

Unlocking potential

Empowering young Australians through education



Contents

Introduction	1
Message from the Chairman and the CEO	2
Compounding effects of disadvantage	5
Creating lasting change.....	6
Our strategy.....	8
Our progress.....	10
 Deeper impact	12
Broader reach	20
Strategic foundations	26
Corporate governance	42
Financial summary	46
Contact details	49

Our vision

A world where every child has the opportunity to change their future.

Our purpose

To overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

Our belief

Education is one of the most powerful change agents.

Our values

Respect – We are caring.
Integrity – We are ethical.
Collaboration – We work together.
Innovation – We are dynamic.
Excellence – We strive for quality.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Smith Family pays respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country in the communities in which we work throughout Australia, and recognises their connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and to Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and Custodians of the Land. We acknowledge that the land on which our workplaces are located are the lands of the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country.



Empowering young Australians through education

Every day across Australia, thousands of children wake up with big dreams for their future. But not all have the same chance to pursue them, held back before they even begin by educational inequality.

Education is about possibility – it's the foundation for a future shaped by choice, not circumstance.

Yet not every young person gets the opportunity to make the most of their education. For some, their school journey is characterised by complex barriers beyond their control – like financial stress, housing insecurity and intergenerational disadvantage.

This year, the lingering effects of the cost-of-living crisis and the digital divide – the gap between those with and without access to devices, internet and digital skills – deepened the hardships facing families already stretched thin.

These pressures can erode a student's confidence, motivation and ambition. They undermine learning and make it harder to stay on track. Students experiencing disadvantage are more likely to need extra support to meet minimum literacy and numeracy standards. They're also less likely to finish Year 12 or pursue further study.

Every child is full of potential and deserves the chance to reach it.

That's why we partner with young people and families to help overcome those barriers. Our long-term, evidence-based programs build skills, confidence and connection, beginning early to develop strong foundations before their first day at school.

As they move through the years, we are there with financial assistance, practical resources and tailored learning opportunities. And when it's time for the next step, we link them with career guidance and mentoring to support their transition into further study, training or work. Alongside this, we equip parents and caregivers with the confidence and skills to support their child's learning – after all, families are a child's first teachers.

The right support at the right time makes all the difference.

Education can change a life. It's where potential is unlocked and dreams are nurtured – and where young people gain the skills and confidence to achieve them.

Message from the Chairman and the CEO

At The Smith Family, we believe education is a powerful force for change. It equips young people with the skills and confidence to shape their futures. When we create this opportunity, Australia becomes a more equitable, cohesive and prosperous nation.

Yet for too many, making the most of education is out of reach. The latest NAPLAN results tell a stark story: students from low socio-economic backgrounds are 10 times more likely to need extra help meeting minimum standards than their more advantaged peers.

Financial stress strains a family's resources, and recently this burden has only grown with ongoing cost-of-living pressures. This can undermine a young person's learning, affect wellbeing and narrow their sense of what's possible.

This last year, we have continued to see positive steps forward with greater investment in education including the signing of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement. This long-awaited commitment will lead to needs-based funding for all public schools by 2034, and a commitment to improved outcomes through evidence-based programs for schools.

What also matters is what happens outside the 'school gate' and that's why we partner with families, schools and communities to help students overcome the barriers created by poverty.

Together, with our generous donors, partners and volunteers, we're creating opportunities for young Australians. Because with the right support, education can help them create a brighter future – not just for themselves, but for Australia.

Outcome focused

Everything we do is focused on the best available evidence or building new evidence through innovation. We want to reach as many people as possible, and as of 30 June 2025, we were supporting 71,818 *Learning for Life* students – up from 67,165 last year.

Along with broadening our reach, we focus on deepening our impact. This year, we improved our *Learning for Life* delivery model and updated our practice approach to ensure team members always have access to the best available data so they can celebrate a young person's achievements or intervene when the challenge a family is experiencing might impact their child's education. This data is also vitally important for us in enabling our team members to identify opportunities to improve our work.

To ensure our programs are delivered efficiently and effectively, we carried out an organisational review and restructure. Outcomes included changes to sharpen our focus on school-age *Learning for Life* students, a new organisation structure reflecting the consolidation of executive portfolios, and general operating cost reductions – including data storage optimisation. Sadly, this did result in some colleagues leaving our organisation. We thank each of them for the contribution they have made to advancing our impact.

Data focus and innovation

Following the rollout of data-sharing dashboards with the governments of South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, we launched another this year with the Queensland Department of Education. These dashboards provide near real-time access to critical data about *Learning for Life* students, covering attendance, academic achievement, enrolment and behavioural records. This data is key to helping us address educational inequality.

Across the four dashboards, we now have data for more than 20,000 students, increasing our ability to provide targeted, timely support.

Through our NextGen digital transformation program, we co-designed a new online attendance tool that saves time for Program Coordinators and helps us better manage data risks. We also created a registration tracker, so school contacts can monitor registrations in real-time, and a program recommendation tool for school-based programs.

We continued to prioritise data security and cyber resilience, completing one of our most significant IT infrastructure programs. This meant we could fully decommission our legacy data centre and transition to a modern cloud-only environment.

This year, we also explored how artificial intelligence (AI) can improve our work. We trialled Microsoft 365 Copilot with a group of team members to identify practical cases for building AI agents and designed our first AI-based digital assistant to help Family Partnership Coordinators prepare for interactions with families.

Finances and funding

Fundraising conditions continued to prove difficult during 2024–25. Despite cost-of-living pressures easing somewhat, economic conditions remained uncertain, with consequent impact on household budgets. However, our generous supporters contributed record amounts, giving \$154.3 million to fund our vital work. We are extremely grateful for their contributions and commitment to supporting the students and families we work with.



The operating result for the year was a deficit of \$5.3 million, down from an operating deficit of \$11.0 million in 2024. The deficit was part of our multi-year investment program where we intentionally invested our surplus funds into programs that are expected to provide long term returns for our students. Savings made as part of an organisation review and restructure will be reflected in future periods. The restructuring program focused on underpinning the long-term sustainability of our programs and allowed us to more effectively pursue our strategy of broadening and deepening the reach of those programs.

Our reserves remain at a healthy level and are expected to be sufficient to fund the organisation's strategy while ensuring our ongoing viability.

We value the generosity of all supporters and partners, and our commitment is to use donated funds in the most efficient and effective manner to deliver the most impact through our programs. During the year, the organisation continued to grow our fundraising capabilities to support the implementation of The Smith Family's longer-term growth plans, with a particular focus on the core areas of individual and philanthropic fundraising.

Investment in operational capability and systems to deliver increased productivity and effectiveness is also an important part of ensuring The Smith Family can continue its support of students and families into the future.

We introduced a new suite of tools to monitor and respond to changes in key indicators, to help refine our priorities, reduce costs and improve consistency of delivery. We also implemented a data labelling framework to strengthen the protection of personal and sensitive information and made significant investments to enhance our human resources and operational systems.

With these investments, and in collaboration with all our partners, we are building a strong, sustainable organisation that will be well positioned to deliver on our core purpose of reducing educational inequality into the future.

Empowering our people

This year, through our Culture Initiative, we continued to make significant progress towards building a culture that supports performance and wellbeing. It is a key step in creating a more constructive, inclusive workplace. Through team-led conversations, we defined our ideal culture and began aligning our practices to support achievement, self-fulfilment and collaboration across the organisation.

We also strengthened our employee value proposition. Meeting our team's diverse needs is a priority, as demonstrated by the launch of Sonder, a holistic wellbeing and safety app for staff.

Additionally, we improved our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies and introduced new leave entitlements. Progress in reducing the gender pay gap and maintaining strong female representation in leadership shows our commitment to equity and diversity.

Completion of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award review marked a major milestone. This complex process ensures current and former team members receive their full entitlements, while embedding long-term compliance in day-to-day operations. We also restarted enterprise agreement bargaining and developed a new classification structure, laying the foundation for a fairer, more sustainable employment framework.



Commitment to child safety

Being a child-safe organisation remains central to everything we do. This year, we extended this enduring commitment through our Strengthening Child Safeguarding initiative and delivered several key improvements. These included upgrades to our Internal Child Safety Alert system, a review of our safeguarding framework, and the introduction of safeguarding indicator reporting.

Embedding the 'voice of the child' in our work was another area of focus. Initiatives like our Youth Engagement Research Group, ethical storytelling workshops and our Statement of Accountability to Children and Young People ensure children's perspectives are heard and shape our decision-making.

Progressing our Reconciliation Action Plan

Our 2025–2028 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) outlines initiatives to strengthen reconciliation. These include establishing a dedicated business unit to advance self-determination and cultural governance, improving the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members, and deepening cultural learning across our entire organisation.

We're grateful for the guidance of our National Advisory Group and internal RAP working groups.

The number of *Learning for Life* students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander increased to 18,715 (26.1%), up from 16,924 last year. We continue work on our Puzzle Project, which provides a framework to better understand and improve services to families who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the young people, families and communities we work with for their dedication to education and creating better futures.

We thank the Governor General, Her Excellency, the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, for her support as Patron of both The Smith Family and VIEW Clubs of Australia. And our thanks go to our Board members and advisory groups for their commitment, expertise and insights.

Thank you, as well, to the 197,360 generous sponsors and donors, 5,478 volunteers and 12,948 members of VIEW Clubs who supported us this year.

We are equally grateful to our 54 corporate partners, 187 trust and foundation partners, six university and multiple community partners; as well as the Australian Government and state and territory governments for their critical support.

So too, we are thankful to our partner schools and the many non-government organisations we worked with, for their shared commitment to our purpose.

We also deeply appreciate the voluntary efforts of our ambassadors and champions – Sarah Harris, Dr Craig Challen SC OAM and Brooke Boney.

Lastly, our gratitude and appreciation go to all our team members for their dedication, hard work and support. In particular, we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Leonie Green, Anne Hampshire and Rhys Kelly during their time as executives with The Smith Family. We extend our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to each of them.

Directors who retired

This year, Christine Cawsey AM and Jeremy Maycock retired from our Board after many years of dedicated service. We acknowledge their important contributions across so many important areas of our work. We thank them for their valued leadership and wish them well in the future.

Nicholas Moore AO, Chairman and Doug Taylor, Chief Executive Officer

Students in our ***Learning for Life*** program face complex and cumulative challenges:



All live in **low-income families.**



More than half live in a **single-parent family.**



Four-in-ten students and more than one-third of parents and carers have a **disability or health issue.**



Half have a parent or carer who **didn't finish Year 12 or equivalent.**



Around three-quarters have a parent or carer who **is not in paid employment.**



44% of school-aged *Learning for Life* students **do not have a laptop or tablet and/or live in a household without mobile or broadband internet.** The figure for secondary students is 32%.

Compounding effects of disadvantage

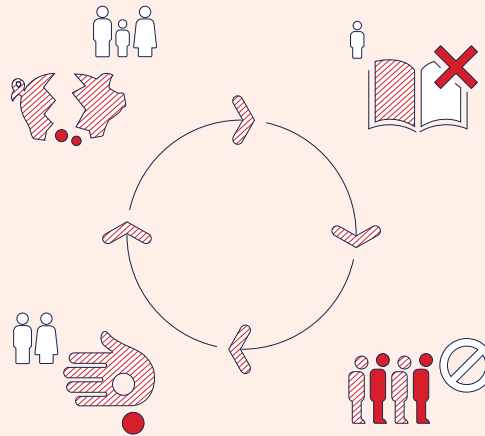
The risk factors that can lead to educational disadvantage can begin in a child's early years and continue throughout their school life. The contributors to disadvantage in this cycle are complex, and without the right support at the right time the effects can be long term and intergenerational.

1. Family challenges

Include sickness, disability, unemployment, difficulty affording basic living costs, inability to provide resources for their child's education, limited access to digital technology and skills, and a lack of knowledge or confidence about how best to support children's educational development.

4. Overall life outcomes impacted

Inability to get ahead in life, health and wellbeing affected, passing disadvantage on to the next generation.



2. Reduced educational outcomes for children

Behind in essential skills when they start school, not having the items they need to fit in, having limited access to resources for learning development, falling behind at school and facing difficulty in catching up, and having limited access to the support needed for guiding study and/or career paths.

3. Difficulty getting a job

A lack of engagement and motivation with their education, lower educational performance, leaving school early with few or no qualifications, fewer job opportunities, and having limited connections to community networks and services.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Small moments, big confidence



Anne, Program Coordinator

"I've been with The Smith Family for fifteen years. The communities I work in are diverse, and many families face challenges in their lives. Our team builds strong connections with families, helping us provide multi-level support to engage students in our programs.

I get a real sense of joy watching our *Learning for Life* students grow and thrive throughout their educational journey. In my fifteen years, I've had the unique opportunity of witnessing students start their scholarships in primary school, continue with support from The Smith Family throughout high school, and then pursue their own careers.

One student is starting high school next year; a transition that can be quite challenging. At a recent Learning Club, this student came up to me, book in hand, and said,

'Miss, can I read a book to the class?'. This was music to my ears. A moment like this wouldn't have happened without the support that he gets from his Learning Club tutors, *student2student* buddies and Family Partnership Coordinator.

This was about more than just improving his reading skills; it was about the increased confidence and pride he demonstrated in wanting to stand up and read to his peers. There's something truly special about witnessing the growth of students in everyday encounters. The self-worth that students can develop and grow with the right support is life changing."

Anne
Program Coordinator

How we work to make a difference

What we bring >

226,365 children, young people and their parents/carers engaged with *Learning for Life* and wraparound programs this year

Practice excellence as frontline team members incorporate evidence-based practice in their work with families to help them set and work towards self-determined goals for their child's education

Partnerships with supporters including individuals, corporates, trusts and foundations, and governments

Our 919 team members and 5,478 volunteers working collectively to achieve our vision

An empowering culture and focus on outcomes

A long history of supporting the education of Australian children and our strong and trusted brand

Sound governance and risk management focused on delivering our strategy, in a manner that is aligned with our purpose and commitment to child safety, reconciliation and sustainability

Data and systems including longitudinal data on what makes a difference for children and young people

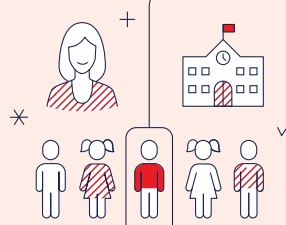
What we do >

Advocacy and influence for policy and system change so that every child has the opportunity to change their future



Evaluation and measurement contribution to overall evidence base and adjusting our course for impact

Program delivery to build skills and knowledge and influence attitudes and behaviours. Programs include *Learning for Life*, other wraparound and community programs, and digital inclusion support



Community and school engagement to understand needs and identify families for support

Program development and continuous improvement of our practice framework through research, innovation and data analysis



Creating lasting change

What we deliver >



Improved outcomes for children and young people

+



Increased number of students supported by *Learning for Life* scholarships and short-course programs

+



Advocacy submissions

+



Strong community partnerships

+



Strong financial stewardship

+



Benefits to team members and volunteers

+



Child safety and strong governance and risk practices, including for cyber security

2024–25 progress >

81.7%

average school attendance of *Learning for Life* students

64.9%

of students in Year 10 advanced to Year 12 by 2024

84%

of students in Year 12 in 2022 were in work and/or study two and a half years after leaving school

90%

of students taking part in our *student2student* program improved their reading

186,499

children and young people participated in our programs

71,818

students on our *Learning for Life* program

8,026

devices issued through the *Digital Learning Essentials* program since 2023

92

advocacy products

>

13

policy submissions

2

publications

1

event

58

external presentations

2

webinars

16

Conversations with The Smith Family podcasts

We partnered with **781 schools in 91 communities** to deliver *Learning for Life*

\$148.3 million

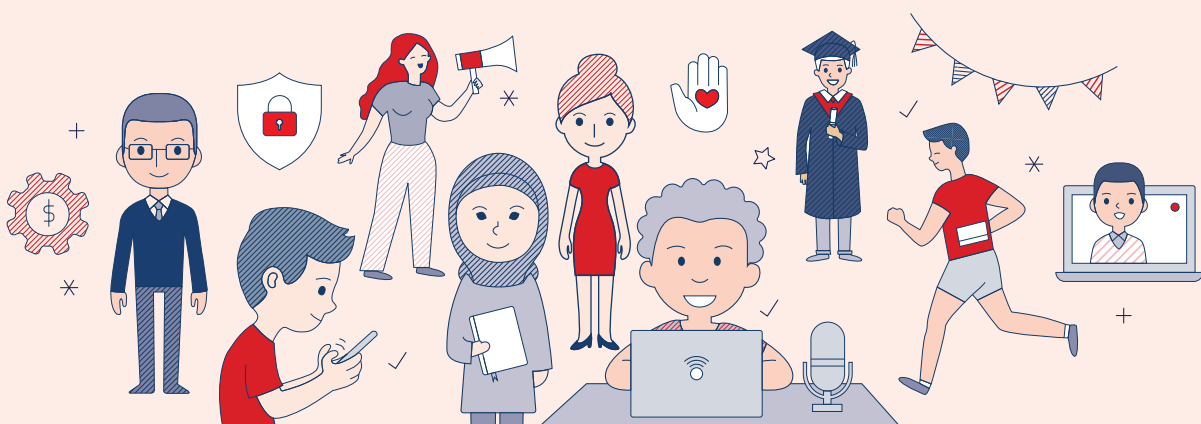
donated by individual supporters, bequestors and our philanthropic partners to assist children and young people.

Completed an organisational review to ensure we remain a strong, sustainable organisation capable of delivering enduring impact for young Australians.

Modernised our workplace through software and hardware upgrades and increased security with data labelling and cyber security learning for all team members.

Launched our capability framework and phase one of our culture and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion roadmaps.

Launched a digital attendance tool to reduce the time Program Coordinators spend on administration.



Our strategy

Ambition	We will deepen our impact and empower young Australians experiencing disadvantage to create a better future for themselves. To do this, we will use personalised, evidence-based practice, data and digital. We are committed to growing the number of <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarship recipients to 100,000 and expanding our programs to reach 250,000 children and young people.			
Our goals	IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES MEASURED BY:			
	Attendance at school	Advancement through school from Year 10 to completion of Year 12 or equivalent	Tertiary completion	Engagement in study or work post-school
WE AIM TO GROW:				
Scholarships: to 100,000 <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarships		Program reach: to 250,000 program participants	Program participation rates: to 50% of <i>Learning for Life</i> students participating in our programs	Digital inclusion: ensuring 100% of <i>Learning for Life</i> students are digitally included
				Funding: to \$220 million in sustainable funding

To achieve these goals, we have developed our strategy around nine strategic priorities and foundations.

Our strategic priorities and foundations 	DEEPER IMPACT THROUGH STRENGTHENED PRACTICE ENABLED BY DATA AND DIGITAL			
		Strengthen impact in <i>Learning for Life</i>	Deepen long-term, evidence-based, personalised practice for <i>Learning for Life</i> recipients to improve student outcomes, including through programs, enabled by data.	
		Leverage digital and partners	Leverage a greater range of partnerships for delivery of short-course programs. Increase digital delivery of short-course programs, with a consistent approach to digitisation.	
		Expand digital inclusion	Ensure all <i>Learning for Life</i> students are digitally included .	
	BROADER REACH			
		Grow reach Grow <i>Learning for Life</i> scholarships and program reach , focusing on existing <i>Learning for Life</i> communities.		Grow influence Grow influence through advocacy in our priority domains to improve the lives of children living in disadvantage. Differentiate ourselves through a refreshed brand .
	STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS TO ENABLE DEEPER IMPACT AND BROADER REACH			
		Grow sustainable funding		Empower our people
		Be cyber secure and invest in digital, data and AI		Strengthen governance, risk management and compliance focus
		Be a child safe organisation		Strive for reconciliation and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
	Embrace diversity, equity and inclusion		Improve our environmental sustainability	

Our highlights from 2024–25

Deeper impact

► Strengthen impact in *Learning for Life*

- ✓ Following the successful rollout of data-sharing dashboards with the governments of South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia, we expanded the initiative this year in partnership with the Queensland Department of Education.
- ✓ We took over The Connection, a program created by Social Ventures Australia. It complements *Learning for Life*, with a network of 4,200 educators across 80 low socioeconomic status schools.

► Leverage digital and partners

- ✓ Through our partnership with High Resolves, we offered an AI tutoring trial, as well as online study support and career coaching for senior students.
- ✓ We advanced the digitisation of our program delivery to improve consistency and ease of use.

► Expand digital inclusion

- ✓ We delivered 2,759 digital devices this year through our *Digital Learning Essentials* program, bringing the total issued since the program's launch to 8,026.
- ✓ Through the Optus Donate Your Data™ initiative, 45,045 students and family members have been provided access to the internet.
- ✓ Our digital inclusion efforts were strengthened through our partnership with WorkVentures and a device trial via the National Device Bank, with Deloitte providing essential support.

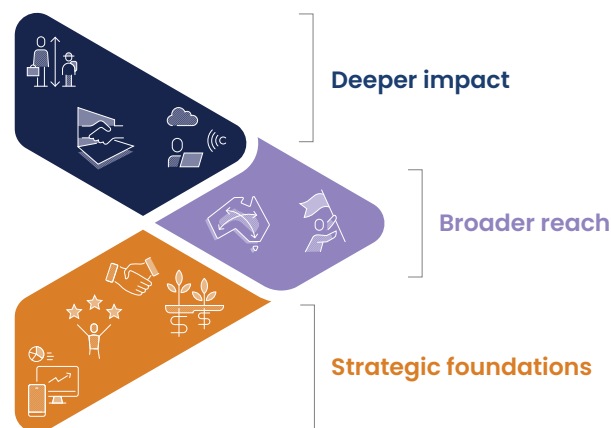
Broader reach

► Grow reach

- ✓ We partnered with 781 schools in 91 communities to deliver *Learning for Life*, supporting 71,818 students, an increase of 7% on the previous year.
- ✓ 186,499 children and young people participated in our programs and activities, up from 178,430 the previous year.

► Grow influence

- ✓ We made 13 public policy submissions, delivered 58 external presentations and placed 12 opinion pieces outlining our advocacy positions in a variety of publications.
- ✓ We continued to engage students and young people through our longitudinal research project Pathways, Engagement and Transitions, drawing on insights from thousands of participants to shape our advocacy and inform policy discussions.
- ✓ We participated in a series of forums with our digital inclusion partner WorkVentures, spotlighting digital poverty during Anti-Poverty Week.



Strategic foundations

► Grow sustainable funding

- ✓ Our individual supporters, bequestors and philanthropic partners donated \$148.3 million to help young people experiencing disadvantage to create a better future through education.
- ✓ We welcomed more than 5,500 new sponsors, almost 4,000 new monthly donors and 12,300 people making their first one-off gift.
- ✓ By year-end, 67,496 people sponsored *Learning for Life* students. Despite challenging economic conditions, almost 93% of our sponsors continued their support.

► Empower our people

- ✓ We progressed our Culture Initiative by defining our ideal culture and launching team-led culture conversations across the organisation.
- ✓ Through our Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award review, remediation was completed for all current team members and over 90% of former team members, with compliance processes embedded into business-as-usual operations.
- ✓ We reduced our gender pay gap and strengthened our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy and governance, with women now holding 70% of senior leadership roles.

► Be cyber secure and invest in digital, technology and data

- ✓ 96% of *Learning for Life* families we support are registered with our My Smith Family portal.
- ✓ Through our NextGen digital transformation program, we co-designed a new online attendance tool that streamlines workflows for Program Coordinators and helps us better manage data risks.
- ✓ We continued to prioritise data security and cyber resilience, completing one of our most significant IT infrastructure programs.

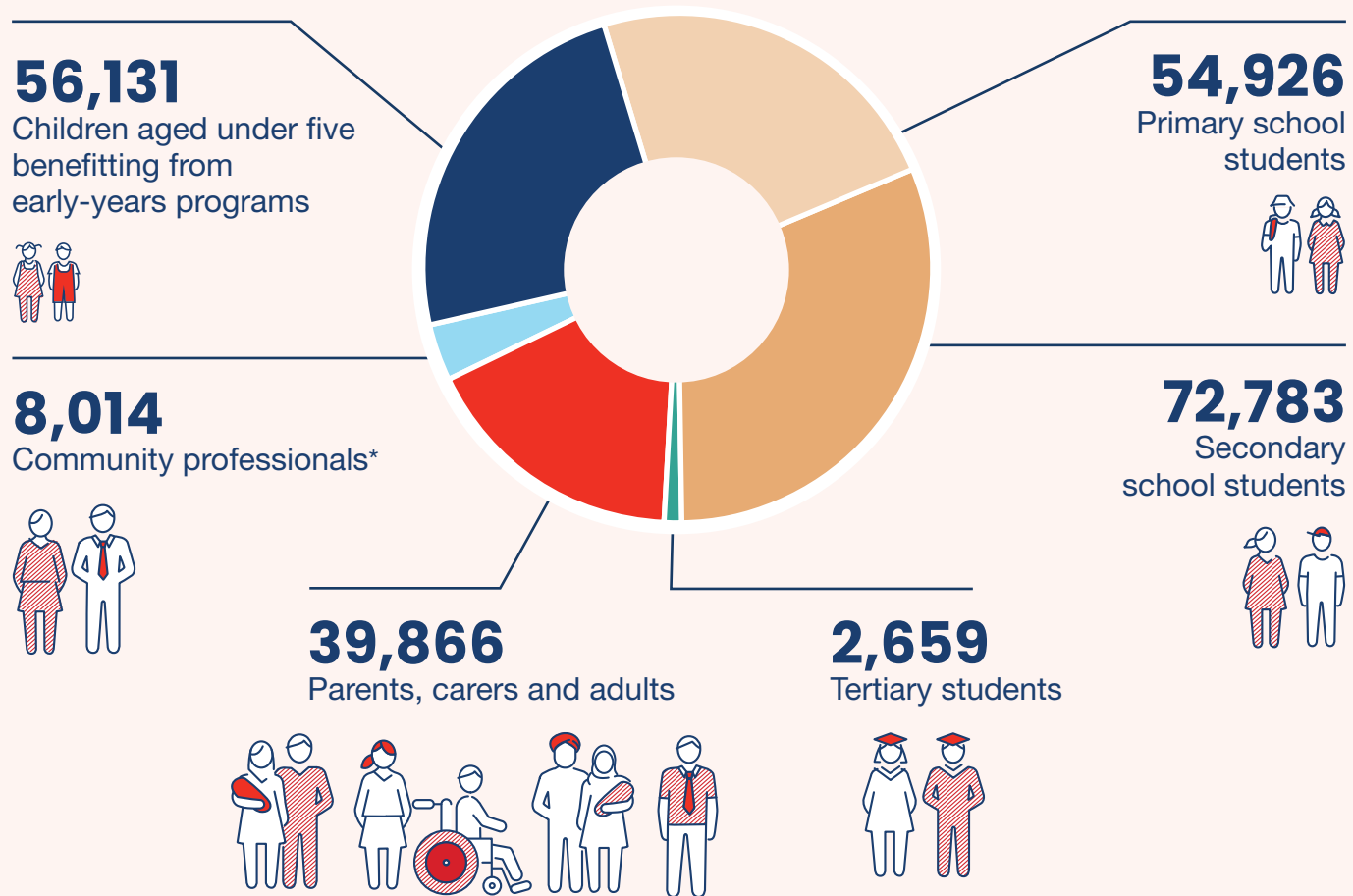
► Strengthen governance, risk management and compliance focus

- ✓ We established ongoing organisational child safeguarding key indicator reporting.
- ✓ We implemented a new AI Governance Group to oversee the responsible and ethical implementation of AI technologies within the organisation.
- ✓ We strengthened our risk culture and capabilities by refining our strategic risk profile, enhancing reporting to our governance bodies and aligning our policy framework with our risk approach.

Our progress

234,379 participants

The Smith Family reached 234,379 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals in 2024–25, up 6.2% on the previous year.



186,499

children and young people participated in our programs in 2024–25

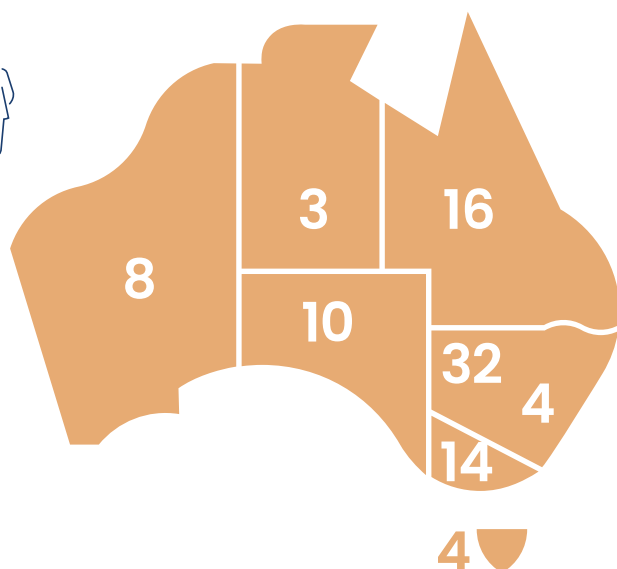
71,818

Learning for Life sponsorship recipients

* Community professionals (not Smith Family team members) include early-years educators and program facilitators in communities.

91 Communities

in which *Learning for Life* programs are delivered



Learning for Life
participation

26.1%

of sponsored students
(18,715) in 2024–25 identified
as Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people

We partnered with

781 schools

attended by *Learning
for Life* students

215,786 Individual supporters

197,360

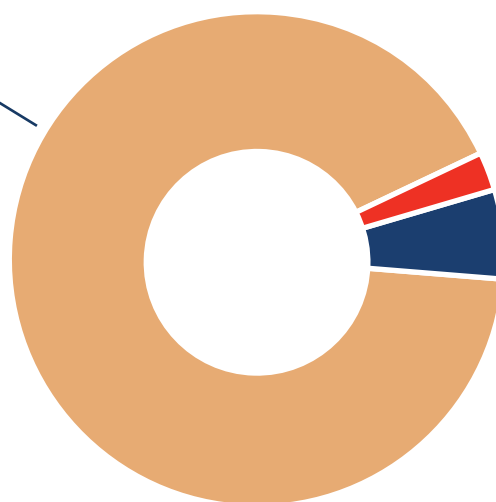
Sponsors and donors

► **67,496**

sponsors of
Learning for Life
students

► **129,864**

donors funding
Learning for Life
programs



5,478

individual volunteers

12,948

members in 270
VIEW Clubs of Australia

247 Partner organisations

54 corporate partners

187 trusts and foundations

6 tertiary institutions





Deeper impact

through a strengthened *Learning for Life* program, strategic partnerships and digital inclusion

IMPACT IN ACTION

Support that unlocks potential

"I'm so grateful for what The Smith Family has done for us. I've got six kids, but only three are at home. Angel is 17 and in a wheelchair. Tye is 13 and Chelsea is 11. We were connected with The Smith Family when my son Brodie, who is now 19, was in primary school. Ever since then, they've supported my children and all their education needs.

I'm a single mum and full-time carer for Angel. Without The Smith Family I wouldn't be able to manage. I couldn't afford the books, the uniforms, the camps, the excursions. The biggest thing for me is the support from my *Learning for Life* Coordinator. Knowing I have someone to reach out to when I need it is amazing.

Chelsea did the reading program for two years. She got on so well with her buddy Emily. They just connected and Chelsea advanced so much in her reading. She was getting extra help at school for her reading, but she doesn't get that anymore. She was actually almost the most improved child in the classroom.

Before The Smith Family, I was always paying off things and I couldn't afford all the books the kids needed at the start of the year. Now with the sponsorship, I can buy them everything outright and they walk into school with all the things they need. When I couldn't afford a laptop, Chelsea was offered one through The Smith Family. She uses it for homework and Tye does a lot of his homework on there.



Lenice and her daughter, Chelsea

The Smith Family has helped me and my kids in so many ways. The kids' sponsors make them feel confident because they go to school with everything they need, just like every other child."

Lenice
Learning for Life mum

Our approach

At The Smith Family, we believe that education is the most powerful change agent. Research shows that children can thrive in their education with the right support at the right time. This, in turn, gives them the best opportunity to realise their potential and create their own futures beyond school.

Our long-term educational support for students experiencing disadvantage helps remove the barriers that poverty puts in the way. This support starts early, in the pre-school years, with foundational numeracy and literacy programs to ensure that children are ready to start and flourish at school.

Then, through our *Learning for Life* program, The Smith Family works collaboratively with children and their families throughout primary and secondary school to deliver positive educational outcomes.

Learning for Life provides each student with:

- financial assistance to help pay for school essentials like uniforms, textbooks, digital tools and excursions
- support from a Family Partnerships Coordinator (FPC), who works closely with their family to problem-solve any barriers to education
- access to various short programs to improve literacy, numeracy and digital literacy outcomes and connections to mentoring and career-related opportunities.

A core part of our approach is helping to build each family's capacity to engage in their child's learning. Studies consistently show that children whose parents are engaged in their education, regardless of income or background, are more likely to succeed at school, graduate and undertake further study. That's why our FPCs work closely with each family to set achievable goals relevant to their circumstances and provide coaching support and/or referral to other support services as necessary.

Our work has been underpinned by a commitment to being data-led and informed. Insights from program data, fidelity checks, and stakeholder feedback have guided decision-making, shaped interventions, and enabled us to measure progress with precision. We have also taken significant steps to improve the accessibility of this data, refreshing our dashboards with a user-centred design and providing targeted training so staff at all levels can access, interpret, and apply information with confidence. By making data more visible and actionable, we have empowered teams to respond to emerging needs and track the impact of their work in real time.

Deepening our impact

Our commitment to lasting impact drives our work with children and families. We pursue this through three strategic priorities – strengthening the effectiveness of our *Learning for Life* program, harnessing digital technologies and partnerships for growth and innovation, and advancing digital inclusion to ensure students and families have the access, tools and opportunities they need to thrive.

Strategic priority 1

Strengthening the impact of our work

Over the last year, our team has worked with unwavering focus to deepen our impact for students. We have aligned every action with our Theory of Change, ensuring that our time, energy and resources are invested where they can achieve the greatest outcomes.

We have refreshed and strengthened our policies to respond to contemporary challenges in education and community needs. With every decision, we kept students at the centre of our thinking, ensuring that our strategic and operational choices were guided by what would best support their success.

A significant milestone was the completion of our *Learning for Life* delivery model project. This initiative harnessed key learnings and strengthened our emphasis on implementation fidelity across programs – reinforcing that how we deliver is just as critical as what we deliver. In parallel, we evolved our practice approach to ensure that data is continuously available and applied to help us reflect on and refine our practice. This way, we can better build on existing strengths and hone our focus on continuous improvement.

Building on the ongoing success of our Education Dashboard South Australia (EDSA), developed with the South Australian Department for Education, and our Education Dashboard Tasmania (EDTAS), with the Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People, we expanded the initiative to other areas. In 2024, we launched the Education Dashboard Western Australia (EDWA) in partnership with the Western Australian Department of Education, followed by the Education Dashboard Queensland (EDQ) in 2025, developed with the Queensland Department of Education. Across the four dashboards, we are now accessing current education data for more than 20,000 *Learning for Life* students, increasing our organisational capacity to provide targeted and timely support for the students and families we work with.



Strategic priority 2

Leverage digital and partners

We are building strategic partnerships to drive growth and innovation across our short-course programs.

Given the complex challenges faced by the children, young people and families we support, forming partnerships with a broad range of services and organisations remains central to our approach. These collaborations help deliver wraparound support and uncover new opportunities, enabling us to focus on our core strengths while extending access to complementary services.

This year, we deepened our commitment to personalised learning outside traditional school settings through digital delivery. Highlights include our partnership with High Resolves, which enabled *Learning for Life* students to take part in an adaptive trial of AI-enabled tutoring, alongside new collaborations offering online study support and career coaching for senior students.

We also advanced the digitisation of our program delivery to improve consistency and ease of use. By streamlining our digital tools, we're making processes faster and more accessible for students, families, schools and partners.

Strategic priority 3

Expand digital inclusion

Our long-term aim is to ensure that all *Learning for Life* students are digitally included.

Digital inclusion is critical to ensuring students fully participate in their education and have the opportunity to build the skills they need for future study and employment. Being digitally included means having access to a reliable device and internet connection at home, along with the skills to navigate online environments safely. Currently, 44% of school-aged *Learning for Life* students face barriers in this area, lacking a laptop or tablet in a household with internet access.

Our *Digital Learning Essentials* program targets students with the highest need. This support enables students to complete homework and assignments while building their understanding of technology and helping them develop critical thinking, creativity and career-ready skills. We delivered 2,759 digital devices this year, bringing the total issued since the program's 2023 launch to 8,026.

Through the support of our valued partner Optus, 11,429 additional students and family members benefited from the Optus Donate Your Data™ initiative. This took the total number of students and family members supported through this initiative to 45,045. The past year also marked the conclusion of the Australian Government's School Student Broadband Initiative, through which we have connected a total of 2,186 families to broadband.

Our digital inclusion work also continued through our partnership with social enterprise WorkVentures, and a trial of devices delivered via the National Device Bank. Our partner, Deloitte, provided critical support for this project.

The positive impact of these initiatives is clear. Feedback from 4,227 families in our annual survey demonstrates the difference access to basic digital resources and support can make: enabling engagement with learning tasks both in and out of school, increasing access to information, supporting communication, boosting confidence and alleviating cost-of-living pressures.

We are also continuing to enhance our online Digital Skills Hub for *Learning for Life* families, providing guidance on safe and effective technology use and building digital literacy capabilities. In 2024–2025, the hub recorded 8,924 visits, with families spending an average of four minutes exploring more than seven articles per session. This reflects the practical value and reach of this resource.

Indigenous Youth Leadership Program students from St. Joseph's College performing during National Reconciliation Week.



Our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

In 2024, the school attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Year 10 was 65.5%, compared to 85.3% for non-Indigenous students.¹ This disparity highlights the significant impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The challenge

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students often face complex social and systemic challenges that can impact their educational outcomes. While families, communities, organisations, governments and education providers continue to work hard to support these students, disparities in outcomes compared to non-Indigenous students persist.

We understand that changing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people requires a fundamental shift in how systems operate and interact with them, their families and communities. Building strong partnerships with communities and delivering consistent, culturally appropriate and targeted support can make a meaningful difference in students' learning journeys.

18,715

Learning for Life students identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

How we help

This year, 26.1% of our *Learning for Life* program students identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We are working on our 2025–2028 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which sets out the range of actions we will take to continue contributing to reconciliation in Australia. This plan sets out three key focus areas:

- developing a business unit within our Finance and Corporate functional area to progress work in self-determination and cultural governance
- recruiting and retaining team members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with an initial focus on improving our systems and processes to enhance team members' experiences
- increasing cultural learning for all team members to expand our understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights.

We continue to be grateful for the advice and generous support provided by our National Advisory Group members on issues concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and our internal working groups, which form part of our RAP Governance Structure.

We are continuing our work on our Puzzle Project, which provides a framework to better understand and improve our services to families who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Supporting a child's educational journey

Early years

When starting school, more than one in three children in Australia's most disadvantaged communities are developmentally vulnerable in at least one of five key areas, including language and cognitive development. In the most advantaged communities, this figure is around one in six.²

The challenge

Starting school is a significant milestone for every child and their family. The abilities children can draw on when they begin school affect their engagement in learning and their academic success. Concerningly, from 2021 to 2024, the percentage of children developmentally vulnerable when starting school has increased across all five key areas measured in the Australian Early Development Census, particularly for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.³ This makes it even more critical for every pre-schooler to have the chance to develop the basic language, numeracy, physical, social, and emotional skills they need to achieve positive educational outcomes later in life.

How we help

This year, following a review of The Smith Family's role in the early years, including consultation with parents and carers of children under five, we identified opportunities to add greater value in supporting school transition. As part of this, we conducted a proof-of-concept initiative in Mirrabooka, Western Australia, building on the strong foundations and relationships established through our Child and Parent Centre in Westminster.

Over four weeks, we hosted four sessions during which parents and carers came together to explore transition-to-school topics and engage directly with various experts. The sessions were well attended and highly engaging, with positive feedback from participants. Further scoping and development work will continue to build on these insights and explore broader implementation opportunities.

The revision of our *Let's Read* program is progressing well. In partnership with United Way Australia (UWA), we trialled a session that incorporated Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL), for which UWA is the Australian licensee. This trial enabled us to explore the combined impact of *Let's Read* and DPIL on families and children, particularly in increasing the number of books in homes. It also provided an opportunity to test the updated pedagogy and practices within the *Let's Read* program. Initial feedback indicates that early-years professionals have found the revised approach effective in engaging families and supporting young children's literacy development.

Key initiatives include *Communities for Children* (3,894 participants), *Let's Count* (26,225 participants), *Let's Read* (25,018 participants) and *Child and Parent Centres* (943 participants).

Primary years

One in three (33%) Year 3 students whose parents have not completed Year 12 need additional reading support, compared to only 4% of Year 3 students whose parents have a university degree.⁴

The challenge

Children and young people experiencing disadvantage often face complex socioeconomic challenges that make it difficult for them to remain engaged at school. They are more likely to encounter systemic barriers within the education and broader human services systems than other young people. Those experiencing disadvantage are also more likely to enter school developmentally behind their more advantaged peers. Families also often struggle to access essential services such as housing, health care and appropriate disability support services. Lack of access to support networks can directly affect children's educational outcomes.

How we help

Through *Learning for Life*, we help young people access opportunities to build the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that help with their school engagement and educational outcomes.

As students move through primary school, we work with their families to provide a range of educational supports. These include funds that help buy school essentials such as uniforms, shoes and stationery and help pay for extracurricular activities. Our programs in the primary years assist students to improve their literacy and learning and transition to high school.

Our Family Partnerships Coordinators work closely with families to support students to prepare for high school and address any issues they may face. These family check-ins provide an opportunity to build trusting relationships.

This year, our *Passport to Success* program helped more than 5,000 students successfully transition to high school – a pivotal milestone in their educational journey.

Key programs include *Communities for Children* (10,492 participants), *Passport to Success* (5,138 students) and *Learning Club* (2,421 students), *student2student* (911 students) and *Adaptive Learning Platforms* (1,485 students). 35,362 primary years students are sponsored through *Learning for Life*.

56,131 children aged under five participating in early-years programs

54,926 primary years students participating in programs

² Australian Government, Australian Early Development Census, AEDC National Report 2024: *Early childhood development in Australia*, Department of Education, Canberra, 2025.

³ Australian Government, Australian Early Development Census, AEDC National Report 2024: *Early childhood development in Australia*, Department of Education, Canberra, 2025.

⁴ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2025), [NAPLAN national results](#)

Secondary years

Almost a third (31%) of Year 7 students whose parents have not completed Year 12 need additional support in numeracy, compared to only 3% of Year 7 students whose parents have a university degree.⁵

The challenge

The secondary school years can be challenging for young people as they navigate physical, social and emotional changes. During this time, they are also expected to take on more responsibility, as teacher support decreases and schoolwork increases. Young people need skills and support to manage a larger, more complex school environment, complete Year 12 and smoothly transition to post-school pathways. Experiencing disadvantage, financial hardship, complex relationships and family health issues can make these years especially challenging.

How we help

Research shows that evidence-based career education in schools boosts productivity by improving skills and reducing disengagement. When students receive quality career education, they are more likely to choose a career path earlier and transition to work faster. However, students experiencing disadvantage in Australia are significantly less likely to access this support compared to their more advantaged peers.

Through the Growing Careers Project, and in partnership with around 60 schools nationwide, we are offering more than 86,000 career program places to students in Years 7-12 from January 2021 to December 2026.

Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, the Growing Careers Project applies a structured approach to deliver sequential career learning throughout young people's secondary school journey, adapting programs to suit students at each stage:

- Discover and Explore (Years 7–8)
- Focus and Plan (Years 9–10)
- Decide and Apply (Years 11–12).

In 2024–25, most of our target cohort were in Year 10, 11 or 12 (that is, between Focus and Plan and Decide and Apply). Our careers learning offerings include many hands-on opportunities to engage with local employers and businesses to explore a range of post-school options aimed at broadening students' career horizons and equipping them with practical skills for their futures.

Our key programs include *Career Activities* (33,318 students), *SmArts* (1,244 students) and *Work Inspiration* (1,588 students). 35,000 secondary years students are sponsored through *Learning for Life*.

72,783 students participating in programs

Post-school years

Almost half (49%) of 24-year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are not fully engaged in work or study, compared to just 18% of those from the most advantaged backgrounds.⁶

The challenge

The post-school transition into work and further study is critical for young people. For those experiencing disadvantage, the cost of transport, textbooks and other necessities can exacerbate the financial pressure on their family. At the same time, students must adjust to a self-paced workload and timetable, along with a wider range of academic choices. In families in which a student is the first member to participate in tertiary education, access to mentors and other support may be limited.

How we help

We invest in post-school educational support because we know it is critical to redress financial disadvantage. Tertiary continuation and completion is one of the four key outcome measures of our *Learning for Life* program. It reflects the well-established link between higher education, sustained employment and long-term financial independence. Yet young people experiencing disadvantage face significant barriers to starting and completing tertiary qualifications.

To address these challenges, our Tertiary Coordinators provide targeted relational support, guided by our Family Practice Framework. Through early intervention, they engage students collaboratively to help them navigate education barriers and transition to tertiary studies. They also support students' continuation and completion of their higher education journey into their chosen post-tertiary career pathways.

In 2024–25, we supported 1,456 tertiary students through our Tertiary Scholarship, including 127 who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Building on this, we piloted a new initiative, the Tertiary Support Offer, which provides tailored assistance to an additional 174 students. Of these, nine identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Alongside these efforts, this year also marked the launch of a new Try, Test and Learn project, designed to explore how we might extend our support to even more *Learning for Life* students pursuing tertiary study.

A total of 2,659 tertiary students are participating in programs such as the *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship (1,456 students), *Job Read-e* (92 students) and *Cadetship to Career* (21 students).

2,659 tertiary students participating in programs

⁵ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2025), [NAPLAN national results](#).

⁶ Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Marie, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J., and Endekov, Z. (2020), [Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out](#). Melbourne: Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University for the Mitchell Institute.

We track our results

Students on the *Learning for Life* program work hard to overcome barriers created by poverty, with important support from their families. Programs offered by The Smith Family are designed to help students with four longer-term outcomes: school attendance; completion of Year 12 or its equivalent; completion of tertiary studies; and post-school engagement in education, training or work. We track the progress of *Learning for Life* students against these outcomes and also review short-term program results to help young people make the most of their education.

1. Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential for students to achieve positive educational outcomes.

2. Advancement

Each year of schooling a child completes leads to better overall life outcomes and improves their ability to make economic and social contributions to the community.

81.7%

average attendance for Years 1–10 *Learning for Life* students in 2024.

84.9% for primary school students,
75.7% for secondary school students,
77.3% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

64.9%

of *Learning for Life* students in Year 10 in 2022 advanced to Year 12 by 2024.

Improved numeracy

Improved literacy

Increased academic engagement and achievement

Increased self-management and confidence

Let's Count

92%

of surveyed participants reported improved capacity to work with parents/carers to support the emergent numeracy of their children.

Let's Read

94%

of early years professionals reported an increased capacity to engage families to foster children's literacy development.

student2student

90%

of students improved their reading, with 71% increasing their reading level by up to two years.

Passport to Success

79%

of students increased their understanding of what to expect at high school.

Longer-term results

Short-term results

Program results

3. Tertiary completion rate

Our tertiary completion rate measures the proportion of students who complete a qualification in four years.

49%

of *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship students who commenced study in 2021 had **completed a qualification** by 2024.

National four-year Bachelor completion rates for low socioeconomic students, was 35% (2020–2023).*

* Department of Education, 2025

4. *Learning for Life* students engaged in post-school education, employment or training

A key indicator of the success of our approach is the proportion of *Learning for Life* students who transition successfully from school to further education, training or employment.

84%

of students in Year 12 in 2022 **were in work and/or study two and a half years after leaving school**

Enhanced learning and development skills

Improved knowledge and understanding of study options and career paths

Increased awareness of the world of work

Learning Clubs

Work Inspiration

Future Seekers

77%

of students increased their self-confidence at school.

78%

of students reported increased awareness of core employability skills needed in the workplace; e.g. teamwork and communication.

82%

of students developed an understanding of the diversity of work.



Broader reach

We are committed to growing our reach and influence to help thousands more Australian children and young people achieve their full potential through education.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Hatching a business plan

“Zac held a chicken before he could walk – and as soon as he was walking, he began collecting eggs. He said he wanted to start a business selling eggs. And I thought, how can I help him achieve his goals?

So, I helped him deliver eggs to customers, pick up chickens and purchase incubators. He even turned his cubby house into a hatchery.

A typical school day sees Zac wake up at 6am to feed the chickens – occasionally, with the assistance of his siblings. At 8am, he leaves for school. When he arrives home, he collects the eggs and cleans the pen. He eats dinner, has a shower, goes to bed and does it all again the next day.

I’m extremely proud of my Zac. It brings a tear to my eye and makes my heart burst with pride knowing he’s reaching for the stars.

I am very grateful for The Smith Family’s educational support, which helped Zac build his confidence with reading through the *student2student* program. He engaged well with his buddy – it really helped him with his vocabulary, maths and ability to tell time.



Zac and his mother, Dagmara

He reads books on farming, which increases his knowledge and has helped with running his business.

Without The Smith Family support and programs, I don’t believe Zac would be where he is right now. The support has been amazing.”

Dagmara

Learning for Life mum

“[The *Future Seekers* program] helped me learn different words for when I read farming and chicken books.

Chickens are smart and they have unique personalities. I would like a huge property with lots of land and as many chickens as I can get, hundreds and thousands – as many breeds as possible.”

Zac (13)

Learning for Life student

Strategic priority 4

Grow reach

Given the growing inequality in educational outcomes, we aim to increase the number of students being supported through our *Learning for Life* program.

In 2024–25, we continued to balance growth in the number of participants in our programs with our objective of improving our overall practice and deepening our impact for our families and school partners.

This year, 71,818 students were supported through *Learning for Life*, up 7% from 2023–24. 186,499 children and young people participated in our programs and activities, an increase of 4.5% on the previous year.

We continued to enhance relationships with families and schools. This included working more actively with the schools we have strong partnerships with to provide more programs and opportunities for *Learning for Life* attendees.

In 2024–25, we refreshed our approach to strengthen *Learning for Life* student engagement and ensure that our programs' portfolio remains relevant, targeted and impactful. Our education and career-related programs are designed to help students navigate the worlds of work and further study.

Our *Career Activities* program supports students to make positive post-school transitions. The program reached a significant number of primary and secondary school students this year, with 35,721 participants – up 21% on the previous year.

We also provided digital support to 4,945 students through our strategic focus on digital inequality. Our support provides access to resources, grows students' digital skills, and provides reliable access to the internet at home.

We also continued to focus on enabling students to access programs at home and in their community.



Donna (centre) and colleagues from Gray Primary School alongside The Smith Family team members

IMPACT IN ACTION

Working as one for students and families

“Gray Primary School wouldn’t be the school it is without The Smith Family. Their support – whether financial, participatory, or practical – is woven into almost everything we do.

Nestled in the satellite city of Palmerston NT, Gray Primary School is a low socioeconomic school with 336 students from preschool to Year 6. Around 65% of our students are Indigenous, and nearly half speak English as an additional language or dialect. Many families face significant cost-of-living pressures, including food and housing insecurity. The Smith Family helps offset these challenges, ensuring students can come to school equipped and ready to learn.

School attendance remains one of our biggest challenges, with many students moving between communities. Despite this, our parent engagement is strong, and we remain a proud, community-minded school in the heart of Gray.

Our 15+ year partnership with The Smith Family includes over 100 students on *Learning for Life* scholarships, as well as access to programs like *Passport to Success*, *Future Seekers*, and our new Learning Club. The Gray Family Centre – supported by The Smith Family – offers playgroups, parenting sessions, and early learning programs, creating a safe space for families to connect.

Together, we provide the wraparound support our families need. At Gray Primary, The Smith Family is not just a partner – they’re part of our family.”

Donna Westaway

Principal, Gray Primary School (NT)
A Smith Family Partner School

IMPACT IN ACTION

A safe space when it's needed most

"I remember in primary school, I was hungry and had no lunch. I went to the tuck shop and asked for food, but I had no money. The tuck shop lady gave me a Vegemite scroll. The school sent my mum a bill. I got in so much trouble. I learnt quickly not to bring up to anyone that I was hungry.

When it came to school camps or activities, there was no way we could afford for me to go. As a child who already felt isolated – I was severely bullied by my peers – not being able to attend activities that allowed for crucial bonding made me feel even more alone.

When I was selected to be a part of The Smith Family program, I remember feeling for the first time like I was part of a group. It was nice having something in common with the other kids and I felt like we were part of something special.

The weekly catch-up was something I looked forward to. There were a lot of days when I didn't want to go home. Being able to stay at school in a safe space where we all got along and had supportive teachers and supervisors was special. The Smith Family ladies, Jane and Annie, were amazing and inspiring.

I have always known I want to help people; be a positive influence on the generations to come who may have gone through similar things. In work and in life, I make sure community and giving back are at the forefront of everything I do.

My goal would one day be to sponsor a child through The Smith Family and give back to the organisation that made an impact in my life."

Tabitha
Former Learning for Life student



Strategic priority 5

Grow influence

We will grow our influence across four key areas of Digital Inclusion, Careers Support, Data for Purpose and Educational Inequality.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Nurturing creativity in young people

Ensemble Theatre, a well-known professional theatre company in Sydney, partnered with *SmArts* to deliver immersive, theatre-based experiences for students in Smith Family partner schools.

Since the partnership was launched in 2020, Ensemble Theatre has provided countless young people with opportunities to engage in the performing arts space, offering students rare glimpses into the world of theatre through post-show Q&As, performance opportunities, backstage tours, playwriting, set and costume design workshops, and career talks by industry professionals.

In 2025, The Smith Family continued its collaboration with Ensemble Theatre, offering schools in Sydney's west opportunities to take part in a week-long series of workshops on set design, directing, stage management, and performance.



Liverpool Girls High School students at Ensemble Theatre's week-long *SmArts* theatre workshop.

Photo Credit: Karen Watson

The *SmArts* experience helps students form ideas around life beyond the school gate. The program is pivotal to helping young people understand the variety of pathways to pursue a career in the arts. Across a breadth of artistic mediums, students can build their technical skills base while learning from professionals who have overcome barriers in their own careers.

In 2024–25, 1,244 students took part in *SmArts* programs around Australia.

"We see our partnership with Ensemble Theatre as an exciting collaboration that is providing young people living in low-socioeconomic or marginalised communities access to live theatre," said Anne Samonte, Program Coordinator at The Smith Family.

Advocating for a more equitable future for children and young people

We continued to focus our advocacy efforts on four key focus areas of Digital Inclusion, Careers Support, Data for Purpose and Educational Inequality.

During 2024–25, we participated in a series of forums with our digital inclusion partner WorkVentures, spotlighting digital poverty during Anti-Poverty Week. Another highlight was our Reimagining Careers Support forum. This brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including industry leaders, educators, policymakers and career development professionals, to explore innovative ideas and collaborative solutions for improving career support services. This work will continue to shape our approach and advocacy for future career support delivery.

We made 13 public policy submissions addressing areas that included educational disadvantage, digital inclusion, career and transition support, data for purpose, and issues affecting the for-purpose sector. These submissions were grounded in our combined expertise in research and practice. We also delivered 58 external presentations, had 12 opinion pieces published and released 16 episodes of our podcast, *Conversations with The Smith Family*. These mediums allowed us to share insights and contribute to advancing ideas that improve outcomes for children and families.

Researching better ways to support students

Over the past year, our longitudinal research with *Learning for Life* students has continued to deepen our understanding of the educational experiences of children and young people living with disadvantage. This work has contributed to the national evidence base on educational equity.

Through expanded data exchange arrangements with state education departments, we have developed more nuanced insights into the factors influencing school attendance patterns.

In addition, The Smith Family was a partner in the Australian Research Council's Advancing Digital Inclusion in Low Income Australian Families project, which concluded in 2024. This research explored the impact of digital inclusion, young people's transitions to work, and parenting practices. The findings have informed recommendations to support more families to be digitally included.

We are pleased to continue this important work as a partner in the newly awarded follow-up project, also funded by the Australian Research Council. Led by Professor Michael Dezuanni from the Queensland University of Technology, the project brings together leading researchers and organisations to explore innovative approaches to enhancing digital media literacy for low-income parents in five diverse Australian communities. The project will use an approach that places the voices of low-income parents at the centre of community-led solutions.

Pathways, Engagement and Transitions project

In 2024–25, we continued our ongoing Pathways, Engagement and Transitions (PET) research project, which began in 2021 with support from the Paul Ramsay Foundation. The project aims to build a better understanding of how young people experiencing disadvantage navigate their final years of school and transition to further education, training or employment. It also seeks to identify how more young people can be supported to complete Year 12 or its equivalent and pursue positive post-school pathways.

The project focused on two initial cohorts of young people on our *Learning for Life* program who were in Year 10 or Year 12 in 2020, following them through three years of surveys and interviews. The research has provided nationally significant insights into the experiences of thousands of young people, and has played a key role in shaping our advocacy and informing policy discussions.

Given the value of the findings and rapidly evolving post-COVID landscape, we extended the PET project for a further three years, with generous support from Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies. This extension allows us to continue following the original Year 10 (2020) cohort for six years in total, and to include a new cohort of young people who were in Year 10 in 2023. Now, we can explore how changes in the labour market and broader social context are affecting young people's transitions after school.

In early 2025, we completed the fifth wave of data collection, with nearly 5,000 surveys submitted and a response rate of 75% – an excellent result. During the year, we published two reports – the fourth and fifth in the PET series. The fourth report drew on three years of interviews to develop six case studies illustrating the diverse post-school pathways young people take and the challenges they face. The fifth report combined survey and interview data to highlight the importance of the first year after school. It showed that early engagement strongly predicts continued participation in education, training or employment.

We are deeply grateful to the thousands of young people who have generously shared their experiences with us through PET. Their contributions continue to shape our understanding and strengthen our efforts to support young people experiencing disadvantage.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Trialling new ways to support primary school students and their families

The *On PAR* program is about personalised partnerships, working side by side with families and young people to create better educational outcomes. This early intervention pilot has already helped 345 primary school students experiencing complex, compounding disadvantages.

Designed for students from kindergarten to Year 5, each young person and their family is partnered with a dedicated team member to set goals and develop a plan that responds to the barriers affecting their education. Challenges like financial stress, housing instability, and health issues, can have a major impact on wellbeing and also school engagement, attendance and achievement.

Working with schools and local partners, we create a support system around each child's strengths, needs and aspirations. Assistance is provided for up to two years. It can include tutoring, access to digital technology, health checks, activities that develop coping skills and parent engagement initiatives.

Primary school student Amber* was struggling with mental health and behaviour challenges when she joined *On PAR*. At home, her family was dealing with financial stress, housing issues and domestic violence.

Our team worked with Amber and her carer to help Amber feel safe at school – this included building understanding around emotions and learning style, alongside fostering a positive attitude to education. Seeing the need for extra support, we helped arrange an autism assessment and guided the family through the National Disability Insurance Scheme process. We also connected them with services and financial support they were eligible for.



The *On PAR* team

Today, Amber is doing much better. Her outlook on school has improved, and she has attended camp with her classmates for the very first time. She now has a tailored learning plan and receives professional support for her autism. Meanwhile, her carer's confidence and independence have grown.

Amber has moved on to our flagship *Learning for Life* program, where she has joined one of our after-school Learning Clubs, our peer support reading program, *student2student*, and has also received a laptop to support her education.

This move marks an exciting new chapter for Amber and her family. With ongoing long-term support in place through *Learning for Life*, they are now better equipped to thrive in the years ahead.

On PAR, a six-and-a-half-year pilot, is available in two communities, one in New South Wales and one in South Australia. It is now in its fifth year, and we continue to learn and adapt as we advocate for the best outcomes for students and families.

On PAR is supported by an individual donor and the Paul Ramsay Foundation.

*Name changed to protect the young person's privacy.



Strategic foundations

Enabling deeper impact and broader reach

We are committed to building a strong and resilient organisation that empowers young Australians through education. By securing sustainable funding, enabling high-performing teams, strengthening cyber security, and investing strategically in digital, technology and data, we are strengthening our governance, risk management and compliance. These foundations ensure we remain a capable, efficient and effective organisation.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Growing Careers Project

Research shows that young people who experience four or more encounters with the world of work while at school are more likely to be in work, training or study in their 20s. Building on this evidence, the Growing Careers Project creates career-related opportunities for students from their first year of high school through to graduation. Opportunities range from short activities and workplace visits to mentoring and work experience, giving students the chance to explore pathways. By connecting students with different industries and experiences, the Project supports them to make informed decisions, build confidence and plan for life after school.

Funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education for six years until December 2026, the project will provide more than 86,000 career-related opportunities to students at selected Smith Family partner schools.

Meaningful careers education

“The Growing Careers Project has significantly expanded our offering of careers programs and activities. We’ve been able to broaden our reach and deepen the impact of our career education.

By working closely with the same cohort of students, we’ve witnessed genuine growth. Some students who lacked direction or confidence are now more self-aware and actively thinking about their future pathways. Others, through exposure to different industries and mentoring, have discovered passions they didn’t know they had. Several have done further training and work experience or secured part-time jobs in fields introduced through the program.



Careers Advisor Sarah and The Smith Family team members

Students who were previously disengaged or at risk of leaving school early have been motivated to stay, knowing more about their pathway. Students are setting long-term goals and taking ownership of their future in ways they may not have without this project.

It has made career education meaningful, personal and empowering by connecting students with industry professionals and providing hands-on experiences and guidance.

Seeing students benefit from such rich and varied career experiences has been incredibly rewarding.”

**Sarah, Hunter River High School
Careers Advisor**

Strategic priority 6

Grow sustainable funding

We are deeply grateful to the generous individuals and businesses across Australia who partner with us to create meaningful and lasting social impact.

Their continued support provides the vital resources we need to operate efficiently and deliver better outcomes for students and their families. Thanks to their commitment, we're able to make strategic investments to strengthen our core capabilities and ensure we can continue raising the funds needed to help even more young Australians to unlock their potential through education.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Joining forces with HCF to build brighter futures

The Smith Family was pleased to announce a new strategic partnership with HCF last year. The partnership enables us to empower more young Australians experiencing disadvantage and reinforces the importance of education in building healthier, more equitable communities.

HCF's generous support over three years will help 1,500 children on our *Learning for Life* program reach their full potential, by providing long-term financial, personal and practical educational support.

"We believe that education is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and improving long-term health outcomes, which is why we're supporting The Smith Family and the *Learning for Life* program," says Lorraine Thomas, HCF's Chief Executive Officer.



HCF team members write holiday cards to young people they support through the *Learning for Life* program.

"This collaboration is a powerful example of how two trusted Australian not-for-profit organisations can come together to make a lasting impact."

We are grateful to HCF for its commitment and belief in what we can achieve together for young Australians in need.

We're also thankful for the enthusiastic support of HCF team members who have embraced the opportunity to get involved in our work and volunteer across a range of activities. This includes writing holiday cards to each of their sponsored students and hosting 15 students from a school in Western Sydney at their offices as part of our *Work Inspiration* program. This program allows students to learn about different industries and connect with HCF staff members to broaden their career aspirations and increase their awareness of different pathways beyond school.

Our supporter community

We are deeply grateful to the tens of thousands of supporters who help make our work possible. They, like us, believe in a world where all children, regardless of their circumstances, have the chance to change their future through education – a belief that underpins everything we do.

In 2024–25, over 197,000 individual supporters made a generous financial contribution that has helped enable our work with children and families in need. Among them, we were thrilled to welcome more than 5,500 new sponsors, almost 4,000 new monthly donors and 12,300 people making their first one-off gift. Their support strengthens the long-term sustainability of our work and helps ensure we can prepare young people for the years ahead.

Fundraising activities such as our sponsorship drives and appeals continued to deliver strong community engagement. For every \$1 invested in raising funds, \$3.35 was returned to invest in life-changing programs for young Australians.

Sponsors

We remain deeply appreciative of the continued support from our sponsors. Thanks to their commitment, compassion and generosity, children and young people taking part in our *Learning for Life* program have ongoing access to the essentials and extra learning support they need to make the most of their education.

Last year, 67,496 people sponsored *Learning for Life* students. Despite challenging economic conditions, almost 93% of our sponsors continued their support – a testament to their belief in education as one of the most powerful change agents.

Donors

The unwavering generosity of donors continues to inspire us. Amid yet another year marked by economic uncertainty and cost-of-living pressures, our ever-generous supporters gave to The Smith Family at record levels.

Our Winter Appeal raised \$8.3 million in single-gift donations, the biggest cash appeal to date for the organisation. We also received \$9.2 million from monthly donors across the year. These contributions are already enabling our goal to expand our reach to more children and young Australians in need.



Bella, *Learning for Life* tertiary student

Bequests

We were humbled and honoured by the 131 generous supporters who left us a gift in their Will. Together, their philanthropy contributed \$18.3 million to help children experiencing disadvantage thrive at school and beyond.

To their families, we extend our deepest condolences and heartfelt thanks. The legacies of their loved ones will transform lives for generations to come.

We also thank the growing number of people who have told us they plan to leave a similar meaningful legacy. We are profoundly grateful for their trust in our ability to tackle educational inequality and make a lasting impact.

Growth in digital giving

In 2024–25, \$14.9 million in annualised income was donated through The Smith Family website. This included gifts from more than 19,000 first-time donors and sponsors.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we have made major upgrades to our online self-service portal – My Smith Family. More than 90,000 supporters now use the portal to manage their giving and the upgrades provide a more intuitive experience.

Looking ahead

As we reflect on the generosity of our community, we are filled with gratitude. Every gift, every sponsorship, every legacy is helping build a future where every Australian child can make the most of their potential through education.

Philanthropy

We're immensely grateful for the contributions of our corporate partners and philanthropic donors. Their steadfast support plays a vital role in helping thousands of young Australians overcome educational barriers caused by poverty.

Together, we create meaningful opportunities for children and young people through long-term partnerships, strategic funding and shared expertise. This support helps us deliver programs that are effective, sustainable and grounded in evidence, while also enabling essential capacity-building projects and pilot programs.

Thanks to these close collaborations, we can continue working towards making lasting change, so every child has the chance to thrive at school and beyond.

Major donors

We want to thank the 590 private individuals and families from around Australia who collectively donated \$14.2 million in 2024–25 to support the education of young Australians experiencing disadvantage.

Through their extraordinary generosity, these donors play a significant role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of our programs, including *Learning for Life*. Their gifts also facilitated the expansion of our *Digital Learning Essentials* program, which aims to ensure all *Learning for Life* students are digitally included.

We also received generous support for our suite of learning and mentoring programs. These programs help students strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills, increase academic engagement and achievement, and build confidence. They also support young Australians to grow their networks and deepen their understanding of post-school study options and career pathways.

Together, we have given children the opportunity to make the most of their education and unlock their potential.

The Children's Future Education Endowment

The Children's Future Education Endowment (CFEE) was established in 2016 to provide long-term support for the education of children experiencing disadvantage. Net earnings from the pooled investment of funds in the endowment are used to provide students with financial, practical and personal support for their education through our *Learning for Life* program.

In 2024–25, we received gifts totalling \$0.7 million. The endowment's value grew to \$16.4 million as at 30 June 2025, up from \$14.7 million the previous year.

We sincerely thank all donors who have established perpetual scholarships through the CFEE. Through their gifts, they are establishing a legacy for themselves and their families, and helping create brighter futures for *Learning for Life* students.

Corporate partnerships

We want to acknowledge and thank our 54 strategic partners for their tremendous support in 2024–25. Our corporate and workplace giving partners contributed more than \$13.7 million, providing vital educational support for children and young people around the country.

This year, we welcomed five new strategic partners: Fletcher Building, Golden Circle, Hungry Jack's, STACK and Telstra Foundation. We look forward to deepening our connections with them.

Despite a challenging economic climate, cause-related marketing campaigns raised over \$3 million, thanks to the generosity of Ampol, Asahi Lifestyle Beverages, Golden Circle, Hungry Jack's, Officeworks and TK Maxx customers.

We also want to thank our other significant long-term partners for their generous support this year, such as ANZ, Deloitte, HCF, KWM, Optus, and Orica.

We're also incredibly grateful to the 15 corporate partners who rallied nearly 600 participants for The Smith Family's Dream Run this year, raising a record \$254,000.

Long-term partner Futurity Investment Group celebrated 30 years of supporting the National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA). In 2021, the NEiTA Foundation, Futurity Investment Group and The Smith Family joined forces to introduce the Powering Potential Award, recognising Australia's most inspirational educators in our partner schools.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our workplace givers and corporate volunteers who generously donated their time and skills to support our work – from aiding program delivery to reviewing thousands of student profiles.



Participants leave the starting line of The Smith Family Challenge run, ride and paddle event.

Trusts and foundations

This year, our relationships with trusts and foundations strengthened, with many building an even deeper connection to our work. Thank you to the 187 trusts and foundations that contributed \$7.2 million to provide life-changing support for Australian children and young people in 2024–25. We are grateful for our continued partnerships with Australian Communities Foundation, Equity Trustees, JBWere, Mutual Trust, Perpetual, and State Trustees Australia Foundation.

We are grateful to Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies for their support of our Pathways, Engagement and Transitions research. Our collaboration with the Colonial Foundation grew, with a three-year commitment to our *Digital Learning Essentials* program.

We were excited to welcome new partners, including The Hansen Little Foundation. Together with an anonymous donor, their support enables digital solutions that reduce our administrative burden and enhance frontline data access for team members. This initiative directly addresses the sector-wide challenge of limited access to technology.

Events and community fundraising

Each year, thousands of people support our work by participating in community fundraising and events such as The Smith Family Challenge and The Dream Run.

In 2024–25, more than 6,000 supporters raised more than \$2.6 million. We congratulate and thank them for their extraordinary efforts.

More than 5,000 participants took part in The Dream Run, a month-long fitness challenge, to raise over \$830,000. This made 2025 the event's biggest year yet.

In March 2025, The Smith Family Challenge was held outside NSW for the first time, with teams travelling to Stromlo, ACT, to run, ride and paddle in a 100-kilometre off-road adventure. In its 18th year, the annual event raised over \$1.2 million, bringing the total amount raised since its inception to more than \$16 million. This year marked an exciting milestone as Ben Keeble, a long-time race participant and dedicated committee member, proudly assumed the role of Committee Chair.

Thank you to our Patrons, Ambassadors and Champions

We would like to acknowledge the support of Her Excellency, the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia who is Patron of both The Smith Family and VIEW Clubs of Australia.

In the past year, we were also privileged to have the support of Ambassador Sarah Harris, journalist and television presenter, and thank her for her ongoing amplification of our work in the media. We also thank Ambassador Dr Craig Challen SC OAM for fundraising, spreading our message and actively supporting our work again in 2024–25.

Supporter data

Thanks to all our supporters for your commitment to our work this year.

197,360

individual supporters

67,496 + 129,864

sponsors of
Learning for Life
students

donors funding
Learning for Life
programs

247

partner organisations

54 + 187 + 6

corporate
partners

trusts and
foundations

tertiary
institution
partners

\$148.3 million

donated by individual supporters,
bequestors and our philanthropic
partners to assist children and
young people

IMPACT IN ACTION

A weight lifted



Maddeline and Kelly

“As a single parent, managing the cost of living while supporting my children has been incredibly challenging. The financial strain of uniforms, school supplies, and extracurricular activities often feels overwhelming. Keeping Maddeline and Brayden engaged in their education and sports can sometimes feel like an endless struggle.

However, when The Smith Family came into our lives, it felt as though a weight had been lifted. We no longer felt isolated in our challenges, and the support we received made a significant difference.

With the assistance from the scholarship, we were able to cover costs that had previously seemed out of reach, such as school camps and replacing uniforms that the kids had outgrown. Even small amounts of financial support have allowed me to be resourceful.

Brayden has a lot going on, including numerous therapy appointments. The financial relief from The Smith Family allowed me to redirect some of those funds toward his essential therapy, ensuring he gets the support he needs. I’m proud to share that Brayden is currently thriving in our local football club, where he’s actively engaged in the community and learning the value of teamwork.

Maddeline, on the other hand, has faced her own set of challenges this year as she transitioned into high school. Despite this, Maddeline remains passionate about dance, practising three days a week outside of school.

The support from The Smith Family has truly transformed our lives in ways I can’t fully express. It has allowed us to focus on what matters most: the wellbeing and happiness of my children. I am deeply grateful for the assistance provided, which has helped us navigate these challenging times. Thank you for being a part of our journey.”

Kelly
Learning for Life parent

Thank you

All our partners provide much-valued support. We are grateful for their commitment, expertise and contributions to our work.

The Abercrombie
Family Foundation



The Adrian and Monica Avis
Foundation Scholarship



Ainsworth 4
Foundation

The Alan and Barbara
Bagnall Endowment Fund



Andrew CC
Farran Foundation



The B B & A Miller Foundation

BF Foundation



BJLR Foundation

The Bolton Sturrock
Memorial Scholarship

The Brazil Family
Foundation



Collier
Charitable
Fund



Dennoch Fund

Dick & Pip Smith Foundation

The Donald & Joan Wilson Foundation



The First Eddystone Foundation



Graeme Douglas
Watson Charitable Trust



The Hammerton
Family Scholarship

Handbury Foundation



Helen & Mark Johnson

Helen and Nicholas Moore AO





VIEW Clubs of Australia

65 years of connecting in the community

Voice, Interests and Education of Women (VIEW) is a national women's organisation and support network. It brings together women in communities all over Australia to connect, network, develop skills and enjoy social activities while supporting the education of young Australians in need.

VIEW exclusively supports The Smith Family and has almost 13,000 members in 270 Clubs. We are grateful for this long-term and valued partnership and thank VIEW members for their ongoing commitment to our cause.

Increasing Learning for Life sponsorships

VIEW Clubs is the largest community sponsor of students on The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program. VIEW passed more than 1,800 sponsored students in 2024–25 – a new milestone for the Clubs.

VIEW volunteers also contribute to the *Learning for Life* program for children and their families through Learning Clubs and other activities.

Making connections makes a difference

VIEW proudly opened five new Clubs during the year: Busselton, Western Australia; Adelaide East, South Australia; Kyneton, Victoria; Capricornia, Queensland; and Murrumbateman, NSW.

Each new Club expands VIEW's reach into diverse communities and audiences, increasing awareness of The Smith Family's work.

Introducing our new patron

VIEW's National President, Elizabeth Birch, and representatives from The Smith Family were invited to meet with Her Excellency, the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, at Admiralty House, to discuss how VIEW fosters connections across the country and how we can work together

in the future. After the meeting, the Governor-General announced her acceptance of patronage for The Smith Family and VIEW Clubs. She recently described VIEW Clubs as:

"The living embodiment of caring connectors, giving women across Australia lifelong friendships and continuously learning new skills, all the while raising funds and awareness for young people in need."

Alleviating loneliness and social isolation

In August, the NSW Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues launched an inquiry into loneliness and social isolation in NSW. VIEW made a written submission to the inquiry, highlighting the crucial role community organisations play in alleviating these challenges. VIEW representatives also gave evidence at a hearing into the subject and took part in a roundtable meeting in Orange, NSW, to inform the inquiry.

Addressing the digital divide

We aim to ensure all *Learning for Life* students have a digital device and reliable internet access. To support this goal, VIEW members raised over \$306,000 this year to fund computers, technical support and internet access for thousands of *Learning for Life* students.

Celebrating 65 years of VIEW

In 2025, VIEW marked its 65th year with Blue Sapphire Anniversary celebrations.

In March, Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, launched celebrations at NSW Government House. The event was attended by 100 VIEW members, Smith Family team members and representatives from the three inaugural VIEW Clubs. This was followed by another reception at the South Australian Government House in April, hosted by Her Excellency, the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, recognising VIEW members' vital contributions.



12,948

VIEW Club members in 270 clubs across Australia



Clubs nationwide held local celebrations, while The Smith Family CEO, Doug Taylor, sent congratulatory cards to all Clubs. Throughout the year, VIEW's Facebook page showcased 65 years of accomplishments, members' stories and events.

VIEW leadership and governance project

VIEW Clubs' geographic boundaries were reviewed to ensure the responsibilities of senior officers are equitable, sustainable and attractive to future leaders. Recommendations will be actioned in 2026. The organisation also updated VIEW's Culture and Guiding Principles, and Code of Conduct.

VIEW members continue to engage via social media

VIEW has more than 2,700 followers on Facebook and its presence continues to grow. Over half of Clubs have their own Facebook page, profile or group, providing a way for members to connect and increase the organisation's profile in their community. In the last financial year, VIEW posts have been seen by almost 80,000 people.

Improving the VIEW website

The VIEW website remains a vital platform. This year, major pages were refreshed to provide more timely, accurate information for current and prospective members.

Strategic priority 7

Empower our people

We empower our people by optimising our organisational capabilities, culture and communication.

Our vision is for team members and volunteers to thrive in a resilient, adaptive and contemporary workplace, where they feel empowered, supported and equipped to deliver on our purpose.

Evolving our culture

This year, we progressed our Culture Initiative – a major organisational effort aimed at aligning our workplace culture with our strategic goals. Working with our partner, Still North, we defined our ideal ‘Blue’ culture, which emphasises constructive styles of achievement, self-actualisation, humanistic-encouragement and affiliation.

We held conversations across the organisation to help teams reflect on their current culture and envision improvements. These discussions revealed a strong commitment to fostering a culture that supports excellence, personal growth and meaningful relationships. The next phase will focus on refreshing our organisational values, elevating performance development practices and strengthening leadership capabilities to embed this culture more deeply.

Employee engagement

Despite organisational changes and challenges, our Employee Engagement score stayed steady at 72%, with 65% of team members agreed that workloads are divided fairly, up from 58% in 2024.

Throughout the year, we focused on four key areas:

- **Team member experience:** We delivered regular updates and support through the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Service Industry Award Review, launched the Sonder wellbeing platform and advanced our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategy.
- **Strategy and outcomes:** We shared our three-year strategic priorities at The Smith Family’s Annual Conference, including improving *Learning for Life* outcomes through greater team member impact.
- **Workload and prioritisation:** We maintained initiatives like ‘Wednesday’ no meeting afternoons and shortened meetings to support balance and focus.
- **Systems and processes:** We invested in digital transformation and systems training, including the rollout of the HR Help Centre for streamlined support.

Strengthening our employee value proposition

We continued to enhance our workplace policies and benefits to reflect the diverse needs of our team. This included introducing new leave entitlements for gender affirmation commitments, interstate relocation and cultural observance, and increasing domestic and family violence leave.

We continued to implement our DEI Strategy and Roadmap (2024–26) through policy development, training and governance. We also submitted our annual Workplace Gender Equality Agency compliance report, showing a reduction in the gender pay gap to 15.01% (mean) and 14.3% (median), with 70% of senior leadership roles held by women.

Reconciliation Action Plan

As part of the development of our next Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), we undertook a review of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and volunteer strategies in 2024–25. The results will form the basis of our revised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Volunteering Strategy, which will be adopted across all business units. Recruiting and retaining these team members will assist us in proactively creating an inclusive and collaborative workplace. By incorporating the voices of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, we can positively impact the communities we support and achieve a key deliverable of our RAP.

**At The Smith Family,
70% of senior
leadership roles are
held by women.**



Team member entitlements

A highlight for the year was the conclusion of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHADS) review after 18 months of work. This included completing remediation for all current team members and more than 90% of former team members. We also embedded sustainable compliance processes in our standard operations, including updated contracts, revised classifications and our Always on Compliance framework.

At the same time, we made notable progress on our Enterprise Agreement, including resuming bargaining in March 2025 and developing a new classification structure through a collaborative working group. We also presented the Bargaining Committee with a comprehensive offer that balanced team needs with financial sustainability.

Investing in systems and processes

This year, we continued to focus on improving key technology platforms, systems and processes that help make The Smith Family a more secure and sustainable organisation.

We transitioned our IT Service Desk operations to an external provider, Fusion5, as part of a broader strategy to enhance service quality and operational efficiency. This decision reflects the growing maturity of our digital and technology capabilities and reinforces our commitment to delivering reliable, scalable support across the organisation.

To enhance transparency, agility and continuous improvement across our digital squads, we introduced a new suite of agile delivery effectiveness metrics and dashboards. These tools enable us to monitor and respond to key indicators – such as value delivery, output volume and predictability, lead time, and flow efficiency – helping us identify opportunities to refine our priorities, reduce overheads and improve delivery consistency.

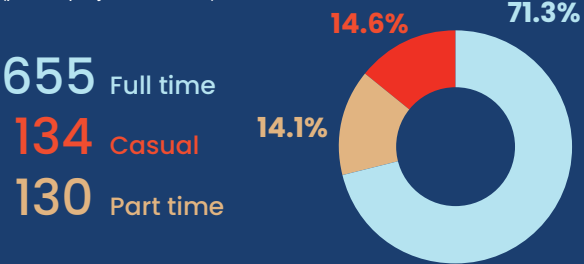
With increasing cyber threats, data labelling plays a critical role in safeguarding our families and students from unauthorised access or exposure. To address this issue, we implemented a data labelling framework to strengthen the protection of personal and sensitive information, particularly Class 1 records. This initiative improves visibility of how data moves across our systems and ensures appropriate controls are consistently applied. By establishing sensitivity levels and implementing appropriate controls, we are better prepared to prevent data breaches, ensure compliance and uphold trust in our digital practices.

We implemented our online attendance tool through our NextGen digital transformation program. Participants reported feeling more comfortable with recording attendance data during sessions and expressed greater confidence in meeting data security and Class 1 record management obligations. Program Coordinators also found the tool more efficient than the existing manual process, with 53% of respondents indicating they won't revert to paper forms.

We made significant investments to enhance our human resources (HR) and operational systems, including enhancing HR Central with stronger escalation processes and safeguarding checks. We developed and tested the EmpLive time and attendance management system, which is scheduled to go live in 2025–26. We also migrated our finance systems to Microsoft Dynamics, enhancing our overall digital infrastructure, and streamlining manual workloads through automation, standardised templates and digital upgrades. Additionally, we continued the Developing Change Capability program to support team members through organisational change and reduce psychosocial risks.

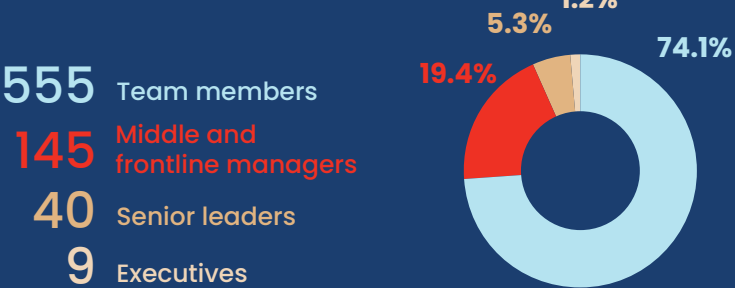
Our team members

Count of employees
(per employment status)



919 Smith Family team members
or 749 full-time equivalents (FTE) – excluding casuals

Breakdown of FTE in roles



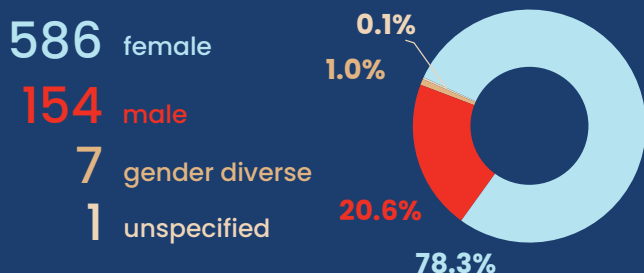
14.5% Voluntary employee turnover for 2024–2025

Our organisational chart

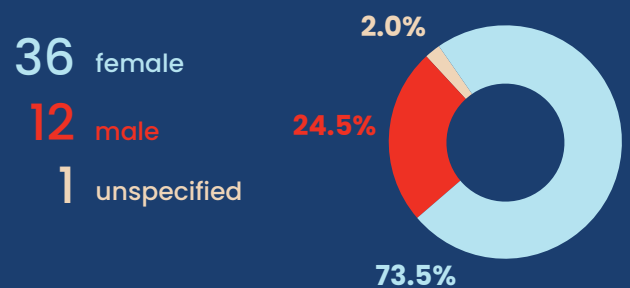


Gender composition across the organisation by FTE status

(excluding Board of Directors)



Executive and senior leadership by FTE



Volunteers

Without the volunteers who generously donate their time and skills, much of our work would not be possible. We are grateful to the thousands of community and corporate volunteers whose ongoing support enables us to fulfil our purpose with scale and impact.

Volunteer participation

This year, volunteer numbers continued to increase. The number of roles filled grew by 9% compared with the previous year, largely driven by a 25% increase in short-term volunteering. Career-related activities were behind much of this increase, engaging an extra 1,000 volunteers who each contributed an average of six hours per role.

Skilled volunteer support also rose by 9%, driven by growing demand for specialised support in digital, data and other projects.

Despite an increase in roles, total volunteer hours decreased by 8%. This indicates an interesting trend: we have more volunteers, but each is giving fewer hours per week. The average hours per role decreased from 23 to 19 hours. This was due to more short-term volunteering opportunities that typically involve two to six hours of work per week.

In late 2024, we concluded the *iTrack* online mentoring program, which also contributed to the decrease in overall volunteering hours. However, retention efforts saw almost 50 volunteer mentors opt to take up an alternate Digital Student Profile Checking role.

Short-term volunteering on the rise

The increase in short-term volunteering highlights our move towards offering more bite-sized, flexible roles. This aligns with broader trends in volunteering, with people preferring shorter commitments and remote options.

We have implemented new processes and platforms to support growth in short-term volunteering. For example, we developed a new registration form to streamline the sign-up process. This integrates directly with our internal systems, supporting faster and more accurate progression through screening.

Improving our processes

Our Volunteering Support Centre's self-service resources were improved to better serve volunteer managers. Almost three-quarters (74%) of cases or queries were resolved within one business hour, and 95% were resolved within 10 business hours. Average wait times for support improved by 66%, down to 36 minutes per request.

We have seen an 8% increase in volunteer managers using the support centre, along with a decrease in the number of follow-up tickets.

Our Volunteer Coordination Unit, which registers and screens volunteers, is a vital part of our model. This year, we improved efficiency, resolving approximately 70% of screening process tickets within one week, an improvement of 5% compared with last year. On average, volunteers are ready to begin their roles in 22 days, well within the target range of four to six weeks.

Volunteer sector engagement and best practice

We align our practices with Volunteering Australia's National Strategy for Volunteering and the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. The strategy's Action Plan 2024–2027 offers opportunities for the volunteering sector to contribute to a stronger, more sustainable future. We played a role in shaping this plan and continue to support implementation.

Throughout 2024–25, we embedded several of the plan's key focus areas into our work and strategic direction. This included sharing research initiatives through our work with customer insight consultancy Precise Value, developing resources to support volunteer management, and participating in forums and communities of practice.

Drawing on our research, we ran events to embed the volunteer voice in planning and operational processes across teams working with volunteers. We also co-hosted sessions for team members, sharing research findings, volunteer feedback and the importance of the volunteer–manager relationship in volunteer satisfaction and retention. Additionally, we updated our volunteer management resources to incorporate this feedback and created a professional development session for volunteer managers. This session focuses on understanding volunteers' motivations and how those motivations shape their experiences.

Volunteering team members also helped improve sector capability and connection by participating in over 40 forums, conferences, grassroots initiatives and strategic partnerships across all states and territories.

Risk and compliance training for volunteers

Recognising the essential role volunteers play in keeping children safe and supporting our work's security, we conducted a review of their training needs. We also trialled new methods and improved processes to deliver training more effectively. In collaboration with our People and Culture, and Learning and Development teams, we created and delivered specialised child-safeguarding training. We also supported the implementation of training in records management and cyber security.

5,478

individual Smith Family volunteers filled 5,983 volunteer roles nationally (with some volunteers taking on more than one role)

113,792

hours of service donated by volunteers, equivalent to \$4 million

91%

of volunteers reported satisfaction with staff support provided

87%

of volunteers would speak positively to others about their volunteering experience with us

PASSION MEETS PURPOSE

Volunteering to build brighter futures

"I started tutoring when I was in Year 11, and when I found The Smith Family's Learning Club, it felt like the perfect fit. It combined my passion for teaching with the opportunity to support students experiencing disadvantage. I've always valued education and wanted to give back to my community. I believe in equality of opportunity, and The Smith Family works hard to make that a reality.

I've lived in the Wyndham area of Victoria my whole life, and volunteering has been a great way to connect with my community. It's inspiring to see students show up each week with curiosity and determination, even after a full day of school. You can see the shift in their confidence when they start to understand something new – especially in maths. Some even explain it to their friends, which is amazing to watch.

Support can be the catalyst for students to set goals and believe in their potential. I've seen students who might otherwise feel overlooked start to thrive when someone shows up and cares.

One of my students told me that he aspired to become a nurse, so he could help other people within his community. He wants to get the best possible marks at school so he can eventually enter a nursing course. This desire was evident in his request for more challenging work in class. He would come to every lesson smiling, interacting with his peers and always contributing to discussions.

Young individuals, especially those with such admirable and selfless goals, should be nurtured and encouraged to reach for their dreams.

Volunteering doesn't just help students – it helps us too. It's a chance to connect, contribute and be part of something bigger. The Smith Family creates a space where everyone – students, volunteers, staff – feels valued. I'd encourage anyone to get involved. It's a great feeling knowing you're helping someone take a positive step toward their future."

Luke
Learning Club volunteer

Celebrating volunteering

Our annual National Volunteer Week campaign reached 24,399 people across our social media platforms. The theme, Connecting Communities, emphasised that volunteering is about relationships, resilience and a shared commitment to something greater than ourselves. Our all-staff celebration included a special video message from the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, who spoke of her own volunteering and thanked our volunteers. Another highlight was hearing directly from our volunteers in media stories and a new video.

In 2025, we congratulated VIEW Clubs on their 65th Blue Sapphire Anniversary. Since 1960, VIEW Club members have volunteered over 3.3 million hours with The Smith Family.



Luke, Learning Club volunteer

Strategic priority 8

Be cyber secure and invest in digital, technology and data

We are focused on continuing to build and develop our cyber resilience and our digital, technology and data capabilities so that we can achieve our goals.

Digital and data

In 2024–25, we embarked on a project to optimise our use of our Microsoft Dynamics Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system by archiving files to reduce costs and manage storage effectively, in line with data retention policies. This has improved our security by reducing the amount of data available in the core system, cutting annual storage costs, and improving backend performance due to more efficient data processing, indexing and filtering. It has also improved front-end and user experiences due to more efficient data use and reporting processes.

We implemented a project to improve code security practices. The project was designed to enhance quality assurance, enable us to implement automated scanning to enforce secure coding practices, and integrate security into pipelines in line with best practice industry standards. This will allow for early, proactive detection of vulnerabilities, enhance code maintainability, ensure regulatory compliance, and seamlessly embed security checks into continuous integration and delivery workflows.

We also explored artificial intelligence (AI). We trialled Microsoft 365 Copilot with a group of team members to identify practical cases for building AI agents. We also developed our first AI-powered digital assistant to support Family Partnership Coordinators in preparing for family engagements. To oversee the responsible implementation of AI technologies, we created a new AI Governance Group.

Policy and processes

We have improved our technology adoption process to assess and approve new technology solutions before they are introduced into the organisation. The structured process ensures that any new application or tool aligns with business needs, security requirements and architectural standards. The redesign also aims to speed up approvals and enforce critical checks for security, privacy and architecture compliance.

Reducing risk

This year, we continued building a culture of cyber and data security. We rolled out a host of activities for team members, including a phishing exercise – a controlled simulation where staff receive fake but realistic phishing emails to test their ability to recognise and report scams. Our annual Privacy Week awareness campaign promoted best practices for protecting personal and organisational information.

After collaborating with team members, service providers and internal teams, the migration of modern networking equipment and connectivity for all our sites is now complete – enabling us to decommission our legacy data centre and become a modern cloud-only organisation.

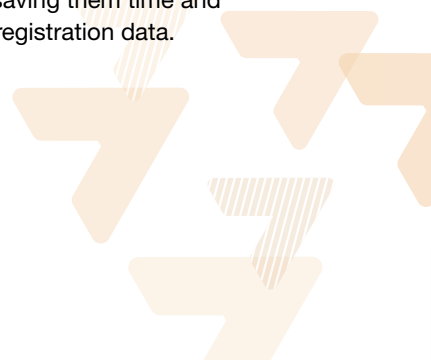
A highlight for the year was the successful migration of 96% of our Windows 10 fleet to Windows 11 by our cloud team – without major disruptions. This seamless transition has helped set the foundation for a more modern, secure workplace.

After a successful pilot involving 12 team members, we have also now implemented data labelling across the organisation. This helps strengthen our information protection and compliance posture.

Enhancing our stakeholders' experiences

During the year, our NextGen program built and launched a new attendance tool to replace manual, paper-based attendance processes in Learning Clubs. This has proved to be highly successful so far, eliminating errors associated with manual processes and ensuring compliance with data privacy and child protection policies. Program Coordinators report saving up to 30 minutes per Learning Club session compared to manual processes.

We also developed a registration tracker, which will be integrated with Microsoft Dynamics CRM. When it is launched in 2025–26, the tracker will enable school contacts to track registrations in real time, saving them time and minimising downloads of student registration data.



BEYOND THE GAME

Investing in futures through education

Christian Welch, former National Rugby League player for the Melbourne Storm and *Learning for Life* sponsor



"The Smith Family is a really appealing charity to me. I have great respect for how they operate, their integrity, and the amount of support they can deliver nationwide to deserving recipients who are experiencing disadvantage.

It's so rewarding being a *Learning for Life* sponsor. Being able to help to a young Australian who is doing it tough and assist them in having the same educational opportunities I had as a young person – it's the best feeling you can have.

I take great satisfaction in knowing I'm helping a young student. For me, growing up, professional sport was never a guarantee.

I never made any representative teams coming through [as a young footballer], so there was always a big focus on my education.

You look at the statistics of NRL players and the average career is three to four years. So, it has always been important for me to have a long-term plan and to find a passion I'm interested in – because you never know when the sporting journey is going to end.

Education and equity of opportunity is so important for young kids experiencing disadvantage. The Smith Family gives children a chance to study and upskill, empowering them to break that vicious cycle of poverty.

I have a lot of trust in The Smith Family, and I know my sponsorship is helping. I get feedback and updates regularly from my sponsor child, and it's wonderful to see their growth and be a small part of their journey.

The Smith Family is an amazing charity and provides crucial support that can make such a big difference for these young students."

Christian Welch

Former National Rugby League player for the Melbourne Storm and *Learning for Life* sponsor

Governance

We are transparent and accountable for how we manage our assets.

IMPACT IN ACTION

The power of mentoring



Girls at the Centre students

The hard work and dedication of *Girls at the Centre* students was recognised with a prestigious Victorian School Sports Award in April 2025.

The Outstanding School and Community Partnership Award acknowledged a collaboration between students from Bairnsdale Secondary College and Bairnsdale West Primary School to deliver Australian rules football and netball programs, Auskick and NetSetGO.

Through this initiative, secondary students from *Girls at the Centre* mentor and support younger students, encouraging participation in the two sports. It reinforces the importance of sport as a pathway for leadership, personal growth, and community connection.

Girls at the Centre supports girls – particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 12 – to stay at school and helps boost their educational achievements through cultural and social activities.

The Victorian Department of Education awards, established in 1994, are the highest sporting accolades for the state's

public schools. The partnership award highlights programs that create meaningful opportunities for students to take part in school sports through collaborations between schools and community organisations.

Each year, about 200 primary school students from Bairnsdale join Auskick and NetSetGo, which provides coaching along with umpiring accreditations, in collaboration with AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria. The programs empower young female leaders to develop skills they can benefit from, on and off the sports field.

Creating meaningful opportunities

"This award is a testament to the dedication of our students, teachers, and community partners in ensuring that young girls have access to sport and leadership opportunities."

"We are incredibly proud of the impact this program has had on both the primary and secondary students involved."

Simone Forster

Girls at the Centre Program Manager

Board of Directors



Nicholas W. Moore AO

HonDBus BComm LLB FCA

Chairman and Non-executive Director since November 2019; Special Envoy for Southeast Asia for the Commonwealth Government; Chairman of The Centre for Independent Studies, Willow Technology Corporation,

Aldus Group and the National Catholic Education Commission; former Chairman of Screen Australia; former Chairman of the Markets Taskforce Expert Advisory Panel and the Financial Regulator Assessment Authority within the Department of Treasury; former Chairman of the Sydney Opera House and PCYC NSW; former Director of Sydney Airports, Rome Airport (Aeroporti di Roma), Southern Cross Media Group and Hills Motorway; former Chief Executive Officer of Macquarie Group; member (and former Chairman) of the UNSW Business School Advisory Council.



Lisa Paul AO PSM

BA (Hons) FAICD FACEL FIPAA FAIM FANZSOG

Non-executive Director since November 2023; Chancellor, University of Canberra; Chair of the Audit Committee of the Australian Academy of Science; Director of Australian

American Leadership Dialogue; Chair of the Rhodes Scholarship Territories Selection Committee; Director of the Powering Australia Industry Growth Centre; member of the APM Disability Employment Services Advisory Committee; member of the Brotherhood of St Laurence National Youth Employment Board; member of the Quality Curriculum initiative; former Enterprise Professor at the University of Melbourne School of Government; Councillor of Bond University; Director of the Future Battery Industries Cooperative Research Centre; former Chief Executive (Secretary) of the Federal Department of Education (2004–16); Director of several non-profit organisations.



Greg Barnes

BComm CPA MBA GAICD

Non-executive Director since November 2023; Group Chief Financial Officer at Ampol Limited; former Chief Financial Officer at Coca-Cola Amatil, Nine Entertainment Co. and CSR Limited.



Professor Peter J. Radoll

BInfoTech MInfoTech PhD

Non-executive Director since April 2019; Non-executive Director of the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW; Visiting Research Fellow at the Australian National University; former Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Victoria University.



S.A. (Tony) Davis

Non-executive Director since 2016; Founding Director and past Chairman of Quantum, a global leader in data analytics, and business transformation (now owned by Woolworths); partner and adviser in high-growth tech ventures across media, cyber security, health and AI;

owner and Director of Greenbanks Tasmanian Whisky; former Chairman of ADMA; Director of Seaford Foundation (family charity).



Mark Ryan

BArts (Journalism) MBA (Distinction) Adv Diploma of Neuroscience

Non-executive Director since November 2023; Manager, Strategic Communications at Queensland Rail; former executive-level roles at Mater Group, the Gold Coast

SUNS AFL Club and Tatts Group across strategy, corporate affairs, organisational development, marketing and stakeholder engagement; Chair of Return Serve Inc.



Rosheen M. Garnon

BEc/LLB FCA CTA GAICD

Non-executive Director since 2019; Deputy Chair and Non-executive Director of Venues New South Wales; Non-executive Director of Resolution Life Australia; member of the Australia Council Board for Creative

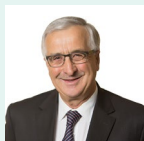
Australia; former senior partner with KPMG with more than 29 years' experience in professional services; member of Chief Executive Women.



Douglas D. Taylor

BMin BA (Hons) GradCertM GAICD

Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director since August 2021; Non-executive Director of Western Sydney University and the Wayside Chapel; member of the Centre for Social Impact Advisory Board.



Adrian J. Kloeden

MSc (Business Studies) BSc (Hons-Forestry) Hon. Doc FAICD

Non-executive Director since 2016; Chairman of Aquasure Pty Ltd; President of the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Director of the Australian Chamber of

Commerce and Industry; extensive experience in senior management roles in a range of companies in Australia and overseas involved in agribusiness, manufacturing, distribution, retail, technology and transport.



Caroline J. Fishpool

BAppSc GradDipEd GradDipStratLdrshp

Non-executive Director since November 2024; Chair of The Smith Family Principals Advisory Group and member since 2018; Lead Director, Conditions for Learning, Department for Education (SA); former Education Director,

Uleybury and Torrens Valley Portfolio at the Department for Education (SA) (2022–23); Principal at Wirreanda Secondary School (2016–22); Chairperson and executive at Panalatinga Local Partnership (2015–22); Department for Education Review Principal (2019–22); Board member of SA Secondary Principals Association (2019–21); leadership positions at Wirreanda Secondary School and Fremont Elizabeth City High School (2001–15).

Directors who retired in 2024–25

Our sincere thanks to our Directors who retired this year.



Christine Cawsey AM

FACEL BA DipEd
MEd (Admin)



Jeremy C.R. Maycock

BEng (Hons)
FAICD FIPENZ

Council of Governing Members

The Council of Governing Members consults with the Board of Directors on The Smith Family’s operations, ensuring they align with the objectives stated in our constitution.

The Council comprises the voting membership of the organisation and is responsible for electing Directors and adopting annual accounts.

In addition to the Directors, the current Council members are Arun Abey AM, Christine Bartlett, Elizabeth Birch, Barbara Cail AO, Christine Cawsey AM (appointed 2024), Emeritus Professor Ross Griffith, Dr Jeffrey Harmer AO, Mark Johnson, Professor John Kelly AM, Chris Leptos AO, Jeremy (Jerry) Maycock (appointed 2024), Christine McLoughlin, Greg Ruddock, Doug Snedden, Rosa Storelli, Peter Stumbles, Paul Tobin, Richard Warburton AO and Ben Watkinson.

We thank all Council members for their support during the year.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is The Smith Family’s decision-making body, responsible for governance and oversight of management. Its role and responsibilities are governed by the constitution and a comprehensive Board charter. During 2024–25, the Board consisted of nine honorary Non-executive Directors and the CEO, with each person offering a range of skills in addition to their board-level experience in various sectors.

Directors Christine Cawsey AM and Jerry Maycock retired from the Board in November 2024 after 11 years of service each. Christine was also Chair of The Smith Family Principals Advisory Group and Jerry was also Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee. We acknowledge their dedication during their tenures and welcome them to the Council of Governing Members.

In addition, the Council of Governing Members endorsed and appointed a new Director to the Board, Caroline Fishpool. The Smith Family’s management conducts a comprehensive induction for new Directors to ensure they understand our organisation, strategy and programs. This enables each Director to start contributing as soon as they are appointed.

Board committees

The functions of the Board’s committees in 2024–25 are outlined below.

The Corporate Governance Committee supports the Board in developing governance principles; identifying candidates for membership of the Board, its committees and the Council of Governing Members; and reviewing The Smith Family’s constitution.

The Endowment Fund Committee oversees the investment policy and mandate for the Children’s Future Education Endowment.

Meetings held and meetings attended										
Director	Board of Directors		Corporate Governance		Finance, Audit & Risk		People & Culture		Endowment Fund	
	Number held	Number attended	Number held	Number attended	Number held	Number attended	Number held	Number attended	Number held	Number attended
G. Barnes	8	8			5	5			1	1
C. Cawsey	4	4					1	1		
S.A. Davis	8	7								
C.J. Fishpool	3	3								
R.M. Garnon	8	6	1	1	5	5			1	1
A.J. Kloeden	8	6					2	2		
J.C.R. Maycock	4	4	1	1						
N.W. Moore	8	8								
L. Paul	8	7	2	2						
P.J. Radoll	8	8					2	2		
M. Ryan	8	8			2	2				
D.D. Taylor	8	8	2	2					1	1

The Smith Family is a company limited by guarantee. Its ABN is 28 000 030 179.

As part of the registration requirements for all non-profit entities, the Australian Taxation Office confirmed in July 2005 that The Smith Family is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI). It is also an income tax-exempt charity and a deductible gift recipient.

The organisation enjoys certain other tax concessions and exemptions, relating to goods and services tax and fringe benefits tax, consistent with its status as a PBI.

The Smith Family is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), and as required by the following state and territory legislation and applicable regulations:

New South Wales

Registration number CFN 11049 – renewable in 2029 and subject to continued reporting to the ACNC

Queensland

Registration number CP 4163 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

South Australia

Registration number CA 778 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Tasmania

Registration number FIA-170 – ongoing subject to continued reporting to the ACNC

Victoria

Registration number FR 0010290 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Western Australia

Registration number CC 20352 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Australian Capital Territory

Registration number 19000133 – ongoing subject to continued registration with the ACNC

Over time, the Endowment Fund's earnings will provide a secure revenue stream to finance student scholarships and community work as part of our *Learning for Life* program. At 30 June 2025, it had \$16.4 million in funds under management.

The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee's main responsibility is to assist the Board in its governance role by ensuring that the organisation operates prudently, effectively, efficiently, ethically and legally. The committee monitors the management of finances and investments to ensure they are effective, and funds are available to meet our operating requirements. It also monitors the effectiveness of risk management policies and procedures.

The People & Culture Committee provides advice on remuneration policies and practices. It also ensures The Smith Family complies with employment-related statutory and regulatory requirements, including those concerning workplace health and safety.

Advisory groups

The following groups advise the CEO and offer their expertise to senior management on issues and projects.

The National Advisory Group on Issues Concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is chaired by John Rawnsley. Its members are Sarah Chaloner, Lenique George, Alara Hood, Jesse King, Rebecca McPhee, Professor Peter Radoll, Kieran Ryan and Wanda Wellington. Two of The Smith Family's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team members, Karen Parter and Leanne Smith, also attend meetings.

Richard McLaren chairs the Information Systems Advisory Group, which also includes Pia Andrews, Sarah Carney, David Ellis, Kelly Ferguson, Rosheen Garnon, Damon Rees and Anthony J. Robinson.

The Principals Advisory Group is chaired by The Smith Family Director Caroline Fishpool. Its members are Angela Falkenberg, Donna McDonald, Andy Mison, David Samaha, Lee Sibir, Karen Snibson, Donna Westaway, Jarrod Williams and Peter Wright-Smith. Christine Cawsey stepped down from the group during the year.

We sincerely thank all past and present members of our advisory groups for their service and support.

Governance standards

As a registered charity, The Smith Family is required to meet the ACNC Governance Standards. These high-level principles deal with how a registered charity should be governed, and we regularly review our compliance with them. Our policy framework ensures that our practices align with:

- the ACNC Governance Standards, which include an obligation to act consistently with Australian laws
- our contractual commitments, including those under key government funding arrangements
- community expectations and our values.

Recognising and managing risk

Strong governance, focusing on risk management and compliance, is a foundational element of The Smith Family's strategy. We use a governance, risk and compliance platform to manage and report on incidents and compliance matters.

This year, we continued to focus on strengthening our risk culture and capabilities by refining our strategic risk profile, enhancing reporting to our governance bodies and aligning our policy framework with our risk approach. We also expanded our risk function to improve systematic risk, compliance and control assessments.

We continue to mature our Risk Management Framework and the Executive team has developed a set of priorities and actions to uplift our risk management approach. This included reviewing and redefining our strategic risk profile and integrating strategic risk management into our business planning and review cycle.

We will continue to focus on a more systematic risk, compliance and control assessment process, and on improving the policy framework.

Child safeguarding

As part of our commitment to being a child safe organisation, we endorse the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This year, we focused on National Principle 4, which promotes equity and respect for diversity in policies and practices involving children, young people and families. To support this, we developed internal resources to assist team members in addressing the equity and diversity needs of children, young people and families.

We also launched our Strengthening Child Safeguarding initiative to further embed child safety into our culture and work practices. Key achievements include introducing child safeguarding indicator reporting, updating training

for team members, enhancing our Internal Child Safety Alert System and reviewing our Child Safeguarding Framework.

Environmental sustainability

As part of our strategic commitments, The Smith Family advanced initiatives to minimise our environmental impact and operate in a more environmentally sustainable way. As a service-based organisation, we do not have significant negative environmental impacts. To improve our operational environmental sustainability, we have introduced carbon offsetting for air travel and established baseline National Australian Built Environment Rating System sustainability measurements for selected property locations.

VIEW Clubs of Australia

This 13,000-strong national women's organisation supports our work through fundraising, volunteering, raising awareness and advocating for Australian children experiencing disadvantage.

Its national leadership team heads up the overall development of VIEW and administers policy. The two-year term of VIEW's National Executive ends in December 2025. The National President, Elizabeth Birch, is supported by National Vice-Presidents Sandra Jankovskis and Lorraine Thomson.

National Councillors include Lyall Aldridge, Hazel Austin, Kris Behets, Angela Carroll, Pam Evans, Dianne Fiddes, Jean Jennings, Jill Mason, Pat McRae, Bernie McSwain, Aletia Norman, Janet Park, Chris Patmore and Elizabeth Terry.



Five-year financial summary

(Figures in \$'000s)

	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
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Income

Fundraising					
Donations and corporate support	111,243	110,874	116,835	126,368	129,970
Bequests	9,773	9,462	10,925	10,286	18,332
VIEW Clubs	2,856	4,558	5,138	5,159	5,344
Government funding	26,366	19,824	18,886	21,066	23,976
Children's Future Education Endowment	836	835	667	2,886	685
Investment and other income	3,297	312	4,922	6,881	7,203
Total income	154,371	145,865	157,373	172,646	185,510

Expenditure

Policy and programs	(87,262)	(102,961)	(111,462)	(126,921)	(131,627)
Fundraising	(30,251)	(28,523)	(33,779)	(40,527)	(40,585)
Promotion	(4,852)	(6,359)	(7,036)	(6,855)	(7,519)
Administration	(2,507)	(3,424)	(4,844)	(5,607)	(7,332)
VIEW Clubs	(1,516)	(3,198)	(3,607)	(3,722)	(3,721)
Total expenditure	(126,389)	(144,465)	(160,728)	(183,632)	(190,784)
Surplus/(Deficit) from continuing operations	27,981	1,400	(3,355)	(10,986)	(5,275)

Volunteering

The Smith Family receives substantial contributions by way of pro bono support from corporate partners and volunteers, the value of which is not reflected in the financial statements. Volunteering contributions are valued based on the level of skill required by various volunteering positions.

	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Volunteer hours	152,596	116,038	108,341	123,457	113,792
Value of volunteering contribution (\$m)	4.7	3.7	3.7	4.3	4.0

Income

Since 2020–21, total income has grown by an average of 4.7% annually, rising from \$154.4 million to \$185.5 million in 2024–2025, mainly driven by higher individual donations, philanthropic support and investment income.

Donations and corporate support	In 2020–21, income from individual donations and corporate support was \$111.2 million. By 2024–2025, it had risen to \$130.0 million, representing an average annual growth of 4.0%.
Government funding	The Smith Family received \$26.4 million in government funding in 2020–21. In 2024–2025, we received \$24.0 million.
Children's Future Education Endowment	In 2024–2025, The Smith Family received \$0.7 million into its Children's Future Education Endowment.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure has risen from \$126.4 million in 2020–21 to \$190.8 million in 2024–2025, largely due to expansion of our community programs.

Policy and programs	In line with our revenue growth, we have invested to extend the reach and increase the impact of our work. Investment in community programs increased on average by 10.8% annually, rising from \$87.3 million in 2020–21 to \$131.6 million in 2024–2025.
Fundraising	In 2024–2025, fundraising expenditure totalled \$40.6 million, representing an average annual growth of 7.6% since 2020–21.
Administration	Expenditure of \$7.3 million on administration support in 2024–2025 represented 4.0% of total income, an increase from 3.3% in 2023–24.

Volunteering

Estimated value of volunteering contribution	The estimated value of the contribution of volunteers in 2024–2025 was \$4.0 million compared to \$4.7 million in 2020–21.
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Fundraising performance

Investing for impact

At The Smith Family, we are committed to supporting young Australians to overcome educational inequality caused by poverty. Our investment decisions are aligned with this purpose, guided by evidence and focused on delivering measurable outcomes for the communities we serve.

Our goal remains to deepen our impact and grow our reach by building and growing sustainable funding streams that enable investment in lasting social impact.

Accountability for every dollar entrusted to us by our supporters is a high priority. This year, our supporters generously donated \$148.3 million. Combined with government support and other contributions, our total revenue of \$185.5 million enabled us to deliver vital community programs and also invest in the people, systems, technology, fundraising and governance that make those programs effective, scalable and sustainable.

In the past year, for every \$1 invested in fundraising, we raised \$3.35 to invest in sustaining and expanding our impact, both through our community programs and strategic investments in our organisation. For example, we have concentrated key investments in cyber security, including supporter and family

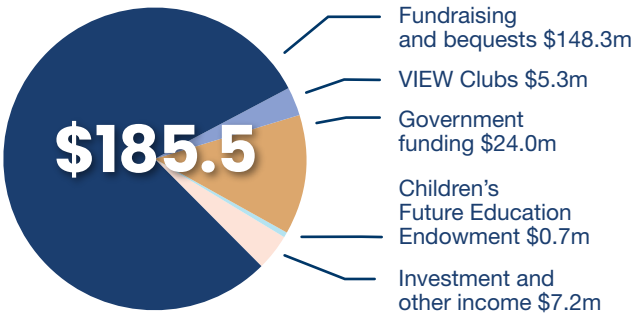
data security, business continuity planning and working towards all our essential systems achieving an elevated security standard.

We are undertaking ongoing work to increase the transparency of our overhead costs, and we are pleased to see our funders and partners becoming more actively involved in working with us to find the best ways to support our vital services. Our commitment to our donors is to use gifted funds efficiently to deliver impactful programs with outcomes measured and reported publicly. This approach positions us to rapidly adapt to evolving circumstances for our beneficiaries and to ensure the strong governance and sustainability of our work.

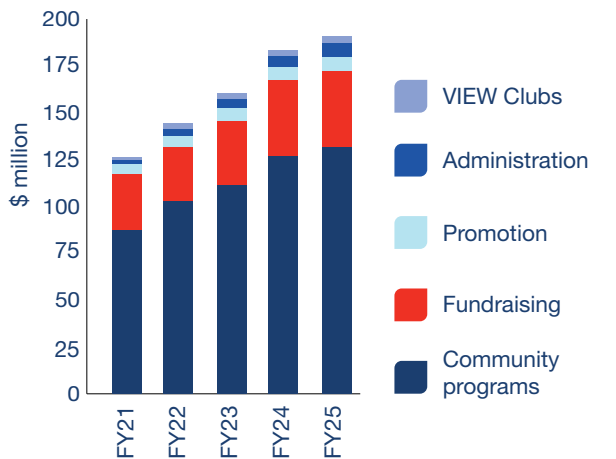
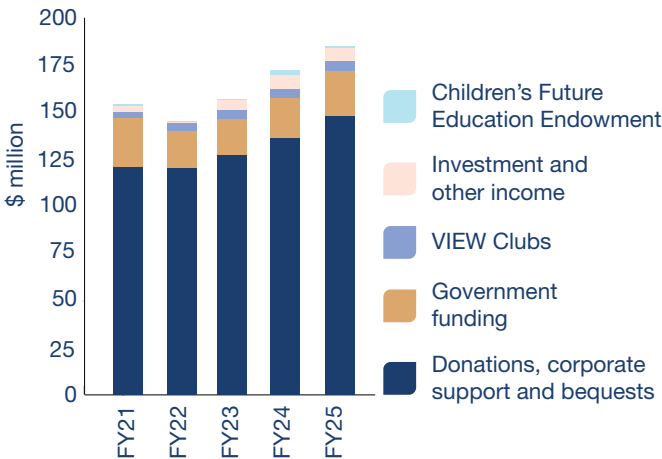
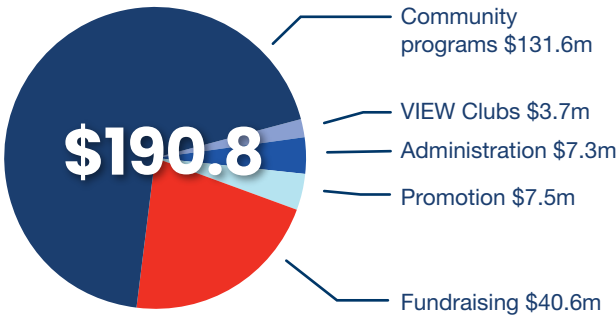
Fundraising to invest in our programs



Where we obtained our financial resources 2024–25



How we applied our financial resources 2024–25



In the five years to June 2025, 74% of donations from our supporters was spent on our community programs, with 26% of our resources invested in vital activities that build our organisational sustainability and success.

2024–25 awards

2025 Australasian Reporting Awards Gold Medal for our 2023–2024 Annual Report; Winner, Best Annual Report in the Community and Welfare Industry Sector

2025 The Smith Family's *Girls at the Centre* program recognised with Victorian School Sports Award for Outstanding School and Community Partnership

2025 International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Gold Quill Award of Excellence for our Combating Digital Poverty campaign

The Smith Family locations

General enquiries

GPO Box 5348
Sydney NSW 2001
Website: thesmithfamily.com.au
T Freecall: 1800 024 069
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

Volunteer Co-ordination Unit
T 1300 397 730

National office

Level 17, 2 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 9085 7222 **F** 02 9085 7299
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra
Corner Launceston and Easty streets, Woden ACT 2606
T 02 6283 7600 **F** 02 6282 1725
Belconnen | Gungahlin | Murrumbidgee | Tuggeranong

New South Wales

Level 5, Westpoint Office Tower, 17 Patrick Street,
Blacktown NSW 2148
T 02 9895 1233 **F** 02 9633 9897
Albion Park | Auburn | Bathurst | Blue Haven | Chester Hill
| Claymore | Coffs Harbour | Cranebrook | Dapto | Dubbo |
Fairfield | Goulburn | Jesmond | Lithgow | Macquarie Fields |
Miller | Mount Druitt | Nowra | Orange | Raymond Terrace and
Karuah | Seven Hills | Shellharbour | Springfield | Tamworth
| Taree | Tarrawanna | Tuggerah Lakes | Wagga Wagga |
Warrawong | Wiley Park | Windale | Wyong

Northern Territory

Darwin
Level 1, 6 Pavonia Place, Nightcliff NT 0810
T 08 8985 6841
Darwin | Katherine | Palmerston

Queensland

Brisbane
Level 1, East Tower, 410 Ann Street, Brisbane Qld 4000
T 07 3115 6200 **F** 07 3337 6424
Brisbane | Cairns | Gladstone | Gold Coast Central |
Gold Coast North | Inala | Ipswich | Logan | Mackay |
Moreton Bay | North Brisbane | Redlands | Rockhampton |
Southport | Toowoomba | Townsville

South Australia

Adelaide
Suite 1, Level 6, 195 North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
T 08 8224 1400
Christie Downs | Elizabeth Downs | Elizabeth Vale | Hackham |
Morphett Vale | Port Adelaide Enfield | Port Augusta |
Salisbury North | Smithfield Plains | Whyalla

Tasmania

Hobart
Suite 4, Level 3, Galleria Building, 31–35 Salamanca Place,
Battery Point Tas 7004
T 03 6223 2627
Brighton | Burnie/Wynyard | Glenorchy |
Northeastern Launceston

Victoria

Melbourne
Level 7, 50 Queen Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
T 03 9473 4300
Bairnsdale | Ballarat | Bendigo | Brimbank | Broadmeadows |
Collingwood | Dandenong | Epping | Frankston | Geelong |
Lakes Entrance | Morwell | Shepparton | Werribee

Western Australia

Perth
Level 1, 14–16 Victoria Avenue, Perth WA 6000
T 08 9265 5555
Armadale | Bunbury | Collie | Gosnells | Kwinana | Midland |
Mirrabooka | Rockingham

Contact details

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GPO Box 5348
Sydney NSW 2001
T Freecall: 1300 326 459
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

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T 02 9085 7222 **F** 02 9085 7299
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VIEW Clubs of Australia

Level 17, 2 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 9085 7178
T Freecall: 1800 805 366
E view@thesmithfamily.com.au

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 [SmithFamily_org](https://twitter.com/SmithFamily_org)

 [thesmithfamilyaus](https://www.instagram.com/thesmithfamilyaus)

thesmithfamily.com.au

2024–25 Annual Impact Report