



Social
Futures

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



Positive social change



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.

2018-19 snapshot

We supported more than

20,000
people



21

service centre locations
across regional NSW



Delivered

27

programs and services



Disability and inclusion

12,680



people supported

Families and children

1,112



people supported

Young people

2,297



supported

Health and wellbeing

1,003



people supported

Housing and homelessness

2,703



people supported

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

3,130



supported

Sector development and support

135



workshops and forums delivered



For more than **40** years we have been creating positive social change. As a regionally based provider servicing **80** per cent of NSW, we are experts in tailoring programs to fit our diverse local communities.



- Services delivered by Social Futures
- Services delivered by subcontractors and alliance partners of Social Futures

Who we are

We create positive social change in regional Australia, working directly with individuals, families, communities, organisations and governments across focus areas of homelessness and housing, youth and family, community inclusivity and programs that promote genuine participation for people with disability.

We are a regional leader and work alongside our partner organisations to strengthen and build capacity within the community sector by providing training, development and advocacy.

Our vision

Thriving people, strong communities

Our purpose

We work to achieve positive social change in our communities

Our values

Integrity: acting fairly, honestly, openly and consistently

Inclusion: valuing diversity, connection, belonging and social justice for all

Learning: improving our knowledge and understanding

Our aim



Inclusive participation

People with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children and young people, older people, LGBTIQAP+ communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities participate in community life, work and education.



Safe and affordable housing

Households have affordable and appropriate housing. We work with other stakeholders to reduce homelessness and to build more affordable and social housing in our communities.



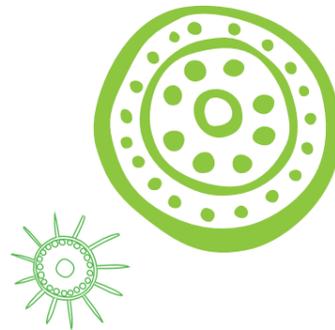
Healthy relationships

Individuals, young people, and families keep children and young people safe. We work with other services and the community to promote healthy relationships.



Strong, connected communities

Our communities are strong and we work as a sector leader to develop well-connected regional services.



What we offer

We pride ourselves on delivering a comprehensive wrap-around service model with a broad range of expertise and resources.

family counselling and mediation

psychological and mental health services (youth, adult)

youth wellbeing and mentoring

women's and reproductive health services

suicide and bereavement support

case management

assessment and planning services (disability, family)

housing, tenancy and homelessness support

centralised intake and referral contact centre (inbound and outbound)

contract and consortium management

workforce and sector development and support

forum and workshop facilitation

stakeholder engagement and community consultation

'white-label' online learning platform

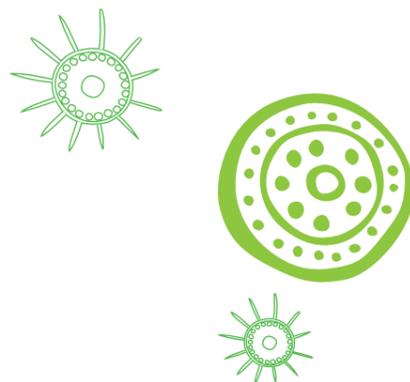
21 service centre locations across regional NSW plus outreach capability



Future fit

This year we commissioned external consultants Deloitte Australia to undertake an independent review of our structure and identify resourcing priorities to ensure we are ready to meet the challenges of the future.

Our new structure will deliver an even stronger focus on organisational excellence, evidence-based practice, the customer experience and ensuring all our staff have the tools and training to deliver consistently high quality services and are able to measure their impact.



Measuring our impact



We are committed to providing accountability and efficiency in our service delivery. Effectively measuring our impact is vital to improving how we work in our communities to improve people's lives.

This year saw huge progress on the implementation of our Digital Transformation Program. The program will replace a number of legacy systems with an integrated cloud-based customer management system. Our new system will allow us to better measure our impact and effectiveness, help us to identify needs, design programs supported by robust data and more closely integrate with our funders' systems and reporting platforms.

By providing better tools to our workers we are supporting them to spend more time with their participants and less time on administration. Importantly, our new systems are scalable and agile, allowing us to easily take on new challenges as we grow.

This Digital Transformation Program is an important cornerstone in ensuring Social Futures is an effective and data-informed organisation.

CEO and Board message

For more than 40 years, Social Futures has been working within regional communities to create positive social change.

This year was no exception as we delivered programs and services across NSW to more than 20,000 people, standing beside them as they moved towards their goals, inclusion and independence.

Highlights for the year

- We worked with external consultants to review our organisational structure, identify resourcing priorities and provide new internal support services to ensure that we are ready to meet the challenges of the future.
- We took significant steps with our Reconciliation Action Plan, implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy and a procurement policy to support First Nations suppliers.
- In June 2019 we launched a new employment program, Opportunity Pathways, designed to break the cycle of disadvantage for social housing recipients and reduce their reliance on government-funded social housing or Rent Choice subsidies.
- We advocated strongly for real action to be taken to address the housing crisis which is particularly significant in the Northern Rivers region and lent our voice to national advocacy campaign Everybody's Home. We also supported the Raise the Rate campaign to lift the rate of Newstart payments and tackle disadvantage.
- This year our Better Chances Forum which works to reduce the number of children and young people in out of home care, put a strong focus on increased engagement and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and workers. In March 2019 we made a submission to the Their Futures Matter access system review with our Better Chances Forum community partners, recommending changes to improve the outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.



CEO
Tony Davies



Chair
Pat Grier, AM

As we move into the year ahead we will continue to work with community stakeholders, organisations and government bodies alike to improve our service delivery, enhance the capacity of our sector, drive and advocate for positive change, promote inclusion and increase awareness of the issues impacting our regional communities.

To all our dedicated staff, thank you for your commitment each and every day. We would also like to acknowledge the support of our partners, donors and funders. Your investment in our work directly touches the lives of thousands of Australians and creates real and lasting positive social change in our communities.

Finally thank you to our participants, for giving us the opportunity to share your journey and for the resilience and courage you show.



Reconciliation

Reconciliation is central in our work to achieve positive social change in regional Australia. We believe reconciliation is everyone's business and we are proud of the work our staff do in community to build relationships, strengthen understanding and ensure our services are accessible and respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Reconciliation Action Plan

This year we rolled out our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our focus areas were:

Relationships – we are committed to developing new, and strengthening existing, relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations

Respect – for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, histories and lived experiences is vital

Opportunities – for economic development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is crucial to strengthen our commitment to equal opportunity and workplace diversity

Tracking progress and reporting

Key 2018/19 actions

- recruited Aboriginal identified Learning and Development position and implemented organisation-wide mandatory cultural awareness training
- adopted an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander procurement policy
- implemented our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy

Yarning circles

We introduced regular staff yarning circles, facilitated by local Elders and respected Aboriginal community members to increase our cultural competency. The topics covered a range of subjects from 'Engaging and Working with Community' to 'Culture: Art and Stories'. The yarning circles increased our awareness of and connection with local Aboriginal wisdom and practice.



7%
of our workforce
identify as Aboriginal or
Torres Strait Islander



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and knowledge are important contributors to the future of our organisation. This year, in line with our Reconciliation Action Plan, we implemented an Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy to guide recruitment, employment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all areas of the organisation, including management positions.

The strategy includes professional development and mentoring for staff to cultivate skills, experience and expertise. We are also implementing external supervision specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to provide an additional pathway of culturally sensitive support.

We make use of identified positions throughout the organisation to ensure that our participants receive culturally appropriate support. Through the employment strategy we have incorporated identified traineeship positions into key areas of the organisation. Our first trainee attends a local high school and completed a Certificate II in Business Administration in our People and Culture Team.



Disability and inclusion

NDIS Local Area Coordination

Social Futures is a **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** partner delivering **Local Area Coordination (LAC)** services to nearly 80 per cent of regional NSW directly in Northern, Western and Far West NSW; and through our subcontractors Mid Coast Communities and Intereach, on the Mid North Coast and Murrumbidgee respectively.

Our Local Area Coordinators assist eligible participants to join the NDIS, prepare individual plans and support their implementation. We also work with local communities to improve inclusion of people with disabilities and help them understand how the NDIS is having a positive impact in our communities.

38%
of our NDIS Local Area Coordinators have lived experience of disability or caring for someone with disability

2018-19 LAC snapshot

1,722

first plans submitted



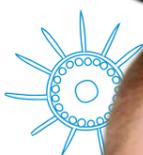
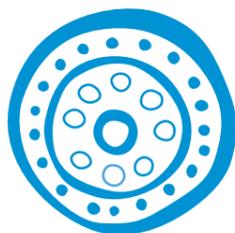
7,029

plans reviewed



12%

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



Linking services

Veronica* and her father Kurt* were forced to move interstate due to traumatic family circumstances.

The process of rebuilding a new life from scratch with limited resources and no community connections proved almost insurmountable.

Veronica loved sport, nature and was a whiz at mathematics but the twelve-year-old's exceptional abilities got lost in her unfamiliar surroundings. While Kurt did everything he could to encourage, provide for and support his daughter, who is neuro-divergent and experiences post traumatic stress disorder, they needed help to find their feet.

After a referral was made to **Ability Links NSW** one of our Far North Coast Linkers Francis began working with Kurt and Veronica around their goals and they benefitted from the breadth of support available through Social Futures programs and services.

Based on the family's needs, Francis worked closely with our **Family Referral Service** and **Connecting Home** program, as well as two wonderful social workers at Centrelink to ensure that basic income and housing support was stabilised. He also referred Veronica to immediate weekly counselling sessions

with a trauma-informed practitioner who introduced her to sand play. The sand play was a game-changer and Veronica's confidence grew, along with her friendships at school.

Francis then helped Veronica apply to join the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and worked closely with Social Futures' **NDIS Local Area Coordinators** to complete her planning process. Given her circumstances, Veronica's NDIS plan was prioritised, funding was secured and Francis was able to introduce Veronica and Kurt to a highly experienced and proactive Support Coordinator.

Over the summer, Kurt secured a job in his passion, custom-building race cars, and enrolled Veronica into Code Camp. She thrived, made friends and designed an interactive game-building app that was voted first place for the Code Camp prize by her classmates. With the assistance of Social Futures and supportive people who understand her and her capabilities, Veronica now has the potential to thrive.

**Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*

Valuing lived experience

Social Futures values the wealth of knowledge and insights that workers and participants with first-hand lived experience of marginalisation and navigating the service system can bring to our organisation.

We developed an innovative best practice framework to safely and effectively use lived experience as a professional asset and this year we were proud to roll out mandatory **Lived Experience training** to all our staff.

We previously shared our expertise with the sector through our innovative Lived Experience online

training package. It has been tailored for workers with a range of lived experience, their colleagues, managers and human resources staff.

“Organisations who value lived experience expertise as a professional asset can recruit and develop their workforce and deliver services in entirely new ways.”

Lived Experience Project Officer, Damien Becker

Leaving a legacy of inclusion

In June 2019 we began transitioning our **Ability Links NSW** services into the work of our **NDIS Local Area Coordination** programs.

The New South Wales Government funded program began winding down after five years linking people living with a disability, their families and carers, to supports and services in their local communities.

Social Futures managed the coordination of the Ability Links program for 80 per cent of regional New South Wales through the innovative North West Alliance consortium - from Broken Hill and Wagga Wagga to Tweed Heads.

From the program's statewide launch in 2014 to its completion in 2019, the **Ability Links NSW North West Alliance** leaves a legacy of positive outcomes for almost 18,000 participants, increasing their personal and social wellbeing, as well as their independence and confidence. The program also helped participants to connect to a passion or to engage with work, education, volunteering or training.

We pay tribute to the important work undertaken by our North West Alliance NSW Ability Links teams. These talented Linker staff provided a unique skillset, working creatively with a person-centered approach to achieve genuine and tangible positive outcomes for both individuals and communities.

We will continue to support people living with disability and build inclusive communities through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building program of our NDIS Local Area Coordination service.

2018-19

Social Futures supported

3,929 Ability Links

participants to meet their goals

through the North West Alliance

2014 to 2019

Social Futures supported

17,920 Ability Links

participants to meet their goals

through the North West Alliance

Integrated regional services

Our program participants benefit from our wrap around service model, breadth of our support capabilities and our strong local community connections.

This year we undertook the **Vulnerable People and Families pilot project** to better integrate our support services for vulnerable individuals, and their families, living with disability. The project was delivered by our **Far North Coast Ability Linkers** and participants were referred both to and from our suite of programs including **Connecting Home, Family Referral Service, and NDIS Local Area Coordination**, as well as other community service organisations.

The model proved successful in significantly improving the participants' housing situations and confidence in accessing community facilities, education and employment opportunities.

Encouraging accessible business

Over the past year our Ability Linkers engaged and educated businesses on the social and economic value of providing inclusive access through the innovative **Access at a Glance project**. The project provides businesses across NSW with a free assessment, on-site accessibility signage, as well as listing via the Everywhere Venues website to give potential customers the information they need.

The project was delivered through our **Ability Links NSW North West Alliance** and will continue through our NDIS Local Area Coordination service.



799

local businesses displaying accessibility information

Families and children

Supporting families

We deliver the **Far North Coast Family Referral Service (FRS)**, part of a state-wide network providing support to children, young people and parents around challenges and demands of everyday family life. We provide intake and outreach services including information, case coordination and referrals to local services from Tweed Heads to Grafton.

This year we established the **FRS in Schools** initiative in our service area. We used our local knowledge and connections to provide tailored services to suit the unique needs of the participants and their families in diverse local school environments.

We also delivered the **Community Services Child Protection Case Worker Pilot Program**, to provide a coordinated response to families and strengthen our team's child safety expertise.

2018-19 FRS snapshot

573
new individuals and families supported



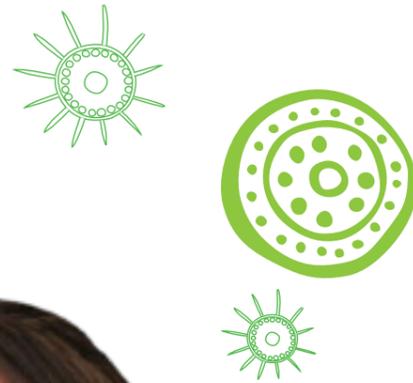
55%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



200
individuals and families experiencing domestic and family violence supported



Image: Stock Library



A positive change

Esme* was shaking when she came into Social Futures Family Referral Service.

The young woman was pregnant and her ex-husband, and father of her four-year-old son, lived locally and had been the perpetrator of domestic violence.

Far North Coast Family Referral Service support worker Helen was concerned, as women are at an increased risk of experiencing domestic violence during pregnancy.

"It was quite a high-risk case. English is not Esme's first language and she didn't understand our system and laws, things like having a safety plan, or even calling triple-zero," Helen said.

She built a relationship of trust with the young mum and helped her to access a wide range of services to ensure her safety and improve her and her children's lives.

She provided comprehensive advocacy and wrap-around service coordination for Esme, including linking Anglicare, police, legal and hospital prenatal supports.

"We had at least two face-to-face visits each week and her feeling safe with me enabled her to engage with the necessary services," Helen said.

"I organised a visit from the NSW Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer to her home to hear directly from Esme about what was going on and supported her through the meeting.

"Esme was very frightened. We worked with the real estate agent to get a safety lock and a peep hole installed.

"We also arranged new safety screens to protect the four-year-old from falling out of a window and we got the air conditioner fixed."

Helen also offered other practical support through the Family Referral Service, like helping to buy a pram, and arranging for the local supermarket to home-deliver fruit and vegetables so Esme didn't have to walk to the shops with two small children every other day.

Helen also checked in with Esme's son's preschool to make sure he was doing ok.

"We hold the children as really central. While all of these things are for mum, a big part of the benefit in the long term is the improved outcomes for the children."

Esme was beaming at her most recent appointment with Helen. Her increased confidence and big smile are testament to the positive change in Esme and her children's lives.

**Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*



Image: Stock Library

Healthy relationships

Elements Youth and Family Relationships Program services the Northern Rivers and provides free counselling for 10-24 year-olds and their parents to build supportive family relationships. We also deliver the **Healthy Relationships program** to schools in the service area. The program challenges young people around gendered violence, sexism, respect and communication.

2018-19 Elements snapshot

266

new individuals and families supported



95%

surveyed learnt new things to achieve their goals



Delivered

277

counselling sessions



24

group work sessions



Healthy Relationship Program to **4** schools



Kids share their journey

Sitting proudly on a shelf in Kyogle Library is a wonderful little book with a beautiful story.

It was created by a local children's group called KidZ Space as part of a self-publishing workshop facilitated by Social Futures **Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind** program, in collaboration with Guggin Guddaba Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Aunty Vera Walker, a local Indigenous Elder who set up and facilitates KidZ Space, explained the group provides a safe place for children to come and get away from other things that may be happening in their lives.

"It's a place where kids can be themselves and have fun together," Aunty Vera said.

Entitled 'Share the Journey', the theme of October's Mental Health Awareness Month, the book reflects the children's exploration of wellbeing.

The book is all about what they love to do together, and what excites and inspires them. It is written in their own words and features their own beautiful illustrations.



Following a number of workshops during the school holidays to develop the book, it was professionally printed. The children and their families gathered at the Kyogle Country Women's Association for the official launch to celebrate their creation. The book was distributed to local schools and libraries so other kids could share the journey too.

Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind (MJKIM) is an early intervention family mental health service, servicing Lismore and Richmond Valley local government areas. We promote wellbeing and resilience in children and young people who are at risk of developing or are showing early symptoms of mental ill health.

This year MJKIM delivered Emotional Resilience Groups in primary schools, providing strategies for teachers to support students to self-regulate.

2018-19 MJKIM snapshot

197

children and young people supported



76

families supported



26%

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



86%

surveyed achieved their goals



Young people

Creative spaces

The **Clubhouse** is a safe, free, after-school drop-in program for young people aged 12-18 located in Lismore. It offers members access to technology and mentors who nurture their creativity and assist them to gain skills and confidence in STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths).

This year The Clubhouse partnered with Rekindling the Spirit's Dream Bigger program to provide a weekly creative space to engage young Aboriginal people through rap, hip hop and music.

In August 2018, two Clubhouse participants got the opportunity to attend the biennial Teen Summit at Boston University in America, a week-long Youth Leadership event that brings young people together from each of the 100 Clubhouses internationally. Youth leaders explore issues relevant to them and propose solutions through the creative use of innovative, high-end technologies. Fleet Partners and Rotary Alstonville assisted Lismore Clubhouse members Elessar and Bella to attend.

“Clubhouse is an amazing place, it has literally changed my life. I can barely remember what I used to do before Clubhouse. I think I just sat at home all day. I’m more productive, motivated and more equipped for the world in general.”

Clubhouse member, Bella.

2018-19 Clubhouse snapshot

103 new young people engaged

1,627 attendances

25% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

38 Life Skills sessions delivered

The **Ballina Youth Support** and **Youth and Community Hub Ballina** services provided support to young people and their families through case management, life skills development, referrals and activities.

2018-19 snapshot Ballina Youth Support

76 families attended youth and family parenting programs

179 families assisted with youth family advice

32% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

88% surveyed achieved their goals

Youth and Community Hub

1,833 referrals, information and assistance provided at the hub

headspace Lismore and Tweed Heads provide early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year-olds and promotes young people's wellbeing.

	Lismore	Tweed Heads
Community events and training	121	45
Young people supported	811	645
Occasions of service	3,177	3,524
New young people	476	383
LGBTIQAP+ young people	25%	21%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people	15%	16%

The Lismore Young Songwriters Competition celebrated 10 years showcasing local talent in 2019.

The annual event coincides with National Youth Week in April each year and is a long standing community-based youth-focused event.

Social Futures youth programs deliver the professional platform for talented regional young people in partnership with The Northern Rivers Conservatorium, Southern Cross University and other community supporters.



Reconnecting

Samantha* dreamed of becoming a flight attendant - travelling the world and meeting lots of people along the way.

With a bit of support from **Reconnect** the friendly teenager is well on her way to doing just that.

Samantha was referred to the service after her mother moved to another town leaving her homeless, couch surfing and starting to disengage from school.

"I was out of home and I had no income. I wasn't even staying with friends, I was just going from place to place," Samantha said.

Reconnect caseworker Shaun helped Samantha get the necessary support to live with a degree of independence.

"He helped me to get my birth certificate, bank account, photo ID and TAFE enrolment. Basically everything I needed," she said.

"We catch up once a week so he can see how I'm going and if I need any help getting a lift to TAFE, getting groceries and stuff."

"I live on the other side of town. Shaun would come and pick me up at 8.30am which was pretty awesome, otherwise I'd end up walking to TAFE and probably wouldn't make it in time."

"Shaun's just been a really big support. I probably wouldn't be at TAFE right now if it wasn't for him."

Samantha recently completed a job preparation course at TAFE and has started studying Individual and Disability Support.

Ultimately she hopes to save up enough money to pay for the flight attendant course.

"I just think it'd be cool to travel and see different places. I want to see everywhere," she said.

"My goal is to own a home by the time I'm 30. Just making sure I have that stability in case I want to start a family."

**Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*

Reconnect assists young people 12-18 who are at risk of homelessness to stabilise their current living situation and improve engagement with their families and services from Grafton to Tweed.

2018-19 Reconnect snapshot

115
young people supported

92%
surveyed improved their situation

94%
surveyed achieved or partially achieved their goals



Local learning

Getting it Together helps people from Grafton to Tweed aged 12-25 find opportunities for positive change in relation to their drug and alcohol use, building self-esteem and improving their life skills through individual and family-focused interventions and group work.

This year we worked to better engage with isolated Aboriginal communities, building our relationships with Elders and community members. We implemented Yarning Circles in collaboration with community members to provide a soft entry into our service and encourage engagement.

2018-19 Getting it Together snapshot

130 young people supported

45% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

92% surveyed improved their situation

94% surveyed achieved or partially achieved their goals

Links to Learning is funded by NSW Department of Education. Group facilitators deliver a program to eight participating schools in Northern NSW. With the aim of engaging young people in ongoing learning by focusing on STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, art and maths) as well as team dynamics and interpersonal skills.

"We identify that there's a need within the group and we target our activities to those needs rather than letting kids slip through the cracks."

Links to Learning Youth Worker, India.

2018-19 Links to Learning snapshot

8 schools engaged

178 young people supported

83% surveyed achieved or partially achieved their goals

Staying on track

Whether fixing bikes, tinkering with cars, or building skateboards, 15-year-old Harry* had a gift for building things and making them work.

Eight months after a referral to the **Youth on Track** program following a few brushes with the law, he was well on the way to making this passion a profession.

Harry began attending regular mental health appointments and went back to school full-time.

With the support of Youth on Track worker Lachlan, he completed a series of courses at TAFE, including automotive, fitness training and skateboard manufacturing and was excited to be exploring his potential.

"I like this kind of thing because it's more hands on. I built a trick board in about two weeks. That was pretty cool," Harry said.

Harry also started attending a learning centre, an alternative to mainstream school which he found suited him better and kept him studying.

He is now about to start a four-year construction apprenticeship that will give him the skills to make a living just about anywhere.

"I'll have work all the time. I'll barely be out of work," he said.

Lachlan supported the budding builder by driving him to various appointments, helping him through the court process, and meeting up for regular check-ins.

"Harry knows he's got someone to rely on and someone who's looking out for him," Lachlan said.

"He knows I've got his back."

**Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*



Youth on Track is an early intervention program for 10-17 year-olds funded by the Department of Communities and Justice that identifies and responds to young people at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. We service Coffs Harbour and Clarence Valley local government areas and referrals are made directly from NSW Education, Juvenile Justice and Police.

This year the Youth on Track team worked with the PCYC to support programs aimed at reconnecting disengaged young people with family, education and employment.

2018-19 Youth on Track snapshot

60 young people supported

58%
Aboriginal or
Torres Strait Islander
participants



97%
participants surveyed learnt
new things that will help them
achieve their goals



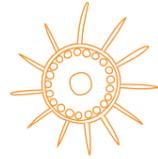
91%
reduced their risk of
reoffending at program
completion



73%
reduced or stabilised
formal contact with police
after 12 months



Health and wellbeing



Celebrating a milestone

Happy birthday to our Lismore based **Choices Reproductive and Sexual Health Clinic** which this year celebrated 40 years providing specialised, inclusive and professional health services to assist young people and adults make positive choices around their reproductive and sexual health.

The service has gone from strength to strength, ensuring good healthcare is accessible for everyone. This year we increased our proportion of new clients from 16 to 27 per cent.

2018-19 Choices snapshot

831 clients

35%

low income or pensioners



100%

participants surveyed reported they were treated with respect

Leading the way after suicide

We deliver **StandBy: Support After Suicide** in the NSW North Coast. The program is recognised as Australia's leading suicide postvention program dedicated to assisting people and communities impacted by suicide. We provide a 24/7 free and confidential coordinated community crisis response service that supports the health and wellbeing of families, friends and associates bereaved by suicide.

As a leader in the field of suicide postvention, we not only worked with individuals but also shared our expertise with the broader sector and our communities. This year we provided:

Support to **172** individuals and families impacted by suicide

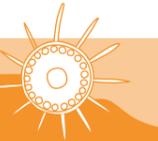
2 First Responder training courses

4 Pathways to Care After Suicide workshops

30 community capacity building projects including workforce awareness and suicide prevention training

Grief is a journey

In the weeks after Hannah's* son suicided she felt 'adrift'.



"I had no concentration and couldn't remember even the simplest of things," Hannah said.

"So many people coming and going before the funeral, and afterwards it was like a switch had been flicked.

"No one came around which was good because I didn't feel the pressure to be around them. It was also no good because I had no one to talk to about him."

Hannah contacted **StandBy: Support After Suicide**, our specialist service providing counselling and support to those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

StandBy Coordinator Rose visited Hannah in her home and maintained contact through the next 12 months with regular phone check-ins and visits.

Rose supported Hannah by providing clarity around the complexities of loss through suicide. She offered information and support about navigating traumatic loss, self-care, help seeking, and connecting back into everyday activities.

"I'm glad I found a service that gave me permission and space to empty out all the stuff in my head and helped me to find a way through my grief," Hannah said.

"I know now how to look after myself. It's all baby steps."

Rose said when she "sits in this space" with the bereaved there's no pushing for an outcome, no judgement about what is shared. Instead, there is an opportunity to speak of the deceased as they lived not as they died.

"Over the months the bereaved will share thoughts, feelings and opinions and quite intimate reflections as they navigate this 'new normal'," Rose said.

"The healing I've witnessed is a person's capacity to develop understanding about this grief in their life, to resume the everyday roles. This was a woman who couldn't imagine any laughter happening again."

As Hannah puts it, "grief is a journey, not a place to stay. I'm on that journey."

**Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*

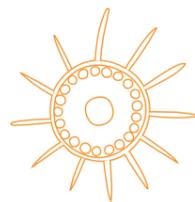
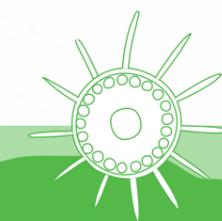


Image: Stock Library

Image: Stock Library



Housing and homelessness



Preventing homelessness

Our **Connecting Home** program supports people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. The program provides case management and support from Tweed to Grafton, assisting people to maintain their tenancies; helping them find new housing; and supporting people with complex needs, longer term.

We also have a specialist Homeless Youth Assistance Program, **Connecting You**, which provides practical and emotional support for 12-15 year-olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It helps them reconnect with family, friends, work, school and the community.

This year we set up offices in some of our more remote service areas in order to better reach young people and improve their outcomes.

2018-19 Connecting You snapshot

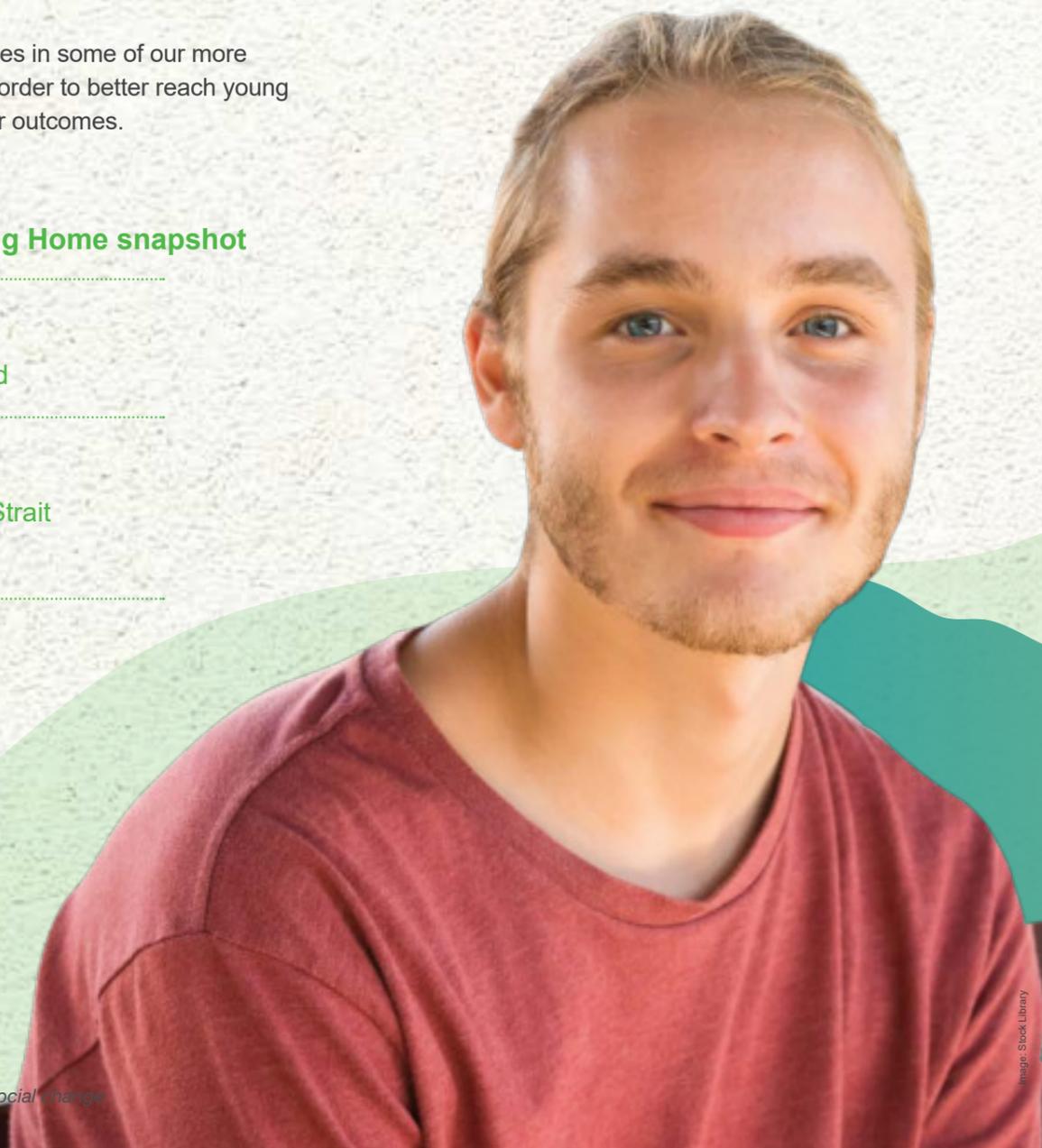
34
new young people (12-15) supported

38%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait
Islander participants

2018-19 Connecting Home snapshot

2,669
new people supported

20%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait
Islander participants



The meaning of home

For 24-year-old Caleb*, finding a permanent home means a lot.

"I became homeless at 13 and have pretty much been that way off and on ever since," Caleb said.

"It would be really nice to be able to just sit comfy somewhere, you know?"

"Plus my girlfriend's due to have a baby soon so it'd be good to have a stable place sorted before then."

With the help of **Connecting Home**, Caleb is on track to find stable, supportive housing for him and his young family.

He is currently living in a studio apartment with his girlfriend and Social Futures' Connecting Home outreach worker Daria is helping him to secure a suitable family home.

"We generally catch up once a week and go through different properties and do all the different kinds of paperwork," Caleb said.

"She helped me get a rental subsidy and priority listing for public housing."

Daria also connected Caleb with Social Futures' **Opportunity Pathways**, a new program that supports people to access education, training and work opportunities with a view to reaching their employment and housing goals.

The program is supporting him to get the training and experience needed to obtain regular work.

"I want to get myself locked into an apprenticeship - carpentry, boiler-maker, diesel mechanic - something like that," he said.

With the help of these supports, and his own determination and hard work, Caleb is feeling much happier and more confident.

"When I look back to where I was a few years ago the difference shines quite bright," he said.

"I'm proud of myself. I'm pretty happy with life. Slow and steady wins the race."

**Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*

A helping hand toward their first lease

Without a rent ledger or real estate reference, young people have the odds stacked against them in securing long-term accommodation. We produced a youth-focused training resource to support an existing Connecting Home Survival Skills program aimed at potential young tenants. On completion of this course real estate agents have tangible evidence that participants are viable potential tenants, with the skills and understanding to manage a rental successfully.

Housing crisis



In the face of a regional housing crisis, Social Futures is actively working towards a Northern Rivers where people have access to appropriate and affordable housing.

Northern Rivers housing snapshot

 **38.6%** of households experience housing stress (compared to 28.4% for NSW)

2nd lowest private rental vacancy rate in NSW

 **18.7%** of the State's rough sleepers but only 4% of the NSW population

This combination of high rents and a critical shortage of available rental accommodation has created severe housing stress among a considerable portion of the community, forcing many into homelessness.

Social Futures convenes the **Northern Rivers Housing Forum**, a group of community and government organisations, academics and community members that identify and highlight housing issues, needs and challenges; and work towards innovative and sustainable approaches to address them. This year we worked with Local Aboriginal Land Councils to build our understanding of regional Aboriginal housing needs. We delivered 24 sector leadership and community engagement activities with almost 350 attendances.

Our **2018 Regional Housing Forum** attracted 120 professionals to discuss solutions and call for more investment in social and affordable housing in our region.

In the lead up to the 2019 state election we supported the delivery of a candidates' forum with Homelessness NSW and the National Council of Social Services, and a letter writing campaign to call for urgent action on the housing and homelessness crisis.

We also lent our voice to the national **Everybody's Home** campaign, calling on the government to take practical action to ensure everybody has a place to call home.

Employment

A new pathway to employment

In June 2019 we launched our new **Opportunity Pathways** program. The program supports people in the Northern Rivers to access education, training and work opportunities to reach their employment and housing goals.

It is designed to break the cycle of disadvantage for social housing recipients and reduce their reliance on government-funded social housing or Rent Choice subsidies.

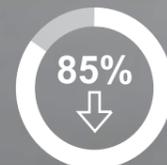
The program offers flexible and tailored support to participants ranging from pre-employment training and help finding a job to ongoing support in their first year of employment. It also supports them to access housing opportunities in the private sector.

Healthy workplaces

Our **Workplace Inclusion Network (WIN)** wrapped up in September 2018 after 18 months, with some great outcomes for both employees and their workplaces.

The program aimed to create a more inclusive culture in Northern Rivers workplaces, supporting people in recovery from – or currently facing – mental health challenges. WIN offered free 'Working It Out' employer training, mentoring for employers, and mentoring and employment support for project participants.

The project resulted in:



85% reduction in hospital admissions for **10** workers saving an estimated **\$355,500** in hospital costs

25 employers completed Inclusive Workplace Training 

97% of surveyed attendees reported increased confidence in dealing with mental health 

Strengthening our communities

Community collaboration

When funding stopped for a youth basketball program, the Clarence Valley community rallied to provide a new program and Social Futures staff from across our services were on the ground to help bring it to life.

Local workers from our **StandBy: Support after Suicide, Reconnect** and **Connecting Home** programs united with other organisations and community members to ensure the young people would continue to have a community basketball program.

Rebound 2460 was born. Auspiced by Ngerrie Local Aboriginal Land Council, it supports Aboriginal young people to enjoy fun, healthy team sport and connection. An artwork painted by one of our talented **Youth on Track** officers was developed into a uniform singlet by our Brand and Engagement Team. Social Futures provides sponsorship to ten players and our dedicated staff continue to volunteer their time each Friday night to show their commitment to young people and their local community.

Domestic and Family Violence

The **Dirty Laundry Day Project** is a Social Futures initiative to shine a light on domestic and family violence. The annual event partners with local businesses, NSW Health, NSW Police and other community organisations in the Northern Rivers to open up dialogue, reduce stigma, empower survivors and ensure our wider community participates in the conversation.

In 2018, businesses once again devoted space in their shop windows to hang posters and t-shirts, bearing messages from people in our communities that have experienced domestic and family violence to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence.

The success of the event in giving survivors a voice and starting difficult conversations will see it rolled out in communities across NSW in 2019.

Regional Transport

Our **Transport Development Project** works to increase access to transport across the Northern Rivers.

Initiatives include managing the local transport website **goingplaces.org.au**, convening **transport working groups** and running transport promotion activities such as **transport information days** and encouraging people to try alternative transport options during **Car Free Feb**.

This year we continued to engage with Aboriginal organisations and communities, identifying opportunities to improve transport access and encouraging community service providers to use the transport information resources we have developed in their work.

We consulted with eight local Aboriginal communities through 47 engagements to identify unmet transport needs. A summary of our draft **Aboriginal Transport Needs report** was presented at a regional meeting in June 2019 with the report to be finalised in the coming months.

goingplaces.org.au

2018-19 snapshot

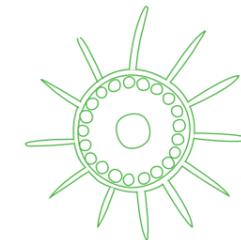
53,011 page views



34,650 individual users



Sector leadership, development and support



Social Futures takes a collaborative approach to sector leadership and actively works to develop the local leadership of communities and organisations that support them.

Professional development and capacity building

We support community services and health sector employees improve services to our community, generate innovation and build capacity. We delivered:

- **dementia care education** including free information sessions to carers of people with dementia and families in locations across the region, in collaboration with Dementia Australia and the Dementia Outreach Service (NSW Health).
- **community aged care sector support**, building capacity to deliver responsive services and develop best practice.
- **families, youth and children sector** professional development, leadership and capacity building through our Better Chances Forum workshops and networking events.

135 workshops and forums delivered



Strengthening our aged care workforce

We deliver the **Community Aged Care Sector Support** program to support the development of the home support service system and assist Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) service providers to operate effectively within the broader aged care system.

As part of the broader program we convene the **Northern Rivers Community of Practice Ageing**, bringing service providers together to build capacity, cohesion and responsiveness in the community aged care system in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

This year we partnered with Real Futures (a majority Aboriginal-owned, controlled and managed Vocational Training and Education Centre), together with Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Sector Support, Mid Coast Communities and Aged and Community Services Australia to deliver aged care workforce

forums aimed at human resource and senior management staff of community aged care service providers in the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast.

The forums aimed to strengthen their aged care workforce strategies through:

- investigating demographics and workforce priorities in our region
- recruiting and retaining quality regional aged care staff, including volunteers
- building skills in the workforce
- exploring how well we currently work alongside Aboriginal communities to offer supportive employment pathways
- understanding how this can improve cultural accessibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Connecting schools to services

We convened two 'speed dating' events for school principals in the Richmond Valley, Lismore and Lennox areas. Principals rotated around regional community service provider stalls who gave five minute introductions to their service and how they might work collaboratively with the school to support students and their families.

The events were delivered as part of **Working Together**, a joint initiative of our **Better Chances Forum** and the NSW Department of Education, which connects school principals and community service providers in the Northern Rivers.

Reducing the rate of out of home care

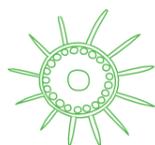
Social Futures convenes the **Better Chances Forum (BCF)** to support better chances for children, young people and their families by working to reduce the number of children and young people entering out of home care in the Northern Rivers region. The forum brings together workers from organisations across the region to:

- explore service system challenges, gaps and opportunities
- identify and share information about best practice and challenges in our services and communities
- consider how BCF members can work better alongside communities

Our **2019 Better Chances Regional Forum: The Right Support. Right Time** attracted 135 participants from community, government and private sector agencies to answer the challenge of how we can offer better chances to children, young people and their families in Northern NSW.

The forum had a strong focus on Aboriginal culture, exploring how our whole sector can work more supportively alongside Aboriginal workers, organisations and communities.

Other themes for the day included connecting across organisations and systems, acting on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and connecting with community in our work.



Supporting Aboriginal family and childhood workers

In 2019 we were proud to deliver the inaugural **Strengthening Day for Aboriginal early childhood and family support workers**, through our **Better Chances Forum**, supported by YWCA and Northcott.

Twenty-eight North Coast workers came together for a day of healing and peer support, acknowledging they are often the first people families seek support from when their children are at risk of removal.

It was also an opportunity for Aboriginal early childhood workers to discuss how the wider sector can work more supportively alongside them. Due to the event's success we have secured additional funding through the Better Chances Forum to host more Strengthening Days.



How we operate

Our achievements over the past year are due to the dedication of our extraordinary, talented, creative and passionate team.

273 Staff 

Organisational excellence

We pride ourselves on creating a culture of excellence, a safe and inclusive workplace which encourages evidence-based services, reflective practice and learning supported by ongoing professional development and training.

Accreditations

- Australian Service Excellence Standards
- headspace Integrated Monitoring Framework – (hIMF) Pilot May 2017
- National Regulatory System for Community Housing Tier 3

2018/19 highlights

- undertook an **organisational review** to identify resourcing priorities and provide new internal support services and systems to ensure we are ready to meet the challenges of the future
- advanced the implementation of our **ICT strategy** and **Digital Transformation Project**
- launched our new **Learning Management System (LMS)** to deliver internal and external training online
- provided **mandatory training** for all staff in our innovative **Lived Experience model**
- developed an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Retention Strategy** including identified positions and traineeships

Finance

We are committed to disciplined financial management to ensure that we deliver consistent high quality services and are prepared to meet changing community and sector needs.

This year we focused on consolidation and strengthening our position after a period of significant growth and expansion.

During the year we created greater efficiencies in the administration of our programs including the introduction of new personnel and learning management systems and a focus on rationalising fleet and office accommodation expenses.

We achieved a positive financial result for the 2018-19 financial year which allowed us to add \$1.135 million to our net equity growing it to \$3.391 million. Our equity position provides coverage for all commitments.

In achieving this outcome, we prioritised stability and sustainability; slowing our growth in turnover has not impacted our strong liquidity position with a 1.54 current ratio.

Social Futures is in a favourable financial position to take on new challenges and opportunities.

Annual turnover



Net equity



Our Board



The Board is responsible for Social Futures' strategic direction including oversight of program and service performance, contractual and financial management.

It includes industry leaders from across health, law, finance, business, banking, journalism, academic research, Indigenous engagement, and marketing.



**Pat Grier, AM
Chair**

Pat has extensive experience in sales, marketing and general management. As CEO of Ramsay Health Care for over 20 years, he grew the organisation to become Australia's largest private hospital operator. He was Chairman of the Private Hospitals Association and received the Member of the Order of Australia in 2010. He has previously been a member and chaired several boards.



**Keith Sloan
Treasurer**

Keith retired as an Associate Professor after more than 20 years with Southern Cross University Business School including a stint as its head. He has more than 40 years' research, consulting and teaching experience in international finance and economics, investment analysis, portfolio management, and corporate finance and over 10 years' board experience.



**Karen Hazan
Deputy Chair**

Karen is a director of Trenches McKenzie Cox Solicitors Lismore. She has experience in all areas of advocacy including family law, employment law, mental health, criminal law, and conveyancing, probate, wills and contested estates. She is an accredited specialist in Family Law. She was previously a board member for Youth Connections North Coast Inc.



**Leanne Coventry
Secretary**

Leanne has worked with Westpac for over 16 years in a variety of roles during which time she has built strong relationships with a number of Aboriginal companies, people and communities. She was awarded one of the bank's Bicentennial Service Honours for her ability to predict her customers' needs and find solutions every time.



Margarita Escartin

Margarita has a background in law including a public funded legal service, private practice and consulting, and she has undertaken pro bono work with Indigenous communities for projects on their traditional lands. More recently, she has worked with stakeholders to develop social and impact investment frameworks and programs.



Orit Ben-Harush

Orit is a researcher at Queensland University of Technology. For almost 25 years she has been researching the social impact of technology, internet, mobile phones and social capital. Her PhD thesis focused on social networks of women. Prior to her academic career she worked in telecommunication companies in several marketing positions.



Kirstie McClean

Kirstie has more than 20 years' experience in marketing. Her career has traversed diverse industries, working with major organisations in Sydney, Brisbane and London; including Fairfax Media, McDonald's Australia, Mercedes Benz UK and Cafédirect. She currently teaches at Southern Cross University and provides marketing consultancy.



Penny Cox

Penny's diverse career has spanned journalism, property management and IT. In her current role as Head of Sales and Account Management for Inlogik, she is a sought-after keynote speaker on improved efficiency and accountability in expense management. Penny brings her experience working with more than 100 not-for-profit clients.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey over the past year.

To our participants, for the opportunity to walk beside you as you take bold steps towards your goals.

To our dedicated staff, for your care, dedication and passion in making Social Futures a regional leader in our sector and a voice for our communities.

To our community supporters, delivery partners and funders, thank you for investing in the important work that we do. Your commitment to Social Futures creates positive change in the lives of our participants and our communities each and every day.

We would like to acknowledge our major donors:

Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand

Splendour in the Grass

Westpac Kingscliff

Cunning Stunts

Woodlawn Parents and Friends Association

As well as all the other organisations, businesses and individuals within our communities who dug deep over the past year. Your generous donations help us deliver this important work in our communities.



ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019

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Join us on



Ballina | Bathurst | Broken Hill | Byron Bay

Casino | Coffs Harbour | Dubbo

Grafton | Kyogle | Lismore

Mullumbimby | Murwillumbah

Orange | Parkes | Tweed Heads

Key funding partners



Australian Government



**NSW
GOVERNMENT**



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.