2025–26 Impact Snapshot Report

The Smith Family
Learn today, change tomorrow.

Creating lasting change, together

Transforming futures through education



Message from the Chairman and CEO



The Smith Family
Chairman Nicholas Moore AO (left)
with Chief Executive Officer Doug Taylor

Every young person deserves to realise their potential through education, but for too many young Australians experiencing disadvantage, the path is increasingly challenging – making it harder to stay engaged at school and keep pace.

That's why The Smith Family provides evidence-based support through *Learning for Life*, family partnerships and education programs that help our students stay engaged, build skills and make the most of their learning.

This year we focused on reaching more students, strengthening our impact and building awareness of education's role in addressing disadvantage. Through our broader education programs, we provided 182,593 children and young people learning and educational support, including 73,731 *Learning for Life* students, while expanding access to devices, connectivity and practical cyber safety information.

Our generous supporters donated a record $154.8 million. We invested $122.9 million in *Learning for Life*, family support and community programs that help children and young people make the most of their education. We remain committed to stewarding donor trust carefully.

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



Transforming futures through education

With the right support, education can help young people embrace new opportunities and create a future defined by their potential – rather than their circumstances.

At The Smith Family, we believe education opens the door to possibility, giving young people the skills, confidence and choices to shape their own future. That's why we're focused on helping young Australians overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

Creating lasting change means building on what works and continuing to deepen our impact and reach more young people who need support. By working closely with families, communities, schools, partners and supporters, we can help create stronger foundations for young people's education and their futures.

To do this, we partner with young people and their families over the long term.

Our evidence-based programs help young people stay engaged with their education, develop their skills and confidence, keep up with their peers and build pathways towards further study, training and employment.

Our flagship *Learning for Life* program combines financial assistance for education essentials with tailored personal support and access to additional learning. Our Community Programs improve outcomes for children, young people, families and communities through learning, financial wellbeing, family support, community development and capacity-building initiatives.

Together, these programs provide sustained, practical support that helps young people make the most of their education.

What shapes educational opportunity

Every child deserves the opportunity to make the most of their education.

Children experiencing poverty often face barriers that make it harder to participate in learning. These barriers can occur across home, school and community environments and accumulate over time.

Research shows that educational outcomes are strengthened when children and young people have:

- supportive family and community relationships
- opportunities to participate fully in school life
- reliable access to learning resources and technology
- guidance during key educational and career transitions
- access to services and support when challenges arise.

This is why The Smith Family works alongside children, young people, families, schools and communities to help create the conditions that support educational success.

Factors influencing participation in learning

Students in our *Learning for Life* program often experience circumstances that can affect participation in education.



All live in **low-income families**



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



Half have a parent or carer who **did not finish Year 12 or equivalent**



Four in 10 students and more than one-third of parents or carers have a **disability or health issue**



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



43% of school-aged participants **do not have a laptop or tablet and/or live in a household without any internet connection**. The figure for secondary students is 30%

Despite these circumstances, children, young people and families show resilience, capability and a strong commitment to education when the right opportunities and support are available.

How we work to make a difference

Our strengths

A long history of supporting the education of Australian children

A clear focus on improving educational outcomes for children and young people experiencing poverty

Long-term relationships with children, young people and families through key educational transitions

Strong financial stewardship

Evidence-informed programs and a practice framework that supports families to achieve their educational goals

Strong partnerships with individual, corporate, trust and foundation, and government partners

Deep connections within schools and communities

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

Sound governance and risk management aligned with our purpose and commitments to child safety, reconciliation and sustainability

An empowering culture for team members and volunteers

How we make an impact



Providing financial and practical support that helps reduce barriers to participation in learning



Working with families to support children's educational aspirations and goals



Delivering evidence-informed programs that build skills, knowledge, confidence and educational engagement



Engaging with schools, communities, and partners to identify needs and connect families with support

Strengthening school and community capacity and connections to help children and young people participate in education and succeed



Monitoring outcomes and contributing Australian evidence about educational opportunity and poverty



Advocating for policy and system change that improves outcomes for children and young people



Creating lasting change

Our 2025–26 progress

Reach

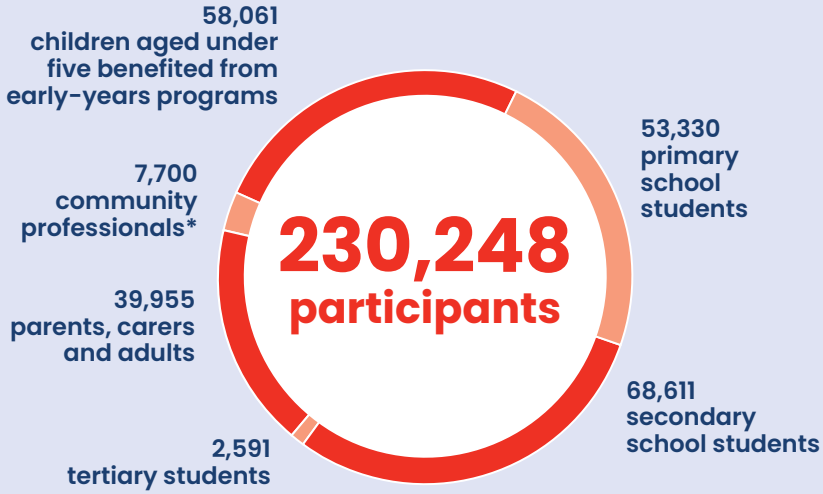
230,248

children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals reached

182,593

children and young people participated in our programs

Participation across life stages



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

Outcomes

81%

average school attendance of *Learning for Life* students

65.1%

of students in Year 10 in 2023 advanced to Year 12 by 2025



84%

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

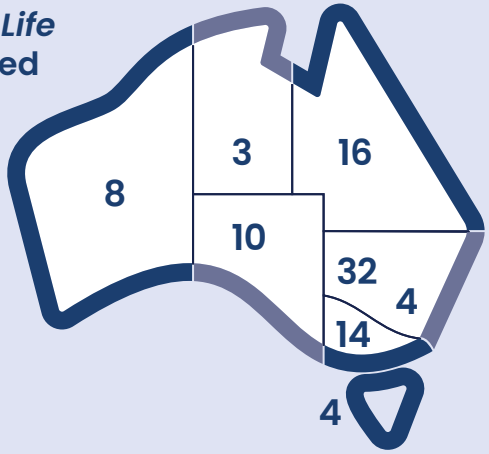
78%

of students who commenced the *Tertiary Learning for Life* scholarship in 2023 had either completed or were continuing towards a Certificate IV or higher qualification after three years

Learning for Life

91 communities

in which *Learning for Life* programs are delivered



73,731
students received support through *Learning for Life*

Partnered with
767
schools around Australia

Digital inclusion

4,400
digital devices issued this year

12,424
devices issued through the *Digital Learning Essentials* program since 2023



Supporter impact

$154.8 million
donated by individual supporters, bequestors, and our philanthropic partners to help children and young people make the most of their education

Our highlights from 2025–26

Deeper impact

Strengthen impact in *Learning for Life*

- ✔ Ongoing coaching strengthened Family Partnerships Coordinators' capabilities, further promoting tailored, consistent support for families.
- ✔ 26.7% of *Learning for Life* participants (19,668) in 2025–26 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Leverage digital and partners

- ✔ We delivered 30% of *Learning for Life* school-age programs digitally or through partners, extending the reach of our support.
- ✔ 2,519 students received targeted educational assistance through digital partner programs such as *Adaptive Learning* and *Study Assist*.

Expand digital inclusion

- ✔ Digital inclusion among *Learning for Life* students increased to 57%.
- ✔ We delivered 4,400 digital devices this year through our *Digital Learning Essentials* program, bringing the total issued since the program's launch to 12,424.
- ✔ Through the Optus Donate Your Data™ initiative, 51,246 students and family members received internet access.
- ✔ We also improved access to trusted cyber safety information for parents and carers, helping families find practical guidance to support safe online participation.

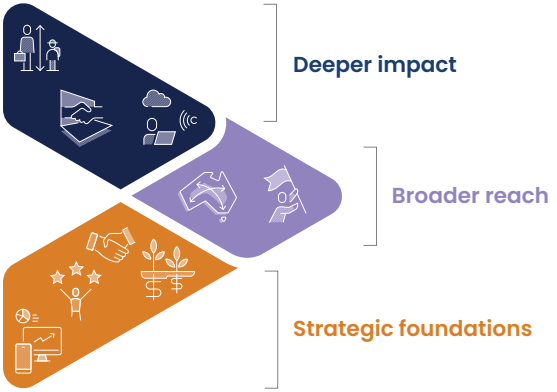
Broader reach

Grow reach

- ✔ We delivered *Learning for Life* in partnership with 767 schools in 91 communities, supporting 73,731 students, an increase of 2.7% on the previous year.
- ✔ 182,593 children and young people participated in our programs.

Grow influence

- ✔ We made six public policy submissions, delivered 26 external presentations and published nine opinion pieces to advocate for children and young people experiencing disadvantage.
- ✔ Six podcast episodes across *All I Can Be* and five episodes across *Conversations with The Smith Family* extended our advocacy reach by sharing lived experience and exploring solutions to educational inequality, generating more than 10,000 downloads and 7,600 YouTube views.
- ✔ Our Growing Careers Project speed mentoring activity, attended by the Federal Minister for Education, the Hon Jason Clare MP, created further opportunities to engage government on career education.
- ✔ We helped build understanding of how AI could improve educational outcomes for students, strengthen organisational effectiveness and reduce administrative burden through a webinar attended by 531 team members and stakeholders.



Strategic foundations

Grow sustainable funding

- Individual supporters, bequestors and philanthropic partners donated $154.8 million [total income] to help young people experiencing disadvantage make the most of their education – up $6.5 million on the previous year.
- We welcomed 5,825 new sponsors, 4,612 new regular donors and 9,731 first-time one-off donors, growing our community of supporters to almost 197,000 people.
- More than 500 private individuals and families contributed $16.5 million; corporate partners and workplace givers contributed more than $13 million; and trusts and foundations provided $7.5 million.
- Our Children's Future Education Endowment grew from $16.4 million to $19 million.

Empower our people

- We delivered a new People and Culture operating model, strengthening support for our people, improving workforce planning capability and enabling more consistent delivery of people services.
- We continued strengthening employment compliance by embedding Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award initiatives into our business-as-usual operations.
- We rolled out our Culture Amp performance and development processes and laid the foundations for AI-enabled compliance management.

Be cyber secure and invest in digital, technology and data

- We completed a major phase of our multi-year cyber resilience program, meeting our FY26 cyber security objectives and extending business continuity planning from three to seven critical functions.
- We removed and deidentified records to protect personal and sensitive information.
- We expanded our use of AI-powered digital assistants from one to three and launched a new search capability shaped by feedback from more than 2,800 *Learning for Life* families, helping provide easier access to trusted digital skills and online safety information.

Strengthen governance, risk management and compliance focus

- We reviewed and redefined our strategic risk profile and integrated strategic risk management into our business planning and review cycle.
- We introduced child safeguarding indicator reporting, specialised training for Child Safe Contacts, and progressed work to incorporate children's voices into organisational policies and procedures.
- We established a sustainability roadmap, including Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions reporting and a proposed Net Zero scorecard.

We track our contribution

Program results

We review short-term program results to help young people make the most of their education.

Programs supported children and young people at every stage of learning, including 58,061 children aged under five, 53,330 primary school students and 68,611 secondary school students.

In 2025–26, program results showed positive progress across literacy and numeracy, academic engagement, self-management, confidence, learning and development skills, and awareness of the world of work.

Let's Read



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

Let's Count



of surveyed participants reported an improved capacity to work with parents or carers to support their children's emergent numeracy

Passport to Success



of students increased their understanding of what to expect in high school

student2student



of students improved their reading, with 16% increasing their reading level by up to two years

Work Inspiration



of students reported increased understanding of the connection between their education or training and future career options

Learning Clubs



of students increased their self-confidence at school

Future Seekers



of students developed an understanding of the diversity of work

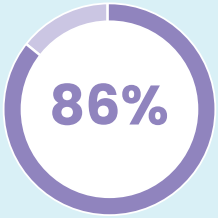
Short-term outcomes

Family Impact Measure

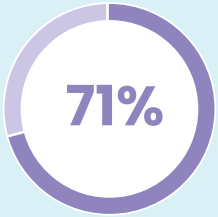
Our Family Impact Measure helps us track the shorter-term changes that support longer-term educational outcomes for students on *Learning for Life.*

These include changes in students' skills, confidence, engagement, learning behaviours and understanding of study and career pathways.

It also measures the impact of our family support approach. In 2025–26:



of families indicated they were confident to seek support if needed



of families were confident they would know where to go for support

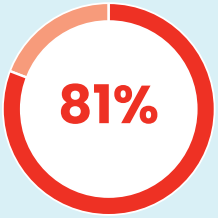
Many people and organisations contribute to a young person's life, including the young person themselves, parents and carers, teachers and other service organisations. This is why The Smith Family is committed to evidence-informed practice and measuring our impact through short-term program outcomes, our Family Impact Measure and longer-term indicators such as school attendance and Year 12 or equivalent completion.

Longer-term results

Together, these results provide encouraging evidence that *Learning for Life* students are staying engaged in education, progressing through school and moving into work or further study, despite the complex barriers associated with disadvantage.

Attendance

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



average school attendance of *Learning for Life* students

83.9% for primary school students
75.7% for secondary school students
76.0% for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students

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 their community.



of *Learning for Life* students in Year 10 in 2023 advanced to Year 12 by 2025

Engagement

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.



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



Raymond and his children

Staying connected to learning

" When I think about what The Smith Family's support has meant for my children, I think about opportunity."

"As a single dad, I want Indie, Raymond and Preston to feel confident at school, connected to their learning and able to look ahead with confidence.

Since joining *Learning for Life* in 2020, my children have benefited from extra learning and mentoring support that has helped them stay engaged and build their confidence. It has been encouraging to see them grow, take on new challenges and feel proud of what they are achieving.

Like many families, we have seen how much school has changed. More learning now happens online, and digital access has become an important part of education, communication and everyday life. For a long time, our family shared one device, which meant we had to manage who could use it and when. With three children needing access for schoolwork, that could be challenging.

Receiving a laptop for Raymond through The Smith Family's partnership with Telstra Foundation has made a real difference. It gives him more independence with his learning and helps ease the pressure across the household. Schoolwork can be completed more easily, routines can run more smoothly and he has a better chance to participate fully.

I also try to encourage a healthy balance between time outside, family time and time online. But having access to technology is now essential for learning and staying connected.

I'm grateful that this support is helping families like mine. It's not just about a device; it's about giving children the tools, confidence and encouragement they need to keep learning, stay connected and look ahead with confidence."

Raymond,
***Learning for Life* parent**

Support that changes lives

Kate wants her children to have the education and support she didn't – and the chance to feel proud of what they can achieve.

"When The Smith Family came into our lives in 2022, I thought maybe we'd just get help for a short bit of time, but it's changed our lives. Knowing that people care, not just about the kids but me too, is overwhelming.

It absolutely takes a village to raise your kids, and even just having one person ring up and say, 'Hey, how are you? Do you need anything? Or do the kids need anything?' means the world.

For my eldest two kids at school, they can go on excursions now, do a sport and I don't feel embarrassed to send them to school because they've got the right shoes, their uniforms, all those things.

Learning Club on a Wednesday is their favourite day of the week. They look forward to it because they get to meet other kids in the area who aren't at our school. It's really helped my daughter, Anika, with her confidence, and to realise that she's actually quite smart and can do amazing things.

The kids getting a good education is important to me, because I didn't get one, I didn't have that support. But they do, and I'm just so proud of them. They do their best and that's all I've ever asked of them."

Kate, *Learning for Life* parent

"I like going to Learning Club because they are nice people, and they help me with stuff. We do things like building because we're working on a city project, and I eat the watermelon."

Anika, *Learning for Life* student



Kate and her children, RJ and Anika



Students in North Eastern Tasmania consuming knowledge and food at a Learning Club

Confidence beyond the classroom

"I started volunteering for The Smith Family in February 2025 and have now worked in four schools.

I have seen the profound impact this program has had on students and am extremely grateful for the opportunity to witness the students grow in confidence and ability – it's just amazing.

The Learning Club not only helps with life and social skills but has such an impact on their academic learning outside of the traditional classroom setting. The food-focused activities strengthen the children's literacy skills by encouraging them to read recipes, follow instructions and develop their cooking-related vocabulary. Their numeracy skills are improved by measuring ingredients, counting, and understanding time and temperature. For example, if a recipe asks for one cup of flour, we might put a 1/3 cup out, so the students must use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to figure out how many 1/3 cups are needed to make one cup.

It's very hands-on and visual so they become more willing to participate, ask questions and try new tasks because they can see what they have achieved from start to finish.

Not all students learn the same way, and this program encourages another way of learning, which lets each student shine creatively and academically.

One student who was quiet and hesitant to participate now volunteers to read recipes out loud and helps other students measure, cut and mix ingredients, and is involved in the entire cooking process.

It is extremely rewarding to see the children become more confident in the kitchen and within themselves whilst learning new skills and making friends along the way."

Evangeline Donati, Learning Club Volunteer

"Not all students learn the same way, and this program encourages another way of learning"

Empowering our people through AI

"By reducing the time I spend searching for information, it allows me to focus on what matters most – having meaningful conversations with families and providing personalised support.

As a Family Partnership Coordinator, my role is all about building relationships with families and supporting them to improve their children's educational outcomes. To do that effectively, I need to understand each family's circumstances, from the programs they're involved in, to any challenges that could affect their child's engagement at school.

Before Sunny, our AI digital worker, gathering that information was time consuming. I would spend a significant amount of time navigating multiple systems and tabs to piece together the context I needed before contacting a family. While important, that administrative work took time away from the relationship building side of my role.

Now, Sunny brings that information together in one place.

The biggest difference is that I can now come into every interaction feeling prepared and present. If I'm speaking with a family for the first time, Sunny can instantly provide a summary of their situation, helping me understand their needs and build rapport quickly.

That means I can listen more closely, respond in the moment and tailor my support to their situation.

Sunny allows me to spend more time strengthening relationships with families and helping them overcome educational barriers, which is the most meaningful part of my work."

Lily Nguyen,
Family Partnership Coordinator

"By reducing the time I spend searching for information, it allows me to focus on what matters most."



Lily Nguyen, Family Partnership Coordinator

Creating opportunity through every cup

We were proud to celebrate an incredible milestone with our partner, Hungry Jack's, this year – $1 million raised to support young Australians experiencing disadvantage. Hungry Jack's made this possible by generously donating 10 cents from every medium and large hot drink sold at Jack's Cafe year-round.

Since joining us as a partner in November 2024, the Hungry Jack's campaign has raised vital funds to help *Learning for Life* students access school essentials and build pathways to bright futures.

Chris Green, Hungry Jack's Chief Executive Officer, said the partnership shows what's possible when people and organisations come together around a shared belief.

"As a leading employer of young Australians, we understand the importance of providing support and believe every young person deserves a chance to reach their full potential."

The Smith Family is grateful for the support of Hungry Jack's, its team and every customer who has purchased a hot drink for positive change, helping to unlock potential in classrooms across Australia.

"Every cup of our coffee is crafted with love, and we invite our customers to share the love by supporting The Smith Family and making a difference together."

Doug Taylor, The Smith Family's Chief Executive Officer and Chris Green, Hungry Jack's Chief Executive Officer

A legacy of opportunity

Dr Karen Duggan believed in the idea of a fair go for everyone, and the power of education to help people create a good life for themselves. It's why she donated to The Smith Family for thirty years.

"Karen was a cardiovascular physician. She was also my cousin.

She was passionate about helping people – it's why she got into medicine in the first place. It was never about making money, it was about making a difference.

If Karen set her mind to doing something or learning a new skill, she would always take it seriously and do it well. She was a really hard worker and believed that everyone should contribute to society.

So, the decision to leave the family home in Clovelly to The Smith Family in her will was probably a no-brainer for her. It would have resonated with her, the fact that The Smith Family is giving children the tools to succeed in life, no matter their background.

The fact that the auction was so successful would have been especially pleasing to her. She had a great love for learning and would have loved the idea of giving children the chance to be all they can be."

Russell Graves,
Dr Karen Duggan's cousin



Dr Karen Duggan

"The decision to leave the family home in Clovelly to The Smith Family in her will was probably a no-brainer for her."

Russell Graves, the new home buyers and The Smith Family team members, outside the sold house

Fundraising performance

At The Smith Family, every investment we make is guided by our purpose of helping young Australians overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

Sustainable funding is essential to deepening our impact and growing our reach. It allows us to invest not only in our programs but also in the capability needed to deliver them effectively, safely and at scale.

This year, our supporters donated $154.8 million. Together with government support and other contributions, total revenue of $187.5 million enabled us to deliver programs and strengthen the capabilities that underpin quality, effectiveness and scale.

In the past year, for every $1 invested in fundraising, we raised $3.80 to sustain and expand our work.

We take seriously our responsibility to use every dollar entrusted to us effectively. We are committed to strengthening transparency around how we invest our resources, and measuring and reporting publicly on the outcomes.

By investing thoughtfully in our programs and the people, systems and capabilities essential to delivering them, we can create lasting impact for the children, young people and families we support.

Fundraising to invest in our programs

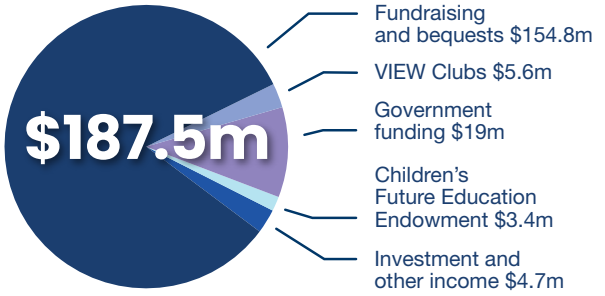


For every **$1** invested in fundraising

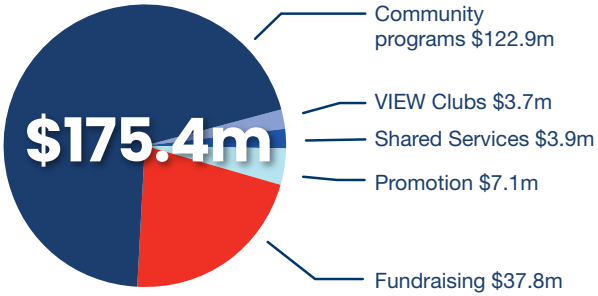
$3.80 was invested in programs

helping young Australians

Where we obtained our financial resources 2025–26



How we applied our financial resources 2025–26



In the five years to June 2026, 83% of donations from our supporters were spent on our community programs, with 17% of our resources invested in vital activities that build our organisational sustainability and success.

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/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and to Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and/or 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.

On cover: Kate and her children, Anika and RJ

To learn more about The Smith Family scan the QR code.

The Smith Family
Learn today, change tomorrow.

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