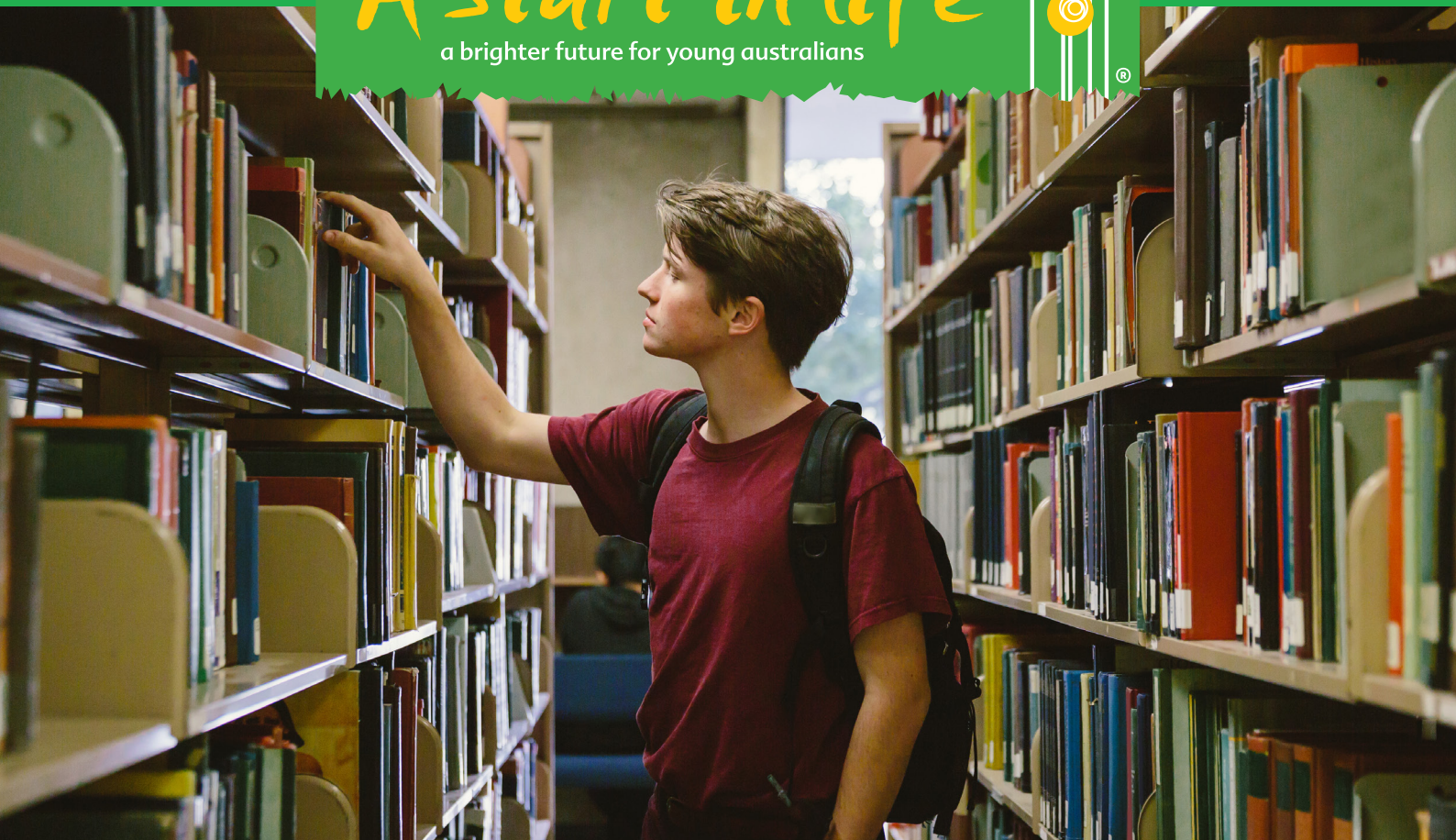


ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Providing educational support to students in need for 98 years

A start in life
a brighter future for young australians



Contents

2
President and Chief Executive Officer Report

3–4
Our Support in 2021: Program Overview

5–6
The Impact of Our Support: Measures of Effectiveness

7
What's New in 2021? New Ways to Foster Engagement

8
What's New in 2021? Prize Giving with a Difference

9
What's New in 2021? Changes to Our Tertiary Support

10
Where are they Now? Checking in with Our Alumni

11
The Value of Strong Community Support

12–14
Financial Statements

Our aim

Our aim is to assist young Australians in necessitous circumstances overcome barriers to their education and reach their full potential. Since our inception in 1923, we have helped over 7,000 young Australians aged 4-24 facing hardship, to access an education equal to their peers and ultimately achieve a brighter future.

President and Chief Executive Officer Report



Allan Elliott
PRESIDENT



Neil Robinson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As we formulated plans for the 98th year, we expected it would be a bit more difficult than many of the 97 years that went before it. To say we underestimated the challenges that our community, Australia and the world would face during the 2020/21 year will perhaps be no surprise to all. We did not expect that, at the end of the year, the education of the majority of NSW students would be occurring remotely, that students would be so reliant on technology, and that our small team would have been operating from their homes rather than our office.

Irrespective, we were so pleased we were able to provide assistance to so many. At the forefront were our students who experienced the most disruptive of years, however this year also required additional consideration of our team, our supporters and all those who come within our compass. How pleasing it is, to now have a pathway out of this pandemic, which is a consequence of the education and research of the scientists in our world. This certainly is a powerful example of how education makes for a brighter future.

We were pleased we could provide levels of assistance to students in 2020/21 largely matching those of previous years. Our Student Support Team were very active throughout the year, adapting the support we provided to the ever changing educational needs of our students. For our Tertiary students, the changes allowed us to marginally increase the assistance we provided and reward those Tertiary students who continued to improve their grades or maintain very high levels. We also set aside funds enabling students to undertake work placements throughout their degrees.

Our financial results this year were positive and were buoyed by the significant rebound experienced in a number of investment markets, over the course of the year. We cautiously and optimistically hope markets will hold onto those gains and trust these markets and companies will return their levels of dividends and distributions to those of prior years.

Key to the assistance we provide to students in need of help is undoubtedly the generous support *A Start in Life* receives from its supporter base. We thank each supporter and wish to acknowledge your generosity and consideration of others in a year like 2020/21, where you could have justifiably focused on your own health and circumstances. You provide inspiration to our students and our team and continually amaze us with the effort you expend ensuring others do not go without. Thank you!



A Start in Life Executive Committee – 2021
Top row, left to right: Neil Robinson (Chief Executive), John Carroll, Richard Winckles, Olly Bergstrom, Dale Thomas-Berrier (Vice President & Secretary), Joe Hansell (Treasurer)
Bottom row: Anne Ellison, Allan Elliott (President), Jeanine Walsh OAM

We also wish to acknowledge and thank the small team within our office and the members of our Executive Committee. Their contributions, their guidance and their advocacy are always large and always invaluable. The charity benefits from the depth of their experience and from their time with the charity and this is particularly evident with Jason Chan, who leads our Student Support Team and Chloe Jiao, our Finance Manager.

To the students and the families who we, and all at *A Start in Life*, have the pleasure of assisting, you should know how proud we are of your achievements and of the progress you continue to make with your education. We look forward to hearing of your successful careers over the years to come.

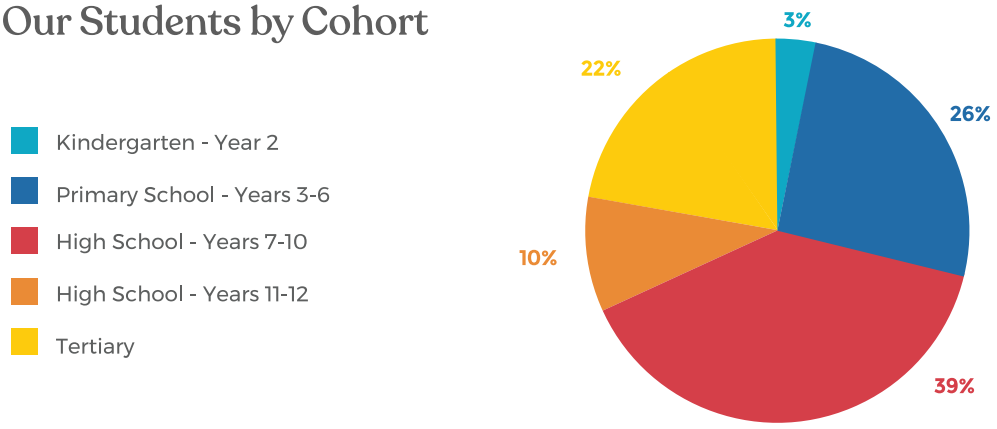
Our Support In 2021:
Program Overview

As Australia adapted to life with COVID-19 still prevalent, our support for students proved just as important and necessary as it always has been. It did however, require us to make some adaptations. These included new ways to foster student engagement, changing the way we delivered our Prize Giving ceremony and updating our Tertiary Program. We also focussed on:

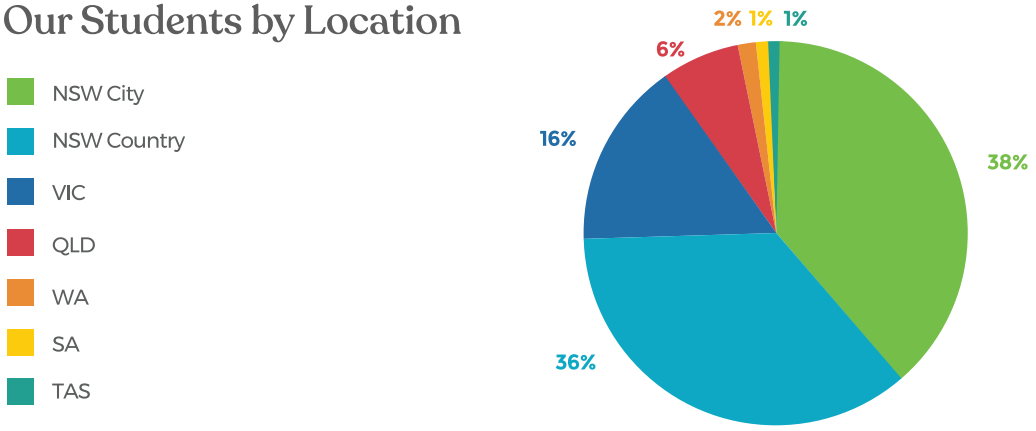
- Helping students move between face-to-face and online learning
- Ensuring educational essentials were available to support individualised learning goals
- Providing increased one-on-one tuition to help students struggling during lockdown periods
- Ensuring replacement extra-curricular activities were available during lockdowns and existing activities could quickly recommence when lockdowns eased

A key reason our support is required is due to the wide gap between the cost of an education and the amount of funds many lower income families have available for their child's education. This year, we were delighted when a team from the Actuaries Institute helped us once again quantify this and demonstrate why it was important that we continued to fill an ever widening gap for many students and their families.

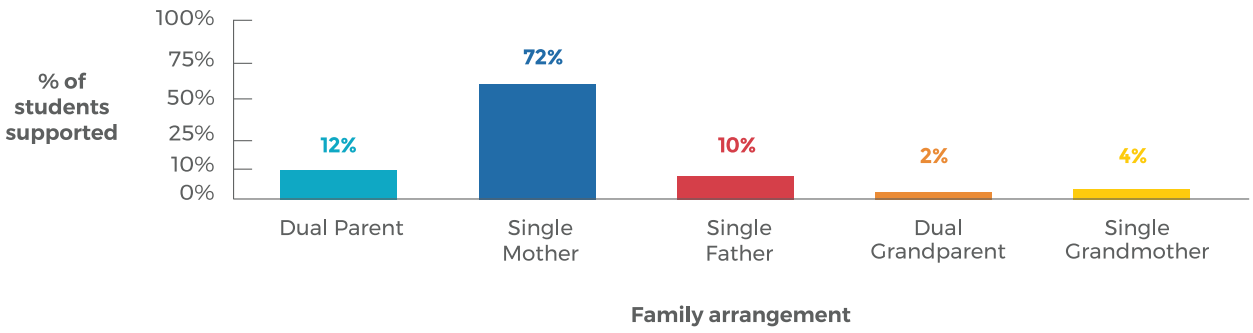
Our Students by Cohort



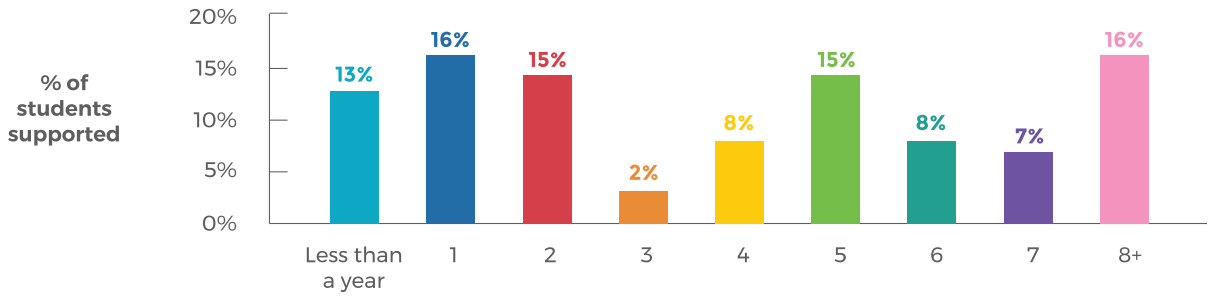
Our Students by Location



Our Student's Family Arrangements



Our Continued Support for Students



Benefits of Key Items of Support Provided to Primary and Secondary Students

KEY AREA OF SUPPORT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS SUPPORTED	KEY BENEFITS
Stationery and books	91	Provides essential education resources needed, increases organisational skills, builds reading fluency and comprehension
Tuition	61	Enables one-on-one support to strengthen areas requiring further development
Extra-curricular activities	100	Supports skills development, socialising, physical and mental wellbeing
Technology (incl. internet, computer, printer, software)	84	Facilitates access to key learning resources, aids pivot to online learning, enhances research skills
Camps and excursions	61	Provides the opportunity to engage in new experiences individually and amongst peers
Uniforms	101	Helps students fit in with their peers, builds self-esteem, enables them to participate in activities like sports

The Impact of Our Support:
Measures of Effectiveness

We assess the impact of our support on students via our Measures of Effectiveness (MoE). These measures, implemented in 2020, evaluate the effects of our support in six key areas – personal, social, environmental/basic financial, academic engagement, academic attainment and educational progression.

While each MoE is scored out of ten, various subcomponents are measured and combined to arrive at the total for each MoE. Our Social MoE, for example, includes measures of friendships, family support networks, broader community, new interests and participation in school activities; and our Academic Attainment MoE includes measures of literacy, numeracy, grades (other), effort and attendance.

Importantly, we assess this data over time to reflect on the ongoing outcomes of our program and the ever changing needs of each student. Below, you will see two students, their stories and their MoE data. Our impact changes from year to year and although the students generally experience an upward swing in their MoE, this may not always occur. This is often a consequence of the complex backgrounds and changing circumstances impacting our students, and why ongoing support from us can be a key part of the assistance they require.

Tony

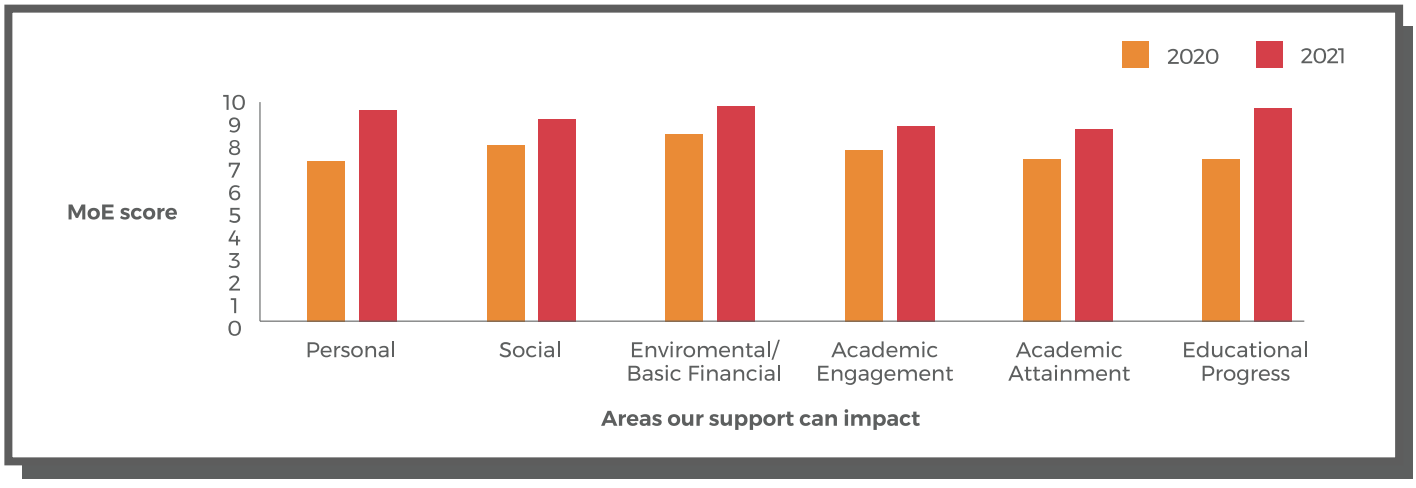
Support for Tony began in 2020 when he was starting Year 6. His mother reached out after being referred by the welfare officer at his school, as they both felt he had great potential but was not being given adequate opportunities due to additional focus being given to his brother who is on the autism spectrum.

At the start of Tony's support, his mother believed he was struggling in group settings and with his concentration. She felt he would benefit from one-on-one support and participating in sports, and was delighted when our Student Support Team advised we could help. We provided Tony with funding for tutoring, extra-curricular activities including swimming lessons, school camp, uniforms, internet access and more.

Since Tony began receiving our support, we have witnessed improvements in all six areas, particularly his Academic Engagement and Academic Attainment. Tony's teachers also noted changes, commenting on his *"enthusiastic and dedicated attitude"*.

Tony has reflected that, thanks to the support from *A Start in Life*, his family can afford the necessary equipment and tuition to be the best he can be. He said *"A Start in Life has helped me through the change from primary to high school. The tuition has helped out over all subjects and improved my grades"*. This year, Tony also received our Prize for Significant Improvement in his learning, and participated in our Read-a-thon and Art Challenge.

One day, Tony wishes to write a fiction book and would also like to become an IT specialist. His mother has also said *"A Start in Life gave us hope and choice. The boys can participate in what they want without worrying about funds. Having people around you that "have your back" so to speak has been the best for us. It takes a village to raise a child and I am grateful to find my village in A Start in Life."*



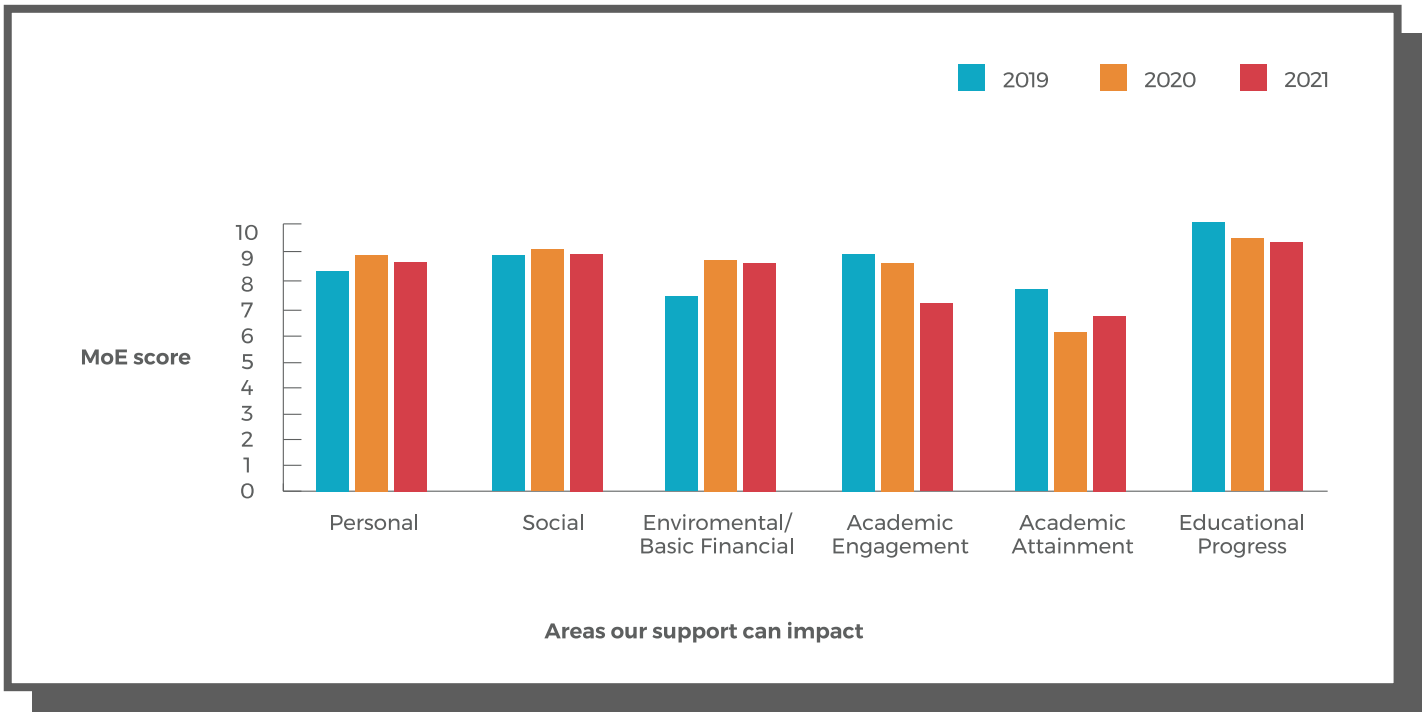
Siso

We first began assisting Siso, a very capable student, in 2017 when he was in Year 4. In 2019, when we began to assess the impact of our support via our MoE, it indicated Siso was improving significantly. The MoE scores for all six measures were each in their upper range.

Regrettably, but perhaps understandably, we have seen small declines in some of these measures in the ensuing two years. Some can be attributed to the numerous lockdowns Siso experienced in his home state of Victoria over these years. Some may also be attributed to adjusting to high school. Despite these many changes, we are pleased that Siso's Environmental and Financial measures have improved, and that his Personal and Social areas of development have remained steady.

When discussing the change in Siso's Academic MoEs with our Student Support Team, Siso reflected that his motivation waned over the period and felt he could have done better in his studies. He indicated he would be trying harder and felt he would improve, and plans to use a visual organiser to set a study routine and ensure that his homework and assignments are completed in advance. This mature approach to his studies was also noted by his teacher, who stated Siso is a positive student who shows great maturity in his conversations and has a good work ethic.

Siso is one of four siblings supported by a single mother who is very engaged with all of her children's learning and is very proud of their achievements. She delights in now being able to ensure his school fees are paid and can participate in all camps and excursions. Siso is also pleased he has the equipment needed and can participate in Muay Thai Boxing as an extra-curricular activity.



What's New in 2021?
New Ways to Foster Engagement

An exciting development in our work this year has been the introduction of our Student Engagement Program aimed at increasing the engagement, motivation and participation of the students we support. Throughout the year, we encouraged students to participate in different 'challenges' and the responses were fabulous. Participation for each challenge was voluntary and we were delighted by the enthusiastic uptake from so many students.

Reading

Our first challenge was a Read-a-thon, where students were encouraged to read either 10 books or 1,500 pages in 10 weeks. Each student was asked to fill out a booklet detailing the books they read, with one reading 2,857 pages and reflecting *"I love reading and this encouraged me to read even more"*. Others told us that they felt proud, excited and accomplished.

Art

Our Art Challenge then took off with flying colours, quite literally! We asked students to submit artworks reflecting the theme *'My Future is Bright'* and received amazing creations – paintings, drawings, collages, sketches and more. After some tough decision making, we picked three fabulous winners (pictured below).

Movement

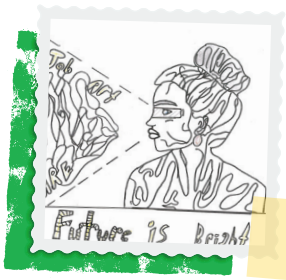
We then held our Movement For My Health Challenge, which was based around physical activity for mental and physical wellbeing. Students were encouraged to engage in daily physical activity – anything from bike riding and dancing, to yoga and gardening. As a bonus task, they were asked to write about how movement supports their health. We have been amazed by the responses we received. One student wrote *"These sports have shown me a fun, healthy way to spend my time and proven to me that I am so much more capable of learning new things"*.

All participants were awarded vouchers to encourage further reading, creativity and movement respectively, and winners were awarded bonus prizes to further support these pursuits. We have loved holding these challenges and continue to be excited by the developments in the Student Engagement Program. We believe these sorts of activities are pivotal to enhancing student's overall motivation and engagement with their education, as well as with *A Start in Life*.



BEST ARTWORK
by a Primary Student

BEST ARTWORK
by a Secondary Student





BEST ARTWORK
for the theme
'My Future is Bright'

A CREATIVE ENTRY
for our Movement for
My Health Challenge



What's New in 2021?

Prize Giving with a Difference

With restrictions limiting travel and preventing the holding of large celebrations, we took the opportunity to change the way we awarded some of the annual prizes that recognise the achievements of our students. Rather than inviting all prizewinners and their families to Sydney, as we have done in the past, we took some of the Prize Givings to the students!

These Prize Givings were held in rural towns, where many of our students live, and included Ballina, Taree and Tamworth. We were fortunate that the Masonic Lodges in these towns were happy to host these small ceremonies, which provided an opportunity for valuable supporters within those communities to attend and witness the positive impacts their their support has made. We also held a small ceremony in Sydney for our Sydney based students and their families.

Whilst in the rural areas, our Student Support Team took the opportunity to visit other local students, conduct face-to-face learning goal updates, and check in with families and schools. It was pleasing to witness these students thriving, see their growing confidence and savour their families' pride in their children's progress.

A selection of the prizes awarded to our students is listed below. They highlight the significant impact that *A Start in Life*'s support has made to their education and future careers.

TILLY ☆ Stephen Floyd Prize for Most Improved in Mathematics

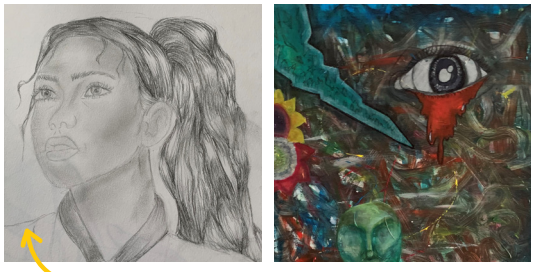
With the assistance of tuition funded by *A Start in Life*, Tilly, a Year 9 student, made big strides in Mathematics. In fact, she moved up two grades in Mathematics over the course of the year.

PEPPER ☆ Frank Hodgson Prize for Good Citizenship

Pepper, a Year 3 student, has shown immense maturity and compassion during the hardships of the pandemic. She delivered cakes and messages to her great grandmother and her friends at their nursing home, helped make care packages for elderly members of her community during lockdown, and assisted our charity by volunteering her time and resources to create coasters for our office.

SANA ☆ Artistic Achievement Prize

Sana, a Year 12 student, is extremely talented and passionate about painting and drawing. Through *A Start in Life*'s support, she enrolled in Art classes to further develop her interests and has shared some of her artworks with us.



Two of Sana's fabulous artworks

THOMAS ☆ Tertiary Encouragement Prize

Thomas maintained a distinction average in his double degree of a Bachelor of Science and a Doctor of Medicine. He is a bright and driven student with a strong commitment to the challenging journey of becoming a Doctor, even in light of transitioning to online learning due to COVID-19. Although currently attending university in Sydney, he hopes to undertake clinical placements in regional and remote areas of Australia.



Some of our award recipients with Sapna and Jason, from our Student Support Team

What's New in 2021?

Changes to Our Tertiary Support

At the start of 2021 we made changes to our Tertiary Program to ensure our support was helping students advance in their studies and progress to their chosen career. With our criteria for determining which students were in need of our support firmly established, we were confident we could reduce the administrative load associated with making payments of assistance. Instead, this has allowed us to increase our interaction with tertiary students.

Our Student Support Team now have quarterly check-ins with all our tertiary students and they are proving beneficial. These check-ins help ensure student's studies are on track and that they still require our assistance. Further, they facilitate discussion of any potential issues and help provide solutions to overcome them (for example, a new study technique). Importantly the check-ins also help ensure students continue to feel supported and engaged. This year, we also switched predominately to video calls rather than just phone calls. Both our students and our team are loving these – being able to see one another's faces has made it a much more personable experience, and the students have reported feeling an even greater level of connection and support from our team.

Our assistance payments are now made in line with our quarterly check-ins. These payments are made directly into each student's account. We advise each student of the educational items these should be directed towards and ask them to account for this. This has given the students a greater sense of responsibility and independence, allowing them to feel more in control and empowered.

Some other key changes we made were:

- **The introduction of a bonus payment for high or improved Weighted Average Marks, or successful completion of a TAFE course**
- **Increased assistance for students undergoing practical placements as part of their studies**
- **Laptops for all first year students**

As Danny, an Aeronautical Engineering student who has been supported by us since 2019, has reflected, *"A Start in Life provided me with the funding to purchase a high-performance personal laptop that could perform aerodynamic analysis. This allowed me to conduct my final year research project on an aerodynamic-related topic which will greatly benefit my possibility of employment in the future...The continual support and relief....meant that I could focus more on my studies with reduced stress which certainly helped me achieve higher grades throughout university."*



Georgie, a veterinary student who has been supported by *A Start in Life* for two years, also said that our support has *"really taken the pressure off"* and meant that she could focus on putting her best foot forward in class and on placements. She has said *"I think that my university transcript will reflect this, as my results over the last two years have been the best of my degree".*

It is this sort of feedback that continually reminds us why we do what we do at *A Start in Life*, and how assistance from our generous supporters does indeed help create brighter futures for young Australians.

Where are they Now?

Checking in with Our Alumni

Each year we are so pleased and proud of the students who graduate and go on to pursue their careers. Through witnessing these young people transform into adults who contribute to our society in a wonderful assortment of ways is fulfilling and inspiring. It also reminds us that the support we make available provides the means through which they can achieve their goals. We enjoy learning of these varied goals and aspirations, whether it be a primary student learning to read and write or a tertiary student graduating from a degree. Here are just some of our Alumni students, their stories and their reflections.

SAMMY



A Start in Life support for Sammy began in 2016, when she was in the first year of her Veterinary Sciences and Biology degree. Sammy was living 10 hours away from her family in Tamworth and was unable to seek employment due to her heavy course load. She reflects *"A Start in Life has had a ginormous impact on my studies, health and wellbeing. It helped to lift a massive weight off my shoulders...and ensured I had every learning opportunity and resource necessary to complete my degree and be the best graduate possible."* In 2021, Sammy completed the final semester of her degree and is now a fully qualified veterinarian. She has moved to a small rural community on the mid-north coast to work as a mixed practice veterinarian with cows, goats, dogs, cats, reptiles, birds and more. She plans to continue her education through ultrasound training and finding a mentor.

CHESTER



Chester's support with *A Start in Life* began in 2011 when he was 12 years old, as his single mother was struggling to support her four children on her own. This year, Chester graduated from a Bachelor of Creative Arts and will soon start his new job at an Indigenous Art Centre in the Northern Territory where he previously did volunteer work. He also plans to return to university to study a Master of Secondary Education, and with a passion for music, it is his dream to become a high school music teacher. In fact, he even released his own debut album earlier this year! Chester reflects *"The support and genuine encouragement by all staff and supporters at A Start in Life gave me confidence and a sense of wellbeing that helped me to keep going. I hope one day that I will be able to give as much as I received from A Start in Life knowing that it will provide opportunities for the less fortunate."*

FAY



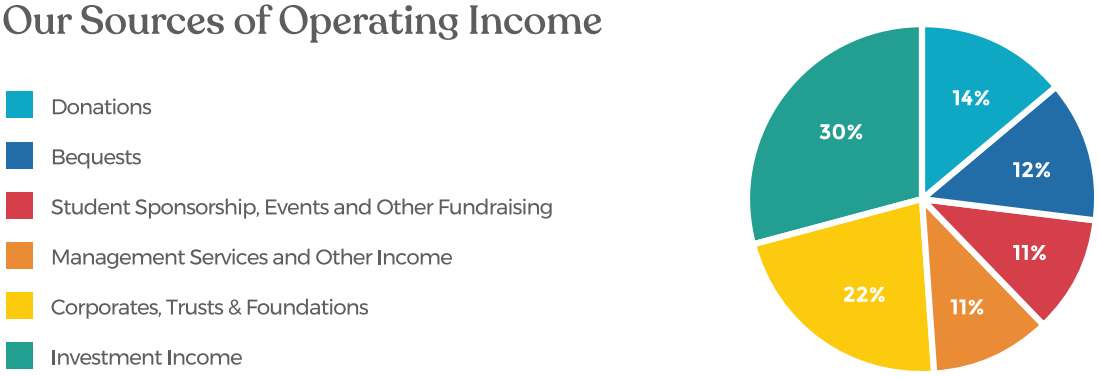
Fay applied for *A Start in Life* support in 2016, during her second year of Dentistry. Her father's disability meant there was limited capacity to provide financial assistance, and the academic demands of Dentistry meant she had limited time to earn her own income. She says *A Start in Life* support *"had a huge impact on my academic success and my willingness to learn, which I have carried with me into the start of my career."* Since graduating from her degree in 2019, Fay and has been working at a local dental practice. She reflects *"My biggest success so far has been my increased scope of practice, by taking on more difficult cases, with the help of my experienced senior colleagues. I also take pride in my patient-centred approach, which has reflected in my busy books."*

The Value of Strong Community Support

The generous support we receive each year from foundations, community groups, business partners and so many individuals across Australia helps us provide meaningful levels of yearly assistance to students. They are, as the chart demonstrates, some of our key sources of Operating Income.

We acknowledge and thank all those who give, so that others in our community don't have to go without.

Our Sources of Operating Income



A Bequest Changes Many Lives

This year, we were again humbled to receive some wonderful bequests and wish to acknowledge those who provided so generously for future generations of students. Bequests are a powerful way to help ensure young Australians receive the education they deserve and provide them the opportunity to fulfil their career aspirations.



Nance and her daughter, Heather, at one of our reunion events

Bequests mean even more to us when they come from students who were previous beneficiaries. Nance McKenzie was a student at the William Thompson Masonic School from 1926 to 1936. On her passing this year, we were notified Nance had left a bequest. Having a past student like Nance give back is powerful, as it truly shows how the experiences and generosity of earlier generations can impact those of the future. We were honoured even further when her children informed us that, as Nance had spoken fondly of her time at the school and of the support provided, they too wished to add to what Nance had set aside for future generations.

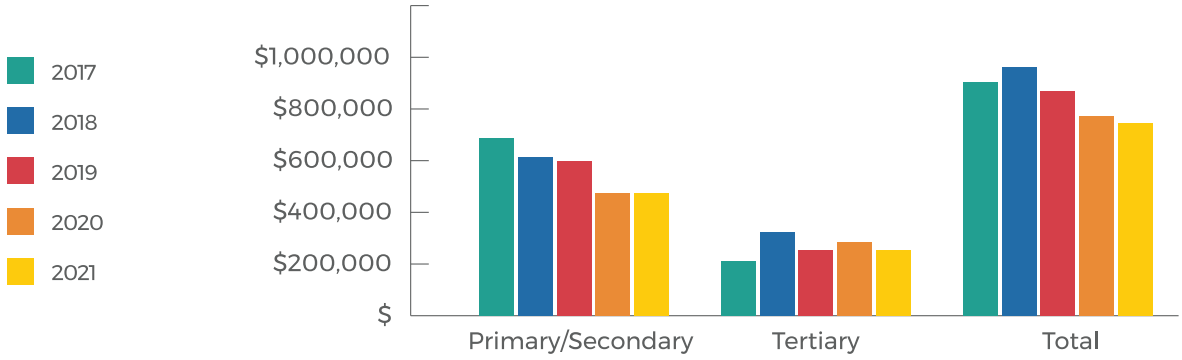
Financial Statements

Joe Hansell has been Treasurer of *A Start in Life* since joining our Executive Committee in 2013. He is passionate about the work we do to transform the lives of young Australians by supporting their education. Joe also passionately ensures *A Start in Life* maintains its sound financial position and is pleased to present these Financial Statements.

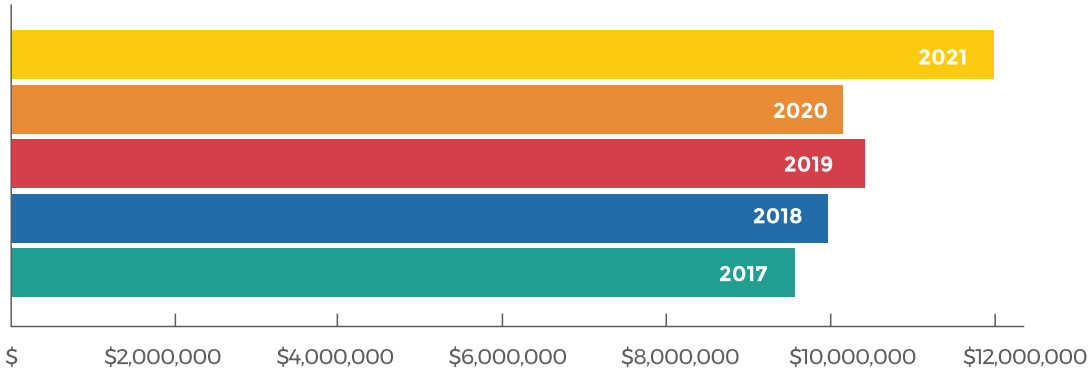


Joe Hansell – Treasurer

Annual Distribution of Support to Students



Net Asset Balance As At 30 June



Statement of Profit of Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 $	2020 $
Revenue	1,383,659	1,512,389
Expenses		
Student assistance	(769,256)	(793,802)
Fundraising	(86,369)	(112,918)
Marketing	(57,812)	(79,888)
Banking, investment and accounting	(99,352)	(124,784)
Depreciation and amortisation	(6,131)	(6,285)
Office and administration	(75,044)	(88,843)
Profit for the year	289,695	305,870
Other comprehensive income		
Net change in fair value of financial assets recognised through other comprehensive income	1,058,757	(674,663)
Net change in fair value of properties	91,992	-
Other comprehensive income	116,100	84,965
Total comprehensive income for the year before allocations	1,556,544	(283,828)
Allocations from capital funds	2,887	212,659
Allocations to capital funds	(1,400,000)	-
Total comprehensive income for the year after allocations	**159,432**	**(71,169)**

Treasurer's Commentary on the Financial Statements

Impact of COVID-19 was
- income from supporters declined
- dividends and distributions received from investments reduced

Ensuring student assistance levels were largely unchanged, required reductions of >20% across other expenses

Changes in the market value of investments in 2021, included reversals of previous years declines and significant additional gains

Allocation to special purpose funds is focused on optimising student's education and will ensure support is available in following years

Statement of Financial Position

for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 $	2020 $
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	912,944	744,777
Trade and other receivables	75,815	95,851
Financial assets	999,918	1,499,815
Other current assets	3,748	1,840
Total current assets	1,992,425	2,342,284
Non-current assets		
Financial assets	9,162,711	7,345,732
Other property, plant and equipment	880,654	796,784
Total non-current assets	10,043,364	8,142,516
Total assets	12,035,788	10,484,800
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	185,713	187,151
Employee benefits	44,832	53,092
Total current liabilities	230,545	240,243
Non-current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	31,383	31,383
Employee benefits	34,124	30,480
Total non-current liabilities	65,507	61,863
Total liabilities	296,051	302,106
Net assets	11,739,737	10,182,694
Capital funds		
Endowment fund	556,173	558,561
Special purpose funds	2,801,689	1,401,689
Asset revaluation reserve	2,138,616	859,711
Retained earnings	6,243,259	7,362,733
Total capital funds	**11,739,737**	**10,182,694**

Treasurer's Commentary on the Financial Statements

Change in the % of current to non current assets is appropriate with interest rates declining

Growth is primarily attributable to significant gains in value of equities held

Net assets increased 15% from previous year

Additional funds were set aside for student assistance in future years and key strategic projects

Thank you for supporting A Start in Life.
With your generous assistance, we are able to continue helping young Australians in need to access a better education and reach their full potential.

A start in life
a brighter future for young australians

Suite 702 370 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box 20606
World Square NSW 2002

www.astartinlife.org.au

02 9264 3017

communications@astartinlife.org.au

Registered Australian Charity
DGR No 62593
ABN 21 871 881 074

© Copyright 2021 A Start in Life
All rights reserved