

CONNECT WITH US



UNITED SYNERGIES
ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18





ABOUT THIS REPORT

This publication provides our readers with a report on our activities during the 2017-18 year, including our key achievements, challenges and financial performance.

It tells the story of what we do, why we do it, and how our work is building better lives.

OUR INTENDED READERS INCLUDE:

- Government regulatory and funding bodies at a federal, state and local level
- Our community partners who provide much needed additional resources and services
- Our staff and volunteers who deliver our services and programs
- Our community supporters and donors who give generously to us
- Our valued members
- People and families who use our services and undertake our programs to build better lives

United Synergies acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. Our staff recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their continuing connection to land and water. We pay respects to Elders past, present and future.

We're a not-for-profit organisation established in 1989.



WEC

We have called this year's Annual Report
'CONNECT WITH US'

to highlight our focus on creating better connections between our services, programs, our communities, and those we help.

People only need to tell us their story once to receive the holistic care and support they need.



Arabella and Josea from our Younger Parents Program.

OUR FOCUS AREAS



HOMELESSNESS



**CHILD AND FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS**



MENTAL HEALTH



**SUPPORT AFTER
SUICIDE**



**TRAINING AND
EMPLOYMENT**

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Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of printing. The authors, publisher and any person involved in the preparation of the United Synergies Annual Report 2017-18 takes no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person or organisation acting or refraining from action because of information contained in this publication.

OUR PURPOSE: EVERYTHING WE DO IS DEDICATED TO BETTER LIVES

We focus on those who are vulnerable as they face the challenges of changing circumstances and life stages.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where our individuals, families and communities achieve:



Sense of **SELF**



Sense of **PLACE**



Sense of **PURPOSE**



Sense of **BELONGING**

OUR VALUES

Our values are the shared principles by which we work – the yardsticks we use to help us make decisions when working with our clients, communities, partners, stakeholders and staff.



EXEMPLARY SERVICE PROVISION



RESOURCEFULNESS & RESPONSIBILITY



WISDOM & FORESIGHT



ALL OF OUR 'UNITED SYNERGISTS' BRING OUR PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES TO LIFE IN THE INCREDIBLE WORK WE DO.

See page 71 for more details.

WHO WE HELP

We have a long history of working with vulnerable youth, with the majority of our services and programs provided to those under the age of 25.

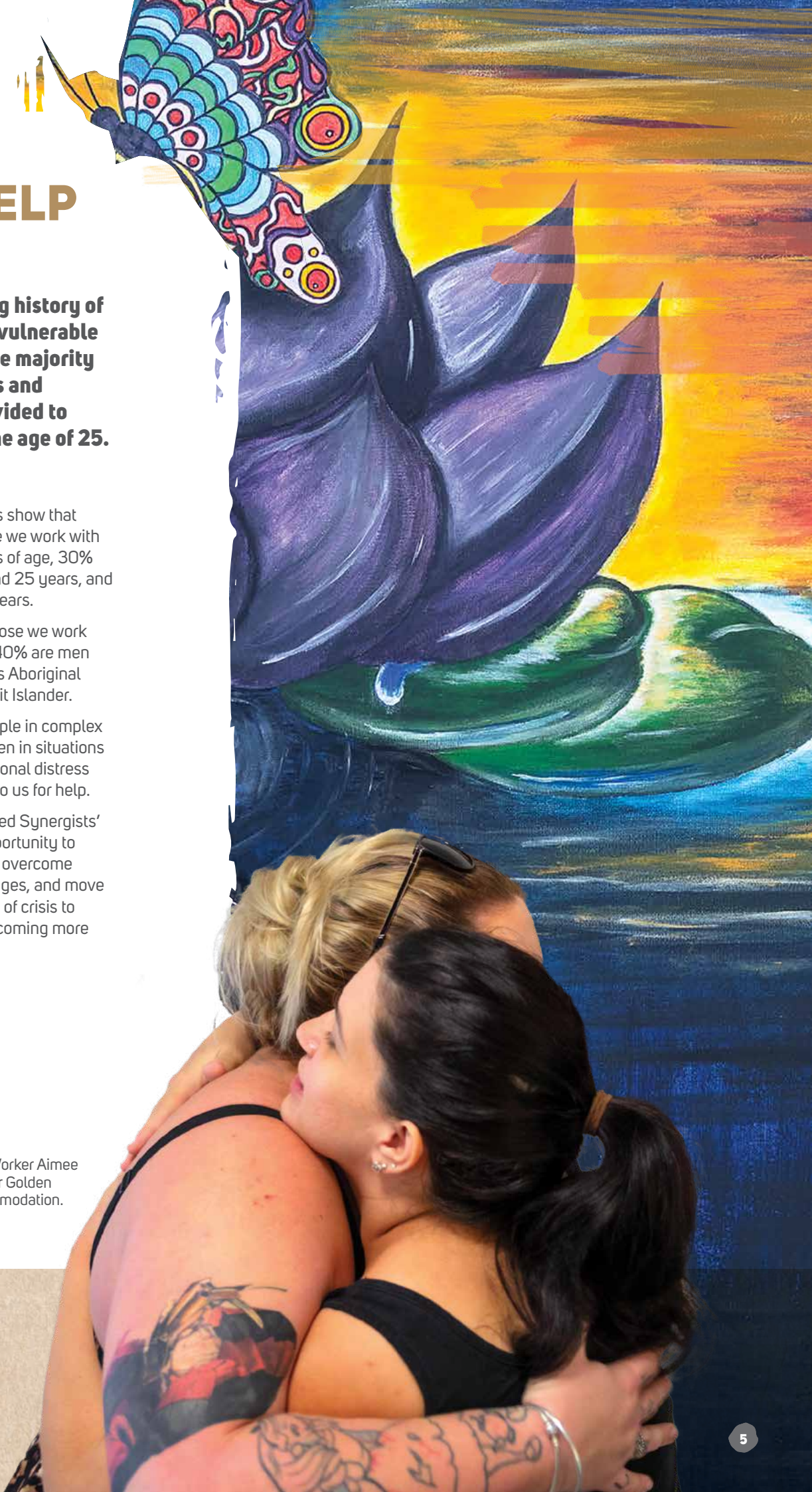
Our demographics show that 56% of the people we work with are under 18 years of age, 30% are between 18 and 25 years, and 14% are over 25 years.

Around 60% of those we work with are women, 40% are men and 11% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

We work with people in complex areas, who are often in situations of crisis and emotional distress when they come to us for help.

Our frontline 'United Synergists' have a unique opportunity to help these people overcome significant challenges, and move through situations of crisis to stability, while becoming more resilient.

Kristina and Case Worker Aimee at the opening of our Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation.



WHO WE HELP...

IN THE LAST YEAR

WE HAVE SUPPORTED

5,474

PEOPLE ACROSS
QUEENSLAND AND
AUSTRALIA*

WHICH IS A

30% INCREASE

COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.



OUR REGIONS:

We support people from 19 work sites across Queensland. Our main work sites are in: Tewantin, Maroochydore, Gympie, Nambour, Caboolture, Toowoomba and Bundaberg.

We also provide support after suicide to individuals and communities across Australia.

* Total number of people we provided at least one service to between 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

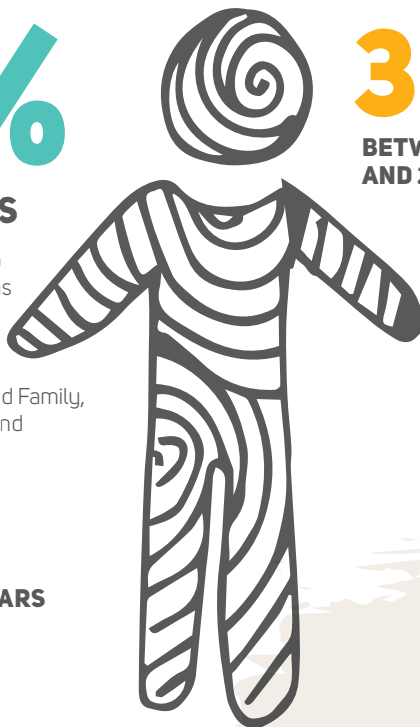
OUR DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

56%

UNDER 18 YEARS

Almost 90% of those we help across our five service streams fall within the youth category (under 25 years). This is particularly representative of the Mental Health, Child and Family, Homelessness and Training and Employment streams.



30%

BETWEEN 18 AND 25 YEARS

14%

OVER 25 YEARS

GENDER

60%

FEMALE

The majority of those we help are female, and are particularly represented in the Child and Family service stream.



11%

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



1%

**TRANSGENDER/
INTERSEX/OTHER**

39%



MALE

BOARD'S WELCOME

Each year United Synergies helps thousands of vulnerable people, who are working through challenging and complex situations to create better lives for themselves and their families.

As a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity, we support people across five core service streams: Mental Health, Child and Family Relationships, Homelessness, Training and Employment and Support After Suicide.

The 2017-18 reporting year has been a successful year for United Synergies, with many achievements and corresponding challenges that the Board is proud to report in this year's publication.

United Synergies has continued to grow in recent years. This year our operating revenue was \$22.2M. We run 30 programs across five core service streams, have 19 different work-sites and 186 staff.

The Board has continued to give focus to ensuring that United Synergies has the right foundations in place to support the work of the organisation – both now and into the future.

At both a governance and operational level, we have embarked on some key changes to ensure that the organisation is aligned to those

we help and to the needs of all stakeholders.

During the past year a comprehensive review of our organisational structure was carried out. The purpose of this significant undertaking was to create better connections between our communities, our staff and our services and programs. This has included the expansion of the Leadership Team to include a wider range of expertise and skill-sets.

We have continued to invest in our Quality Management System (QMS), which will ensure that United Synergies has strong, centralised systems, processes and solid documentation in place to support our work and improve our effectiveness.

This year the Board and Leadership Team remained focused on tackling challenges associated with the changing funding landscape, including the renewed focus on social impact transparency. As a not-for-profit organisation, key to our future success is our ability to showcase our impact utilising data. Addressing these challenges requires investment in our systems and we will continue this focus into the future.

The Board also acknowledges that it has been a challenging year for United Synergies given the uncertain funding environments in which we operate. This is why the capacity building work described above is so important and we thank all staff for the huge effort they have put in during the year.

Going forward, United Synergies is creating a new Strategic Plan - mapping out a more connected and focused future that aligns to three key areas: Better Connections, Better Services and Better Accountability. With a strong focus across these

areas, we are dedicated to delivering quality, safe and accessible services provided by a network of connected professionals to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

This year saw strong attendance and involvement from all directors in Board meetings. We welcomed Dr Oscar Modesto, Joyce Chorny and Glen Damro who bring additional clinical, community development and risk management expertise to the Board.

Geoff Argus left the Board in early 2018, after making a substantial contribution to United Synergies over the last two and a half years. We thank Geoff for his continued interest and dedication to the local community and the wider United Synergies footprint.

Our United Synergies Young Director Internship is a voluntary role that is all about fostering leadership in young people and helping them to have a voice in organisations such as our own. The completion of our first Young Director Internship by Hayden Ford last year provided many learnings around engaging young people. Going forward, we continue to seek opportunities for young people to participate at the governance level of our organisation. More information can be found on our website: www.unitedsynergies.com.au

United Synergies is committed to excellence and we are pleased to report that we were the recipients of an ARA Silver Award for our 2016-17 Annual Report. Thousands of businesses and organisations enter these awards, and to be acknowledged with an ARA Silver Award demonstrates that our over-arching branding direction, communication and stories of those we help are resonating with the wider community.

United Synergies relies on a diverse range of funding from government departments, partner organisations and community supporters to deliver our services and programs. We have endeavoured to recognise and thank all of those funding providers, organisations, and community members who work with us and are also dedicated to helping people live better lives.

The Board is grateful to all United Synergies staff who continually go over-and-above in their day-to-day work to bring to life the organisation's purpose - Dedicated to Better Lives. It is our people who make it possible to deliver a Sense of Self, Sense of Place, Sense of Purpose and a Sense of Belonging to those we work with.

This year the Board has made a deliberate effort to get out and meet more United Synergies staff and see first-hand the work they do. We sincerely thank all staff and volunteers who bring the United Synergist values to life each and every day.

The Board would also like to thank CEO Christopher John and the Leadership Team for their dedication and commitment throughout the year.

Our challenges and achievements over the last year have reaffirmed our commitment towards the work we do. Collectively, we remain dedicated to building better lives, supporting our communities and those who are vulnerable to allow them to reach their full potential.

We thank everyone who is part of this journey with us.

United Synergies Board of Directors



Chair: Greg Livingstone

CEO'S WELCOME

Our organisation is dedicated to helping people live better lives, and it's our people, who we refer to as 'United Synergists' that continually go over and above in their roles to change the lives of those we help for the better.

I want to acknowledge our 'United Synergists' and those we help, who are truly inspiring in their efforts, and thank them up front for sharing their stories of challenge, change, and dedication throughout the year.

It's been a year of significant change for our organisation.

During the year, we undertook a substantial organisational re-design to make it easier for people to 'Connect with US' – which is reflected in the theme of our Annual Report.

Our new organisational design allows people with complex circumstances to move seamlessly between our different program streams, gain more support and assistance, and also lays a stronger foundation for our future growth.

I'm pleased to report that in this financial year, we supported 5,474 people across Queensland and Australia, which represents a 30% increase compared to last year.

One of the ways we measure our impact, including how we help people live better lives, is through our social impact data – which we refer to as our Social Impact Evaluation Framework (SIEF). See pages 18-21.

This year 60% of our services and programs participated in SEIF, where almost 70% of people reported that it was their first time accessing a United Synergies service or program. This is 12% higher than last year, showing that we are reaching more people and that those we help are less likely to need support again after completing a United Synergies program.

Overall, after receiving support from us, these people reported significantly

fewer issues, with the largest reductions seen in homelessness, emotional distress, financial distress and unemployment/under-employment, down between 9% and 20%.

Significantly, there was also a meaningful 28% reduction in self-harming behaviours or suicidal thoughts, across all our programs and services partaking in our social impact data.

We currently run four **headspace** centres – in Maroochydore, Toowoomba, Caboolture and Bundaberg – that are focused on youth mental health.

This year, we opened an additional **headspace** Kilcoy service, co-located at the Kilcoy Hospital, which has been a great success and also received the go-ahead for our new **headspace** Gympie satellite service which will launch in August 2018.

Overall, we helped 3,937 people across our **headspace** centres and our other mental health programs.

Not having enough money and experiencing financial hardship can lead to significant emotional and mental distress. This year our Money Matters team successfully negotiated \$338,474 in waivers and discounts on behalf of those we assisted, which has made a big impact on the lives of those we helped. See pages 29-30.

Across our Child & Family service stream, we assisted almost 300 families and young people with complex needs, where 35% of those we helped identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

During the year, the team also undertook a major Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) audit, which identified the need for us to implement an over-arching organisational model of care throughout all our Child & Family programs and services.

After much investigation, we chose the Sanctuary Model of Care, with an integrated roll out expected to be completed within the next three years. This Model of Care suits our organisation and encapsulates

the requirements for developing a culturally sensitive service for those at risk of statutory interventions.

People are often surprised at the continuing issue of youth homelessness across Australia, and how significantly challenging some of the situations are that young people find themselves needing to deal with.

We know from the work we do on the ground, that young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are often dealing with relationship breakdowns, domestic and family violence, employment problems, as well as the lack of affordable rental properties.

This year we assisted over 300 people across our Homelessness programs, where the prevalence of five issues decreased significantly: homelessness (56% rate reduction), emotional distress (39% rate reduction), family breakdown (24% rate reduction), self-harming (39% rate reduction) and criminality or contact with the justice system (38% rate reduction).

Overall, our Homelessness teams across the Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba regions achieved a 40% increase in helping people into stable accommodation.

These results show that our work really does have an impact and help people live better lives.

Having said this, we recognise that there is much more work to be done in making a tangible difference in reducing youth homelessness and next year we plan to start more Homelessness programs across other regions in which we operate.

This year we re-orientated our service and program offering to focus on training and employment opportunities and exited out of our school-based education programs due to the lack of funding in this area. Our teams in our Child and Family and Homelessness streams created new partnerships with key education providers, which allows those we help to undertake their education online while they go through the care system.

Our StandBy Support After Suicide program is largely recognised as Australia's leading provider in postvention support and continues to grow in terms of reach and impact. This year we were pleased to partner with Thiririli Ltd and the National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS) to deliver StandBy in Indigenous communities. We also partnered with MATES in Construction to form MATES StandBy to better reach and support more construction workers and their families impacted by suicide.

StandBy is currently available to 30% of Australia's population across 10 PHNs through partnerships with local organisations. Our goal is for all Australians to have access to StandBy, and going forward, we will continue to work hard for national expansion.

As mentioned earlier, our people are at the heart of our organisation and the difference we make in the lives of others.

I would like to sincerely thank all our staff for their hard and dedicated work, our volunteers, and our community supporters who are so generous with giving their time, expertise, and also their fundraising efforts on our behalf.

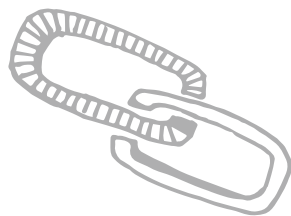
I would especially like to thank our funding bodies and our partners for their collaboration and investment in our services and programs that help make the lives of the individuals and families we work with better.

Lastly, I would like to recognise and thank our new leadership team, our Chairman Greg Livingstone, and our Directors for their leadership, dedication, guidance and support in laying the right foundations for our organisation to continue to grow and help more people live better lives.

Christopher John
CEO



HELPING YOUTH CONNECT



Expression Sessions at our Maroochydore Warehouse provide a space free from pressure and judgement for young people to express themselves through music, dance, poetry or spoken word.

EXPRESSION

This year we were really pleased to have Nomads Golf Sunshine Coast come on board as a sponsor and supporter of our Expression Session events, which provide a soft entry point into our other programs and services.

Our Maroochydore Centre Manager Deb explains how the partnership came about.

“Our services and programs have benefited many young people, who have reached out for help and support after first attending Expression Sessions, where they felt comfortable with our environment and our people.

“This led us to pitch the idea to Nomads Golf Sunshine Coast, who have previously raised money for **headspace** Maroochydore, to come on board as a sponsor of Expressions Sessions so we can further develop the engagement event.

“Nomads Golf Sunshine Coast have wholeheartedly embraced the idea of Expression Sessions, as a way of contributing back to the community,” says Deb.

Over the past 12 months these Expression Sessions have become a popular creative space connecting young people and youth workers in a relaxed social environment – over music, lunch, and coffee served by our BUZZING Barista’s trying out their coffee making skills.

This year we were pleased to also host a special Expression Session at our Maroochydore warehouse to celebrate Reconciliation Week.

This event engaged young people, sports stars (Sunshine Coast Lightning), sector colleagues and government (local, state and federal) partners, including the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), in a host of activities to understand and promote reconciliation. These included art, feather jewellery making, music and conversation on reconciliation.

Expression Sessions are a terrific way for our staff, young people and the community to connect, where we see young people gain confidence each week – with many progressing to performing at Open Mics around the Coast and our own AGM event.



SESSIONS

**WE ARE PROUD TO FEATURE
EXPRESSION SESSIONS,
CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO
OUR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

CONNECTING TO OUR STRATEGY

Our operating model is underpinned by a number of core strategies, including:

PERSONALISED PATHWAYS

Our services are underpinned by a philosophy of personalised pathways targeting an individual's needs and desired outcomes.

CO-DESIGNED SERVICES

We develop and refine our services and supporting processes with those we serve and our stakeholders to empower and guide better service solutions.

COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING AND RESOURCES

While we are predominantly a government funded organisation, we also seek complementary sources of funding and alternative resources to enhance the delivery of our Vision.

ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We empower our people to maintain a positive culture and continually improve the way we operate.

PRIORITIES AND PERFORMANCE

1. PEOPLE RECEIVE EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL PERSONALISED CARE

One way we monitor our achievement of this is through our Social Impact Evaluation Framework (SIEF) – see pages 18-21. Analysis of our SIEF data tells us that helping people build confidence and connections in their community translates into tangible outcomes such as jobs, housing, education, and ultimately better lives.

Our commitment to creating personalised pathways has been underpinned by the provision of quality and meaningful services, and our organisational value of 'Exemplary Service Delivery' is reflected in bringing our United Synergist behaviours to life – see page 70.

2017-18 GOALS	PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
Making our data count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 60% of programs regularly submitting outcomes data Further improvements in our SIEF reporting <p><i>Achieved, see pages 18-21</i></p>
Strong culture of excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restructuring our organisation to create stronger foundations and internal and external connections to better support the needs of those we help <p><i>Achieved, see pages 70-79</i></p>
Investing in new models and frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking and starting to implement recommendations from our external Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) Audit <p><i>Achieved and in progress, see pages 32-41</i></p>
Redesigning our systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing an organisational wide electronic Client Management Software <p><i>In progress</i></p>
2018-19 FOCUS	GOALS
Making our data count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing a new monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework Building capacity to conduct evaluations in collaboration with academic institutions contributing to research
Investing in new models and frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing an over-arching best practice Sanctuary Framework across our entire Child & Family service stream Scoping out a comprehensive Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for our organisation
Redesigning our systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping out an organisational wide electronic Client Management Software
Refining our service and program delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting an audit of investments across all programs and services Developing a new business model to further support integrated service delivery Implementing a new strategic contracting process to support service and program decision-making

2. SERVICE AND PROGRAM QUALITY IS IMPROVED BY CO-DESIGN

In many of our services, the program and activities delivered have been participant led to meet their personal needs. Co-design enhances engagement, ownership and outcomes achieved in services and moving forward we expect to increase our engagement in co-design activities.

2017-18 GOALS

Achieving a strong level of engagement with our funding bodies, partners and peak bodies

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Working collaboratively with **headspace** National to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement for the **headspace** MDS and hAPI data collection tool to improve usability for our clients

In progress

Effectively engaging young people and our consortium partners in our **headspace** centres

- Launching our **headspace** Kilcoy outreach project
- Receiving confirmation of funding for **headspace** Gympie satellite service

Achieved, see pages 26-29

2018-19 FOCUS

Achieving a strong level of engagement with our funding bodies, partners and peak bodies

GOALS

- Developing a portfolio of 'shovel ready' programs designed to meet the needs of our communities*
- Increasing our program funding coverage for each service stream by more than 30% over next two years

Effectively engaging young people and our consortium partners in our four **headspace** centres

- Launching our **headspace** Gympie satellite service in the next financial year

* The term 'shovel ready' refers to programs held in draft/concept stage ready for implementation when funding opportunities become available

3. SOURCING AND CREATING NEW AND ALTERNATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDING AND RESOURCING

Sourcing complementary funding opportunities is an essential focal point for most non-profit organisations to reduce reliance on government purse strings, build sustainability and foster a culture of innovation. Fundraising is a new and developing function at United Synergies.

2017-18 GOALS

Implementing a 'Fundraising Basics' organisational wide framework

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Creating a formal donor resource kit for other organisations, businesses and community members to learn more about us and how they can support us

Achieved, see: www.unitedsynergies.com.au

2018-19 FOCUS

Enhancing our 'Fundraising Basics' organisational wide framework

GOALS

- Establishing a regular donor newsletter showcasing the work we do and the difference we make in the lives of others

4. APPLY COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE PLANNING, REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STANDARDS SUPPORTED BY A HIGH LEVEL OF STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

As we grow as an organisation, our ability to adapt, remain responsive and sustainable requires our staff to have appropriate systems and resources, visibility of performance expectations and clear accountabilities.

2017-18 GOALS

Strong systems and processes underpin our organisation

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Investing in our Quality Management Project
- More than 50% of internal audits complete
- Requirements for ISO accreditation mapped and implementation plan developed

Achieved and in progress, see pages 82-83

Strong culture of excellence

- Cascaded organisational planning to ensure transparency and accountability across the organisation

In progress

Maintaining compliance with industry standards

- Achieving/maintaining our HSQF accreditation and certification
- Meeting the requirements of the new **headspace** Model Integrity Framework (hMIF) for three sites

Achieved, see pages 22-29

2018-19 FOCUS

GOALS

Strong systems and processes underpin our organisation

- Embedding our Quality Management systems throughout our organisation
- Achieving ISO 9001:2015 certification

Redesigning our systems

- Scoping out an organisation wide electronic data system including: client management and a comprehensive update to our finance systems that integrates with other parts of our organisation
- Completing a data and information audit across all programs and services
- Revising our workflow and data management policies and procedures to ensure continued compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles

Strong culture of excellence

- Launching a formal succession planning project, which identifies critical roles and clear succession plans for our high potential employees
- Providing in-depth finance and systems training to improve the financial acumen of our people and program managers

Building and growing our brand

- Researching and persona-mapping our core target audiences to align with a potential future brand refresh

KEY CHALLENGES

The main challenges we have faced over the past year include:

- Working in an ever-changing and uncertain funding environment
- Managing the strong rate at which our organisation continues to grow and ensuring we have the right foundations, connections, systems and processes in place
- Successfully restructuring our organisation to create better internal and external connections to meet the needs of those we help
- The complexities of mental health, child and family, homelessness, training and employment, and support after suicide issues our staff work towards resolving
- Increasing domestic and family violence and drug taking issues within the families and young people we work with
- The continual rise in youth homelessness and those at risk of homelessness, along with the lack of crisis and affordable accommodation options

CONNECTING TO OUR FUTURE

Our challenges and achievements over the last year have reaffirmed our commitment towards the work we do. We are dedicated to building better lives, supporting our communities, and those who are vulnerable, to allow them to reach their full potential.

As we continue to grow our organisation, and our services and programs, we recognise the importance of adapting and improving the work we do – now and into the future.

In order to manage the rate at which our organisation continues to grow, over the last six months we have begun to focus our efforts into three key areas of our business:



This year, while we have embarked on some key changes for our organisation to lay stronger foundations for better connecting our people, services and programs, there is much more work to do in 2018 and beyond.

A key part of our commitment to our communities will see a revitalisation of our strategic direction to create a new Strategic Plan, mapping out a more connected and focused future for our organisation.

OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

SOCIAL IMPACT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (SIEF)

SIEF was established in 2012, with the aim of demonstrating the positive impact and effectiveness of our services and programs – as well as showing how our vision and mission translates into meaningful and sustainable outcomes for the people we support.

WE WANT TO KNOW THAT WE ARE HELPING PEOPLE LIVE BETTER LIVES.

In 2017-18, almost 60% of our programs contributed data to the SIEF.*

HOW DO WE COLLECT OUR DATA?

People who come to us for help complete a short survey when they enter one of our services or programs participating in **SIEF**, and during and/or after they complete the program. The survey measures a range of outcomes, including:

- Issues and personal circumstances
- Health outcomes
- Social outcomes (e.g. employment, stable housing)
- Satisfaction with life (measured by the Personal Wellbeing Index)
- Hope (i.e. optimism for the future)
- Personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender)

We sub-contract social researchers, The Science of Knowing, to manage and analyse our data.

WHAT DO WE USE OUR DATA FOR?

The results from our data are used for many different purposes, including organisational improvements and funding applications for future programs. We use our data to better understand where we are helping people the most, and areas where we might be able to help them more.

Our data from the last financial year has specifically been used to create better connections between our services and programs, whereby people with complex circumstances can move seamlessly between different program streams to ensure they receive holistic support.

We are in the process of identifying areas where data collection processes can be streamlined and simplified.

*Programs participating in SIEF

Mental Health Service Stream: CHIME and Mental Health Carer Respite. Child & Family Service Stream: Residential Care, Supported Independent Living, Intensive Family Support Program, Foster & Kinship Care, Younger Parents Program, Youth Support, Bridging Families, Family Support. Homelessness Service Stream: Specialist Homelessness Services, Gateway House and Gateway to Dignity Program. Training & Employment Service Stream: Get Set For Work, United Synergies Army and Smarter Choices.

NOTE: headspace Centres collate their data separately through **headspace** National. Our Support After Suicide Service Stream does not currently participate in SIEF.

This section over page compares key people outcomes from intake to follow-up and only includes people who have completed both an intake and at least one follow-up form, so that direct comparisons can be made for the same people before and after they have been supported by United Synergies. Approximately 60% of people participating in the SIEF (271 people) completed a follow-up form in 2017-18, so the sample sizes for the key people outcomes are smaller.

KEY SOCIAL OUTCOMES

APPROXIMATELY

60%

OF 271 SIEF PEOPLE completed a follow-up form in 2017-18

TOP 5 ISSUES AT INTAKE:

- 1 UNEMPLOYMENT/ UNDER-EMPLOYMENT 55%
- 2 EMOTIONAL DISTRESS 40%
- 3 MENTAL HEALTH 39%
- 4 HOMELESSNESS 36%
- 5 FINANCIAL DISTRESS 33%

TOP 5 ISSUES AT FOLLOW-UP:

- ↓ 20% HOMELESSNESS 1
- ↓ 16% EMOTIONAL DISTRESS 2
- ↓ 9% FINANCIAL DISTRESS 3
- ↓ 9% UNEMPLOYMENT/ UNDER-EMPLOYMENT 4
- ↓ 6% FAMILY BREAKDOWN 5

52%

OF PEOPLE WERE EXPERIENCING 3 OR MORE ISSUES AT INTAKE



38%

OF PEOPLE WERE EXPERIENCING 3 OR MORE ISSUES AT FOLLOW-UP



33%

EARNING OR LEARNING

37%

EARNING OR LEARNING

Across our service streams, United Synergies continues to assist clients engage in earning and learning opportunities

72%

HAD STABLE HOUSING

90%

HAD STABLE HOUSING

20% INCREASE

1 IN 5 PEOPLE

had self-harming behaviours or suicidal thoughts

1 IN 7 PEOPLE

had self-harming behaviours or suicidal thoughts

28% REDUCTION



CONNECTING WITH US



Data from SIEF shows that

**ALMOST
70%**

of people reported that it was their first time accessing a United Synergies service or program.

**THIS IS
12%
HIGHER**

than last year, suggesting that we may be reaching more people and that our current clients are less likely to need support again after completing a United Synergies program.



IMPROVED WELLBEING

The Personal Wellbeing Index measures people's satisfaction with life across several domains – health, financial security, achievements, relationships, community involvement, safety and future outlook.

As an evidence-based tool, it is used all over the world and has been tested with different ages, cultures and languages.

Scores from the Personal Wellbeing Index are easy to understand – scores range from 0 to 100.

In Australia, adults typically score between 74-76, while adolescents typically score slightly lower than this. Scores below 60 may indicate a higher risk of depression.

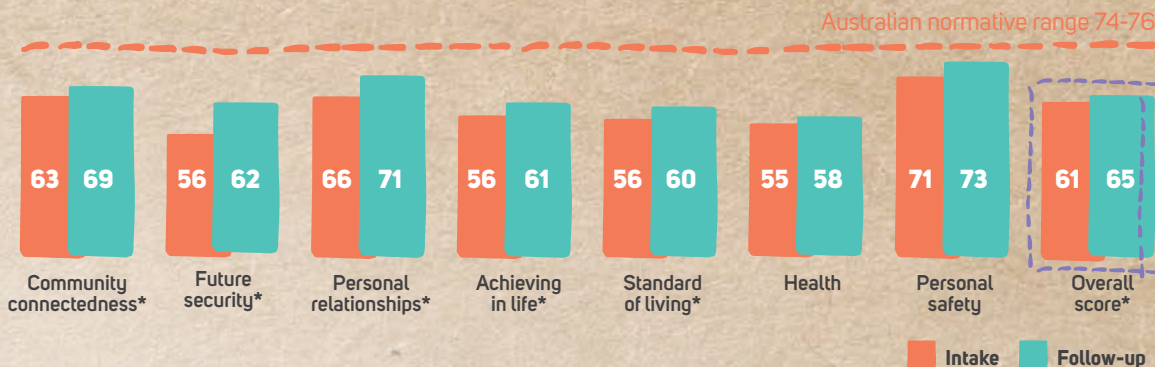
Those we work with typically score much lower than the Australian average, with adults scoring an average of 54 and young people scoring an average of 62 at intake.

In particular, those we work with tend to score lowest on the domains related to health, standard of living, achieving in life, and future security.

The chart below shows how United Synergies clients' personal wellbeing scores in 2017-18 changed from intake to follow-up across the seven domains and overall. All domains showed an improvement and both the overall scores and five of the seven domains increased significantly (indicated with an asterisk).



PERSONAL WELLBEING INDEX DOMAINS (SCORE 0-100)



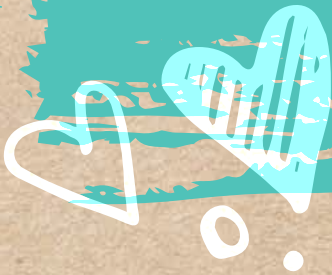
KEY HIGHLIGHT



After receiving support from United Synergies, people reported **SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER ISSUES.**

The largest reductions seen were on:
HOMELESSNESS, EMOTIONAL DISTRESS, FINANCIAL DISTRESS AND UNEMPLOYMENT/UNDER-EMPLOYMENT,

DOWN BETWEEN **8%** AND **20%**



FUTURE FOCUS

We are continually improving our processes for collecting and using outcomes data, so we can better understand those we help, and how to meet their needs.

In the next year, we plan to use data from our programs and services to:

- **Identify geographic 'hotspots'** and gaps in services – e.g. areas needing outreach support
- Highlight emerging changes in our demographics and how we can **better meet our community's needs** – e.g. increase in helping Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people as seen in 2017-18
- Streamline and **simplify our data collection** processes for staff and those we help, to ensure data is accurate and adds value
- Make sure **results are accessible and meaningful** for staff, so that they can be used directly in service and program planning and design

Sense of self MENTAL HEALTH

Each year approximately one in every four Australians experience a mental health concern, and this is most prevalent in young people aged 18 to 24 years old.

Furthermore, research shows there is a higher degree of youth mental health concerns among those living in low-income, step/blended and sole-parent families. Unfortunately, many delay seeking help because they fear stigma and discrimination.

(Source: Mindframe)

This evidence highlights the need for early intervention, the need to educate and de-stigmatise mental health concerns within the broader community, as well as facilitating better connections between different services and programs to ensure people receive the help they need.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Creating better connections between our **headspace** centres and our other services and programs
- Assisting over 300 people in our Money Matters program where the total amount in waivers and discounts successfully advocated for those we helped was \$338,474
- Assisting people across our Carer Respite and CHIME programs, where the prevalence of five issues decreased significantly:
 - 56% reduction in financial distress
 - 43% reduction in emotional distress
 - 57% reduction in relationship concerns
 - 51% reduction in parenting concerns
 - 20% reduction in family breakdown
- Creating new community partnerships with organisations and businesses who support our work

HEALTH



CHALLENGES

- Restructuring our workforce to better connect our **headspace** centres with our other services and programs
- Meeting the high demand for our services at our **headspace** centres
- Completing the **headspace** Model Integrity Framework (hMIF) audit (**headspace** Trade Mark Licence Deed)

DEMOGRAPHICS

3,937

PEOPLE HELPED through our Mental Health services and programs



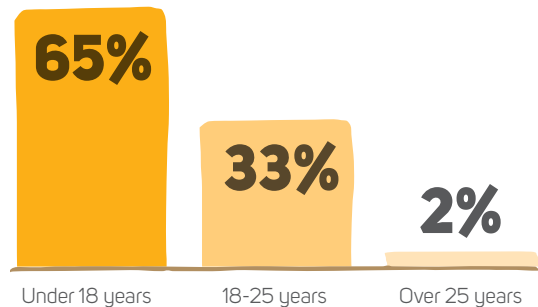
40%
MALE



59%
FEMALE



1%
OTHER



9%

Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

LIGHTNING STRIKES AT headspace MAROOCHYDORE

It's not every day you receive a call from one of Australia's top national sports teams.

When Community and Youth Engagement Officer, Jacinta, took the call from Sunshine Coast Lightning it was the start of what would be an exciting partnership for **headspace** Maroochydore.

Chosen as one of just four community charity partners for 2018, the team were keen to get behind the work **headspace** undertakes to support young people in the region.

"To be chosen by the team from hundreds of worthy organisations across the Sunshine Coast is a real boost for our **headspace** centre.

"I can't put a value on having the players dedicate their time to be involved with **headspace** events. Good mentors play such an important role in the lives of young people," says Jacinta.

One of the first events the team attended was the special Reconciliation Expression Session. A staple in the **headspace** calendar, the Expression Sessions are a monthly event sponsored by Nomads Golf Sunshine Coast where young people can get together and, with the support of local musician Dale Mallet, express themselves through music.

It was the perfect introduction for the Lightning players to learn more about the role **headspace** plays in engaging young people.

"It was a great opportunity for the players to chat to some of the young people in a relaxed setting and gain a better understanding of some of the challenges they are experiencing.

"Having inspirational role models can have such a positive influence on the ideals and actions of a young person.

"The players were fantastic, I don't think they wanted to leave. They were still there after the event playing music!" Jacinta shared.

The partnership also includes free tickets to home games providing an experience many of the young people at **headspace** Maroochydore would not otherwise be able to enjoy. One of the Youth Engagement Committee members was a grateful recipient. As a carer for her Mum, it was a very welcome time-out for her and her younger sister to have some fun watching the team in action.

The **headspace** team have also enjoyed the opportunity to host a stand at the University Sunshine Coast Stadium which provided great exposure to youth in the region to share the **headspace** message.

For the Sunshine Coast Lightning, the collaboration with **headspace** demonstrates their ongoing commitment to community, as Community and Fan Engagement Manager Georgia Galton explains.

"Lightning chose to partner with **headspace** Maroochydore to provide an opportunity for young people to have a connection to elite athletes and sporting role models.

"Lightning also wanted to provide an opportunity for **headspace** to have a platform to showcase and raise awareness of the fantastic work being undertaken in the youth space," says Georgia.



sense of self

headspace Maroochydore Youth and Engagement Officer Jacinta.

Photography Credit: Sheree McArthur Photography

OUR headspace CENTRES

United Synergies operates four headspace centres – in Maroochydore, Caboolture, Toowoomba and Bundaberg, with our fifth site, headspace Gympie opening early in the 2018-19 year.

Funding for our **headspace** centres is obtained on a regional basis through the PHNs and Medical Benefits Schedule Billing. Each **headspace** centre is developed in partnership with local Youth Engagement Committees (YECs), local consortium agencies, **headspace** National Youth Mental Health Foundation and the PHNs.



As our first **headspace** centre, opened in 2012, **headspace** Maroochydore is now in its sixth year of operation and continues to adapt to meet the needs of young people and their families on the Sunshine Coast.

Over the last 12 months, the centre provided 6,241 support sessions to young people with mild to moderate mental health concerns, which represents a 30% increase compared to last year.

headspace Maroochydore remains committed to offering after hours appointments until 8pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings with the continued funding support of Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN. These extended opening hours provide a flexible service delivery that is accommodating to the needs of young people and their families. Evening appointments remain popular with high attendance rates.

Throughout 2017-18 **headspace** Maroochydore delivered a range of additional holistic support services, education and information to parents, families and friends. The LGBTIQ SHOUT groups (Under 18s and Over 18s) continue to be held weekly with increasing numbers of attendees. Yoga has been held each Monday afternoon, providing young people with relaxation and mindfulness techniques. Weekly Coffee Time offers an opportunity for young people to come together and socialise.

With the financial support of the Nomads Golf Sunshine Coast, **headspace** Maroochydore was able to continue to facilitate monthly Expression Sessions which provide a soft entry point for young people to our **headspace** services, as well as other United Synergies services and programs. See page 12 for more details.

Gubbi Gubbi Dance Member Jacquie (middle) with Sunshine Coast Lightning Netballers at our special Reconciliation Expression Session event.



Based on the growing need for youth mental health services in the Gympie region, in 2017 United Synergies submitted an expression of interest to operate a **headspace** site in Gympie. Late last year it was announced that we would be funded to provide a satellite service from our Maroochydore **headspace** site to deliver local support to young people in Gympie. Our **headspace** Gympie satellite service will formally launch in August 2018 offering services four days a week.

headspace Maroochydore/Gympie is thankful for the dedication and involvement of our Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) and our consortium partners: Fresh Marketing and PR, Mental Health Service, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, University of the Sunshine Coast, Integrated Family and Youth Service, Steps Employment, Community Solutions, and Ted Noffs Foundation.



MAKING CONNECTIONS



Our **headspace** Toowoomba centre officially opened in July 2015 and has very quickly established itself as a youth friendly space.

Over the last 12 months, **headspace** Toowoomba provided 3,236 support sessions to young people, which included services to LGBTIQ (22%) and Indigenous (9.6%) youth reached through community engagement initiatives such as: participation in the LGBTIQ Network; YARN Safe and NAIDOC initiatives in schools and university; and service links to Goolburri and Carbal Health Services.

The generosity of the Grand Central and Clifford Gardens Shopping Centre Commonwealth Bank branches (Centenary Grant), as well as the Perpetual's 2018 IMPACT Philanthropy Grant, has allowed us to commence our Mental Health and Well-being Sensory Garden as a non-traditional clinical care setting and community engagement space.

It's envisaged the outdoor space will include an edible garden for use in educational programs in nutrition and independent living skills; a sensory space for young people with sight and hearing impairments; a fenced area to implement animal therapy for young people living with Autism Spectrum Disorder; as well as a general meeting space for centre visitors and as a venue for community events.

Overall, the new garden space is intended to remove the barriers of a traditional clinical setting, allowing for greater reach to children and young people going through a tough time, as well as their families.

headspace Toowoomba is thankful for the dedication and involvement of our Youth Engagement Sub Committee (YES) and our consortium partners: Darling Down Hospital and Health Service (CYMHS), University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba Regional Council, Downs Industry Schools Co-Op (DISCO), IFYS, Lives Lived Well, CatholicCare Social Services, UnitingCare Community, and Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland Limited.

An example of our new organisational model providing enhanced wrap around support occurred when a 16-year-old girl was told never to come home again, when dropped off by her parent for an appointment at our headspace Maroochydore centre.

As part of this young person's holistic care plan, our **headspace** Clinical Lead followed up with both parents to see if returning home was an option. Both parents said no, so while exploring other options, our Clinical Lead contacted our Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) crisis accommodation.

SHS were on standby for an immediate place to stay, while our Clinical Lead contacted Child Safety and located an uncle who fortunately was able to take this young person in.

At this point, our internal service connection model helped further, because now our SHS team were aware of the situation and were able to offer further support in the form of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Enhancement (SAAPE).

Our SHS workers followed up with our Clinical Lead at **headspace** Maroochydore to see if the young person and her uncle needed support to manage their changing family dynamics, as we could also offer financial assistance with an extra person in the house.

Opening in March 2016, **headspace** Caboolture very quickly experienced high demand for services in the local area. This level of demand enabled us to extend our opening hours until 6.30pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays to cater for after school and after work appointments.

Over the last 12 months, **headspace** Caboolture provided 2,942 support sessions, which represents a 22% increase compared to last year.

This year also saw the launch of a Kilcoy Outreach Pilot Project funded by Brisbane North PHN for one year from October 2017 to October 2018. The project has been a great success, providing a valuable headspace service co-located at the Kilcoy Hospital to young people who would otherwise find it difficult to access headspace support (with Caboolture being a 50-minute drive away and serviced poorly by public transport).

This year, we strived to increase our parent/carer engagement, through appointing a volunteer parent/carer consultant to bring new perspectives and ideas to our service. This included hosting a Parent Carer Open Information event, where discussion centred around “mental health myth busters” and our other services and programs available in the Caboolture region.

Our Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) have remained fundamental in all that we do, taking part in our consortium meetings, recruitment of staff, participating in mental health roundtable forums with Members of Parliament, and attending events like the **headspace** National forum and Mental Health First Aid training.

*We are thankful for the work and contribution by our **headspace** Caboolture YEC, our parent/carer volunteer, students and consortium partners: Brisbane North PHN, Metro North Mental Health Service, University of Sunshine Coast, Connections Inc, IFYS, Life Without Barriers, Community Solutions, Lutheran Services, Ted Noffs Foundation, Steps Employment Group.*



headspace CABOOLTURE MURAL

The Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) at **headspace** Caboolture were behind the stunning new mural on the stairwell as a welcome to the centre.

The YEC felt the stairwell needed brightening up and member Zac Randle said that they engaged a local artist, Kelly from Temple Tattoo, to spray paint the mural.

“We wanted something that would be really welcoming for young people coming into the centre and links to Caboolture flora and fauna,” Zac said.

The mural features the Caboolture River with its bird life and a carpet snake on the river bank. The Kabi traditional custodians of Caboolture called the area around the Caboolture river Kabul-tur, meaning the place of the carpet snakes which were plentiful in the region.

The bright vibrant colours, sun rising and clouds clearing, are also synonymous with centre services that aim to help young people through a tough time feel uplifted towards a brighter day.





It has been an adventurous first year for **headspace** Bundaberg. The centre officially opened in March 2017 and it has been full throttle since with grand opening parties, community events, clinical team building, and regional school support developed and delivered all while having fun.

Our dedicated and passionate Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) have helped to influence and present a positive mental health message to the young people in Bundaberg and surrounding areas. There are currently 12 volunteer members who meet monthly, attend events, create exciting programs and develop social activities to engage more young people with the centre.

The young people in Bundaberg have embraced the **headspace** model in their town with 53.7% of our clients being first-time help seekers. In 2017-18, **headspace** Bundaberg provided 1,767 support sessions to young people. On average 16.4% of young people attending identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, which is high in relation to the **headspace** national average of 8.2%.

Support for young LGBTIQ people in our community was an area recognised by our YEC members that needed to be developed and delivered. After much research and discussions BRITE was launched in June 2018 as a safe and comfortable environment for young people to come and have genuine conversations with others. The first get together attracted more than 15 young people.

headspace Bundaberg is thankful for the dedication of our YEC and our Consortium partners: Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN, Wide Bay Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs (Wide Bay HHS), YMCA Bundaberg, Regional Housing Limited, EPIC Assist, STEPS Group Australia, Relationships Australia, IMPACT Community Service, CQUniversity Australia, CentacareCQ, and QClinic Sexual Health Service.

MONEY MATTERS



Not having enough money and dealing with mounting debts can lead to significant emotional and mental distress.

Our Money Matters team provides support to those experiencing financial hardship, where assistance includes:

- Assistance with budgeting and money strategies
- Negotiating realistic payment plans for debt
- Information on options available
- Referral to other supports who can further assist
- Advocating to creditors



During 2017-18, the Money Matters team assisted 338 people to manage their finances, where the total amount in waivers and discounts we successfully advocated for on behalf of those we assisted was \$338,474.

This was achieved by negotiating with financial institutions, debt collectors, Telcos and toll operators. Money Matters does not involve taking over anyone's finances or dealing directly or advising on Financial Planning matters.

Funded by Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors



EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGISTS: **LYN AND GAIL** MONEY MATTERS

Lyn realised there was a growing need for financial hardship intervention after hearing that people’s accommodation was threatened by unmanageable debt.

To add to this, data from the Social Impact Evaluation Framework (SIEF) indicated that financial hardship was in the top four presenting issues for people across the organisation.

Lyn decided to take action. Within three months Lyn completed her Financial Counsellor qualification and began offering financial hardship assistance to those in need. Very quickly Lyn became a welcome referral for many of her colleagues who were dealing firsthand with the fallout bad debt had on the lives of the people they worked with.

Fast forward 18 months and in February 2017 Lyn’s vision officially became known as Money Matters. With funding from the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors the “new” program expanded to offer the service to the wider community with the assistance of a second team member Gail, a Financial Resilience Worker.

Gail and Lyn work as a team to find the most beneficial and sustainable solutions for the individual’s circumstances. Following an initial meeting to assess the urgency of the situation,

Gail will provide budgeting and money management strategies and assist with issues relating to Telcos, utilities and any fines on the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. While Lyn will help address a person’s more complex issues that may have a legal aspect such as the National Credit Code or the Bankruptcy Act.

They may be a small team, but their results have been huge. In total, the program has help save close to half a million dollars for the people they’ve assisted since October 2015, and over \$338,400 in the last financial year through waivers, discounts and grants.

“We work with priority groups such as people leaving domestic and family violence situations; young people leaving care; homeless or at risk of homelessness as well as seniors.

“It’s about advocating, collaborating and providing a holistic service,” explains Lyn.

The Money Matters Team:
Lyn (left) and Gail (right)



MENTAL HEALTH RESPITE: CARER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mental Health Respite: Carer Support Program supports people on the Sunshine Coast who are looking after someone with a mental illness. This is achieved through information and referral, social engagement, wellbeing education, as well as time for respite.

Over the past year, the program supported over 89 primary Carers of a person with a mental illness, as well as another 62 family members. Many of these Carers and family members were supported on several occasions over the year.

In 2018-19 our focus will be transitioning Carers to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as well as providing continuity of support until the program ceases in June 2019.

ZEDTWELVE (NO LONGER RUNNING)

ZedTwelve was a family-friendly mental health service for children from birth to 12 years that we ran from 2015 to September 2017.

The psychological services provided were free for children who qualified for a Mental Health Care Plan from their doctor.

Unfortunately, we were not successful in receiving ongoing external funding and are no longer continuing this program in the Sunshine Coast region.

CHIME (TRANSITIONED BACK TO OPEN MINDS)

CHIME provides tailored one-on-one support to individuals aged 18 to 64 experiencing severe and persistent mental ill health. The service reduces re-entry to the hospital system by keeping clients linked in with community health services to maximise independence and self-management.

Over the past year, the United Synergies CHIME team (based in Nambour) supported 111 clients. CHIME assisted clients with practical day-to-day support such as meeting psychiatric appointments, advocacy and housing for clients at risk of homelessness, and building social connectedness.

United Synergies has delivered CHIME as a subcontractor to Open Minds since 2014. However, as of 30 June 2018, United Synergies will no longer be part of the Open Minds consortium.

Open Minds will continue to deliver CHIME on the Sunshine Coast and provide the same level of support and care that clients have experienced over the past five years in partnership with United Synergies.

United Synergies would like to acknowledge and thank Open Minds for the opportunity to be part of the CHIME consortium.

FUTURE FOCUS

Plans for next year and beyond include:

- Launching our new **headspace** Centre in Gympie
- Promoting our other programs and services across our five **headspace** centres
- Implementing our Quality systems and processes throughout our mental health services and programs



Sense of belonging

CHILD AND FAMILY

Domestic and family violence is recognised as a serious and widespread problem in Australia with enormous individual and community impacts and social costs.

It is recognised as one of the significant drivers of family breakdown and children becoming at risk of trauma, abuse or neglect.

Our work supports the transition towards, and achievement of stronger, capable and more resilient families and improved life outcomes for vulnerable young people and children.

Our Child and Family staff predominantly work with people on a one-on-one basis, to help set goals and navigate through their personal journey, providing opportunities for them to connect with the right people to support them along the way.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Assisting almost 300 families and young people with complex needs
- Successfully undertaking an external Quality Framework (HSQF) Audit
- Identifying and moving towards implementing an over-arching best practice Sanctuary Framework for our entire Child and Family service stream

FAMILY



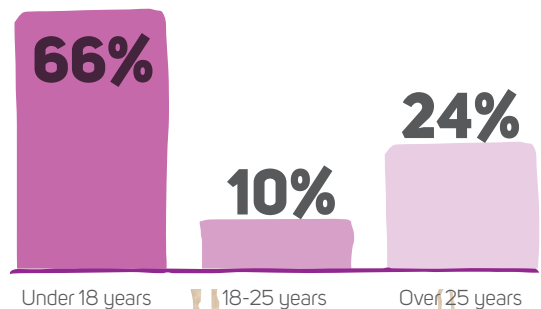
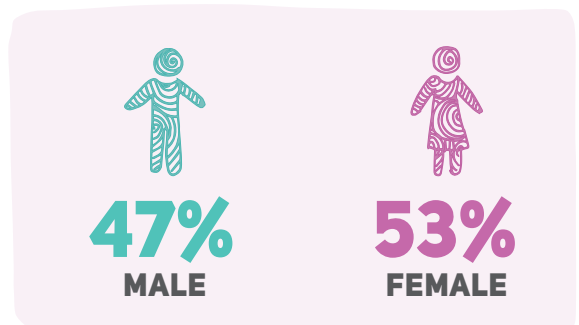
CHALLENGES

- Increased domestic and family violence and drug taking issues within the families and young people we work with
- Training and upskilling key frontline staff to take on the more complex issues emanating from our Child and Families stream
- Effectively assessing the risk of harm within the families we work with, and linking them with relevant community support systems, without the need for statutory intervention

DEMOGRAPHICS

291

PEOPLE HELPED through our Child and Family services and programs



35% Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

POSITIVE LIFE CHANGES - WHEN LOUISA MET SASKIA

Louisa was referred to our Bridging Families program when things got tough for her and her family.

As a single mother of five children who experienced a violently abusive relationship and chronic drug addiction, Louisa was very much in need of someone to support her, who she could fully trust and feel comfortable with.

Enter Saskia, Team Leader for Bridging Youth and Family Support, who helped Louisa find the strength, skills and hope to turn her life around.

"When I first met Saskia earlier this year, I was lonely and had no one supporting me. I was at my lowest point.

"During the course of my involvement with the Bridging Families program I never felt judged. I could be completely honest with Saskia and she would listen and help me work out strategies to get me back on track.

"I have had a very difficult and challenging life, and at times have felt a lot of guilt. I am working through these feelings with Saskia, and I now know that I am a good mum, I love my children and they love me. My children are the most important thing in the world to me and everyone I work with can now see this.

"Together Saskia and I are working on making sure I keep up with my drug counselling and I really do understand the high need for relapse prevention. I know what I need to do, and the Bridging Families program is helping me without judgement and without fear.

"Saskia has been a huge support. She will liaise with the Department on my behalf, and this takes the stress away from me, although I am learning how to communicate without being defensive or angry all the time. The gentle reminders from Saskia help!

"I still have a lot of work to do, and I know that Bridging Families is beside me all the way. Some people fear this type of intervention with their families, but they shouldn't because it has probably saved my life.

"In previous times when things went wrong, I would have spiralled downhill and relapsed big time. I am so proud of myself because my drug screens are clean for the first time, and it's a great feeling to know I am doing something right," says Louisa.

Saskia says that Louisa sells herself short.

"Louisa has done a phenomenal job holding things together through some very trying times. Without Louisa's dedication to helping herself, my job of guiding her would be so much harder. Louisa is always open and honest with me and that makes moving forward so much easier," says Saskia.



Louisa (left) with Case Worker Saskia (right)

Belonging

OUT OF HOME CARE SERVICES

Our Out of Home Care services provide placement options for young people in statutory care including: Residential and Supported Independent Living placements, as well as Foster and Kinship Care.

These services work in a trauma informed therapeutic framework with the aim of achieving long-term sustainable outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Our organisation receives funding from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women with the following number of service types:

- **RESIDENTIAL CARE** – four placements for young people with complex support needs with an additional two CRC-pas models of care with three young people placed between both
- **FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARE** – 11 placements for children and young people with high support needs
- **SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING** – 18 placements for young people with moderate to high support needs

RESIDENTIAL CARE

Our Residential Care service provides community-based care and shared living.

Young people aged between 12 and 17 years are supported by care teams dedicated to their journey and individual goals in education, health and emotional wellbeing. Family, culture and community connections are important for this group of young people transitioning to adulthood, making choices and decisions that will affect their futures.

The care teams work in partnership with young people's families, Child Safety staff and other stakeholders to ensure that young people are supported and provided with options to reach their potential.

In 2017-18, United Synergies provided both long-term and short-term residential care options, with increased flexibility in support levels and care to meet individual needs. Our new organisational design helped in this regard, as our Child and Family front-line staff made better connections with our Homelessness front-line staff to access better support and accommodation options.

FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARE

Our Foster and Kinship Care (FKC) service on the Sunshine Coast was established late 2014 to provide enhanced support to Carers, their families and the children and young people in their care to assist Carers sustain their important role.

Over the past year, we supported 14 Carers, with 18 children placed within their care. These Carers range from uncles/aunties/grandparents to members of the local community known to the child placed in their care.

Working in partnership with the Carers, FKC ensures that family culture is respected and maintained. The care team provides support with parenting of children with difficult behaviours due to trauma and/or disabilities, short respite, family reunification and transitional support for young people.

KEY CHANGES TO OUR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE STREAM

In 2017-18, we restructured our organisation and brought all our Child and Family programs and services together to report up to one central line manager. See our organisation chart on page 74.

During the year, we also undertook a major HSQF audit, which identified the need for us to implement an over-arching organisational model of care throughout all our Child and Family programs and services.

After much investigation, we chose the Sanctuary Model of Care, with an integrated roll out expected to be completed within the next three years. This Model of Care suits our organisation and encapsulates the requirements for developing a culturally sensitive service for those at risk of statutory interventions.

Other key changes involve the need for us to be more flexible and nimble in responding to individualised placement and support packages.

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

Supported Independent Living (SIL) provides support to young people in the transition from statutory care to adulthood and independence. During the last year, 30 young people were supported in the program.

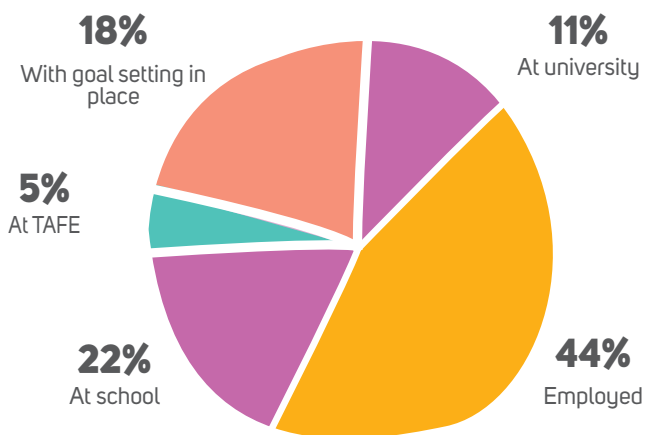
SIL has a flexible approach and supports young people in a range of living options. Young people can be supported in either individual, shared or lead tenant housing where the 'lead tenant' is appointed by United Synergies as a role model and mentor. Other young people are supported through an outreach model of care as they live with partners, family or in other arrangements. The care team focuses on individual goals and young people achieving healthy, safe and sustainable living in the community.

The care team work with young people and their families to achieve goals in: education; training and employment; living skills; safe and sustainable housing; family and social relationships, and community participation.

A key highlight for 2017-18, has been creating a partnership with Vocational Training Queensland (VTQ), that allows our participants to undertake their education online while they go through the wider care system. See pie chart below showing that 83% of people we work with completed further education, training, and transitioned into employment.

Out of Home Care is funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

OUTCOMES YOUNG PEOPLE IN SIL ACHIEVED (JULY 2017-JUNE 2018)



SOME GOOD NEWS STORIES FROM OUR YOUNG PEOPLE:

One young person (SM) stated to her care worker she, "wouldn't have been able to transition from care confidently and have the independent skills needed to succeed on her journey had it not been for the support of United Synergies".

Another young person (KW) spoke about, "nobody has ever given me the nurture and support I needed" and that he feels, "like a valued member of society".

EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGIST: KELLY CAPLE RESIDENTIAL CARE

Managing Residential Care homes in Nambour, Currimundi and Coolum takes a certain kind of person. Among other things being a morning person certainly helps Kelly get a head-start on her day.

"My day starts early with my mental to-do lists well underway.

"When I get to work, I'll catch up on important emails from overnight and then start checking in with the Youth Workers at each of our houses. I'll ask how their night shift was, how each of the young people are, and any needs they have for the day ahead" says Kelly.

Starting out as a Residential Youth Worker, Kelly knows first-hand what life for her team and those residing at each house is like, and she's not beyond getting stuck back in with a hands-on role.

"I'll arrive onsite to one of the three houses at about 8am to help out in any way that's needed, from wake-up calls to ensure the young ones are up for school or activities to tidying up around the house, cleaning, checking WHS reports and completing room searches for banned items – that's all before 9am!

As our Residential Care Service Lead, Kelly works in a high paced state of critical thinking and juggling priorities, from liaising with external agencies to managing internal staffing needs. A large component of the role is managing her team, including the rostering of 24/7 shifts across the three houses to holding team meetings and supporting individual's development.

"Running 24/7 Residential services, self-care and personal awareness are so important. It's what gets you through the crazier days and allows us to always remain smiling and have time for others.

"Having strong connections with my team, along with the support of a Coordinator and an amazing Manager helps make my job extremely rewarding., says Kelly.

Residential Care Service Lead Kelly



EXTRAORDINARY SYNERGIST: CONRAD TOWNSEND

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
(CSE) TASKFORCE

Child sexual exploitation is often associated with foreign, developing countries, but sadly the issue is closer to home.

Defined as 'the coercion or manipulation of children and young people into taking part in sexual activities, it is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, protection or affection' (Source: 2009: All Wales Protocol: All Wales Child Protection Procedures, UK).

Over his years in child and family support roles, Conrad has witnessed the devastating effect child sexual exploitation can have on its victims.

Determined to raise awareness of the issue and increase protection for those at risk, Conrad joined forces with several local organisations to launch the Sunshine Coast Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group in September 2017.

"I have worked with many children and young people during my career who have been impacted by this type of abuse and seen firsthand how debilitating it is on their lives, both as children and as adults.

"The taskforce is focused on achieving greater awareness and education among practitioners and professionals working with young people, so they can be more proactive with intervention and prevention.

"Part of this process is to gather data from across the Sunshine Coast to develop a better understanding of the issue in the region. Very little research is available in an Australian context, as most of the research comes from the UK and Europe.

"With greater local knowledge we can provide better support for those young people either at risk of, or being sexually exploited, by providing more targeted intervention.

"Ultimately, we want to achieve change in social policy and legislation at both State and Federal levels, which will enable all organisations involved in child and youth work to be able to action effective intervention and protection for young people at risk," explains Conrad.

Conrad is Chair of the Sunshine Coast Child Sexual Exploitation taskforce and represents United Synergies among representatives from Queensland Police Service, Child Safety, Youth Justice, Queensland Health, Act for Kids, IFYS, Uniting Care, Laurel Place and Centacare.



Acting Intensive Family
Service Lead Conrad



Young Gubbi Gubbi
Dance members

BOOIN GARI FESTIVAL

Gubbi Gubbi Dance invited the community to Booin Gari (meaning “come this way”) held on the banks of the Noosa River for an immersion in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The origins of the Booin Gari event began in the car park of United Synergies 11 years ago, and now we are the major event sponsor with Gubbi Gubbi Dance led by Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi Traditional Custodian Lyndon Davis and Brent Miller, assuming the host role. Booin Gari was rescheduled from April to September 2018 due to Lyndon’s own health issues this past year. United Synergies and many people from across the Sunshine Coast community gathered at the event to welcome Lyndon back to the spotlight having made a full recovery.

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Our Intensive Family Support (IFS) Program is funded to work with families who have multiple and/or complex needs. It is a consent-based program that responds to vulnerable families with children and young people (unborn – under 18 years) who are at risk of involvement in the statutory child protection system.

A team of three Case Managers and seven Family Support Workers operate under a case management model to address identified issues and needs through direct support and links to specialist services. Child Safety Services provide case consultations and support decision making around risk to children.

Key areas of focus in 2017-18 have included training staff to increase their ability to assess risk more effectively and using the Circle of Security model to increase parental and community capacity to keep children and young people safe.

During the past financial year, the Sunshine Coast based IFS service supported 150 families, where 25% of these families were Indigenous.

From their linkage with Intensive Family Services, many of these families have been noted as having improved life outcomes and reduced risk factors among vulnerable children.

IFS is funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

YOUNGER PARENTS PROGRAM

The Younger Parents Program (YPP) supports young parents and pregnant young women (25 years and under) to feel confident and valued in their nurturing role and to better be able to keep their children safe and well. In the past year, the program supported 17 young families, who were encouraged to share their parenting experiences, develop new friendships, and to mentor and support each other in their roles as young parents.

Based in Tewantin, YPP provides a weekly forum for young parents to access support, referral and education in family, life and parenting skills. Participants were engaged with the Positive Parenting Program, Saver plus, financial counselling/budgeting, goal setting, choosing healthy food options, guest speakers, cooking and ongoing driver training supported by the Zonta Club of Noosa.

This program is funded by the Department of Social Services with support by Zonta Noosa for driver training.



CONNECT2FAMILIES COMMUNITY BROKERAGE PROGRAM (NO LONGER CONTINUING)

This program was initiated in 2016, with six partner organisations providing secondary family support services to look at new and innovative projects. It was deliberately designed to be time-limited and co-led to build knowledge to inform further reform activities by the Department relating to the findings from the Carmody review.

Following a review in 2017-18, United Synergies made several recommendations to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women about the Connect2Families program activities over the past three years.

We would like to thank the other partner organisations for their contribution to this program.

YOUTH SUPPORT

The Youth Support Program in Toowoomba aims to enhance young people's connections to family and community, education and training, housing and health.

During the year, 165 young people were assisted with information, advice and referral. From these young people, 39 were provided with direct case management to reach their goals that included: sourcing independent accommodation; accessing mental health, alcohol and other drug services; budgeting; work skills; building self-esteem and social skills.

The Youth Support Program actively supported a range of community development initiatives including:

COMMUNITY YOUTH GAMES

Community Youth Games (CYG) is a grass roots community sports development program for young people not engaged in mainstream education or at risk of dropping out of school. It is a sports-based activity that enhances community connections and mentoring opportunities for young people.

During the past year, 60 young people participated in the program with a large group of local organisations providing support.

In 2017-18, we transferred the management and running of Community Youth Games to Youth and Community Learning Centre, with United Synergies Youth Support still having an active role.

CRIME PREVENTION

In 2017-18, over 200 young people and their families were provided support by the Youth Support Program at Children's Court via our long-standing MoU with the Department of Justice and the Attorney General (Youth Justice). This support includes linking the young offender in with their legal representation and youth justice workers providing general support on the processes of court to family members and care givers.

Going forward, in collaboration with Youth Justice, we have also explored some joint training initiatives with "Train the Trainer" for our **RAGE and SCREAM** anger management programs, which are still in the planning stages for delivery in 2018-19.



belonging

BRIDGING FAMILIES

Our Bridging Families Program in Toowoomba aims to help families provide a safe and protective environment for their children. The primary aim is family preservation – where a child/ren live at home under Child Safety intervention and are monitored by Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women; or alternatively when a child/ren have been living in and out of home care and it is in their best interests to be reunified with their family.

The level of complex needs for individual family members increased significantly this financial year, with much more intensive work required with each family. On average, we worked with families for six months, and offered additional support when the Department formally closed the case.

In 2017- 2018, eight families moved through the Bridging Families program, where they successfully met their goals. Of these families, two subsequently returned to the service for additional support.

Funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Our Family Support Program is primarily funded to provide group courses and workshops aimed at enhancing parenting skills and/or personal development.

In 2017-18, we ran nine programs in partnership with **headspace** Toowoomba, Integrated Family & Youth Services (IFYS), Drug Arm Australasia and Child Youth and Mental Health Services (CYMHS). Parenting and tenancy workshops were particularly popular. Participants gained an understanding around what it takes to be a good tenant, while financial tips came in very handy for parents struggling with budgeting.

Overall, more than 300 people accessed Family Support in the last 12 months, where 52 of the participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and/or were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There were more than 250 occasions where information, advice and referral services were provided. Overall three out of four people who accessed the service reported improved life skills.

Key highlights for this year include:

- Hosting our first **Indigenous Specific Triple P** parenting program and running a **Hidden Histories** workshop to give participants a better understanding around the impact of colonisation on Indigenous Australians that continues to this day
- Running a new **Infant Massage** program and a **Happy Steps** playtime group. This program is growing in popularity and is used by the Department as a safe mechanism for supervised contacts to occur

Family support is funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

FUTURE FOCUS

Plans for next year and beyond include:

- Upskilling our front-line staff and responding effectively to the increasing incidences of domestic and family violence
- Moving from long-term inflexible contracts towards flexible individualised placement and support packages
- Implementing our Quality systems and processes throughout our child and family services and programs
- Scoping out an effective client management database



Sense of place HOMELESS

Our homelessness programs support young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, across the Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba regions.

Many young people tell us that they find themselves homeless, or at risk of homelessness, due to relationship breakdowns, domestic and family violence, employment problems and lack of affordable rental properties.

Through more effective connections and cross-program referrals within our organisation, particularly with our **headspace** centres, we can support more young people at risk of homelessness.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Assisting over 300 people across our homelessness programs, where the prevalence of five issues decreased significantly:
 - 56% reduction in homelessness
 - 39% reduction in emotional distress
 - 39% reduction in self-harming or suicidal ideation
 - 38% reduction in criminality or contact with the justice system
 - 24% reduction in family breakdown
- Achieving 40% rate increase in helping people into stable accommodation
- Opening our new Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation property and starting our new innovative Gateway to Dignity Program in Toowoomba to help break the cycle of homelessness

HOMELESSNESS



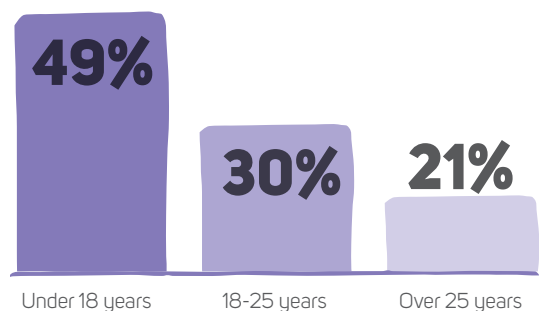
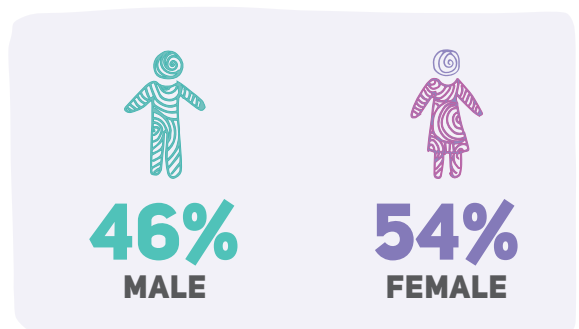
CHALLENGES

- The continual rise in youth homelessness, and those at risk of homelessness, along with the lack of crisis and affordable accommodation options
- Complex and challenging behaviours of young people and the high risk that requires skilled staff – such as Domestic Family Violence (DFV) and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Specialists
- Funding and casual staff shortages

DEMOGRAPHICS

305

PEOPLE HELPED through our Homelessness programs and services



29% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

SAPPHIRE'S STORY - RIDING HER WAY TO RESILIENCE

During a particularly rough patch, Sapphire turned to her local headspace in Toowoomba for help.

It was there she was connected into Gateway to Dignity – a new program in the region designed to support young people on their path to independence.

Over a 19-week period, Sapphire became part of a tight knit group who found themselves physically and emotionally stretched as they took on challenges that would build their resilience and self-determination.

Supported by the rural Toowoomba community, several local businesses supported the program by providing opportunities for the group to learn experientially; offering activities deliberately designed to show them how to help themselves.

When Nash Horse Trekking offered a trekking camp, Sapphire was thrilled her childhood dream of riding a horse had come true. But it was not without its trials, as Sapphire learnt her equine friends could have their difficulties too.

"The horses caught me off guard! There was Sunny who didn't like to listen to me, Jack who was lovely but did his own thing, and then there was Poppy who really challenged me.

"Poppy could be aggressive with the other horses and would jolt. But I didn't want to give up on her.

"I learnt that I had to take control and manage the situation, so I kept persevering until she grew to respect me, and we built up a good relationship – then we rode 31kms together in one day!

"You didn't just think about yourself anymore, you had the horse to care for too. We fed the horses before we fed ourselves!"

"Halfway through the day I would be tired and have sore hands. I'd want to give up but everyone else was in a similar situation, so it kept me going.

"There were times I wanted to drop out, but the United Synergies staff helped me believe in myself and encouraged me to graduate.

"The program was a really challenging experience and getting through it has helped me build my resilience.

"I know now that I can do the things that I didn't think I could because I've proven I can. I would like to work in Youth Support and help people in a similar situation; let them know things can get better and I am an example of that," says Sapphire.

Program Coordinator Imogen can testify the transformation in participants, witnessing Sapphire's true potential shine through.

"I have noticed a huge change in Sapphire's confidence from start to finish. When I first met Sapphire she was so reserved, now it's like she's a different person. She is openly positive, outgoing and bubbly. She has shown so much maturity throughout this process and is developing into an amazing human being," says Imogen.



sense of place



Sapphire (above) and with Youth Mentors Toby (left) and Louise (right)

Photography Credit: Baz Photography

sense of place

SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICE

Our Specialist Homelessness Service provides three streams of support to young people (16 – 25 years) who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, across the Sunshine Coast. This support is provided by nine Case Managers and Support Workers (including casual staff) across Tewantin in the north, Caloundra in the south and out to Nambour in the west.

These three streams include: semi-supported accommodation (transitional housing), fully supported housing (crisis housing) and centre-based (where a young person is individually supported by a case worker, but is not in one of our accommodation programs, or they may be waiting for accommodation to become available).

In 2017-2018 our Specialist Homelessness Service accommodated 87 people including adults and children within transitional and crisis housing, and a further 115 people with centre-based support and emergency relief. This equates to a huge 7,474 bed nights throughout the year.

In addition to this, we also assisted an additional 445 community members with:

- Accommodation advice and support
- Support with housing applications
- Support with maintaining housing
- Referral to other services (including drug and alcohol)
- Support in seeking family violence assistance
- Access to financial support
- Support with Centrelink benefits
- Advocacy, legal and court support
- Mental health and disability support information
- Support to obtain food

Funded by the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works.

CRISIS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

To support the growing need for accommodation across the Sunshine Coast, United Synergies leases 15 properties through a head leasing arrangement with local community real estate agents. We also manage an additional three properties provided by the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works. Having excellent relationships with our real estate agents is imperative for us in maintaining and growing our housing programs.

This year we were proud to open our Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation property.

GOLDEN BEACH CRISIS ACCOMMODATION PROPERTY

In October 2017, to help address the youth homelessness issue on the Sunshine Coast, we officially launched our new Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation property.

The accommodation provides 24 hour, fully supervised support to young people (16 to 25 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is run on a "one-to-four model" – where we employ one youth worker to support four young people.

The property is almost always at full capacity, having housed and supported 16 young people at risk of homelessness since opening in 2017.

Going forward we plan to increase the ways in which other services in the community can support young people in our care, with initiatives like driving lessons, a community veggie garden, and further education, training and employment opportunities.

Funded by the Department of Housing and Public Works.

'Blossoming' by Kristina Crossman that hangs in our Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation property. This artwork gives hope to other young people at risk of homelessness.



GATEWAY HOUSE ACCOMMODATION

Gateway House provides 24 hour, fully supervised support to young people (16-18 years) from all socio-economic backgrounds. It is the only crisis accommodation for this age group (outside of Child Safety Services) in the Toowoomba region.

Gateway House is run on a "one-to-five model", where we employ one youth worker to support five young people. We also have an emergency sixth bed, which is not Department funded, but is often used due to the increasing number of homeless youth in the Toowoomba region.

Over the course of the year, our front-line staff supported and accommodated 60 young people in crisis, who on average, stayed for eight weeks longer than the previous year. This is due to the young people in our care requiring much more intensive case management support before moving on and living independently.

In 2017-2018, Gateway House was pleased to receive a new five-year contract from the Department of Housing and Public Works, providing us with a great deal of stability to provide this service in future years.

Funded by the Department of Housing and Public Works



Getting fit: Gateway House training session with Youth Mentor Toby



"Even in your darkest of days there will always be light to guide your way. And if you ever need some help don't ever be afraid to ask because a helping hand is always there to guide your way through the darkest of lights. And just like a caterpillar to a butterfly you will blossom and learn to fly."

Artist Kristina Crossman

EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGIST: ROSS KITE

WORKING IN HOMELESSNESS

Being able to multi-task is a must. That's Ross' first response when asked to describe his 'typical' day. As he continues it doesn't take long to understand why: connecting with people, completing intakes, moving young people into accommodation, furnishing housing, reporting maintenance, providing support sessions and making referrals are among his list of daily tasks.

"It all starts with intake. When a new enquiry comes in we review the individual's needs and complete an assessment using the Queensland Homelessness Information Platform – an online system that enables us to search any suitable housing vacancies, no matter of their age or presenting circumstance.

"If they fall within 16-25 years of age, we keep our fingers crossed that we have a vacancy to accommodate them at one of our houses. Then we can move our focus to moving them in.

"We have two types of housing in our program, the first is our Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation which can house up to four young people in need of immediate support. This is a fully supported option with support workers onsite 24/7.

"The second type of accommodation is provided in our transitional housing program. There are 18 houses stretching from Tewantin to Caloundra that provide a safe and secure base for young people to work with their case manager on a longer-term plan.

"Case management underpins what we do in helping to break the homelessness cycle. By addressing the underlying issues that have led to their homelessness we can help them overcome barriers preventing them from finding stable independent accommodation. This may include connecting them into support or referrals for financial, medical, relationship or education and employment assistance.

"Often, it's a balance of building rapport and getting to the bottom of the issues, while being a 'landlord' and having tough conversations about rent not being paid, property damage, drugs and alcohol consumed on site or extra visitors at the properties.

"It's a tough job requiring many hats, but it's also very satisfying when a young person moves through the program from being homeless to achieving their goals and moving into their own independent accommodation," says Ross.

EMERGENCY RELIEF

In the last 12 months the Toowoomba and Sunshine Coast regions assisted 204 people facing financial crisis and needing items from our Emergency Relief Programs. This assistance primarily consisted of food vouchers, hygiene packs, groceries, swags, prescription medication and clothing. We also referred people to other in-house programs or to external specialist services.

Toowoomba Emergency Relief assisted 105 individual young people between the ages of 10 and 49 years on 156 occasions. Sunshine Coast Emergency Relief assisted 99 people over 136 occasions.

We would like to acknowledge the valued support of Oz Harvest. Through REAP food rescue, OZ Harvest volunteers collect perishable food donations and deliver them to United Synergies daily to distribute to people in need.



Sense place



Working with horses and mentoring are part of Gateway to Dignity

NEW ONGOING STUDENT PLACEMENT PROGRAM

In 2017-18, we initiated a new ongoing student placement program with the University of the Sunshine Coast and Mooloolaba TAFE, where our frontline service staff work with students in developing their skills across youth work, counselling, and delivering much needed living skills workshops in a supervised and supportive environment.

This new arrangement has given us a much-needed increased casual workforce across our Specialist Homelessness Services and our Golden Beach Crisis Accommodation property.

It's also enabled us to build solid relationships with key educational providers in our local communities, as well as get to know, train and develop our future workforce.

Since implementing the program in February 2018, we have had seven student placements, where three of these students have gained employment with United Synergies, and one student has become an ongoing volunteer.

GATEWAY TO DIGNITY

In 2017-18, we launched our new Gateway to Dignity program, which utilises a range of self-esteem and emotional intelligence activities – including working with horses – to help break the cycle of homelessness.

Overall, the aim is to reduce the number of young people needing to re-enter our Gateway House accommodation and support service, by building their resilience and developing their independent living skills through experiential learning (experiencing, reflecting, thinking, acting), working with horses and practical living skills (budgeting, driving, health, ethics and mindfulness).

Overall, 17 participants undertook the program, with seven of the participants seeing the program through to completion. All participants who completed the program expressed a significant increase in their self-esteem and stated that they felt this experience was a stepping stone to a more positive “next stage” of their lives.

Funded by the Dignity First Fund – Department of Housing and Public Works.

JOHNS LANDING

Johns Landing was a Noosa campsite where approximately 90 people (including 20+ young people) were living in basic camp conditions and at significant risk of homelessness. The campsite owner wished to sell the river frontage land, which Noosa Council purchased for environmental restoration. We worked closely with Noosa Council and a range of other support agencies, police, service providers, and the Department of Housing to assist all camp residents to relocate to better housing.



Noosa Council drops off gifts for Adopt a Family.

ADOPT A FAMILY

Over the past 16 years, the Adopt a Family for Christmas appeal, supported by the Sunshine Coast Daily, brightens the lives of local families facing adversity at Christmas time by providing a range of gifts.

Last year, as with previous years, United Synergies nominated approximately 100 families for adoption. As part of the program, United Synergies coordinates the donations, as well as the delivery of gifts.

Adopt a Family provides an opportunity to support families facing financial hardship and United Synergies is grateful to the generous support provided by the local Sunshine Coast community.



EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGIST: NATALIE CLARK

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

Christmas is not a joyful time for everyone. In fact, for some it can be a time of increased stress, vulnerability and breakdown.

With the support of local businesses and a generous community, Natalie is dedicated to putting the joy into Christmas for as many families as possible.

As Coordinator for Supported Independent Living, Natalie works closely with our homelessness staff, and knows firsthand the challenges many vulnerable families and young people face.

“My drive is to make people aware of the level of disadvantaged families in our community. The Adopt a Family Christmas Appeal is one way we can raise awareness and connect with the community.

“When people learn about the difficulties that families experience, they can be inspired to provide support that will make a difference to others’ lives.

“We receive so many wonderful donations and I am so grateful to be able to coordinate these gifts reaching the families in our care,” said Natalie.

The delight this brings Natalie is clear as she wells up recalling some of the reactions from last year’s recipients.

“We had a father of twin boys who was living with a mental illness; unable to work he had never been able to provide the kind of gifts other young kids of his sons’ age received. Through Adopt a Family, we had a generous community member donate two identical bikes which was such a perfect match for this family.

“The boys were obviously overjoyed but the impact it had on how the Dad felt that Christmas was immense.

“Knowing that someone is thinking of you can make all the difference. We had a lady who reported feeling suicidal every Christmas, but the year she received a personalised gift and realised there were people in her community thinking of her at this difficult time, was in her words life-changing,” Natalie shared.

Supported Independent Living
Service Lead Natalie (left) with
her manager Bernadette (right)



FUTURE FOCUS

Plans for next year and beyond include:

- Creating better connections with our other programs and services
- Expanding our homelessness services and programs to other regions in which we operate
- Securing ongoing funding and community support to provide much needed resources for young people who find themselves homeless – so they can access driving lessons, obtain their licence, and be able to take on training and employment opportunities
- Implementing our Quality systems and processes throughout our homelessness services and programs

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Australia's youth unemployment rate for young people aged 15 to 24 is sitting at a high 12.5% *(Source: RBA Australia).*

We know from the work we do on the ground, that unemployment problems are often coupled with other serious concerns, including mental health, relationship breakdown, and in some cases also homelessness.

Our Training and Employment programs are provided across the Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg, Caboolture, and Gympie regions and provide accredited training and work experience for local job markets, along with wrap-around support to help address barriers to employment.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Assisting over 170 people across our training and employment programs, where the prevalence of three issues decreased significantly:
 - 57% reduction in education concerns
 - 27% reduction in mental health concerns
 - 14% reduction in unemployment or under-employment
- The successful pilot of our innovative Buzzing Barista Training and launching our new United Synergies Army program in Caboolture, Gympie and Maroochydore to up-skill and support women re-entering the workforce
- Winning the Not-for-Profit Organisation of the Year at the Bendigo Bank Gympie Chamber of Commerce Business Awards for our employment programs and NAIDOC support in the Gympie region

ND YMENT



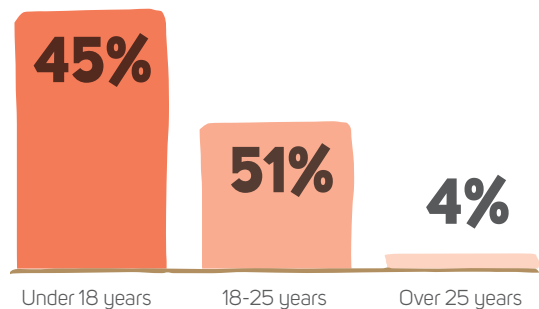
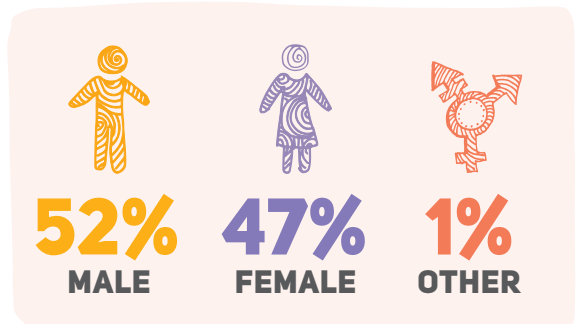
CHALLENGES

- Working in an ever-changing and uncertain funding environment
- Marketing our employment programs to our target audience who are typically disinterested and unengaged prior to starting our programs
- Increased competition in delivering our training and employment programs with other providers offering similar courses

DEMOGRAPHICS

177

PEOPLE HELPED through our Training and Employment programs



23% Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

BUZZING EMPOWERS ELI TO NEW START

From being a regular visitor to our old Coffee United social enterprise in the Maroochydore Warehouse, Eli aged 17 years became interested in becoming a Barista.

In 2017-18, we delivered a new innovative 8-week BUZZing Barista Training Program for young people aged 15-24 years.

The program combined the use of technology, practical hands-on learning, work experience, accredited training and voluntary work to help participants develop their individual coffee making and hospitality skills.

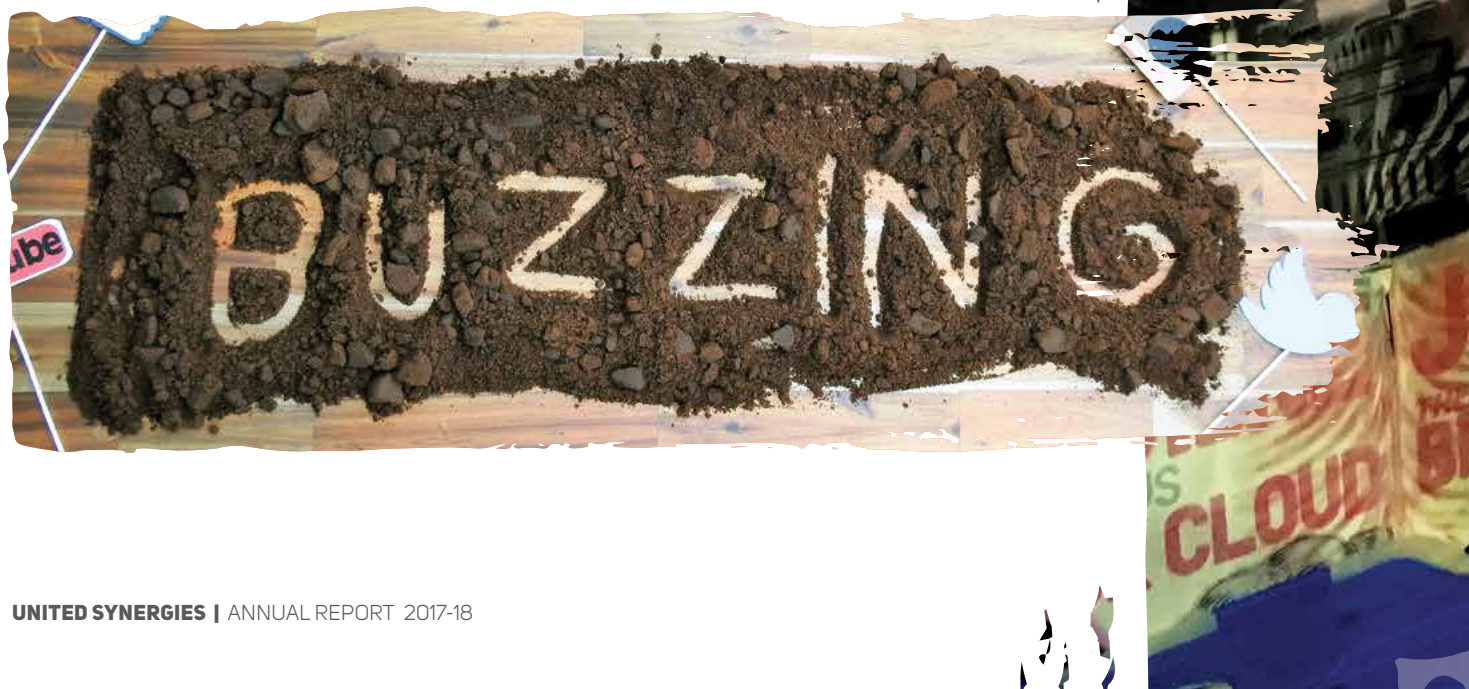
Eli commenced the BUZZing program in May 2017, and soon after began as a volunteer barista at community events.

Displaying plenty of initiative and aptitude for barista work, during his work experience shifts for Coffee Time in the warehouse, Eli was also a natural support and motivator to his peers.

We approached Eli to become a student mentor for the next BUZZing program intake, and he jumped at the opportunity.

Eli's confidence grew in his role and responsibilities, and he continued to volunteer for Coffee Time every Thursday for many weeks before gaining employment at a local café.

Eli continues to drop in to volunteer his time and skills when he can, and we are extremely proud to see how far this amazing young man has come.



Sense of purpose



ASMINO
vs
BLACK CLOUD

DANIEL
vs
THE BLACK CLOUD

Leaving a future



GET SET FOR WORK

Get Set for Work programs are delivered four days per week over 10 weeks and provide young people aged 15-19 years with accredited training, work experience, life skills and employment opportunities.

Over the course of the financial year, 127 young people participated in the Get Set for Work programs across our Maroochydore, Caboolture, Bundaberg, and Gympie sites.

Many of these young people have obtained relevant work experience, employment, access to further training, or returned to school.

Going forward we will continue to run Get Set For Work across our Maroochydore, Bundaberg and Gympie sites.

Funded by the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training under a Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative.

BUZZING BARISTA TRAINING

In the 2017-18 financial year, 112 participants completed the BUZZING Barista Training, with 34 participants gaining employment, and many other participants engaging in further education and training. The Pilot program finished in March 2018.

Our program staff delivered weekly coffee making training in our Maroochydore Warehouse, as well as facilitating a range of site visits to places like Clandestino and Maleny Dairies to learn all aspects of coffee making and the wider supply chain.

The use of a Gamification & Colour App, also allowed participants to "check in" with program staff and proved to be a gentle way of flagging wellbeing issues and accessing assistance.

BUZZING Initiative is funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment as part of the Empowering YOUth Initiatives.

SMARTER CHOICES

Smarter Choices offers customised training and support to young people aged 15 to 19 years, who are subject to supervision orders with Youth Justice Services or Queensland Corrective Services.

The program is designed to help participants gain nationally recognised skills and vocational qualifications, including a Certificate II level.

Smarter Choices provided 70 places across the Sunshine Coast, Caboolture and Gympie regions, with 49 participants undertaking the program.

Going forward, we will be continuing to deliver Smarter Choices in Caboolture. For the Sunshine Coast/Gympie regions our funding contract concluded at the end of February and we did not tender for future years.

Funded by the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training under a Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative.



EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGISTS: KAYLA FERNANCE

Kayla joined United Synergies in the newly created role of Integration Officer based in Caboolture, a position designed to ensure the people we work with receive the most holistic support that we can provide.

"Often when we meet a young person for the first time, or over time, it becomes apparent they are facing more than one challenge; often they are requiring support in more than one area of their life.

"We want to be sure we provide wrap-around support to address their overall wellbeing – both positive mental and physical health – to help them reach their full potential.

"At Caboolture, we are fortunate to have several referral programs inhouse and within the local community that can provide the support they need," says Kayla.

Since commencing the role, Kayla has seen a heavier flow of cross referrals from **headspace** into the training and employment programs and vice versa.

"As a result of providing **headspace** workshops to young people in our Training and Employment programs it has sparked a conversation with some individuals about seeking therapeutic support.

"It's wonderful to be part of a team who can make time in their day to complete a walk-in intake if a young person is wanting to access support in the moment. We can literally walk with them to their appointment and help ease any anxiety about accessing this support.

"Likewise, when a young person at a **headspace** appointment reveals other challenges in their life such as being unemployed or having financial difficulties, my role is to ensure they are offered to be connected into programs and services that can help in these areas too, such as our Get Set For Work or Money Matters program.

"For me, providing wrap-around support for the people we work with is dependent on staff across the organisation making connections. I am excited to be in a role where I can support connections between sites and programs. There are so many amazing things that we are doing across the organisation and when we share this with each other and support one another then the support we can offer young people can only improve," says Kayla.

BENDIGO BANK GYMPIE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS AWARDS

This year we were proud to win the Not-for-Profit Organisation of the Year category award at the Bendigo Bank Gympie Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, where we were recognised for our employment programs and support given to the Gympie community for NAIDOC week.

With **headspace** Gympie opening, we plan to increase our connections and support for people in the Gympie region.



Caboolture
Integration
Officer Kayla



LAUNCHING UNITED SYNERGIES ARMY

Jacquie (third from left) with other United Synergies Army participants

In 2018 we were proud to launch a new program United Synergies Army at our Caboolture, Gympie and Maroochydore sites. The program is all about helping women increase their self-esteem, resilience and confidence to connect with job opportunities and (re)enter the workforce.

Delivered four days per week, over 10 weeks, with family-friendly hours, the program provides a holistic focus on mental, emotional and physical wellbeing, combined with accredited training, job readiness, and employment pathways.

Participants can gain an accredited Certificate II qualification in either Business/Community Services or Hospitality to support entry across a range of different sectors.

In May 2018, 23 women undertook the first round of the program across our Caboolture, Gympie and Maroochydore sites.

United Synergies Army is a Community Work Skills program under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative by the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

JACQUIE: FROM MUM-MODE TO WORK-MODE

When Jacquie signed up to the United Synergies Army she was hoping to advance her admin skills, but soon realised she was gaining a whole lot more than a qualification.

“It can be challenging looking after my three young sons, and at times my anxiety and depression leave me lacking any confidence about being able to re-enter the workforce when I’m ready to.

“When I heard about the United Synergies Army program during school term time, it felt like a more practical option to get the skills and confidence I would need when it came to applying for jobs.

“I really wanted to develop my admin skills, so I could apply them to the volunteering role I have at my local Muay Thai Club and use that as a doorway to employment once my youngest is at school,” explains Jacquie.

While Jacquie didn’t miss a day of the ten-week program, the early days were a little difficult for her three-year-old son.

“My son has ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), he didn’t understand

where Mum was going each day and was getting distressed. So I brought him in to meet with Ceska and Anne-Marie (the course facilitator and coordinator). They were so supportive. They really helped him understand what Mum was doing while she was gone, which really helped me with leaving the house each day!

“Since making time to pursue this course I am feeling much better about myself and find myself having more patience and time for my boys now too,” said Jacquie.

Program coordinator Ann-Marie explains the United Synergies Army program helps tackle external factors as well as what the individual may be facing on a personal level.

“With our program, women don’t just walk away with a qualification but are ready emotionally and physically when the right job comes along.

“The transformation that I have seen within Jacquie over the past 10 weeks has been inspirational,” says Anne-Marie.

FUTURE FOCUS

Plans for next year and beyond include:

- Creating better connections with our other programs and services
- Successfully delivering Get Set For Work, Smarter Choices and our United Synergies Army programs
- Implementing our Quality systems and processes throughout our training and employment programs

CHILL'N BEANZ TOOWOOMBA (ON HOLD)

The Chill'N Beanz coffee trailer provides young people with valuable training and experience in several areas including barista training, customer service and community engagement.

In 2017-18 we largely put this initiative on hold, while we work out a more viable training and funding plan for future years.

CONNECT2EDUCATION & STUDENT WELFARE WORKER PROGRAMS (NO LONGER RUNNING)

Due to the funding landscape, we also re-orientated our service and program offering to focus on training and employment and decided we could no longer continue our schools-based education programs sustainably.

From 1 July to December 2017, our Connect2Education was provided at Nambour State College and Noosa District State High School. Case management support was provided to approximately 70 students to enable them to remain engaged with their school or to transition into alternative pathways of education, employment or training.

From 1 July to December 2017, our Student Welfare Worker program was delivered to five state schools: Chatsworth, One Mile, Montville, North Arm and Mango Hill. Workers liaised closely with the school community and assisted students and families by providing practical, flexible and responsive student supports as needed.

Connect2Education was funded through Department Education Training (DET)

Student Welfare Program was funded by the State Chaplaincy and National Chaplaincy

SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE

Suicide impacts everyone. For every Australian that takes their own life, more than 100 people are impacted.

That's approximately 300,000 Australians impacted each year, including:

- Individuals, families, friends, witnesses
- Schools, workplaces and community groups
- First responders and service providers

For those exposed to or impacted by suicide, their risk can be up to eight times higher than the general population, but with the appropriate support, the risk of suicidality can be reduced.

StandBy provides free support to anyone impacted by suicide, helping families, workplaces, social groups and the wider community navigate the support available to them in their local area and providing follow up support for up to 12 months.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completing a major Program Evaluation, comparing outcomes of those supported by StandBy with those who had not received support from the program following a suicide
- Partnering with Thirili Ltd and the National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS) in delivering StandBy Support After Suicide in Indigenous communities
- Commencing MATES StandBy to better reach and support more construction workers and their families impacted by suicide
- Launching our new website www.standbysupport.com.au

UICIDE



CHALLENGES

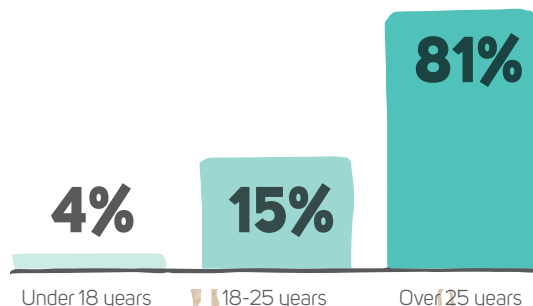
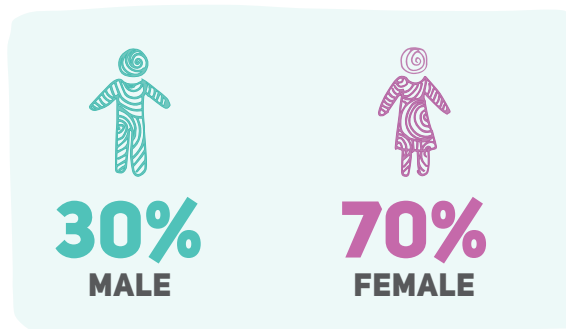
- Aligning to larger PHN regions and maintaining the integrity of the program in a changing service landscape
- Increased workload for Site Coordinators to encompass management of Team Leaders across larger geographical areas

DEMOGRAPHICS

1,857

PEOPLE HELPED

across all StandBy sites



7% Identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



REACHING OUT AND CONNECTING – RIDE4LIFE

When Michael and Lidia Di Lembo lost their daughter to suicide in 2017 it came as a huge shock.

While supporting Sabrina through a period of anxiety and depression they had never imagined she would contemplate taking her own life. Lidia explains the loss of their beautiful daughter at the age of 19 as “incredible”.

“A part of our heart has been broken and can never be repaired or replaced.

“The impact is so big. When you struggle to be here, you seriously question, what life is all about?

“I knew we needed help so I thank StandBy for reaching out to us. It made such a difference to have someone visit us in our home, spend time with my husband and two boys. We spent a lot of time talking things through and it was helpful to have that ongoing contact with StandBy.

“We also had the wonderful support of our family and friends and understand the importance of having close contact with people around you,” says Lidia.

Trying to make sense of the loss of a loved one to suicide can be all-consuming. There are so many questions and some that may never be answered. For the Di Lembo family it has opened up the question of why we are not talking about mental health more, and importantly what can be done to help prevent other families experiencing the tragedy of losing loved ones in this way.

When Sabrina’s father Michael suggested embarking on a cycle ride from Adelaide to Darwin to help raise funds for research and increase awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, Lidia was surprised at his choice of event. Michael had not been on a bike in 30 years and Lidia was at best a “casual cyclist”.

With an immense amount of planning, albeit in a short time, Michael and Lidia were determined to raise awareness in as many places as possible along their 3,000km route. Driven by their cause, within three months of the idea, a team of four and their support crew set off on SabrinasRide4Life (SR4L).

“We shared our story in many places, and at public events in Adelaide, Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin both with community and the media.

“But it was all the conversations we had along the way as we stopped in communities each day that was the most rewarding for us....

“Some people said they’d never shared their loss of losing someone to suicide but opened up to us. It was heart-wrenching to think that they had felt that they could not speak to anyone for so long.

“We were able to share our experience and how reaching out for support had helped.

“The generosity and encouragement we were shown by people along the way and in our home town of Darwin has been incredible. Without it, none of it would have been possible.

“It’s such a big issue and there is such a long way to go but hopefully we have put a small dent in raising awareness for the need to provide more support to those impacted by mental illness. We also did this to instill hope in those who are not well, or have a mental illness, and help them understand that there is hope and the alternative is devastating for those left behind.”

SabrinasRide4Life culminated with a fundraising event at Parliament House in Darwin, hosted by Chief Minister of the NT Michael Gunner MLA and MC’d by Ms Ngharee Ah Kit MLA. Chairman of Black Dog Institute Mr Peter Joseph was presented with a donation of \$100,000 raised by the SR4L to support mental health and suicide prevention research.



Michael (left) and Lidia (right) riding from Adelaide to Darwin for Sabrinas Ride4Life



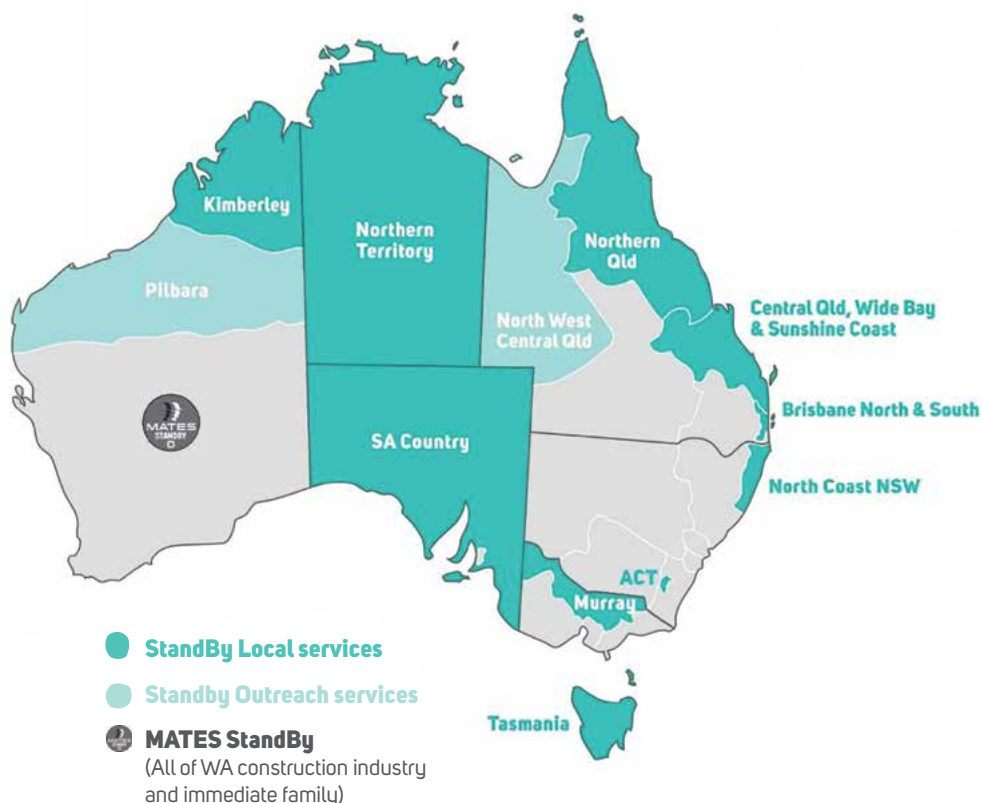
OUR COVERAGE AREAS

StandBy operates across 10 sites nationally aligned to PHN boundaries.

The program is delivered by partner organisations with a dedicated Site Coordinator and support team. By partnering with local organisations in each region, the program engages local expertise to ensure support meets the individual needs of the community.

THE SITES ARE:

- Tasmania (Lifeline Tasmania)
Pop. 512,000
Area 90,758km²
- Country SA
(Uniting Communities and Centacare)
Pop. 497,000
Area 983,296km²
- ACT (SupportLink)
Pop. 403,468
Area 2,351km²
- North Coast NSW
(Social Futures)
Pop. 520,000
Area 32,047km²
- Brisbane South and Brisbane North
(UnitingCare Queensland)
Pop. 2,100,956
Area 7,671km²
- Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast
(United Synergies)
Pop. 841,119
Area 154,426km²
- Northern Queensland
(UnitingCare Queensland)
Pop. 92,832
Area 510,684km²
- Murray Victoria (Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee)
Pop. 602,738
Area 97,068km²
- Country WA [Kimberley region only] (Anglicare WA)
Pop. 15,224
Area 221,594km²
- Northern Territory (Thirriili Ltd)
Pop. 245,470
Area 1,345,558km²



MATES StandBy

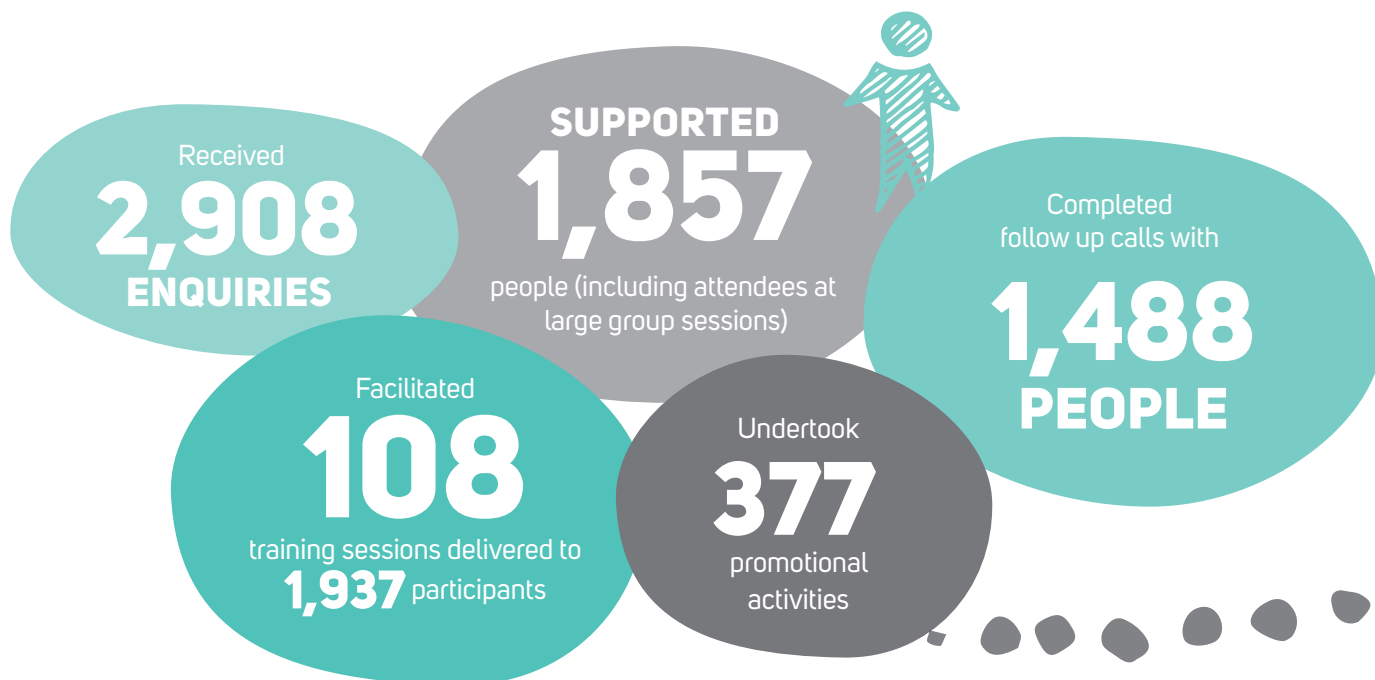
StandBy partnered with MATES in Construction (WA) as a pilot program to provide support to construction industry workers and their family impacted by suicide. The success of the pilot will see the program rolled-out nationally in late 2018.



STAFF STRUCTURE

StandBy currently employs five FTE and one 0.4 FTE based in the National Office, comprising the National Operations Manager, three National Partnership Coordinators, one Office and Database Administrator and Marketing and Social Media Coordinator. In our partner sites, staffing includes 13 Site Coordinators, 11 Area Team Leaders and 100 casual staff (forming the Crisis Team) located across the 10 National sites.

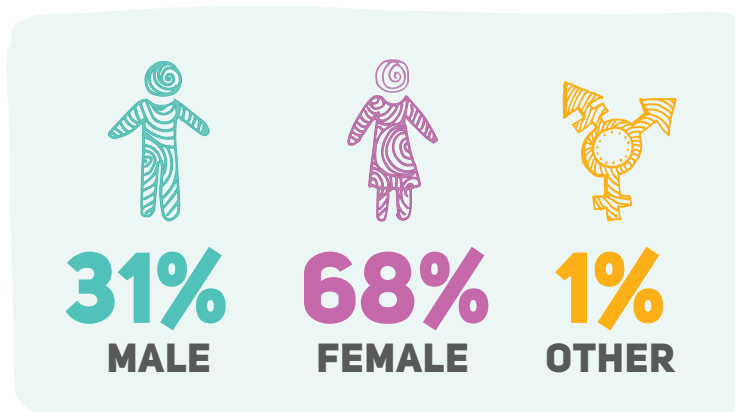
IN THE REPORTING PERIOD 1 JULY 2017 TO 30 JUNE 2018, STANDBY ACHIEVED THE FOLLOWING:



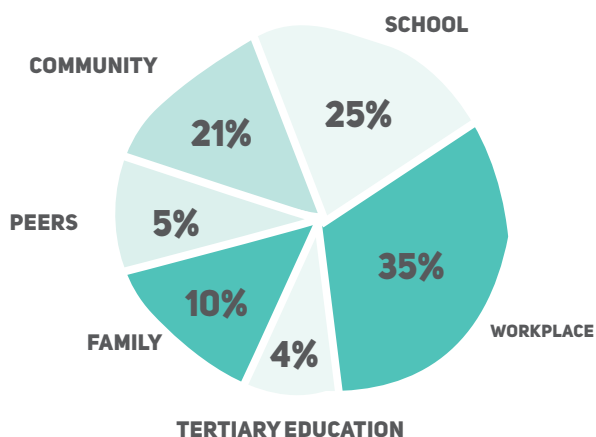
LONGER-TERM FIVE-YEAR TRENDS (2013-2018)

Over the last five years, **StandBy** has responded to

13,698 ENQUIRIES and provided **3,099 SUPPORT SESSIONS**
69% OF THESE WERE FACE-TO-FACE



We supported the following groups:



We conducted

3,506

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

1,591 PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

WORKING WITH OUR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

NORTHERN TERRITORY

In the Northern Territory (NT), our partnership with Thirrili has led to working together with the National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS), to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people impacted by suicide-related trauma. Our NT StandBy Coordinator is co-located with the NICRS advocate, resulting in a blended service that can provide the most culturally appropriate response to each individual enquiry.

KIMBERLEY, WA

StandBy has joined forces with Thirrili, the National Indigenous Critical Response Service (NICRS) and Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS) to develop a postvention model unique to the needs of communities in the Kimberley. Workshops were held in Broome and Kununurra, engaging key stakeholders in the region to co-design the program making sure it is informed by the local community and is responsive to their needs. Further planning for its implementation will continue through 2018.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

StandBy collaborated with Centacare Catholic in Country South Australia on a revised version of *You, Me - Which Way?* – a resource designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people impacted by suicide.

Developed with the perspectives of key community stakeholders and Aboriginal Elders, the project supports the ongoing work of StandBy to ensure support is adapted to the local needs of a region.

The initial roll-out will happen in Yorke Peninsula, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Ceduna and Whyalla.

The project is funded by Country South Australia PHN

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The National team have been working on several projects across 2017-18, aiding the development and expansion of the StandBy program, including:

- A Lived Experience engagement strategy has been implemented at all StandBy sites to ensure StandBy operations are informed by those with lived experience
- A National Supervision Framework has been developed to support the health and wellbeing of staff working in the postvention sector
- Following international interest in the program, Practice Discussion Groups are being established with New Zealand Victim Support Service and the Canadian Mental Health Association

*Photography Credit:
Jacob Tyndall – outback
starry night*

STANDBY EVALUATION OUTCOMES

StandBy commissioned The Science of Knowing to conduct an evaluation of the StandBy program including a review of the outcomes for people supported by StandBy compared to those who had not received StandBy support following a suicide loss in the last 12 months.



A TOTAL OF
545
PEOPLE

participated in the evaluation, with preliminary results showing positive outcomes including:



REDUCED RISK OF SUICIDE

The risk of suicidality was significantly lower for people supported by **StandBy** (38% compared to 63%)



FEWER MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

People supported by **StandBy** reported experiencing significantly fewer mental health concerns (38% compared to 74%)



MAINTAINED SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

People supported by **StandBy** were significantly less likely to experience social loneliness, or report a loss of social connections or social support



SUPPORT PROVIDED BY STANDBY

Over two-thirds of people who accessed StandBy reported that the program staff helped them to make some sense of their loss.



81%

of people reported they **did not have to wait long to access the support services referred to them by StandBy.**

89%

of people believe that **StandBy is an important form of support for people bereaved by suicide.**



EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGIST: SUSAN VAUGHAN

StandBy
National
Partnership
Coordinator
Susan at
SabrinasRide4Life

Working in suicide postvention can be challenging. Supporting those working in the field takes a certain set of unique qualities. Qualities the StandBy family are lucky to find in Susan.

Having worked in four roles across the program over the past eight years, Susan has a unique perspective of the StandBy program and has contributed to the growth of StandBy in the roles of Expansion Coordinator, Quality Assurance Coordinator and currently as National Partnership Coordinator.

Initially, Susan joined the program as StandBy Coordinator for Far North Queensland. Spending three years in a position she now supports other Coordinators across Australia to fulfil, she knows first-hand the demands of the role.

While the National Partnership Coordinator's work includes a host of activities to ensure consistency in the service delivery nationally, it's the day-to-day support and mentoring of Site Coordinators that plays such an important role in enabling the program to thrive, while also ensuring the health and wellbeing of the team.

Talking to Site Coordinators, it's clear Susan's dedication is integral to the achievements that have been possible across their diverse regions.

"I have greatly appreciated Susan's wisdom, humour and down-to-earth style in her practice. Her mentorship and support has been instrumental in establishing Murray as a new site – it's difficult to imagine the past year without her," reflects StandBy Coordinator for Murray (Vic) Lucinda.

"Susan's experience in community development has come to the fore in the West. Her dynamic and flexible approach has enabled us to respond to what we hear on the ground and adapt the support to the needs of our local community," says StandBy Coordinator for Kimberley West, Jacob.

As for the National Team who share an office with Susan, they all agree Susan brings an unmatched level of energy and enthusiasm that can't be ignored!

"Susan's passion and presence are missed when she's away from the office, it's a much quieter place without her voice radiating through the entire complex," says National StandBy Operations Manager Geoff Timm.

CRITICAL POSTVENTION RESPONSE

Critical Postvention Response (CPR) is a short-term rapid response to communities experiencing suicide crisis, including the impact of suicide clusters or suicide contagion.

In 2017-18, CPR was delivered in Charleville, Cunnamulla, Quilpie, St George and Thargomindah. During this outreach a range of community training and capacity building activities were provided for both community members supporting friends and family impacted by suicide and community service providers in the region. Workshops included What Do I Say? What Do I Do?, Supporting Children & Young People, Pathways To Care and Talking About Suicide.

The CPR team have been monitoring other high-risk communities across Australia over the past year by attending community meetings and liaising with our National networks and partners to gauge current concerns. The CPR model has also been refreshed to better assist communities responding to community safety concerns around suicide contagion or clusters.

www.standbysupport.com.au GOES LIVE

The launch of a dedicated website, www.standbysupport.com.au, now allows anyone to search online for their local StandBy site and seek support.

The website also includes a set of comprehensive resources assisting those looking for self-help or to support someone they may know who is bereaved by suicide.

The website will be further developed to include videos of Site Coordinators from across Australia explaining how the program can assist, and testimonials from individuals who have been supported by StandBy.

STANDBY CENTRAL QUEENSLAND, WIDE BAY AND SUNSHINE COAST

StandBy Central Queensland, Wide Bay and Sunshine Coast (CQWBSC) is delivered by United Synergies to provide an immediate response to people bereaved or impacted by suicide across the PHN region. The team is based in Maroochydore, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Emerald. People can receive face-to-face support provided by skilled StandBy Crisis Team members and referred to local support services matched to their needs. In the past year the service received 290 enquiries and supported 118 people bereaved or impacted by suicide.

StandBy CQWBSC participated in 61 collaborative activities. Highlights include organising two significant local events, the Annual Suicide Bereavement Remembrance Day Ceremony in Cotton Tree Maroochydore and the annual Kylie Foundation fundraiser – which has raised over \$35,000 since 2015. This event is generously supported by the Reeve family.

SHIFTING THE DIAL

In May, United Synergies partnered with specialist mental health and suicide prevention consultancy ConNetica to host Shifting the Dial on Suicide Prevention – new settings, new players.

Sponsored by Queensland Mental Health Commission, the one-day forum attracted experts in the field of mental health who shared insights to engaging community in suicide prevention through everyday settings

Presenters included world renowned suicidologist from Denver US, Dr Sally Spencer-Thomas, Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic, R U OK? Day CEO Brendan Maher, 2016 NAIDOC Person of the Year and leading Indigenous Educator, Professor Chris Sarra and Creator of the Mentally Healthy Campaign Act-Belong-Commit Professor Rob Donovan.

FUTURE FOCUS

StandBy is currently funded to the end of June 2019. Work is now focused on securing ongoing and increased funding to expand the program to full national coverage. StandBy has engaged health and social services consultancy, Beacon Strategies, to provide strategic direction with future tendering requirements. The detailed research, encompassing the 31 PHN regions, includes a comprehensive communications and engagement plan as part of the refunding strategy to support the program's vision for all Australians to have access to support after suicide by StandBy.



OUR PEOPLE

Our people are at the core of the work we do and the difference we make to other people's lives.

Our recruitment processes are centred on ensuring new employees are a cultural fit with our organisation, their prospective teams, and align with our overarching mission: Dedicated To Better Lives.

We run a de-centralised human resources system, where our Human Resources team works closely with management and staff to provide consultancy across all human resource functions. The team of two FTEs actively develops, advises and implements policies relating to the effective use of personnel within our organisation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Implementing a substantial organisational restructure, which supports better connections between our services and programs
- Transferring all employee files to an electronic format, which eliminates large paper trails
- Integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture into our employment opportunities

CHALLENGES

- Supporting employees through the substantial change management process with our organisational restructure
- Instability with our workforce due to a high volume of short term contracts (which is fairly standard in our industry)
- Maintaining multiple excel spreadsheets to record human resources data and metrics

PROFESSIONALISM

You can spot us from a mile away! We are **CONSIDERATE, APPROPRIATE, ACCOUNTABLE** and **TRANSPARENT** in our work.

INTEGRITY

Own your actions.
Be honest and inclusive.

**APPROACH YOUR
WORK WITH POSITIVE
INTENTIONS!**

RESPECT

Treat others as you would
expect to be treated.

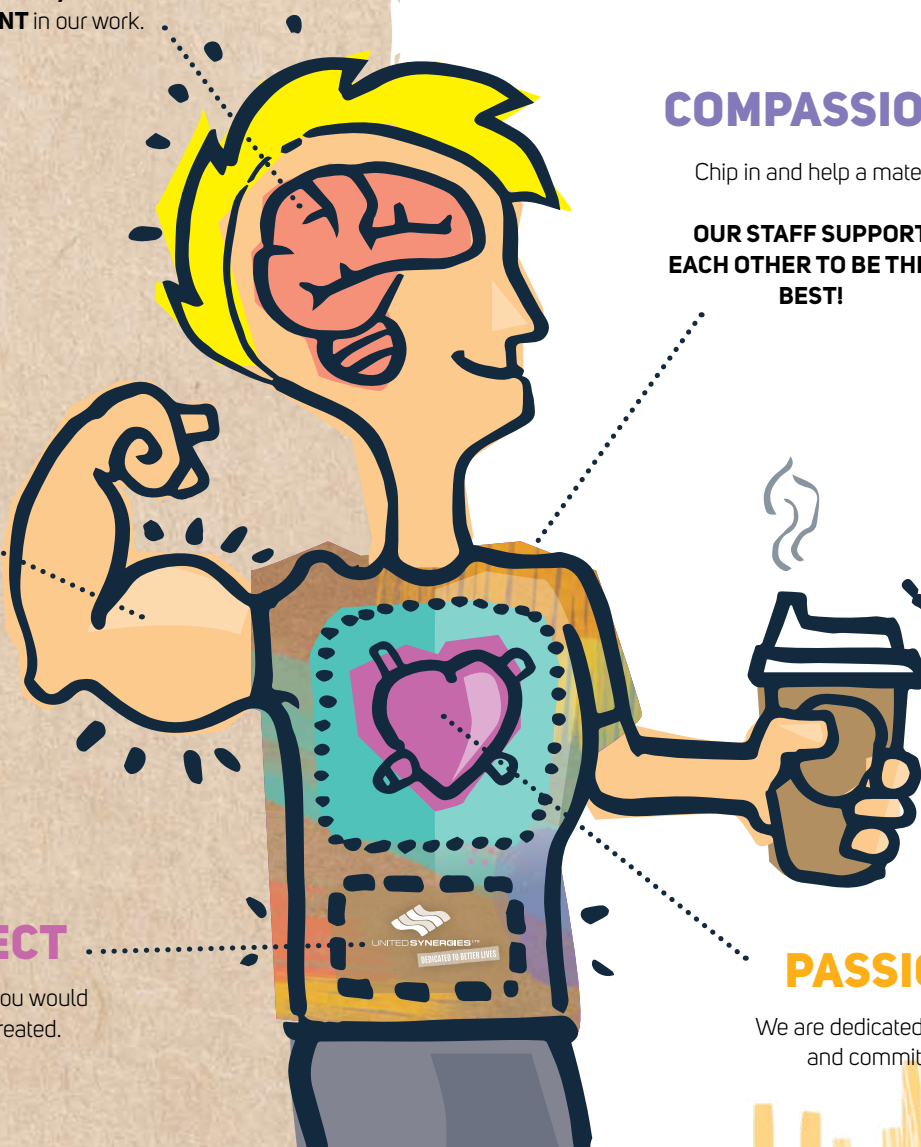
COMPASSION

Chip in and help a mate.

**OUR STAFF SUPPORT
EACH OTHER TO BE THEIR
BEST!**

PASSION

We are dedicated, resilient
and committed!



UNITED SYNERGIST

United Synergies is a values driven organisation. To encourage our staff to bring our values to life we developed our 'United Synergist' behaviours (shown above), which are promoted across all our sites.

OUR PEOPLE DATA

TOTAL # OF EMPLOYEES*

*As at 30 June 2018

186

FULL TIME

76

PART TIME

39

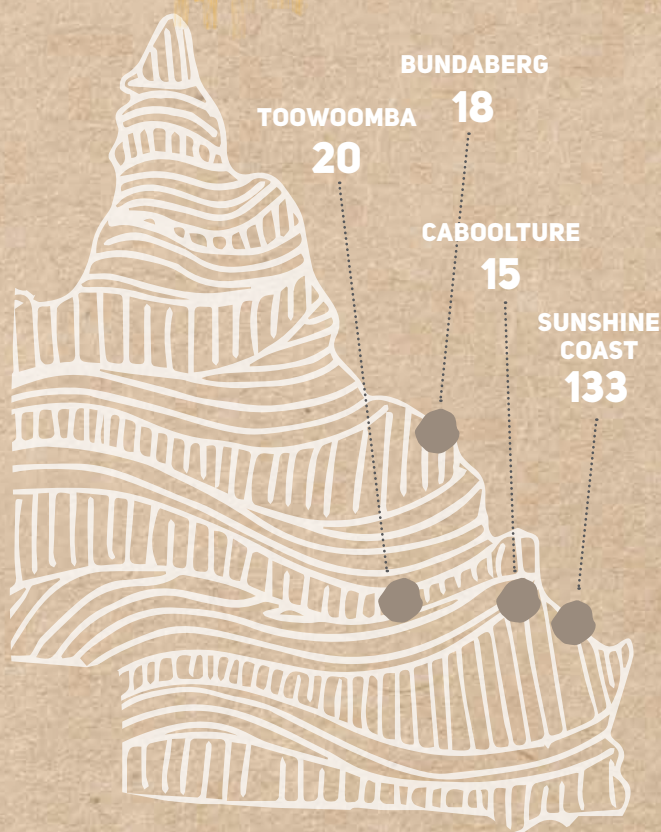
SHIFT

26

CASUAL

45

EMPLOYEES ACROSS OUR MAIN SITES



AVERAGE SALARY

BY GENDER*

MALE \$65,805

FEMALE \$65,186

*Difference due to more female employees having part-time and short-term contracts.

BY EMPLOYMENT

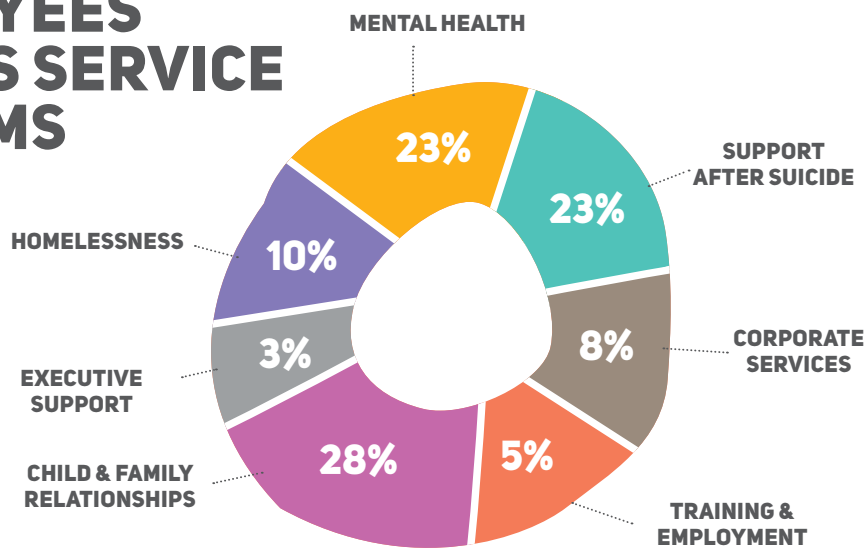
FULL TIME \$66,142

PART TIME \$64,680

CASUAL \$6,183

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE 30 JUNE 2018 24%

EMPLOYEES ACROSS SERVICE STREAMS



EMPLOYEE GENDER
MALE 29% | FEMALE 71%

	MANAGERS	SERVICE LEADS	SUPPORT STAFF
Mental Health	5	5	31
Child & Family Relationships	1	4	47
Training & Employment	1	0	8
Homelessness	1	1	27
Support After Suicide	1	4	36
Corporate Services	5	0	9

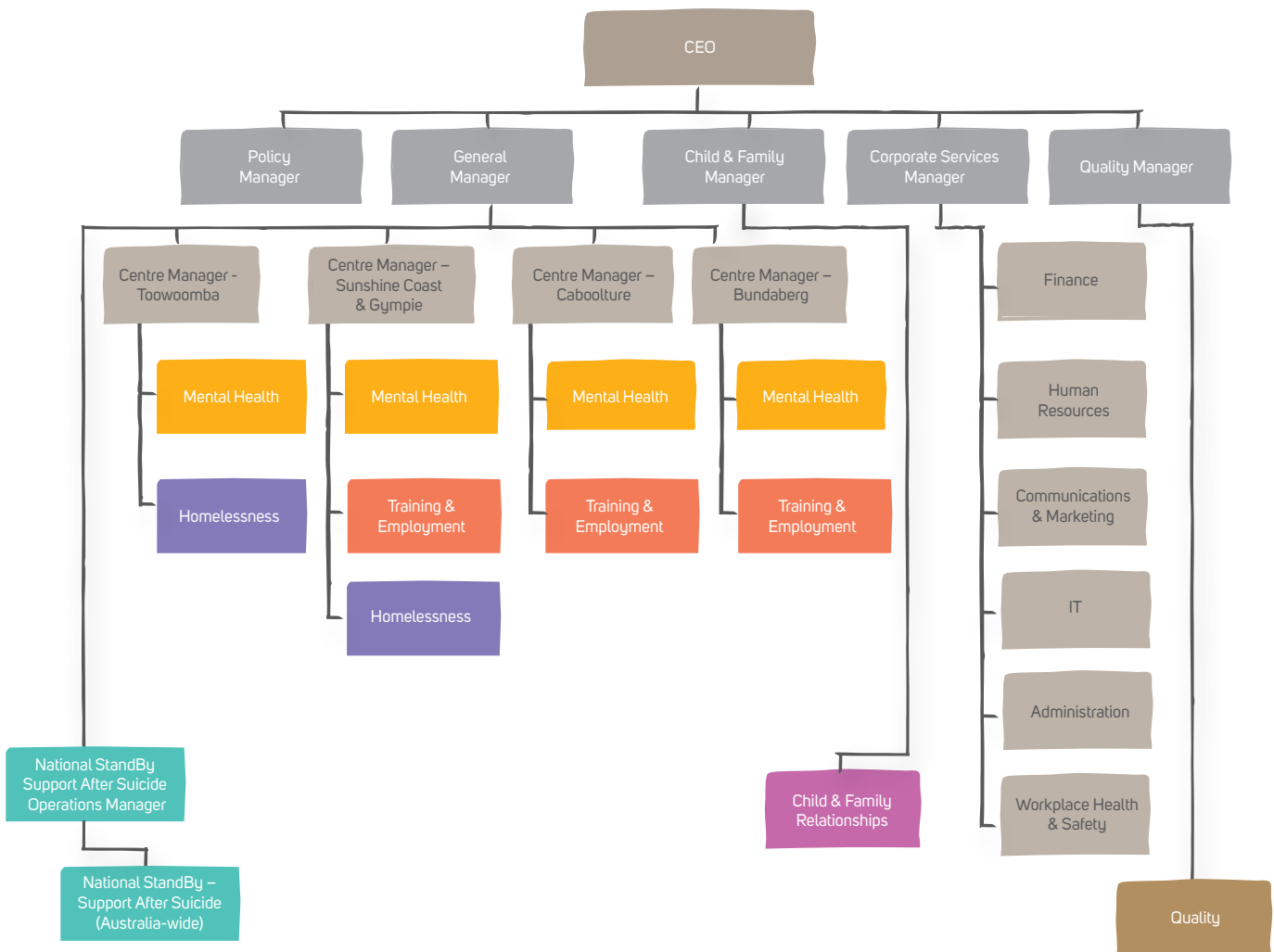
OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

In 2017-18 we developed and launched a new organisational structure to ensure we have the right organisational design, roles and reporting lines in place to support our continual growth and expansion into new regions.

Our Human Resources team worked closely with management and staff to ensure communication was clear and transparent; and that employees whose roles were impacted were consulted with throughout this process.

Our new organisational structure, shown below, supports better connections between our different services and programs, where people only need to tell us their story once, and they can access greater care for their individual needs.

This year we launched a new leadership team consisting of eight core managers across our organisation. This change included the elevation of the HR, Finance, and Child and Family Manager roles to assist with speciality knowledge in their respective fields, as well as the creation of the new General Manager, Policy Manager and Quality Manager roles.



OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



CHRISTOPHER JOHN
Chief Executive Officer

As the CEO, Christopher ensures the organisation's values are at the heart of all its operations; leading the team and reviewing progress to ensure outcomes are achieved.

Christopher became the CEO in April 2012 after six years as CEO of Lifeline Hobart in Tasmania.

Christopher has a Master of Management, a Post Graduate Diploma of Health Science, is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors Course (GAICD), and a Director of Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA).



MARK JAMES
Corporate Services Manager

Mark oversees all support functions for the organisation including financial, human relations, marketing and communications, workplace health and safety, organisational risk, and information and technology. He is also the Company Secretary.

Mark joined United Synergies in December 2012 after seven years of running and expanding a successful retail franchise network. He holds a Business Degree from The Robert Gordon University in Scotland.



DR TANYA BELL
Policy Manager

Tanya leads the strategic planning and development of our services to ensure while meeting the requirements of government policy, we are working effectively with our partners and local stakeholders to achieve better outcomes for those we help.

Tanya joined United Synergies in 2018 in the new role of Policy Manager. With almost two decades in the primary health care sector, Tanya has worked for research and academic institutes, state government departments, as well as non-government agencies including Medical Locals and Primary Health Networks.



KAREN PHILLIPS
General Manager

Karen's role is to provide overarching guidance and coordination for our Centre Managers and our National StandBy Operations Manager. Karen is focused on ensuring we have smooth operations and good practices to support those we help.

Karen joined the organisation in 2009 as Program Manager for the Education, Employment and Training team and has also led the operations of StandBy – Support After Suicide.

Karen's qualifications include a Bachelor of Education and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.



JAMILA SHAH
Child and Family Manager

Jamila provides overarching guidance and coordination for all our Child and Family services and programs. She has worked in the child protection and community services arena for over 18 years, holding management positions for 15 years.

Jamila holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Melbourne University majoring in Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies, and a Diploma of Social and Community Welfare from Monash University.



SCOTT DOUGLAS
Quality Manager

Scott joined United Synergies in 2018 and oversees our accreditation and quality processes, which includes compliance to a range of standards.

Scott has a Masters of International and Community Development, a Graduate Certificate of Management, and Diploma of Quality Management. He is a Fellow with the Governance Institute of Australia (FGIA) and certified Lead Auditor with International Register of Certified Auditors (IRCA).



TONY HOWLEY
Finance Manager

Tony oversees the management of our budgets and financial resources. His role is integral to assessing, planning and coordinating our efforts to better support the future needs of our organisation in the most cost-effective ways.

Tony joined United Synergies in 2017 and brings a wealth of experience and is passionate about working across the various programs that support vulnerable people in our community.



MELISSA SMIDT
Human Resources Manager

Our HR Manager guides our organisation in the recruitment, management, training and people needs of our organisation.

Melissa joined as HR Advisor in July 2015, and since August 2016 has taken on a secondment in the position of HR Manager. Prior to this she worked for a global organisation as a HR Business Partner for five years, providing extensive hands-on support and guidance to managers and employees in all facets of the employee life cycle.

OUR PEOPLE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

As a result of our strong growth in recent years and subsequent organisational restructure, we have spent the past year reviewing and developing our internal resources and support model. This has ensured employees and line managers can access up-to-date and relevant tools and resources to drive and manage performance.

Going forward, we plan to launch a formal succession planning project, which identifies critical roles and clear succession plans for our high potential employees. We also plan to develop and launch a new Employee Benefits and Wellbeing Program – which will help us to be viewed as an ‘Employer of Choice’ with an extensive range of employee benefits and wellbeing initiatives.

It’s anticipated that these two new initiatives will help us to attract and retain top talent, reduce absenteeism, and increase employee motivation and productivity.

RECRUITMENT AND ON-BOARDING

Our HR team works closely with our People Leaders in developing recruitment strategies and position descriptions for all employment opportunities across our different services and programs.

We ensure all People Leaders are up to date with our internal recruitment and on-boarding processes by providing HR Essentials: Recruitment, On-boarding and Induction training.

Our main advertising platforms include Seek.com, our website, intranet and occasionally social media. Our recruitment and candidate database system, Scout, allows our People Leaders to review applicants, score them based on their suitability and contact them to arrange interviews.

This year we updated all our job advertisements to encourage those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to apply as we hope to increase representation in our workforce. This is in line with our anticipated Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

All new employees receive a welcome pack which includes a welcome letter from the CEO, employment contract, position description, payroll related forms, blue card and licensed care services application forms, salary packaging information sheet, employee assistance program brochure and a United Synergist mousepad which outlines the five behaviours we encourage our employees to display as United Synergists. See page 71.

INDUCTION

This year we reviewed and updated our site-specific induction handbooks, which contain payroll and salary sacrificing details, a summary of highly important policies, employee assistance program details, key contacts in the organisation, day one checklist, workplace health and safety information (which includes the site emergency response and evacuation plan, emergency procedures and a workplace health and safety induction checklist).

Our formal induction takes place over the course of three months and is led by line managers. All new employees are set up in our Learning Management System to complete our online induction program and attend a corporate induction day – where our senior leaders provide an overview of the organisation, including our history and our strategic direction, and are available for any questions our new employees may have.

We measure the success with our on-boarding and induction program by conducting on-boarding surveys and our voluntary turnover figures within the first six months of employment.

EMPLOYEE AGREEMENTS

Our workforce is covered predominantly under the Social Community Homecare and Disability Services Award (SCHADS) and Health Professionals and Support Services (HPSS) awards to ensure parity consistency across the programs and regions we operate in.

Staff at our Employee Engagement Day.





EXTRAORDINARY UNITED SYNERGIST: CRISTEL SIMMONS

headspace Bundaberg
COMMUNITY & YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

LEARNING TO LISTEN

With headspace reporting one in four young people are living with a mental health concern, it begs the question 'What can we do to help support our youth's wellbeing?' We asked our Community & Youth Engagement Officer at headspace Bundaberg, and her answer is a lesson for us all.

"It's conversations that will connect us.

"Genuine conversations where we ask open-ended questions, give them our time and attention, and allow them to feel vulnerable and safe. Most importantly we need to listen.

"Every day those who are struggling are told to speak up, be strong, talk about it, raise your voice ... but who is listening?

"As a mum, wife, friend, sister and fixer-upper it has taken a while for me to learn to listen. At first I wanted to fix everything and tell people how to fix themselves. When I learnt to step back, listen to what they needed – not what I needed – it became more effective, and more empowering for those who were heard. The outcomes for everyone were more real.

"It's so easy to be busy, distracted, always doing something, even when we're trying to have a conversation, but how much more invested are you when you put down the potato peeler and actually talk, in presence, in acknowledgement of what each other is saying. That's how we connect with our young people, and our community.

"We can only begin to support our youth's wellbeing once we have given our full attention to understanding what is happening for them, what is reality in their world.

"I love how **headspace** allows us to listen to our young people. We get to hear about what is important to them, what they value, and how we can help them.

"In my role I get to work alongside some inspiring and passionate young people who have taught me a lot. I also get the chance to connect our community, to network and build on conversations that matter ... it's a beautiful thing!" says Cristel.

BLUE CARDS AND LICENSED CARE SERVICES CHECK

All our employees, students, volunteers and board members are required to have a positive Blue Card issued and a Licensed Care Services check. We closely monitor this compliance requirement to ensure these checks do not expire. Blue Cards need to be renewed every three years, and Licensed Care Services checks need to be renewed every two years. We ensure renewal forms are sent out three months prior to expiry to ensure we allow sufficient time for renewal processing.

The Blue Card check is a key prevention and monitoring system of people working with children and young people in Queensland.

The Licensed Care Services check is conducted by the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors to obtain particular information to assist in deciding and monitoring the suitability of the person engaged in the provision of care services provided by the organisation. The information obtained relates to child protection history, domestic violence history and traffic history.



Staff at our Employee Engagement Day.



TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

We are continually developing our employees and offering training opportunities to ensure we have a highly skilled workforce, who can provide optimal care, support and guidance to those we help.

Our mandatory training catalogue is refreshed every two years and is comprised of Cultural Awareness, ASIST (Suicide Awareness), TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), and Medication training (as appropriate to roles).

Each employee has an annual Personal Development Plan which identifies any areas for development, future career aspirations and training opportunities. We invest in our employees to ensure they keep developing within the organisation.

PERFORMANCE

This year we worked closely with our People Leaders in developing their skills and knowledge in managing difficult employee performance issues. We provided all People Leaders with *HR Essentials: Performance Management* training as well as strategies, templates and swim lane flow charts to assist with resolving employee issues in a timely way.

OUR EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY

In 2017-18 we conducted our seventh Employee Opinion Survey (EOS) with Peter Berry Consultancy to identify how satisfied our employees are across two broad categories – Business Engagement and Personal Engagement.

Our employee satisfaction score was 78 per cent – which sits within the 94th percentile of Australian companies.

Overall, the survey also showed:

The 3 best aspects about working for our organisation are:

1. Working with fellow employees
2. Challenging work with job satisfaction
3. Interaction with those we help and support

The top 3 areas for improvement are:

1. Lack of job security
2. Poor co-operation between different work areas
3. Uncertain Future

We are pleased to see that most employees are generally happy with the organisation. Unfortunately, 'lack of job security' and an 'uncertain future' is partly due to fixed term contracts, which are aligned to government funding. We have taken positive steps to address the 'poor co-operation between different work areas' by restructuring our organisation and promoting better connections between our services and programs.

SUSTAINABILITY AND GROWTH

United Synergies has grown strongly in recent years. We currently operate at a level of an annual turn-over of \$22M with 30 programs and 186 staff across 19 work-sites.

We plan and practice corporate sustainability in the way we manage and coordinate our environmental, social and financial demands and challenges.

The investments we make in staff training and development, infrastructure and equipment, are planned to lead to increased profitability to sustain, grow and innovate our social services.

We achieve sustainability by engaging with our stakeholders and communities; implementing systems that provide structures and processes to foster quality and mitigate risks; and systematic measurement, analysis, reporting and disclosure of our social impact.



FUTURE FOCUS



Plans for next year and beyond include:

- Launching a formal succession planning project, which identifies critical roles and clear succession plans for our high potential employees
- Further developing our Performance Management approach to effectively manage employee grievances and under-performance through internal and external training
- Developing and launching our new Employee Benefits and Wellbeing Program – which will help us to be viewed as an ‘Employer of Choice’ with an extensive range catalogue of employee benefits and wellbeing initiatives
- Developing a strategy and streamlining our student placement and volunteer systems and processes to support future growth in this area

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Our internal communications is overseen by our Development Manager, who aims to ensure there is a line of sight between United Synergies employees and business priorities, so everyone can contribute to the achievement of goals.

This has been achieved, in part, by the role linking into our internal committee structure to support key messages and collateral; working with IT to manage content on the intranet; supporting the Operations Team in producing its monthly e-newsletter and launching Making Others Great staff award; and producing the quarterly Synergies staff magazine.

Much of this activity has been about reporting and sharing staff news. Going forward it is anticipated that the role will mature into a strategic function; operating as an internal partner and adviser to different parts of the business, to support two-way communications, employee engagement and a united culture.

Next year, we plan to roll out an over-arching Internal Communications framework, policy, and work processes to increase integration, efficiency and effectiveness of internal communication practices across the organisation.

Internal audits and staff feedback will be used to inform areas for improvement, pilot new channels to personalise content, and use approaches that place employee engagement at the centre of plans.

STUDENT PROGRAM AND VOLUNTEERS

This year we have seen a marked increase in the number of students who complete a student placement with us – particularly across our homelessness programs. See page 49. As our Student Program continues to expand, we are currently developing a strategy, systems and processes to support this growth.

We are also fortunate in that we have a constant flow of volunteer expressions of interest at United Synergies. Our volunteers are community focused and want to lend a helping hand to our organisation and to those who access our services and programs.



future

belong

CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services consists of human resources, information technology, finance, marketing and communications, business development and administration.

The total staff is 13 people, which represents 8% of United Synergies total workforce – a lean and capable team supporting the business operations of the organisation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Implementing high speed internet connection across our main work sites
- Automating our staff credit card systems, which eliminates large paper trails
- Consolidating and marketing our brand more effectively across our five core service streams
- Reach to around 165,000 people from our main United Synergies Facebook page, with engagement from this reach increasing to 14,532 (clicks, comments, likes, shares)

CHALLENGES

- Servicing and supporting a large and growing organisation with diverse staffing needs

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

We outsource our IT Support to All Computer Services (ACS) on the Sunshine Coast and use Microsoft Office 365 cloud services across our sites.

This year we installed high speed fibre connections across our main work sites, to provide staff with reliable, consistent and fast internet connections.

One of the consistent challenges we face with our IT involves supporting staff with varying levels of IT knowledge across a diverse geographical spread.

Our data shows us that our most common issues and support request staff make to IT are:

- Forgetting their password and needing it to be reset
- Not understanding how to use SharePoint, our content management system

Going forward, ACS plan to make a series of short videos sharing their knowledge and upskilling staff as to how they can resolve these more common IT requests themselves. These videos will be available on mobile, tablet and desktop devices, and will also include short tutorials on how to use the main features of SharePoint.

We also plan to implement a staff satisfaction survey that staff will fill out after each IT request has been actioned, which will also provide ACS with continual improvement feedback.

FINANCE

Our Finance team consists of four FTEs and one 0.8 FTE, who manage our annual budgets, funding acquittals, monthly management reports, staff payroll, supplier payments and credit cards.

This year we focused on updating our finance systems, with a new MYOB reporting add on feature, and automated staff credit card systems, which eliminates large paper trails and allows us to have better oversight of spending as it occurs.

The finance team also ran two popular roadshow workshops across our main worksites, which provided managers with in-depth finance training across:

- Emplive – our online rostering and timesheet management system
- ProMaster – our online credit card system

Going forward, we plan to scope out and implement a more comprehensive update to our finance systems that integrates with other parts of our organisation, including our new Quality Management System.

We also plan to continue our finance roadshow workshops twice a year to share knowledge, upskill and improve the financial acumen of our People and Program Managers. This training will also include the planned release of a new online budget monitoring system, that will assist managers in accessing key financial information in a timely manner to make the right service and program decisions.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our Marketing and Communications team consists of one FTE and one 0.8 FTE who oversee all brand marketing, social media marketing, and external media liaison for the entire organisation.

A key change this year involved bringing the marketing, social media and media of our StandBy –Support After Suicide program in-house as previously we contracted this out to external consultants.

BRANDING

Over the course of 2017-18, we continued to strengthen the recognition of our over-arching United Synergies brand. We did this by strategically reducing unnecessary and confusing sub-brands in the market place, and instead marketing our core brand more strongly across our five core service streams: Mental Health, Child and Family Relationships, Training and Employment; Homelessness, and Support After Suicide.

As a result, we now operate with only three brands in the market place:

- Our main United Synergies brand (which we are continuing to strengthen)
- Our five **headspace** centres brands (which align with **headspace** National branding)
- Our StandBy – Support After Suicide brand (where we are aiming to increase national coverage)

We also introduced new organisation wide brand marketing, media and social media policies and procedures, to ensure that we are delivering a compelling and consistent visual look and feel, as well as consistent key messages to our target markets.

Going forward, we plan to research, and persona-map our core target groups to align with a potential brand re-fresh, that will allow us to more effectively engage with our audiences, meet our future strategic goals and deliver on our social purposes.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Overall United Synergies runs six Facebook pages and four Instagram accounts, which reside on a professional Facebook Business Manager Platform and are optimised for maximum reach and engagement.

Our **headspace** social media sites are run by their respective Youth and Engagement Officers, who attend specialised workshops run by the communications and marketing team, who provide training and share knowledge around security, and how to increase organic reach and engagement.

For our main United Synergies Facebook page:

- Our total reach was: 164,618 people
- Our total engagement (clicks, comments, likes, shares): 14,532

Going forward, we plan to re-develop our main United Synergies website, to align with our five core service streams and integrate our social media channels to promote increased traffic across all our digital platforms.

MEDIA

Public Relations and media forms part of our content marketing, local area marketing and event marketing strategies.

At a program level, our media coverage focuses around the stories of our people and the work we do in our local communities. At an umbrella level to grow the profile and recognition of the United Synergies brand, we have begun to move into engaging media at an issues level across our core service streams.

Over the past year, all program spokespeople have undertaken comprehensive media training, and we have expanded our media reach significantly.

FUTURE FOCUS



Plans for next year and beyond include:

- Providing a short series of IT training videos to up-skill staff understanding of our SharePoint content management system and how they can resolve common IT support requests
- Scoping out a more comprehensive update to our finance systems that integrates with other parts of our organisation
- Providing in-depth finance training to improve the financial acumen of our people and program managers
- Re-developing our website for mobile, tablet and desktop devices – where we will structure the site across our five core service streams and encourage the community to support our work and donate
- Researching and persona mapping our core target audiences to align with a potential future brand re-fresh

OUR GOVERNANCE, QUALITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Our organisation is a Company Limited by Guarantee, where our constitution governs how our organisation can use its resources. We are registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC), classified a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. Our constitution and certificates are available on our website.

Our 2017-18 focus has been on ensuring our foundations for the future are aligned to the needs of those we help and the stakeholders we engage and report back to. The subsequent redesign of our organisational structure and introduction of new processes with our Quality Management System aim to improve the capacity of our organisation to respond to new and changing opportunities.

Please see pages 14-17 for information on how we measure our performance on our strategic goals.

REPORTING STRATEGIC RISKS

Our strategic risks are important to monitor and mitigate. To do this, our Board comes together each year in February for two days, where strategic risks are given focus, and this is followed by another major review during the year.

The CEO reports monthly and Managers report service delivery and other risks quarterly in board meeting papers. A Director is invited to attend our Quarterly Workplace Health and Safety meetings.

This year the Board and management remained focused on the Primary Health Networks (PHNs) transition and the expansion of services across our regions. Over the past year we increased our engagement with many PHNs around the country and locally in our service areas.

We also remain focused on positioning ourselves effectively for the Department of Health and national suicide prevention funding for the period post June 2019, and are currently finalising planning for a model to provide national coverage of the StandBy – Support After Suicide program in partnership with PHNs and local community partners.

We expect the mid-term review of the Queensland Government Carmody roadmap will become more visible in the coming year. Over the past four years, the Queensland Government has made a significant further investment in family and child support services, including through United Synergies. We are keen to continue being part of this review process to ensure we can share our learnings and meet community expectations of efficient and effective service delivery.

ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

In late 2017 we completed a major review into our organisational design. This resulted in a restructure of our management reporting lines and major work processes to allow us to be more responsive to the needs of those we help.

These changes have increased the capacity and specialist knowledge around our financial, quality, policy and service management areas. They have also reduced the complexities for people accessing our services and programs, where they will no longer need to repeat their stories, and find it easier to access more comprehensive supports for their individual needs.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In 2017-18, we continued to implement our new Quality Management System (QMS). Our investment in this space, along with our organisational redesign will provide a pathway and traceability to allow management, staff and auditors to navigate their way through how we operate and achieve our goals. Going forward, we plan to continue with our investment into strong centralised systems, architecture and processes, which will allow us to dispense with ad hoc duplication, inefficiencies and unnecessary risks.

BOARD CHANGES

This year saw three new directors join the Board of Directors, with strong attendance and involvement in Board meetings. Dr Oscar Modesto, Joyce Chorny and Glen Damro all joined the Board at the beginning of 2018, bringing clinical, community development and risk management expertise respectively.

At the 2017 AGM, our Board changed its Chairman from Ian Montague to Greg Livingstone, following three years of Ian's contribution in the Chair role. The Directors thank Ian for his role as Chair and are delighted to retain Ian's involvement as an ongoing Director.

Geoff Argus resigned from the Board in early 2018, after making a substantial contribution to United Synergies over the last two and a half years. We thank Geoff for his continued interest and dedication to the local community and the wider United Synergies footprint.



LICENSED CARE PROVIDER

United Synergies is a Licensed Care provider with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. This organisational wide Licensed Care accreditation is maintained through internal processes in compliance with the Department's Human Services Quality Framework introduced in 2015 for promoting quality outcomes for people who access our services. United Synergies accreditation was obtained in 2015 with a subsequent renewal audit conducted by HDAA Australia in February 2018 which was successfully approved.

OUR YOUNG DIRECTOR INTERNSHIP

Our United Synergies Young Director Internship is a voluntary role that has no formal 'voting rights' and runs for a 12-month calendar year. This role provides an opportunity for fostering leadership in young people and helping them to have a voice and be heard in organisations such as our own.

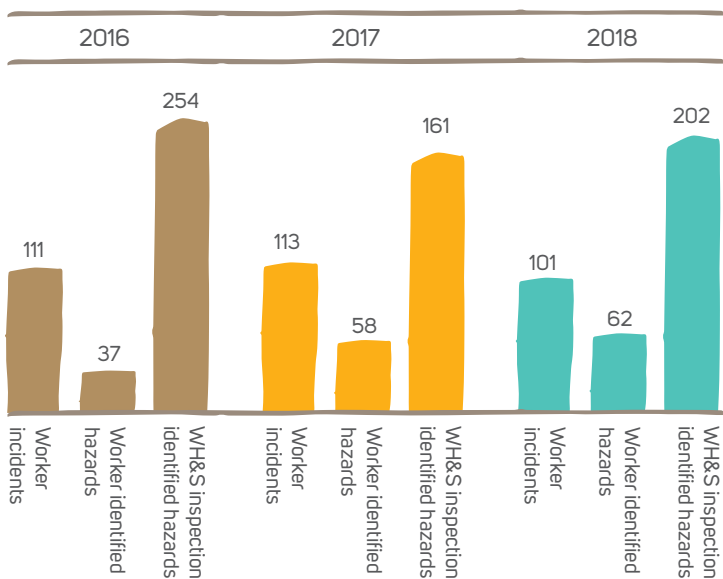
The completion of our first Young Director internship by Hayden Ford last year provided many learnings for the Board around engaging young people. Going forward, we continue to seek appropriate young people to participate at the governance level of our organisation. For more information please visit our website www.unitedsynergies.com.au

WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

United Synergies is dedicated to ensuring our employees have a safe working environment. This has been achieved through increased identification of hazards and control measures to address them.

The approach has resulted in an overall slight reduction of reported workplace incidents.

WH&S INCIDENCES



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



GREG LIVINGSTONE Chairman

Greg has extensive experience in general management, strategy, finance and HR in a large Australian agribusiness and consumer products company. Since leaving his corporate role, Greg has been engaged in areas of particular interest including sustainability in its broadest sense and has worked with the Noosa Biosphere, University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) Sustainability Advisory Committee and has chaired the Sunshine Coast Economic Development Advisory Board.

Greg has a Master of Commerce qualification from the University of New South Wales.

IAN MONTAGUE Director

Ian is the Principal of Montague Consulting, a Sunshine Coast based consultancy specialising in enterprise training advisory services. With 15 years' experience in ceramic manufacturing and 10 years of business development in tertiary education institutions in Victoria and Queensland, Ian brings a broad range of management experience to the United Synergies Board.

Ian has a Masters of Business Administration (Marketing), a Graduate Diploma of Management and is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

KATHLEEN COLCLOUGH Director

Kathleen has extensive experience in the finance, academic, small business and not-for-profit sectors. She has held senior positions with well-known Australian businesses and universities. Her expertise is in strategic and business planning, process mapping, operational inefficiencies, change management, customer relationship management and training. As a business owner on the Sunshine Coast, Kathleen also brings to the Board insights and challenges of the local business environment.

Kathleen holds an undergraduate Arts degree (Chinese language & politics), post-graduate qualifications in Banking and Finance and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.



PAULA HOLDEN
Director

Paula is currently employed in the premium corporate protection sector providing solutions to the aviation, mining, maritime and critical infrastructure industries, and has acquired over 15 years' experience as a professional Human Resource generalist.

With a strong people and change background across sectors including mining, not-for-profit, commercial consulting and government, Paula embraces strategies which enable a whole of business approach. Her expertise is in developing and implementing business strategy, risk and workplace health and safety, and human resource strategies, ultimately aligning business and human capability.

Paula holds a Bachelor of Management, Graduate Certificate in Business Administration and is currently completing a Masters of Business Administration.

JOYCE CHORNY
Director

Joyce has a 20-year career in the visual arts and community engagement and brings extensive knowledge of grant writing and fundraising acumen to the Board.

Prior roles include Principal Coordinator of the Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre, where she worked with disenfranchised and vulnerable people for the last 18 years. This involved managing a variety of licensed and regulated programs including childcare, aged care, youth at risk and family support programs. She also worked with community planning and fundraising in designing and building a \$7M community hub, which now provides a public meeting space and houses 20 services supporting community.

Recently retired from work, Joyce is an active Rotarian and incoming President of the Rotary Club of Hervey Bay Sunrise.

GLEN DAMRO
Director

Glen has 25 years' experience as a senior manager across a range of industries both in Australia and internationally. At present he is the Manager – Consulting Services for a large Brisbane-based organisation specialising in safety, security, compliance and risk management. Glen's strengths are innovation, strategy design, business development, and operations accountability.

Glen has two Masters degrees including an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA). He is also a qualified Lead Auditor and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

DR OSCAR MODESTO
Director

Oscar is a registered psychologist with a Masters Degree in Family Therapy (Mexico) and PhD in Psychology from Macquarie University.

Oscar has held senior roles overseeing services in post separation, family violence, counselling, parent education, and men's services at Centacare Parramatta and CatholicCare Sydney.

Oscar has conducted research on attachment, identity and relationship issues, presenting his findings at several international conferences. Recently Oscar joined the Australian Catholic University (ACU) as a Lecturer on a permanent basis and coordinates the postgraduate counselling programs.

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Revenue – excluding capital grant	22,060,158	19,567,531
Revenue – capital grant	160,000	690,000
Total Revenue	22,220,158	20,257,531
Staff Costs	(11,495,795)	(10,282,243)
Contracted Expenses	(4,674,774)	(4,319,776)
Occupancy Expenses	(927,417)	(816,355)
Client Support Costs	(1,426,423)	(1,144,606)
Motor Vehicle Expenses	(515,929)	(506,239)
Consultancy Expenses	(204,715)	(281,737)
Administrative Expenses	(691,694)	(543,028)
Staff Travel and Training Expenses	(563,510)	(430,632)
Information Technology Expenses	(323,666)	(352,324)
Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses	(1,082,825)	(578,208)
Repairs and Maintenance Expenses	(135,269)	(120,860)
Other Expenses	(742,567)	(516,211)
Current year surplus/(deficit) before income tax	(564,426)	365,312
Income tax expense	-	-
Net current year surplus/(deficit)	(564,426)	365,312
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	(564,426)	365,312

NOTE TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financials for 2017-18 show a deficit, primarily due to a Board approved change in accounting policy for the amortisation of the **headspace** fit out costs which was accelerated to fall in line with the contract funding period, rather than the traditional method of depreciating over the life of the lease.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes on our website, www.unitedsynergies.com.au/publications.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

	2018	2017
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,669,712	4,216,337
Trade and other receivables	276,936	1,968,658
Other assets	226,821	273,266
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	7,173,469	6,458,261
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	1,523,942	2,402,533
Intangible assets	-	344
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	1,523,942	2,402,877
TOTAL ASSETS	8,697,411	8,861,138
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	2,301,124	1,354,797
Income in advance	2,382,732	3,019,366
Provisions	74,644	36,649
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	4,758,500	4,410,812
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	190,419	137,408
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	190,419	137,408
TOTAL LIABILITIES	4,948,919	4,548,220
NET ASSETS	3,748,492	4,312,918
EQUITY		
Reserves	1,897,863	1,897,863
Accumulated Surplus	1,850,629	2,415,055
TOTAL EQUITY	3,748,492	4,312,918

FULL FINANCIALS

A full copy of our financial statements, notes, and commentary as at 30 June 2018 can be viewed on our website at www.unitedsynergies.com.au/publications.

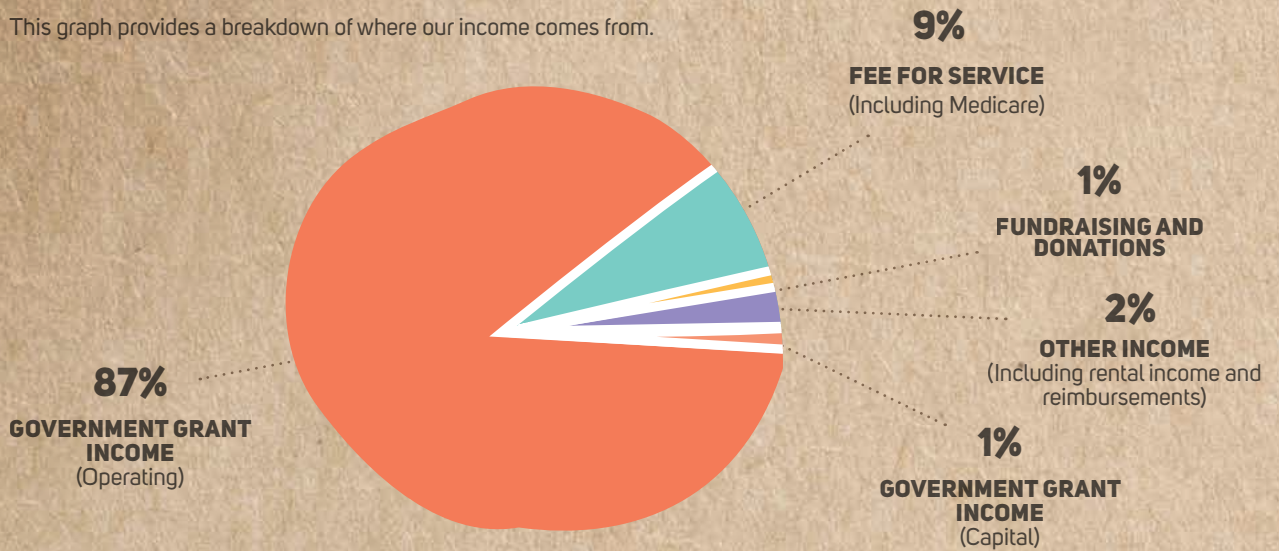
The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes on our website, www.unitedsynergies.com.au/publications.

FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

These pages provide graphic overview of our income sources and percentage breakdown of distribution across our services.

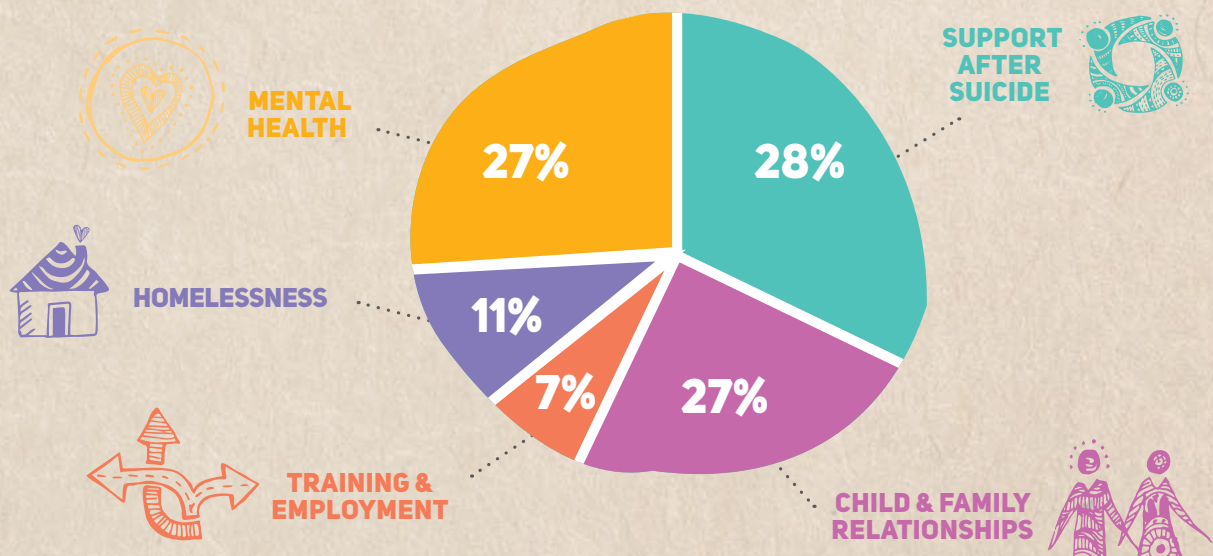
SOURCES OF INCOME

This graph provides a breakdown of where our income comes from.



GOVERNMENT GRANT INCOME - OPERATING

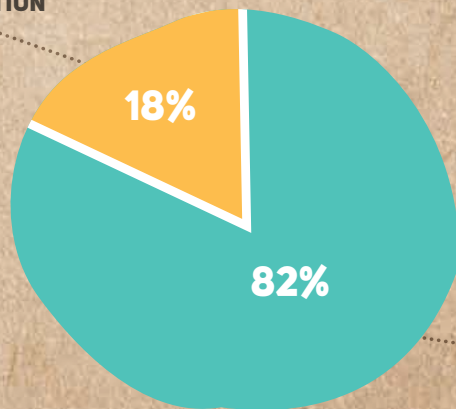
This graph shows the breakdown of our Government grant income across our five core service streams.



EXPENSES BREAKDOWN

This graph shows that 82% of our expenses are directly incurred by our programs and services.

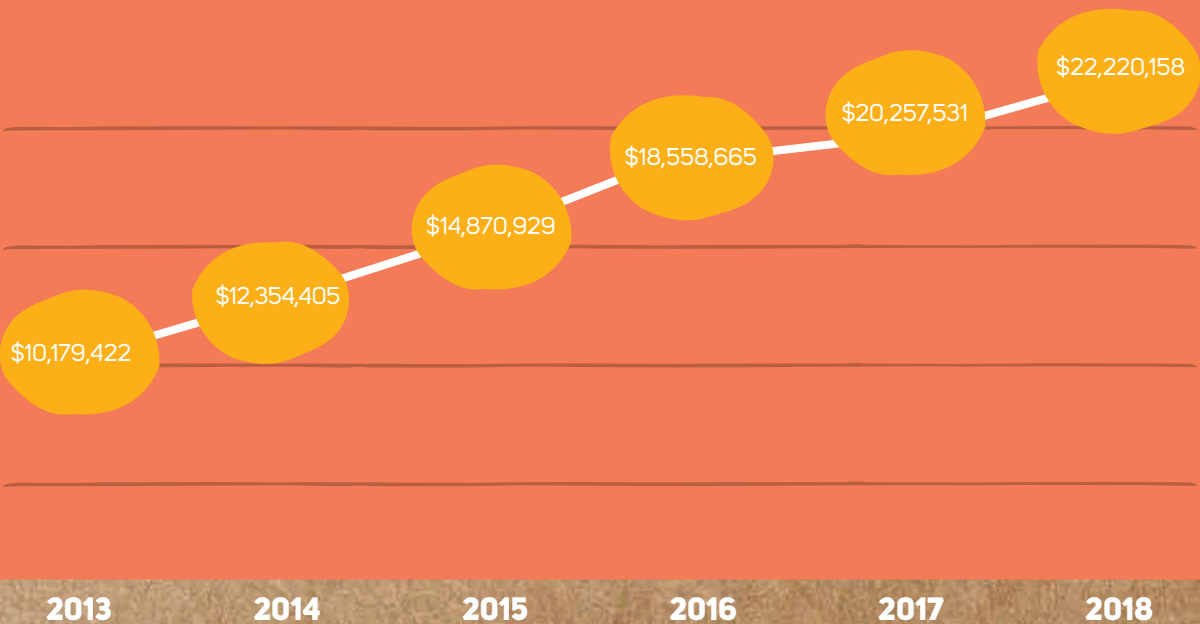
ADMINISTRATION



DIRECT EXPENDITURE
on services and programs for those we help

GROWTH IN TURNOVER (\$M)

This graph shows the growth in our turnover over the past six years.



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

United Synergies could not achieve all that it does without the invaluable support it receives from its partners. Their assistance is highly appreciated.

MAJOR FUNDING BODIES

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

- Australian Government
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

- Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- Department of Housing and Public Works

PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORKS

- Brisbane North
- Darling Downs and West Moreton
- Central Queensland, Wide Bay, and Sunshine Coast

DONORS

ORGANISATIONAL WIDE

Commonwealth Bank
Gambling Community Benefit Fund
IFYS Ltd
Leo Club of Swanies
headspace National

SUNSHINE COAST REGION

Adopt a Family Appeal donors
Australian Skateboarding
Coolum Cool Connections
Cool Harmonies Charity Fund
Gambling Community Benefit Fund
Helping Hand Charity - Mooloolaba Uniting Church
Heritage Bank Nambour
Lioness Club of Mooloolaba
Maroochydore RSL
Margot Tutte
Noosa Council
Noosa Heads Rotary Club
Nomads Golf Club
North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health
Open Minds Australia
Ord Minnett Limited
Queensland Community Foundation
Rotary Club of Caloundra
RSL Services & Citizens Club Nambour
Sunshine Coast Council
Sunshine Coast Lightning
Tewantin Lions Club
The Kylie Foundation (and local businesses used as public collection points)
University of the Sunshine Coast
Warren William
Zonta Club of Noosa

TOOWOOMBA

Baha'i Community of Toowoomba
Commonwealth Bank of Australia – Clifford Gardens
Commonwealth Bank of Australia – Grand Central
Credit Union Australia
Grill'd Toowoomba
Greg Bell
Haines Australasia via Givit
Harristown State High School
Louise Brotto
OzHarvest
Perpetual Trustees
PEACE
Sathya Sai International Organisation (Food) – Gateway House
St James Anglican Church
St Stephens Uniting Church
St Theresa's Catholic Church
Ray White Real Estate
Suzanne Coombes
Toowoomba Outdoor Power Product Centre
Toowoomba Regional Council
Soroptimist International Toowoomba
Vanguard Laundry Service

CABOOLTURE

Artist Tracy Heaydon
Bunnings
Butterfly Foundation for Eating Disorders
Eddie Fraser
Kilcoy nursery
Kilcoy IGA
KSP Theatre Inc
Moreton Bay Council
Mango Hill Skirmish
Mr Shayne Neumann, MP
Sabine ShintaraRose Art
Spiders Boxing Club
Temple Tattoo
Wax and Relax Beauty

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Our partners below support our service delivery and are not necessarily paid suppliers.

NATIONAL

Anglicare WA Inc
Centacare Catholic Family Services Country SA
headspace School Support
Lifeline Central Victoria & Mallee
Lifeline Tasmania Inc
MATES in Construction WA
Everymind - Mindframe
Social Futures
SupportLink Australia
Thirrili Ltd - National Indigenous Critical Response Service
Country South Australia PHN
UnitingCare Queensland
Uniting Communities
Roses in the Ocean

ORGANISATIONAL WIDE

Community Solutions
ConNetica
CQ University Australia
headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation
Human Services (Centrelink)
IFYS Ltd
Lives Lived Well
Life Without Barriers
Queensland Police Service
Queensland Ambulance Service
STEPS Group Charity
Ted Noffs Foundation
University of the Sunshine Coast
Youth Justice, North Coast, and Southern Queensland Regions

REGIONAL - BUNDABERG

Artius
Bundaberg Neighbourhood Centre
Bundaberg Regional Council
Bundaberg Regional State High Schools
Bundaberg Regional Youth Hub
CentacareCQ Bundaberg
Creative Regions
Department Human Services Centrelink
EPIC Assist
Family Relationship Centre
IMPACT Community Services
PCYC Bundaberg
Queensland Police Referrals

Q Clinic Sexual Health
Reclink
Regional Housing Limited
Relationships Australia
Rotary and Rotoract
Salvation Army
STEPS Group Australia
UnitingCare Community
Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service
Wesley Mission
WYLD Projects
YMCA Bundaberg

REGIONAL - CABOOLTURE

Caboolture State High School
Caboolture Youth Justice
Coast2Bay Housing
Family and Child Connect, Mercy Community
Hearts Content Life Coaching
Kilcoy Aquatic Centre
Metro North Hospital and Health Service -Kilcoy Hospital
Kilcoy State High School
Kilcoy Recreation Centre
Live Lift Nourish
Lutheran Services
Mango Hill State School
Metro North Mental Health Service
Redcliffe Area Youth Space
Relationships Australia Sexual Health and HIV Service
Somerset Regional Council
STEPS Group Australia
Trish Pearce
Uniting Care

REGIONAL - GYMPIE

Chatsworth State School
Community Action Inc
Cooloola Aboriginal Services Incorporated (CASI)
Gympie Community Place
Gympie Regional Council
Hartbeat Training & Consultancy
One Mile State School

REGIONAL - SUNSHINE COAST

Caloundra Community Centre
Clandestino Roasters
Coast2Bay Housing Group
Fresh Marketing and PR
Generation Innovation
Gubbi Gubbi Dance
Hutchinson Builders

Kinway Relationship Counselling, Education & Training
Life Without Barriers
Lutheran Community Care
Maleny Neighbourhood Centre
Maroochydore Neighbourhood Centre
Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, Mental Health Services
Montville State School
Nambour Community Centre
Nambour State College
Noosa District State High School
Noosa Community College
Noosa Flexi School
North Arm State School
North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health
Noosa Council
One Mile State School
PCYC Nambour
Probation and Parole North Coast Region
Relationships Australia
REAP Food Rescue
Solutions 4 Learning
Shine Community Care
STEPS Group Australia
Sunshine Beach State High School
Sunshine Coast Private Hospital
Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN

REGIONAL - TOOWOOMBA

CatholicCare Social Services
Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service
Downs Industry Schools Co-op
IFYS Limited
Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland Ltd
Lives Lived Well
PCYC Toowoomba
Perpetual Group
Redcross YHaRS Toowoomba
Rosies – Friends on the Street Toowoomba
Soroptimist International Toowoomba
Teen Challenge
Toowoomba Regional Council
Toowoomba Rugby League
University of Southern Queensland
UnitingCare Community, Toowoomba
Youth & Community Learning Centre, Toowoomba

COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING

We are extremely grateful to all organisations, businesses and individuals who have given generously to us throughout the year.

Unfortunately, due to the high volume of smaller individual donations we receive it is not possible for us to provide a complete listing.

We greatly appreciate all these donations, and the collective impact is significant in strengthening our communities. Where possible throughout the year, we also recognise and acknowledge these organisations, businesses and individuals on our main United Synergies Facebook page.

If you wish to learn more about our organisation and how to support us, a donor resource kit is available on our website at www.unitedsynergies.com.au/donations

The support we receive is appreciated.



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