

Annual Impact Report

Creating generational change in mental health starts here.



Table of Contents



Introduction:

- This is amazing progress, but there's so much more to do
- Returning to Smiling Mind



The stats:

Mental illness is an enduring crisis in Australia, but the evidence shows that prevention and early intervention can reduce its prevalence and impact



Impact to date:

Over 11 years we have supported millions of people



Large scale programs in 2023

- Resilient Families Program
- Smiling Mind in Schools



Major initiatives in 2023:

- Smiling Mind Generation
- Our Kids Count



More 2023 highlights:

- Walk for Kids' Mental Health
- Supporting workplaces
- Australian Mental Wellbeing Index



Evolving to empower Australians with lifelong mental fitness



FY23 Financial Statement

Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise and pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Elders past, present and future from the different First Nations across this country. We acknowledge the importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community for the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.



NPY Women's Council, 2019 ©

Introduction



This is amazing progress, but there's so much more to do.

Smiling Mind continues to demonstrate leadership in the preventative mental health space by proving high impact and efficacy for young people and families. This report not only provides tangible evidence of this but highlights the integral role our donors, supporters and broader community play in achieving this impact. It is their generosity, energy and wisdom that has been the catalyst for us embarking on one of our most ambitious phases yet, the Smiling Mind Generation. Seeing the Smiling Mind Generation come to life both online and through live activations, is the first of many steps we will be taking to ensure our evidence informed programs reach 100% of primary schools in the coming years.

James and I did not start Smiling Mind 11 years ago to continue the status quo. We are proud of the high impact our team and community has achieved but there is so much more to do. Our vision is bolder than ever to match the need within the Australian community. It has become clear that to create generational change in mental health and wellbeing, crosssector collaboration and innovation are essential. Smiling Mind is more committed than ever to be the driver of this change.

I look forward to collaborating with even more believers, innovators and changemakers in 2024. Together, we can (and will) create generational change in mental health in this country. For those who have contributed to our journey so far, we are deeply grateful. For those yet to begin, welcome to being part of the change we urgently need to see in our community.



Returning to Smiling Mind

The last time I was at Smiling Mind, as COO, Australia was in lockdown and we created immediate evidence-based resources to urgently support everyday Australians and health workers with one-of-a-kind digital tools, to empower them with the skills they needed to thrive.

The pandemic dramatically exposed the sombre truth that has been central to Smiling Mind's purpose - that mental health continues to deteriorate at alarming rates and young people are falling through the cracks.

Smiling Mind's deep-rooted foundation of innovation and positive energy remains steadfast. Harnessing this upon my return as CEO, we are now perfectly placed to not only prevent mental illness, but to empower people to flourish and live healthy, fruitful lives.

The opportunity to return and lead this high impact organisation is a huge honour, with an even clearer path forward to expand our impact. 2024 will see Smiling Mind continue to pioneer new ways to support mental wellbeing for all Australians for generations to come. For now, join me in acknowledging all we achieved in 2023.

Sarah La Roche CEO

Janey Martino

Chair and Co-Founder

We're here to help every mind thrive

With over 10 years experience focused on helping minds thrive, Smiling Mind uses technology to deliver evidence based mental health benefits at scale. We support people across schools, their homes and workplaces. we're proud to have impacted the lives of millions of Australians.

Our mission is to help every mind thrive, providing proactive tools and programs to promote lifelong mental fitness. Our dedicated team embody our organisational values in delivering impact, everyday. We are:



100% People First

We are dedicated to creating impact with people at the centre of everything we do.



Curious

We ask questions and we strive to keep learning and improving.



Intentional

We know action is required to achieve our goals and we're purposeful in every action we take.



Changemakers

We challenge the status quo and pave new paths towards helping every mind thrive.



Mental illness is an enduring crisis in Australia, but the evidence shows that prevention and early intervention can reduce its prevalence and impact



7 out of 10 of the most common presentations to pediatricians are related to mental health needs.¹



Although 50% of all adult mental health issues emerge before the age of 14², there are few widely accessible, age-appropriate preventative mental health programs for Australian children aged 5-12 and their parents to use anytime, anywhere.



The number of young people aged 16-24 experiencing mental ill-health is up 50% over the past 15 years $^{\rm 3}$

The number of young people experiencing mental ill-health has risen by almost 50% over the past 15 years.

Australia's National Study or Mental Health and Wellbeing, revealed that during 2020-2022, a staggering 38.8% of people aged 16-24 years had a 12-month mental disorders, which refers to the number of people who met the diagnostic criteria for having a mental disorder at some time in their life and had sufficient symptoms of that disorder in the 12 months prior to when they completed the survey. This is despite estimates that at least 50-60% of youth in Australia are not receiving the mental health treatment they require.⁴



Did you know?

While youth mental health (12+)

issues have become widely documented, many people aren't aware that younger kids are also experiencing declines in mental health. Between 2020-2022, among kids aged 6-12 years: Social Anxiety Disorder increased by 45%, ADHD by 42%, peer relationship difficulties by 39% and educational and learning concerns by 35%.⁵



Evidence shows that

strategies to promote mental health and prevent mental illness during early childhood have greater outcomes than those delayed until later in life.⁶ 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24.² Despite the rising prevalence of mental ill-health amongst children, only half (51.1%) of the children with a mental illness had seen a health professional in the last year.⁷

Failure to invest in prevention initiatives is costly. KPMG estimates that greater investment in prevention and early intervention—including digital interventions —would result in savings of approximately \$532M for Australians in the short term.⁸

¹National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2021

- ²Kessler, RD et al. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62: p. 593-602
- ³National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, ABS Website, accessed 18 January 2024

4AIHW, 2020

⁵Australian Psychological Society, 2022

⁶Stelmach R, Kocher EL, Kataria I, et al, The global return on investment from preventing and treating adolescent mental disorders and suicide: a modelling study BMJ Global Health 2022;7:e007759.

⁷Sawyer, M. G., Reece, C. E., A. C., Johnson, S. E., Hiscock, H., Lawrence, D. (2018). Access to health professionals by children and adolescents with mental disorders; Are we meeting their needs?. Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 52(10), 972-982

⁸KPMG evaluation of Headspace, 2022. https://www.health.gov.au/resources/ publications/evaluation-of-the-national-headspace- program

Impact to date

Over 11 years we have supported millions of people



What people say about Smiling Mind

App 📋

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Counselling was not effective for my little boy and medication was not a path I wanted to go down. Smiling Mind was a fantastic tool for helping my anxious child to fall asleep at night. After using this with him I realised it was a good tool for me to reduce my stress at the end of the day and as a tool to make me more resilient at the start of the day.

— Caregiver

Workplace 😑

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Smiling Mind has had such a huge positive impact on my life in such a short period of time! Some days I only have time for a 3-minute meditation, and even in such a short period, I'm left feeling relaxed, centered and better equipped to handle challenges and stressful situations in my studies, workplace or in general. This app has changed my life in such a wonderful way and I'm so grateful.

— Natalie Costa, Eastern Health

School 👘

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As a school counsellor I have had the opportunity to teach all grade levels in a social emotional class setting, and we have used Smiling Mind mindfulness lessons at least 3 days a week for the past 6 years. The students absolutely love it and ask for it on days we aren't scheduled to practice. I have NEVER had a student tell me that they didn't like the lessons, they are so very helpful to all age levels. Teens and pre-teens tell me often that they download the app on their devices to use outside of school because they see such benefits.

- Katie Meredith, School Counsellor

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"I use the Smiling Mind app in the classroom as a transition from the break back to the classroom. I find it is something that helps the children refocus before we begin to work. As a teacher, it also provides valuable time to prepare the next lesson so when the children refocus everything is ready to go.

— Bey Hayes, Teacher

Over the years, many studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the Smiling Mind app across different audiences.

In 2023, researchers from Dublin City University found compelling results regarding the efficacy of the Smiling Mind app in reducing burnout among educators from special education schools over a 10 day period. **Their study revealed that educators using the app experienced a significant decrease in personal burnout compared to a control group.** This decrease was sustained for at least two weeks after the intervention period. These significant outcomes highlight the invaluable role technology-driven solutions, like the Smiling Mind app, could play in enhancing the wellbeing of educators in special education schools.⁹

⁹Russell, A., & Smyth, S. (2023). Using a 10-day mindfulness-based app intervention to reduce burnout in special educators. Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 23(4), 278-289. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12599

Resilient Families Program - Supporting families at home



The Resilient Families Program pilot was found to support children and their families with applying resilience-related skills within their everyday lives. The program was developed with the support of the NSW Government and VicHealth.

In February 2023, Smiling Mind launched the Resilient Families pilot program as the newest addition to our app, to empower caregivers to nurture resilience in their children aged 7-12 years.

The program was informed by in-depth research, including a series of focus groups and interviews with children and their caregivers, that revealed the biggest challenges families were facing when it comes to resilience.

Read: Why Building Resilience in Children Begins at Home

In translating the research findings into practice, six learning modules were created comprising of psychoeducational content for children and their parents/carers. Program content features meditations, stories and interactive activities to cater to a variety of learning styles.













Emotions

Relationships

Self-Worth

Perspective

Flexible Thinking

Taking Responsibility

> Watch: Supporting social and emotional skills at home

Resilient Families Program - Impact Results

The Resilient Families pilot program was successful in supporting caregivers and children alike to build their resilience-related skills and overall wellbeing.



Caregivers provided a range of insights reflecting the positive impact and benefits the program provided to their family, as well as providing a range of suggestions for further program expansion.



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Thank you so much for giving us language to discuss the complex world of emotions, thoughts and feelings with our children. And for giving us and our kids the skills and tools to feel empowered with this complex task of living with a human mind. And for helping us to feel normal, even when we feel overwhelmed.

— Caregiver

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I learned a new way for me to be very calm and get closer to friends and family.

— Year 3 Child

Smiling Mind in Schools - Overview

The Smiling Mind Primary School Program is an evidence-based approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children. Delivered in classrooms and home environments through digital, skills-based social and emotional learning, it is aligned to the Australian curriculum and is supported by state and federal governments.

The program supports social and emotional skill development in children, and overall mental health through:



A comprehensive Primary Classroom Curriculum, with lessons, digital resources and classroom activities designed to build social and emotional skills for primary year levels 1-6



Educator training via an online learning hub, giving teachers the knowledge and confidence to implement the program within the classroom



Impact measurement tools, to assess the benefits of the program within schools



Ongoing support and guidance from the Smiling Mind Support Team

Supplementary resources and tools for educators, school leaders, parents and more.



Smiling Mind in Schools - Student Feedback

Across 2023 we received survey results from 6,729 primary students, with over half of students reporting using Smiling Mind within the classroom multiple times a week (54%), and 1 in 7 students (14%) using the program daily. More frequent use, and taking the program beyond the classroom, were associated with higher levels of student wellbeing outcomes. Students say they learned...

66 Bottling up emotions is not actually a good habit for you **66** I learned how to calm to do - instead managing and myself down when I am understanding your emotions upset or angry. It's really is much more helpful and helpful at home beneficial — Year 6 Child — Year 6 Child **66** To notice your emotions and feelings, but not try to change them — Year 6 Child **66** Feeling sad or mad **66** I have learnt is okay, you just need to to be more selfknow how to regulate it. compassionate — Year 4 Child — Year 4 Child

Smiling Mind in Schools - Impact Results

With Government support, in 2023 we worked with 979 Australian primary schools, including 21,728 educators, 13,781 non-teaching staff and 268,027 students, and demonstrated the positive impacts of our program across the board.

The Australian Government Department of Education enabled a significant number of schools from across the nation to participate through its Emerging Priorities Program.

This included the onboarding of new Smiling Mind schools, and enabled continued access and support for schools already participating in our program.



Smiling Mind Primary School Program -National Reach



Our Regional & Rural program, supported by the Australian Government Department of Health, concluded in 2023 after three-years of activity.

This program focused on supporting geographically diverse schools that often experience barriers to access, as well as communities that were most severely impacted by natural disasters, including floods and bushfires. Many of these schools went on to receive ongoing support through the Emerging Priorities Program.

Evaluation of the Regional and Rural program by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) showed high satisfaction among staff and positive impacts of the program on students.



of school staff were satisfied with the Smiling Mind program overall, with 68% saying they were 'very satisfied'



of students found the program to be enjoyable



of students reported wellbeing benefits, including being more focussed on school work (33%), ability to keep calm during stressful times (29%), and life being easier to manage (24%)

Smiling Mind Generation - Creating generational change in mental health



Pioneering systemic change in mental health, with children and prevention at the centre.

This year in partnership with DECJUBA Foundation, we launched the Smiling Mind Generation as <u>a revolutionary approach to mental health</u> for Australian children and families.

The Smiling Mind Generation is a social movement, pioneering a digital approach to mental health and has big plans to reach children in Australia with the evidence-based tools and mental fitness skills needed to underpin good mental health and resilience from an early age.

We do this with a 360° approach, engaging the most influential people and systems in a child's life: parents, teachers and health professionals. Our whole community approach aims to lead a paradigm shift towards mental health and physical health being treated with equal importance and mental fitness being actively practised and maintained by every Australian. Our goal is to support Australian children to build resilience and confidence, to understand and regulate their emotions, and become more focused and selfaware. We will support adults to help raise children who are connected, compassionate and well-equipped to deal with life's ups and downs.

The Smiling Mind Generation will be the first group of people who collectively have the skills to look after their mental wellbeing before illness prevails. Imagine the benefits of a world in which generations of young people have the skills they need to thrive, face challenges with resilience and ultimately, experience less mental ill-health.

Smile Station activation

In partnership with DECJUBA Foundation and Westfield Shopping Centres, the Smile Station tours nationally, bringing mental fitness to life for minds of all ages and stages, in shopping centres on school holidays. Over 6.2k customers came through the Southland activation—with nearly 700 customers a day engaging with the space. The activation reached a further 400K+ through <u>media</u>, digital screen advertising and activation and social media, including a post with ambassador, <u>Adele Barbaro</u>. We can't wait to bring the Smile Station to life in NSW, QLD, WA and SA in 2024.





Smiling Mind Generation Hub

The digital <u>Smiling Mind Generation Hub</u> is home to practical, research-led resources designed for parents, teachers and health professionals to help lead generational change in mental health. The Smiling Mind Generation has been joined by ambassadors to support the key audience groups: <u>Dr Preeya Alexander</u>, <u>Cass Furst</u>, and <u>Adele Barbaro</u>.

These passionate ambassadors actively promote and authentically contribute to the hub, driving further organic social media reach and engagement.



Our Kids Count - Championing children's mental health



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The Our Kids Count Campaign was a national movement calling for transformation in how we promote children's mental health and wellbeing—and more broadly to the way children's needs are prioritised nationally.

In our first major advocacy campaign, more than 11,000 people rallied behind Smiling Mind including parents, mental health professionals, teachers and deeply concerned individuals. Every signature and comment on the Our Kids Count Petition highlighted Australians' desire to seek change, with people sharing their everyday experiences of a broken system.

Read and download the campaign report

Our Kids Count called for 5 key actions:

- Appoint a federal Minister for Children to advocate for the specific needs of children across policy areas federally. Success requires a whole of Government, coordinated approach.
- Raise government investment in the primary prevention of mental illness to 5% of all mental health expenditure to promote mental wellbeing. Less than 1% of Federal Government expenditure on mental health goes towards preventing the onset of conditions and keeping people mentally healthy. We need to urgently rebalance this.
- Prioritise children's mental health and wellbeing with the funded implementation of The National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy was developed after extensive consultation and has broad support—it's time to put this into action.
 - Deliver a regular, nation-wide survey of Australian children's mental health to support effective decision making and service design and delivery.
 - Launch a National Children's Mental Health Day as part of Australia's Mental Health Awareness Month, to raise awareness of children's mental health nationally.

Our Kids Count - Reasons for support

People signing include parents, mental health professionals, teachers and deeply concerned individuals—all rallying for change and sharing their everyday experiences of a broken system.

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I believe that children tend to be invisible to policy makers.

— Michelle Jones, Footscray

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As a mother with a 9 year old daughter who has anxiety already, the mental health sector needs a BIG overhaul. It's a very big issue that needs resolve.

— Amy Uren, Hotham

66

We expect people to go and find help. But families with complex problems struggle to find the help they need. Young children who are suicidal and seriously ill are told to go away and find private psychiatrist. But they're not easy to find and they're very expensive.

 Anne Hollonds, National Children's Commissioner

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We've seen a real increase in the number of mental health referrals for anxiety and even things like self-harm, which used to be an issue more for teenagers-that is very concerning.

- Cassie Xintavelonis, Child Psychologist

Our Kids Count - Media Engagement

The campaign received extensive national coverage across print, broadcast TV, radio and digital media with an estimated audience reach of approximately 180,650,000*.

In November 2023, Independent Federal MP Zali Steggall OAM advocated on behalf of Smiling Mind for this much-needed change and <u>presented</u> <u>our call for action to the House of Representatives.</u>



Media Headlines

Smiling Mind calls for dedicated federal minister to address child mental health problem

Published by The Daily Telegraph, The Herald Sun, Courier Mail, The Advertiser, Gold Coast Bulletin, The Mercury, Cairns Post, Toowoomba Chronicle, NT News, Townsville Bulletin and Geelong Advertiser, with an **estimated reach of 9,100,000 Australians.**

Daily Telegraph

Herald Sun	The Chronicle
Courier Mail	Bulletin
The Advertiser	NT News
Gold Bulletin	Cairns Post
MERCURY	Advertiser

The mental health toll of COVID on kids

Aired on A Current Affair, with an **estimated reach** of 1,380,000 Australians



Children's mental health is worsening. Where is the minister for primary kids?

Published by The Age, Sydney Morning Herald, WA Today and Brisbane Times, with an **estimated** reach of **12,000,000 Australians**.

THE AGE

The Sydney Morning Herald

WAtoday Brisbane Times

*Media reach is not unique, the same person may have been reached multiple times across the campaign.

Walk for Kids' Mental Health

Walk for Kids' Mental Health is Smiling Mind's largest annual fundraising event. For the second year running, our incredible community stepped up to support Smiling Mind and advocate for children's mental health —this time in sleek Walk for Kids' Mental Health t-shirts courtesy of DECJUBA. It's clear to see the passion and alignment they feel for Smiling Mind's mission, with people proudly promoting our cause across social media and to their networks.

Our community raised almost \$350K to support children's mental health and wellbeing and walked a huge 615,600 minutes throughout November. That's more than 427 days—over a full year of walking!

These efforts were supported and motivated by generous prize donations from Kmart and Dulux, and Dollar Match Days from MYOB.



\$350K

Raised



Minutes walked



Supporting workplaces

By the end of 2023, we are proud to have helped support 330+ mindful workplace partners with 50K+ participants. Empowering 50K+ employees with premium app access, in-person workshops and an expert-led mental fitness community.



Small Business Program

With another year of support from our Official Small Business Partner, MYOB, we have extended our free mindfulness program for small business owners and operators. The in-app program supports small business owners and their teams to build their mental fitness, using practical mental wellbeing strategies—including meditations, exercises, and discovery activities.

Our years-long partnership with MYOB played an integral role in supporting Smiling Mind's fundraisers in 2023. They contributed to significant dollar-matching campaigns during our Mid-year Tax Appeal Fundraiser and our annual Walk for Kids' Mental Health.

To support Australians through tough economic circumstances throughout 2023, MYOB also partnered with Smiling Mind for an article on <u>how to prioritise</u> wellbeing while under financial stress.



Australia Mental Wellbeing Index

With KPMG, we checked in on the everyday mental wellbeing of Australians.

Initially launched in August 2022 by Smiling Mind and KPMG, the Australian Mental Wellbeing Index (AMWI) is one of the first, and largest, indices of its type to highlight specific skills and outcomes contributing to everyday mental wellbeing of Australians aged 18 years and above.

This year's annual report collected 782,253 surveys from 192,337 people, and found that Australians continue to grapple with their mental wellbeing, with nearly a third (29%) reporting poor overall levels of mental wellbeing.

Australians exhibit the lowest wellbeing scores in areas of focus and concentration (44%), stress (39%) and sleep (35%).

In a first for the AMWI, the relationship between mental wellbeing and age was explored. Some notable differences were found between younger and older Australians. Young people aged 18-24 showed the lowest level of mental wellbeing, compared to all other age groups, particularly when compared to adults over the age of 65. This pattern is consistent with the findings from the ABS 2020-22 National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing¹⁰.

> Read the latest Australian Mental Wellbeing Index



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¹⁰Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020-2022), <u>National Study of Mental Health</u> and <u>Wellbeing</u>, ABS Website, accessed 7 February 2024.

Evolving to empower Australians with lifelong mental fitness



In 2023 Smiling Mind concluded an extensive research project analysing the skills that underpin mental wellbeing. This has informed the development of the Smiling Mind Mental Fitness Model.

Evidence shows that a number of factors are associated with positive mental wellbeing, and if practised proactively can protect against the symptoms of mental illness. By developing these skills through intentional practice, we're better able to navigate the ups and downs of life. Mental fitness skills can also lessen the severity and duration of mental illness symptoms.

In the years ahead, we are committed to revolutionising the way people think, feel, talk about, and nurture their mental health. The Smiling Mind Mental Fitness Model is a full, evidence-based skills framework that includes five key pillars that evidence shows support people to build and maintain optimal wellbeing. It has been designed to help people proactively and intentionally develop resources and skills to respond to setbacks, sustain healthy relationships, navigate change and uncertainty, and make effective decisions.

Mindfulness makes up one part of our new, expanded five pillar Mental Fitness Model, which will continue to come to life in the coming year in our evolving app and program offering. It is our aim to empower everyday Australians to support the development of skills shown to improve mental wellbeing through incremental and consistent practice.

Without our partners and supporters, none of our impact would be possible

We are also enormously grateful to everyone who has donated to Smiling Mind this year. However big or small, your support matters in helping every mind thrive with accessible, life-long tools to support healthy minds.

Official Partners:

DECJUBA **DECJUBA** Foundation MYOB



Philanthropy Supporters:

Future Generation Global Barr Family Foundation Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation Ian Potter Foundation Kmart Gandel Foundation DECJUBA Foundation Waratah Education Foundation Blue Sky Foundation Fidelity Asia Pacific Foundation Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation



Brand Collaborators:

BIC **Dulux Group** Munchme Cengage Kids Help Phone Canada AllKinds ABC



😤 Pro Bono Support

Minter Ellison FRA Pitcher Partners Prevention United

Shine On Foundation

Financial Performance

For the financial year ending 30 June 2023

Despite the dynamic fiscal landscape of the 2023 financial year, Smiling Mind recorded \$6.64 million in revenue, marking a substantial 38% increase on the previous year.

We are grateful that our generous donors contributed \$1.35 million towards our operational and vital programs. We received an additional \$2.82 million in government funding, which allowed us the opportunity to reach more schools than ever before through our impactful Primary School Program. A further \$1.59 million in grant funding fortified our capacity and programmatic initiatives.

We look forward to exploring diverse funding opportunities to ensure Smiling Mind's sustainability and support our transformative program expansion in the upcoming year.



Income Source	Total	% Share
Donations	\$1,354,371	20%
Partnerships	\$413,055	6%
Provision Goods & Services	\$462,503	7%
Government	\$2,824,252	43%
Grants	\$1,589,498	24%
Other	\$2,624	Not material
Total Revenue	\$6,646,303	

For more information, including full Annual Information Statements, we welcome you to visit the <u>Annual Charity Register here</u>.

More information can be found on the Smiling Mind website <u>smilingmind.com.au.</u>



Smiling Mind

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Smiling Mind is a not-for-profit organisation here to help every mind thrive with digital-first tools, resources and education.