



REACH  
OUT.COM

100

REACHOUT  
AUSTRALIA  
YEAR IN REVIEW  
2018/19

Three years ago we pledged to help 1 million more young people by 2020 and we did it!



In fact,

we've

1.6

more

young people

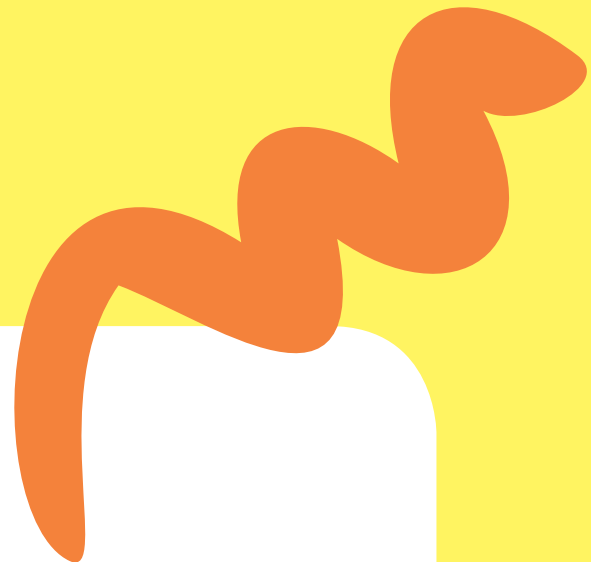


helped

million

and their parents

help themselves.



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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 both past, present and emerging. We recognise connection to Country as integral to health and wellbeing.







## We broke the 3 million mark

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ReachOut.com (Under 25s)  
2,698,545 unique Australian users

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ReachOut.com/Parents  
323,215 unique Australian users

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ReachOut.com/Schools  
167,317 unique Australian users



## We were there for young people in urgent need

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29,945 users visited the 'Urgent Help' page

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7209 users visited the 'How to make a  
[suicide] safety plan' page

# 2018/19 AT A GLANCE



## We went all out on new content

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ReachOut.com:  
61 articles  
17 videos  
14 infographics

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ReachOut.com/Parents:  
29 articles  
11 videos  
2 infographics



## We helped young people help themselves

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WorryTime: 23,687 app downloads

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Breathe: 13,287 app downloads

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Orb: 3494 downloads



## We helped young people find a safe place to open up

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42,627 posts made on Youth forums

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10,404 active, registered users  
(grown by 1745 this year)

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530 duty of care interventions



## Where we couldn't help, we found others that could

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104,136 young people referred to other services, including 9676 to crisis services

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3468 parents referred to other services, including 667 to crisis services



## We got parents posting

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2962 posts made on Parent forums

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3954 registered users  
(grown by 1501 this year)

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28 duty of care interventions



## We helped others take the next step

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18,917 users completed NextStep and received personalised recommendations on where to get the support that was right for them.

# 100

## We provided one-on-one support for parents

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576 parents registered to take part in the Parents One-on-One Support Program. And, 1197 sessions were delivered as part of this program.

# MEASURABLE IMPACT

Our ongoing research and program evaluation has always shown the positive outcomes the work we do has on the mental wellbeing of young people. Recent analysis of the largest ever impact study we've ever conducted has given us a clear indication of the significant direct impact ReachOut has on young people in distress.

From 2014–16, ReachOut conducted a longitudinal study of approximately 2000 users, to understand how young people use ReachOut, as well as its impact on their mental health and help-seeking behaviour. The results, which have been independently peer-reviewed, show that over a three-month period ReachOut contributed to a statistically significant decline in symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress. And the biggest changes were seen in young people who had severe or extremely severe symptoms.

### Here's a snapshot of the findings

Users who took part in the study completed multiple surveys over three months. Surveys were conducted at:

- Baseline
- Week 5 (5 weeks post baseline)
- Follow-up (3 months post baseline)

While at the beginning of the study, the majority of users rated their mental health as either 'fair' or 'poor', a large proportion of users (68%) scored in the 'severe' or 'extremely severe' range on symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or stress.

Fig. 1. Gender

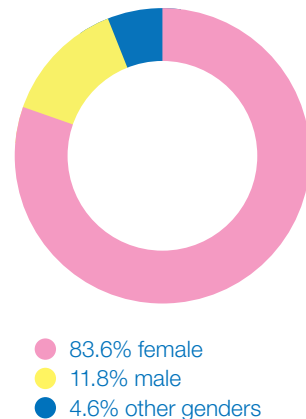


Fig. 2. Sexuality

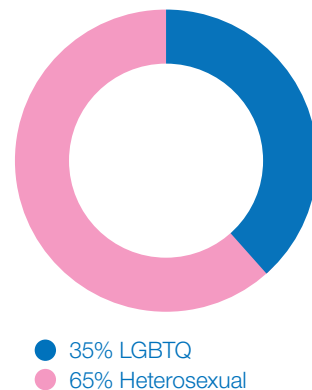
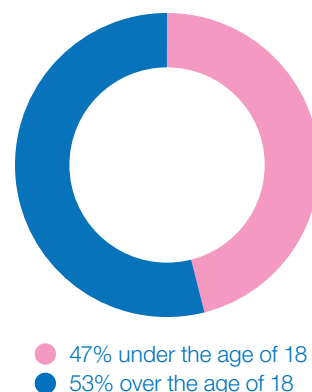


Fig. 3. Age





'It's great to get the info and know that it's not just you, that you're not 'broken' and that there is a way through it, even when it does seem like there really is no hope or any options left.'

Impact Study Participant

'It feels like your stuck on a leaking boat in the ocean but you don't know which land you should paddle towards ... but from the site even just finding the name for a disorder and that it's something so many people have changed a lot and that was like being given the map and compass to sort out life.'

Impact Study Participant

'It was reassuring to know that most likely I am not the only one who has the same problems and it is completely okay to seek support and people will want to help.'

Impact Study Participant

**Key points of impact**

Analysis of the data from this study found that ReachOut users experienced:

**1. Improvements in mental health:**

Overall, we found that ReachOut users participating in this study experienced a significant reduction in their symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress over the three-month study period. We saw the largest reduction in symptoms of depression. There was also a reduction in the proportion of participants experiencing severe or extremely severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress [Fig. 4].

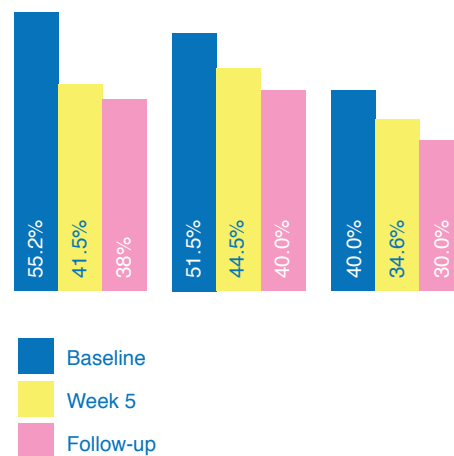
**2. Reduction in suicide risk:**

There was a significant reduction in suicide risk; at baseline 12.3 per cent of users were at high-risk of suicide, but this had significantly reduced to 8.6 per cent of users by the three-month follow-up.

**3. Increased help-seeking:**

Of those participants who were experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and/or stress, but had not sought help within the three months prior to the study 11.6 per cent went on to seek help from a mental health professional and a further 5.7 per cent went on to seek help from a doctor or GP by the three month follow-up.

Fig. 4. Impact on depression, anxiety and/or stress



The percentage of participants who scored severe or extremely severe on depression, anxiety, and/or stress at baseline, week 5, and the three-month follow-up.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Julie White, Chair

2019 has been a landmark year for ReachOut in many ways. Firstly we celebrated 21 years of supporting and advocating for the mental health and wellbeing of young people all over Australia. From the moment we opened our doors in 1998, we've made a significant difference to the health and wellbeing of many young people and we are very proud of our continuing focus on this work.

Secondly, one of the biggest achievements of the year has been meeting our 2020 goal of helping an extra one million people, in 2019. This has enabled us to get a head-start on our 2023 strategy which includes ensuring the capacity constraints in the mental health system are addressed, providing help wherever and whenever a young person needs it.

I am incredibly fortunate in my role as Chair to be able to meet some incredibly inspiring young people who, have not only surmounted incredible challenges in their lives, but have been brave enough to share their stories. We are very lucky to be able to share three such stories in this year's report. Thank you to Emily, Carter and Kai for their generosity and candour.

Helping these young people and many like them relies on the support and commitment of so many people and I am continually awed and inspired by the dedication of all the Reach Out staff, my board colleagues and our incredibly generous donors and supporters.

During 2019, we were very pleased to welcome two new Board members: our Patron, Ian Thorpe AM and Dianne James, who joins both as a Director, and as Chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee. Sadly, we farewell David Winterbottom, who has been an outstanding Board Director and longstanding Chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee. David's wise counsel and exemplary focus on our finances means that we finish our 21<sup>st</sup> year in a very healthy financial position, with steady growth year on year under David's stewardship. We thank David for all that he has contributed over the years and wish him every success and happiness in his future endeavours.

ReachOut has now reached the age of maturity and we face the coming year more than ready to embrace all the challenges and opportunities that lie before us.

Finally my personal heartfelt thanks to all who support us – we could not do what we do without you.

In 2017 ReachOut unveiled a bold new plan to significantly increase the number of young people and parents in Australia accessing digital mental health support. Our three-year plan was to help an additional one million people by 2020 and I'm very proud and excited to announce that we have reached our target one year early.

We've gone from helping 1.58 million people at the start of 2018 to helping more than 3 million young people and their parents by the end of 2019. This has been such a monumental achievement and I have to thank our incredible staff, the young people who volunteer as ReachOut Youth Ambassadors, our Board, our community, and our individual, corporate and government supporters. Thank you for your dedication and congratulations on what has been an amazing team effort! We couldn't have done it without you.

Of course, reaching the key goal of our strategic plan one year early doesn't mean our work is done. Suicide is still the leading cause of death for young people and statistics show we need to do more. ReachOut will spend the remaining year of our 2020 strategy doubling down on the innovation and integration pillars of our strategic plan and will work to scale the impact of our peer-support service by making it accessible in even more places.

2019 has seen two significant inquiries into mental health by the Productivity Commission and the Royal Commission in Victoria. ReachOut's submissions to these inquiries focus on what can be done to further prevent mental illness, and how we can provide early treatment and support. This includes calls

for investment into the prevention of mental ill-health, in the same way we currently invest in sun safety education to prevent skin cancer. Our submissions also talk about the need to enhance support and education for parents who have teenagers experiencing mental health difficulties, and to resource programs that build young people's ability to manage stress and adversity.

One last piece of exciting news is the results of our 2019 Impact Study. This is the largest study of its kind that ReachOut has invested in and we're thrilled that now we can irrefutably demonstrate that the work we do has a measurable impact on the reduction of depression, anxiety and stress in young people. Of course, this is in addition to the powerful evidence we already have on our effectiveness to help young people across a range of subjective benefits like helping young people feel less alone and more connected, helping them to understand what they're going through and increasing their readiness to seek further help, when needed.

Again, thanks to everyone who contributed to our wins and achievements in 2018/19. It is through this work and your ongoing support that we can continue to help young people all across Australia to be happy and well.

Ashley de Silva, Chief Executive Officer

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

EMILLY'S

STORY



Growing up, I thought I was emotionally healthy. I had a large Chinese and Vietnamese family, where everyone knew each other's business. We'd always have these huge family gatherings where everyone would ask about my grades, comment on my weight, and ask if I had a boyfriend. There were always these expectations to stand out for the "right" reasons. And if you're not achieving those things, you were considered an embarrassment to your family.

I began interpreting my exam marks at school as a reflection of my worth. There was so much pressure to be good enough for my family and every mark I didn't get on an exam would show how "ungrateful" I was to my parents.

After some time, it felt like even my best efforts would never be enough. There was a voice in my head telling me that I was worthless and that I was a burden to my family. The voice told me that I had nothing to give and that everyone would be better off without me. It became so loud that it was difficult to hear anything else. After over a year of feeling this way, I made plans to end my own life.

When I got back from the hospital after a suicide attempt, I started seeing a psychologist and was diagnosed with depression and anxiety.



Healing looks different for everyone, but for me, it was understanding my feelings through therapy, developing boundaries, and meeting people who had been on similar journeys.

I found ReachOut's online forums, where people were sharing their stories and helping others understand that things do really get better. When I was going through everything, it really helped me to know that I wasn't alone and that there are people that want to help.

Recovery has had its ups and downs, but the difference now is that I have an amazing support system, an arsenal of coping skills, and I know how to ask for help when I need it.

To the people who are struggling, who are fighting off their demons each day, you are strong. You are not over exaggerating.

'You are not too sensitive, and you are not alone. All you need to do is reach out.'

Digital self-help is at our fingertips. It's in our backpacks and our pockets. We know it has a positive influence on accessing support and yet young people aren't reaching for it soon enough. To create real change, we believe widespread integration of digital self-help is vital. ReachOut is committed to leading the evidence base for digital self-help to demand integration on a national, regional and local scale.

PRIORITY 01

# WIDESPREAD INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL SELF-HELP



PRIORITY 01: WIDESPREAD  
INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL SELF-HELP

# 2018/19 HIGHLIGHTS.



To help young people (and their parents) deal with the pressures of what has been one of the worst droughts of the last century, ReachOut created a 'digital' care package. Designed to help those living in drought-affected areas manage feelings of stress and depression, this free care package included real stories, tips for coping with stress and advice on where to go for extra help. Being digital, our care package was accessible 24/7 and young people and their parents could get support without having to leave their local area.

ReachOut's work is part of the Australian Government's Drought Support Package and we're proud to be working with the Government as a mental health partner and to support communities.

## Check-in Study

We launched Check-in, a longitudinal study of ReachOut users. Check-in aims to enhance our understanding of ReachOut's unique impact and to support the continuous improvement of the service. The study follows a group of 17–21-year-olds over a three-month period and uses sophisticated data tracking to identify how young people engage with ReachOut; this will help us to understand the service features that drive impact. The study was co-designed with young people to create an engaging and meaningful research experience.



## Supporting LGBTQIA+ Queenslanders

Young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ have an increased risk of depression and anxiety, substance abuse, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. To improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ people living in regional Queensland, ReachOut partnered with the Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN to develop a suite of support resources, including personal stories, practical self-help strategies and a targeted peer-support activation through community forums.

We connected young people to these resources through geo-targeted advertising on Facebook and Snapchat, and developed a new school resource focused on respectful relationships.

The project reached more than 340,000 people and the support content was viewed more than 18,000 times.



## Our 2000<sup>th</sup> coaching session

Together with The Benevolent Society, we delivered our 2000<sup>th</sup> one-on-one parent coaching session since the program started four years ago! The most discussed issues this year were around communicating with your teen, self-esteem, stress, education and school, and social media use

'It's fantastic, it's always good talking to you, you remind me that my daughter is a good kid and what she's going through is normal.'

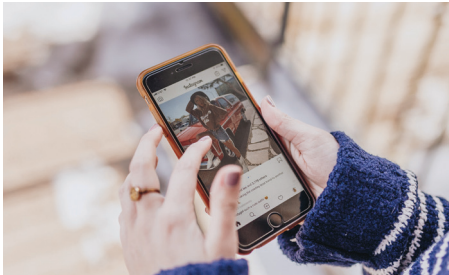
– Parent of 14-year-old



## Ask A Young Person (Almost) Anything

Our online parent forums provide a moderated environment for parents of teenagers to safely give and receive support. Recently we've been sharing what young people are feeling and talking about as a way of giving parents first-hand insights. One way we do this is through a segment called *Ask A Young Person (almost) Anything (AAYPAA)*.

AAYPAA allows parents to submit questions every fortnight to a team of trained youth volunteers, aged 16–25 years, who then share their answers on our forum. It's become the red-hot favourite with parents and – since the segment's introduction in April – our volunteers have shared insights on a range of topics including how to support your teen through a break-up, how to have a good relationship with your teen, and how to help your teen with social anxiety.



## Productivity Commission and Royal Commission into Mental Health and Youth Suicide

In 2018–19 ReachOut developed and submitted two submissions, one to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health, and one to Victoria's Royal Commission into the Mental Health System. The recommendations and actions from these inquiries will inform important work across the mental health sector. Our submissions drew on previous reviews and inquiries, and our own research and reports supported by partners like EY and Future Generation Global. Our key recommendations included:

- the need to shift the focus from treatment and crisis, to early intervention
- the role of evidence-based digital services to provide immediate, low cost / high scale support that can boost the capacity of the mental health system and expand access to prevention, treatment and suicide prevention
- the need to support the people that young people turn to for help – their friends, schools and parents and carers.

## Campaigning against cyberbullying

Dolly Everett's death in January 2018 was a sad reminder of the dangers young people face and the need for more to be done to protect them online. In public statements, we released data about the extent of the problem, highlighting that parents are more worried about social media and technology than alcohol, drugs and smoking. ReachOut's position is not just about harsher penalties for cyberbullies, but to ensure technology companies do more to make platforms safer.

ReachOut used the analogy that social media is the 'car of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' and that this is big tech's seatbelt moment – an opportunity to create significant positive change. Our *Cyberbullying 5-Point Action Plan* was submitted to the Australian Government and includes calls for more emotional support for those affected, education and awareness to prevent and reduce the occurrence, support for parents, new safety standards for social media and tech companies, and safety features to be built into new tech platforms. On a positive note, ReachOut has seen progress on many of the initiatives through the Morrison Government's online safety package.



## ReachOut before you FreakOut

Launched in June 2018, the *ReachOut before you freak out* campaign responded to the fact that most young people don't know that what they're experiencing is worthy of help, or that with some intervention they could feel better. More than 111,000 young people visited ReachOut.com after seeing the campaign, with evaluation of the campaign showing that the majority of young people liked the campaign (81.9%) and thought it was helpful (87.9%) and effective (85.3%). Three quarters of young people who had seen the campaign reported that it helped them to feel less alone (76.7%).

## Understanding new audiences and issues

At ReachOut, we never stop learning. Our research findings give us new direction to ensure we're able to continue supporting young people in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their experiences. Here's a taste of what we've been looking into this year:

- We partnered with EY to publish a report that looks at the mental health and wellbeing impacts of a future working world on young Australians.
- We conducted two nationally representative surveys with 1000 young people aged 14–25 to understand their needs and preferences, measure awareness of ReachOut and adapt our service accordingly.
- We conducted an online survey with a nationally representative sample of 1000 parents and carers with children aged 12–18 years to understand their needs and preferences, measure awareness of ReachOut and adapt our service accordingly.
- We conducted qualitative research with single parents in regional and metro NSW to identify and understand any unique needs and concerns of this cohort, and the types of support they would find helpful.
- We conducted research with parents of 12–13-year-olds to explore their experiences as their child transitioned from primary to high school.
- We conducted two online surveys and ten face-to-face interviews with young people to explore their experiences of bullying and friendship issues, both online and offline.
- We ran three focus groups with young men in regional and metro NSW to explore experiences of powerlessness and low self-worth, to uncover how best to support this cohort.

I went to a selective school so the pressure to perform in the HSC was on.



My first exam was English. I had prepared, but I didn't feel 100% ready. I was apprehensive, but I had special provisions – small exam room, rest breaks and ice cubes to manage any panic. Plus, I had a wealth of experience dealing with anxiety and panic attacks. The odds were in my favour, but five minutes into reading time I was in a very panicked state.

Thinking about it now, the questions weren't that bad. I could've given adequate responses, but my mind was beyond rational thought. I asked for a rest break and clenched my ice cubes, but I couldn't calm down. I asked to leave the room and outside I descended into

the most severe panic attack I'd ever had. I was crying, curled up in a ball, my breathing was shallow and rapid to the point of passing out. My mind worked against me, telling me to toughen up and get back in the exam room. That I was weak. That I would fail, and all my hard work would be lost. I thought that this was it.

The exam supervisors consoled me, and my dad arrived, but ultimately it was me that pulled myself out. I rode the wave of panic until I got to a point where I could control my breathing. I didn't finish the exam – the furthest I got was writing my student number on one booklet – but

it didn't ruin my marks. NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) made sure that my work through the year wasn't worthless but would help them give me the mark I deserved.

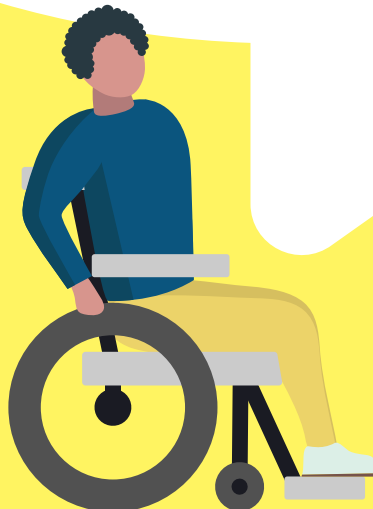
I've sat dozens of exams since and, whilst I still get anxious, I know I can turn to ReachOut for a heap of tools and guidance to manage my stress. My favourite is ReachOut's Breathe app, which is a simple form of meditation. I also highly recommend the WorryTime app for when you get pressing thoughts while you're trying to concentrate, as it allows you to set them aside for when you can deal with them properly.

‘Ultimately it was me that pulled myself out. I rode the wave of panic until I got to a point where I could control my breathing.’



While exam stress is often unavoidable, keeping your anxiety at a comfortable level is so important. I want others to know that exams are never the end of the line. There are so many options that still recognise and validate your efforts.

# EXPANDING BEYOND .COM



There's more to being digital than just having a website. That's why the constantly evolving digital landscape has got us excited. We've pledged to go beyond .com and redefine what it means to provide the right help at the right time. We've committed to exploring new ways of connecting with young people, using big data and new technologies to carve out space in the areas they already occupy. It's not always easy seeking out help – which is why we're committed to connecting with young people, wherever they might be.

PRIORITY 02:  
EXPANDING BEYOND .COM.

# 2018/19 HIGHLIGHTS.

## Making it easy to embed ReachOut content

We've developed, and will soon pilot, a new content syndication tool that will make it simple for our supporters, partners, community groups and other service providers and organisations to embed our content directly onto their intranet and public-facing websites. This tool will also make it easier for us to connect our valuable content to even more young people, reaching them where they are.



## Exam stress and new partnership with Student Edge

ReachOut's 2018 exam stress campaign kicked off with research showing that two-thirds of young people now experience worrying levels of exam stress driven by concerns about the future and getting a job. The situation is worse for students in regional areas. 2018 saw a new partnership with student information service, Student Edge, and their research insights arm, Youth Insight, where we surveyed young people about their diets at exam time. Not surprisingly, we found that students were consuming an unhealthy concoction of junk food, sugary drinks and caffeine to help cope. We also found many were not getting enough sleep or exercise and were getting sick. We used the research insights to encourage young people to look at simple and healthier eating options. And, going forward, we've partnered with Student Edge to present ReachOut's support content on their website, ensuring that their 1 million+ members have access to information about mental health whenever they need it.



## Mental health support for regional and remote young people

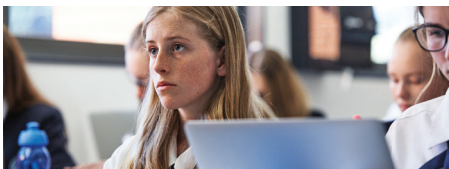
ReachOut Australia received philanthropic funding from Future Generation Global for a five-year project to investigate the barriers and challenges that young people living in regional and rural areas face. We're turning our learnings into recommendations for service improvements and innovations so that we can better meet the needs and improve mental health outcomes of young people living in these areas. In year three of the project, ReachOut:

- increased our reach into regional and remote areas by 54% (from 2017/18), with 184,505 young people engaging directly with ReachOut to improve their mental health
- collaborated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to develop new content and personal stories to highlight the strengths of their culture
- partnered with 1800 RESPECT to develop a suite of new content addressing priority issues of family and domestic violence
- extended our service offering to support parents and schools, the networks that facilitate help-seeking for young people.



### Suncorp Team Girls

Established in 2017, the Suncorp Team Girls program champions young girls to give them confidence on and off the court. It focuses on changing Australian cultural attitudes and behaviours towards girls starting to play and continuing to play sport throughout their lives. Working with ReachOut, Netball Australia and a panel of expert ambassadors, Suncorp has designed a program that has ignited a conversation around young girls and confidence and given parents practical resources to help them navigate the adolescent years.



### Expanding our reach into schools

Of every 30 high school students in Australia, seven will be dealing with a mental health issue, two will ask for help and five will suffer in silence. Research shows that programs that raise awareness of and support mental health in schools can equip students with the skills and awareness they need to manage their mental health now and in the future.

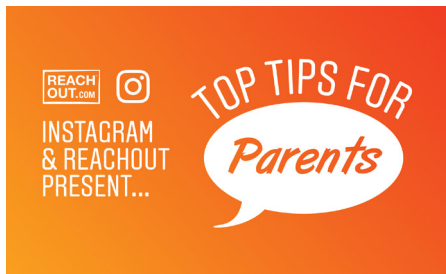
ReachOut Schools support teachers to engage their students in improving their wellbeing, with digital resources that are evidence-based and developed with young people and teachers at their heart.

We know teachers are already under a lot of pressure and can find it overwhelming to wade through resources to find those that are evidence-based and engaging.

In the last year, ReachOut Schools has focused on:

- understanding teachers' needs through in-depth qualitative research
- connecting directly with 23,917 teachers through a monthly enews
- updating the content and website user experience, making it easier for teachers to find what they are looking for.

In the last 12 months, email subscribers grew by 67%, from 14,184 to 23,725 to and website users grew by 36%, from 123,161 to 167,317. This growth demonstrates the positive impact ReachOut is having among schools across the country.



### A parent's guide to Instagram

From our research, we've heard that parents and carers are worried about their children using social media. At the same time, being socially connected is important for a young person's development and, today, social media is part of socialising and connecting with others. To help parents navigate both the risks and the rewards of being active online, we partnered with Instagram to develop a guide to help parents understand Instagram and provide practical tips on how to start a conversation with a young person about managing their privacy, comments and time online.



### Coming up: Student Snapshot Pilot

The transition from primary school to secondary school is a significant time of change, and research from the NSW Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation highlights a decline in student engagement in their education and sense of belonging during this time. One of the key protective factors for supporting students through this time is developing strong student-teacher relationships as early as possible.

To support teachers to build these relationships with their students and develop a tailored wellbeing program, ReachOut is working with teachers and students to develop a new digital tool. The Student Snapshot is a student self-assessment survey that will generate a report for teachers. The survey asks students to share their favourite subjects and activities, as well as any things that may have been causing them to feel stressed or anxious about starting highschool.

Teachers can access a dashboard for their year level which will highlight key wellbeing topics to focus on recommended resources to implement in class, as well as take-home activity and parent resources (whole-school approach). Based on their responses in the survey, students will also receive personalised support content from ReachOut's youth website.



### Collaboration with Raising Children Network (RCN)

We'll be joining forces next year to expand the ReachOut Peer Support forums to parents and carers of teenagers using the RCN program. Syndicating the forums within the RCN website will allow even more parents to hear from other's experiences and seek advice and validation from parents going through similar concerns. Design of the forum syndication pathway has commenced, with the launch of this service due to take place in early 2020.



### Ready or not: Equipping young people for the future working world

To begin to address the issues young people face in a changing working world, we worked with EY to develop a report – *Ready or not: Equipping young people for the future working world*. This report adds to a growing knowledge base about how and why the working world is changing, and for the first time looks at its impact on the mental health and wellbeing of young Australians.

The report reveals young people are naturally excited and optimistic, but also scared about their personal futures. They're concerned about performing well in exams, of finding stable employment and, one day, gaining financial security. As the impacts of the future working world are increasingly felt, we will likely see more young people affected by these concerns, which can put their mental health and wellbeing at risk.

Looking to the future, it's vital that we rethink the way we plan for both work and life. We need to equip young people with the skills, experience and resilience to face challenges not encountered by previous generations.

‘I chose to volunteer for ReachOut because they helped me through some of the darkest moments in my life.’

I was your average 14-year-old just trying to make it through high school in one piece. I was also your average “gifted kid.” You know, the one who read above their year level and was always in the top 5 in class. That one. In Year 9 I was accepted into the accelerated program.

Now, I had always been one to push myself. I always had to be the best at what I did, and the accelerated program was the perfect way for me to do this. But when I actually started the class, I realised I might not be able to keep up with the work and so I began to push myself even harder. I didn’t sleep. I refused to eat. It got to the point where it was almost impossible for me to get out of bed for school. I couldn’t lose the one thing I was good at. I was the smart one. Without that, I felt I was nothing. Then when the pressure became too much, I started self-harming.

I managed to keep what I was doing a secret. I just continued to push myself to maintain at least a passing grade, but then my mum found out and forced me to go the doctor. I hated it at the time but in hindsight it probably saved my life. I was given a diagnosis of anxiety and depression, a prescription for medication, and a referral for a psychologist.

At this time, I also started searching the internet for answers to questions I had about what I was experiencing and that’s when I found ReachOut. They had articles on depression and self-harm, and I was able to better understand what I was dealing with. This knowledge empowered me to want to get better. With help from my therapist, and the medication I was taking, I did start to feel better and I stopped self-harming.

However, when I got to Year 11, with school constantly telling me that these were the most important exams of my life, the urge to push myself to be the best returned and I relapsed. But this time I was armed with strategies I had learnt from my therapist as well as the Breathe and Worrytime apps from ReachOut.



# KAI'S STORY







It was only after the HSC that I realised what I had thought were the most important exams I'd ever take, weren't really that big a deal, because there are other ways to get into university. Even now when I feel the urge to be the best returning I know I've got the tools to help me calm down, think clearly and I realise that even if I'm not top of the class, that it's not the end of the world and everything will be okay. That's why I chose to volunteer for ReachOut, because they helped me through some of the darkest moments in my life.

PRIORITY 03

# ACCELERATING CHANGE



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

# 2018/19 HIGHLIGHTS.

## Social inclusion

ReachOut remains committed to delivering an inclusive service that works for everyone, regardless of their ability, background or resources. We know that hard-to-reach groups are often those that have the highest incidence of mental health difficulties and benefit significantly from ReachOut's service. Our Social Inclusion Working Group drives this, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and the implementation of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). You can find a copy of our Innovate RAP on the ReachOut website.

Over the last year, the Social Inclusion Working Group participated in Yabun Festival in Sydney on 26 January to show our support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community. We hosted a chill out space and filmed festival-goers talking about the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Through philanthropic investment from Future Generation Global, we partnered with young Aboriginal people to share their stories. You can hear them at [ReachOut.com/YarnUp](https://ReachOut.com/YarnUp).



## Laps for Life

In March this year, we launched Laps for Life, our first ever owned fundraising event. When we set out, we aimed to engage 600 participants and raise \$150,000. By the end of the campaign, we engaged 1454 participants (242% over target), who collectively swam the distance from Sydney to New York, and who raised \$450,000 (triple the target).

'Partnering with ReachOut on Laps for Life this year, and sharing our passion for swimming, was a perfect brand synergy for Zoggs Australia.

Promoting the ongoing mental health and wellbeing benefits from a regular exercise like swimming, as well as encouraging Australians to get in the pool to raise funds for youth mental health supported our passion for all swimmers, whether swimming for fitness or recreation to enjoy the freedom, fun and exhilaration of the water with brand trust in our goggles and swim wear.

Seeing how many people were inspired and engaged by Laps for Life this year and how many young people will get support for mental health challenges via ReachOut means we are definitely back on board for 2020 as a principal partner.'

– Rob Davies, General Manager,  
Zoggs Australia

**Laps for Life**



### 'Great Mates' with JB Hi-Fi

We partnered with JB Hi-Fi on the 'Great Mates' campaign. JB Hi-Fi staff submitted their original artworks in response to the question 'What makes a good friend?'. We turned these into postcards and throughout May, sold 116,272 postcards in JB Hi-Fi stores across the country, raising \$232,544.

'ReachOut was one of five charities chosen by JB Hi-Fi at the inception of its Workplace Giving Program back in 2008. Our team selected youth mental health as an important cause and ReachOut was a clear choice for its great work providing practical tools for young people, and their parents, to deal with the variety of complex issues facing young people today.'

– Mikey Sammut, Area Manager,  
JB Hi-Fi Group



### 7-Eleven

This year also saw the launch of another new partnership designed to improve the wellbeing of young Australians. 7-Eleven's Good Cause initiative includes 'Young Australians' as one of their three community pillars, so it was a perfect alignment for ReachOut. We're collaborating with 7-Eleven to learn from, and leverage, their business and marketing expertise. 7-Eleven will help us identify and reach the 70% of young people who are experiencing mental ill-health but are not proactively help-seeking.



### Youth Volunteers

This year our amazing group of volunteers racked up over 6000 hours! A good chunk of this time is attributed to our awesome team of 18 Peer Moderators and 58 Community Builders who, after intensive training, provide online peer support on our youth forums.

We partnered with EY again this year to show our support at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras' Fair Day. Several youth volunteers helped out with our engagement activities focused on self-love and self-acceptance to highlight that we are a whole person and are not defined by our sexuality. Our stall and our volunteer engagement led to ReachOut winning the Best Community Stall at Fair Day at this year's Mardi Gras Awards.

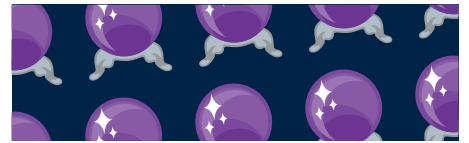
Our youth volunteers also helped us out at the Fernside Weave Youth Week Festival where we focused on engaging the youth skating community by hosting a range of wellbeing activities. The opportunity to have our youth volunteers present allowed us to better connect with young men to talk about mental health and build awareness of ReachOut and the support available to them. We also interviewed several young men on the benefits of skating and looking after your wellbeing and have produced a video for our website.



### Recruitment

Our Youth Ambassadors continue to be active members of the ReachOut.com community, ensuring the organisation remains relevant and accessible to all young Australians. This year we recruited 11 new Youth Ambassador speakers and trained them on how to share their stories safely. As a result of our targeted recruitment, we have representation across LGBTQIA+, regional and remote, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. This year we're also fortunate enough to have four male speakers to help champion mental health and wellbeing for young men.

Recently, we reviewed our parents volunteer model and have established a new pilot recruitment program of Parent Community Champions. These are people selected from our regular online contributors who help us out and provide support to other parent members and run activities on our forums. We've also continued our work with the Headspace Youth Mental Health Engagement Initiative Steering Committee. To date the Committee has recruited young advocates and project ideas are being reviewed by the steering committee members.



### Clinical Advisory Group

Our Clinical Advisory Group is a diverse team of clinicians who advise us on best practices in mental health service delivery. Together, we design and refine features of the ReachOut service in response to trends and changes in mental health practice and policy and identify opportunities to engage health professionals in our programs. Coming from professions including psychology, psychiatry, general practice, and social work, their diverse expertise helps us improve ReachOut's positive impact on the mental health of millions of young people.

Sera Harris, BSW(Hons), BFA

Joe Tighe, BSc(Hons) Psychology,  
Dip. Coaching

Dr Felicity Waters, MBBS, FRANZCP,  
Cert of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

### Board committees

We would also like to say a special thank you to the members of our various board committees: Rob Lewis (EY), Michael Barbour (Westpac), Sophie Tobin (Atlassian), Brett Raven (Big Red Group) and Corbin Neale (EY). We truly appreciate your generous gift of time and expertise to us.

Thank you to the many, many volunteers who have supported ReachOut this year – we could not help as many young people as we do without your ongoing support to us.

## FINANCIALS

30 Sept 2019  
\$30 Sept 2018  
\$**Income**

Government grants	4,417,936	4,829,483
Donations	3,203,265	2,529,929
Non-government grants	1,565,166	839,202
Interest income	165,516	164,292
Consultancy and other income	46,749	56,327
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>9,398,632</b>	<b>8,419,233</b>

**Expenditure**

Employees	3,868,792	3,737,198
Design and delivery of services	2,608,794	1,960,677
Marketing	1,136,796	923,364
Fundraising	433,687	365,839
Administration	345,137	308,490
Occupancy	304,208	305,883
Travel	163,245	160,738
Depreciation and amortisation	114,605	133,101
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>8,975,264</b>	<b>7,895,290</b>

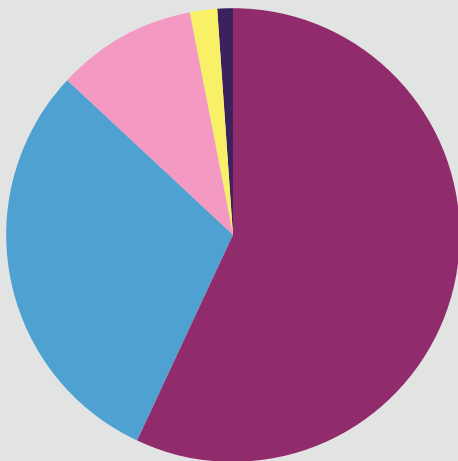
**Other comprehensive income**

Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of financial assets	61,504	(24,937)
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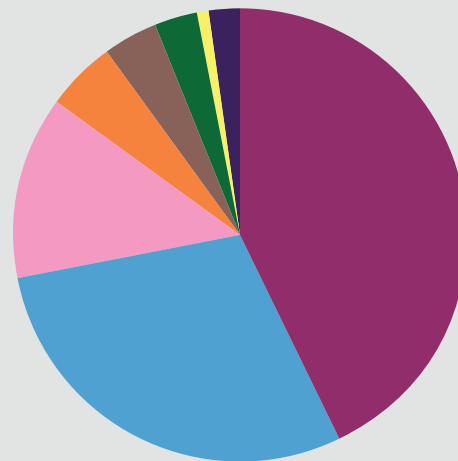
**SURPLUS**

484,872

499,006

**Income**

Government grants	47%
Donations	34%
Non-government grants	17%
Interest income	2%
Consultancy and other income	<1%

**Expenditure**

Employees	43%
Design and delivery of services	29%
Marketing	13%
Fundraising	5%
Administration	4%
Occupancy	3%
Travel	2%
Depreciation and amortisation	1%



# MANY



For every person we support, you can give yourself a pat on the back. That's literally 3 million pats on the back because, thanks to your support, more than 2.6 million young people now understand what they're going through and what to do next. More parents too, feel hopeful and reassured, and more schools are driving social change to develop resilient communities. So from us to you – and your family and your company or your community event – huge thanks!

## Government Partners

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

## Platinum partners



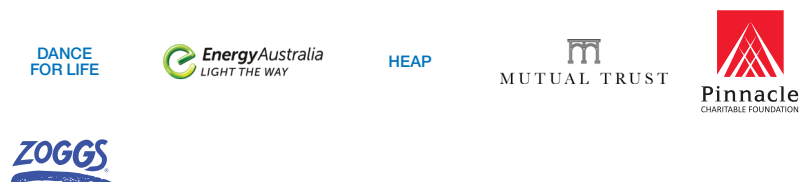
## Diamond partners



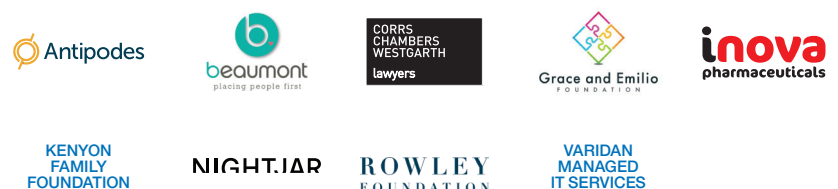
## Gold partners



## Silver partners



## Bronze partners





## A SPECIAL SHOUT OUT TO OUR BOARD AND PATRONS. WE COULDN'T HAVE HAD SUCH AN INCREDIBLE YEAR WITHOUT 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 global head of the Macquarie Group Foundation. As Director and Principal of JulieMWhite & Associates she is a strategic adviser on social investment to business and consults to not-for-profits on strategic planning, corporate governance and corporate and community engagement. Julie also serves as a Chair and/or Director on several other not for profit boards.

#### Helen Conway

Helen Conway has had a successful career as a lawyer and corporate executive. She is Chair of School for Life and a Director of Westpac Life, St George Life, Westpac General Insurance, Westpac Lenders Mortgage Insurance, Endeavour Energy, and Catholic Schools NSW. She is also a mentor with Kilfinan Australia.

#### Zoe Gault (until June 2019)

Zoe Gault has a background in finance and marketing and over 7 years' experience in leading FMCG companies, Lion and Coca-Cola Amatil. She's recognised for her work within innovation and customer experience and is currently the Brand Manager for new growth ventures at Lion, spearheading customer and marketplace experience for brands and business units of the future.

#### Alison Hughes

Alison Hughes is the Head of Technology at VMG Digital, a company delivering mobile optimised video creative for social platforms, at scale. Previously Product Director at

Vamp, the global leading platform for influencer marketing she has a very strong background in digital strategy, customer experience and enhancing company's technical capabilities. Alison has led digital teams for leading brands including Virgin Money, Lion, Schick, National Foods and Optus.

#### Dianne James (from May 2019)

Dianne is the CFO, Strategy & Enterprise Services at the Westpac Group, responsible for leading Financial Control and Business Performance, 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 Deputy CFO for Westpac Retail and Business Bank from 2009–2013. Dianne commenced her career at KPMG and has over 30 years' experience in the financial services industry. Dianne has previously held roles with MLC, NAB and State Street Australia across Transformation Programs, Finance, People & Culture, Strategy, Operations and Process ownership.

#### Michael Price

Michael Price is an executive director of Macquarie Group, where he has worked for the past 30 years. A passionate supporter of the not-for-profit sector in Australia, he is a member of the Leadership Council at Social Ventures Australia, which boosts the impact and sustainability of organisations such as ReachOut.

#### Nigel Smyth

Nigel Smyth has a wealth of experience in the technology space. Now retired from Macquarie Group, he provides technology strategic consulting and executive coaching to IT executives across a broad range

of industries. He has served on several boards both for profit and not for profit, including Pillar Administration, the Centre for Social Impact and livewire.org.au.

#### Ian Thorpe AM (from March 2019)

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, and is 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 the Invictus Games Sydney 2018. Ian is also co-founder of Beon Performance, which helps cultivate cultures that thrive under pressure, whilst giving people the tools to eliminate self-induced stress and anxiety.

#### Andrew Wilson

Andrew Wilson is the CEO of Ascender HCM, one of the Asia Pacific region's leading providers of payroll and human capital management software solutions and outsourcing services. Previously Andrew was General Manager – Strategy, Planning & Innovation at Coca-Cola Amatil and a strategy consultant for Bain & Company.

#### David Winterbottom

David Winterbottom has 30 years' experience working with organisations to solve operational, strategic and liquidity problems and is a senior consultant at KordaMentha, Australia's leading turnaround and restructuring company. David is a Chartered Accountant and a Registered Liquidator of the Supreme Court of Australia.

### 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



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email [info@reachout.com](mailto: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.