

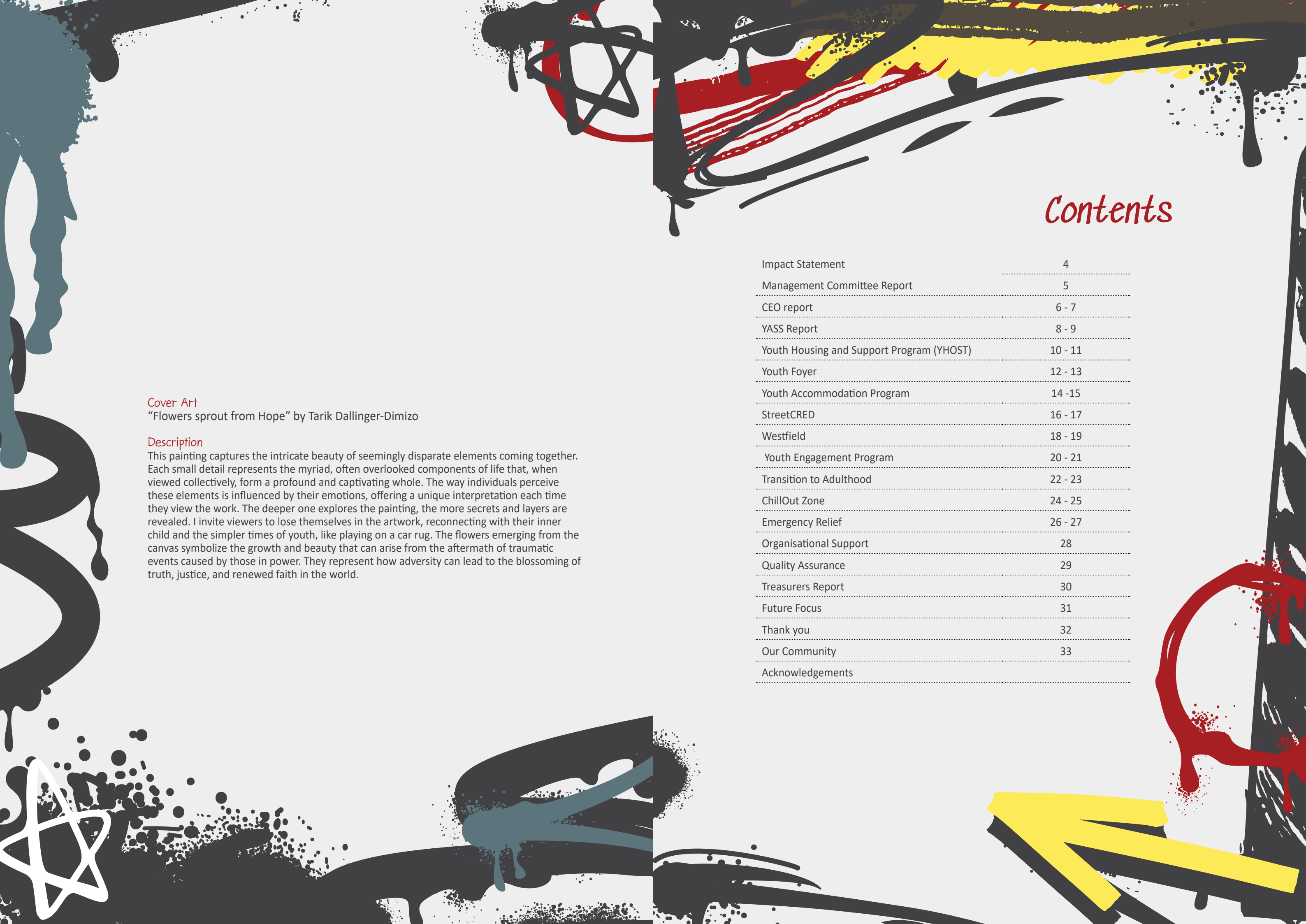


COVER ART  
'FLOWERS SPROUT FROM HOPE'  
BY TARIK DALLINGER-DIMIZO

GOLD COAST  
Youth Service







Cover Art  
“Flowers sprout from Hope” by Tarik Dallinger-Dimizo

**Description**  
This painting captures the intricate beauty of seemingly disparate elements coming together. Each small detail represents the myriad, often overlooked components of life that, when viewed collectively, form a profound and captivating whole. The way individuals perceive these elements is influenced by their emotions, offering a unique interpretation each time they view the work. The deeper one explores the painting, the more secrets and layers are revealed. I invite viewers to lose themselves in the artwork, reconnecting with their inner child and the simpler times of youth, like playing on a car rug. The flowers emerging from the canvas symbolize the growth and beauty that can arise from the aftermath of traumatic events caused by those in power. They represent how adversity can lead to the blossoming of truth, justice, and renewed faith in the world.

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## Next Step Plus

80% of young people in the transition phase had a transition from care plan.

## Chill Out Zone

1966 people were assisted with a range of support through the Safe Night Precincts and events.

## Street CRED

1099 engagements through assertive outreach.

## Emergency Relief

1038 individuals and families were assisted through Emergency Relief.

## Westfield

1917 engagements at Westfield Helensvale & Westfield Coomera

# Impact Statement

**Total 2216**

2024 distinct young people accessed the Gold Coast Youth Service youth teams. A further 192 young people were known by first name only.

# Management Committee

At Gold Coast Youth Service (GCYS) our vision is that Young People are valued, connected, hopeful about their future and supported to realise their potential.

Our values are founded in the social justice philosophy where all young people are entitled to a 'fair go' at opportunities in life. The Service aims to advocate for young people's rights to be recognised, and that they are consulted in appropriate and meaningful ways and have the opportunity to participate in decision-making that affects their lives and all our futures.

In the 2023-24 Financial Year GCYS was grateful to receive the Queensland Government's 20% 'uplift in funding' for all Housing & Homelessness Services. Given the significant increase in demand for housing and support services over recent years coupled with the cost-of-living crisis facing all Australians and particularly those in South East Queensland, the ongoing additional funding has been a lifeline allowing us to offer more support to young people at a crucial time.

Many of the young people accessing our support services face a disproportionate level of difficulty in navigating these additional housing and general cost of living pressures. This is exacerbated by the high rate of youth unemployment, which has risen from last year to 8.6%, well over double the general unemployment rate on the Gold Coast, which has consistently been around 4% for the past few years.

Over the course of the year and in the lead up to the Queensland State Election there has been a lot of media publicity around the so-called Youth Crime Crisis. While it is clear there are issues our society needs to address in this area, the official statistics actually indicate a reduction in Youth Crime over the past 5 to 10 years. There has been an increase in the rates of young people re-offending but the overall number of young people engaging in illegal behaviour and the number of offenses has been steadily decreasing.

GCYS strongly advocates for our community to take a responsible and evidence-based approach to tackling complex issues faced by young people and their families. Increasing crucial early intervention support programs and services has to be the foundation of our response to these issues. Despite the popular rhetoric around deterrents like increased incarceration, evidence clearly demonstrates this only increases the likelihood of reoffending rather than discouraging it.

Grant and philanthropic funding has allowed GCYS to increase our capacity to offer additional early intervention support to young people (and their families) including care coordination and youth engagement through outreach. We aim to further develop these early intervention options through community partnership funds.

Keeping in mind the many complex challenges these uncertain times create across the whole community, the Management Committee is very grateful for the ongoing dedication and

passionate commitment of our professional GCYS staff teams in supporting local young people. Committee Members were pleased to attend the annual Staff Gathering event in May to again witness this dedication.

The vital and robust governance role of the Management Committee in steering the strategic direction of the GCYS continues to be as important as ever. We have a stable, committed and cohesive Committee overseeing the development and ongoing implementation of measurable operational objectives across the service through our Strategic Planning processes.

The Committee is very pleased with the strength and stability of our expanded staffing leadership structure that has helped us improve our supervision and support mechanisms. We look forward to rolling out Advantage Thinking training across the next Financial Year to all teams to help inform individual program outcomes and performance measures complementing the supervision and support.

I would like to thank each of our dedicated Management Committee Members including Matthew Clayworth as Treasurer, Susie Boyer as Secretary, Allan Finn as a General Member. As Chairperson I am confident the Committee has continued to balance significant service development and risk mitigation strategies in an effective manner to ensure our ongoing sustainability,

Matt, Susie, Allan and I remain incredibly grateful for the extraordinary effort and energy of our CEO, Maria Leebeek. Her ongoing passion for young people, her practical support for the staff and her strategic thinking & advocacy continues to put GCYS at the forefront of policy and practice development.

The Management Committee continues to feel proud of the work ethic and culture of the whole staff team at GCYS and of the impact this service has in our community.

I commend to you the work of this dynamic group of professionals and acknowledge your support and collaboration as we work together to make a positive difference in the lives of young people on the Gold Coast.

Steve Hackett  
Chairperson



# CEO Report

The youth service has been at the forefront of the cost-of-living crisis with the Gold Coast being one of the highest areas in Australia for housing unaffordability, and young people with the lowest income being hardest hit. With this pressure it has been vital that the service has the capability to respond to this demand.

A key capability component is having the infrastructure to support all our staff to manage how they face these challenges and remain positive. As a result, during the year our focus has been on our ‘Our Approach’.

‘Our Approach’ is the infrastructure framework to support our workforce. It enables us to implement our Advantage Thinking Lens, underpinned by a practice framework with three core pillars of intent, holistic and presence, and supported by a range of workforce tools.



The focus on our intent has allowed a renewed focus and rigor on the impact that the teams are providing. Our impact statement and team reports demonstrate where outcomes were attained. Our organisational data demonstrates the changes around our program logic in Street CRED and Westfield where we are having a greater number of engagements with young people, this is consistent across all programs. However, without extra staff we continue to be limited in our ability in terms of how many people we can provide support for.



As the Continuum of Support demonstrates we continue to provide both early intervention and transition to independence services.

Throughout the past year we have continued to intentionally advocate for the need for more early intervention services, specifically YASS and Street CRED. The research shows that many young people, including those who access our service, are subject to adverse childhood trauma and we are keen to be able address this trauma in our responses to young people and families and to address people becoming homelessness or involved in the statutory systems. We have built on our early intervention work with a Care Coordination Project around young people and their families. Care Coordination provides an opportunity to support young people and families with navigating agency referrals and involvement with services.

As I noted in my last AGM report there has been considerable work completed on our evidence base to demonstrate not only the need but the impact of the work – and I would like to thank the Frizelle Foundation for their support to allow us to demonstrate the impact of the YASS program. Unfortunately, community based early intervention resourcing continues to be overlooked. There is no “turning off the tap” to acute issues if there is no resource allocation to addressing early the risks.

Last year we also worked on our evidence base in our Youth Engagement Work, and we have been able to demonstrate the positive impact of this work not only directly on young people but around systems advocacy.



A key part of this work has been our relationship with Westfield as a community partner, and we have seen not only great outcomes for young people in terms of accessing social and recreational opportunities but also more positive social interactions in the centre – a win win for everyone!

We also know that no one service can do it alone and we continue to work with our community partners to create positive systems and individual solutions. GCYS have expanded our partnership with YFS to deliver the Transition to Adulthood program, continue our collaborative approach to deliver Emergency Relief across the Gold Coast LGA, deliver the Street CRED program, maintained our positive working relationship with Wesley and Nerang Neighbourhood Centre in delivering the Youth Access and Support Service, the partnership with Community Housing Limited to deliver the Youth Foyers and our support of the Gold Coast Homelessness Network and the Gold Coast Youth Network. A big win for the year was the Chill Out Zone winning the Neighbourhood Local Hero Award from the City of the Gold Coast.

It’s wonderful to be able to support our community partners, celebrate our successes and just enjoy each other’s company.



The GCYS also continues to have great support from our local community – from housing, through to food, donations of clothing and white goods and everything in between.

It has also been wonderful to have had the support of all levels of government and I would like to particularly thank the City of the Gold Coast and Mayor Tom Tate, and Meaghan Scanlan MLA in her role as the State Housing Minister.

I would like to thank our regular contractors who so ably work with us and feel like “part of the family”, Aaron, Mardi and Brendan at Cloud9Nine, Ingrid Kemp for HR support, Noel at NEC who keeps us safe and Garry King who provides external staff supervision.



I would like to acknowledge the Senior Leadership team of Will, Matt, Justine, Israel and Lisa – I could not do my job without their support. I would particularly like to thank Will who has taken the reins while I have been away, attended many functions with me and is always there for tough decisions and discussion – we work so well together.

To the 55 staff of the Gold Coast Youth Service that you all for embracing the three pillars of practice – being intentional, holistic and present in your work – you make such a big difference to people’s lives.



To the Organisational Support Team, you have driven the backbone support structure essential for everyone to do their jobs, thank you for your tireless efforts during the year.



Lastly, I would also like to thank the Management Committee for their continued support and good governance of the organisation. This job is never easy however you are all so available (often

at short notice), embraced your growing role and tackled the big jobs with integrity and considered decision making. I have also really enjoyed having those critical strategic discussions and look forward to working with you all for another year.

Maria





# YASS Report

The Youth Access Support Service (YASS) is an early intervention response to support vulnerable young people aged 12-21 years of age who present with at risk factors including disengagement from family or community/support networks, education/employment, homelessness and harm (including self harm). The aim of the program is to strengthen young people's engagement and relationships with their family and community.

During the year we were generously supported by the Frizelle Foundation to assist us to demonstrate our social impact.

The YASS program provides support through case management offering two levels of support which can be provided through centre-based support, outreach within the community or home visits:

- ✓ **Access** - Brief Intervention through information, referral, and advice to prevent escalation
- ✓ **Support** - Comprehensive needs and strengths assessment, support planning and goal setting, advocacy and practical support to navigate and overcome complex issues

The length of support provided is based on duration of need or until they no longer meet the age criteria.

## WHO IS ACCESSING THE PROGRAM?

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Number of young people | 63  |
| Case                   | 82% Support and 18% Access  |
| Identified gender      | 63% male 36% female 1% Other  |
| Age                    | 11% aged 12-14 years<br>48% aged 15-17 years<br>41% aged 18 – 21 years                  |
| Duration of support    | 14% 0-3 months<br>22% 3-6 months<br>11% 6-9 months<br>15% 6-12 months<br>38% 12+ months |
| Referrals received     | 111 Referrals   |

Of the **111** referrals received, **34** young people became a case. **69** were closed for reasons such as being unable to allocate a worker, being referred to another service, no longer requiring support, not ready to engage and not being eligible. **8** are still being followed up on for next financial year. Although we are unable to support every referral, much time is spent responding to referrals, providing information & advice and linking them in with alternate services.

## What were the challenges this year?

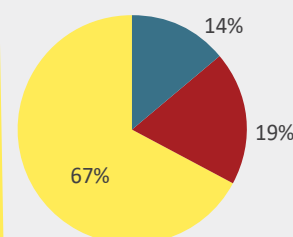
**Demand** for support continued throughout this year with a 29% increase in referrals compared to last year. Young people are presenting with complex needs requiring 12 months duration or more of intensive support. Unfortunately, the YASS team's philanthropic funding for our additional worker ceased early in 2024. Therefore, we were not able to allocate a worker to a large proportion of the referrals received. Despite this, we continue to keep a record of requests for support in hopes of obtaining further ongoing government funding for more workers in the much-needed early intervention space.

**Environmental** circumstances of young people continue to present challenges to achieve outcomes. Young people and their families continue to be impacted by the current cost of living and the housing crisis. Notably, single parent households are impacted by having a singular income, limiting access and affordability for housing, thus further compounding financial stress and mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, grandparents who have taken on informal caring responsibilities for their grandchildren face financial and emotional stress, hence impacting their own health and well-being.

## What outcomes were achieved?

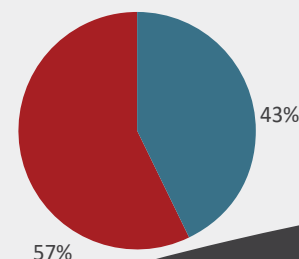
The YASS team works with young people on goals in the following areas:

- Education/Training
- Re-engaging back into school
- Maintaining attendance and engagement at school
- Enrolling in school
- Having appropriate and meaningful supports at school



Education Goals

- Fully achieved
- Partly achieved
- Not achieved



Training & Other Goals

- Fully achieved
- Not achieved

**Barriers:** There are limited education options for young people within the compulsory school age where mainstream education is no longer an option. Essentially, significantly increasing the length of time a young person is disengaged from education, peers and socialisation.

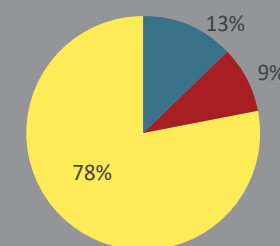
**Positive Outcome:** YASS supported a Young Person who had been disengaged from school for 6 months. The young person was struggling with family dynamics and mental health, therefore engaging in anti-social behaviour. The young person was supported to enroll into their chosen education facility and accessed support for their mental health. Although the young person's attendance was not 100% the young person continued to attend school, and the family had reported an improvement with the young person adhering to curfews and being more emotionally stable.

## Quality of Life

- Securing or maintaining stable housing
- Obtaining an income
- Gaining identification
- Referrals and linkages to physical and mental health supports
- Meaningful relationships and connections with peers, family, and community

Quality of Life

- Fully achieved
- Partly achieved
- Not achieved

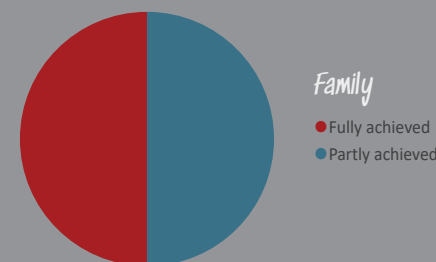


**Barriers:** Although there has been an increase in income support from Centrelink, payments from Centrelink and/or employment continue to not reflect the cost of living for vulnerable young people. A large proportion of young people's income is dedicated to paying rent in the private rental market. Therefore, leaving limited income to support independent living. Further to this, they continue to be consistently engaged in precarious employment and housing with no secure tenure for long periods of time.

**Positive Outcome:** We have supported many young people living with extended family members this past year. The YASS team worked collaboratively with a social work team to prevent a young person from becoming homeless after their extended family members health declined. The young person was assisted to gain identification, income, resume, drivers licence and was housed in one of GCYS's housing programs. Having stability enabled the young person to engage back into education after being disengaged for more than 12 months.

## Family

- Reconnection with family and conflict resolution



Family

- Fully achieved
- Partly achieved

**Barriers:** Many of the young people we support have come from families who have separated, and young people living in single parent households. Consequently, single parent families have limited time and income whilst supporting an entire household. Significantly, impacting affordability for health needs, school resources, sports or pro-social activities. Thus, a greater systemic response is needed to effectively support these families in need.

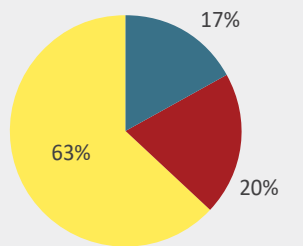
**Positive Outcomes:** The YASS team has supported several young people to remain in the family home through advocacy and engaging the young person and/or their family in support. When this is unable to occur, young people have been supported to move into alternate housing whilst working on rebuilding relationships with their family and natural support systems.

## Improved life skills

- Gaining a driver's licence
- Job readiness skills
- Budgeting
- Managing systems
- Accessing public transport

Quality of Life

- Fully achieved
- Partly achieved
- Not achieved



**Barriers:** Obtaining a driver's licence can be a challenge for young people facing adversity. Limited identification, income and access to a car can take twice as long for a young person to obtain their licence alongside their peers. Subsequently, restricting employment opportunities, specifically apprenticeships.

**Positive Outcome:** Several young people were referred to volunteer driving programs and assisted to apply for logbook exemptions. A young person who was supported through this process gained their Provisional Licence. As a result, this improved their access to reconnecting with family living in a rural area, attend health appointments, and increased the number of shifts that they could work between their studies.



JAMES FRIZELLE  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



## What is our plan moving forward?

The YASS team will continue to explore funding avenues to expand the YASS team that is equal to the current demand. We hope to highlight the impact of early intervention and the importance of investing in this approach for the young people of our future.



# Youth Housing & Support Program

The Youth Homelessness Outreach Support Team (YHOST) changed its name in October 2023 as it separated from the Housing and support program to continue with servicing Open Access (OA), centrebase and mobile support (outreach) for young people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

It has been a busy year for the YHOST team as they provide much needed support for young people that are further marginalised and affected by the current rental crisis. With rent and the cost of living continuing to increase, the rental vacancy rate fluctuated between 0.8% -1.6% during the year, young people are disadvantaged as they were priced out and the demand for housing outweighed the supply.

The housing crisis is prevalent across the region and until this issue is addressed the system will continue to fall short in supporting disadvantaged young people with accommodation opportunities. On a positive note, with the support of the Services Union, the Federal and State Government injected a 20% increase in funding for frontline homelessness services as they continue to review Specialist homelessness services.

Furthermore, the YHOST team provides information such as trends, gaps and barriers that impact on systemic issues that are escalated to contract management and the Gold Coast Homeless Network. The team attends events such as the annual Connect to Home event and Youth Homelessness matters day that promotes awareness and advocacy about homelessness on the Gold Coast.

## Staffing

Thank you to Team Leader Israel and YHOST team Amanda, Emma, Greta, and Jasmine, who have continued to work tirelessly throughout the year. With Israel and Amanda looking to grow the Youth Accommodation Program, this created an opening to welcome our additional staff members that joined the YHOST Team.

Justine commenced in Jan 2024 as the new YHOST Team Leader, Justine brings extensive leadership skills and experience working in the Youth Justice space and Lotus who is a highly skilled social worker commenced with YHOST in May 2024 as our GC Zero worker (watch this space for next year's report)

With the introduction of the Immediate Housing response (IHR) funding that started in May 2024 we also welcomed our newest staff Molly and Monique who both started in July to support the development of IHR (Also watch this space 😊)



## Open Access (OA)

We recognise that it is not easy to ask for help, so we try to go the extra mile to make sure that young people feel safe and are welcome when coming into the Miami Hub.

At the Miami hub, all the incoming calls, walk-ins and enquiries are welcomed by Greta, who is the OA worker or the YHOST team who takes turns with Open Access support. They are the first point of call for young people and referrals from service providers. On a typical day, the OA workers will have a chat with the young person or service provider about what is going on and will assess what the needs are. The OA worker will then either provide brief intervention or refer to the most appropriate team or service.

The OA team serviced **3231** enquiries during the period, this number is made up of the following:

**1247** Drop ins – Young people present to the Miami hub for intake or case management support, young people that drop in will meet with the OA worker and have the option of accessing facilities to use showers, washing machine, kitchen, and computer.

**519** emails, responding to incoming emails or communication via other platforms this includes the GCYS website and the QLD police referrals. The OA worker will phone or respond providing the most appropriate steps to access support.

**1465** phone calls, The YHOST team responded to 1465 phone calls that consisted of third-party referrals and young people seeking accommodation, support, referral to internal GCYS or relevant services, information, and advice.

Of the **3231** Open Access enquiries the YHOST team provided support to **1574** distinct young people.

## Gold Coast Statistics

"On Census night in 2021 there were 322 young people aged 12-24 that were homeless on the Gold Coast"

## Case management

The YHOST team provided case management support through the centre base and mobile support to 330 young people over the period, including 36 young people that resided in the Youth Accommodation program.

Centre base is where young people come to the Miami hub to see their Youth Worker from the YHOST team to work on their case management goals.

Mobile support is when Youth Workers provide outreach support and take the service to where the young person is in the community. This may include assertive outreach to where young people are sleeping rough or providing homelessness support at Westfield shopping centers at the northern end of the Gold Coast.

Case management is not just accommodation support, it involves looking at other areas of a young person's life, from supporting them to obtain photo identification to access housing or focusing on life skills to maintain their accommodation and finally supporting young people to thrive in what they want to do for themselves.

- 33% of young people that were case managed during the period were sleeping rough or residing in nonconventional accommodation (squats, cars, stairwells, and other improvised dwellings)
- 93% of young people that closed support during the period had a case management plan and completed half or more of their goals.
- 63% of young people that closed support were housed in sustainable accommodation during the period.
- 54% of young people case managed by the YHOST team were aged between 20 – 24 years of age
- 17 % identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

|          |     |       |
|----------|-----|-------|
| 16 years | 21  | 6.4%  |
| 17 years | 33  | 10%   |
| 18-19yrs | 62  | 18.8% |
| 20-24yrs | 179 | 54.2% |

59% of young people case managed sought assistance due to housing related causes, this includes:

- Housing affordability and financial stress
- Housing crisis (eviction)
- Inappropriate or inadequate housing conditions
- Previous housing ended.

| 330 YOUNG PEOPLE | MAIN REASON FOR SEEKING ASSISTANCE |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 59%              | Housing related                    |
| 8%               | AOD/Mental Health                  |
| 14%              | Relationship/Family breakdown      |
| 8%               | Domestic Violence                  |
| 11%              | other                              |

## Collaboration

The YHOST team pride themselves on being knowledgeable with what is available for young people and knowledge of services across the region, they work closely and collaboratively with GCYS internal teams and external service providers to provide seamless support for young people. The YHOST team have exceptional relationships and work directly with services such as Centrelink, Department of Housing, Child Safety, Multicultural Families Organisation, Anglicare IBI, MI Best life, Lives Lived Well, Public Space Liaison Officers, QLD Health and many more services in the hopes that young people do not fall through the gaps and ensure that their needs are being met. The case study below demonstrates just one of the many scenarios that involves an elevated level of multiple services collaborating.

## Case Study Female 22 yrs.

The Young Person (YP) moved to Australia in 2018 on a French student Visa. During this time, she completed her secondary studies and was enrolled at Griffith University. The YP was diagnosed with Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, and ADHD. She reported being sexually assaulted historically, in addition to her best friend and mother dying whilst she was living in Australia. The

YP previously worked part-time during her studies but was primarily relying on her mother's inheritance for income.

The YP was living in a rental (with the landlord) in Surfers Paradise - her name was not on the lease. During her stay, the YP struggled to pay rent due to international funds transfer issues and inability to confirm her address. The YP left her rental to stay with friends until she could pay her landlord back. During this time, the YP's belongings remained at the rental property.

The landlord reported her missing after no contact for 2 months. The YP had had her phone stolen and was unable to call them. Upon learning of the missing persons report, she went to the police. The YP presented heightened at the police station which resulted in an admission into the Crisis Stabilisation Unit at Gold Coast University Hospital. Upon discharge, the YP was referred to Wesley Mission Queensland's "Way Back Program" for Mental Health support.

A referral was received from WMQ due to the YP couch surfing with no income, and no identification, which had been disposed of by her landlord. This included her Passport, Laptop, and sentimental items from her deceased mother. The YP decided that it would be practical to return to France. The YP identified a decline in the state of her MH and was mindful of lack of supports she could access in Australia.

The YHOST team attempted multiple contact via email and phone calls to the French consulate but were unable to reach them. After a case review with Multi Cultural Families Organisation and the YHOST Team were able to connect with the UN Immigration "International Organization for Migration." This support provided connection to "French Assist", who aid French citizens in Australia, and they agreed to help the YP to return to France along with the Department of Foreign Affairs and government agency "Homeward". The YP returned to France for New Years.

## Challenges

- As mentioned, the rental market continues to be problematic for young people to access, the high rental prices with the fierce competition are often the main barriers.
- There are still only 7 crisis beds on the Gold Coast for young people aged 16 – 17 years of age.
- Extremely limited vacancies across the Queensland Homelessness Information Platform where young people can be referred to immediate or transitional accommodation.

## Future planning

»Introduction of Immediate Housing Response (IHR) May 2024 by the QLD State Government – IHR provides brokerage aimed at providing immediate access to short-term temporary accommodation when all alternatives housing options are exhausted. IHR brokerage can also be used to sustain current Tenancies or accommodation.

»Head leasing through real estate and partnering with other organisations to source sustainable accommodation options for young people.

»YHOST Tactical Plan

- Develop the GC Zero working group that will support young people that are complex with high needs
- Build better relationships with caravan parks and explore council planning laws for access.
- Improve access to mental health and AOD treatment facilities.



# Youth Foyer

This year marked another exciting chapter for the Gold Coast Foyer, with significant milestones achieved.

For those unfamiliar with the program, the Foyer supports young people aged 16 to 25 who are at risk of homelessness. Our mission is to help them break the cycle of welfare dependency and build a successful future through 24/7 onsite support and the Foyer Advantaged Thinking Methodology, offered for up to two years.

The 2023/2024 period celebrated our second anniversary and saw many of our original residents complete the full duration of the program. Despite the ongoing cost of living and housing crisis, our young participants rose to the challenge, resulting in 27 successful transitions from the program. Of these, 63% entered the private market, 22% returned to family, and 15% secured long-term social housing, all of whom left with increased living skills, qualifications, and meaningful employment.



## TRANSITIONS -

Check out these videos powerful transition stories above.



FROM THE HEART  
TOGETHER  
WE RISE

## The Campaign!

QLD FOYER INVEST, 8 MORE FOYER FOR QLD!

The GCYS is a proud member of the QLD Foyer Invest Working Group, advocating for more Foyers in our state. This campaign placed young people at its heart, with many Foyer residents proudly showcasing the GC Foyer to interested dignitaries. We were thrilled when the Honourable Minister Meghan Scanlon announced the Miles government's commitment to adding 8 more Foyers in QLD.



Yesterday I caught up with Gold Coasters living in our government's youth foyer.

I've seen first hand the difference they make.

That's why we're building another eight new youth foyers as part of our Home for Queenslanders plan.



## Parity Magazine

The Foyer Foundation team, along with representatives from the network, conducted a significant campaign in Canberra to support their goal of establishing 50 Foyers by 2030. They held over 30 meetings with various political figures in Canberra over 2 days and launched their feature piece in Parity Magazine. The Gold Coast Foyer made a significant contribution to this campaign with Tarik's art featured on the front cover of the magazine. Gemma's powerful Foyer journey was also featured in the magazine providing a critical voice in several of the 30 meetings attended over the two-day campaign blitz. This successful campaign generated over 400 media stories, reaching an audience of over 10 million within a week.



# Youth Accommodation Program

The GCYS Youth Accommodation Team consists of Israel Bull (Izzy) and Amanda Carroll who oversee the intake and exit process, maintenance of properties, and case management and support of clients. The GCYS accommodation program is made up of properties from a number of different sources and young people pay 25% of their weekly income for rent and a nominal amount for utilities. The properties are fully furnished with everything from white goods to cutlery, bedroom and lounge furniture. This year we saw an increase in the number of young people and families who have employment and minimal barriers but are still presenting for support due to simply not being able to afford a rental property.

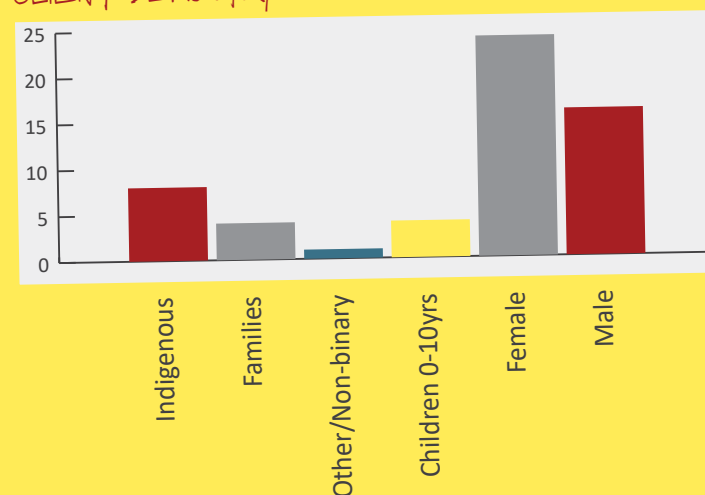
## The Programs:

**YAP:** Youth Accommodation Program is made up of 5 two-bedroom units and 2 one-bedroom units in the Miami area. We also have a four-bedroom house at Coomera. The properties are fully furnished and maintained by GCYS. The program is funded under a contract agreement with the Department of Housing.

**SunSHYne:** The SHY program consists of 1 three-bedroom house and 2 two-bedroom houses in the Southport area which has been our young mothers/families' program. The program was developed through a philanthropic partnership with a Gold Coast property developer and Gold Coast Youth Service.

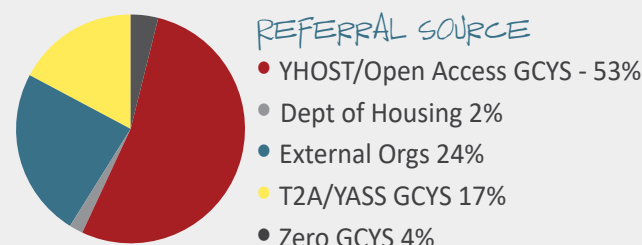
**PacPines:** The property is a four-bedroom house purpose built for a shared accommodation situation. The bedrooms are similar to motel style with a bar fridge, kitchenette and ensuite bathroom. There is a kitchen and large communal area for common use in the main area of the house. The property is provided by CHL (Community Housing LTD) who provide the tenancy support and maintenance of the property while the case management, support, and advocacy of clients is completed by the YAT team.

## CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



## Application and Processes:

Young people present from numerous sources of referral i.e., external support agencies, other SHS (specialist homelessness services), GCYS internal programs, hospitals, and in person when they attend GCYS Open Access area to engage with staff who pass on applications to the YAT team. Young people complete and submit an initial application form and once the application is received YAT staff contact the young person and book a "face to face" assessment meeting with the YAT team leader. Once all assessments are completed a decision is made regarding placement in the program. There are a number of things that need to be considered when placing a young person in the program, matching young people together in accommodation and how their behaviors may impact dynamics with housemates already living at the property etc. Other things considered include age, mental health status, AOD use, and willingness to engage in study or employment. It is important a young person has a level of self-responsibility as the program is supported externally, so there are no staff based onsite at any of the properties.



## Model of care:

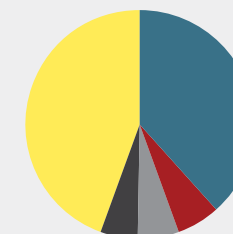
Staff provide case management, advocacy, transport, employment/education, living skills support (such as doing chores alongside the young person etc.), referrals to external orgs e.g. AOD and mental health support. Moral support and rapport are also very important when it comes to our engagement with young people.

The program models essentially all have a similar strengths-based focus on living skills, hygiene, self-care, hobbies /pro-social behavior, and completing study or employment. Young people are also gaining experience in what it is like to have a residential tenancy with the end goal being transition to independent living. The first stage is generally the Miami YAP units as when young people first enter the program, they often require a high level of support so being close to staff and the GCYS Hub is necessary so staff can respond quickly to any crisis that may arise, as well as case management meetings at the office being more frequent in the early stages.

Once a young person has settled into employment or study, can navigate transport, and has shown a level of independence and self-responsibility they may move to either Pac Pines or YAP Coomera where the focus is on transition planning as they move a step closer to independent living.

## EXIT POINTS YAP

- Private Rental - 38%
- AOD Rehabilitation 6%
- Vacated/Disengaged 6%
- Family Reunification 5%
- Private Shared Accom. 44%



## Some other achievements:

- 99% of Pac Pines clients transitioned to private rental or private share accommodation. 1% returned to family home (reunification).
- 95% of SunSHYne clients transitioned to private rentals. 1% acquired social housing through the Department of Housing and 4% were able to live with family after staff facilitation.
- 82% of YAP clients transitioned to private rental or private share accommodation.
- 70% of young people gained employment due to the abundant job market with some young people working for multiple employers until finding their niche.
- 10% of young people graduated high school and attended their formals.
- Two babies were born to parents in the program, and both are doing very well, one family is still in the program and engaging in parenting programs and living skills support.

## Youth Accommodation Team Case Study March 2024

### Presenting:

Male and female couple (male 21 yrs (Aboriginal) & pregnant female 19 yrs) presented to the youth service. They had moved from Kilmore Victoria to Highland Park G.C in early April 2023. YP (young people) were staying with female's uncle and his family with five children. YP needed to move out due to overcrowding at the property. YP had been looking at properties through Realestate.com, Facebook Soul Full Abodes, Flatmates.com, and Gumtree. YP said they would like to secure their own housing, however, were struggling in the current rental market due to having no rental history and financial stress. YP had also disclosed that they were expecting their first child in October 2023 female had a strained relationship with her mother and very limited contact with her father. Male had a supportive family however they all live in Airlee beach. Both YP had their driver's licenses and a car. No income supported with Centrelink on presentation.

## Support provided:

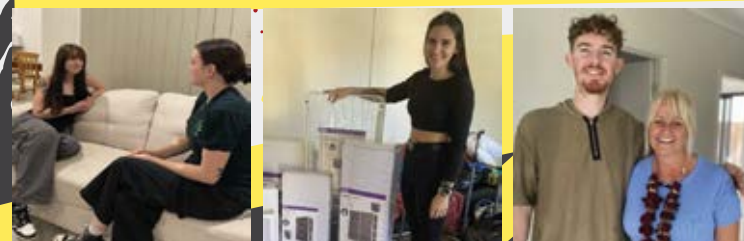
- Social Housing application completed. YAP application completed.
- Financial assistance was provided to get YP both linked in with Centrelink payments and set up their MY GOV accounts. Male was supported to seek employment in construction.
- Mental health care plan completed for female as she has been diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety, and depression. She was medicated on Fluoxetine but not currently using medication. Male was also supported with his mental health as he has been previously diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and complex PTSD. He had been previously medicated but felt he didn't need it anymore.
- Pregnancy support was provided with referral to Aboriginal midwife team at Gold Coast University hospital. A referral was made to a parenting program with ACT FOR KIDS for support once the baby is born. Contact made for young mums' program at YHES house once baby arrives.
- Staff supported female with reviewing her domestic violence order that was in place. Due to perpetrator living in South Australia and female having no contact with him since the order was put in place there was no immediate risk.
- Research into TAFE course for female as she is considering studying once the baby arrives.

## Outcome:

YP were accepted into the youth accommodation program. Support with food/nutrition, budgeting, and daily living skills was provided while living in the accommodation program. YP now have social housing approval and are on the Department of Housing list. YP are receiving Centrelink payments with rent assistance. YP are maintaining their fortnightly budget and saving for a second car. Baby arrived in October and female was supported by staff while adjusting to motherhood (moral support etc.). Male was working as a contractor in the construction industry when work was available. After being in the accommodation program for over eight months the couple decided to relocate to Airlee Beach where they had family support. Male has secured employment at Hamilton Island (QLD), and the family have moved into private rental close to family home so that YP have extra support with their child.

It's a privilege to be part of GCYS YAP team. We are looking forward to the year ahead and the continuing expansion of our programs to meet the growing demand for accommodation from the homeless and at-risk youth in the Gold Coast community.

Thank you  
Israel Bull (Izzy)  
Team Leader  
Youth Accommodation Team





# StreetCRED



## Collaborate \* Empower \* Re-engage \* Deter

In March we farewelled Nathan who had been the Street CRED Coordinator for nearly 2 years. We welcomed Justine as a Team Leader and Trevor as the new Street CRED Coordinator. Justine and Trevor acknowledge Nathan's work this first half of the year, and all the contributors to Street CRED since it's pilot in 2018, and they look forward to continuing the great work, flexibly adapting to community needs and emerging trends.

The collaborative multi-agency approach has always been the strength of Street CRED, and key to ensuring positive outcomes for young people. A strong partnership continues with the Public Space Liaison Officers (Council), Queensland Police Service (QPS), Child Safety, Anglicare, Youth Justice and G-Link who regularly participate in assertive outreach, and secondary partners such as Wesley Mission, Kalwun and Street Uni. The sharing of information between services ensures timely and targeted responses to young people in need.

QPS recognise the strength of building relationships with young people whilst on Street CRED and have shared positive outcomes from their participation. For example, after engaging with Street CRED a young male wanted on an arrest warrant, along with a female wanted for questioning, willingly handed themselves into the local station to have their matters addressed. Nil action was required from the QPS officers at the time as speaking with the young people resulted in their voluntary compliance. Further, following Street CRED attending a known abandoned house where young people were gathering and suspected of engaging in illicit drug use, discussions with those present and the owner were held to look at viable options to disband the group of young people and shut down the problem location. The local police station were able to follow up the action plan to ensure the trap house remained closed.

In July Minister Meaghan Scanlon joined Street CRED attending a camp site where four young people were residing and joining a patrol through Southport Mall. In the mall, the Minister observed the team engaging a highly vulnerable 13-year-old female who was previously unknown to stakeholders and not from the area. The Minister stayed 2 hours longer than her initial finish time, observing the contribution of all the team in ensuring appropriate responses to support the young females return home. The four young people living rough in the camp site were each supported into accommodation over the following weeks.

**This impact and outcome for the four young people demonstrate that Street CRED does not stop with assertive outreach on a Thursday. Follow-up support by the Street CRED Coordinator and partners continue during the week.**



In the last financial year there were 1099 young people engaged on Street CRED during the period. While the majority of young people continue to be mostly male, and 15 – 17 years of age, a significant trend of ages is shown through the data. The younger cohort of 12 – 14 years of age has continued to climb, demonstrating the need for early intervention to prevent these young ones entering homelessness and/or the statutory systems:

|           | 12-14yrs | 15-17yrs | 18-21yrs |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2019-2020 | 6%       | 37%      | 46%      |
| 2020-2021 | 18%      | 54%      | 20%      |
| 2021-2022 | 22%      | 54%      | 13%      |
| 2022-2023 | 21%      | 52%      | 17%      |
| 2023-2024 | 38%      | 47%      | 11%      |

## Dean's story of change:

Dean was 16-years of age when he came to the attention of Street CRED. He was homeless and engaging in early offending behaviour. Dean advised that due to ongoing conflict with his mother's new partner and their choice of income, he could no longer reside at home. Following further family breakdown, he wanted to care for his 13-year-old sister who had also commenced couch surfing and at times living rough with Dean. The siblings did not want to be split up and there was initial reluctance to engage. Street CRED ensured frequent contact with the young people and agencies were encouraged to continue to report their concerns to Child Safety. Consistent engagement resulted in trust building, and with the Street CRED Coordinators support Dean agreed to come into GCYS for a conversation. Dean began to realise that caring for his younger sister was problematic. Dean agreed to case management with GCYS and received support with a housing application, accessing centrelink, a medical and mental health assessment, and gaining a tax file number. Dean is now residing successfully in the SPin Model Housing Program and is working full time. Dean's sister was initially supported into temporary kinship care and Child Safety and key stakeholders continue to support her access to long term stable living.

## Jack's story of change:

Sue rang GCYS in relation to her 14-year-old son, Jack, and Sue was referred through to Care Coordination. Sue resided in Far North Queensland (FNQ) and was very worried about Jack. Sue had lost contact with her son for many years after Jack's father reportedly absconded with him. Sue had heard through QPS that her son was in trouble with the law and had left the care of his father some months back. Jack's whereabouts were unknown, he was suspected to be living rough on the Gold Coast. Coincidentally, at the same time Westfield security shared knowledge of a young person who had been sighted sleeping in a tent around the outskirts of the shopping centre. Jack's mother sent through a recent photograph which was forwarded to Street CRED who then targeted the area around Westfield. Street CRED were able to locate and identify the young person at the nearby train station, and they quickly built rapport and Jack was open to support. Liaison continued and communication was supported with Jack's mother, Jack and Youth Justice. Jack had a pending court matter two days later. Sue flew down to the Gold Coast was reunited with her son, she supported him in court the following day. Jack's father did not attend court. Following his court matter Jack accepted the offer to accompany his mother to FNQ to reside with her and his extended family, including a younger sister he had never met. The collaboration and throughput of services resulted in the young person being found, no longer living rough and reunited with family, and his outstanding youth justice matters are able to be dealt with remotely.

## COMMUNITY YOUTH RESPONSE AND DIVERSION (CYRD) OUTCOME EVALUATION

In May 2024 we received the Final Findings Report from the Community Youth Response and Diversion Evaluation undertaken by the Nous Group (international management consultancy).

Street CRED was classified as a Diversionary Service where diversion 'plays a primary role to connect young people to prosocial activities, other support services, improve personal safety and support compliance with Orders'. It was determined that the Gold Coast has a highly 'collaborative partner model that brings in a range of services and gives each key information they would be lacking otherwise'. In this manner it was found that Street CRED responds to community needs by:

- Filling regional gaps in the service system
- Playing a coordinating role in the service system
- Offering a soft touch point for young people and their families.

## The specific outcomes for young people observed in the evaluation of Street CRED included:

- Greater access to prosocial activities
- Improved access to services
- More positive view of the future
- Supported to comply with bail and orders
- Diverted from remand

Key recommendations from the report include the integration of the program into systematic collaboration and coordination mechanisms (such as local governance panels and formal partnerships). These recommendations will be reviewed further in the Street CRED Executive Leadership Group where governance and strategic responses to enhance the program and address barriers are discussed.

## CARE COORDINATION

Care Coordination was identified through the Executive Leadership Group as a previous gap in the community, and one that will be responsive to further expand and support the early intervention need. Justine came on board in January to develop the Care Coordination model and commence the program. Care coordination is beneficial for young people who are showing signs of early disconnection, who are vulnerable, or have disengaged from education, family, or services. The young person may be at risk of offending or homelessness.

Care Coordination provides an opportunity to support young people and families with navigating agency referral and involvement with services. It is not case management, rather Care Coordination seeks to link young people and families with appropriate and purposeful supports. Based on the prioritised needs of the family and identified gaps, various agencies may be involved through the coordinated process.

As at September 2024 eight young people and families had been supported. The young people were engaging in early offending, had school disconnection, were using substances and were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Care Coordination targets risk factors to help mitigate those risk factors while aiming to enhance protective factors to promote resilience and well-being. Care Coordination closes when the family are well engaged in case management with a lead agency or the family no longer require the support. The families and young people referred were supported with pathways into the Intensive Family Support Service with Act for Kids, the Regional Youth Support Service with the Department of Education, the Complex Needs Assessment Panel, or the Gold Coast Youth Service.



# Westfield

Our Westfield initiative, funded by the Department of Youth Justice, is a diversional and engagement program and includes regular events at both Westfield Coomera and Westfield Helensvale. It's about recognising where the young people are, and going out to them instead of expecting them to come to us. Taking a pro-active engagement strategy with young people gathering and meeting at their local shopping centre reduces risk factors to anti-social behaviour and offending while enhancing their protective factors. Young people feel welcome and increase their sense of belonging to the community. They identify familiar and safe connections, trust and rapport enables access to services and support, and pathways to recreational pro-social activities are identified and opened.

## WESTFIELD COOMERA:

In a collaborative partnership with PCYC Gold Coast and Thriving Multi-Cultural Communities, GCYS run a weekly drop-in basketball clinic and BBQ. Young people have the opportunity to participate in friendly basketball games, coaching and skills training, and enjoy cold drinks, fruit and a sausage sizzle. Coaching provided on site by the Seahawks Basketball Club is available for any young person who would like to upskill, it further encourages pathways into social, community sport and recreation. Additionally, each month Courtside Networking occurs where a number of youth and community services attend to provide information and connect with young people.

The weekly engagement has grown exponentially from the early days of 3 workers encouraging young people to enjoy a free sausage sizzle with barely one 24 pack cooked and given out. As it's continued to grow, we have had the support of a Police Cultural Liaison Officer join weekly and Westfield Coomera adjusted the times of musicians and DJ's to start earlier to complement our BBQ. In the first quarter of the 2023/2024 financial year 237 young people attended the BBQ and basketball. By the last quarter of the financial year 501 young people attended over the period. The majority of the total 1451 young people engaged over the financial year were males, 59%, with the average age of 14 - 16 years. Young people are now lining up for the sausage sizzle, engage with services, play rounds of basketball and connecting in a pro-social space. To showcase the increase in numbers through sausages, the humble 24 snags are now regularly up to around 80-100 sausages given out.



Grants were successfully applied for during the financial year enabling basketball competitions with prizes, additional food, merchandise, and brokerage to support young people with memberships, uniforms or equipment to participate in basketball or other recreational activities.

Smithy was one young person who would regularly attend and play basketball, he was quickly identified by the Seahawks coach who regularly attends as being a highly talented player. Smithy disclosed that he used to play representative basketball however the family were no longer able to afford the fees, uniform and other associated expenses. With consultation with Smithy's family, the grant enabled us to fund Smithy's memberships and uniform. Smithy is now a proud member of the Junior Seahawks Representative Program competing against the best players from other Queensland Associations.

Westfield approved the basketball area to be updated including with an art mural at the hoop. The key request was that young people were involved in helping shape the design of their space, guided and supported by artist Claudio Kirac from Art-Work Agency. GCYS connected Five young people to the workshop to design and create a mural that is appealing to the young people who frequent and use the area, further helping to support a sense of belonging for young people.



# Westfield

## WESTFIELD HELENSVALE:

With limited options for engagement in a safe space to share recreational activities at Westfield Helensvale, GCYS commenced providing a monthly BBQ near the transport hub of the shopping centre to engage young people and introduce them to the service. Over the financial year, 60 - 90 distinct young people have attended the BBQ each month. GCYS workers have been recognised by some young people as the 'BBQ People'.

GCYS also provide a weekly outreach response to the shopping centre, liaising closely with security to coordinate and increase support for young people. We have included our Westfield Security partners in training opportunities such as Trauma Informed Practice and Drug and Alcohol First Aid. Information sharing about concerns with young people including those identified as vulnerable, sleeping rough, or those who have a tendency to behave in an anti-social manner provides for a timely service response. Security have advised about young people attending the shopping centre early in the morning and changing out of their school uniform, distinct and conflicting groups of young people, and young people (and others) sleeping rough near the centre for example. This enables the team to adjust response times of assertive outreach to engage at risk young people, support partners to respond to homeless adults, and target particular areas to reach young people doing it tough connecting them with the appropriate supports.

At each Westfield significant days are celebrated, including R U Ok, Harmony Day and cultural celebrations, including Matariki Day and NAIDOC week.



## DIVERTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR:

The team supporting the basketball event at Westfield Coomera were approached by Security and asked if they could support a situation with four young males. The young people were in one of the larger retail stores and were behaving in an anti-

social manner. The store staff called security as they could not manage nor exit the boys from the shop. Two of our team approached the four young people ahead of security and were able to engage the boys and encourage them to attend the basketball and enjoy the BBQ. The young people engaged in the activities until the close of the event when they left the shopping centre without further incident. Security advised our team that without their support that successfully engaged the young people, the boys would have been banned from the shopping centre, with the possibility of police involvement. Three of these boys continue to regularly attend and participate in the basketball.

Meaghan Scanlon MP came to visit and checked out how the basketball and BBQ help divert young people from anti-social behaviour.



Olympic Gold medalist winner Arisa Trew visited Westfield for a BBQ and skate too!



# Youth Engagement Program

The Youth Engagement Officer (YEO) supports young people to build connection to community and support, foster resilience, and advocacy of young people's transition into independence through a community development framework.

In 2023–2024, GCYS identified and worked toward addressing key social issues affecting young people through two high level impact areas (1) improving systems and services and (2) creating positive social and physical conditions.

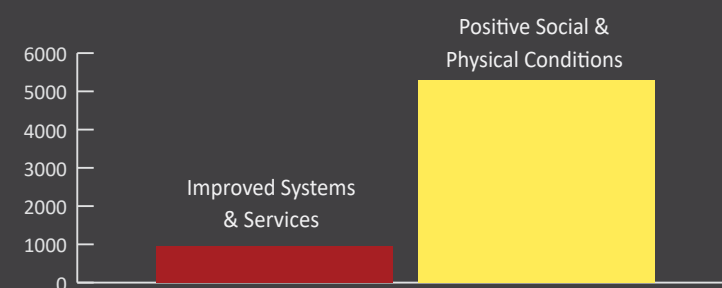
As there are a range of key social issues that are important to young people on the Gold Coast, we focus on key High Impact Projects.

These HIP projects are targeted around in three key areas:

- Social Inclusion Activities
- Networking and Partnerships
- Events and Campaigns

Measuring the impact of the work within these HIP's includes identifying the number of activities and three outcome areas (Issues, Advocacy, and/or Communication Outcomes).

During the 2023 – 2024 the data showed that most of impact was directly with young people creating positive social and physical conditions. We had a comparatively smaller impact on improving systems and services. As the rest of report demonstrates the focus on the year was about collaborations and the Youth Engagement Officer (YEO) was able to secure over \$50, 000 in grants toward initiatives aimed at supporting, engaging, and amplifying the voices of young people.



## High Impact Projects Addressing Key Social Issues

The YEO emphasises extensive collaboration within the Gold Coast Youth Network (GCYN) through monthly meetings, activities, cross agency support, and opportunities. By valuing shared perspectives, diverse approaches, and collective strengths, the GCYN fosters innovative and creative partnerships. Through the GCYN, guest speakers have provided learning opportunities, key relationships to support new programs, training and a range of feedback and development opportunities for young people to have their voice heard and shape service delivery, new groups

or activities. This collaborative spirit has led to the establishment of various activities, advocacy efforts, and working groups, such as:

- Establishment of a financial literacy working group and development of Taplink
- Advocacy for identifying and addressing the needs of 10-14 year olds
- Ongoing efforts to involve young people in decisions that affect them
- Creation of an art mural at Westfield Coomera
- Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD) activities
- School presentations, many of which have focused on driving donations to support young people
- Schoolies

The GCYN continues to be a vibrant, supported peer network with meeting attendance regularly exceeding 35 individuals. The weekly GCYN correspondence email further complements the GCYN and provides an up to date central communication resource to the community with the mailing database siting at over 500 addresses.

## HIP Housing for young people – Youth Homelessness Matters Day (YHMD)

With funding from the City of Gold Coast, GCYS partnered with Salvador from Lume Studios to produce a compelling documentary that highlighted the experience of 8 young people who had experience of homelessness and out of home care on the Gold Coast. The focus is on advocacy and elevating the voices of young people, their stories and experiences of homelessness and disadvantage.

At the YHMD event (Wednesday April 19th) we premiered this impactful 25-minute film, which aims to raise awareness about the challenges of youth homelessness in our community. The documentary encourages the audience to reflect on the structural and systemic barriers confronting young people, as well as the accompanying shame and stigma they endure. Following the screening, a panel engaged in a meaningful discussion about youth homelessness, exploring potential solutions and a vision for ending functional homelessness with insights from Finland's success in ending homelessness.

HOTA (Home of the Arts) again generously provided their venue, catering, and complimentary access to the Art Gallery for young people and attendees. We welcomed key partners including the Multicultural Families Organisation, Tenants QLD, and Mission Australia to host stalls, information sharing and HOTA delivered screen printing of tote bags. We also hosted Youth Music Venture who provided two young people to perform on the day. Over 100 attendees participated, reinforcing the crucial message that homelessness is not a choice, particularly for young people.

## HIP Housing for young people – Connect 2 Home (C2H)

This year marked another incredible milestone for the C2H event, celebrating its 14th anniversary by connecting over 1,000 young people with the wider community. With support from 70 service providers, guests were introduced to a range of services tailored to meet their individual needs, facilitating easy access and pathways to essential resources.

Attendees enjoyed a festive atmosphere with bouncy castles, sweet treats, music, and various engaging activities. In addition to meals, guests received haircuts, medical and podiatry services, while their pets benefited from veterinary care and essential supplies.

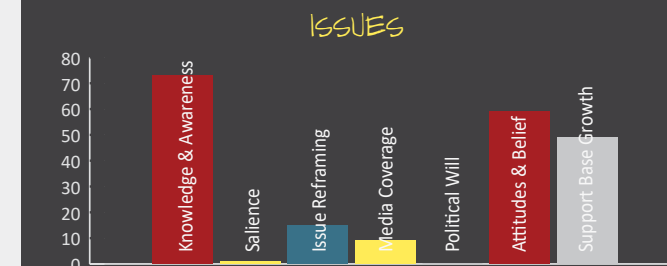
Generous donations were received, and young people actively participated as volunteers through our partner Volunteering Gold Coast and supported donations and stalls through their local school supporting attendance. The Food Support Taplink, developed by GCYN, played a crucial role in promoting ongoing access to free and low-cost groceries and hampers, ensuring support extends beyond this one-day event.



We are looking forward to 2024 – 2025 to build on the work we are doing and to be able to demonstrate the positive contribution of youth engagement activities for the community.

## DATA

Our data tracks three different measures of outcomes that flow into the Impact measures of either improving systems and services or positive social and physical conditions.

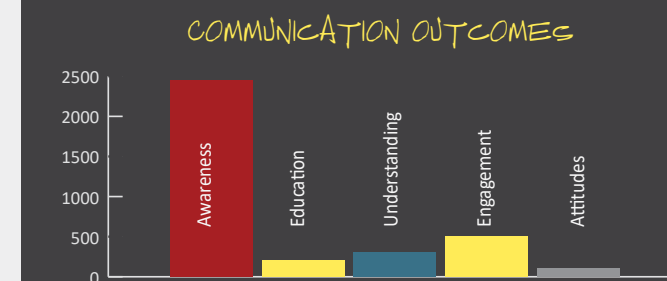


The Issues Chart tells us that the last financial year included a strong emphasis on promotion and awareness-raising, aimed at enhancing advocacy, action, and positive shifts in community attitudes and beliefs regarding homelessness, disadvantage and perceptions of young people.



The Advocacy Outcomes data demonstrates our key focus on Collaboration and alignment with partners to ensure clear messaging in our advocacy efforts

» Enhancing brand awareness for GCYS, specifically by creating more opportunities for young people to connect and engage with us and the broader community, showcasing both the impactful work being done and highlighting the existing gaps.



Our Communications Outcomes data points to our strong

- ✓ emphasis on promotion and awareness activities;
- ✓ where we increase our visibility and address key issues with clear intent and purpose. Engagement rising, reflecting a shift in attitudes and understanding through targeted initiatives



# Transition to Adulthood

## Compromising both Next Step Plus & Extended Post Care Support Programs

*Note our change of team name! Last year in July, in a bid to reduce homelessness experienced by young people in child safety care- the Queensland Government extended the foster care allowance up until the age of 21! This means that foster and kinship carers will continue to receive financial assistance until young people are more well equipped and ready to live independent lives. For young people in care who are not residing in a home based placement (think Residential Placements or self-placing in community)- we can access this yearly funding to support their transition into adulthood which works out to be approximately \$16,000 per year each year until their 21st birthday. This is the "Extended Post Care Support Program" and here at the Gold Coast Youth Service, we are lucky to be able to deliver both "Next Step Plus" and the "Extended Post Care Support" Programs- meaning two new workers and merging into what we now call the Transition 2 Adulthood Team. As workers we are trained in and deliver both programs so that we are able to provide continuity of care across young people's lifespan. We deliver both programs in conjunction with our partners in Logan- YFS!*

### Next Step Plus

In Next Step Plus we support young people aged 15- 25 years who are or who have been in care under a Child Protection Order with the Department of Child Safety after their 12th birthday. The aim of our program is to support young people to transition from care and to develop skills, knowledge and resources needed to live successful independent adult lives.

We have two phases in this program:

#### TRANSITION PHASE (15 - 17 YEARS OLD)

At this age, many of our young people are still under the care of Child Safety . This means we work closely with Child Safety to help prepare the young person:

- Transition Plans: to ensure the young persons views and wishes are heard and identified.
- Help to identify accommodation options post care
- Ensure the young person is on track with skills to help them flourish independently- from checking they have all of their ID, a bank account and income to cooking, cleaning and getting their licence

- Build a supportive relationship with us so that they not only feel supported leaving care, but are comfortable reaching out to us in times of need!

#### FUTURE PHASE (18 - 25 YEARS OLD)

This is where we do most of our work! Once a young person turns 18- Child Safety no longer hold guardianship, meaning they are out in the big wide world on their own and required to be fully independent. This can be very challenging for our young people who have been in care, who often have limited or strained relationships with family.

- Together with the young person we determine the right type, level and intensity of support required- Support can mean weekly check in phone calls, or it could be frequent face to face engagement.
- Outreach- we do most of our work in the community- we are rarely in the office!
- We actively support the young person to work towards any identified goals- no matter how big or small, from finding employment and somewhere safe to live to connecting with family, community or culture.
- Access transition from care funding programs they may be eligible for (Such as YHARS, TILA, YHE)

We are a revolving door service- which means young people can engage with us for as long or as little as they need- and they can come back! We love hearing from young people that we supported to transition from care to see them flourish as young adults in their 20s!

## Extended Post Care Support Program "EPCS"

As mentioned earlier, in July 2023 the Queensland Government launched a new program that supports young people aged between 18 – 21 years old who were on a Child Protection Order up until their 18th birthday. In this program, young people or their carers can access up to \$16,000 per year to go towards supporting their independent living.



The aim of this program is to support a young person to become independent and help ease the stressors that come from transitioning to care. 35% of Young people were homeless in the first year of leaving care . With access to funding, the idea is to build a young persons capacity to live independently. Ideally we meet with young people at 17 and a half, while they are still in care to begin to plan for how they would like to access the funding. Funding can be used multiple ways. For example to help go towards weekly expenses- such as subsidising rent, grocery vouchers or fuel vouchers. Or it can be used for larger once-off expenses, such as a education course, furniture or a car. The plan is built around the young persons goals and aspirations, and we work to ensure we are helping to build their capacity- not increase their dependence on systems.

#### SOME EPCS SUCCESS STORIES:

- One young person utilised her funding to pay for a traffic controller course and all of the associated safety equipment- which is very costly! She completed this course successfully and was employed immediately and now works frequently all-around Gold Coast and Brisbane. This job has allowed her a good income to support her independence- including being able to buy her own car!
- EPCS funding was used to help an 18 year old mother be able to provide a 1st birthday party (including several presents) for her daughter which she advised GCYS was very important to her due to not having a birthday party with her biological family herself as a child.

#### Other fun facts:

- We now have three workers in the Transition 2 Adulthood Team- Brad, Sammie and new addition Sarah! Our fourth worker is due to start later this year.
- The T2A team reached 436 young people in the year! We supported, and case managed 134 young people across two programs.
- We supported 49 young people to transition out of care. These referrals come directly from Child Safety.
- We have worked with 85 young people in the after-care space. Young people will often reach out to us and demonstrate good help seeking skills. Many of these are young people that we had met while they were still in care!
- In the Transition Phase-39 out of 49 cases were closed with a transition plan in place.
- In the Future Phase- 56 of the 70 cases were closed with majority of their needs being met. 22% of our caseload identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. 12% identified were from Cultural and Linguistic Diverse Cultural background
- We helped 64 young people find safe and stable accommodation. This includes social housing outcomes, private rentals, share accommodation or friends/family/ carers. This rental crisis has been particularly difficult for young people who grew up in care as they are not often able to turn to family members to help with homelessness.
- We assisted 25 young people to obtain employment. This included helping with resumes, cover letters, approaching businesses and preparation for the interview.
- We helped collaborate with educational institutions and 13 of our young people began engaging in education/training opportunities. 26 of our young people were or became young parents and we helped them to prepare for arrival of baby.
- Our relationships with Child Safety allow us to work effectively as a team to address any child protection concerns so children were able to remain or be reunified to the family home!
- We helped 22 young people link in with ongoing mental health support. This includes young people who were not previously accessing therapy and actively working within our mental health units and hospitals.
- We worked with Youth Justice and Probation and Parole to ensure that 19 of our young people were meeting the requirements of their order. This includes attending court and providing support with young people in custody to help them re-integrate into community.
- We assisted 22 young people to engage with the NDIS. This includes advocating for assessments, linking in with local organisations and ensuring the young person was accessing their plan.
- We helped young people access \$43K worth of financial assistance to pay for goods and services through programs including YHARS & TILA.



# Chill Out Zone

The Chill Out Zone had a big year, kicking it off in October 2023 by winning the City of Gold Coast - Safer Suburbs Award under the Project or Initiative category. The biennial award celebrates those that contribute to community safety, and acknowledged the 25 years that COZ has provided intoxication, first aid and welfare support to the Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise Safe Night Precincts. Well done COZ!



Not long after, the team supported the 2023 Safer Schoolies Response, supporting 415 young people directly across both the Recharge Zone and Orchid Ave site, and working across the full two weeks alongside our key partners to deliver a safety response to thousands of 2023 schoolies. We provided countless condoms, bandaids, phone charges and nearly 43,000 cups of water!



2024 started with the team supporting New Years Eve, one of the highest client numbers we have seen since before COVID-19, and during the challenges of power outages and storms from the Christmas period. This set the tone for a year that produced ever-increasing demand in the Surfers Paradise precinct, with new venues opening, impacted wait times with QAS, and growing community need for welfare responses, such as homelessness, mental health and minors accessing the precincts.



In January 2024, we said goodbye to long-term Chill Out Zone supervisor Geoff de Jersey, who is dearly missed by not only the COZ team, but many of the regular COZ visitors that frequent the Safe Night Precincts. We wish him the very best for the future and can never truly calculate the immeasurable impact he has had on the team, service and broader community.

February 2024, the team trained in the use of naloxone as a harm reduction measure to the increasing incidence of opioid use and overdose in the precinct. This has been a staff-driven initiative that was highly relevant, as only a few weeks after the roll-out of the training, the team were required to administer naloxone to a community member in the precinct, ultimately saving their life and highlighting the importance of adapting to the changing needs of the communities that we support.



In April 2024, the City of Gold Coast showcased the Chill Out Zone team as part of their Neighborhood Heroes Campaign, promoting the program across bus stops and in major shopping centers across the Gold Coast, and on the City of Gold Coast website. The campaign highlighted several local services including COZ that help communities to remain connected and resilient, and reinforced the privileged position that the program holds in being able to promote and uphold community safety for vulnerable members of the Safe Night Precincts.

While May-July is usually a quiet period due to winter, The Chill Out Zone attended a spate of critical incidents involving medical emergencies and under extremely challenging conditions. The staff worked to successfully save the lives of those involved alongside our essential QPS and QAS partners, and we adapted several of our processes, practice and resources in response to, and in reflection to these events. Of particular note was the outstanding display of teamwork demonstrated by the staff during these events. The genuine care they have for each other, and their ability to work together under challenging and within high-stakes environments is at the heart of the program's success. This is also evidenced in their drive to promote a social club during 2024, another staff-led initiative that allows the team to spend time together on a quarterly basis and outside of the work environment, as just another way to support each other and the broader team culture.

Over August and September 2024, the team engaged in additional professional development, including training with the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence, and our first cohort of staff completed two days of Mental Health First Aid Training. Since COVID-19 and with the increasing rates of mental health needs and the housing crisis on the Coast, COZ has seen a significant increase in the need for welfare responses, particularly at our Broadbeach site with an almost 30% increase. We also supported the Gold Coast Connect2Home event at Metricon stadium.

In September 2024, the team won \$100,000 from the one-off super round Gambling Community Benefit Fund to replace our custom-built COZ van and trailer. The significant grant money will allow the team to build and re-design a new trailer to better accommodate growing client numbers, but to also ensure on-going support and commitment to the community for many years to come. We look forward to showcasing the new build at the next AGM.

Overall, the Chill Out Zone team have worked hard to support and adapt to changing community needs in 2024, and look forward to what 2025 may bring, including the potential to expand into Burleigh if this becomes a Safe Night Precinct.



# Emergency Relief

Emergency Relief (ER) is an Australian Government initiative funded by the Department of Social Services and forms part of the Financial Management Program (FMP). Emergency relief services are delivered by community organisations to support people who are experiencing financial distress and who have limited means or resources to help them alleviate their financial crisis.

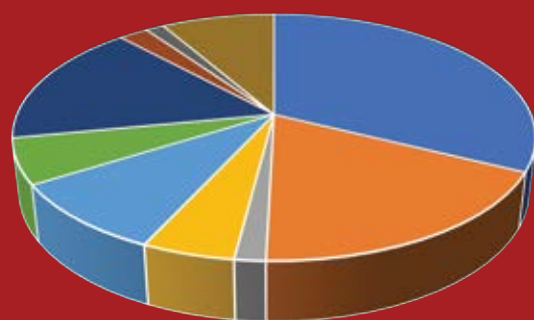
ER monies distributed in the 2023-2024 Financial Year  
\$252,847.33

Monies to sustain tenancies was again the most sought-after ER payment with 50% of formal applications approved being directly seeking monies for rent arrears and rent advances, or removals as their tenancies were no longer sustainable.

In addition, there has also been the continuance in homeowners seeking ER support; for body corporate or council and water rate payments, or the payment of another debt so that they can meet those payments themselves.

Working families are also being hit hard by the cost-of-living crises with many now unable to meet all of their financial obligations, now having to seek the support of services including ER, for the first time.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-2024



- Arrears
- Advance
- Transport
- Electricity
- Removals
- Rates/Utilities
- Car rego
- Medical
- Identification
- Other

The increases in rents and living costs over this financial year has also meant that many who were seeking to make application for ER, were not able to move onto the formal application stage, as their tenancies would not be sustainable even with ER support. The housing crises in Queensland has become so critical that the Queensland Department of Housing has now implemented a number of programs where they are able to provide some financial support to maintain those tenancies in the form of rent subsidies or providing funded emergency accommodation options for those who sadly now find themselves homeless.

Only 0.6% of rentals are affordable for minimum wage workers in Australia:

The housing crisis in Australia is "the worst it's ever been", according to a shocking new report.

NCA NewsWire 26/04/2024

Incredibly distressing: Cost-of-living crisis plunges old families into debt

Working Queensland families are spending \$200 more than they earn each week on just the bare essentials as the spiralling cost of living pushes household budgets to the brink.

Courier Mail 28/01/2024



A survey conducted by the Australian National University in January 2024, noted an increase in the number of Australians under financial distress estimating that approximately 32% are now finding it difficult, or very difficult to get by on their current incomes. According to their study this is the highest rate they have observed at any time since February 2020, and well above the average over the preceding four years.

In addition, the Gold Coast population has soared over the past four years leading to a lack of housing supply and affordability. New rental price analysis has revealed it is now more expensive to rent in certain Gold Coast suburbs than it is in Melbourne's most prestigious neighbourhoods with rents increasing by nearly 10% just in the last twelve months. A unit that could be rented for \$450.00 just four years ago, is now costing tenants \$730.00 per week. Such is the percentage of income needed to maintain tenancies, that many are having to share their rental properties with as many people as possible just to make ends meet.

Soaring rents has now meant that more and more people are falling out, or are at risk of falling out, of the rental market. Older Australian's and those on a fixed income are at heightened risk of becoming homeless so where possible, the Emergency Relief Worker and both Government and non-government services are working together, this combined financial support is helping to stabilise people's housing and alleviate some of this distress.

## Additional Persons Supported

In addition to approvals for Emergency Relief payments, the ER Worker also makes herself available to individuals and other services who are not seeking, or are ineligible for, an ER payment. Emergency relief organisations can also be the first point of contact for an individual with complex needs, allowing for referral to more intensive support.

This financial year has seen an increase in the number of people seeking ER who were unable to move on to the formal ER application stage. The main contributing factor to this has been the unaffordability of some tenancies moving forward, or the significant costs associated with

their requests and the need to maintain our working budget. In further supporting those who are not able to make application for an ER payment, the ER Worker provides support through information and advocacy, material aid, and referrals to a range of other service types in meeting their needs. An additional 628 persons were provided with this type of support session which cannot be identified in the general ER data.

This takes the total number of requests for support through the ER Program to 1038 in the 2023-2024 Financial Year.



## NO WRONG DOOR

In 2021 GCYS developed and implemented a collaborative working model which enables clients to access ER via a service they are already working with, and feel most comfortable talking to about their situations. This collaboratively working model has been so successful that a range of services and service types right across our region are working with the ER Worker to ensure that our community, across all demographics, has access to ER support in times of financial crises. I would like to take this time to sincerely thank all of those wonderful services for their commitment not only to their clients, but their ongoing commitment to this collaborative approach.



# Organisational Support

The responsibility for office maintenance, administration, event coordination and front office support is shared by the Organisational Support Team (OST).

Finance continues with Vicki Fraser as our Finance Officer and Phyllis Andrews in the Finance Assistant position. Together they ensured we kept up to pace with the challenges of increased revenues from Government (both Local, State & Commonwealth), philanthropy and community members.

There were planned team expansions (T2A EPCS, IHRF, YHOST), all putting our payroll software to the test and some wonderful projects through Community Grants obtained by our resourceful Youth Engagement Worker, Belinda that are to be carried across the next year.

We also enjoyed the presence of Gerlinde who commenced with us in a part-time capacity during the year in Reception to take some heat off the phones enabling us to concentrate on providing more focused support to the teams.

During the year ahead we should see a concentration on updating internal financial policies to keep abreast of new digital payment systems which will ensure continuity of service, easier access of approved funds to teams, streamlined approval processes and direct connections to financial software limiting the touch points for errors.



The focus of IT and Operations continues to be to create a modern workspace with smart solutions that meet the needs of the Service as it flexes.

Streamlining technologies such as cloud-based applications, smartphones and tablets have improved connectivity and connectedness across the workforce, adding benefits such as improving the organisational culture, and opportunities for collaboration.

Upgrades to data collection methods have contributed to greater access to real time data and the ability to generate reports on demand for Program meetings and strategic planning.

The expected shutdown of Australia's 3G network by the end of 2024 has seen a necessary but unscheduled upgrade to some older devices. In all about 10% of the IT equipment required replacement. With no exchange program available all replacement costs were borne by the Service.

A Learning Management System (LMS) was launched in early 2024. With best practice content sourced from subject matter experts, the LMS is already enhancing the onboarding experience for new starters. The ability for staff to learn independently and at their own pace encourages continuous



learning and a growth mindset. We look forward to enhancing the online learning library to meet organisational and professional development needs.

All in all, 2024 was an extremely productive year for the Youth Service and the Organisational Support Team are looking forward to 2025 with enthusiasm.

## Quality Assurance

The GCYS is fully certified under the Queensland Government's Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) which is the formal system for the continuous quality improvement of human services. The HSQF Scheme provides a mechanism for reviewing and where appropriate, developing policies and systems to improve the quality and safety of our workplace, and the services we provide.

The Youth Foyers is continuing its processes around meeting the Australian Foyer Foundation Accreditation Framework.

There has been a focus this year on our Policies and Procedures enhancing the nomenclature to improve access for staff. There has also been a review of how we manage the various Registers required through our various compliance arrangements.

The Quality Assurance Team structural relationship to the Senior Leadership team has seen and a more intentional approach to the development and review of our Policy and Procedures.

As we have adopted an Advantage Thinking Lens, we are also applying this into the quality space.

Maturing into the Share Point system has assisted greatly in our management of our quality systems, and we are looking forward to continual improvements to our quality management system as the organisation grows and diversifies to meet the needs of young people, families and our community.

 **global-mark®**

### Certificate of Approval

This certificate confirms that the company below complies with the following standard:

|                        |   |        |   |
|------------------------|---|--------|---|
| Company Name           | Gold Coast Youth Service  |        |   |
| Company Other Name     | Gold Coast Youth Service Inc  |        |   |
| Client ID              | 103840  | Scheme | Human Services Quality Framework Scheme |
| Certification Standard | Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) - Human Services Quality Standards December 2012  |        |   |
| Scope of Certification | Provision of services to young people including Information Advice & Referral (T103), Support & Case Management (T314), Assertive Outreach (T316), Rest and Recovery (T322) - Broadbeach & Surfers Paradise |        |   |
| Type of Certification  | Product Certification - Human Services  |        |   |

**CERTIFICATE DATES:**

|                                  |            |                         |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Original / Initial               | 15/06/2017 | Last Certificate update | 15/06/2023 |
| Certification / Re Certification | 6/04/2023  | Expiry                  | 15/06/2026 |
| Last Certification Decision      | 15/05/2023 |                         |            |

**APPROVED COMPANY / SITE ADDRESS (ES):**  
15 Oak Avenue Miami QLD 4220 Australia

This certification remains valid until the above mentioned expiry date and subject to the organisation's continued compliance with the certification standard, and Global-Mark's Terms and Conditions. This Certificate of Approval remains the property of Global-Mark Pty Ltd, Company Number: ACN 108-087-654.

The use of the Accreditation Mark indicates accreditation by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand in respect to those activities covered by JAS-ANZ accreditation. Refer to [www.jas-anz.org/register](http://www.jas-anz.org/register) for verification.

 **Certification Manager** 

Unique Certificate Code: 6207A8DDF0A3C03BCA2589A3003DED32  
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# Treasurer's Report

## A reflection on Gold Coast Youth Service Inc finances for 2023 - 2024

The financial statements for the period ending the 30th of June 2024 have been prepared to meet the requirements of the Gold Coast Youth Service Inc (GCYS) under the Associations Incorporations Act QLD and have been audited by Haywards Chartered Accountants meeting the relevant Australian accounting standards.

The year 2023 - 2024 has seen a stable financial position and a 9% increase in our overall income. Most of this increase in revenue has been through government grants and there has been a small (1%) decrease in donations.

Overall, we are able to meet costs of our programs however some programs are dependent on the GCYS making a financial contribution to ensure that they meet the needs of people using our service and our quality standards. This is therefore reflected in our overall deficit position this year.

The organisation is on a sound financial footing and have set in place a range of accounting policies and procedures to ensure our ongoing financial stability. GCYS continues to maintain a high level of financial controls ensuring the effective management of financial resources.

We continue to be incredibly grateful for the support we receive from our community that has enabled:

- Rent properties for young people to be accommodated in.
- Articulate the social impact that the YASS service makes to improve the lives of young people and their families through an early intervention response.
- Purchase of essential and material goods during this cost-of-living crisis.

GCYS would like to advise the Members that we hold public liability insurance of \$20 million and to note that all insurance policies are renewed on annual basis to ensure adequate cover.

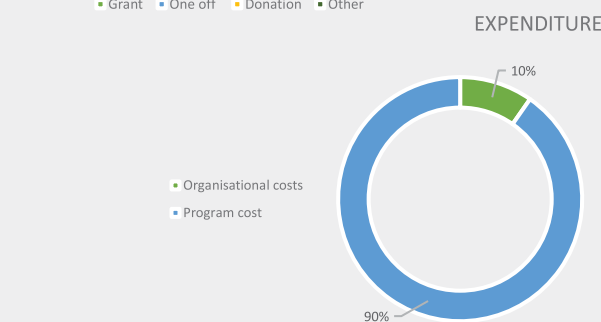
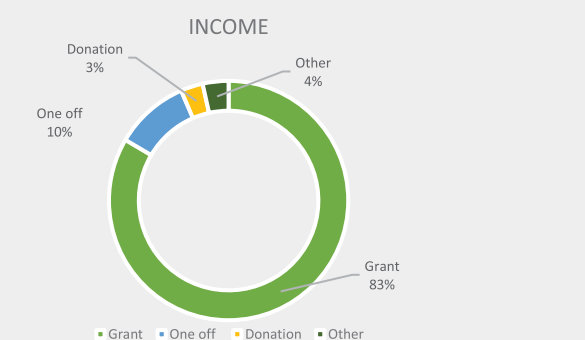
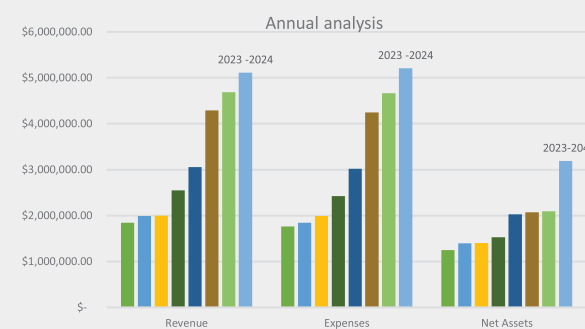
I would like to acknowledge and thank Vicki Fraser who is managing increasing complex financial management systems and Phyllis who so ably supports her with the increased transactions.

I would like to acknowledge the Federal Department of Social Service, the Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, Department of Housing and Public Works, and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

The financial results for 2023 – 2024 provide a deficit of \$94,939.75

I would like to recommend the appointment of Haywards Chartered Accountants to audit GCYS accounts for the 2024-2025 financial year.

GCYS Treasurer  
Matthew Clayworth



## Future Focus

The cost of living continues to be a key challenge facing young people across the Gold Coast. We look forward to working with the new State Government to address these vital issues.

For 2024 – 2025 we will:

- Explore options to increase crisis accommodation and housing solutions for young people on the Gold Coast
- Continue the focus on increased funding for the delivery and expansion of early intervention services, specifically the YASS, Street CRED and Care Coordination projects. Assisting young people earlier addresses trauma issues and is more cost effective for the community.
- Seek support for the Gold Coast Zero Youth Working Group so that we can focus on those young people who are the most vulnerable and experiencing homelessness in our community.

GCYS is committed to 'Our Approach' which has provided the infrastructure to articulate our Advantage Thinking Lens, Practice Framework and supporting staff tools, buttressed by a Learning Management System. The year ahead will continue to focus on all the elements of this infrastructure as part of our continuous quality improvement process.

GCYS will continue to support the growth of a passionate community sector, focusing on the professional development of our staff as well as nurturing new workers through student placement opportunities.





Thank You!



**Queensland  
Government**

Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services  
Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works  
Department of Youth Justice  
Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities  
and the Arts

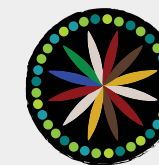


**Australian Government**  
Department of Social Services

Baby Give Back  
Bas Naidu  
Betty's Burgers, Coomera (Westfield)  
Benowa SHS  
Grace Community Church  
Grill'd (specifically Nobby's & Robina)  
HOTA – Home of the Arts  
Jerry Savelle Ministries International, Chloe Solomon  
Junior Council, City of Gold Coast  
Kings Christian College, Pimpama  
Merrimac State School  
Nourishing by Sally, Carrara  
Nutrition Warehouse, Upper Coomera  
Planet Fitness  
SAI Centre (Nathan)  
St Andrews Lutheran College (Tania Stewart)  
Street Smart  
The Men's Shed, Burleigh  
The Star Entertainment Group, Broadbeach  
The Sheila Shack, Paradise Country Parklands  
Whispering Gully Childcare, Robina

CITY OF  
**GOLDCOAST.**

*Our Community*



BUILDING INDEPENDENCE & PARTICIPATION



**Lives Lived Well**  
Passionate about the possibilities

**MinterEllison.**



We would like to thank the many local community members and organisations who have generously donated with housing, food, clothing, books, hygiene products and cash that have assisted the young people who access our services either directly or via Give Now, Play for Purpose or Containers for Change. Many of you do so anonymously and regularly and we wanted to let you know how invaluable your contributions have been to the lives of young people.



# GOLD COAST Youth Service



## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia as the traditional owners of this land and support the right of indigenous people to self determination and cultural expression. We are committed to working in partnership to close the gap.

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