

Annual Report 2023



Building
Brighter Futures
for 100 Years

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Our Aim

We aim to assist young Australians without life's necessities overcome barriers to their education and reach their full potential. Since our beginnings 100 years ago, we have helped over 7,000 young Australians aged 4-24 access an education equal to their peers and achieve brighter futures.



Message from Our President and Chief Executive Officer

We are delighted to present *A Start in Life's* Annual Report, reflecting on our accomplishments, progress, and the impact we have made in the past year. It is with immense pride and gratitude that we share the remarkable work our organisation has undertaken to support children without all of life's necessities as they seek a brighter future.

Over the past year, *A Start in Life* continued to expand its reach and deepen its impact. Through our dedicated team, committed volunteers, and generous supporters, we have successfully provided crucial educational resources and opportunities to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them to overcome barriers and unlock their potential.

Since our charity's beginnings 100 years ago in 1923, our core focus has been to address educational inequalities and facilitate equal access to quality education. Through partnerships with some wonderful student support officers in schools, we have been able to implement a range of programs and initiatives designed to bridge the educational gap. From providing scholarships, educational necessities and tutoring support, to establishing educational goals and facilitating extracurricular activities, we have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of education in the lives of these children.

In the past year, we introduced our new Career and Skills Development Scholarship, initially targeted at Year 9 students. Our efforts have been met with resounding success, as evidenced by the numerous stories of achievements and positive outcomes achieved by the students. We are proud of the triumphs of these bright young minds, who have defied odds and are well on their way to realising their potential.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support and generosity of our supporters and partners. Your contributions have fuelled our operations, allowing us to make a significant difference in the lives of countless children. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to each and every one of you for your belief in our cause and your commitment to creating a more equitable, educated society.

As we celebrate our centenary and look ahead to the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to increasing our impact. We will continue to innovate, collaborate, and adapt to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve. Our vision, where a greater number of children have an equal chance at success, drives us. We invite you, if you haven't joined us already, to help us in achieving this goal.

In closing, we express our deepest gratitude to our small dedicated team, supporters, volunteers and partners for their unwavering commitment and passion. Together, we will continue to assist future generations of students by providing them with the tools they need to thrive and succeed.



Executive Committee Meetings 2022 - 2023			
Executive Committee Member	Meetings Held	Meetings Attended	Year Appointed
Allan Elliott	6	6	2006
Dale Thomas-Berrier	6	4	2007
John Carroll	6	4	2009
Jeannine Walsh OAM	6	5	2012
Joseph Hansell	6	5	2013
Neil Robinson	6	6	2013
Richard Winckles	6	6	2018
Anne Ellison	6	5	2018

Our Student Support and Career Coaching Team

Our Student Support and Career Coaching Team are dedicated to helping students without life's necessities maximise their education and livelihoods. The students come from all walks of life with varied needs, barriers and desires. From primary school children through to tertiary students, the assistance we provide each student is tailored. It involves addressing immediate needs including school and university fees, internet access, tuition, school excursions and work placements. Our support also fosters long-term development, introduces effective study techniques, fosters engagement with education, builds support networks and facilitates self-discovery of values, interests and skills. We also conduct regular check-ins with all students, which allow us to hear how they are achieving or working towards their goals, ensure barriers continue to be overcome, foster strong connections and witness the remarkable progress they are making. Through our support, each student can access their full potential

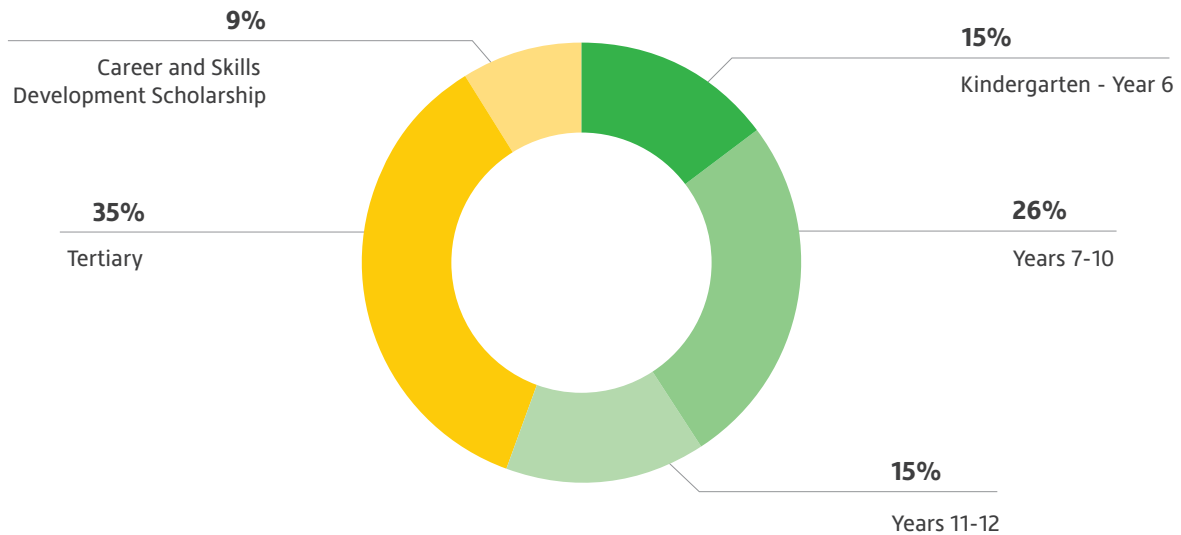
academically and emotionally, and can then apply these throughout their future careers and livelihoods.

This year, we continued to finesse and refine our programs of support to adapt to changing educational needs. Two focus areas were assisting students with study techniques and time management skills, and encouraging parents' involvement in this. We had many other highlights this year too, including the launch of our Career and Skills Development Scholarship (read more about our Scholarship on pages 7 and 8!). Anthony Siokos, one of our dedicated team members, also leveraged his extensive football connections and arranged for Western Sydney Wanderers FC players to generously run a program for students at the William Rose School for sensory and special education. Students, parents and teachers now excitedly wait for each Tuesday, their Sports Day!

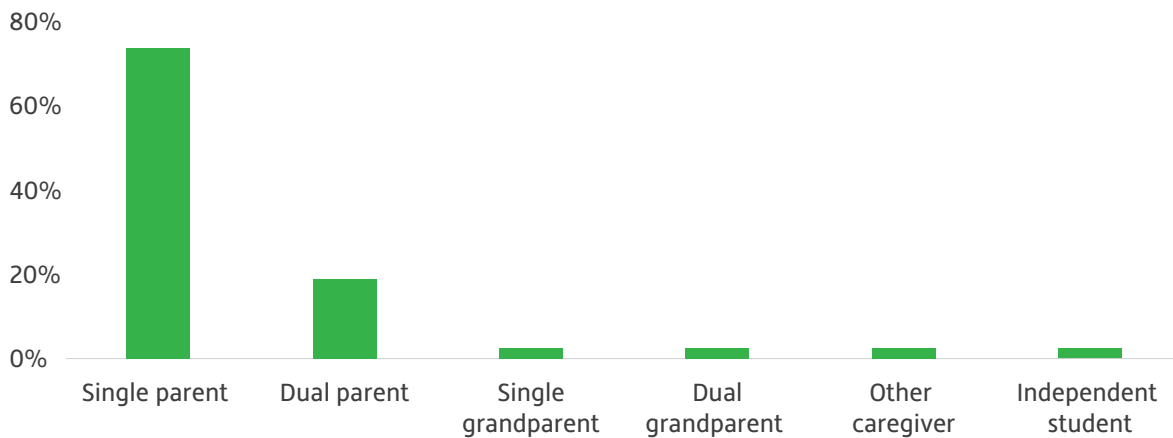


A snapshot of the students we support

Students by Cohort



Students and their Family Arrangement



We support students from



57 schools



12 tertiary institutions



Students we support are located in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland



69% students are from city areas



31% are from country areas

Career and Skills Development Scholarship

An exciting development this year has been the launch of our Career and Skills Development Scholarship.

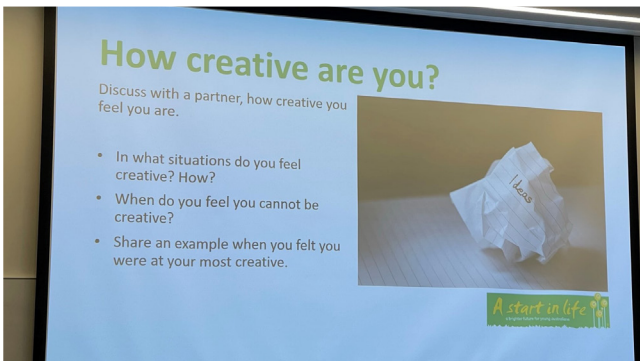
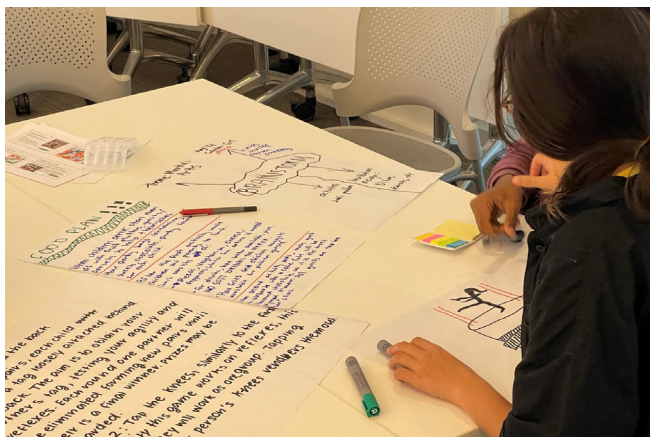
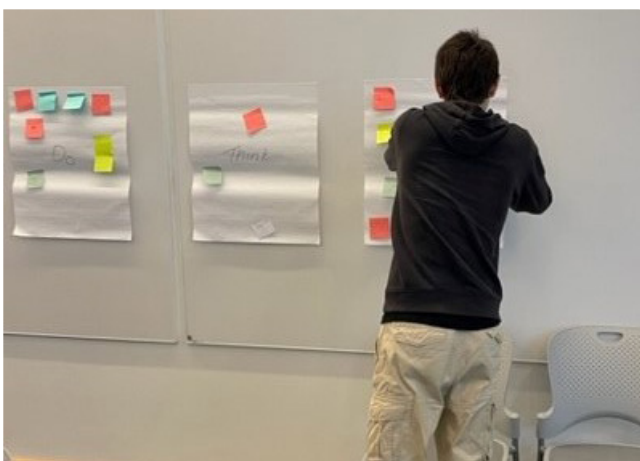
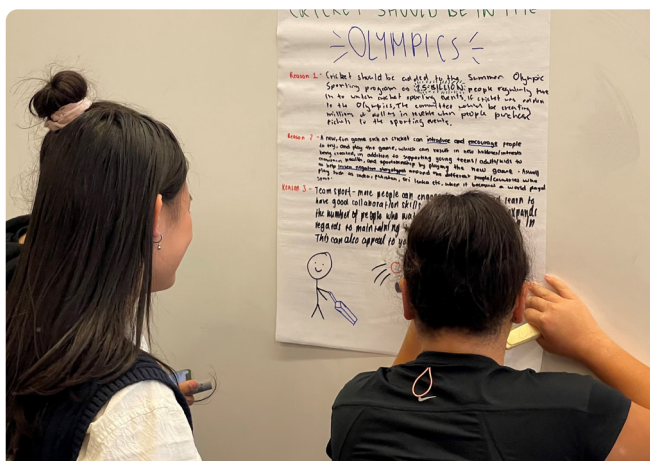
Although students learn a lot in school, it can't cover everything. Schools teach vital academic knowledge, but often can't focus on all the skills that modern employers want. Additional time, assistance and resources are needed to teach students these skills, help them discover career options and enhance their career prospects. That is why we developed the Career and Skills Development Scholarship, which equips students with the 21st Century skills needed for modern careers and broadens their career horizons. It launched in April 2023, with a small number of Year 9 students from a diversity of schools

taking part in the pilot year of what is planned to be a four year Scholarship. The Scholarship is offered to students who face financial hardships, yet are aspirational and show high potential. One feature of our Scholarship is workshops which train students in crucial 21st Century skills vital to modern careers. During these workshops, students not only learn skills, but trial using them across various activities – from role plays to group discussions to problem solving tasks. A handful of these workshops have been delivered to date and students are already demonstrating higher levels of self-awareness, stepping outside their comfort zones, reflecting on their current strengths and exploring opportunities for growth. Read the table below to learn more about some of our workshops!

21st Century Skill Taught	Workshop Focus Area - Highlights	Student Feedback
Collaboration	Discovered the importance and value of collaborating in both face-to-face and online environments – from job interviews to working from home Came to understand the benefits of agreeing on expectations of a group before collaborating Worked in teams to explore potential blocks and solutions in common collaborative settings – e.g. school group assignments	<i>"I learnt about how important collaboration truly is, as it can be found almost anywhere."</i> – Nellie
Creativity	Looked beyond common perceptions of creativity to discover it exists in all fields – e.g. innovation and the generation of ideas in science and engineering Explored transferrable creativity skills across various professions – e.g. nurse, labourer, retail assistant Put creativity in action by creating a work brief for a party planning company	<i>"I believe after really deconstructing creativity, what it means and how to apply it... regarding a future work place, I am able to initiate these skills."</i> – Vee
Flexibility and Adaptability	Learnt how being flexible and adaptable help build career resilience Had an open discussion about how core attitudes and behaviours impact flexibility and adaptability Brainstormed challenging workplace situations and how to respond in flexible and adaptive ways – e.g. learning a new software system and managing changing expectations from bosses Learnt how to pause, reflect and evaluate before responding in different situations	<i>"[I learnt] the difference between flexibility and adaptability, and how to apply both in many situations, such as a group project."</i> – Veeran
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Learnt the 5 step problem solving processes Worked in pairs to apply both critical thinking and problem solving to specific school and work situations – e.g. an unsupportive manager in a new casual job Discussed various workplace problems that may require critical thinking or problem solving – e.g. research roles, differing opinions amongst colleagues, delegating work	<i>"I learnt how to solve certain situations whether from school, work or home, in a way that is rational and benefits all parties."</i> – Briana
Upcoming 21st Century skills workshops include Information and Digital Literacy, Social and Cross Cultural Skills, and Leadership.		

Our Scholarship also includes:

- Regular one-on-one meetings with a trained Career Coach
- Development of a personalised Career Action Plan
- Assistance in discovering how personal strengths and values may relate to future careers
- Opportunities to explore possible careers through interactions with industry professionals
- Study skills training
- Access to job preparation tools and resources



Career and Skills Development Scholarship students at work

Primary and Secondary Students

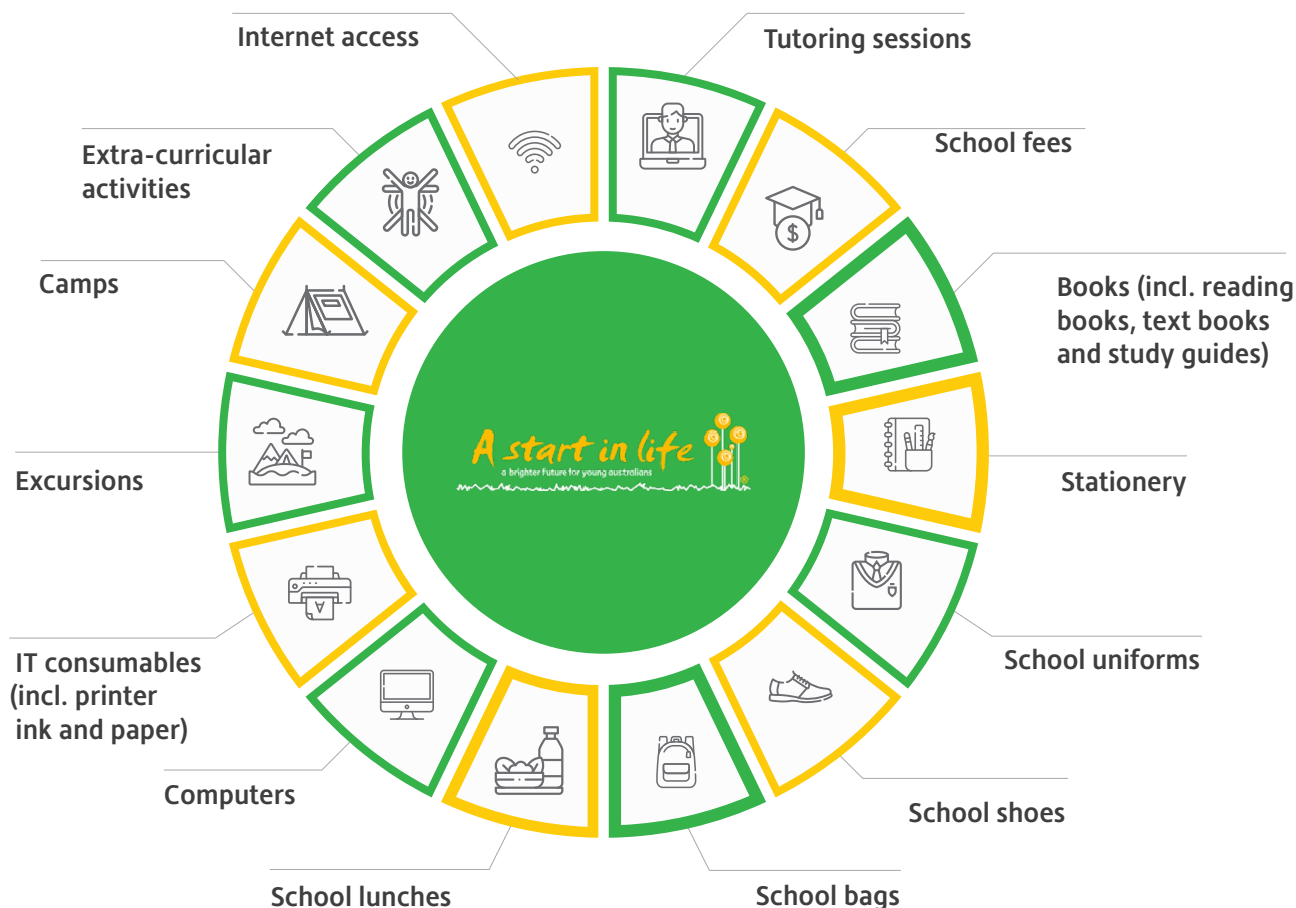
Our primary and secondary students continued to impress us with their determination, growth and capabilities this year. To facilitate their development we help formulate goals with students focussed not only on academic pursuits, but also on their personal and social development. This is also conducive of lifelong learning and produces many long term benefits. Their goals are understandably unique and so too are the outcomes achieved, as shown below.

Student	Goal	Achievements
Lex – Year 7	Continue to develop spelling strategies and grammar skills with your tutor	- Lex’s weekly tutoring sessions have boosted his confidence and pushed him to tackle more challenging work - His grammar improved through a daily writing practice as encouraged by his mother - Lex’s tutor has observed his commitment in every lesson, where he explores various types of texts, writes creative stories, and practices his spelling - He achieved a C in English, participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge, and was a finalist in his school’s public speaking competition - Lex most significant accomplishment, says Lex’s tutor, is the improvement in Lex’s “motivation and love for learning”
Mon – Year 5	Revise Maths concepts related to working with money, multiplication and division	- Mon actively practices multiplication and division through singing songs with her mum and using the Maths learning aids we provided - She achieved a C in Maths, showcasing proficiency in decimals, multiplication techniques, and problem solving with large numbers - Mon is gaining more experience with money and even recently purchased a puppy with her own pocket money!
Bel – Agricultural College	Successfully complete Certificate III at TAFE by gaining competency in all units	- Through hard work, Bel successfully completed her Certificate III. She has since been offered fully funded work experience with Taronga Zoo Training Institute! - She completed a leatherwork course related to her Certificate III, including making a horse bridle - Bel deepened her knowledge and confidence across various subjects, such as animal reproduction - Bel implemented a study routine to ensure she completed all required tasks and readings

●● It has been wonderful to see Lex’s progress both academically and socially. It has been an honour to be given the opportunity to mentor Lex and I am so proud of all his achievements since childhood to now becoming a young independent man. The future is bright for Lex and through hard work, resilience and confidence, I am sure he will continue to achieve great things now and in the future. ●●

– Lex’s tutor

Another key component of the assistance we provide primary and secondary students is the provision of various items crucial to each student's education. Each student is supplied with a combination of items unique to their circumstances, needs and goals. Items we fund include:



Highlights from our primary and secondary students over the past year



12% all students participated in **leadership and representative roles** – including school captain and vice-captain, prefect, SRC representative, Arts captain, public speaking finalist, Senior Ultimate Frisbee Championships, Open Netball Knockout and Chess Grand Prix



11%– average increase in **attendance rates** of all primary and secondary students



63% improvement in **literacy grades** – experienced by a Year 3 student



10% improvement in **parental engagement** – enjoyed by a Year 4 student



Year 5 – 15% increase in **self-efficacy**



A Year 6 student – 30% improvement in **overall grades** and 20% improvement in **classroom effort**



Year 7 – highest increase in **educational progress** with a 14% improvement



Year 8 – 50% of students experienced an average mark of **70% or higher in English**



Year 9 – improved their **literacy grades** by 39% and **numeracy grades** by 14%



Year 10 – more than doubled their **participation in school activities**



Year 11 – 27% upswing in overall grades for **elective subjects**



Year 12 – 18% upswing in their **confidence to learn**

●● Jasper surprises me with his wealth of knowledge, which helps me understand how much he focuses on the topics he enjoys. He is friendly towards his peers and will help where he can. He engages the class with his knowledge and artistry. Awesome work, Jasper! Keep it up! ●●

– Jasper's teacher (Year 3)

●● Evan is a delight to be around. During our first session, he was listening to what I was saying and he likes to pitch in his ideas. With these positive attributes, we'll be able to improve his results in both English and Maths. ●●

– Evan's tutor (Year 7)



Tertiary Students

We work closely with our tertiary students, ensuring they have the necessary resources, support and skills to excel academically and in their future careers. We are delighted to see their hard work has paid off, with **46% improving their WAM** (Weighted Average Mark) and **42% completing a double degree**. Our financial aid covers diverse expenses such as tuition, technology, learning aids, accommodation and transport. Additionally, regular check-ins allow us to understand their academic progress, identify challenges, help them explore interests, discuss academic and career goals, and ensure effective support.

Our support has significantly impacted these students' lives and academic progression. For instance, our funding helped a Global Studies student secure a valuable work placement and broaden her career possibilities, while an Engineering/Commerce student could afford to buy printed circuit boards for his Advanced Bionics Unit, and a Law/Advanced Arts student could afford accommodation as she had to relocate for her studies. Hear from our beneficiaries below.

Reina

Reina (Bachelor of Medical Science and Business) began receiving our support in 2022. She's the primary carer for her younger sister and incapacitated mother. Since receiving our assistance, her WAM has improved by over 15% and she's experienced a newfound confidence. This support has enriched her career progression and networking skills, leading to an internship at a medical biotech company which may result in a fulltime job upon graduation!

- With the generous support, I have been able to work towards goals outside of the academic scope and catalyse my journey of self-development... *A Start in Life's* continuous academic assistance has allowed me to delve deeper into my potential career progression and the differing pathways to success. ●●

Simon

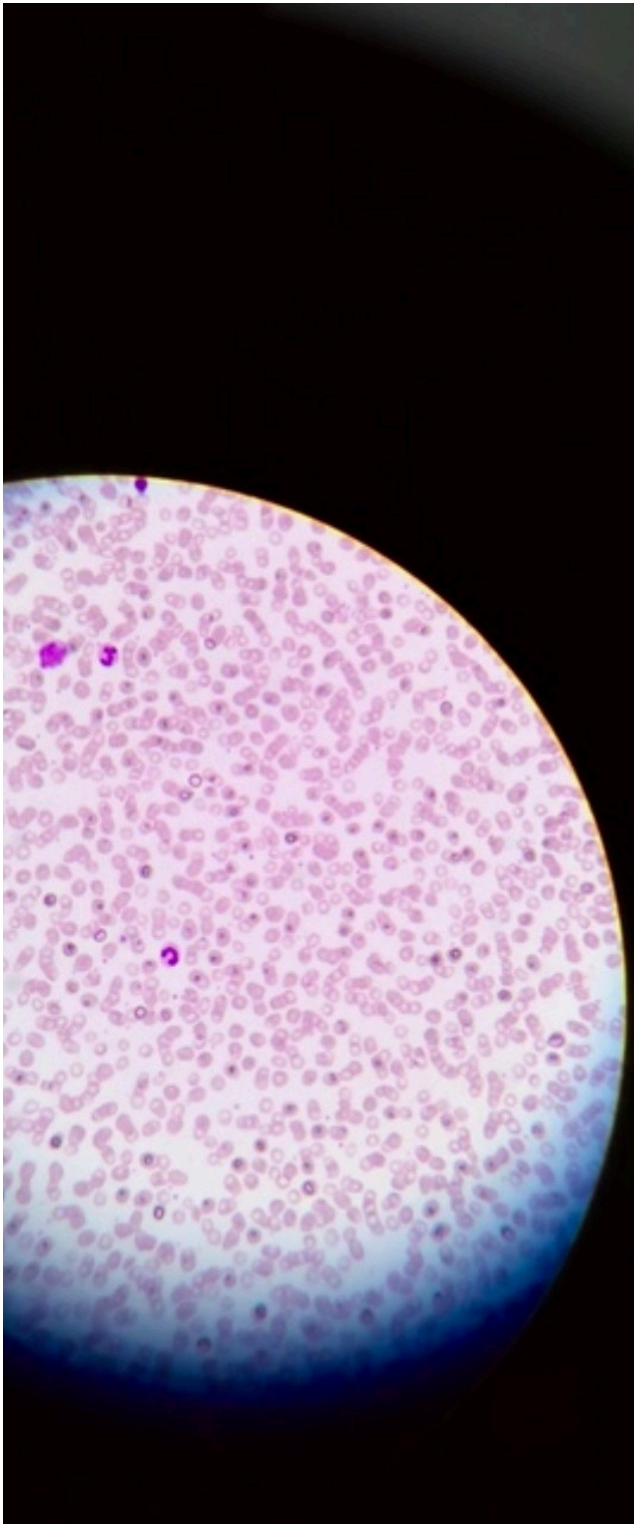
Simon (Engineering Honours and Science) began receiving support in during the second year of his degree. Previously, he had limited access to necessary resources which caused academic setbacks. Our support helped him afford vital items for his degree, relieving his stress and promoting academic growth.

- The financial assistance provided has been truly transformative for my academic and career experience...The support provided me with a new laptop that was tailored and met the demands of my university course, this directly enhanced my learning process. This assistance has not only facilitated my academic progress but also mitigated my emotional stress, allowing me to approach my career development with a more balanced and determined mindset. ●●

Nala

Nala (Certificate III in Agriculture) started receiving our assistance in early 2023. Amid her parents' divorce and unemployment, our aid alleviated financial stress and helped her feel more supported. With our help, she's gained confidence and an exclusive job at a local farm, where she's learning and gaining new insights in an excellent environment.

- I have been able to afford purchases such as a good quality hi-vis raincoat, prescription sunglasses, work shirts and even cover my signup fee for the Farm Work Dogs training course which I was lucky enough to receive a place in... It has been such a huge relief knowing that I am backed financially and the assistance has honestly made such a difference to my study experience. ●●



A microscopic image of Reina's medical lab work



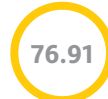
Nala feeding a calf as part of her Certificate III in Agriculture

Highlights from our tertiary students over the past year

251 were studied by university and TAFE students – from 'Fundamental Concepts in Food and Nutrition' to 'Educational Thought' and 'Fix and Secure Electrotechnology Equipment'. Only 6 of these subjects were failed.



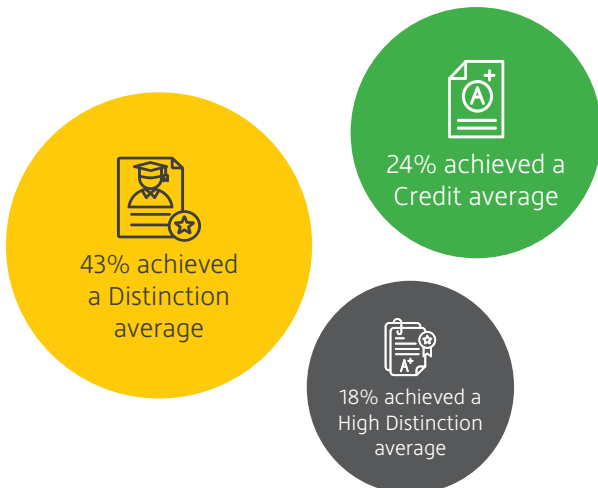
100% of TAFE students studied achieved 'Competent' (the highest grade)



76.91 – the average Weighted Average Mark (WAM)



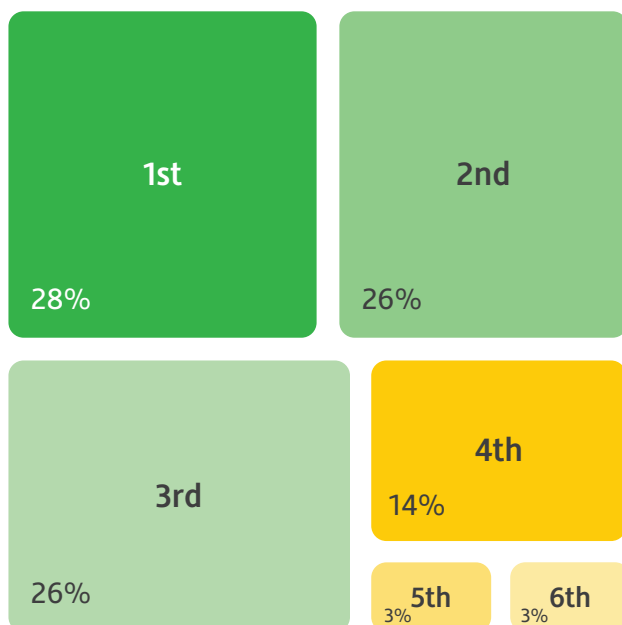
82% of our 2022 first year students continued to be supported in 2023



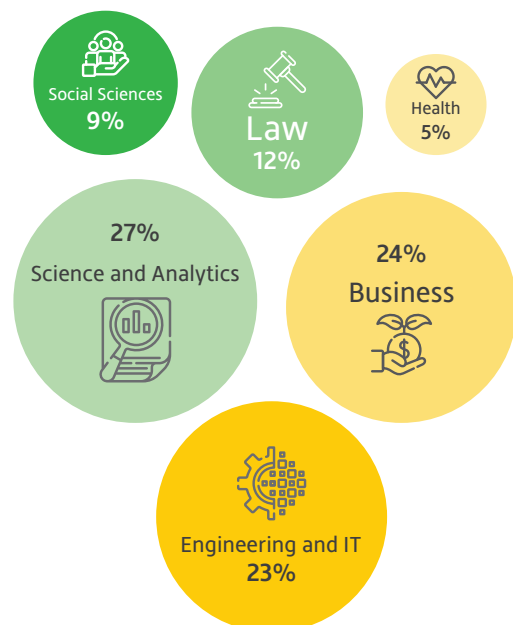
Will's unwavering enthusiasm and eagerness to embrace his unpaid placement are a testament to his dedication and desire to gain valuable experience

– Will's university teacher commenting on his Engineering Vacation Research Internship, which focuses on disease detection and classification

Tertiary Students per Year Group



Tertiary Students per Field of Study



Our Thanks to All Supporters

We are deeply grateful to every single donor and supporter who has helped us assist students without life's necessities. Your contributions, regardless of their size, have created a meaningful difference. Whether you are an organisation or an individual, a regular contributor or a one-time donor, providing financial support or advocating for our community,

every form of support is invaluable to us. The \$20 notes that are sent to us and the heartfelt bequests we receive inspire us. As we reflect on our proud 100 year history, enjoy our present and look towards our future, we express our sincerest gratitude. Thank you for standing by us and being so dedicated.

You can continue to help the students in our program through the various ways of supporting *A Start in Life*:

- **Make a one off or regular donation** via our website www.astartinlife.org.au or by phoning 02 9264 3017
- **Create a legacy and leave a gift in your Will** by naming *A Start in Life* as a beneficiary
- **Set up workplace giving** with your employer, which allows you to donate to *A Start in Life* from your pre-tax income
- **Give a donation as a gift** on someone's behalf, from birthdays to weddings to in-memoriam gifts and beyond
- **Host a fundraising event** such as a local barbeque or walk-a-thon
- **Become a local advocate** by spreading awareness about *A Start in Life* amongst your community
- **Become a corporate partner or foundation sponsor** by emailing communications@astartinlife.org.au or phone 02 9264 3017

To learn more, scan the QR code or visit www.astartinlife.org.au/how-to-help



Financial Statements: Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income (For the Year Ended 30 June 2023)



Joe Hansell has been the Treasurer and an Executive Committee member of *A Start in Life* since 2013. He is passionate about the work we do to provide students with a well-rounded education and help transform their lives. He ensures *A Start in Life* maintains its sound financial position.

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	1,485,896	1,656,466
Expenses		
Student assistance	(814,525)	(737,038)
Fundraising	(94,189)	(95,762)
Marketing	(51,911)	(57,326)
Banking, investment and accounting	(121,262)	(104,461)
Depreciation	(6,131)	(6,131)
Office and administration	(86,062)	(77,073)
Total expenses	(1,174,080)	(1,077,791)
Surplus for the year	311,816	578,675
Other comprehensive income/(loss)		
Gain/(loss) from the revaluation of financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	414,810	(856,792)
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	414,810	(856,792)
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year before allocations	726,626	(278,117)
Allocations from capital funds	198	300,998
Allocations to capital funds	(714,810)	(26,334)
Total comprehensive income for the year after allocations	12,014	(3,453)

10.5%
increase in
student assistance

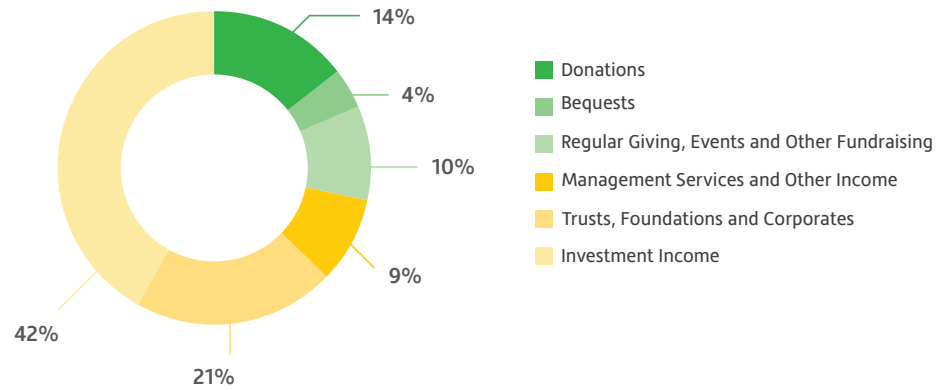
VS

5.5%
increase in
operating costs

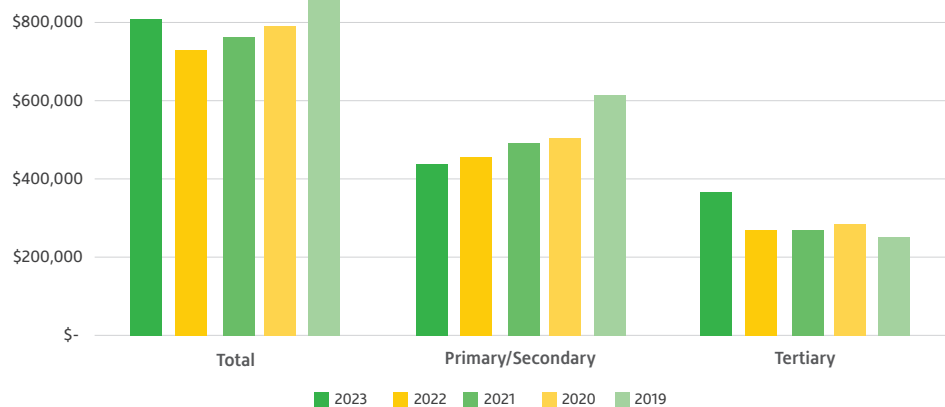
\$414K
gain on
revaluation of
financial assets
at fair value

\$714K
surplus income
transferred to
reserves for
future student
support

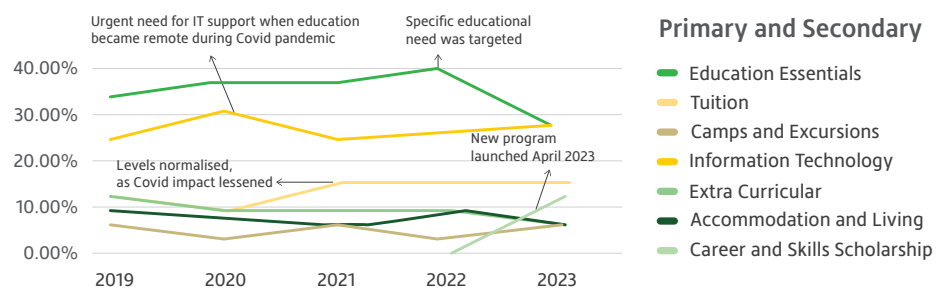
Sources of Operating Income



Annual Value of Support to Students



Annual Assistance by Key Component



Financial Statements: Statement of Financial Position (as at 30 June 2023)

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	793,135	768,364
Trade and other receivables	105,464	110,695
Other financial assets	1,495,000	1,500,000
Other current assets	26,089	23,364
Total current assets	2,419,688	2,402,423
Non-current assets		
Other financial assets	8,096,284	7,409,076
Investment properties	744,000	744,000
Property, plant and equipment	1,218,392	1,224,524
Total non-current assets	10,058,676	9,377,600
Total assets	12,478,364	11,780,023
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	16,596	29,893
Contract liabilities	165,061	173,153
Employee benefits	40,731	51,375
Total current liabilities	222,388	254,421
Non-current liabilities		
Employee benefits	42,521	37,310
Other liabilities	29,209	28,672
Total non-current liabilities	71,730	65,982
Total liabilities	294,118	320,403
Net assets	12,184,246	11,459,620
Equity		
Reserves	5,350,749	4,437,755
Retained surpluses	6,833,497	7,021,865
Total equity	12,184,246	11,459,620

29%

increase in reserves
allocated to future
support of students

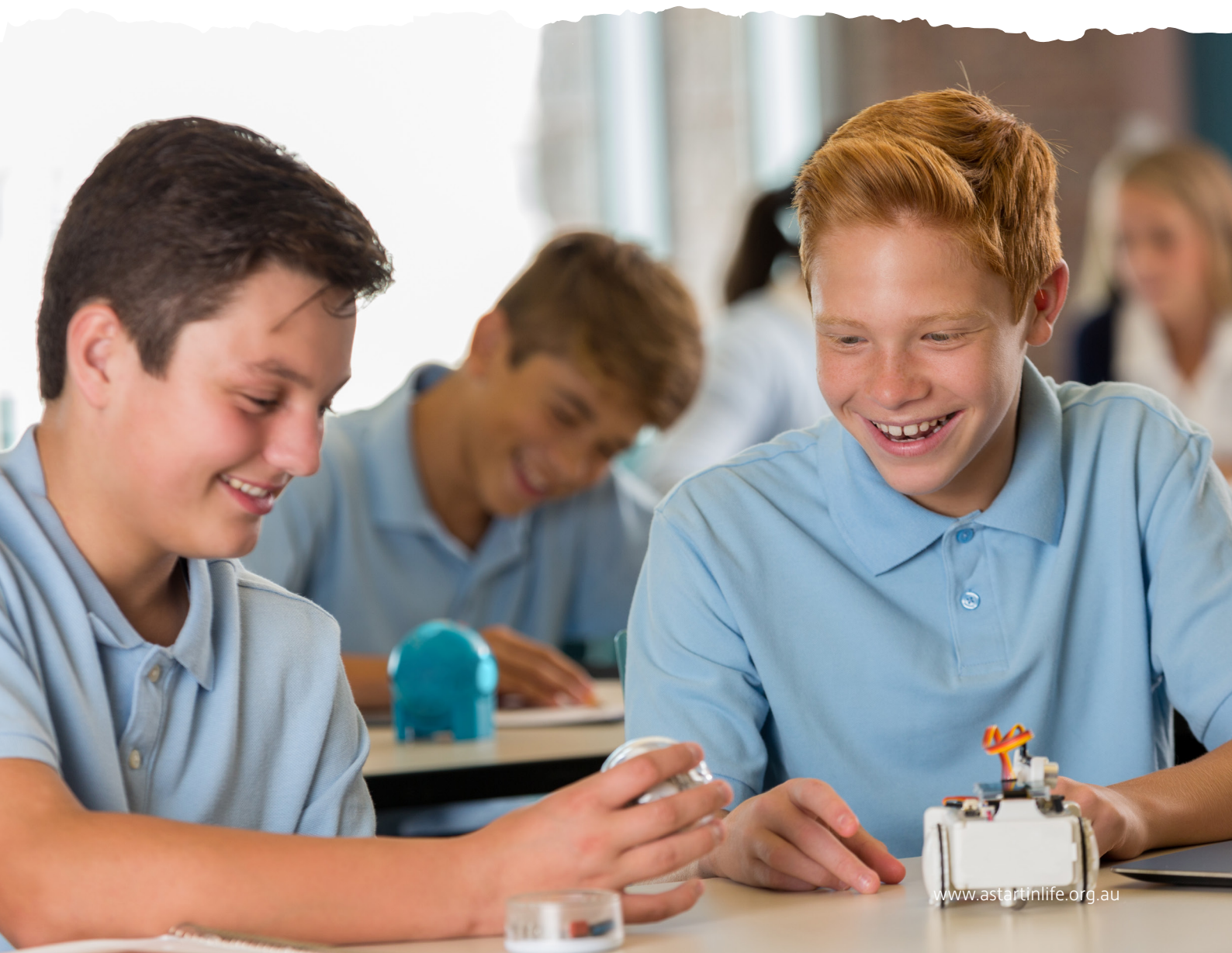
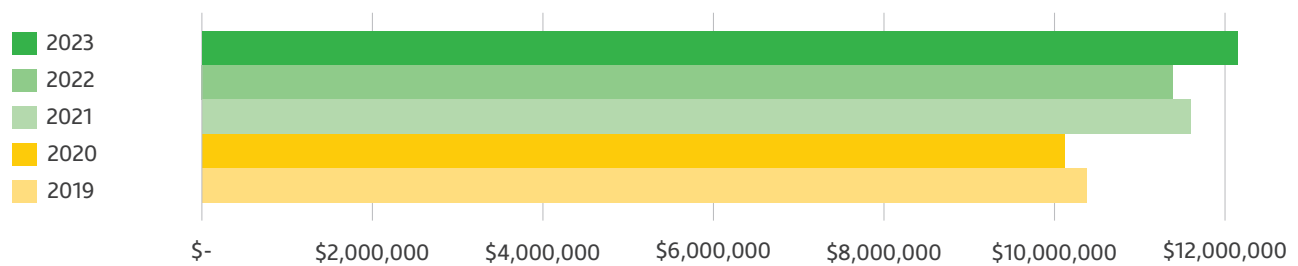
\$10.3m

actively invested and
producing income
and capital returns



Increases in market
value of investments
benefited our Net Assets

Annual Net Assets





●● Knowing that there are individuals like you who believe in me and my potential has been a great source of encouragement and motivation. Thank you again for your support, it has made a significant difference in my life. ●●

— Ned

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