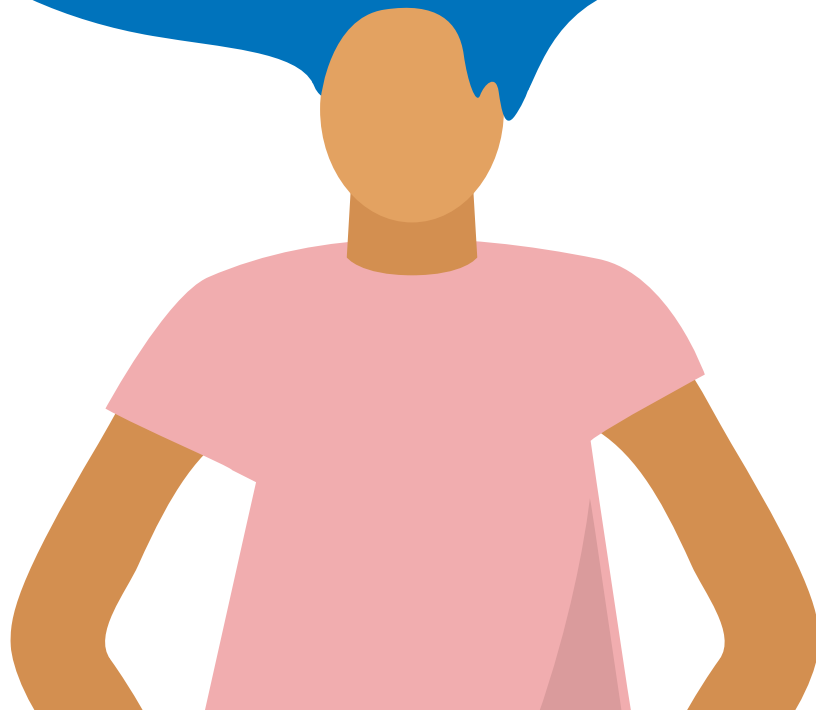




Well, that just happened.



It wasn't the year we thought it was going to be. The Australian bushfires, COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns brought immense disruption and challenges to our lives. But some good things came out of it, too. Yes, we baked more, and we gave the environment a well-earned break; but we also reached out to each other like never before, connecting and supporting each other in new ways, and in the and in light of these challenges we have demonstrated great strength and resilience.





This artwork shows ReachOut in the middle, with the first outer circles representing wellbeing, connection and learning. The outer circles also represent ReachOut's community and everyone we have helped, and will help in the future. The final circles represent celebrating our diversity and encouraging our differences. The shades of brown that surround all of our stories acknowledge our land – remembering that it always was, and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.

Rheanna Lotter is a proud Yuin woman and founder of Ngandabaa (Yun-Da-Baa; named after her grandfather Keith Thorne). Growing up in Willow Vale in the NSW Southern Highlands, Rheanna now lives and works in Western Sydney. Rheanna has worked with many companies and clients around Australia to showcase modern and contemporary Aboriginal art, sharing culture in unique ways and creating artworks for all Australians to enjoy. ReachOut thanks Rheanna for her ongoing work creating artwork for our community to enjoy, connect with and learn from.

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This report covers the period
1 October 2019 – 30 September 2020.



We acknowledge the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present. We recognise connection to Country as integral to health and wellbeing.

We provided personalised support to young people and parents

As part of our one-on-one support program, more than 1000 free sessions were provided to parents of teenagers.

We provided 13,328 personalised recommendations of support through NextStep.

We sent close to 32,000 emails as part of ReachOut Delivered, providing tailored content journeys across friendship, self-care, exam stress, and adulting.



2,950,623

ReachOut.com (Young people) visited by 2,950,623 people in Australia

2019

"[It's] such a relief that if this is put on a webpage then it is recognised that others must be going through the same experiences. I will spend more time here.

Friends don't share their problems so you think their children are doing well and have no issues coping – so it is such a relief knowing I'm not alone. I've not had time to research anything like this before – this is a new resource for me."

(Mum, NSW metro)

We helped young people find a safe place to open up and find more support, whenever they needed it.

There were more than 35,000 posts on the ReachOut Peer-Support Forums. We undertook more than 650 individual duty-of-care interventions to help ensure forum users were safe.





414,409

ReachOut.com/Parents
visited by 414,409 people in
Australia

238,845

ReachOut.com/Schools
visited by 238,845 people in
Australia

"I really didn't realise how much I missed and needed the support from this community. I thought I was just a waste of space and didn't deserve it, and still do, but somehow you guys always manage to really touch my heart and pull out some good in it. So thank you. It's just so nice and helpful to be able to share things and feel so supported. I really do appreciate it. There truly is no community like it out there ... RO never seems to fail me. So thank you ❤️ It's just nice."

(ReachOut.com, Community member, Age 18)

— 2020 AT A GLANCE

We responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing support for young people and their parents around the issues that were affecting them.

ReachOut's COVID-19-specific resources were accessed by 216,236 people in Australia.

216,236



We were there for more people in urgent need.

On ReachOut.com (Young people), the 'Urgent Help' page was visited more than 40,000 times.

We helped ensure young people had access to the right service at the right time with 120,000 referrals to other services, including 14,782 to crisis services.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2020 is a year I don't think any of us will forget. The events of the past twelve months have impacted the mental health of every single one of us. It has put a spotlight on the challenges of accessing mental health services and the role and importance of digital-based services like ReachOut.

With record numbers of young people, parents and schools needing urgent support this year, the ReachOut team acted quickly to seamlessly meet the constant and high level of service demand. Pleasingly, our services were also able to be expanded to respond to this demand – allowing us to be there for all young people, when and where they need us, no matter what happens.

As this is my final report as Chair I have been reflecting on some of the incredible young people I have met along the way. People like Erin, Mimi and Joey (who you'll meet in this report), who bravely share their experiences and the challenges they've faced. I thank them for their candour and strength. In the retelling of their stories, they give hope and comfort to other young people to feel less alone.

As Chair I have been in the unique position to see how supporting young people through difficult times relies on the support and commitment of so many, and I am continually awed and inspired by the dedication of the ReachOut team, my board colleagues and our incredibly generous supporters.

We are very thankful for the support that we get from Government and their funding is vital to our core, however it will never meet all our needs, and importantly for us we have been blessed with so many other supporters, both longstanding and new who have maintained – and in many cases increased – their financial commitment, through this difficult year.

I particularly want to thank all of my Board colleagues for their hard work and support for ReachOut and myself over the past 9 years whilst as Chair. We have a talented and hardworking team led by an inspirational CEO in Ashley de Silva, but the guidance, skills, leadership, dedication, energy and commitment of all my board colleagues complements and strengthens the staff at ReachOut on a daily basis. It has been an honour to have worked alongside so many wonderful people.

Thank you to all those who support us – there are many. 2020 has highlighted so graphically how important your support has been and will continue to be. We could not provide the vital support for young people in all the ways that we do without you.

Julie White, Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

2019–2020. A year like no other. The past year has been a scary and unpredictable time for many of us. And its unprecedented disruption and challenges have made it an especially crucial time for digital mental health services.

In 2019–20, more than 3 million people sought support from ReachOut Australia. We were there for young people, parents and schools over the summer bushfires and when, as a nation, we grappled with the health, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know that disasters and emergencies have significant impacts on mental health and wellbeing. ReachOut's ability to seamlessly support large increases in demand reflects the agility, creativity and passion of our people, partners and community.

Even as we responded to this year's high levels of demand, our team was still able to push our innovation strategy forward. Our new three-pillared approach – based on personalisation, improving and expanding peer support, and helping young people at risk of suicide – will continue to deepen the impact of ReachOut's service for all young people.

This year, the government's investment in mental health and wellbeing support initiatives has been very positive. We are pleased to have received new funding for two suicide prevention initiatives, including co-designing culturally safe online resources for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We also invested in a 'Check-In Study', which followed 300 young people for three months to learn about their lived experience of mental health issues, their use of ReachOut and their wellbeing over time.

A clear lesson for us this year has been the need for smart digital services. We continue to build on our data and analytics capability, with the vision of being able to provide personalised and integrated services in cooperation with other providers, such as Lifeline and Beyond Blue, that offer young people the right help at the right time.

In tough times you soon learn who your friends are, and this year we've been reminded of what incredible friends we have. A big thank you to all of ReachOut's amazing supporters, youth ambassadors, volunteers and, of course, our dedicated team. You make everything we do possible.

And lastly, to all young people around Australia, I want to acknowledge the strength and resilience you've shown this year, and your care and compassion for each other, your communities and the planet.

Ashley de Silva, Chief Executive Officer

THE MENTAL HEALTH PANDEMIC

The outbreak of COVID-19 brought rapid change, and widespread economic and social hardship. The lives of young people and their parents across Australia have been profoundly impacted by factors such as lockdowns, high unemployment levels, constant change, and uncertainty about the future.

As Australia's most accessed online youth mental health service, ReachOut was well-positioned to respond quickly to the mental health needs of young people, and those they turn to for help.

ReachOut mobilised a rapid response, informed by a range of research methods and data analysis, to provide support tailored to the lived experience and changing needs of young people during this time.

Research insights

Our research included desktop and user research, data analytics, and ongoing sentiment analysis of our peer-support community.

Research with young people showed they were experiencing increased fear, uncertainty and anxiety, had trouble sleeping, and had concerns around education and family welfare. It also showed disruption to routines that young people use to manage their mental health, and concerns about loneliness and staying connected with friends and family. Existing mental health issues were exacerbated by the pandemic, and young people had difficulties accessing traditional supports.

Research with parents of teenagers indicated that families were under intense pressure during the initial weeks of the lockdown, leaving parents feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and concerned for the wellbeing of their families. Conflict and tension in households was common. Many parents struggled to help their teenagers adapt to new remote learning routines, and worried about the flow-on effects on their children's education and the impact of isolation on their wellbeing.

Service response

ReachOut's COVID-19 service response was evidence-informed, and tailored to the changing needs of young people. Our approach was recognised in the 2020 NSW Youth Work Awards when we received the Outstanding Use of Data and Evaluation award.

Highlights included:

- Dedicated COVID-19 content across ReachOut's Youth, Parents and Schools sites.
- COVID-19 study support hub for young people, information for parents on how to support their teens, and information for schools.
- Dedicated resources for teachers via ReachOut Schools, including online learning activities, teacher self-care, and advice for connecting with students in remote classrooms.
- Dedicated peer support via ReachOut's youth forums, including practical chats on accessing mental health support, the ins and outs of COVID-19, self-care activities, and life after social isolation.
- Dedicated peer support via ReachOut's parents forums, including posts on topical issues such as dealing with COVID-19 and coping with the transition to home-based learning.
- Additional information on emerging topics for young people, including work and money and future stress.

Engagement and reach

ReachOut's Youth, Parents and Schools services experienced an increase in service demand as soon as COVID-19 measures came into effect in Australia:

- The number of visitors to ReachOut's youth, parents and schools services soared by 48 per cent on average in the first five weeks after the introduction of social distancing measures in mid-March 2020.
- Traffic to ReachOut's youth, parents and schools services has remained elevated since then, with demand up 35 per cent on average in the period after the initial lockdown, demonstrating a sustained and ongoing increase in demand.
- User numbers increased significantly, with 456,285 additional users between 16 March and 30 September, compared to the previous year.
- A total of 202,783 users accessed dedicated COVID-19 content between 16 March and 30 September.
- A 32 per cent spike in the use of ReachOut's youth forums from 16 March to 30 September reflected increased demand for peer support from young people.

Evaluation

We embedded evaluation measures into ReachOut's service response to understand the impact of our resources on the mental health and wellbeing of users. Key content pieces helped 80–90 per cent of those who had read them feel better. The majority of young people surveyed agreed that the resources provided them with immediate relief, reduced their sense of isolation, and increased their knowledge of self-help strategies and their ability to cope and to support others.

A moment of truth

I was diagnosed with anxiety at the age of 12 in Year 7. Back then, people didn't talk much about mental illness and I am so thankful that my parents recognised the signs and got me treatment. I hated seeing a child psychologist, but at least my family and I had some answers. The following year I saw a psychiatrist, who put me on the medication I am currently on.

In my class I was known as the girl who would cry all the time and who was different. Having anxiety isolated me and I struggled alone. I remember asking my friends if they ever felt like crying all the time, just because I wanted someone who would understand how I was feeling. They didn't and it only furthered my isolation.

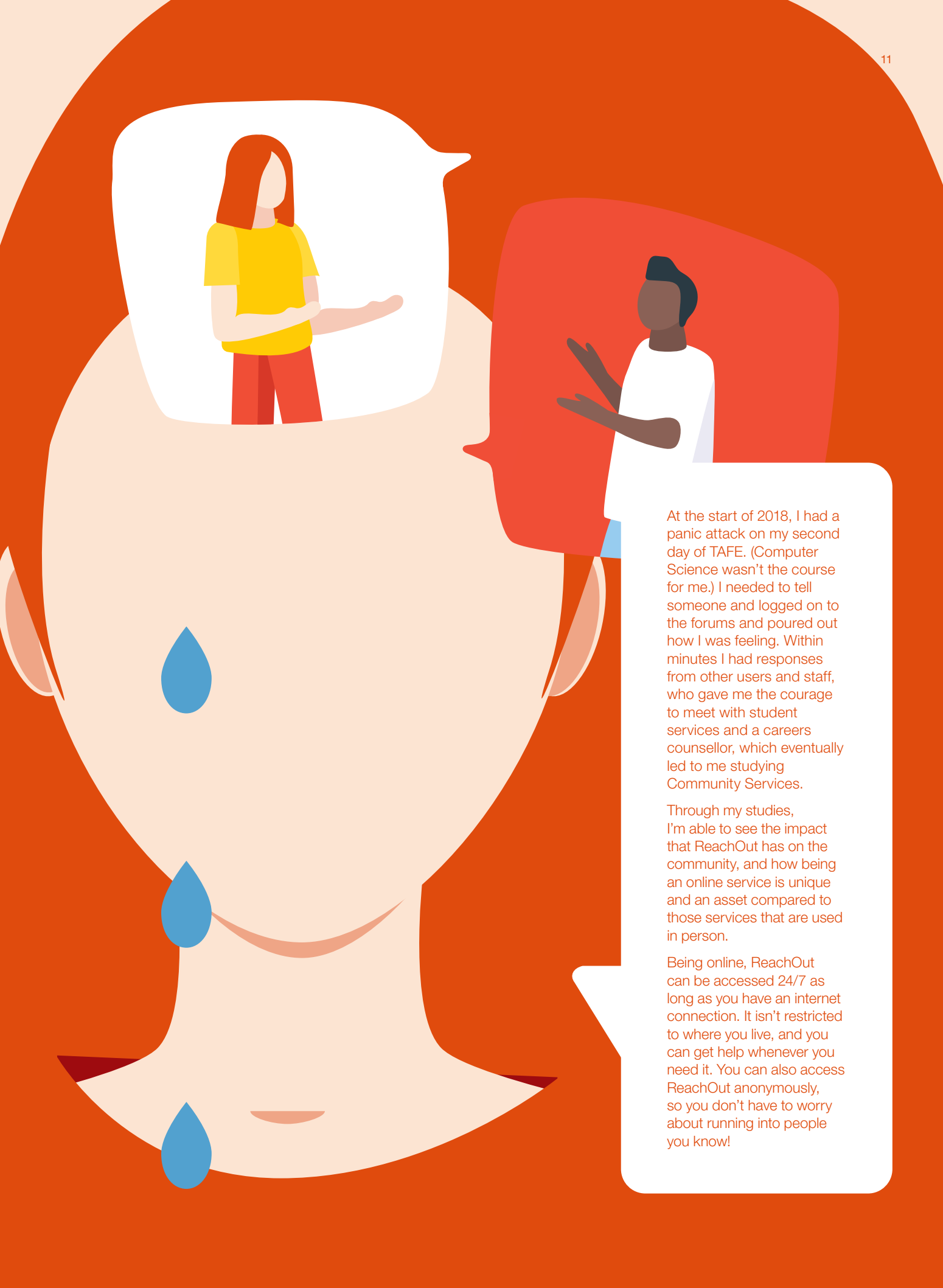
That year, the school had someone come and talk to us about our mental health and why it was important. They gave us these black stickers with 'ReachOut.com' on them and, being 12-year-olds, we stuck them on our folders with pride. At home, I looked up ReachOut.com on the family computer and realised there were other people struggling like I was. I couldn't believe there was help available on a website that I could relate to and that was so easily accessible.

Fast forward to when I got Facebook. I was still on medication for anxiety and surviving life as best I could in Perth. I 'liked' ReachOut on Facebook and the images about self-care, how to manage your mental health, and other tips and tricks for surviving life. I also loved the articles, which seemed almost tailored for me and brought me comfort during the tough times.

Then, when I was 18, I was diagnosed with severe panic attacks and was referred to a psychologist. I was terrified I would see someone I knew there. That fear came true one day when I was on the bus on my way to an appointment with the psychologist and ran into someone I'd known in Year 7, when I was at my worst. He asked me what I was doing north of the river. I decided to tell him the truth: that I was seeing someone about my anxiety and panic attacks. He didn't react at all. He just said it was good that I was getting treatment, and many years later he is one of my closest friends.

One day, my psychologist told me I needed to push myself more. At the same time, ReachOut posted that they wanted Youth Ambassadors in Western Australia. It was a sign! I joined up. As a ReachOut Youth Ambassador, I was active on the forums and then became a builder and then a forum moderator. I still use the forums and love the sense of community there.

'I decided to tell him the truth: that I was seeing someone about my anxiety'



At the start of 2018, I had a panic attack on my second day of TAFE. (Computer Science wasn't the course for me.) I needed to tell someone and logged on to the forums and poured out how I was feeling. Within minutes I had responses from other users and staff, who gave me the courage to meet with student services and a careers counsellor, which eventually led to me studying Community Services.

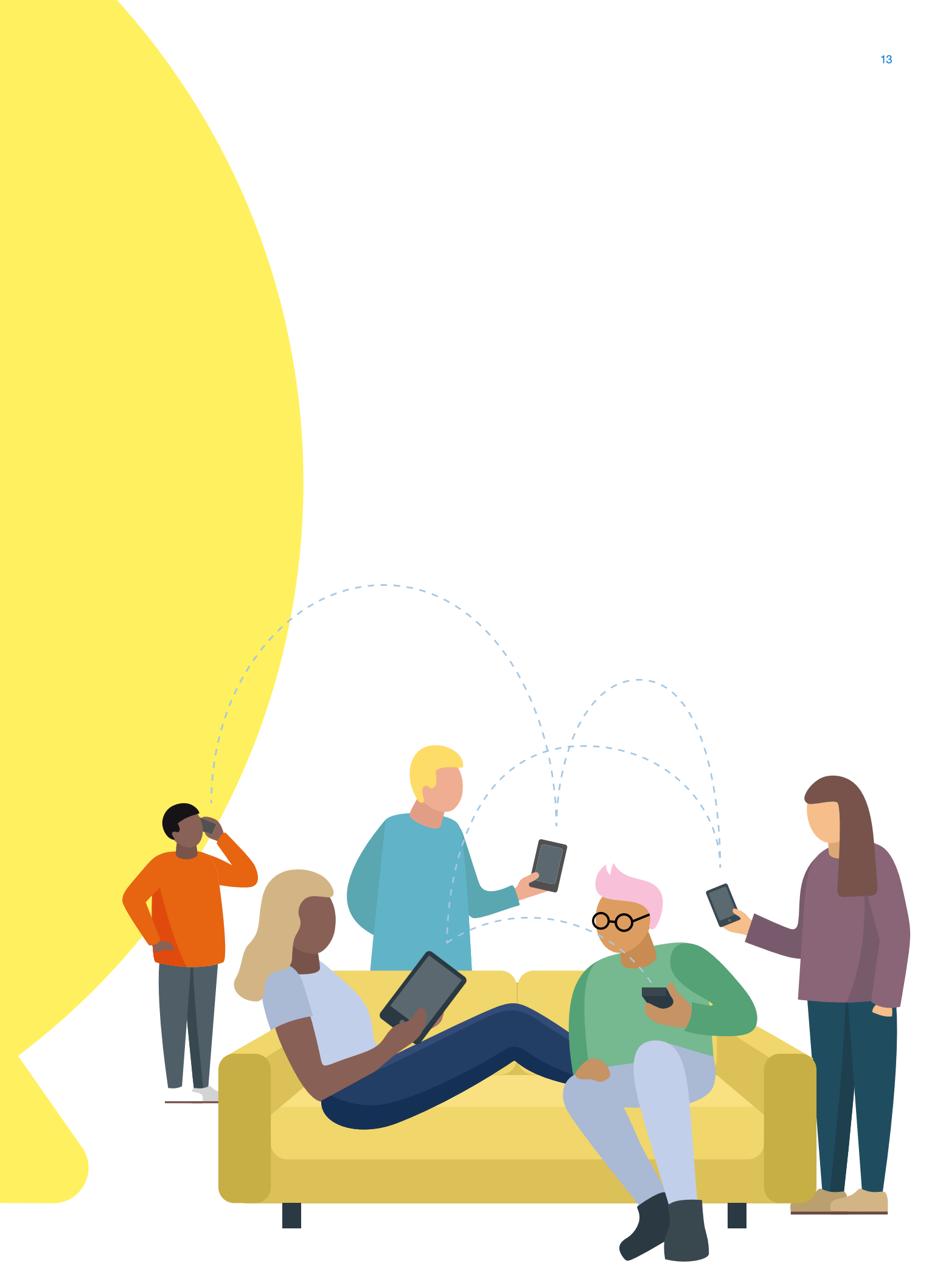
Through my studies, I'm able to see the impact that ReachOut has on the community, and how being an online service is unique and an asset compared to those services that are used in person.

Being online, ReachOut can be accessed 24/7 as long as you have an internet connection. It isn't restricted to where you live, and you can get help whenever you need it. You can also access ReachOut anonymously, so you don't have to worry about running into people you know!

PRIORITY 01:

Integration

We believe that we need to transform the mental health landscape by making digital self-help an integral part of the system. ReachOut is committed to leading the evidence base for digital service models to demand integration on a national, regional and local scale.



PRIORITY 01: INTEGRATION



Responding to a national emergency

One of ReachOut's core service capabilities is offering support in response to bad world news, natural disasters and emergencies. In anticipation of a longer bushfire season and more severe weather events, we began developing our service response in September 2019. Our focus was to help young people and their parents develop skills for building resilience, coping, managing climate anxiety and accessing professional help.

Between mid-November 2019 and 13 May 2020, our resources were accessed 11,829 times via online advertising, online content partnerships and owned channels (including email).

In the same time period, our peer-support community was accessed by 978 young people, and 3390 teachers and educators accessed our practical classroom resources for secondary schools in bushfire-affected communities.

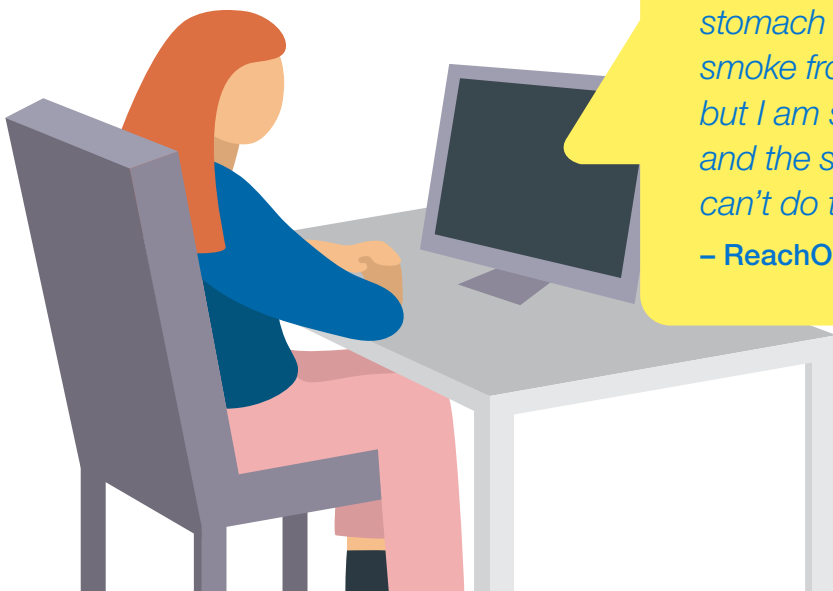
We proactively created discussions about how to cope with bushfires across our peer-support forums, and got young people talking about their experiences, including having to evacuate, and about their feelings of anger and hopelessness. Due to high distress, the peer-support approach focused on wellbeing activities and good news stories that inspired hope and a sense of support.

'I just saw that 3 people have been killed due to a firefighting plane crash. That was pretty distressing. I think I'm going to take a break from social media while the fires are going on. It's become a really unhealthy place for me, seeing all the poor animals and this horrible news.'

– ReachOut Forum User

'The weather is bad. It is basically 40+ for the next 3 days and 0 rain. Here I am having not slept again at 5:15am shaking and crying, my stomach hurts and all I can smell is smoke from the fire. I am exhausted but I am scared to dream again and the smoke stinks and I just can't do this.'

– ReachOut Forum User



Understanding our unique impact

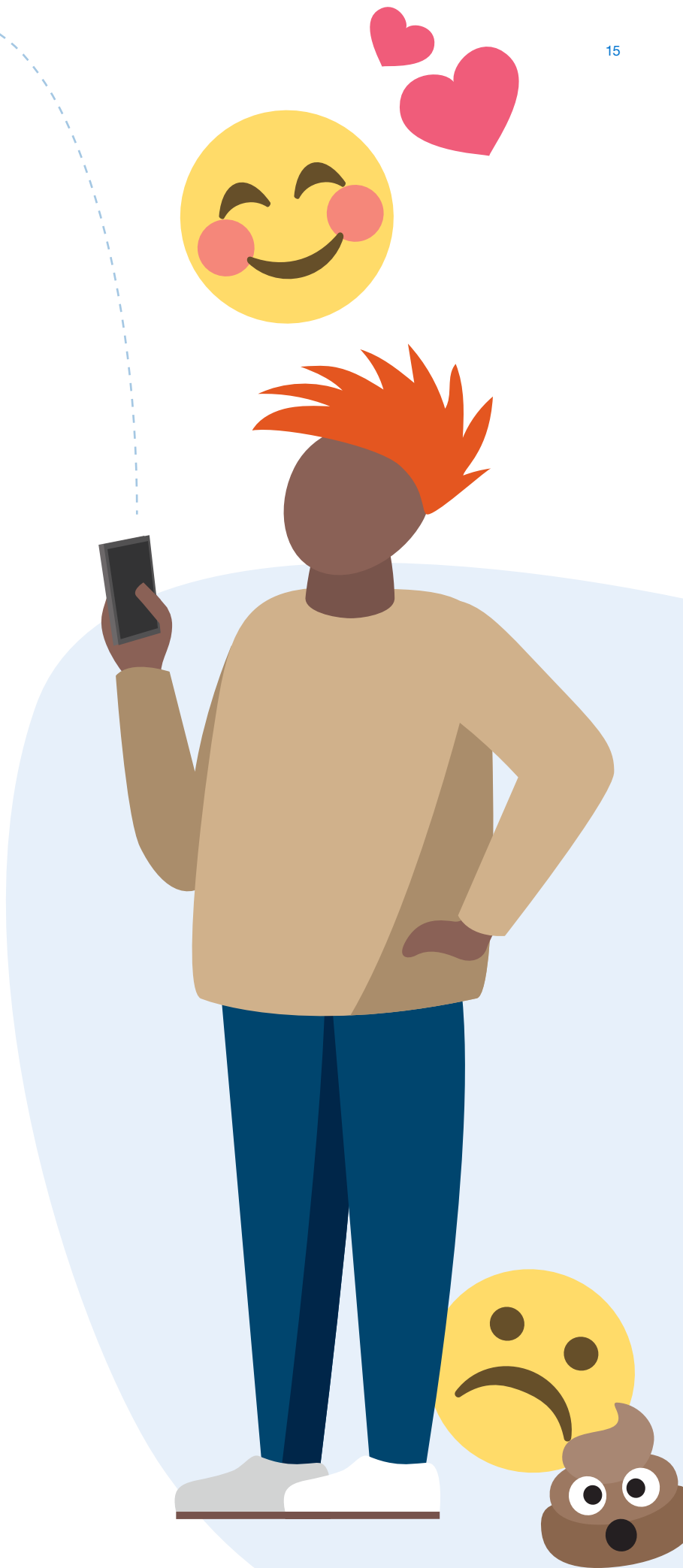
In February 2020, we launched the largest study we've ever conducted, *A measurable impact: Helping young people to be and stay well*, which revealed the mental health benefits of ReachOut.com.

This independently peer-reviewed study explored how young people engage with ReachOut and how the service impacts their mental health. We surveyed approximately 2000 ReachOut users, aged 16 to 25 years, over a three-month period. The findings of the study showed:

- an improvement in mental health, including a significant reduction in symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress
- reduced suicide risk
- an increase in help-seeking behaviour
- 90–95 per cent of participants rated their overall experience of ReachOut as 'good' or 'excellent'
- 87.7 per cent of participants said it was available and accessible.

ReachOut helped users by improving their understanding of their experiences of mental health and wellbeing, as well as the experiences of others. It also provided practical strategies and tools to support their mental health, connected them with others, and made them feel more positive about themselves.

To build on what we learnt from *A measurable impact*, we have implemented a second longitudinal study to investigate the mental health impacts of our service for the young people who use it. With 'Check In', we followed young people for a period of three months, checking in with them weekly to learn about their lived experience of mental health issues and their use of ReachOut, and to see how their wellbeing is tracking over time. We also collected their onsite browsing data, so that we can connect their use of ReachOut with their mental health outcomes and better understand what works, and for whom. Approximately 360 young people started the study, and 140 completed the survey in the final week. Data analysis and interpretation of our findings is scheduled to kick off in early 2021.



PRIORITY 01: INTEGRATION



Partnering for impact

A *measurable impact* showed that 13 per cent of the people who visit ReachOut are suicidal and 35 per cent are in high distress. This year, there were more than 40,000 visits to our *Urgent Help* page. While it's good to provide this information, many young people 'drop off' when moving between services, or lose hope and don't take the next step from here. ReachOut wants to demystify the mental health landscape so that young people in need of urgent help become more likely to access it.

We launched a pilot in partnership with Lifeline to directly intuitively connect users on ReachOut to Lifeline's chat service. The integration is built using a range of inputs (on-site behaviour, search terms, time of day, etc.) to identify when someone may be at risk of suicide. If a person is considered 'at risk', a pop-up opens and invites them to chat with Lifeline. If they choose to proceed, a direct link into Lifeline's chat service makes the transition between services easier and provides a clear real-time pathway. As a pilot project, aspects of this work are quite simple, but it is enabling us to test and learn so that we can take the best parts of this work forward.

We partnered with Beyond Blue to address heightened levels of distress among young people due to the COVID-19 pandemic, by hosting a youth-focused landing page within Beyond Blue's dedicated COVID-19 support website that contains links to relevant resources, tools and information on ReachOut's services.

Peer support can help parents by providing an outlet to learn from the experiences of other families, to feel less alone and provide hope, and to gain ideas and information to support their child, so we partnered with Raising Children Network to extend the reach of the ReachOut Parents forums. The partnership means that any parent searching for teen parenting information via raisingchildren.net.au will see relevant discussions from the ReachOut Parents peer forum. Parents can then click to read the discussion and/or sign up to contribute to the conversation.

Peer Support

ReachOut's peer-support forums play a critical role in helping young people to support each other in a safe environment.

In the past year, 650 young people in our peer-support forums required a duty of care intervention, the majority due to suicide risk. Our trained moderators help to identify and respond to these incidents – according to the degree of risk – escalating, where appropriate, to parents and carers, or treating mental health professionals, or, in the most high-risk cases, to the emergency services.

We all benefit from feeling understood by someone who has 'walked in our shoes', and there is growing evidence that peer support can play an integral role in addressing current and future mental health challenges.

In response to insights of an earlier program evaluation, we are upgrading the experience of our youth forums, which provide support to more than 65,000 young people each year. Our upgraded forums will launch in 2021.

This year, we also invested in validating a one-on-one peer-support service for young people. Following this work, a pilot has been designed to demonstrate the feasibility and viability of developing this model at scale.

Unfriendly Friendships

We released the *Unfriendly Friendships* report, which examines bullying and friendship issues and their impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing. Highlighting the realities and complexities of young people's experiences of bullying and friendship issues, the report recommends that we:

- shift the focus from set definitions of bullying to specific behaviours, to ensure that we reveal the full scale and complexity of the issue
- review current approaches to bullying and take into account the social context in which it takes place
- recognise that friendship issues can have a serious impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing, and take a public health approach
- support all young people to build skills and confidence to navigate friendship issues and to ensure they are able to benefit from the protective factors that positive, healthy friendships provide.

In response to these recommendations, we developed new resources to equip young people, parents, carers and educators with [information and tools to help navigate friendship issues](#).



Supporting the supporters

We continued to work with The Benevolent Society to deliver personalised, one-on-one support via the ReachOut Parents Coaching service.

Through this partnership with The Benevolent Society, more than 1000 personalised sessions were delivered to Australian parents.

Expanded Indigenous content

We expanded our content on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their parents. Rapper Sonboy shared his experiences around [reaching his goals and the impact of role models on his life](#); Taliah King shared her experience of the [#BlackLivesMatter movement and of realising what stereotypes and statistics meant to her](#); and Kylie and her teenage son Jarrod shared their story of [connecting to culture through role models](#).

Supporting diverse audiences

We produced a new topic for [culturally and linguistically diverse \(CALD\) young people and their parents](#). Working with a CALD clinical psychologist, we established a CALD parents' content review group for user review. We also created a video series, in partnership with Beyond Blue, aimed at CALD young people impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and our CALD content squad audited our Youth culture topic to make it more relevant.



Worthy of happiness

I was bullied when I was younger. There were lots of people I didn't get along with and this led to a lot of negative self-talk and actions being thrown my way. I wanted to be normal and to fit in; I wanted for everyone to like me. After a while, I essentially bullied myself and eventually I became my own worst enemy.

I wasn't in a good headspace. My body image was crap, and my eating started suffering because of this. My health and my spark started to deteriorate. I didn't even notice how much damage I was doing to myself trying to fit in. I was hurting myself emotionally and physically, and everything started spiralling out of control.

My eating – or lack thereof – was causing my body and my mind to shut down. I couldn't control my emotions; I was constantly sick and sad. The cycle just went round and round.

I struggled to do daily tasks. It wasn't uncommon for me, when in class or walking down the street by myself, to start getting dizzy. I would see dots in my vision and feel a hot flush before everything went black and I passed out.

This went on for a few years, and I was just about to turn 17 when I finally admitted I needed help. I couldn't keep living like that. I wanted to be the bright, bubbly girl I once was – the girl with a million dreams and a spark in her eye. I was sick of hating myself and putting my body through so much torment.

I reached out to my mum, and to my family and friends. Luckily, I had a great team of people wanting to help me get back to being me

After reaching out, I was diagnosed with anorexia, depression and anxiety. It really hit me then how unwell I had become. With the help of my family, friends and some amazing medical professionals – but most importantly, myself – I fought to get better.

At first, I would take two steps forward and five steps back. I'd have a great day and then three bad ones. But I kept on pushing through. I found lots of coping strategies: nature, breathing, yoga and meditation. There are some great apps that can help with all that, including the ReachOut app Breathe, which I still use all the time.

'I had a great team of people wanting to help me get back to me'



Flash forward a few years and I'm now 25. I have a job, I've travelled, I love food, and I have a smile on my face more days than not.

I still struggle with anxiety, and with my eating at times. I'm not saying that life is picture-perfect all the time, but I have steps in place to help me.

Five years ago, if you had told me that I would be able to be this functioning I probably would have laughed and cried and called you crazy. I never thought I would get here.

For those of you who are struggling emotionally in any way, all I can say is: you are not alone. By reaching out, you can find so many great resources and so much support! ReachOut offers amazing online resources at a touch of a button for so many different things. You can find online support, or just research what's going on!

If you can only take one thing away from my words, know that you are worthy of happiness. Reaching out for help was the best thing I ever did.

PRIORITY 02:

Beyond .com

There's more to being digital than having a website.

ReachOut is committed to finding new ways to connect with young people, wherever they might be, and to using data and new technologies to carve out space in the areas young people already occupy. We're going beyond .com and helping young people to get the right help at the right time.



Data and personalisation

We've continued to develop our personalisation capabilities so that we can improve each young person's experience of ReachOut. In 2019, we implemented a sophisticated new data-tracking facility that allows us to see what people do on-site, while still respecting their anonymity and privacy at all times. Now we're able to understand how individuals arrive at ReachOut; what information, self-help or peer support they access; and whether they click out to help-seeking pathways. Over time, this information will be critical in helping us to offer a more personalised service – one that delivers the right help at the right time, whether that's from ReachOut or another service provider.

We worked with a consultant to explore the organisational capabilities required to embed and sustain personalisation over time. As a result of this project, we were able to secure pro-bono support from Telstra and from McKinsey's data science team. This support will inform the development of a foundational structure and personalisation road map that will allow us to better meet the needs of young people over the coming years.



Student Snapshot

The transition from primary school to secondary school is a significant time of change. One of the key protective factors for supporting students through this period is the early development of strong student-teacher relationships. To support teachers to build these relationships with their students and to create a tailored wellbeing program for them, we developed an evidence-based digital tool called Student Snapshot.

Student Snapshot is a simple, free, digital alternative to paper-based transition questionnaires. This student wellbeing self-assessment survey can be used to generate individual student profiles and a cohort wellbeing overview with resource recommendations for teachers.

ReachOut developed Student Snapshot in collaboration with teachers and students, and it was trialled successfully in more than 40 Australian schools in term 1 of 2020. The success of the pilot spurred us to launch Student Snapshot into schools nationwide in term 4 of 2020, in time for teachers to use it for Year 7 transition activities in 2021.



NextStep 2.0/2.1

This year, our most in-depth product ever went through a major upgrade to allow young people to get to support options faster in times of need. And the new tech stack means that it has far greater third-party integration capabilities.

ReachOut NextStep makes it easier for young people to navigate the range of available mental health services by recommending customised support options – online and offline – based on a person's symptoms and how significantly those symptoms are affecting them.

Meeting parents where they are

In a five-part, live-streamed series hosted on Facebook, ReachOut Parents Live offered an opportunity for parents to interact with an expert panel (including other parents and teens) on topics including communicating with your teen, mental health and wellbeing, body image, and drug and alcohol use. Each episode was published on a dedicated podcast, expanding the reach and longevity of the series, and amplified through a partnership with Facebook. ReachOut Parents Live was viewed more than 68,000 times.

ReachOut Delivered

In April, we rolled out an early example of the potential benefits of user-led personalisation through ReachOut Delivered, a collection of 'email journeys' to which young people can subscribe and receive information on topics that may be causing them concern. Topics included study stress and friendships, two issues that regularly cause distress, as well as a series on self-care. ReachOut Delivered is a way for young people to discover, refine and control their own self-help journey.

Young men

We conducted research to understand the unique challenges faced by young men, and what it would take to reach and engage them with ReachOut's service. We heard that some young men feel they are constantly being ranked and measured and, despite their best efforts, are always found to be falling short. As a result, they feel a loss of personal significance and low self-esteem. We developed a targeted online advertising campaign to validate their experience and let young men know there is hope and support available – that what they're feeling now doesn't have to be the way. To support and continue to improve their experience of ReachOut, we sought their insights around our peer-support forums and developed bespoke content to respond to their unique challenges.

Could you be a better friend?

Friendships are incredibly important at any time of life. In adolescence, friendships are especially important, as they provide young people with a sense of belonging, as well as opportunities to develop their self-esteem, and problem-solving and social skills. Strong friendships are integral to positive mental health, acting as a protective factor against stressors and helping to maintain wellbeing, strengthen resilience and even deflect the impact of victimisation by peers. However, friendship dynamics are complex, and there are times when friendships can be volatile, confusing and stressful. For young people, being bullied or treated badly by friends can cause considerable emotional distress.

That's why we developed 'Could you be a better friend?', a national advertising campaign designed to encourage young people to consider the impact of their friendships. In a series of candid quiz-inspired interviews, seven young people answer questions related to their friendships – good and bad. Young people are then directed to quizzes on ReachOut.com that have been specifically designed to prompt reflection on a user's own behaviour, and that of their friendship group.



JOEY'S STORY

Never give up on yourself

High school was definitely a big chapter of my life, with sweet and bitter memories still lingering to this day. One day, I was careless and worry-free; the next thing I knew, the HSC was on its way and about to strike me.

As the exam days were getting closer, everyone's stress levels were rising. Mine? Mine decided to do a rocket launch as soon as term 2 started. I was a high-performing student, and so my teachers had high expectations for me. My own expectations were also high.

As my yearly exam in term 2 got closer, I started to fall behind in everything, including Extension 1 Maths – a subject I was extremely good at. It was no surprise when I didn't do well in the exam: I dropped multiple places in every single subject, and to second last in my year in Extension 1 Maths.

This felt like a disaster at the time, but I buried my sadness and tried to push myself to do more work. And that didn't help me, academically or mentally.

The final straw was my ex breaking up with me the day before my HSC exams started. The stress was enough to freak me out, and then anger and sadness consumed me.

I completely broke down. That afternoon, I realised I needed to take a break from studying. I had a long chat with my friends, and then went online in search of some help with stress management. That was when I found ReachOut.com. During my HSC exam period, I used ReachOut.com and started to work on my support network and stress management skills.

ReachOut taught me to meditate every now and then, with the help of some apps on my phone, as well as how to put things aside when pressure was accumulating. I now know how to balance my uni-work life, and I ensure that I take time out for myself. All these skills have significantly improved the quality of my life and my mental stability in a high-stress environment.

Now, when I look back to my HSC, I'm proud that I didn't give up on myself even though it was truly stressful for me. Also, I'm still utilising many skills I learnt from the ReachOut website to cope with my everyday stress and uni stress.

To sum up, I would say: reach out to your friends when *they* are in need, and reach out for yourself when it's *you* who is most in need.

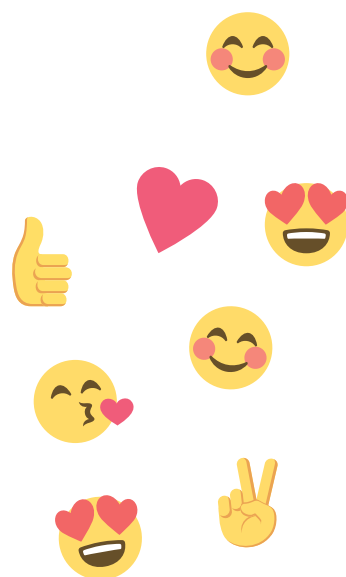
‘Everyone’s stress levels were rising. Mine? Mine decided to do a rocket launch ...’



PRIORITY 03:

Inspiring change

When we all work together to advocate for better mental health outcomes, we can create incredible change. We're working towards attracting more supporters, partners and volunteers who are as committed as we are to helping all young people be happy and well.



PRIORITY 03: INSPIRING CHANGE



Advocating for young people

For many years, ReachOut has called for the Australian mental health system to be reformed to be more accessible, connected and people-focused. We're now optimistic that the current focus on reforming our mental health system will result in a more effective system that responds more appropriately to the needs and service preferences of young people.

To help ensure that the needs and views of young people are represented, ReachOut has produced a range of submissions and documents that speak to our research and work with young people, outlining their policy priorities, and the role of online mental health services in supporting young people and the people they turn to for support – parents, carers and friends. ReachOut has made [submissions](#) to the:

- Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees: Lessons to be learned in relation to the Australian bushfire season, 2019–20
- Productivity Commission Draft Report: Mental Health
- Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT
- Senate Inquiry into COVID-19.

Engaging the community in a big way

Despite the challenges of 2020, we found two opportunities for the community to take better care of their own mental health while also raising money to support suicide prevention. First was *Laps for Life* in March, which in its second year saw a doubling of participants and funds raised. And second was *Make A Move* – a new event, presented in partnership with Facebook and Instagram, that coincides with Mental Health Month in October.

We're continually inspired by the dedication and extreme generosity of the *Laps for Life* and *Make A Move* communities, who often have lived experience of mental health challenges and suicide. The money raised from these events allows ReachOut to invest in improving and innovating our services to better support young people.

#YouCanTalk

#YouCanTalk is an innovative campaign that provides a catalyst for positive changes in the suicide prevention sector. We banded together with other organisations to send a positive message to the community about the importance of having conversations around suicide.

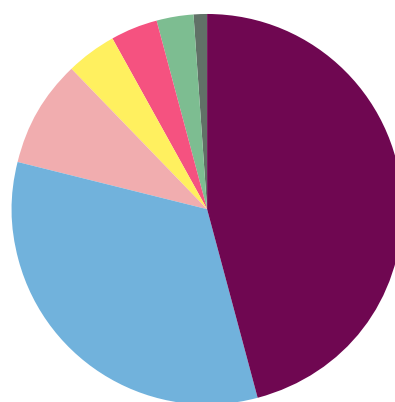
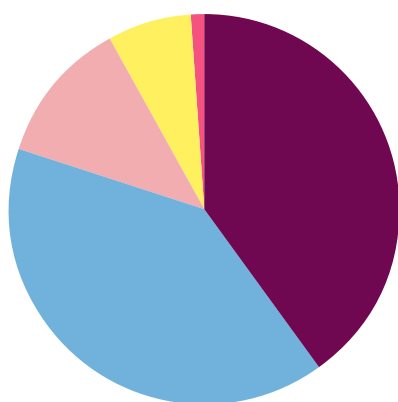
The sector is often criticised for overlap and duplication, and this was a great example of organisations that all operate very differently coming together with a common goal. The media launch of the campaign video reached more than 1.5 million people and there was a total audience of 5.65 million via social media.



FINANCIALS

	30-Sep-20	30-Sep-19
	\$	\$
Income		
Government grants	4,814,563	4,417,936
Donations	4,742,157	3,203,265
Non-government grants	1,375,660	1,565,166
Government COVID-19 stimulus funding income	827,500	0
Interest income	152,323	165,516
Consultancy and other income	13,415	46,749
TOTAL INCOME	11,925,618	9,398,632
Expenditure		
Employees	4,631,192	3,868,792
Design and delivery of services	3,367,005	2,608,794
Marketing	923,571	1,136,796
Fundraising	355,250	433,687
Administration	371,636	508,382
Occupancy	312,792	304,208
Depreciation and amortisation	109,722	114,605
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	10,071,168	8,975,264
Other Comprehensive Income		
Net fair value gain/(loss) of financial assets	(61,532)	61,504
SURPLUS	1,792,918	484,872

Percentages



Income

• Government grants	40%
• Donations	40%
• Non-government grants	12%
• Government COVID-19 stimulus funding income	7%
• Interest income	1%
• Consultancy and other income	0%

Expenditure

• Employees	46%
• Design and delivery of services	33%
• Marketing	9%
• Fundraising	4%
• Administration	4%
• Occupancy	3%
• Depreciation and amortisation	1%

THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD AND PATRONS

We couldn't have achieved all that we've done this year without our diligent and dedicated Board and Patrons. Thank you.

OUR BOARD

Julie White, Chair

Julie White has more than 30 years' experience in the not-for-profit and corporate sectors, including her former role as head of the Macquarie Group Foundation. She is also the former CEO of Chief Executive Women, Chair of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia Australia, and a non-executive director of International Fistula Alliance, Women's Community Shelters and Health Industries SA. Julie serves on a number of advisory boards and provides consulting and mentoring services to a range of not-for-profit organisations.

Helen Conway, Board member

Helen Conway is a non-executive director. She is a director of Westpac Life, St George Life, Westpac General Insurance, Westpac Lenders Mortgage Insurance, Endeavour Energy and Catholic Schools NSW, and is the Chair of Per Capita Australia, a progressive think tank. She is also an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Institute for Business and Economics at the University of Queensland and a mentor with Kilfinan Australia.

Helen had a successful career as a lawyer and senior executive. Following ten years in private practice as a lawyer, including seven years as a partner in a major law firm in Sydney, she moved into the corporate sector where she worked as a senior executive in a range of sectors over 18 years. From 2011 to 2015, Helen served as the CEO of the Australian Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Aaron Green, Board member

Aaron Green is the Senior Vice President and Head of SAP SuccessFactors, Asia Pacific and Japan. He joined SAP in 2016 and has two decades' experience in People & Culture trends and technologies.

Aaron is incredibly passionate about the practice of human experience management and how organisations can deliver increased talent engagement as a lever to drive organisational outcomes. In addition to believing in the power of technology to transform workplaces, Aaron is a major

proponent of a service-based approach to leadership and its potential to bring out the best in a company's people and customer experience.

Prior to SAP, Aaron held senior leadership roles at Oracle over 12 years. His career spans roles at PeopleSoft, Lexmark, Logitech and Sun Microsystems, working across Australia, the US, China, Germany and Switzerland.

Alison Hughes, Board member

Alison Hughes is the Head of Technology at Velocity Made Good (VMG) Digital – delivering mobile-optimised creative at scale. She was previously the Head of Digital at Virgin Money, where she was responsible for developing and executing the company's digital strategy and enhancing its technical capabilities. She has also led teams to develop and execute digital strategies, campaigns and projects across leading brands, including Lion, Schick, National Foods and Optus. Alison has co-owned two digital agencies, one achieving a ranking of #31 on the 2012 BRW Fast Starters list

Dianne James, Board member

Dianne James is the CFO, Strategy & Enterprise Services and Director Enterprise Portfolio Governance at the Westpac Group, responsible for leading the Financial Control and Business Partnering, including formulation and implementation of strategy, execution and outcome delivery.

Dianne originally joined Westpac in 2008 as Project Director for Finance merger activities and was the CFO for Westpac Retail and Business Bank from 2009 to 2013.

She commenced her career at KPMG and has over 30 years' experience in the financial services industry. She has previously held roles with MLC, NAB and State Street Australia across Transformation Programs, Finance, People & Culture, Strategy, Operations and Process Ownership.

Michael Price, Board member

Michael Price is an executive director of Macquarie Bank, where he has worked for the past 25 years. A

passionate supporter of the not-for-profit sector in Australia, he is Chair of the Social Finance Advisory Council at Social Ventures Australia, which boosts the impact and sustainability of organisations such as ReachOut. Michael is a member of ReachOut's Fundraising Committee.

Nigel Smyth, Board member

Nigel Smyth joined our Board after retiring from Macquarie Group in July 2013, where he was the Group Head of Market Operations and Technology. He is a director of Middle Harbour Yacht Club and Gill Australia, and has held board positions with Pillar Administration, the Centre for Social Impact and livewire.org.au. Nigel now provides technology strategic consulting and executive coaching to IT executives for a number of companies.

Ian Thorpe AM, Board member

Ian Thorpe AM is Australia's most decorated Olympian and one of the country's most recognised and influential athletes. He has a strong commitment to the not-for-profit sector, having established his own charity, Fountain for Youth, to prevent and control illness in children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. He is also a passionate advocate for mental health through his various roles as Patron of ReachOut, Member of the AIS Athlete & Wellbeing Advisory Board and Ambassador for Invictus Games. Ian is also co-founder of Beon Performance, which helps to cultivate cultures that thrive under pressure while giving people the tools to eliminate self-induced stress and anxiety. Ian is a member of ReachOut's Fundraising Committee.

Andrew Wilson, Board member

Andrew Wilson is the CEO of Ascender HCM, the leading HR, payroll and learning outsourcing provider in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions. Previously, Andrew was General Manager – Strategy, Planning & Innovation at Coca-Cola Amatil. He has also gained more than seven years of strategy consulting experience across a range of industries while working at Bain & Company. He has completed an MBA from London Business School.

OUR PATRONS

Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO
Patron-in-Chief

The Honourable Warwick Smith AM
Founding Patron

Geoff Handbury AO
Patron

Jack Heath
Patron and Founder

Ian Thorpe AM
Patron



THANK YOU

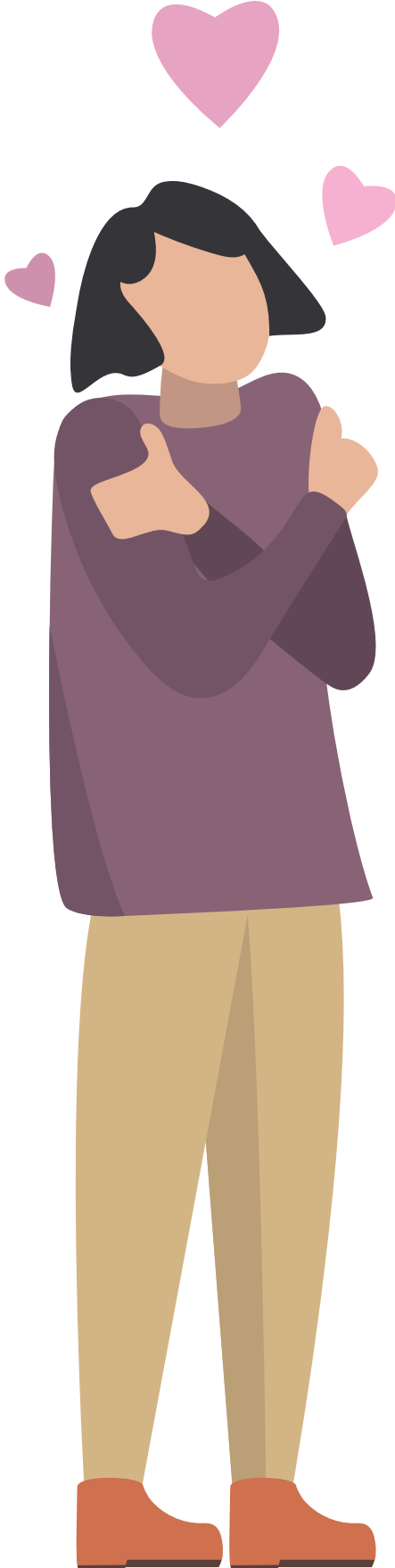
REACHOUT AUSTRALIA YEAR IN REVIEW 2019-2020

With your incredible support, we've been able to help more than 3 million people in Australia through what has been the most challenging year in ReachOut's history. We've also helped the parents of young people feel hopeful and reassured. And we've been able to support schools, drive social change and develop resilient communities. So, when it comes to positive mental health and wellbeing, you can feel confident that we've got your back. And your incredible generosity is reassurance that you've got ours. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.



7-Eleven Australia
October 19, 2020
Dance the blues away! This October, get moving and give back a little with ReachOut.com Australia's Make a Move campaign. Sign up today: <https://fal.cn/3aETV>





Government Partners

We'd like to acknowledge our Government Partners, the Australian Government Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Social Services (DSS), and the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) for their funding and support for our work.

Platinum partners



Diamond partners



Gold partners



Silver partners



Bronze partners





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Call us on +61 2 8029 7777 or
email info@reachout.com



ReachOut is Australia's leading online mental health organisation for young people and their parents. Our practical support, tools and tips help young people get through anything from everyday issues to tough times – and the information we offer parents and schools makes it easier for them to help their teenagers and students, too.