

Creating brighter tomorrows

Supporting the educational outcomes of young Australians



At The Smith Family, we believe education is a powerful agent for change. We work with children, young people and their families to help them overcome educational inequality caused by poverty.

2021–22 The Smith Family Snapshot



The Smith Family

Learn today, change tomorrow.

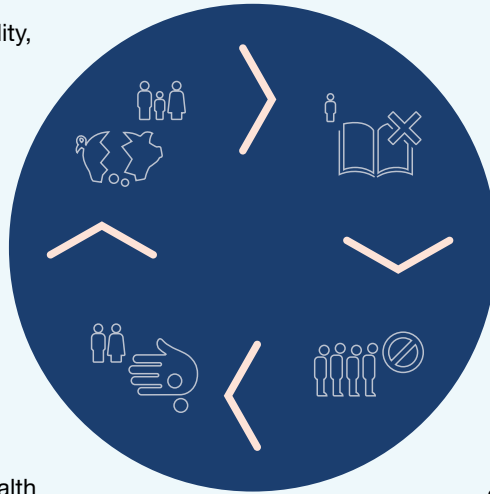
The Problem

1 Family challenges

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

3 Overall life outcomes impacted

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



2 Reduced educational outcomes for children

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

4 Difficulty getting a job

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

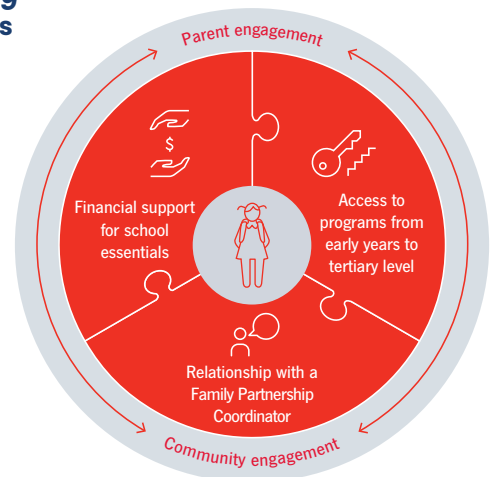
How we help

We provide long-term educational support to children and young people experiencing disadvantage, so they can reach their full potential.

Our flagship education support program *Learning for Life* provides:

- financial assistance to help families pay for school uniforms, books, digital tools and excursions
- support from a Family Partnership Coordinator, who works with the family to collaboratively problem-solve any barriers to education
- access to a suite of short programs to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes and connect students to mentoring opportunities.

How Learning for Life works



Our Five-Year Strategy

Our Five-Year Strategy provides a framework so we can better assist children and families in a rapidly changing world.

OUR AMBITION

Over five years to 2022 we will increase by 30% the number of young Australians reached with our effective, evidence-based programs, enabling them to break the cycle of disadvantage and thrive in the 21st century.

SCALE EFFECTIVELY

Grow our reach by 30% over five years while maintaining the effectiveness of our programs.

INNOVATE

Innovate to enable the children and young people we serve to thrive in a rapidly changing and increasingly challenging environment.

ADVOCATE

Be an authoritative and influential advocate with those who shape public policy on behalf of disadvantaged children and young people.



FUND

Develop a sustainable funding base to fund our scaling up and strategic initiatives.

DATA ENABLE AND DIGITISE

Amplify and accelerate our mission through digital and data.

ENABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE

Be a destination employer in our sector. Ensure systems are scalable and fit for purpose.

We track our results

We track the progress of students receiving *Learning for Life* support against four longer-term outcomes: school attendance; completion of Year 12 or its equivalent; continuation through and

completion of tertiary studies; and post-school engagement in education, training or work. We also assess the short-term outcomes of our programs, as these help to put children on the path to reaching the four longer-term goals.

1 Attendance

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

2 Advancement

Each year of schooling a child completes leads to better overall life outcomes and improves their ability to contribute economically and socially to the community.

3a Tertiary Continuation Rate

Our Tertiary Continuation Rate measures the proportion of first-year *Learning for Life* tertiary students who continue into their second year at university, while still on a scholarship.

Longer-Term Results

Learning for Life students average school attendance in 2021:

86.9%

for students in Years 1–10

88.6% for primary school students

82.9% for secondary school students

82.4% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Learning for Life students who advanced through school from Year 10 to Year 12 or its equivalent by 2021:

68.4%

of *Learning for Life* students in Year 10 in 2019 advanced to Year 12 in 2021.

Over the past nine years, 18,462 *Learning for Life* students across Australia have been supported to complete Year 12.

Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship students continuing from first to second-year study at university in 2021–22:

88.0%

(93.7% in 2020–21)

Short-Term Results

Improved numeracy

Improved literacy

Increased academic engagement and achievement

Increased self-management and confidence

Program Results

Let's Count

94%

of early-years professionals felt that they had increased confidence in engaging with parents/carers about their children's mathematical development.

Let's Read

86%

of parents agreed that they now have more ideas about how to read, talk and sing with their child to enhance early literacy.

student2student

95%

of students improved their reading. 84% of students agreed that participating in *student2student* made it easier to do their schoolwork.

Passport to Success

82%

of students stated *Passport to Success* helped them learn skills that would assist them in high school. 78% of students increased their knowledge and understanding of high school.

This is the second year our Tertiary Completion Rate has been calculated. Data reported here is the proportion of students who were on a *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship for the first time in 2018 and completed a qualification by the end of 2021.

3b Tertiary Completion Rate

Our Tertiary Completion Rate measures the proportion of students who complete a qualification in four years.

Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship students who competed a qualification by 2021:

48%

of students who commenced a *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship by 2018 completed a qualification by the end of 2021.

A further 23% of the 2018 cohort are still studying.

This rate, along with continued longitudinal analysis of *Learning for Life* attendance and Year 12 completion rates, is contributing to the ongoing refinement of our program and informing the Australian educational evidence base.

4 Engagement Rate

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

Learning for Life students engaged in post-school education, training or employment:

84.2%

or five in six students who were in Year 12 in 2020 were involved in education, work and/or training approximately 18 months after leaving school.

Enhanced networks and relationships

Improved knowledge and understanding of study options and career paths

Improved knowledge and understanding of financial management

iTrack

79%

reported that participating in *iTrack* improved their knowledge of post-school options and career pathways. 75% reported their mentor increased their aspirations to go onto further education.

Certificate 1 Financial Services

89%

of participants attained the Certificate 1 qualification. 88% reported saving on a regular basis since completing the program.

Saver Plus

87%

of participants were saving the same amount or more three to seven years after completing the program.

Early years

On starting school, one in three children in Australia’s most disadvantaged communities are developmentally vulnerable in at least one key area. In the least disadvantaged communities, this figure is just 15%.¹

HOW WE HELP

Our early numeracy and literacy programs help educators and community professionals support parents and children in the pre-school years.

In 2021–22, we continued to improve our *Let’s Count* program to make it appropriate for all cultural backgrounds. Working in partnership with

the Stronger Smarter Institute and Peridot Education, we trialled our revised *Let’s Count* learning materials in November 2021, with positive results.

We also reviewed *Let’s Count* facilitators’ professional learning materials. With funding from the Ian Potter Foundation, our aim was to embed First Nations’ knowledge into our program to ensure its cultural appropriateness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and that that knowledge is used in children’s early learning. We have now included cultural proficiency professional learning resources developed by the Stronger Smarter Institute with our materials.

This year, we also started a review of Australia’s early years literacy landscape to help understand how we can improve the delivery model for our *Let’s Read* program. This included speaking with a cross-section of *Learning for Life* families, subject matter experts and early-years professionals.

Our research highlighted several potential opportunities that we will continue to explore in 2022–23 to ensure that the program is aligned with contemporary evidence and meets the needs of the communities we support.

In June, we were pleased to hear that access to quality play-based learning for all four-year-olds will soon get easier in NSW and Victoria as a pre-kindergarten year of education is introduced in both states.

Universal access to pre-school is something we continue to advocate strongly for. Affordable early education provides a range of beneficial outcomes for all children but especially children experiencing disadvantage. It helps them develop vital skills, putting them on a more equal footing with their peers when they start school. We raised this issue with several federal and state government departments after the release of our *Small Steps, Big Futures: Community Insights Into Preschool Participation* report in 2021.

63,983

children aged under five participating in early-years programs

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Child and Parent Centres*
- *Communities for Children Facilitating Partner initiative*
- *Let’s Count*
- *Let’s Read*

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Children start school ready to learn
- Parents and community workers have skills and resources to support the early development of children’s language, literacy and numeracy abilities

¹ Australian Government, *Australian Early Development Census National Report 2021: Early Childhood Development in Australia*, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Canberra, 2022.

Primary years

Only 57% of Year 5 students whose parents have not completed Year 12 exceeded the national minimum numeracy standard for their year level. Among Year 5 students whose parents have a university degree, this figure is 94%.¹

HOW WE HELP

Primary years are essential for acquiring the fundamental skills that support long-term educational success. For children living with disadvantage, it's particularly important to establish strong patterns of attendance and engagement from the start.

64,551

students participating in programs

Our *Learning for Life* sponsorships begin when a student starts school. Financial assistance from sponsors helps families pay for school essentials so children can participate in everything school has to offer.

Our Family Partnership Coordinators work with the family to understand the specific needs of each child and facilitate their access to relevant supports, including learning and mentoring programs that help students build skills.

Lack of digital resources and internet access continued to be a significant barrier to education for many families. In 2021–22, we provided 2,058 Digital Inclusion Packs to families, each with a laptop, internet access and technical support.

Our major partner, Optus, also continued its Donate Your Data™ program encouraging its customers to donate their excess mobile data to *Learning for Life* students. The initiative

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Catch-Up Learning*
- *Communities for Children*
- *Future Seekers*
- *Kidpreneur*
- *Learning Clubs*
- *On PAR*
- *Passport to Success*
- *student2student*

helped provide more than 14,000 primary school-aged students with internet access to support their learning and homework. Around 22,300 students were provided with access overall.

In 2021–22, with the generous support of a private donor and the Paul Ramsay Foundation, we continued our *On PAR* pilot program. This place-based, early intervention program aims to improve the educational outcomes of primary school students with complex compounding needs by providing case management support and tailored resources.

According to the Drawing the Future report², children's perceptions about jobs and careers are formed and sometimes cemented at a young age. To help children broaden their aspirations, we continued to run our Future Seekers program with nearly 700 Year 5 students. The program helped them to develop skills relevant to the world of work, like communication, collaboration and critical thinking.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Children enhance their literacy and numeracy skills
- Primary school students start to think positively about the future world of work
- More children get access to online resources and opportunities

1 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2021, ACARA, Sydney, 2021 <<https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2021-naplan-national-report.pdf>>.
2 Chambers N, Kashfepakdel E, Rehill J and Percy C, Drawing the Future, Education and Employers, 2018, accessed 5 October 2022 <<https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DrawingTheFuture.pdf>>.

Secondary years

At age 15, students from the least advantaged backgrounds performed nearly three years behind their peers from the most advantaged backgrounds in their reading literacy and numeracy skills.¹

HOW WE HELP

In the secondary years, our aim is to help *Learning for Life* students stay engaged in their education so they can complete Year 12 and go on to further studies or find meaningful employment. We also connect students to opportunities and programs that increase their awareness of career options and how to access them.

We continued delivering our Growing Careers Project, funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, to provide more than 76,000 opportunities for secondary students to participate in careers programs and activities over four years.

This year we worked in close collaboration with 59 schools nationwide to provide more than 12,900 opportunities for students to participate in a range of career-related activities, including skills and talent identification, activities to improve job-readiness and job-seeking skills, and one-on-one career mentoring.

COVID-19 restrictions meant we had to deliver our *Work Inspiration* program online this year. This initiative helps businesses showcase their work, meet future talent, and support their local communities. The usual two- to three-day program with worksite visits,

was replaced by a virtual program in 2021–22, but still gave *Learning for Life* students first-hand, meaningful exposure to the world of work. By the end of the year, 825 students had participated.

Our three-year Pathways, Engagement and Transitions (PET) study, funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation, focuses on young people experiencing disadvantage and aims to understand their pathways through work and study over time, the factors that influence these pathways, and what more could be done to strengthen young people's post-school outcomes. This year we continued to collect data on two cohorts of young people experiencing disadvantage. These young people were in Year 10 or Year 12 in late 2020 and *Learning for Life* program participants. We are releasing a series of reports on findings from the study in the coming year.

56,713
students participating
in programs

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Career Coaching*
- *Catch-Up Learning*
- *Girls at the Centre*
- *Indigenous Youth Leadership Program*
- *iTrack*
- Learning Clubs
- *SmArts, including Bella Momentum*
- *Work Inspiration*

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Secondary students improve their literacy and numeracy skills
- Students learn about available career options and pathways to further study
- Students improve their knowledge and understanding of financial management

1 Thomson S, De Bortoli L, Underwood C, and Schmid M, *PISA 2018: reporting Australia's results. Volume 1 Student Performance*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 2019, accessed 5 October 2022 <<https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=ozpisa>>.

Post-school years

49% of 24-year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are not fully engaged in work or study, compared to 18% of those from the most advantaged backgrounds.¹

HOW WE HELP

Our *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship program helps students to continue their studies at university or TAFE. Students receive financial support as well as specialised help tackling other obstacles to their tertiary education.

Our national team of Tertiary Coordinators plays an important role in assisting our students to remain engaged with their studies. This includes offering additional resources and programs designed to help them take their first steps into the workforce.

64,551

students participating in programs

In 2021–22, we collaborated with Deloitte Australia and a team of third-year students from the University of Melbourne (HACE Consultants) to undertake preliminary scoping and analysis for a comprehensive review of our work in the higher education sector.

As has been widely reported, the sector has changed considerably in recent years, not least because of the challenges arising from the pandemic. During this period, we have been pleased to continue working closely with our higher education partners to support students living with disadvantage. We are grateful for their help in enabling *Learning for Life* students to pursue their chosen post-school pathway.

To ensure that our programs are meeting student needs, we also surveyed a group of participating students and employers to understand their experience of the *Cadetship to Career* initiative. The feedback will

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Cadetship to Career*
- *Care2Achieve*
- *Job Read-e*
- *Learning for Life Tertiary Scholarship*

inform a review of the program in 2022–23 and will eventually allow us to refine and enhance the program to ensure its continued success.

Meanwhile, new supporters Align me, BOQ, ENGIE and SCA Property Group joined our existing supporters – Accenture, AECOM, ANZ, BASF, BCG, Cochlear, Jemena, Macquarie, MinterEllison, Pearson, Position Partners, Programmed and Woodside, who together hosted 43 Tertiary Scholarship students with paid work placements. Many of these were provided over the summer break, however employers were also flexible in their offering to ensure the placements aligned well with the study obligations of our students.

Our *Job Read-e* app continued to help young people to develop their skills in seeking and applying for work. It directs students through a series of job-seeking activities with personalised feedback provided by a careers advisor.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Students stay engaged with their studies and attain a qualification
- Students benefit from supportive networks and relationships in their post-school years
- Students develop the skills they need to succeed in the job market

¹ Lamb, S, Huo, S, Walstab, A, Maire, Q, Doecke, E, Jackson, J and Endekov, Z (2020), *Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out*, Melbourne: Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University for the Mitchell Institute.

Parents and carers

Parental engagement in a child's learning is a bigger predictor of academic performance than a family's socioeconomic status. Regardless of background, students with engaged parents are more likely to do well at school, graduate from Year 12 and go on to higher education.¹

HOW WE HELP

Our Family Partnership Coordinators work closely with parents and carers to overcome the barriers to education that their children face. We also work in partnership with families to support and enhance their capacity to work towards their goals and help their child achieve improved educational outcomes.

27,443
parents, carers and
other adults participating
in programs

These relationships enable coordinators to identify issues and opportunities as they arise, and to support families at key points in a child's education journey. Our Family Practice Framework uses a series of evidence-based tools designed to help families to respond more effectively to any complexity or uncertainties in their lives. The transitions from primary school to high school and from Year 10 to Year 11 are particularly critical and can involve our coordinators linking families to transition support and activities.

This year, we implemented a continuous quality improvement plan to track the implementation of the Family Practice Framework. We are now working on measuring the impact of the Framework which will include launching a new Family Impact Measure in 2022–23. This will assess the confidence of *Learning for Life* families in addressing issues that arise in their child's education,

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Child and Parent Centres*
- *Communities for Children*
- *Engaging Parents and Community*
- *Let's Count*
- *Let's Read*
- *Saver Plus*

their connection to their school, and knowledge of and access to support services.

We also continued to expand the features and capabilities of the My Smith Family portal, focusing on helping *Learning for Life* families engage with us and provide feedback. New features include options for providing feedback and virtual workshop activities. As a result of these innovations, we received more than 700 pieces of general feedback from families and Tertiary Scholarship students about their *Learning for Life* experience and more than 600 parents and carers participated in virtual workshop activities.

A highlight of the year was working with ANZ and the Brotherhood of St Laurence to revamp the Saver Plus financial literacy program to deliver it virtually and improve accessibility for participants.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Families feel more confident to support their children's learning
- Parents and carers benefit from helpful networks and relationships
- Families develop practical financial management skills and knowledge

¹ Thomson S, De Bortoli L, Underwood C, and Schmid M, *PISA 2018: reporting Australia's results. Volume 1 Student Performance*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 2019, accessed 5 October 2022 <<https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=ozpisa>>.

Working with the community

A child's local community, cultural events, services and their accessibility, reinforce a sense of belonging and wellbeing for a child and their family. Families and kinship members have primary influence on their children's health, learning and development, shaping each child's sense of belonging, being and becoming. Access to a network of quality community services and programs that support children's health learning and development are fundamental to positive outcomes for children.

20,490

participants supported through community programs funded by governments

HOW WE HELP

Factors like the availability of support networks and services play a major role in determining educational outcomes for children and young people. To help parents and carers access needed support services, we strive to build strong relationships between families and community organisations.

That's why we help families navigate service systems more easily and build closer community ties through the *Communities for Children Facilitating Partner* initiative. In nine *Communities for Children Facilitating Partner* sites, we facilitate a community-based approach to program development that involves listening to families, establishing strengths-based partnerships with local service providers, and collaborating with local schools, businesses and government agencies. This helps ensure the voices of children and families inform every

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Child and Parent Centres*
- *Communities for Children*
- *Engaging Parents and Community*
- *Let's Count*
- *Let's Read*

aspect of program planning, design and implementation.

This year across our nine *Communities for Children* sites, we worked with local service providers, children and parents to agree the provision of a range of supportive services and undertook the process of providing funds for service providers to deliver agreed services.

In Western Australia, *Child and Parent Centres* play a key role in working with families, local schools and the community to ensure the programs, services and supports families need most in the area are easy for them to access and use.

By training educators and other community workers to present our early-years programs such as *Let's Count* and *Let's Read*, we help parents and carers develop their children's early numeracy and literacy skills.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Improved collaboration and integration between community service providers
- Families can access community resources with confidence
- Communities across sectors partner to produce better outcomes for local children

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

While the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students at or above national minimum standards in numeracy has improved over the past decade, about one in four of these children in years 5, 7 and 9, and one in five in Year 3, remain below the national minimum standards.¹

HOW WE HELP

We are committed to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families to help close the gap in educational outcomes. This includes building cultural competence within our organisation and providing culturally safe spaces for the families we support.

20,015
program participants
who identify as Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
people

We are guided by our 2021–2024 Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), our fourth RAP. Developed in consultation with our Advisory Group on Issues Concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, our RAP sets out a framework for the actions we will take to build strong and trusting relationships, champion ongoing respect and understanding between cultures, and create opportunities through our actions.

We continued to work on integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge into our programs. This includes partnering with Peridot Education and the Stronger Smarter Institute to embed First Nations knowledge in our *Let's Count* program.

This year our team members engaged in a range of cultural learning initiatives, including taking part in a quiz during National Reconciliation Week; a screening of the film, *Off Country*, followed by a Q and A; and exploring

HIGHLIGHT PROGRAMS

- *Communities for Children*
- *Engaging Parents and Community*
- *Girls at the Centre*
- *Indigenous Youth Leadership Program*

The Australian Centre for Social Innovation's Seven Threads framework.

We participated in several external forums to learn more about how other organisations are meeting their RAP commitments, and we facilitated a *Be Brave. Make Change Through Reconciliation* webinar for our corporate partners and their teams.

Our *Engaging Parents and Community* program in Morwell and Darwin continues to collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their parents, leveraging broader school and community networks to support positive engagement with learning.

We also supported 271 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students to attend high-achieving academic schools through our *Indigenous Youth Leadership* Program, with funding from the Australian Government's National Indigenous Australians Agency.

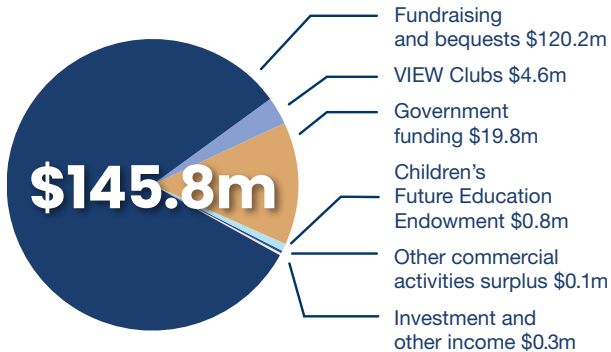
PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Students of all ages improve their confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding
- Students stay motivated to attend school and complete Year 12
- School leavers engage in further study, training or work

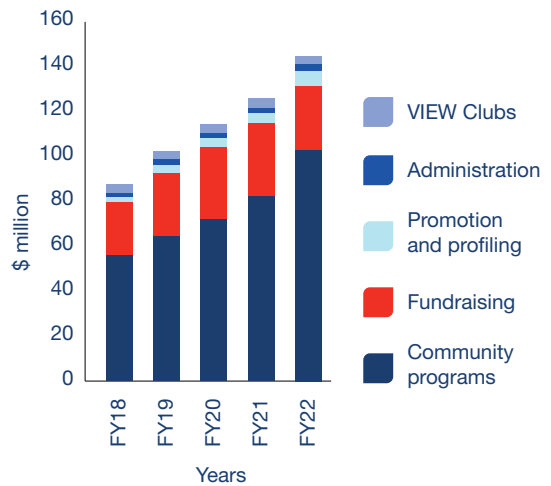
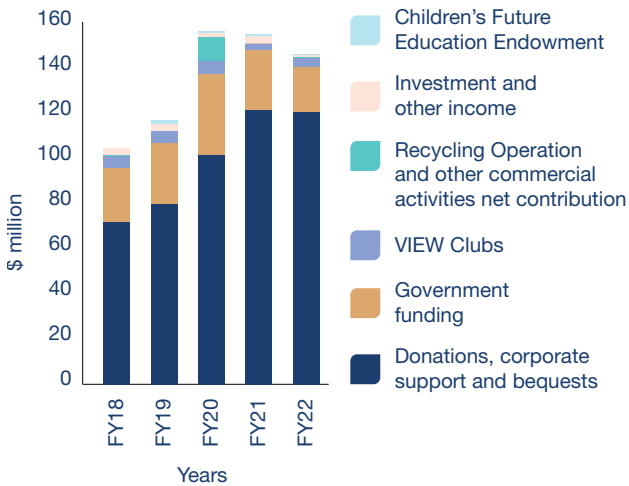
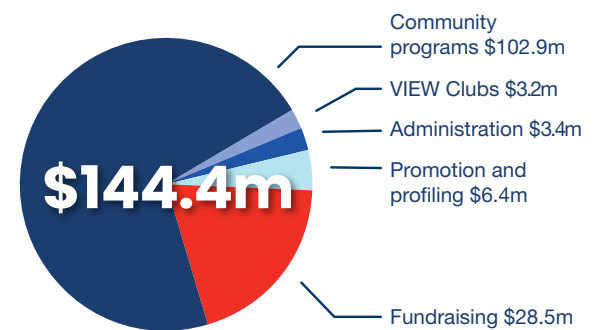
¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2021*, ACARA, Sydney, 2021.

Financial summary 2021–22

Where we obtained our financial resources

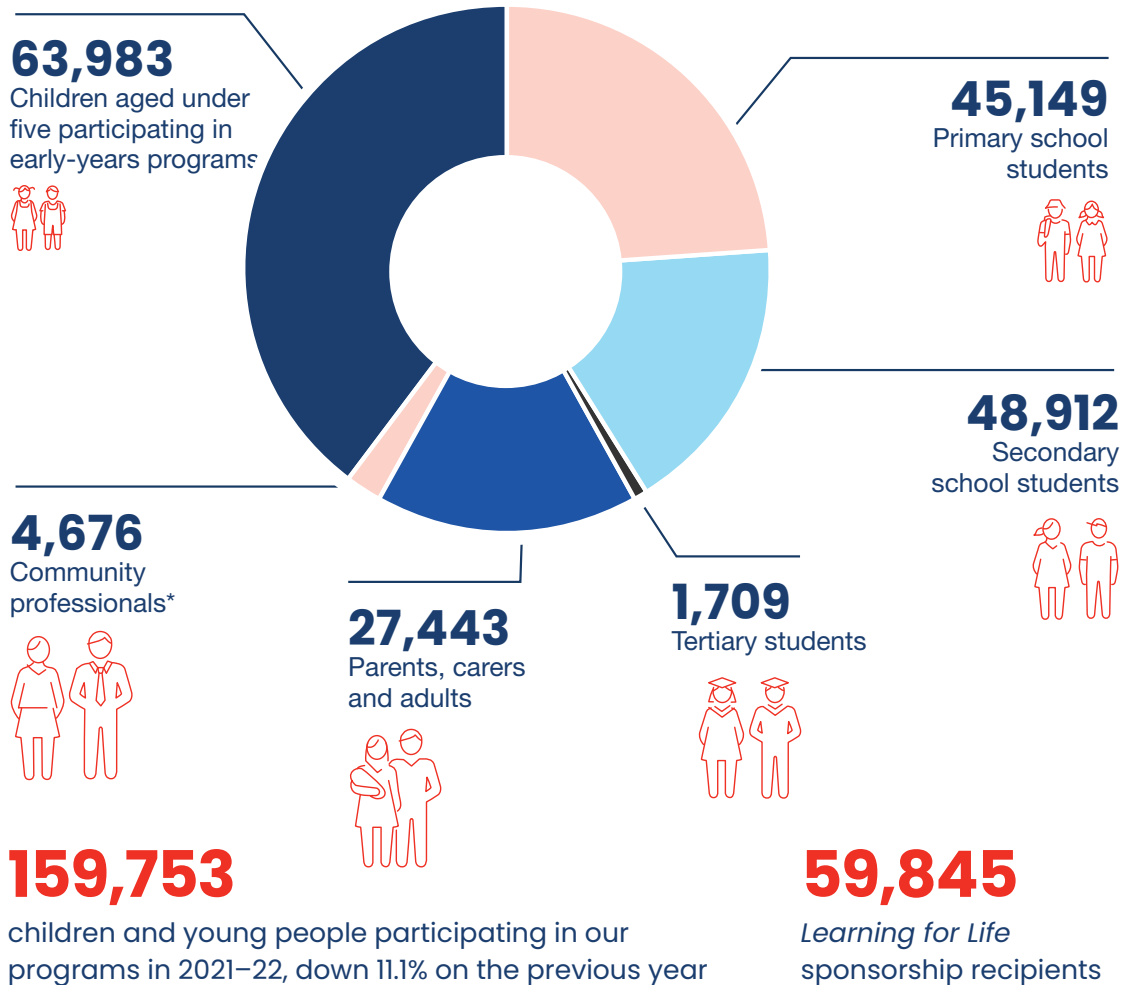


How we applied our financial resources



191,872 Participants

The Smith Family reached 191,872 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals in 2021–22, down 13% on the previous year.



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

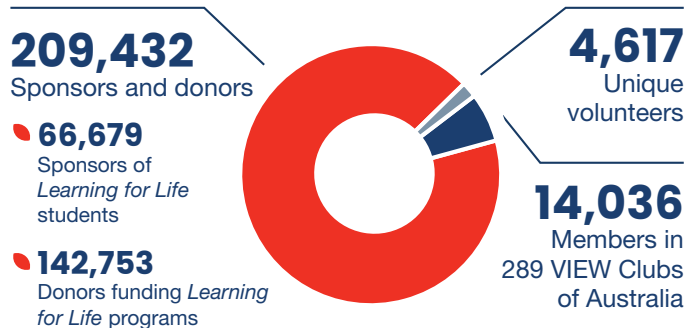
91 Communities

in which *Learning for Life* programs are delivered.



228,085 Supporters

Down from 231,587 supporters last year – a 1.5% decrease



Learning for Life participation

22.2%

of sponsored students (13,304) in 2021–22 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We partnered with

764

schools attended by *Learning for Life* students

271

Partner organisations

87 Corporate partners
170 Trusts and Foundations
14 Universities or other tertiary institutions

Celebrating 100 years of The Smith Family

2022 marked The Smith Family's 100th year of working alongside families to improve the lives of Australian children living in poverty.

The story began on Christmas Eve in 1922, when five businessmen banded together to deliver gifts to children in a Sydney orphanage. They then went on to establish The Smith Family to provide welfare assistance to children and families in need.

Since the 80s, the organisation has evolved into what it is today – a charity dedicated to providing educational support to children experiencing disadvantage, so they can create better futures for themselves. The organisation has grown and evolved into what it is now: a charity uniquely dedicated to helping children experiencing disadvantage create better futures for themselves by supporting their education.

Centenary celebrations kicked off in December 2021, coinciding with our annual Christmas toy and book

distribution to families, a tradition with direct links back to 1922.

In a special film to mark our history, students, alumni, families and longstanding team members and volunteers shared how The Smith Family has been a much-valued part of their lives.

We also launched a centenary website to document our history. This includes a timeline of key events from the past 100 years, a social history of the organisation written by sociologist and historian Tanya Bretherton, and films and stories that bring our work to life.

We were thrilled to welcome journalist and author Wendy Harmer as our first Centenary Champion, working with our longstanding Ambassador, Channel 10 television presenter and journalist Sarah Harris, to promote and celebrate The Smith Family throughout the year. In April, Channel 9 presenter and journalist, Brooke Boney was announced as our second Centenary Champion.

In February, our Patron, the Governor General, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), hosted a reception at Admiralty House in Sydney to celebrate our centenary with students, families, volunteers, donors, VIEW Club members, supporters and other partners.

In June we marked the 'Now' phase of our centenary with a film highlighting The Smith Family's work today. We heard from five outstanding young students – Alliance, Susu, Quinny, Bobby and Seynab – all excellent role models and living proof of how education can open new opportunities.

We will continue to acknowledge our staff and all our supporters for their commitment to the education of young Australians and their families, as we head towards December 2022 when our commemorations conclude. Working with you, we are proud to have made a world of difference to thousands of children across Australia. Thank you all.





Bradley

“He’s much more confident and interactive now.”

Building a love of learning

“*Learning for Life* has been fantastic for Bradley. He’s doing a lot better at school this year and he’s a lot happier.

It was Bradley’s Year 5 teacher who got us involved with *Learning for Life* last year. The funds helped me pay for fees and new school shoes. It helped me buy him a new jumper and pants for the winter, which was good.

Bradley also wanted to play football this year, and the funds helped me pay for his boots. I couldn’t have afforded for him to play football without that support.

Playing football has been great for Bradley. It’s been good for him socially and it’s improved his physical health. He’s much more confident and interactive now.

Being able to give those opportunities means a lot to me because I never had any of those sorts of things when I was growing up. I never got new uniforms and I was never allowed to play sports and things like that because it was too expensive for my family.

Through The Smith Family, Bradley has also had the chance to get involved with the *student2student* reading program.

It’s really improved his confidence with his reading, and he’s definitely much more interested in books now.

I feel more confident Bradley will do well when he starts high school next year, thanks to the support that he’s had from The Smith Family. I’m very grateful for the help.”

Danielle, parent of *Learning for Life* student, Bradley



Kristie

Making a positive difference for the future

“Two of my children are in the *Learning for Life* program. When I first spoke to The Smith Family, I broke down crying just hearing the support that my daughter was going to get. About eight months later, my son was also sponsored.

I’m a single mum. I’ve suffered a lot of trauma. I live in emergency housing. Two years ago, I was couch surfing with my six-year-old daughter. I think many families have found themselves like this, due to COVID. For the first time, I had to buy my daughter birthday presents, shoes, clothes, everything from Vinnies.

That was very emotional. I’d always been able to manage. But when you hit rock bottom, you’re lucky to even provide for yourself. When The Smith Family stepped in, the relief I felt was unbelievable. It felt like bricks were just lifted off my shoulders.

A teacher told me about The Smith Family because she noticed I was struggling so much with getting my daughter to school, buying uniforms and paying for excursions.

The money helps with clothing my children. Making sure my son has

got a comfortable uniform, decent shoes, socks that aren’t strangling his feet. It gets him pens, pencils, anything extra that he wants to take to school that’ll help him focus. I can also get at least two to three tutoring sessions.

I don’t know if our sponsor knows how much of a difference he has made in my life, and my daughter’s life. A complete stranger is helping change my children’s lives.”

Kristie, *Learning for Life* mum



Kim

“Without Saver Plus or The Smith Family, it would have been a lot harder.”

Building a safety net

“We are drought farmers. We had insurance for our farm but our insurer didn’t pay up. Six years ago, we decided to get out. We owed half a million dollars through loans. Farming is intertwined in my life. My husband is a born-and-bred farmer. Losing our farm was devastating.

My son, Doug, is in Year 5 and my daughter, Zoe, is in Year 3. When Zoe was getting ready to start school, Leanne (from The Smith Family) first told me about *Saver Plus**. Then the guilt started to set in. It was nearly six months before I decided to ring her.

Saver Plus showed me a lot of new things and ways to save. I learnt about catalogues and the second-hand uniform site on Facebook. There were four mums there, talking about our different situations and sharing great ideas.

We had to save \$50 a month, or \$12.50 a week. Because money wasn’t coming in regularly (from farm work), we couldn’t put the money away regularly. We started collecting cans and recycling them (to get cash). Then if we had to top the savings up, we put in cash.

It was nearly four years ago, but we’ve still got the account and still try to save. I think there’s \$2,200 in it. We’ve used it to buy a computer. It’s now our safety buffer.

Without *Saver Plus* or The Smith Family, it would have been a lot harder. We would have had to miss out on more. If I hadn’t called Leanne, I don’t think I would have faced our situation.”

Kim, *Learning for Life* parent and *Saver Plus* participant

**Saver Plus* is an initiative of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and ANZ. It is funded by ANZ and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



Kylie

“I just want my boys to have the best education they can possibly have and succeed in life.”

Support to succeed

“My sons, Max (Year 5) and Jacob (Year 3), both have sponsorships with The Smith Family, which is fantastic. It pays for some of their schooling needs and things like school bags and shoes when they’ve got holes. It helps because it means we can put other money away so we can do other things.

Max enjoys the Learning Club through The Smith Family, which is Tuesday afternoons after school. Last year, he did the *student2student* reading program. The extra support has helped Max a great deal. Both boys had

speech delays. I think with reading, that’s where they have struggled a little bit, so the support helps. I think Max would cope, but he might also struggle just that tiny little bit to keep up.

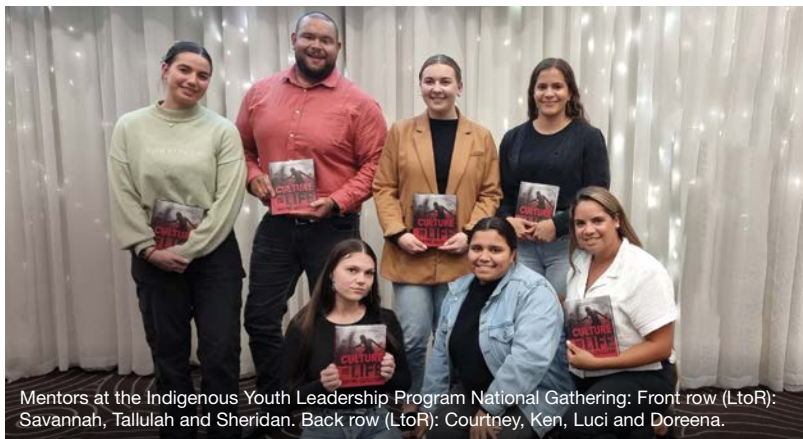
Last year, Max was struggling with being at home and doing remote learning. When he was offline, he’d get upset. The *student2student* program got him through because his buddy was really supportive.

I did The Smith Family’s *Let’s Count* program. It was an eye-opener. It helped me because

maths has changed since we all went to school. When the boys come home with maths homework, it’s easy to help because I know all the basics now, and how they’re being taught.

I enjoyed school, but I had two years in high school where I was bullied because I had a lisp and wore glasses. I know that still happens now. I just want my boys to have the best education they can possibly have and succeed in life.”

Kylie, parent of children supported by *Learning for Life*



Mentors at the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program National Gathering: Front row (LtoR): Savannah, Tallulah and Sheridan. Back row (LtoR): Courtney, Ken, Luci and Doreena.



Lucy, student participant in the *Indigenous Youth Leadership Program*

Developing our young leaders

The *Indigenous Youth Leadership Program* (IYLP) recognises the strong links between higher levels of education and improved employment, income and health outcomes.

The program aims to keep young people engaged in learning by providing positive educational experiences, opportunities to grow life skills and access to role models. Each year the program supports around 250 students.

Lucy was one of 70 Year 9 and 10 students from around the country to meet at the IYLP's annual National Gathering this year, and take part in a range of educational workshops, networking activities and cultural experiences led by Smith Family representatives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders.

The students also had the chance to meet mentors who helped them develop their life skills,

with a particular focus on working together with communities, schools and government.

Lucy was 12 years old when she became involved in The Smith Family's *Indigenous Youth Leadership Program*. Originally from the town of Bourke in north-western NSW, the proud Wiradjuri Year 10 student is currently attending a high-performing school in Sydney until the completion of Year 12.

"I really enjoyed getting to know all the other IYLP students from around the country and sharing our experiences on the program," said Lucy.

"I learned a lot hearing from my peers during the forum on the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which encouraged us to voice our opinions and perspectives on what the statement means to us.

"The workshop also taught me a lot about my culture and heritage,

and what it means to be a future leader.

"I feel very lucky to be a part of IYLP and have so many opportunities presented to me now and into my future."

The Smith Family's National Manager Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, Leanne Smith, said it was wonderful to finally unite these bright students after two years of cancellations due to COVID.

"It is heart-warming to see how much of a transformation the students make in just four days," said Leanne.

"Over the course of the workshops, you could really see their confidence grow and close connections being formed. By the end, the students leave as stronger young leaders within their communities."



Evenezer

A chance to shine at university

"I'm the first in my family to finish high school and the first to go to university. I wouldn't have achieved that without The Smith Family's support.

I came to Australia in 2011 with my mother and younger sister. We're refugees, originally from Eritrea in East Africa.

We connected with The Smith Family soon after we arrived. Since then, I've always taken every opportunity I could get involved in. I've loved every little thing I've done with them.

When I finished high school, we moved interstate. My mum was

working seven days a week just to buy food and clothes, pay the bills and save for a house.

The Tertiary Scholarship was a godsend. It helped me cover the cost of things like textbooks and public transport when money was pretty tight.

I'm now in my last year of study, completing a Bachelor of Business Management and Innovation with Accounting. I hope to work in a futuristic industry, working towards a net-zero carbon footprint in energy or electric vehicles. I'm looking for a sales or marketing job or graduate program.

The Smith Family helped me organise a cadetship with a renewable energy start-up. It's been a great experience.

My dream is to start my own business that doesn't just make money, but also helps people. I couldn't be more thankful for The Smith Family and my sponsor for helping me to get where I am today and giving me the chance to make my dream a reality."

Evenezer, *Learning for Life* Tertiary Scholarship student



Maddie

Gaining confidence and courage

“I know that I’ve benefited as much as I possibly could from The Smith Family. They’ve helped me financially. They’ve helped me as a person.

I started on the *Learning for Life* program in Year 8. At the time, it was just mum and I, and my older siblings. Having that financial sponsorship helped mum pay for books, uniforms and excursions, especially with three other kids.

Last year in Year 12, I was quite proud to be our Student Council President, which was really amazing. Without The Smith Family, there’s no way I would have had the confidence to go for that type of thing. All the workshops that

I did, like joining the circus for a few days, or the drama workshops, all of those really helped me to find my own personality and find my voice.

The free phone data from The Smith Family was amazing in Year 12 when I wasn’t going into school because of COVID. I used my phone to hotspot to my laptop so I didn’t have to work off my home wi-fi. Or if I was on a long drive, I’d bring my laptop and hotspot it. The data was essential for me being able to work wherever I could.

During school, knowing there were people out there wanting to help me be better gave me more motivation to make them proud.

It wasn’t just my mum who wanted me to succeed; it was a whole other team of people, most of whom hadn’t even met me, but wanted me to succeed.”

Maddie, *Learning for Life* alumni

“I know that I’ve benefited as much as I possibly could from The Smith Family.”

"I didn't realise how many opportunities were out there that I can take."

Talon, *Growing Careers Project student*

"Knowing I've helped someone change their attitude towards reading and made a difference in their life makes me feel very proud. It's such a blessing."

Jeremy, *student2student volunteer*

"Having these kinds of programs that are reaching out, where people can feel not ashamed to come forward and say, 'okay, I do need help'. They are so important."


Jacqui, *Learning for Life parent*

"The Smith Family has always been by my side ever since I was a little kid in primary school. The long-term support has definitely had a massive positive impact on my life and my family."

Ahmad, *Learning for Life student*

GPO Box 10500
Sydney NSW 2001
T Freecall: 1300 326 459
E tsfmktg@thesmithfamily.com.au

 TheSmithFamilyAustralia

 SmithFamily_org

 thesmithfamilyaus

thesmithfamily.com.au



 **The Smith Family**
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