



THE GIRLS & BOYS
BRIGADE

IMPACT REPORT 2026

ADDRESS FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Stefan Lamour-Jansson



I am incredibly proud to be launching The Girls & Boys Brigade's (GBB) 2025-26 Impact Report. This report represents an important milestone for our organisation, not only because it captures the breadth of work delivered across our programs, but because it reflects our growing commitment to understanding, measuring and communicating the difference this work makes in the lives of children, young people and families.

This report is the first of its kind in The GBB's long 144-year history. We acknowledged in our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan that measuring our impact was a journey we had only just begun. We knew impact measurement was an important next step in The GBB's strategy to both improve our services and better communicate the outcomes our programs create for young people and families.

At its core, The GBB has always strived to provide a safe space, happy memories, enriching opportunities, support to navigate challenges, and ultimately to set them up for a brighter future. This has been true across generations of young people who have walked through our doors, and it remains true today as families face increasingly complex social, financial and wellbeing pressures.

It is exciting to mark this milestone on what will continue to be an important journey as we respond to our community's needs. I hope this report gives our supporters, partners, families and wider community a clearer understanding of the depth of The GBB's work, the outcomes being achieved, and the enduring value of investing in children, young people and families over the long term.



The GBB provides low-income children, youth and families with free recreation, education and wrap-around support – ensuring every inner-Sydney young person achieves a bright future.

SINCE 1882, THE GIRLS & BOYS BRIGADE HAS:

ADDRESS FROM THE FUNDRAISING IMPACT COORDINATOR

Gemma Clendining



Over the last two years, I have had the privilege of collaborating with our team here at The GBB to develop the organisation's first impact measurement strategy and I am so excited to now share this report with our community, our partners and our supporters. This work began with a simple but important set of questions: how do our programs create positive outcomes for children, youth and families, how can we record those outcomes, and how can we communicate them?

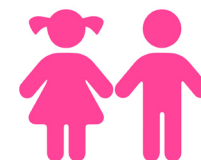
This has meant collecting surveys, conducting interviews, recording staff observations and tracking administrative records such as attendance. Bringing these sources of evidence together highlighted four key outcome areas: education, recreation, community and family.

While our team see these outcomes being realised every day, like the increased confidence in a child who used to doubt their reading skills or a family finally feeling settled in their new home after years of housing challenges, we believe this report is one way for us to make visible the depth of our work that often happens quietly.

As our evaluation practice continues to mature, we will keep strengthening the way we collect data, track change over time, and understand the combined effect of our programs. In doing so, we hope to build an increasingly clear picture of how The GBB contributes to long-term outcomes for the young people and families who walk through our doors.



Delivered **144 years**
of uninterrupted service



Supported over **40,000**
young people in need



Opened our Riley St doors
over **2-million times**
to welcome young people and their families



Provided **hundreds of thousands**
of free activities
to enrich the lives of young people



“The old “Boysie” was a second home to us in those days, a safe, caring, disciplined community. It was a protection from loneliness, boredom, temptations and the dangers which only inner-city nights could threaten.” – 1920s Attendee



The GBB is one of the longest running charities in Australia. Established in 1882 by Sir James Reading Fairfax from The Sydney Morning Herald and A.S. Bennett from The Evening News, The GBB was originally the second home to vulnerable newspaper boys who needed a safe space off the congested industrial streets of inner Sydney. Opportunities were limited, so ‘The Boys Brigade’ –as it was known then –provided accommodation, meals, education and recreation to improve boys’ life outcomes.

Alumni stories collected since this time highlight an evolving but long-standing service that provided steady support to the young people of inner-Sydney.



Over the last 144 years of continuous operation, The GBB has provided tens of thousands of inner-Sydney young people with life-changing opportunities, all while remaining independent and non-government funded.



In New South Wales

Almost **one-million** people are living in poverty.

Children have the highest rate of poverty out of any age bracket.

7.5% of young people can’t afford to participate in activites, hobbies or groups.

In The City of Sydney LGA

20,000 people live in low-income households.

Suburbs with the highest rates of low-income housing include Surry Hills, Waterloo, Redfern and Woolloomooloo.

Households in these suburbs receiving income support have increased by **64%** since 2020.

At The Girls & Boys Brigade

100% of young people come from low-income households.

94% of young people live in social housing or are experiencing housing stress.

70% of young people rely on a single parent.

58% of young people come from culturally and linguistically diverse families.

12% of young people are neurodiverse.

20% of young people are First Nations.

The GBB continues to respond to an enduring need.

317 children, youth, parents & carers were supported by The GBB in the 2025-26 financial year.



THE GIRLS & BOYS BRIGADE Client Journey

Cultural &
Language
Differences

Disability
& Health
Difficulties

Family
Violence

Food
Insecurity

Challenges

Financial
Difficulties

Housing
Insecurity
& Over-
Crowding

Single
Parenthood

Enrolment

Advocacy &
Referrals

Gently-Used
Clothes &
Necessities

Food
Support

Casework &
Counselling

Family
Support
Program

Educational
Programs

Real-World
Learning
Experiences

Children's
Program

Youth
Program

Camps

Camps

Vacation
Care
Programs

School
Holiday
Programs

Mentorship &
Employment
Opportunities

Alumni
Events &
Newsletters

Support
in Future
Planning

Celebration
of Client
Achievement

Ongoing Contact

Exit



THE GIRLS & BOYS BRIGADE Theory of Change

	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Children's Program	• Children's After-School Care • Children's Homework Program • Children's Vacation Care • Children's Camps	• Education & Training • Physical & Outdoor Recreation	Young people: OUTCOME 1 • Improve their learning outcomes OUTCOME 2 • Improve their social-emotional skills	Children, youth and families are confident, resourceful and resilient. When they leave The GBB they have created the foundations for success in the journey through life.
Youth Program	• Youth After-School Workshops & Programs • Youth School Holiday Program • Youth Camps	• Play & Leisure Opportunities • Peer Connection	OUTCOME 3 • Increase their sense of connection & belonging	
Family Support	• Wrap-Around Support • Food Support and Food Literacy Workshops • Casework & Counselling • Gently-Used Clothes & Necessities	Families increase their access to: • Wrap-Around Support • Parent Education • Food & Material Relief	Families: OUTCOME 4 • Create thriving family units to better support children & youth	

This report will explore four key outcome areas using a mixed-methods approach.

Evidence	Interviews with young people & families	Participant feedback surveys by young people & families	Observations and reflections by the GBB team	Administrative records like attendance rates
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My son struggles in big groups. He needs constant reassurance because he's worried about doing everything right. But in the Homework Room he gets that one-on-one support and is more focused.

-Parent at The GBB



OUTCOME 1

The GBB increases young people's learning outcomes

THE PROBLEM

- The learning gap is **increasing** between children from low-income and high-income families.
- **From Year 3 to Year 12** the gap continuously widens.
- Without intervention children are less likely to **finish school** and less likely to **join the workforce**.

OUR SOLUTION

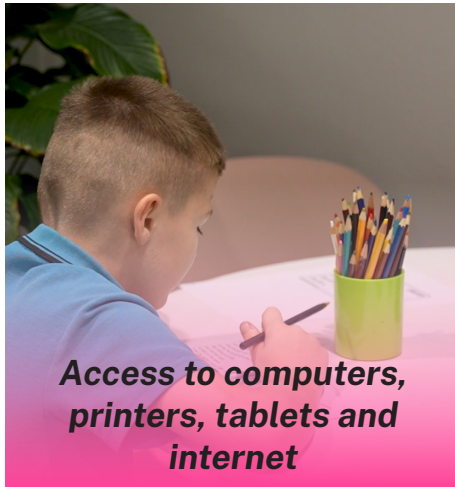
The GBB delivers a **Homework Program** for children, a **support program** for new high school students and **vocational workshops** for youth. Together, these improve young people's educational and vocational skills to ensure they **complete school** and **secure gainful employment** as adults.

Improved Educational Outcomes

The Homework Program supports children aged 5 to 12 by increasing their access to learning support. The program provides:



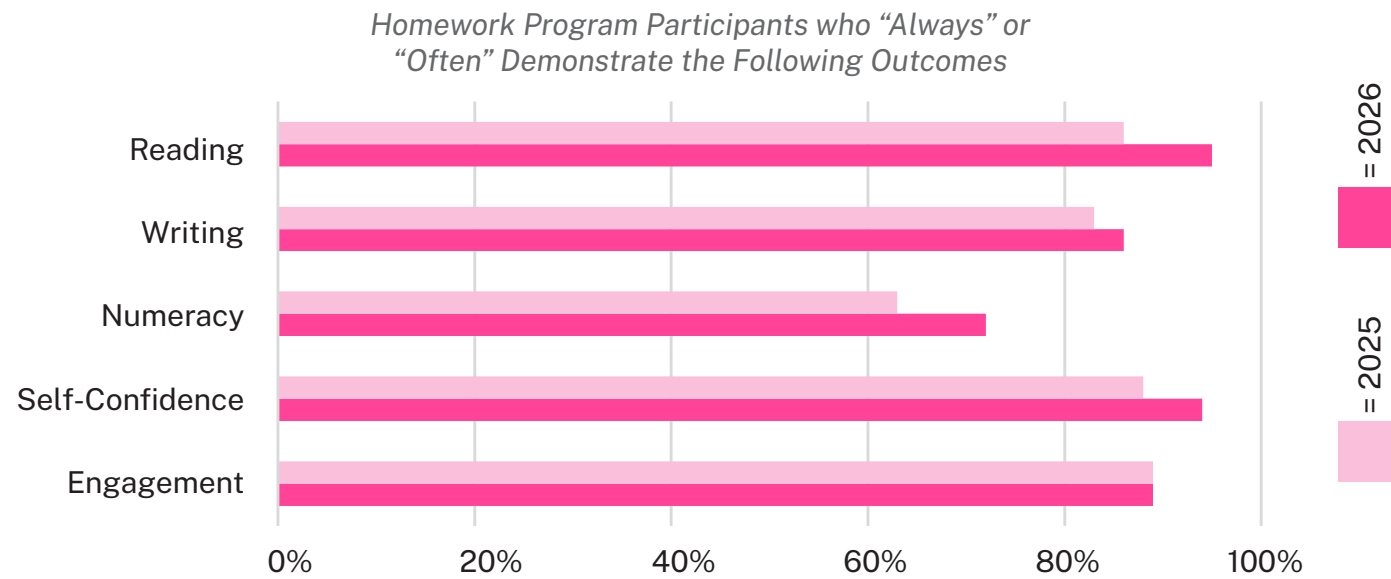
One-on-one tutoring from educators and volunteers



Access to computers, printers, tablets and internet



Learning resources like books, stationery and educational games



Homework Room Observations

JUNE 2024		JUNE 2024
“Olivia seems very despondent and finds homework and school work a chore.”		“Her interest in most things has waned a bit. We’re working on her self-esteem and behaviour.”
DECEMBER 2024	JUNE 2025	DECEMBER 2025
“Olivia has matured these past six months. She is settled in the homework room and starting to support and help the younger children.”	“Olivia always strives to do her best.”	“Olivia has improved greatly in confidence. She loves maths and pushes herself to do well.”

57

children received homework support through the Homework Program

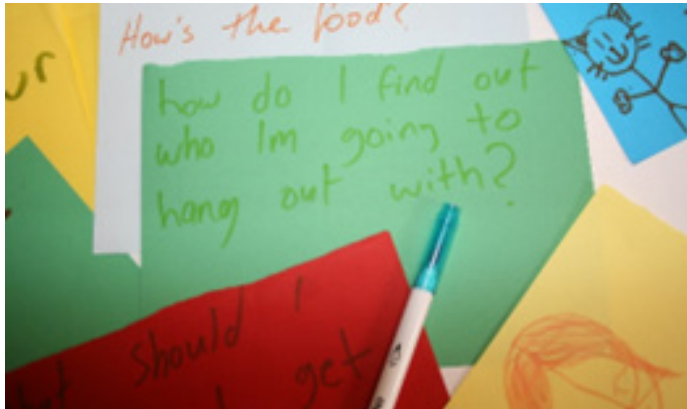
In the last 12 months:

84%

improved or maintained their literacy and numeracy skills

The Homework Program has achieved improved outcomes across all measurable areas, except for learning engagement which has remained the same at 90%.

Improved High-School Readiness

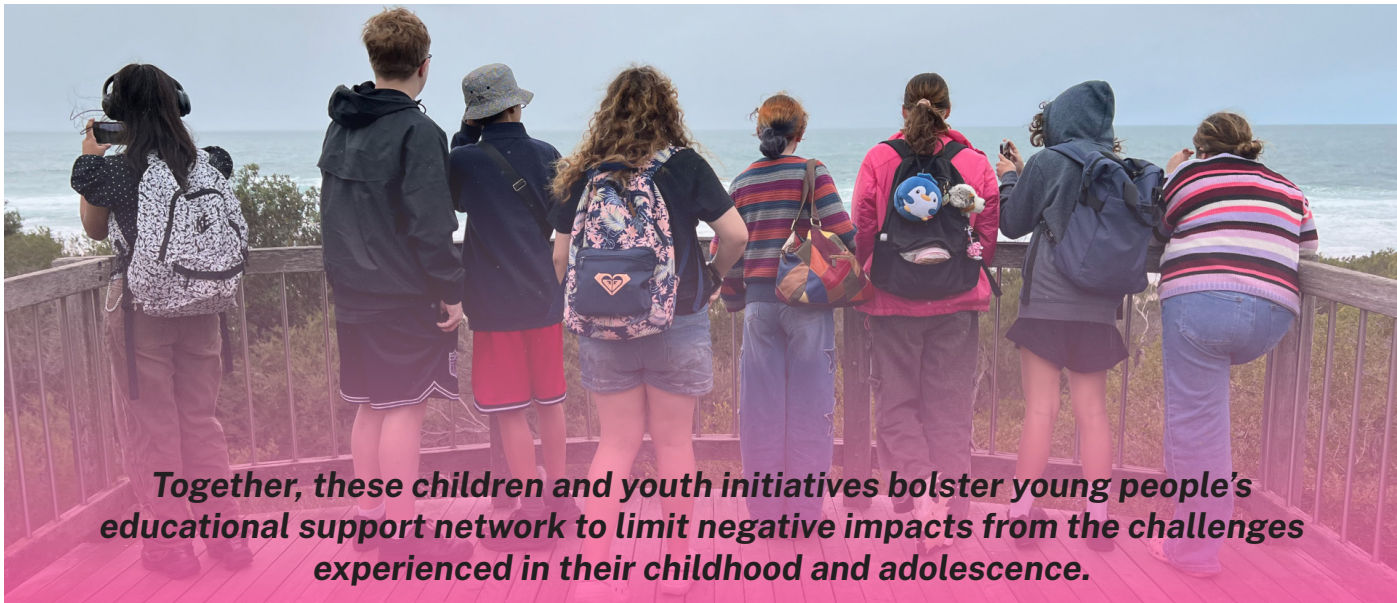


Year 6 students received mentorship from The GBB's Youth Program attendees, participated in educational games, and contributed to a mental health discussion facilitated by Headspace. At the end of the workshop young people indicated they were feeling **more confident** about the key challenges identified at the beginning, particularly **finding their way around a bigger school, managing a timetable of different subjects and looking after their mental health.**

Improved Vocational Skills

Once young people graduate the Children's Program and join the Youth Program, The GBB provides **vocational opportunities**. These aim to increase young people's vocational skills, work experience and knowledge of what training and employment pathways are available to them, particularly as “not knowing where to start” and “not having enough skills or experience” were the most common obstacles young people identified.

The most impactful program was Esca Hospitality Group's six-week workshop. The workshop culminated in an apprenticeship offer to one teen from The GBB, who through this opportunity realised a passion for cooking and a new potential career. With ongoing commitment from our community partners, vocational opportunities for young people will continue to carve pathways out of disadvantage.



Together, these children and youth initiatives bolster young people's educational support network to limit negative impacts from the challenges experienced in their childhood and adolescence.



“

We'd just like to thank GBB for giving my boys opportunities that they'd not have if it wasn't for this program.

-Parent at The GBB

”

OUTCOME 2

The GBB improves young people's social-emotional skills

THE PROBLEM

- Research with young people confirms eating out, day trips, holidays, school excursions and after-school activities are essential.
- Low-income young people are **three times more likely to miss out** on leisure and recreation.
- Limited leisure and recreation **negatively affect young people's long-term wellbeing.**

OUR SOLUTION

The GBB's camps and school holiday programs for children and youth remove financial and social barriers by providing free recreation and leisure activities. These activities improve young people's well being and support their development of life skills.

Increased Access to Recreation & Leisure

83

children and youth attended activities during school holidays

In the last 12 months:

168

activities occurred across four school holiday periods

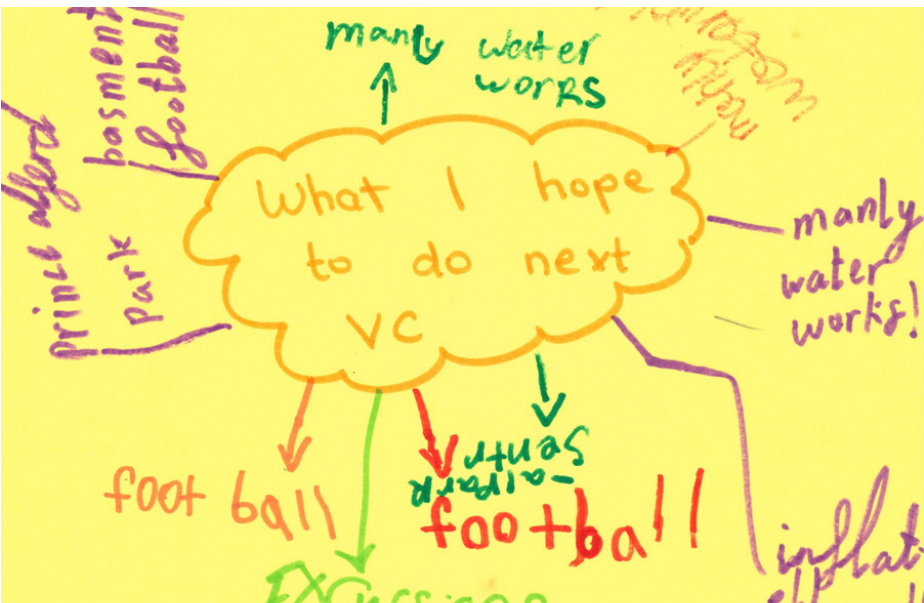
For many of the young people we support, school holiday activities are out of reach because they are financially and geographically inaccessible. The April School Holiday program themed “Mixed Tape”, for example, provided eight of The GBB young people’s favourite holiday experiences, including two interagency youth events inviting youth services from across the city which brought together 180 young people.

“Aisha has been entrusted with significant responsibility by her parent, often managing many of her family’s day-to-day commitments alongside her siblings. Through the Mixed Tape Holiday Program, and especially during the Luna Park excursion, Aisha found a new group of friends. For that day, she seemed free from the weight of her family responsibilities and wasn’t talking about them in the way she usually does.”

-Post-Program Staff Observation

”

Improved Wellbeing and Life Skills



In the last 12 months:

91%

of children agreed they tried something new during the school holidays

100%

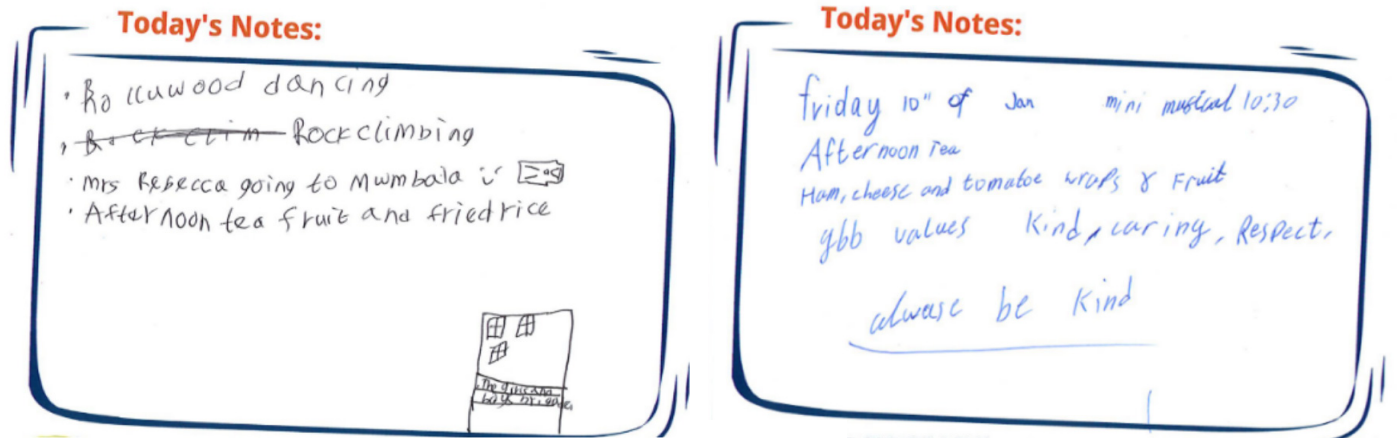
of youth agreed they learned a new life skill from camp activities

“Dance, acting and using their bodies to create art helps with their emotional development and self-expression. The crafting was also great. My boys came home with countless creations showcasing their creative brain at work. Thanks again and I’m so grateful to be a part of GBB!”

-Parent at The GBB

”

Research on Australian Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) consistently highlights the positive impact play and leisure have on children’s wellbeing, including their happiness, optimism and sense of fun. The Children’s Vacation Care program uses diverse recreation and leisure activities to improve children’s social, emotional and physical wellbeing.



Sports day with the Sydney Swans		
Pre-Program Goals	Program Observations	Post-Program Evaluation
“Encourage Mateo’s listening skills, team participation and self-regulation.”	“Team-based games required children to rely on one another, building trust and a shared sense of belonging. As they celebrated each other’s successes their self-esteem and group identity flourished. We observed children who are often hesitant in group settings step forward with enthusiasm.”	“Mateo demonstrated persistence when skills didn’t come easily. We also observed Mateo discussing being an AFL player when he grows up.”

The GBB’s camps similarly supported young people’s wellbeing by providing opportunities to develop new life skills and gain meaningful experiences.

In September, for example, The GBB collaborated with Mountains Youth Services Team (MYST), whose youth cohort guided GBB participants along a clifftop hike and hands-on outdoor activities. Before this, 14 year old Ayaan’s experience of the world was limited to inner-city Sydney. He was also often anxious of trying new activities and preferred to stay close to GBB staff for support. The expansive landscape of the Blue Mountains took him by surprise as he repeated “I didn’t know this existed” to those around him.

Through new and physically demanding activities Ayaan began to demonstrate growing confidence and independence. In a survey completed after camp, Ayaan described these activities, including “making fire”, as his favourite experience on camp, stating “because I feel proud of myself.”





It's good for the kids to see all of us parents socialising and getting along, because they then begin to understand the importance of community.

-Parent at The GBB

OUTCOME 3

The GBB increases connection & belonging

THE PROBLEM

Research with NSW families highlights:

- Families experiencing financial stress **socialise less, participate in fewer community activities** and **feel less a part of the community.**
- Financial hardship **weakens belonging and trust** in others.
- Friendships and social connections can lessen the impact of financial hardship on wellbeing and happiness.

OUR SOLUTION

The GBB's children's, youth, parent/carer and family programs encourage community connection every weekday throughout the year. These activities **create safe environments** in which they can **develop and strengthen friendships** with their peers while participating in **shared activities.**

Developing Peer Connections

For children and youth, their sense of community is built through the friendships they create during school holiday programs and camps. These activities create safe environments to develop and strengthen friendships with peers while participating in shared activities.

The March Boys Camp to the Central Coast, for example, was Jun’s first camp after only enrolling at The GBB five weeks earlier. Despite his first time meeting the other boys, he said making friends was “easy” after describing sharing a room, chatting at night, laughing at funny moments, and spending time together outside. Jun’s interview demonstrates how camps help young people build trust and a strong sense of belonging in a short period of time.

What do you like most about camp?		
“I get to hang out with my friends for a whole day. It’s basically like a school day with my friends.”	“That I make new friends”	“That you have lots of friends to play with”

Partnerships with neighbouring children’s and youth services also allow young people to widen their peer networks, particularly for youth who staff say are hesitant to socialise with peers outside their immediate circle.

The GBB’s ongoing collaboration with MYST, for example, has produced two camps and two school holiday programs. These collaborative programs achieved strong social outcomes for all participants.



Feedback from Youth Camp participants		
“I really liked going on the bushwalks and making new friends from MYST”	“I made lots of new friends”	“I enjoyed coming to the Blue Mountains because I got to meet new people”

74%

Of children and youth agreed they strengthened their friendships with peers through camp.

For parents and carers, it is family events at The GBB, including; monthly Family Dinner nights, parent education workshops and parent/carers drop-in cafes, that create a sense of community.

Family Dinner Night Reflections

“The networking I can do with other mums during family dinner nights is invaluable as we can support each other too.”

62%

of families agreed Family Dinner Nights give them an opportunity to socialise with other families

Also, it provides a moment of contact and a perfect-sized chance to chat & connect with other mums / families. This, along with other aspects of GBB, gives children and families an enhanced experience of community. For my own family, this is of higher value because we are estranged from ^{almost} all of our extended family. So ~~of~~ receiving pantry items from GBB has a feeling of having a really lovely Nanna! Who is trusted and reliable. Food is vital to bonding!

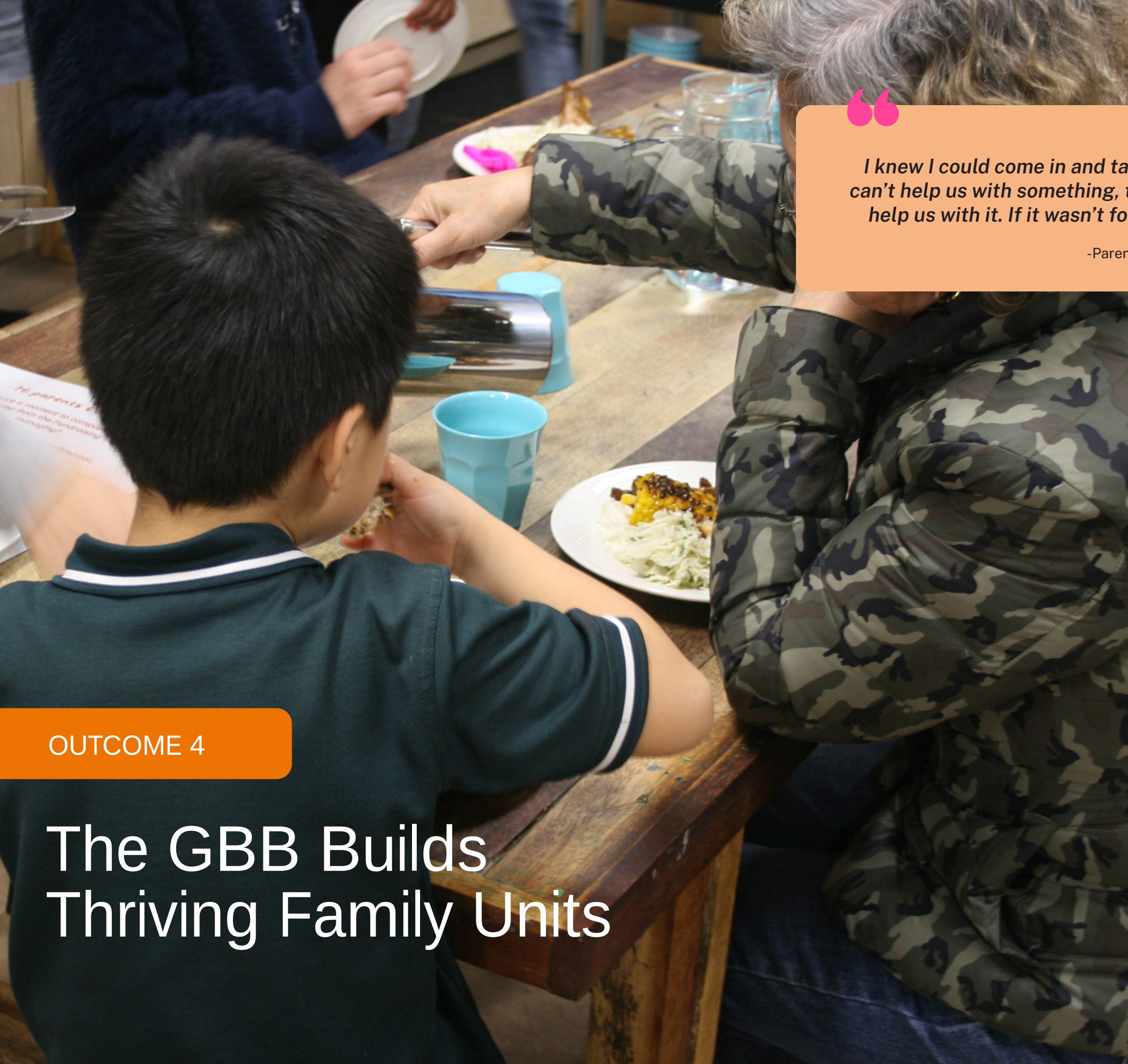
“

Last Friday’s Oz Tag throwdown was an amazing day! It was great seeing different organisations and communities come together. All our young people are really looking forward to the next one.

”

-Community partner of The GBB





I knew I could come in and talk to them about anything. If they can't help us with something, then they'll know a service that can help us with it. If it wasn't for them, I would have had nothing.

-Parent at The GBB



OUTCOME 4

The GBB Builds Thriving Family Units

THE PROBLEM

- **\$22 billion is spent on late intervention**, and NSW is the highest spending state.
- Late intervention **causes poor outcomes** for children, **ongoing challenges** for families and **long-term strain** on communities.
- **Early intervention** and **wrap-around support** is key.

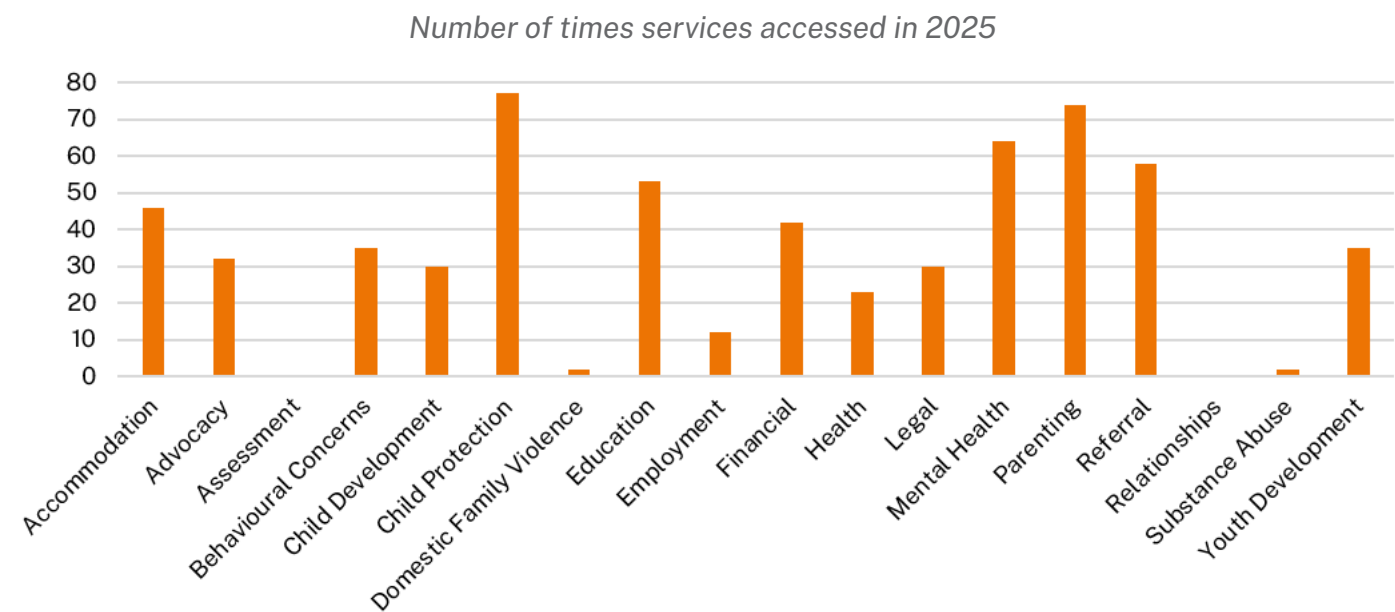
OUR SOLUTION

The GBB's Family Support Program (FSP) provides early intervention and trauma-informed support including **counselling, advocacy, referrals, family events, parenting education, wellbeing workshops and material and food relief**. With this consistent wrap-around support, the FSP improved parent/carer wellbeing and improved each family's ability to shield young people from the effects of adversity.

Increased Access to Support

Demand for the FSP grew significantly in the last 12 months with the number of families accessing support doubling (102%) between December 2024 and December 2025. In the same period, the number of parents and carers needing casual support increased by 62% in the same period. To better respond to this increased need a second Family Support Coordinator was hired in October 2025. With additional support the FSP has provided both complex casework and preventative support.

The below chart demonstrates the types of complex casework provided by the FSP, highlighting both the depth of the need and the breadth of support provided.



With families accessing The GBB’s services for an average of

3.7 years*

many receive multiple forms of support throughout their time here.

*Based on families currently accessing our FSP since its establishment in 2019.

The GBB supports the family unit because we know for young people to thrive, they need whole family support. Our FSP provides resources, counselling, advocacy, referrals, parent education workshops, and welcoming social events for parents.



Family Activities



Qualified Staff



Practical Support



Improved Family Wellbeing



This organisation looks at the unique challenges that everyone has, and it tries – not even tries – it succeeds, in supporting people in all their different plights.

-Parent at The GBB



The GBB has supported a mother and her two children since 2020, initially through enrolment of their two children in After School Care and Vacation Care. Over time, this practical support became a doorway to deeper engagement.

In 2024, the mother enrolled in The GBB’s delivery of the Bringing Up Great Teens parenting course. At this time, she was navigating significant challenges in her relationship. During the course, staff became aware she was experiencing distress due to family violence and supported her to access individual counselling through the FSP.

In early 2025, The GBB worked with the mother to connect her with local domestic violence services, providing coordinated support as she prepared to separate from her partner. With wrap-around support from the FSP and community partners, the family was able to move safely out of the home.

During this transition, one child began showing signs of increasing anxiety and withdrawal within the Children’s Program.

Staff observed her isolating herself and struggling to communicate with others. After receiving this information, staff organised a cognitive assessment which confirmed diagnoses of PTSD and an intellectual disability.

To better support the child and her family, the Family Support Coordinator worked closely with the NDIS to co-design a tailored behaviour support plan. This involved ongoing coordination between specialists and ensuring plans and reports were explained in a way the child and her mother could understand.

Since this support was put in place, staff have observed meaningful changes; she is now engaging in two-way communication with eye contact, participating confidently with peers, and developing new interests.

This demonstrates the importance of long-term support for the whole family because although immediate challenges may be resolved, these challenges can cause or trigger long-term effects.

HOW DO WE KNOW THESE OUTCOMES LEAD TO LONG-TERM IMPACT?

Although The GBB is in the early stages of our evaluation journey with only two years' worth of data, anecdotal and empirical evidence collected from new and long-term alumni over the past ten years has consistently highlighted the positive and enduring impact of The GBB. For many alumni, their success in adulthood is attributed to their participation in The GBB's programs throughout their childhood and adolescence.



Looking back, I realise how important it was to not only be around children who were living through similar experiences to me but to have well-adjusted adults in my life who taught me that my future held endless opportunities.

-Sasha, Full Time Nanny and Student, attended The GBB for 12 years



We also know it is the holistic nature of GBB programs that drives long-term impact. Young people who attend both the Children's Program and the Youth Program are more likely to have developed life skills like self-confidence and independence, are more likely to attend The GBB regularly and are more likely to practice the positive values The GBB teaches.

As we continue to strengthen our evaluation approach and expand our evidence base, these long-term insights will become richer. Research references can be viewed on our website.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The GBB's first Impact Report has explored how our programs achieve four interconnected outcomes – learning, recreation, family and community – to create the foundations for young people to succeed in life. This report has highlighted that The GBB achieves these outcomes by providing diverse and holistic programs and activities. In the context of growing disadvantage and increasing pressure on families, these programs create a consistent support network that bridge the gap between adversity and wellbeing.

PRIVACY MATTERS

To protect the privacy of the young people and families at The GBB, we take care with how images are shared. Images in our printed reports are intended for viewing only by trusted supporters, and we kindly ask that they are not photographed, scanned, or shared beyond the printed document. This digital version features anonymised imagery and can be shared more broadly. Thank you for helping us safeguard the privacy of the families we support.

IMPACT REPORT REFERENCES BY SECTION

Introduction

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Outcome 1: The GBB increases young people's learning outcomes

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Outcome 2: The GBB improves young people's social-emotional wellbeing

Saunders, P., Bedford, M., Brown, J., Naidoo, Y., & Adamson, E. (2018). Material Deprivation and Social Exclusion Among Young Australians: A child-focused approach. Australian Research Council and UNSW Sydney. <https://apo.org.au/node/205541>.

Outcome 3: The GBB increases connection & belonging

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Outcome 4: The GBB builds thriving family units

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