



2016-2017 IMPACT REPORT

CONNECTING THE DOTS



BUILDING INDEPENDENCE & PARTICIPATION
yfs2017impactreport.yfs.org.au

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People need...



CONNECTING THE DOTS

YFS is uniquely positioned to make a real difference in the lives of individuals, families and the Logan community. With our wide range of services and programs, we can take a holistic approach to helping people build independence and participation

At YFS we strive to position vulnerable people to thrive, not just survive. To achieve this, we “connect the dots” between services, organisations, people and communities. In 2016-17 we increased our focus on connections and collaboration to improve outcomes for our clients and the communities we serve.

We made significant progress on our evidence and outcomes priority area in 2016-17. Each of our teams developed a clear program logic that articulates the outcomes we’re seeking with clients and the activities we need to undertake to achieve these outcomes, based on the best available evidence about what works.

This report outlines some of the results we’ve achieved in our work with clients; the impact we’ve had on people’s lives. It also outlines the changes we’ve been part of in the communities in which we work in Logan, Beaudesert, Redlands and beyond.

In 2016-17 we made good progress on all four of the inter-connected priorities set out in our strategic plan, improving our services, sustainability, capacity and positioning.

Our client feedback and stakeholder survey last year told a consistent story of excellent work with clients, positive contribution to community and productive collaboration. For example, 69% of our stakeholders rated our collaboration with others as “excellent” and a further 17% “good” – a total positive rating of 86%. Results for our community participation and client service were similarly positive.

Some highlights include the launch of our Project Hera co-location with the Logan District Domestic and Family Violence Unit; expansion of our youth housing service; integration of financial case work into our YFS Connect team; and the introduction of employment transition workers at Substation33 and in our mental health team.

In 2017-18 we will continue to develop and deliver proven services and demonstrate leadership in Logan and surrounds. We will strengthen our workforce and continue to invest in innovation and improvement. We look forward to continuing to connect the dots for better lives for people in Logan and surrounds, thanks to the good work of our Board, staff, volunteers, partners and community.

Cath Bartolo and Albert Hili



The YFS Board October 2017



The YFS Connect team

A STABLE HOME

Housing and homelessness continued to dominate our service delivery at YFS in 2016-17. Half of the 11,689 contacts to YFS Connect last year related to homelessness, risk of homelessness or tenancy issues.

This trend follows through to our case management programs. The proportion of clients who were homeless or at risk when they engaged with us ranged from 24% in our Youthlink youth engagement program, 45% for Step by Step family support, 60% for Money Smart financial capability service and almost 100% for our Housing First service. All our teams have developed expertise in helping people find housing rapidly, given the importance of stable housing as a foundation for independence and participation.

Our capacity to respond to youth homelessness in Logan increased when we were awarded a contract for additional mobile outreach services for young people. In conjunction with this expansion, we introduced employment advisory services for housing clients, and a project to follow up housing clients to track their housing sustainability over time.

Looking forward: In 2017-18, YFS will relinquish the management of 24 community housing properties to larger providers, retaining 14 crisis housing units that are associated with our housing case management service.

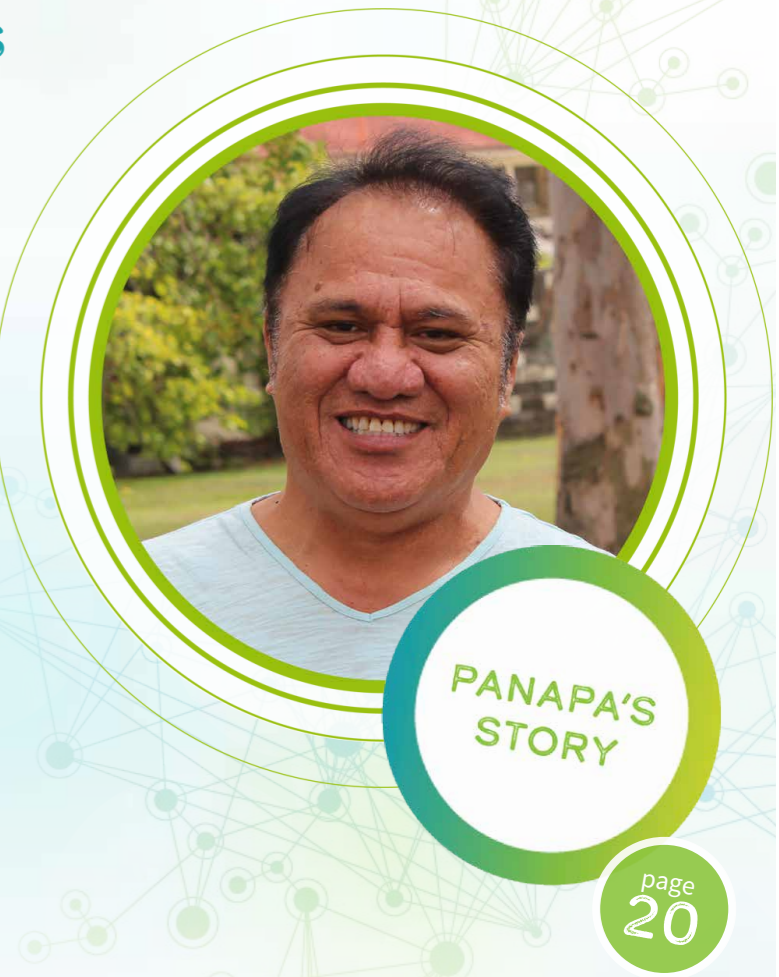
CONNECTING THE DOTS

YFS established YFS Connect (formerly known as IRAS) to act as our front door. YFS Connect joins the dots for clients, providing information, advice, referrals and assessments.

In 2016-2017, YFS Connect responded to **11,689** requests for advice or assistance (2,204 in person and 9,485 over the phone). Demand increased by 14%, up from 10,213 requests in the 2015 to 2016 financial year.

In 2016-17 we further improved the YFS Connect team's ability to respond to homelessness and serious tenancy issues. As well as referring people to YFS teams and other homelessness services where there are vacancies, YFS Connect staff provided short-term responses to help people save their tenancies or find accommodation.

In 2016-17 YFS Connect helped an estimated 90 clients maintain at-risk tenancies through advice, advocacy and emergency relief for rental payment plans. The team also helped more than 120 people get established in emergency, short-term or permanent housing.

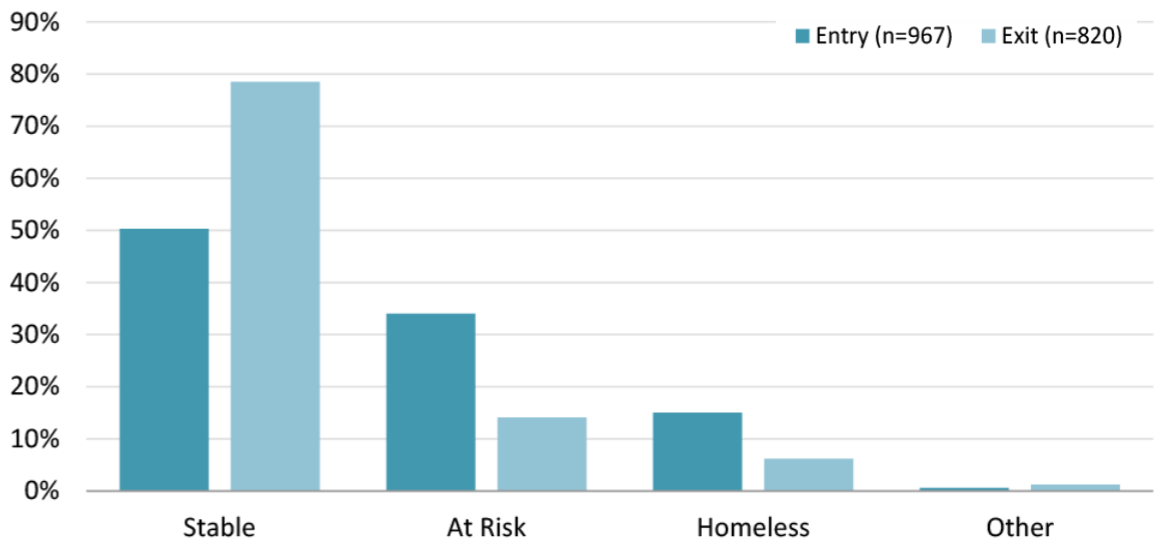


OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

In 2016-17 we embarked on a project to track outcomes across our whole organisation. Focus areas for this were housing, financial stress and social supports. As expected, housing was a significant issue for many clients on entry into our services, and was also an area where we were able to help people improve their situations significantly.

78% of YFS clients exited the service in stable housing, compared to 50% on entry. Only 6% of clients remained homeless when we finished working with them – often this was simply because we lost touch with them. We are working throughout YFS to improve this outcome across the board.

YFS ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES HOUSING STABILITY DATA





Solar Sign Solutions

A DECENT INCOME

Many of our clients are on low incomes, and most experience financial stress. In 2016-17, our efforts focused on three areas:

- increasing clients' income by supporting them into employment
- improving people's ability to cope on their incomes through our financial counselling and capability services
- preventing people getting into financial difficulties through community education.

In 2016-17 we invested in an employment transition worker in our Substation33 team to help Substation volunteers move into paid work once they gained experience and skills with us. We also employed an employment engagement worker to work with clients in our case management teams, particularly our PHAMs mental health recovery service. These workers joined our ParentsNext team to improve work readiness of people facing significant barriers to employment. We estimate that 75 vulnerable people moved into work in 2016-17 through YFS' efforts, while ParentsNext supported a further 500 parents to set work-related goals and take action to achieve them.

Our financial counsellors and Money Smart workers continued to help people deal with financial crises. Many of our clients have debilitating debts to rental companies. With a grant from the Department of Social Services, we launched a marketing campaign to promote alternatives to consumer leases for appliances and furniture. Our Done With Debt campaign generated awareness of alternatives including no interest loans (NILS) and prompted calls to YFS Connect and visits to the campaign website from people considering rentals.

Looking forward: In 2017-18, YFS will continue to build our focus on employment. We look forward to working with vulnerable people on innovative work-related projects.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

It takes strong partnerships to create real employment opportunities for people who have never worked or who haven't worked for a long time. YFS' social enterprise, Substation33, provides opportunities for jobseekers to gain experience and skills in a supportive environment. In 2016-17, Substation33 partnered with Logan City Council to establish Solar Signs Solutions, manufacturing flood warning signs for low-lying road crossings.

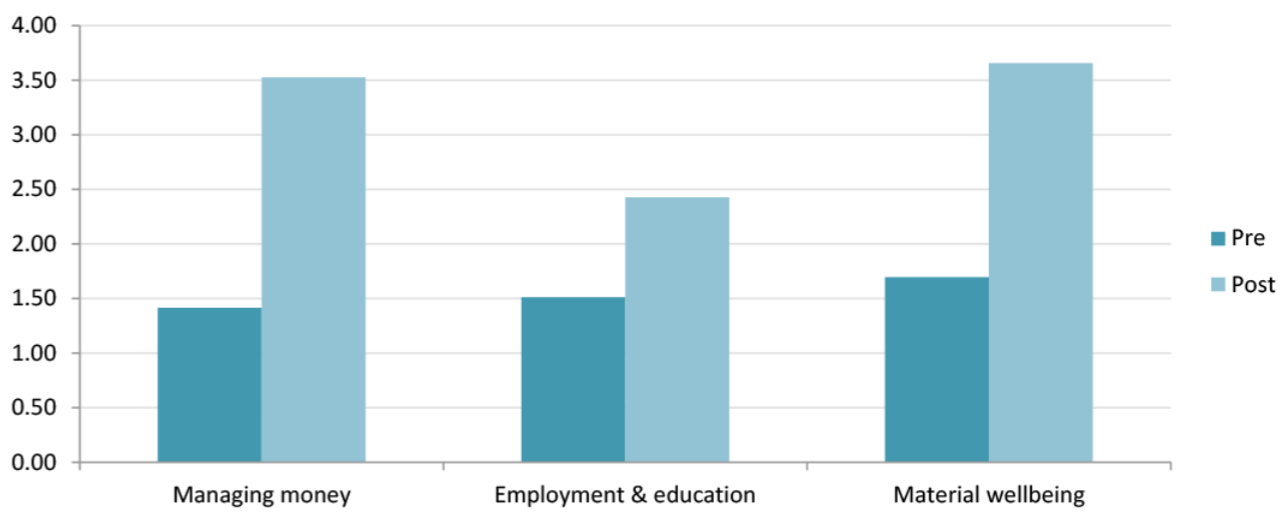
The signs proved themselves during Tropical Cyclone Debbie in early 2017, when no motorists attempted to drive through floodwaters at the nine crossings where solar signs were installed. This new business arm has generated increased paid work and work experience opportunities for Substation33. We worked with Work for the Dole providers to create real-world learning experiences in manufacturing for participants, a number of whom have gone on to paid work.



OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Our Federally-funded services use the SCORE tool to assess improvements in clients' ability to manage money, their material well-being and their employment and education. On average YFS clients made performance improvements in all financial domains, in particular managing money and material wellbeing.

SCORE INCOME AND FINANCIAL DATA



While clients generally improved on financial issues, many remain in financial stress. Across all programs we asked clients about their financial situation through our organisational outcomes questions. On entry to our services 52% of clients reported having trouble paying a bill in the past month, compared with 41% of clients on exit. Clearly our clients need further support to increase their financial capacity, which is why we are focusing on employment.



CONNECTING THE DOTS

In September 2016, Queensland Police Service Logan and YFS Ltd entered into a new and unique partnership agreement – Project HERA. A YFS worker is co-located with the Logan District Domestic and Family Violence Unit to provide prompt assessment, referral and support to those affected by domestic violence.

The Project HERA domestic violence worker often attends the home of victims as soon as the police assess the safety of the situation. The project addresses a gap in the domestic violence system in relation to responding to victims.

The overall goal is to identify systems, processes and procedures for development, to enhance inter-agency responses and provide increased services and safety to Logan survivors and their family members where domestic violence has occurred. The model also aims to hold perpetrators accountable.



SAFETY

In October 2016, YFS partnered with Beaucare to launch a much-needed domestic violence counselling and court support service for the Beaudesert area.

Some additional funding for our Responsible Men's behaviour change group program for perpetrators allowed us to increase to five groups weekly, working with 75 men in groups (and 130 men overall) at any given time, as well as supporting their partners with advocacy and referrals. An evaluation by Griffith University showed positive results, and helped us improve the program's effectiveness.

YFS is an active contributor to the Logan Integrated Service Response to Domestic Violence and to the High Risk Team which commenced In January 2017. The improved information sharing between organisations has greatly increased our collective ability to support victims of high-risk perpetrators to achieve safety, and to hold perpetrators accountable.

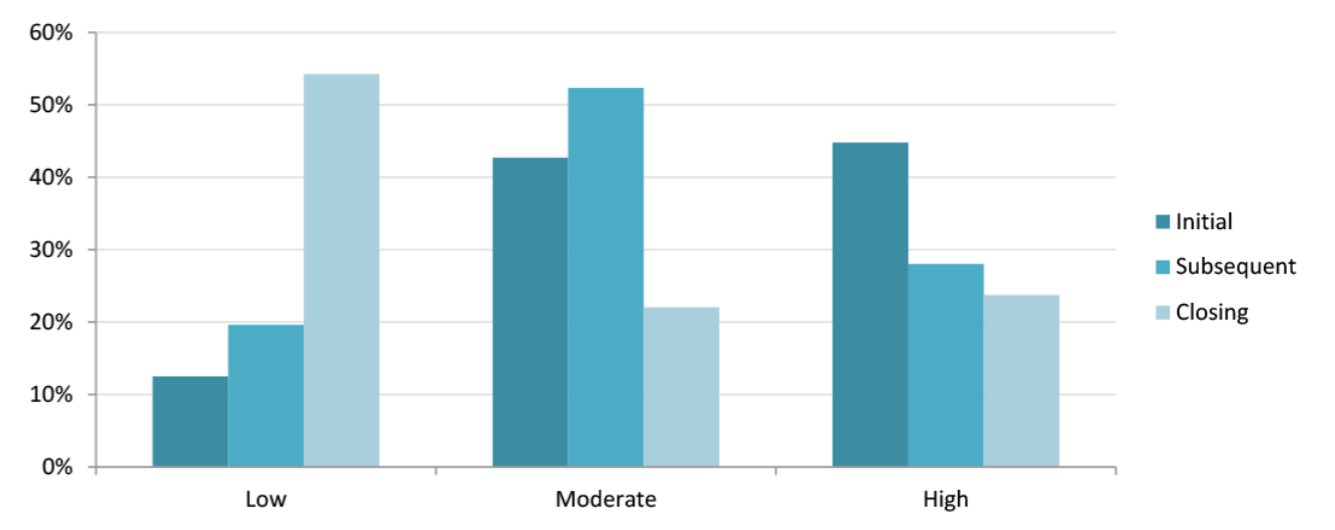
Our Legal service was re-funded in 2016-17 after a period of uncertainty. YFS Legal represented approximately 500 children and young people in the Beenleigh Children's Court last year, supporting them to get fair treatment in the justice system and link with the other services they need.

Looking forward: In 2017-18, YFS will work with young people, employment support services and community groups to develop an action plan to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol use on the work prospects of vulnerable job seekers.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Our Intensive Family Support team works with families that Child Safety is concerned about, with the aim of reducing the risk of abuse or neglect for children in those families. 54% of clients were considered low risk on closing, compared to 13% on entry.

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT RISK LEVEL



In our domestic violence services for victims, 81% of clients reported improvements in safety. Our SHIFT youth drug and alcohol clients reported a reduction in risks associated with use of alcohol and other drugs. Across our Federally-funded programs on average YFS clients rated themselves 2.61/5 on personal and family safety on entry to our programs and 3.24/5 on exit, with the greatest improvement in our Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) mental health recovery program.



CONNECTIONS WITH OTHERS

Connections with family, friends and community supports are really important for ongoing wellbeing. All YFS case management programs try to help clients build linkages with other supports so they can sustain change in their lives.

Our disability services are particularly focused on connections and participation. Our Community Connections and Social Links programs continued to grow in 2016-17, attracting more clients keen to participate in a wide range of group activities in the community or to pursue their individual interests with support.

In 2016-17, YFS expanded The Club group program to seven Logan schools thanks to a grant from the Amanda Flynn Foundation and ongoing funding from Communities for Children. The Club worked with 397 vulnerable students to help them improve their social skills and ability to thrive in the school environment. Unfortunately funding for The Club ended at the end of the financial year.

Looking forward: In 2017-18 YFS will prepare for the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Logan. Sadly, YFS will not register as an NDIS provider for viability reasons, so we will support our clients to make the most of the NDIS and to transition to their chosen services.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

When Logan Together consults with Logan parents about what they need, “like-minded connection” is one of the three responses, along with financial security and aspirations. Logan Together aims to reduce disadvantage for Logan’s children. YFS has participated enthusiastically in the Logan Together collective impact approach since it began.

Logan Together is a great model of the power of connection. For example, Logan’s seven ParentsNext providers work collaboratively as a Logan Together working group, identifying and implementing ways to leverage the program to generate broader benefits for parents and children.

YFS CEO Cath Bartolo is very involved in the Logan Together leadership group, promoting better ways to provide services that position our children to thrive. Too many Logan children are lagging behind state and national averages on developmental indicators. Logan Together is a community-wide response to change this picture.

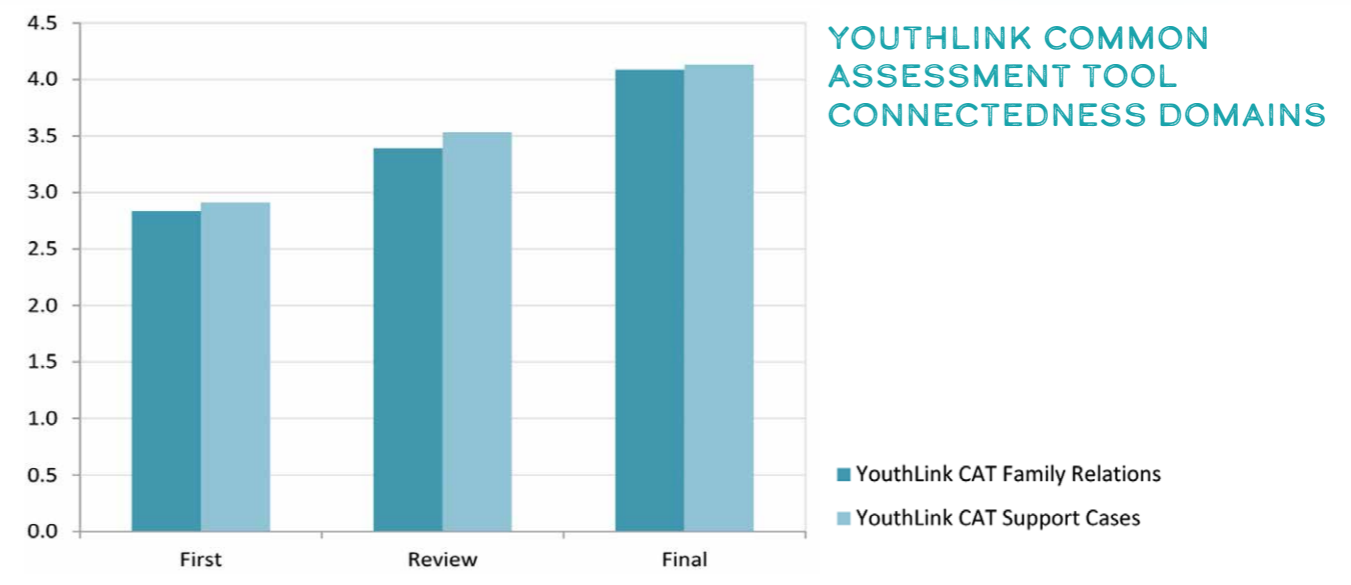


OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Most clients have some source of support when they come to YFS, whether it be from family, friends or community services. Overall, 95% of clients exiting our services are socially connected according to our Organisational Outcomes survey.

Many of our programs measure connectedness in different ways. For example our Intensive Family Support Service assesses social connections and family interactions, with clients making significant improvements in both. Youthlink clients improved their family relations and social connections – both of which are a focus for our work.

In our programs that use the SCORE outcomes measurement system, YFS clients improved on all connectedness outcomes. PHAMS clients saw the greatest improvements in community participation and family functioning; while Money Smart clients saw the greatest improvements in engagement with relevant support services.





Rail Trail trainees

CONNECTING THE DOTS

In 2016-17, YFS provided 16 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander jobseekers with traineeships through Skilling Queenslanders for Work. All the trainees gained a Certificate I in Conservation and Land Management qualification while clearing land on the disused Bethania to Beaudesert Rail Trail.

The Rail Trail project is managed by staff from Substation33. Our strong local linkages have contributed to the success of this program. The Rail Trail traineeship program incorporates cultural awareness activities supported by DATSIP, Mununjali Housing and Development Company Ltd and yourtown, led by an elder from the Scenic Rim's Indigenous Men's Group.

11 of these young people are now in paid work, including two in traineeships.



BRITTANY'S STORY

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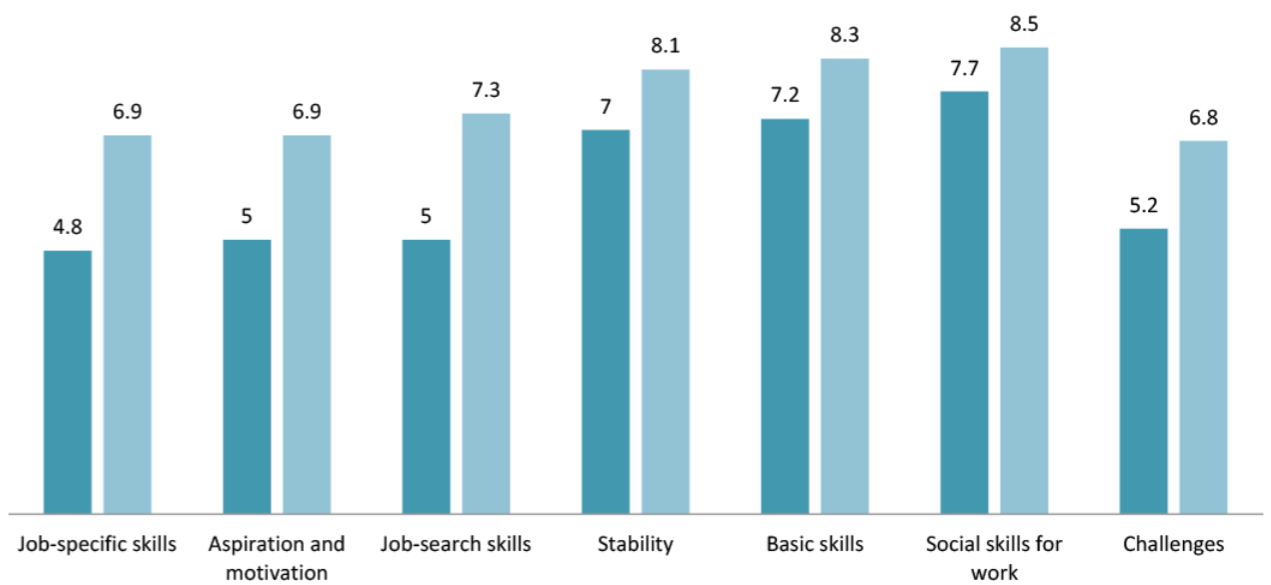
OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

YFS teams measure improvement in clients' skills in different ways depending on the team. Those programs that use the SCORE outcome measurement tool noted significant improvement in knowledge, skills and behaviours among clients, particularly in our MoneySmart and Financial Counselling areas where clients improved their financial literacy.

YouthLink clients had strong improvements in their engagement with schooling, while SHIFT clients reported a decrease in the impact of alcohol and drug use on performance at school or work.

ParentsNext used the WorkStar assessment tool with a sample of clients as part of an external evaluation of the program. Clients noted the greatest improvement in job-specific skills and job-search skills through their interaction with the program, but also improved their basic skills and social skills for work.

PARENTSNEXT WORKSTAR SKILLS MEASURES



SKILLS, EDUCATION & TRAINING

Skills and education are critical for independence and participation. Education is a key to escaping disadvantage, and skills such as communication, coping, money management, tenancy, control of emotions help people maintain stability.

Our Step by Step family support team undertook a process of development and improvement in 2016-17, working with a families expert to ensure our work with parents helps them build the skills they need to improve family functioning in sustainable ways. An evaluation of the program found that parents improved their knowledge, skills, behaviours, confidence to make decisions, engagement with support agencies, and impact of immediate crises.

Our Get Ready team continued to educate people in Logan, Redlands and the Gold Coast about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Over the course of the year, Get Ready helped more than 1,300 people with disability and their carers and supporters to prepare for the rollout of the NDIS in July 2018.

Looking forward: In 2017-18, YFS is developing the capacity of case managers across our organisation in crucial areas like parenting and child development, rapid rehousing and domestic violence safety planning.



The Mabel Mob at our ParentsNext building opening

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

YFS works with people to build hope and aspirations in many ways.

Our R4Respect initiative is based on hope that young people can change the way we see relationships. In 2016-17 our 15 R4Respect youth ambassadors talked with more than 5,000 young people about respect in relationships. They also used social media to engage with thousands more. In September 2016, R4Respect Ambassadors attended the international Prevalent & Preventable Domestic Violence international conference in Adelaide to share stories about young people leading change with delegates from around Australia, New Zealand, the Asia Pacific and Europe.

During the year, R4Respect partnered with Griffith University film students to produce some animated videos to prevent disrespectful or controlling behaviours like cat calling, stalking and locker room stalk. The seven "Bad Apple" videos feature fruit and vegetable puns to raise young people's awareness of the serious implications of behaviours that are often seen as harmless.

YFS' Reconciliation Action Plan is founded in hope. In 2016-17 we embedded the plan's themes of relationships, respect and opportunity in every YFS team. We are pleased to see that 13% of our staff, 21% of our case management clients and 8% of our case work clients identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the year under review. When we opened our new premises at 372 Kingston Road Slacks Creek in October 2016 we were pleased to include co-location space for the Logan District Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Elders.

Looking forward: In 2017-18, YFS will launch Sure Steps, a family coaching approach to help public housing tenants with young children identify and achieve aspirations for their families. We developed the approach in consultation with Logan Together and the Department of Housing and Public Works, and look forward to trialling it with 30 Logan families.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

The *Not Now, Not Ever* in Logan community campaign to prevent and reduce domestic and family violence in the City of Logan continues to gain support.

YFS joined with Federal, state and local government, businesses, organisations and services to take up the challenge to put an end to domestic and family violence. The community response asks Logan people to pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about domestic violence in our community.

As part of the campaign, the Rotary Clubs of Logan, Loganholme and Beenleigh have funded the production of a pocket Quick Help Guide outlining sources of support and information for Logan people experiencing violence.

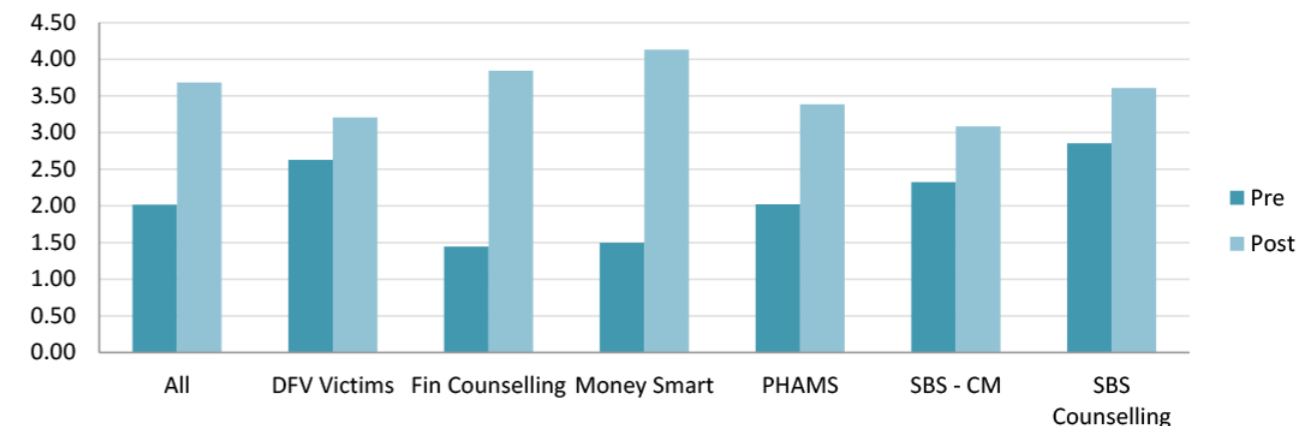


OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Hope for the future is measured in various ways by many YFS programs. For example we noted improvements in hope among clients of ParentsNext, which asks participants about their aspirations and motivation, and Step by Step family support, which uses the Parental Empowerment and Efficacy Measure (PEEM) to assess change in feeling good about the future, self and children and believing children will do well. Our YouthLink clients improved in their belief in their capacity to make changes, and their motivation to make changes.

Our services funded by the Department of Social Services used the SCORE tool to assess clients' confidence in their ability to make decisions, with strong improvements in most programs.

SCORE "CONFIDENCE TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS"



2016-17 STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

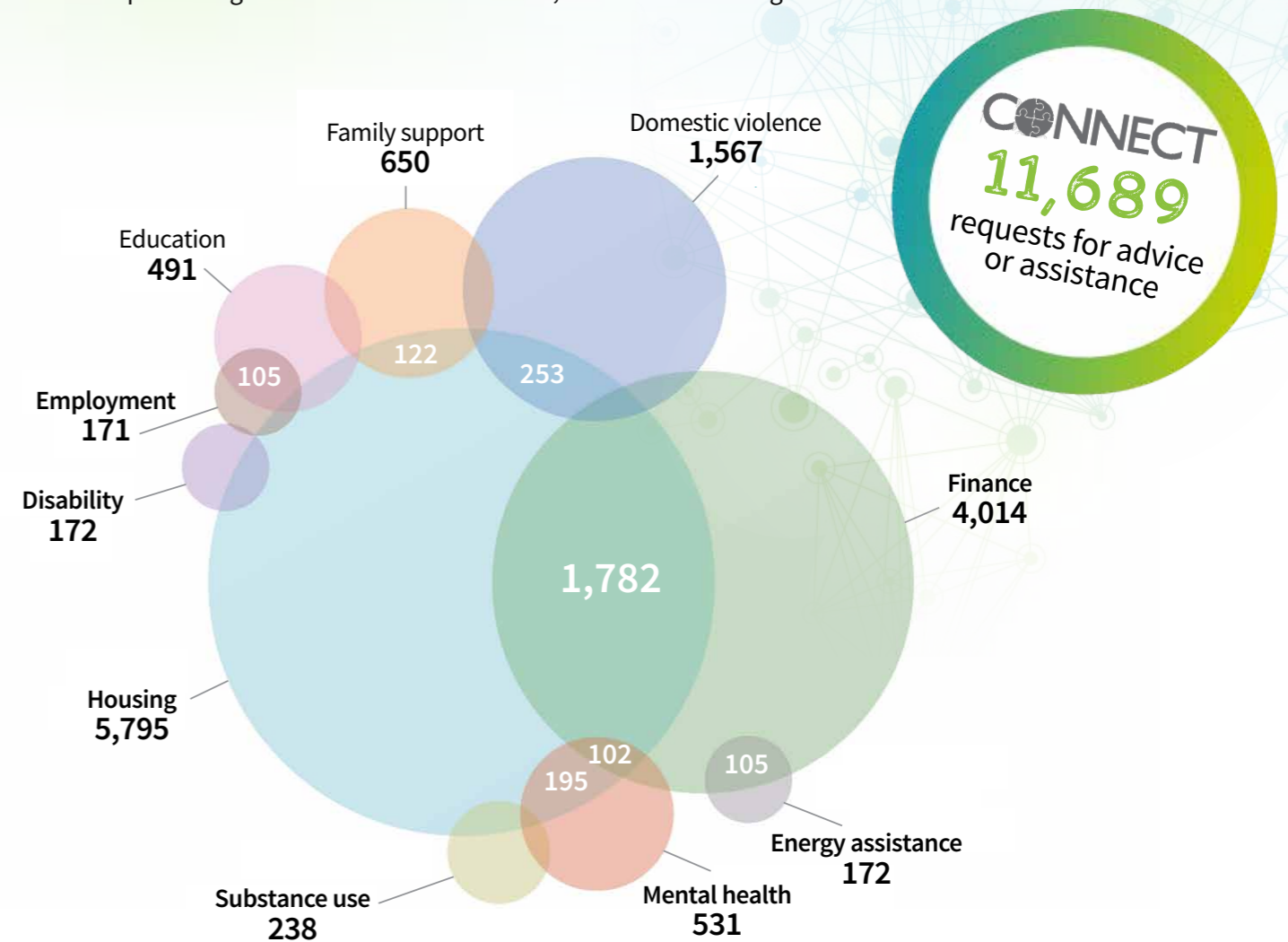
OUR SERVICES IN 2016-17

YFS continued to offer a diverse range of services as shown in the diagram below, working with more than **5,000** people in our case management and case work services.



YFS CONNECT PRESENTING ISSUES

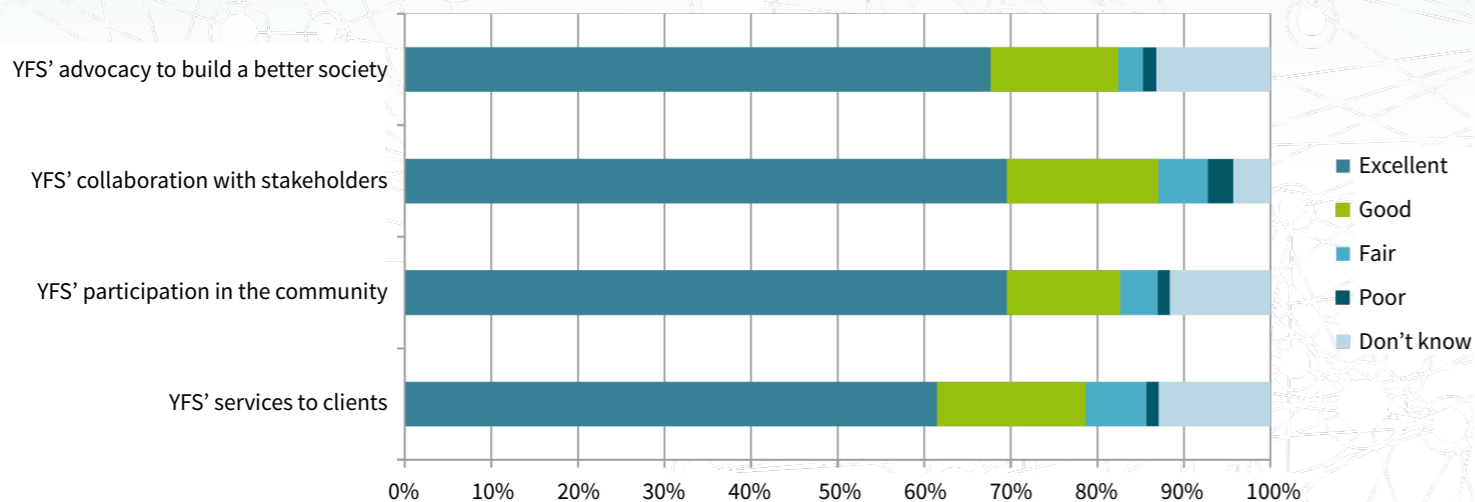
YFS Connect responded to more than 11,600 requests for information, advice or referral, nearly 1,500 more than in the previous year. Concerns about housing or homelessness issues and financial problems continued to dominate demand, with a significant number of people presenting with a combination of issues, as shown in the diagram below.



2016-17 STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

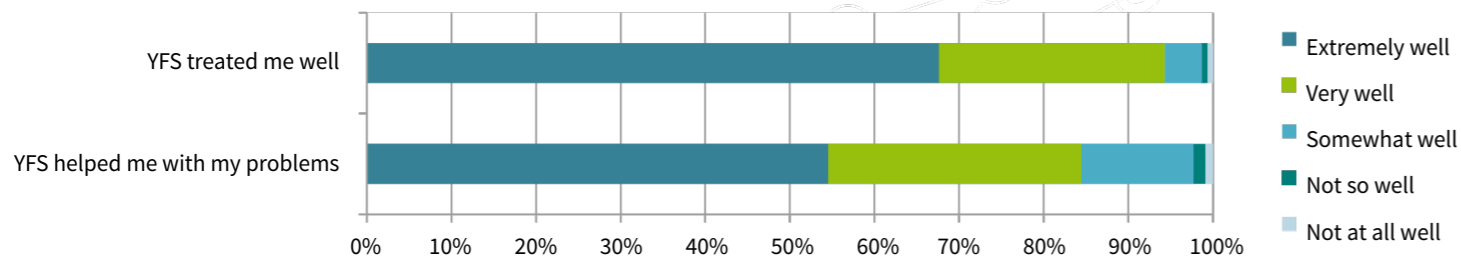
OUR STAKEHOLDERS

We survey stakeholders every two years about how YFS is performing. The 70 respondents to our most recent survey rated all aspects of our performance very positively.



OUR CLIENTS

In 2017 we changed the way we monitor client perceptions of our work, asking them to rate our services in terms of how we treated them and the difference we helped them achieve. The 300 clients who responded in April-June 2017 were overwhelmingly positive.



OUR ENTERPRISES

YFS continued to provide employment pathways through Substation33, our car wash business and our garden maintenance group.



43,353
Hours of work experience and volunteering



14,991
Hours of paid employment



152,911
Kilograms of electronic waste recycled

TASK



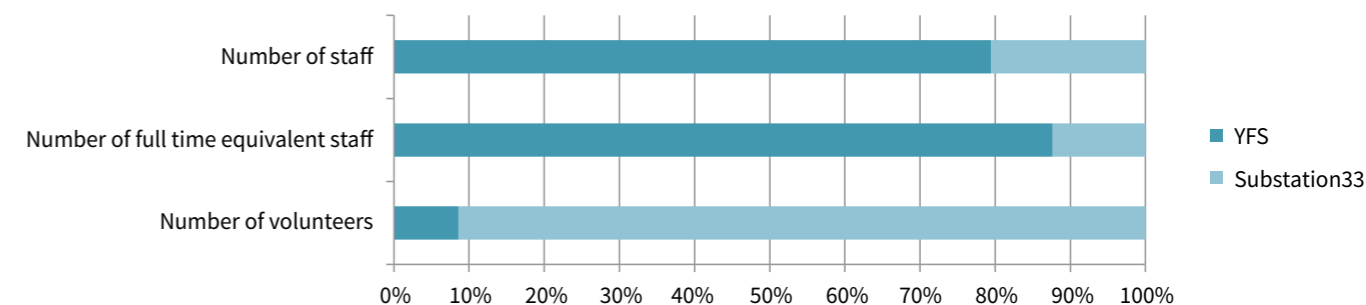
750
Hours of grounds maintenance



650
Number of cars washed

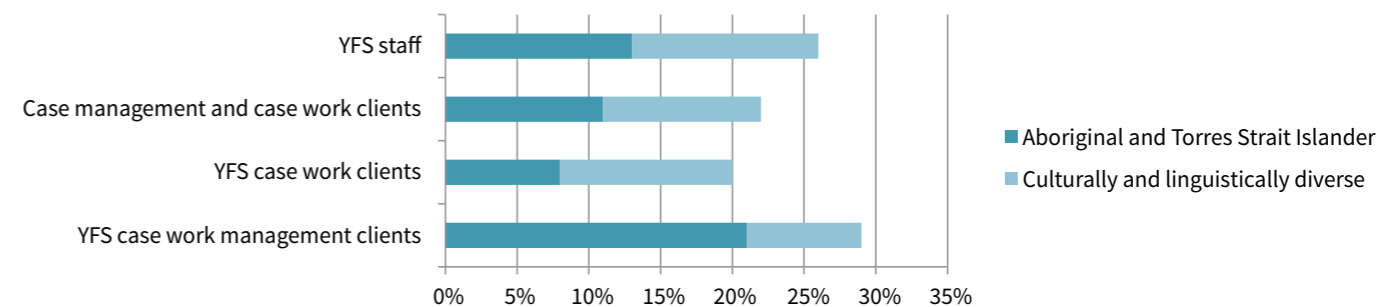
OUR STAFF

141 paid workers and **442** volunteers formed the YFS team in 2016-17 across all YFS services and Substation33.



OUR DIVERSITY

YFS clients and staff continued to reflect the diversity of the Logan community.



2016-17 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

YFS' revenue grew by 12.7% in the year ended 30 June 2017, a very creditable result in an increasingly competitive environment. The ParentsNext program, which started late in the 2015-16 financial year, was fully rolled out and contributed \$542,000 to our income. Our social enterprise continued to grow with income increasing by 34%. Substation33 won a significant contract during the year to manufacture flooded road warning systems for Logan City Council, worth \$360,000 in 2016-17. This is budgeted to grow to \$500,000 in the 2017-18 financial year.

Expenditure increased by 5.25%, achieved through a continuing focus on efficiency and cost control. This has enabled us to expand and develop our services to the Logan and surrounding communities without significantly adding to our cost base.

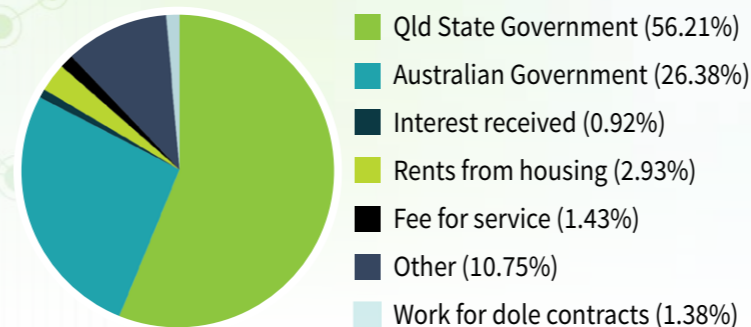
YFS continues to be in a very strong financial position. Our asset to liability ratio of 2.61 times and our current ratio of 2.96 times position us well to continue to provide innovative, high quality services to our community.

CURRENT RATIO UP TO
2.96
TIMES

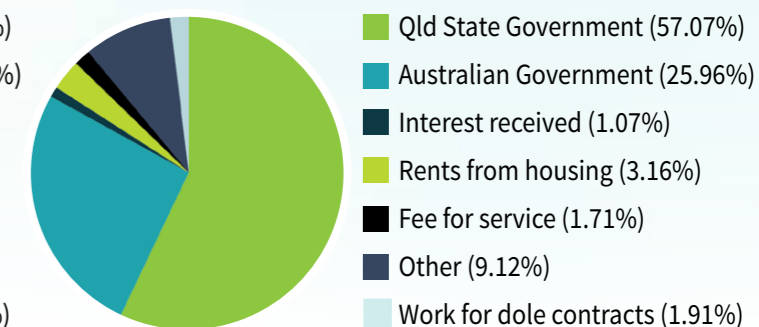
12.7%
GROWTH
in revenue
over 2015-16

INCOME COMPARISON

Income 2016 - 2017

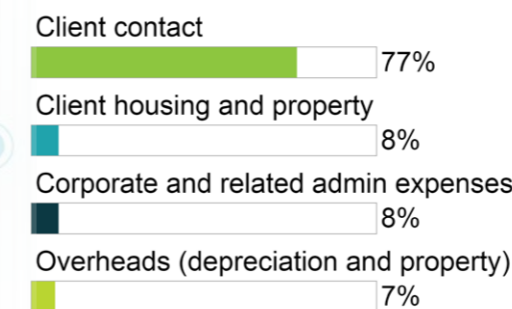


Income 2015 - 2016

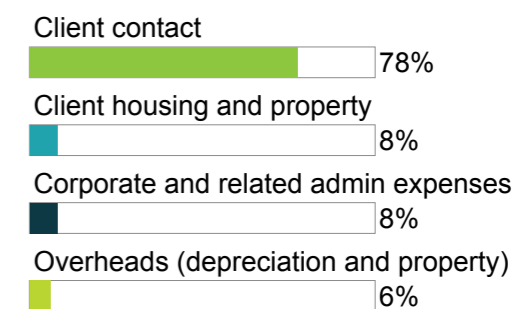


EXPENDITURE COMPARISON

Expenditure breakdown 2016 - 2017



Expenditure breakdown 2015 - 2016



KEY RATIOS COMPARISON

2017

Assets Ratio
Assets: \$14,481,805
Liabilities: \$5,547,081
Ratio: 2.61:1

Current Ratio
Current Assets: \$5,737,165
Current Liabilities: \$1,935,066
2.96:1

2016

Assets Ratio
Assets: \$13,500,454
Liabilities: \$5,492,500
Ratio: 2.46:1

Current Ratio
Current Assets: \$4,719,306
Current Liabilities: \$1,817,666
2.60:1

Read Bill's story
on page 22

Thanks to our supporters, sponsors and funding bodies.

Funding partners 2016-17

- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Australian Government Department of Employment
- Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works
- Queensland Department of Education and Training
- Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation
- Legal Aid Queensland
- Commonwealth Community Legal Services Program
- Salvation Army - Communities for Children
- Logan City Council
- Mater Health - SHIFT Drug and Alcohol
- AGL
- Amanda Flynn Foundation
- Tenants Qld - QSTARS
- Catholic Religions Australia, Queensland - Presentation Sisters
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Queensland Community Foundation

PANAPA'S STORY



“If I know someone who is struggling with their life I would inform them about YFS. YFS has been a godsend.”

As he speaks he tries to come to terms with the changes in his life. Panapa, 61, came from New Zealand 23 years ago, looking for new opportunities. Last year he had to stop working due to serious health issues.

He used to have a job and never thought he would struggle to pay his essential costs of living. He was referred to YFS by Queensland Housing in September because he fell behind on his rent. “I was very desperate. When I first walked into YFS I was dragging my feet. I couldn't afford my rent and later on my landlord gave me a week to vacate the property.”

YFS provided Panapa some emergency relief and helped him find a new place to live. “I fell into the Very High Need criteria. Once the bond was approved, YFS paid half and I paid the other half plus an extra two weeks rent. I moved in like a month ago.”

Panapa has four children and eight grandchildren but he enjoys living on his own. Sometimes, he says he feels lonely, but it doesn't last.

He worked closely with Kerri from YFS' Money Smart program. “Panapa came to YFS very motivated to improve his situation but unsure of what steps he needed to take. It has been great to be able to walk alongside him on his journey and provide support towards his goals” said Kerri. Finding a new place to live makes him feel a lot happier and relieved. “I wake up every day saying thank you for this new gift and a roof over my head. I felt I had a ton of bricks on my neck and shoulders before. It's like taking a huge weight off me.”

Panapa knows his efforts have not been in vain. His confidence has improved and he credits his worker's support for all the changes in his life. “I'm living and walking with purpose now. I feel like I'm somebody now. When I came to YFS I knew straight away that I was guided”.

Right now he is focused on taking care of his health but in the near future he would like to find some part time work and travel the world.

DANNIELLE'S STORY



“It feels good to be working again. I've got money. I go to the shops and sometimes I say to myself I can buy this and that. It's not that tight anymore.”

Despite looking and applying for different jobs, Dannielle, 27, felt like she was getting nowhere. She was dealing with financial difficulty and even though her main goal was to find work, she admits she wasn't confident enough to get it.

Dannielle is a single mother. She had to stop working after having her two children. Last year, Centrelink referred her to YFS' ParentsNext program where she was mentored by Rachel. Rachel says Dannielle wanted to look at career options but she was lacking the confidence and knowledge of where to start. “ParentsNext mentored her on employment and study options, resume techniques, and building confidence in her to apply for jobs or consider studying.” YFS also addressed her financial hardship by working on a payment plan for her rent arrears and providing advocacy to the real estate.

In March this year, Dannielle was offered a casual position at SnapFresh, Qantas' frozen meal manufacturing facility in Crestmead. “My ParentsNext worker was great. She sat down with me and helped me decide what I wanted to do to gain employment. She helped me with my resume, making it look better. She had many things in mind, but in the meantime I got a job. It was pretty quick.”

“At work, we pack all the meals. I love it. Just being back at work makes me feel better. I had been unemployed for two years.” Since she started, Dannielle has been working three to four days a week on average. “I do night shifts. I start at 4pm and finish at 11:30 pm. I take the kids to my mum's and pick them up on my way home. It works out good that it's at night. I could still do everything else I need to do. My mum works during the days so we just swap. I don't have to pay day care.” Dannielle's life is coming together now and she says she feels calmed.

“When you're struggling you just don't know where to get money; you keep thinking; what else can I do? I feel happy now that I can provide for my kids. There's a way to do it now. Before, I was just stuck.” She's very grateful to have a job and just wants to keep working hard and stay there for as long as she can.

“I'd like to have a holiday. Travel overseas. I'm feeling more confident now. I know that I can do things and achieve what I want.”

TINA* & MEL'S STORY



“We work closely with families to enhance their safety at a particular time and engage them in the process of change.”

Creating a safe environment where families with children can thrive is paramount for YFS' Intensive Family Support Program Manager, Melissa.

Melissa has been leading the Intensive Family Support program for two years now. She explains the service aims to increase safety and decrease risk for the family and the children. “Safety is about increasing parents' and children's sense of belonging, their sense of self in knowing that they have a safe place. It's also about identifying what concerns a family has and what we can do to address those concerns. Safety is a big part of their hierarchy of needs.”

When working with families Melissa models how they can incorporate safety into their lives and encourages them to see what their lives would look like once it is in place. “An initial assessment helps us identify if the family is at medium or high risk and the possibility of that risk happening again. We also have safety assessments which identify harm indicators. If we're unable to put a safety plan in place we need to make a report to Child Safety.”

Melissa says it all comes down to listening to what's going on for the family in order to be able to create that environment where

collaboration and trust can also increase. She describes Tina's case as a clear example of the work we do on a daily basis.

Queensland Health referred Tina* to YFS over a year ago. She was going through domestic violence and struggling with mental health issues. Following a family court order she was living with her four children at her parents' house. Tina* and her children all lived in one bedroom. Two domestic violence perpetrators had been identified. Only one was still on the scene. He was the father of the youngest child and he was still financially and emotionally abusing her. Tina* knew there was domestic violence happening but she didn't know what her options could be and wasn't aware of the impact on her children.

YFS supported Tina* by creating a plan and setting some goals, including introducing routines for her children, organising her household, taking care of her mental health and increasing her safety. Along her journey Tina* became very clear about her options and her boundaries, the supports she wanted to use and what she wanted in her family court orders. With YFS' help Tina* re-established the family court order so that contact with her former partner would be supervised, her mother would act as a safety person and living with her parents was no longer a condition. She also applied for a protection order in which her three older children were actually included. Tina* worked with the Intensive Family Support program for 13 months. After that, she joined YFS' Step by Step program where she attended counselling and she re-engages if she feels she needs to.

Through YFS, Tina* received legal advice and advocacy and gained money management skills. Today she feels safe for the first time in a while and she lives with her children in her own home. Melissa says the Intensive Family Support service provides different solutions or responses for every person considering their circumstances could be different.

“Safety always comes first. We can't do any work with families unless we have safety in place. All of the other work that we do can't be achieved until that happens. Safety plans can be done around domestic violence, substance misuse and abuse and neglect. We work closely with families to enhance their safety at a particular time and engage them in the process of change. We can extend our work up to 14 months depending on where the family is and the risks involved. It may take a while for significant change to happen within a family but it definitely happens.”

*Name changed for privacy

MAVIS' STORY



“I planned to go back into workforce in 2013 but things started to go wrong. It's been a big uphill battle since then but I feel I'm ready now.”

Single parent Mavis, 48, came to YFS in August 2016 following a friend's recommendation. She was homeless and experiencing depression and anxiety. She wasn't coping. “I was living in my car. I had to remove myself from a very bad environment and I didn't have anywhere to go. I stayed in my car for about six weeks,” she says.

YFS' Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) program helped Mavis find emergency accommodation. “Within three months my worker helped me get back on my feet and get through my everyday business.” After three months, her application for permanent housing was also approved. She still lives in that house with her six year old son and her 15 year old son comes to visit them often.

“When I had issues and I couldn't cope, my worker would help get me to the appointments or prompt me. In the process of applying for permanent housing, basically YFS did it all. If it wasn't for YFS I wouldn't have a place to live.”

With the help of her worker, Isabel, Mavis addressed her depression and anxiety problems. She went through counselling and group work and she now sees a psychologist. Isabel says Mavis has faced many challenges in her life but she continues to be strong and reach her goals.

“She is a reflective person. She knows and understands how hard she has worked to improve her life,” Isabel said. Mavis says she feel really good now. “All this has been good for building my confidence.” Mavis wants to get back on track and find herself a job. She started working when she was 15 and stopped in 2009 when she fell pregnant. “I planned to go back into workforce in 2013 but things started to go wrong. It's been a big uphill battle since then, but I feel I'm ready now. I've recently completed two different workshops for depression and for getting back into the workforce. These are things that I'm saying yes to, to build my confidence. Before this I wouldn't talk to anyone.”

Mavis is proud of herself. “From doing nothing but going to the shops, buying my food, bringing my son to school and going home and shutting out, I believe I've come a long way.” She describes herself as a people person and is now thinking about helping others. “Knowing how I felt back then to what I'm feeling now, to where my future is, I feel I could help people like that too.”

BRITTANY'S STORY



Brittany, 19, admits her journey hasn't been easy as she has faced many obstacles in her life. "I've been put through a lot even when I was a kid. I wasn't in a good place. Everything is different now," she says.

She was five months pregnant and considering adoption when she came to YFS in September 2015. She was struggling with mental health issues as a consequence of an abusive relationship. She had to leave her ex-partner's parents' place and she needed a place to live. "I was feeling anxious, sad and stressed out. The only thing available was emergency housing but because I was pregnant I couldn't stay there."

Brittany lived in share housing for a while, but wanted to find a place of her own. Renae, her worker from YFS' Step by Step program, helped her send applications to different places. At the same time, through counselling, Brittany's mental health gradually started to improve. "My worker helped me become a more confident and comfortable person around others," she says. Brittany also changed her mind about adoption. "When I had my son in January 2016, I didn't want to let go of him. I became very protective."

"I had absolutely nothing at all. YFS basically helped me find everything I needed for the baby. They got it for me within a day or two." In March 2016, Brittany moved into private rental on the same street her mother lives. She still lives there with her son.

Brittany's worker Renae says she's made several long term changes in her life while working together. "She has developed skills in parenting, budgeting, confidence and understanding relationships. She is very independent and can now confidently recognise this herself," Renae said.

Brittany says that some days things still get a bit too much for her to deal with but she feels much better. "My worker was extremely helpful and always checked on me and my son," she said. Brittany's son goes to day care two days a week and she is looking for a job. She is happy with all the changes in her life and has many things in mind for the future. "I can see myself traveling together with my son, just making good memories. One day I will have a nice perfect life."

"I definitely recommend YFS. They were extremely helpful. They can help you with housing, counselling or basically around anything you need to achieve."

CAPREZE'S STORY



When Capreze, 19, realised the impact of her father's absence in her life, she turned to drugs to cope. She was used to feeling sad until earlier this year, when she decided to look for help. "I wanted to give YFS a go. I had seen YFS' sign before and I just walked in. When I came in I was a bit shy and nervous and then my confidence grew from there."

Capreze lives with her family. She likes listening to music and helping others. She recently started a new job as a Customer Service Representative at a fish & chip shop in Daisy Hill. She came to YFS in January and worked closely with Mariann from the SHIFT program. "I started counselling and started to feel better. Mariann helped me get my licence and also helped me with my resume and a few job interviews."

As Capreze's confidence kept improving she also asked YFS' Employer Engagement and Transition Officer, Kiran, to help her to look for work. "I wanted to get somewhere in life," she says. Kiran mentored Capreze and then successfully connected her with her current employer. He says Capreze was determined to make the most out of any opportunity that would come along. "She was so motivated, she made it happen. She just wants to learn and do more every day."

Caroline the shop owner agrees. "Capreze has come along well. She follows directions; she's happy to serve customers and makes best use of her time. She is definitely willing to learn. She asks when she's not sure about something. She will do anything; whatever needs to be done, gets done," Caroline said. Capreze admits she's learnt great things along the way. "I asked for help because I wanted to get out there, go back to work. The opportunity came up. I had a trial session for four hours one day and I got the job because I did so well."

She's still attending counselling and she says she now has a better understanding of life. "After counselling I feel good. It's really helped me. I completely stopped doing drugs. I know I'm doing really well. It has helped me to go further in life and not be afraid to try new things or ask for help." Becoming more confident has helped Capreze to continue with her life. She now wants to study. "My next move is to get into aged care. I'm planning to get my Certificate. Being able to give back to people and helping others makes me happy."

"I tell people YFS is such a good service. They help people with whatever they're going through in life. You can trust them. They treat people like family. You can talk to them about anything."



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YFS acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are Australia's First Peoples and the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet and work.

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