



MARCH 2026

Brighter Futures

🌱 Exploring the state of inequality

What the data means for young Australians Educational inequality is growing — and can no longer be ignored

In rural New South Wales, a Year 5 teacher starts her Monday with 28 students, no specialist literacy support, and a class that, by national standards, is already falling behind. Forty minutes down the highway, a class of 18 has individual tutoring, purpose-built spaces, and teachers who have never had to cover the cost of student resources themselves. Same country. Worlds apart.

1 in 3

are children is not meeting basic literacy standards^[1]

Low-SES students are **8X MORE LIKELY**

to need numeracy support than their peers^[2]

Research tells us that students who fall behind in Years 7 and 8 rarely catch up without targeted support. The learning gap widens. Confidence erodes. By Year 10, many quietly stop trying. Not because they cannot. Because nobody has shown up

A start in life



A Brighter Future for Young Australians

consistently enough to convince them it is worth it. [2]

For Aboriginal students in remote communities, the barriers compound further: distance, resource shortages, and a historical lack of culturally appropriate support. The cost of education falls hardest on the families least able to absorb it. That is the problem. But it is not the whole story.

100%

of students supported by A Start in Life reported their learning improved^[4]

When someone shows up

83%

of students feel more supported^[4]

When a young person gets the right support at the right time, the trajectory shifts. Confidence returns. The gap that seemed fixed starts to move.

A young Australian's future should not depend on what their family can afford. For too many, it still does. Your support is what stands in the gap.

Sources: [1] Grattan Institute, Widening the Gap, 2024 [2] Australian Education Union, State of our Schools, 2024 [3] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia, 2024 [4] A Start in Life Student Impact Survey, 2025





Students flying and testing drones at CSIRO Facility in Brisbane with EPE owner and Alumni Warwick Penrose

🌟 Opening doors to the future!

Experiences that open doors Adventures and real-world discovery

When a group of A Start in Life students boarded their flight to Brisbane, many were experiencing something extraordinary: their first time on a plane. They were heading to Explosive Protective Equipment (EPE), one of Australia's leading organisations in extreme environment robotics. But this wasn't just a career excursion. It was proof of what becomes possible when early support meets purpose.

Waiting to welcome them was Warwick Penrose, EPE's Owner and CEO, and an alumnus of A Start in Life. Warwick's story matters because he has walked exactly the path these students are just beginning.

From the moment they arrived, the students found themselves somewhere most people never get to see. They explored advanced robotics labs, examined bomb disposal technologies, and watched demonstrations built around one clear idea: how do we take people out of danger and put innovation there instead?



Warwick shared his journey openly. It started with service in the Australian Defence Force, specialising in mine warfare and explosive ordnance disposal. Those values came with him into civilian life. What began as just two people has grown into a team of over 45, delivering world-class protective solutions to defence forces, police, and government agencies across Australia, New Zealand, and beyond.

"A Start in Life has strengthened my confidence and resilience while I balance study and finances."

~ George, Student

Every dollar goes to a student who needs it. Scan the QR code to donate today.





Spotlight on Our Education Team

Six months ago, Maya was disengaging from class. Today, she's putting her hand up. Maya is one of the students our newest education team member, Lauren, works with. Lauren has just joined A Start in Life as a Student Support Officer, and she's already making a difference. She works one-on-one with students from Kindergarten to tertiary. But with kids like Maya in that age range of 10-15, it's a critical window. Kids this age are figuring out who they are, where they fit, and forming their self-worth. Peer pressure is loud. Confidence can slip quietly away.

“With the support of A Start in Life, I felt brave, stepped out of my comfort zone, built confidence, and made connections for my future career.”



Annie
Student

Lauren helps them find their footing. Not with a checklist. With time, attention and the kind of consistent belief that tells a young person they are worth investing in. Students explore their values and strengths, set real goals, and get a personalised report on where they can grow. Parents stay in the loop. And when a student needs more, Lauren is there, whether that's tutoring, an art workshop, or a zoo excursion. Because some of the most important moments don't happen in a classroom.

Six months ago, Maya had stopped trying. Now she's the one with her hand in the air.



Strong Women, Strong Futures: ASIL in the Community

While Lauren shows up for Maya every week, Kathleen shows up for our communities across Western Sydney. That's what this organisation is built on. Women backing women, backing the next generation. In March, we joined NSW Women's Week 2026 with Mobileyes and Dental Foundation. Up to 600 women and girls across Liverpool, Blacktown, and Regents Park. Women rebuilding after hardship, girls still figuring out who they are. All of them deserving care they couldn't access alone.

Kathleen said it plainly at every event: a child's future is shaped long before they walk into a classroom. It's shaped by whether their mother has glasses to read the school newsletter. Whether she has the confidence to advocate for her kids. Whether anyone showed up for her first. We did. And we'll keep showing up.

Or Donate online!

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