2025 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

ENCOUNTER YOUTH

1 JULY 2024 – 30 JUNE 2025

Schoolies
TIVAL™

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ABOUT US

WE SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

ALLEVIATE • EDUCATE • FACILITATE • COLLABORATE • ADVOCATE

As a staff team and volunteer group of over four hundred fifty, we support and equip young people to make a lasting difference in their communities and the world at large.

We fulfil our mandate by...

- Offering direct support to those facing serious social challenges.
- Providing education and training programs.
- Facilitating volunteer and service opportunities.
- Working collaboratively with local communities.
- Advocating for the best interests of young people.

We are motivated by our Christian faith and represent a rich variety of South Australian Christian communities.

At Encounter Youth, we feel privileged to impact the lives of thousands of Australian young people each year as we encourage them to make a positive impact in society.

OUR STORY

1999

We began in response to the school leaver mass gathering in Victor Harbor, on the invitation of SA Police.

2000

We started delivering school seminars to SA secondary schools.

2002

We launched our Alcohol & Other Drug education program to SA secondary schools.

2006

School leavers gave our volunteers the nickname 'Green Team' and it was officially adopted in 2007.

2009

In response to an invitation by SA Police, we started investigating an intervention program on Hindley Street.

2011

After extensive assessment of the situation, we launched the Hindley Street Program.

2013

Our first registered teacher led our Education Program, and the program was mapped to the national curriculum for Alcohol & Other Drug education.

2017

An independent evaluation by OCSAR confirmed that our Hindley Street Program was making a tangible difference.

2019

We celebrated 20 years!

2020

We launched the Online Learning and Training Platforms for our programs and the *You Got This!* initiative to support Year 12s.

2021

We educated our 200,000th student, celebrated 10 years of the Hindley Street Program and launched an Encounter Youth brand refresh.

2022

We launched the Teacher Resource Room and Impact Partners—our first-ever giving program.

2023

We supported Glenunga International High School with two school socials and went on an exploration trip to Japan for future missional opportunities.

2024

We pioneered Operation Japan, debuted the first Sensory Space at a school leaver celebration in Australia and launched Green Team+.

2025

We launched Empower Oz, our revamped online learning platform, and the Uncharted Parenting podcast.

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

REV MARK SCHULTZ
BOARD CHAIR

The past year has been a time of blessing, a time of change, a time of challenge and a time of joy for Encounter Youth and for the Board as we have governed the organisation. Let me take you through them.

A TIME OF BLESSING

Encounter Youth lives and breathes because of God's blessing. Every time I catch up with Nigel Knowles, or one of the other staff, or even just read the same updates that you receive, I can't help but see blessing. The partnerships that we enjoy with people, government and other stakeholders are profound in their range and generosity. The opportunities that open up for our work and the success Encounter Youth enjoys because of God's grace. The commitment of staff, not just to their roles, but to the mission and life of the organisation. Finally, the blessing of my team – the Board who have strengthened in their vision, their commitment and work rate to support and safeguard the organisation as it grows – they too have been an extraordinary blessing to Encounter Youth.

A TIME OF CHANGE

While there are always changes for an organisation such as Encounter Youth, perhaps the biggest change for the Board has been the move from an incorporated association structure to becoming a company limited by guarantee. As I mentioned at our Special General Meeting, this change represented a maturing of Encounter Youth as an organisation, as well as the size and complexity of the work we undertake. While the decision was relatively easy to reach as membership, the work behind it was substantial and special thanks needs to go to both Nigel Knowles and Nick Banks (Deputy Chair) for their considerable work and Lisa Christo of NDA Law for making it all happen. We will kick off under the new structure very shortly.

A TIME OF CHALLENGE

Like many charities, Encounter Youth continues to navigate the challenge of rising operational and employment costs, while funding often does not increase at the same rate.

Despite these pressures, our work has continued to thrive and diversify in exciting and meaningful ways. In recent years, we have drawn on reserves from previous surpluses to sustain growth and impact.

Recognising the importance of long-term sustainability, the Board, together with Nigel, have worked diligently to address this financial imbalance. Through careful planning, prioritisation, and strategic decisions, a balanced budget has been set for the 2025/2026 financial year, positioning Encounter Youth to continue its mission with strength and stability under God's provision.

A TIME OF JOY

Encounter Youth has so much to celebrate this year. As you will read in the CEO Report, the work continues to grow, to change, to receive the funds, the favour and the direction it needs. As a Board, we are overjoyed by the way God continues to honour it.

Lastly, let me offer my great thanks to Nigel and the wonderful staff team who are so dedicated to God's call on their life in the work of Encounter Youth, the various partners who provide support and effort to so much of Encounter Youth's work, and those who support financially and in so many other ways. I also want to thank the Board for their continued work: Nick Banks (Deputy Chair), Amy Chudleigh (Treasurer), Grace Carman (Secretary) and Pietta Brown. Finally, I am thankful to God who leads us, sustains us and keeps us as we seek to serve in His mission in the world.

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

NIGEL KNOWLES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As I reflect on 2025, I am deeply grateful for the resilience, innovation and commitment that has shaped Encounter Youth's impact this year. Our vision to support young people to make a positive difference in the world has never felt more urgent or more possible than it does now.

This year, we saw our work expand in both depth and reach. From Hindley Street to Victor Harbor, from school classrooms to international communities in Japan, our programs continued to meet young people at pivotal moments in their lives. Whether alleviating harm, equipping with knowledge, or opening doors to serve, the Encounter Youth team and volunteers embodied compassion and excellence.

Our Empower Education program built on strong foundations, reaching over 26,000 students, parents and teachers across 76 schools. The launch of Empower Oz, our revamped online platform, now makes our Alcohol & Other Drug education accessible nationwide. New initiatives such as Uncharted Parenting and Tough Talks gave parents fresh tools to navigate the complexities of raising young people today, while our upcoming Digital Wellbeing elective positions us to meet tomorrow's challenges head on.

Through our Schoolies Operation, we continued to lead South Australia's safe celebration response. 2024's Schoolies Festival™ demonstrated the power of collaboration and culture change, with overall good behaviour and overwhelming positive feedback from students and families. The tireless service of our Green Team volunteers remains at the heart of this work, reminding us that young people themselves are often the most powerful agents of hope and change.

Our Hindley Street Program once again provided care and safety in Adelaide's late night precinct. Backed by renewed government partnerships, it continues to stand as a nationally recognised model of compassionate harm reduction, ensuring young people in vulnerable settings are met with dignity and support.

We also celebrated the growth of new initiatives from hosting school socials at Glenunga International High School to leading our first international volunteer trip to Onomichi, Japan. These ventures not only strengthened community but expanded the horizons of what our mission can look like in practice, both locally and globally.

Behind every statistic and program milestone are people, our dedicated staff, board, volunteers, funders, and partners, who make this work possible. I want to thank each of you for your unwavering support and belief in our mission. Your contribution ensures that Encounter Youth remains a trusted, innovative and faith driven organisation serving young people where they need it most.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast. The world young people are stepping into is complex, with challenges around digital wellbeing, alcohol and other drugs, social belonging and safety. But it is also full of opportunity. With God's guidance, and together with our partners, we will continue to listen, adapt and respond so that every young person we encounter is empowered to thrive.

ACROSS **46 NIGHTS** IN THE 2025FY, GREEN TEAM VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTED YOUNG PEOPLE ON HINDLEY STREET WITH:

14,710 positive interactions

378 young people supported to get home safely

4,560 bottles of water given out

23 referrals to SA Police

41 referrals from SA Police

200 vomit bags given out

15 referrals to SA Ambulance Service

34.5kg of Mentos given out

Over 1,065 on-street volunteer hours

162 laps of Hindley Street

ALLEVIATE

HINDLEY STREET PROGRAM

Our Hindley Street Program remains dedicated to addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with alcohol-fuelled violence, drug-related offences, sexual assault, anti-social behaviour, and community safety concerns among young people on Hindley Street. Every week, our Green Team volunteers patrol the area in teams of four from 11:00pm to 5:00am, providing a responsible peer-to-peer presence. They assess situations, refer individuals, and offer support to those in need or facing vulnerability.

In the first year of our renewed three-year partnership with Consumer and Business Services, our volunteers engaged with young people on the street for 46 Saturday nights, positively interacting with 14,710 individuals and recording 24 critical incidents that required referrals. These actions help alleviate the burden on South Australian emergency services.

To take advantage of the warmer weather, we deployed the photobooth for eight Saturday nights during the warmer months as part of our activation plan. This photobooth serves as a vital harm-minimisation tool, creating a safe waiting area for patrons awaiting transport home, or acting as a reconnection point for friends. Located at the corner of Leigh Street and Hindley Street, our volunteers engaged with patrons through various strategies, including distributing food and water and providing minor first aid assistance.

“COME AND TRY” SHIFT OPPORTUNITIES

As part of our volunteer recruitment pathway, Encounter Youth hosted several “Come & Try” shifts on Hindley Street. These shifts were designed to give potential volunteers an opportunity to experience what serving in the Hindley Street Program is like before committing to formal training and the application process.

The evenings were filled with energy, connection and fun. The photobooth, along with plenty of fairy bread, created a welcoming atmosphere that drew in passersby and sparked positive interactions. For many participants, it was their first opportunity to see how something as simple as a smile, a friendly chat, or even a piece of fairy bread can open the door to meaningful connection.

Guided and supported by experienced volunteers, participants were able to observe the rhythm of the street teams, engage in conversations, and gain confidence in a safe environment. This hands-on experience gave potential volunteers a clear picture of the impact they could have while serving with Encounter Youth.

The combination of real-world experience, mentorship, and community engagement made these “Come & Try” shifts an invaluable step in the volunteer journey, inspiring many to take the next step toward joining the team.

The Hindley Street Program effectively complements emergency service providers by responding to critical incidents and notifying the appropriate services, thereby facilitating a faster response time.

Throughout the year, we made:

- 23 referrals to SA Police for issues ranging from suspected drug activity and domestic violence to assaults and measures to prevent breaches of the peace.

- 15 referrals to SA Ambulance Service for cases including unconsciousness, adverse reactions to substances, and various injuries.

Additionally, we received referrals from SA Police on 41 occasions, enabling us to support their patrols and allow them to address other urgent situations. This increase in referrals is a direct result of our participation in the “Operation City Safe” briefings with SA Police.

INCIDENT HOTSPOTS

Each incident our volunteers respond to is mapped to an incident hotspot map.

We use this interactive map to track the location and frequency of incidences to alert our key stakeholders to trends and patterns on the street.

Key incidents our volunteers responded to over this period include the following:

12:35 AM, 3 NOVEMBER 2024

The volunteer team noticed two female patrons sitting on the curb outside KFC, with one of them slumped over. The team offered the patrons a vomit bag, but they declined. Shortly after, the slumped-over patron began vomiting. The volunteer team again offered a vomit bag, but it was declined and they moved on. The volunteer team then observed a police foot patrol guiding the patrons closer to the building wall to keep them away from the curb.

Shortly after, the volunteer team were approached by police who asked if they could keep an eye on the same female patrons as the situation had worsened. Upon arrival, the patron was barely responsive, and a male passerby had already called an ambulance. While waiting for the ambulance, the volunteer team provided a vomit bag and water. The patron's friend mentioned that she had only had two drinks but had been depressed due to a breakup and had not been eating properly.

The volunteer team leader called to confirm that an ambulance was on its way. The female patron experienced periods of responsiveness, complete unresponsiveness, and continued vomiting. When the ambulance arrived, the volunteer team handed over to paramedics and moved on.

2:10 AM, 26 JANUARY 2025

The volunteer team came across a male patron in front of Rooftop Sheesha, surrounded by his group of friends. He appeared intoxicated and had been vomiting on the footpath and into a bin. The patron and his friends were attempting to get a taxi but were refused twice. The male patron was lying on the ground, so the team placed him in the recovery position and provided water and vomit bags. One of his friends contacted his parents to arrange for them to pick him up.

Although the patron remained responsive, his condition was not improving. At one point, he experienced a sudden chill, and the team provided a space blanket for warmth. Shortly after, his parents arrived, collected him and his friends, and expressed their gratitude to the volunteers. The volunteer team then moved on.

12:50 AM, 8 MAY 2025

The volunteer team received a referral from a plain-clothed police officer regarding a male who was alone, had vomited, and was slumped over a table. Communication was limited, and his phone was flat, so the volunteers charged it while monitoring his condition and providing basic care.

As his condition did not improve, an ambulance was called at 1:55 AM. The ambulance arrived at 2:25am, provided additional warmth, and assessed that hospital transport was not required. His sister, who was nearby picked him up. The volunteer team were then able to move on.

We received the following voicemail on Sunday from the patron's grandmother:
"I'd just like to thank the Green Team for helping my grandson in the early hours of Sunday morning when he was very vulnerable in Hindley Street. So thank you."

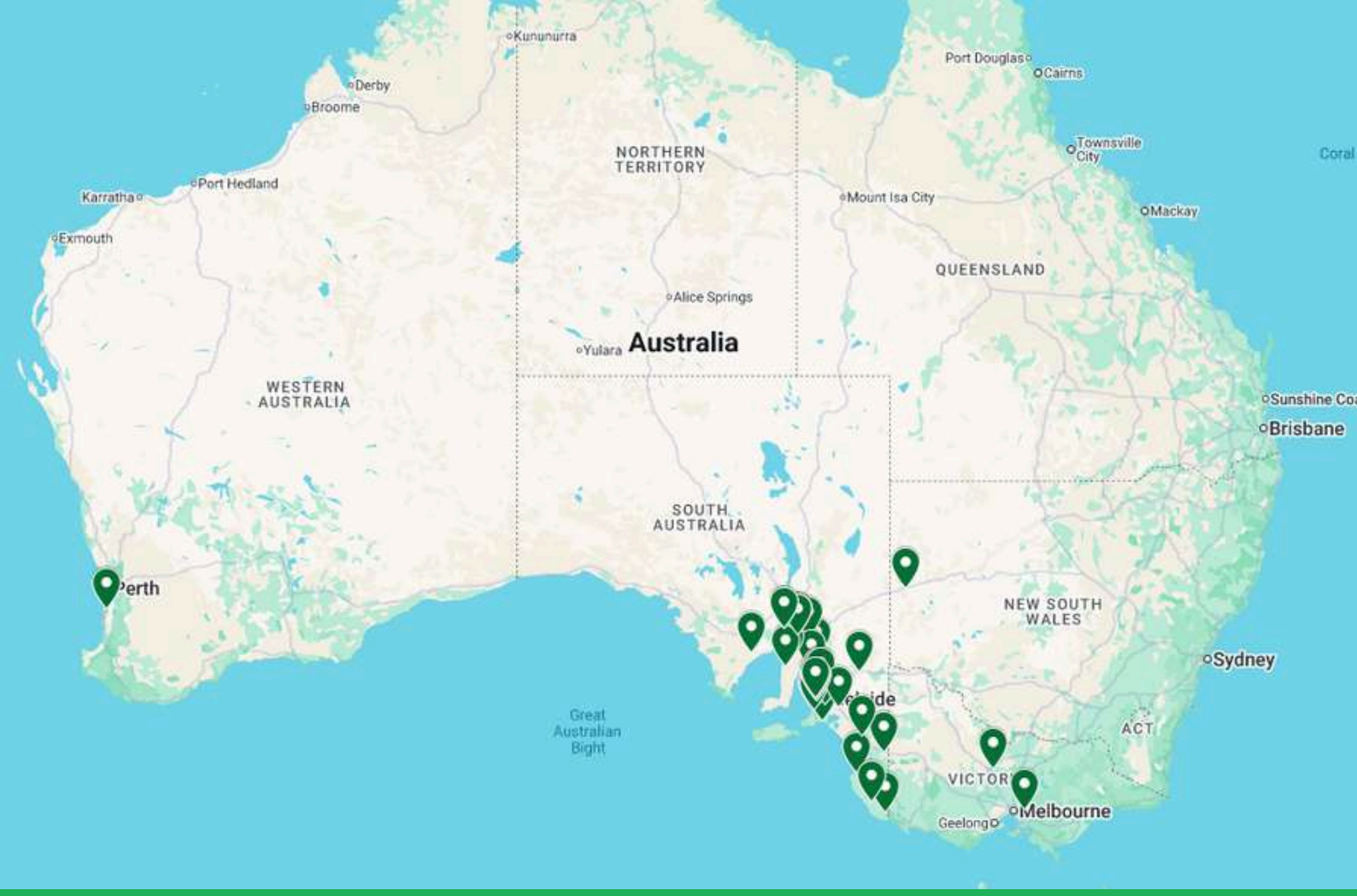
In a follow up phone call, she explained her grandson is neurodivergent, and this was one of his first experiences with alcohol. She was very grateful our volunteers were there to support him.

1:30 AM, 24 MAY 2025

SA Police requested assistance from the volunteer team in Produce Lane, where a young male was found unconscious and awaiting SA Ambulance Service, who were ramped and unable to provide an estimated time of arrival. The male had been found by staff inside Fabric nightclub and was removed from the venue via a side exit. Volunteers attended the scene and agreed to stay with the intoxicated male.

Police moved on but indicated they would remain in the area. The male's consciousness was monitored by the volunteers, with no initial change in condition. After a short time, his condition slightly improved; however, he began vomiting but remained conscious and responsive. He was placed in the recovery position during the wait.

An ambulance was later sighted on Hindley Street and flagged down by volunteers. After conducting checks, paramedics determined that hospitalisation wasn't required but requested a clear plan to ensure the male was safely removed from the area. An Uber was arranged, and a female friend assisted him home. The volunteer team then moved on.



ON THE ROAD WITH EMPOWER EDUCATION ACROSS THE 2025FY

Educated 26,136 students, teachers, parents and members of school communities

Visited 76 secondary schools

Presented 258 seminars

Travelled on 20 intrastate or interstate trips

Developed and presented 6 custom seminars and workshops

Delivered seminars in 4 Australian states

Presented 21 *'Safety at Schoolies'* seminars

EDUCATE

EMPOWER EDUCATION

Empower Education experienced another significant year. Building on our strong foundations in Alcohol & Other Drug education, we broadened our capacity to engage schools, parents and communities while responding to new and emerging challenges. From revamping our core program to launching innovative new initiatives in parent engagement, student leadership development and digital wellbeing, our reach has never been wider nor our impact more significant.

Our commitment to Alcohol & Other Drug education remains central to our mission. Over the last year, we continued to deliver evidence-based, age-appropriate seminars and workshops to students across South Australia. Over these past twelve months, we presented to over 26,000 students, parents and teachers across 76 schools, maintaining our reputation as the leading provider of this vital education.

Yet, alongside this strong output, we faced a noticeable shift. After riding the wave of intense public concern around vaping, we observed a change in demand. Direct enquiries around Alcohol & Other Drug education slowed down as wellbeing, resilience and digital safety increasingly dominated public discourse. In response, we adapted. Just as we had added vaping to our program suite when that became a crisis issue, we have now laid the groundwork for a new digital wellbeing elective for middle school students. These will launch in 2026, giving schools more tailored options while keeping us true to our expertise.

EXPANDING OUR REACH WITH **EMPOWER OZ**

One of our proudest achievements this year was the launch of Empower Oz, our revamped online learning platform.

Designed to extend our reach beyond Adelaide, Empower Oz delivers our full Alcohol & Other Drug education program through high-quality, age-appropriate, engaging video modules mapped to both the Australian Curriculum (V 9.0) and the 2023 Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum.

Now accessible from anywhere in the country, Empower Oz makes it possible for regional and interstate schools, many with small cohorts or limited budgets, to access the same level of expertise as metropolitan schools.

Presented by the same friendly faces as our in-person Alcohol & Other Drug education, the videos can be watched individually by students, or as a class group, with accompanying student activity sheets and teacher resource pack, to facilitate discussion and reinforce learning.

BROADENING OUR REACH TO MARGINALISED YOUNG PEOPLE

We are partnering with Youth Options to enabled us to support young people outside the traditional school system, many of whom are often disadvantaged, disengaged, or in crisis. Through new workshop models, we reached young people previously beyond our scope. Ongoing consultations with Youth Options gave us insight into their experiences, understanding, and duty of care which looks different in a non-school setting. With the success of the first workshop, the relationship is ongoing, and we look forward to continuing to connect with these young people and create a safe space they can be educated on important topics relevant to them. This initiative reflects our deep commitment to serving young people and ensures that those most at risk are not excluded from vital education and support.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Over the last year, we delivered our new Student Leadership Program at Glenunga International High School for prefects, house captains and student leaders. Taking a different approach to our usual seminar format in schools, the leadership session included real stories, time for discussion, interactive games and small group focus time, with the opportunity to grow rapport with the same students throughout the year. Timed ahead of the school's 2026 leadership appointments, the program was so well received that the school's Assistant Principal described it as "the best program we have ever had for student leadership". This endorsement not only affirms the quality of our content but also opens new doors for replicating this program across other schools in future.

SUPPORTING PARENTS: FROM WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH

Eighteen months ago, we identified parent engagement as our weakest area. In 2025, that changed dramatically.

Ideally, when in schools delivering our Alcohol & Other Drug education program, we take a holistic approach including teachers, other staff, parents, and the wider school community to create a common language and combat misconceptions. However, we have found through conversations with schools, and with bookings over the years, that parent engagement drops as they reach high school. No matter the time in the evening, the in-person or online form that it took, nor the school's level of promotion, we did not see valuable uptake in the parent sessions.

To provide a new space where parents have access to this much needed information, between their very busy schedules, we launched Uncharted Parenting. Our podcast is designed to help parents navigate the challenges of raising young people today. The response was immediate and encouraging. The podcast also gave us a platform to feature leading parenting experts, parent experiences, and our own staff, deepening the conversation and establishing us as a trusted voice in the parenting space.

From this foundation, we rolled out *Tough Talks* – a new collaborative initiative with members of parliament to engage parents directly through live seminars. Our first event in May was hosted by David Basham MP in Finniss, combined a seminar with open Q&A, equipping parents with practical tools for supporting their children while raising Encounter Youth's profile in new communities. It's already proven to be such a great opportunity to reach parents ready to have tough conversations about alcohol and other drugs, outside of our usual connections through secondary schools. This has led to further conversations with other members of parliament and local Hills primary schools, specifically filling a gap in Digital Wellbeing education and broadening our impact.

INNOVATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Behind the scenes we also saw important infrastructure improvements. The launch of our new Booking Portal streamlined the process for schools, making it easier than ever to engage with our team. Instant quotes unique to the enquiring school and proposed booking dates available, meant bookings could get fast tracked and reduced the risk of communication being lost in inboxes. Combined with Empower Oz, the portal represents a major step forward in accessibility and efficiency, ensuring that our impact can continue to scale in the years ahead.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

In summary, this financial year was a year of both consolidation and innovation. We strengthened our core Alcohol & Other Drug education, expanded our reach through Empower Oz, dramatically improved parent engagement, launched Tough Talks and Uncharted Parenting, supported marginalised youth, and laid the foundations for digital wellbeing education.

As we look to this next year, our focus will be on embedding these new initiatives, rolling out our digital wellbeing elective and deepening our partnerships with schools, parents and communities.

Empower Education has never been more agile, more engaged or more needed. The challenges young people face are evolving rapidly, but with every step we take, we remain committed to empowering them, as well as those who support them, with the tools to thrive.

82%

of students surveyed said they learned useful facts about alcohol and other drugs.

84%

of students surveyed said they learned strategies to keep themselves or others safe.

FEEDBACK FROM **SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

"Loved the presenter, really got the students involved and showed passion for the content [that] was covered. Kept students interested throughout. Great job."
Teacher – Kadina Memorial School

"Excellent presenter, very calm and approachable style, but with great knowledge."
Teacher – Emmaus Christian College

"I thought it was good not preaching to the kids not to, but just covering the risks and what to do when things go wrong."
Teacher – Grant High School

"The best part of the seminar was the realisation that a large proportion don't engage in drug and alcohol abuse. Good to hear."
Parent – Blackfriars Priory

"I found the practical format good. The tips on language to use when speaking to young people and the resources were good too. I feel better equipped to have a meaningful conversation with my son. Thank you."
Parent – Sacred Heart College

SCHOOLIES OPERATION **VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS**

Each year, hundreds of Green Team volunteers give their time, treasure, energy and heart to make Schoolies Festival™ a safe, welcoming and memorable experience for the graduating class. From late-night conversations to practical acts of service, their presence leaves a lasting impact on every school leaver they meet.

Here are just a few reflections from our 2024 volunteers about what it meant to serve as part of the Green Team.

"I love connecting with other Green Team volunteers and with the young people we support. I love being a part of something bigger and playing my part in making the Schoolies Festival™ safe and enjoyable. I also find it really rewarding helping people who are having a hard time, be that physically, mentally, or spiritually."
– Mikayla

"I love the community among the volunteers, and the joy we are able to bring the schoolies by offering them a safe place to celebrate!"
– Isabel

"Just seeing so many people willing to serve however is needed. The servant hearts of the Green Team are amazing."
– Josh

"I love being a part of the body of Christ, and practically being the hands and feet of Jesus. Seeing how the different roles of each of the Green Team contribute to supporting the schoolies over the weekend is really special."
– Ashley

FACILITATE

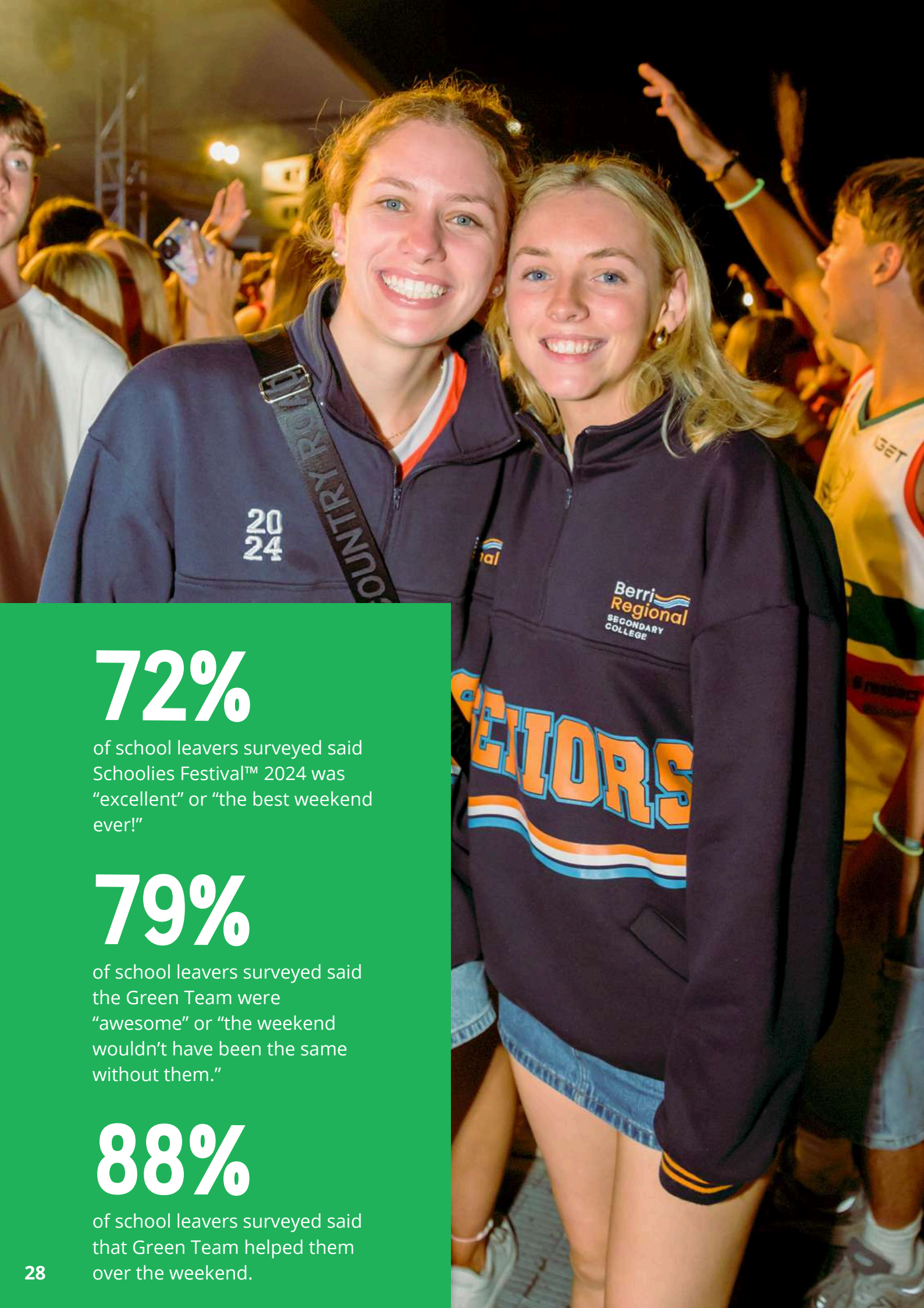
SCHOOLIES OPERATION

In 2024, Encounter Youth continued its legacy of coordinating safe and vibrant school leaver celebrations in South Australia, building on over 25 years of impact. Schoolies Festival™ 2024 delivered a dynamic celebratory atmosphere that ensured young people could mark their end of schooling in a memorable and safe way. The addition of a new sensory space further increased the accessibility of the Festival and ensured that all young people could participate in a way that felt safe, inclusive, and supportive.

Our enduring presence at Schoolies Festival™ remains a vital support for graduating Year 12 students, offering a safe, welcoming space during a pivotal life moment. The success of 2024 reaffirmed the importance of our mission - being there when young people need it most.

2024 saw another year of strong partnership with the City of Victor Harbor, working collaboratively to minimise community disruption throughout the Schoolies Operation. School leaver behaviour was outstanding and an encouraging reflection of the positive culture fostered at the event.

This impact is made possible by the extraordinary efforts of our Green Team volunteers. Their compassionate, non-judgmental support led to countless meaningful interactions with school leavers, further strengthening the Green Team's reputation as a trusted and transformative presence.



72%

of school leavers surveyed said Schoolies Festival™ 2024 was “excellent” or “the best weekend ever!”

79%

of school leavers surveyed said the Green Team were “awesome” or “the weekend wouldn’t have been the same without them.”

88%

of school leavers surveyed said that Green Team helped them over the weekend.

WHAT **SCHOOL LEAVERS** SAID ABOUT THE **GREEN TEAM**

The unwavering commitment of our volunteers continues to inspire. Their selfless service is a powerful example of how young people can lead with purpose, creating lasting change in the lives of others.

"Thank you guys so much for everything you guys do for us, it was an absolutely amazing experience and wouldn't of been the same without you."
School Leaver – Rostrevor College

"Thank you for your support and guidance through the weekend to keep everybody safe!!"
School Leaver – Cleve Area School

"Thank you for all your hard work, everyone I spoke to on the bus was friendly and chatted the whole time."
School Leaver – Kadina Memorial School

"The Green Team are absolutely incredible. What they do for us at Schoolies is amazing. As someone with anxiety especially in large crowds and public transport, they made my Schoolies experience so safe and positive, allowing me to have a fantastic time. Thank you Green Team 🫶"
School Leaver – Nazareth Catholic College

FACILITATE

NEW INITIATIVES

In 2024, Encounter Youth continued to drive the development of new missional opportunities. Now into their second year, the new initiatives are steadily growing, whilst simultaneously establishing strong foundations.

These initiatives are expanding the reach and impact of our Green Team volunteers, offering fresh service opportunities and fostering deeper collaboration with stakeholders. Through this evolving work, we remain committed to equipping young people to make a positive difference in the world – locally, nationally, and globally.

In our second year of involvement, Encounter Youth continued to support Glenunga International High School's school socials aimed at fostering connection and community among students. In July, we returned to host a Year 7 and Year 8 social, followed by two new socials in September, for the Year 9 and Year 10 cohorts.

Working alongside Student Life Director, Sam Chan, these events were designed to promote inclusivity and provide students with a safe, fun environment to connect beyond the classroom. With engaging activities, a dance floor, and food available, the socials encouraged friendships within their year levels, providing an opportunity for people to connect outside of the classroom.

In July 2024, Encounter Youth embarked on its inaugural international volunteer trip to Onomichi, Japan, building on the relationships and groundwork laid during last year's exploratory visit. Led by CEO Nigel Knowles and Initiatives Director Corinne Hamdorf, the team included six passionate volunteers who embraced the opportunity to serve and connect across cultures.

The trip featured a diverse range of activities designed to foster community engagement and cultural exchange. We hosted a stall at a local night market, facilitated a two-day English exchange program at a high school, partnered with local families to do some community service through a beach clean-up, and experienced three nights of homestay with local families. Each moment was rich with connection, learning, and mutual respect.

This initiative was a resounding success, strengthening our partnerships in Onomichi and deepening our commitment to meaningful, cross-cultural engagement. The warmth and enthusiasm from everyone we interacted with affirmed the value of this growing collaboration.

As we look ahead, this trip has laid a strong foundation for future initiatives that will continue to enrich the lives of those who participate in both Australia and Japan, through shared experiences, service, and friendship.

These initiatives continue to strengthen our commitment to empowering young people to make a positive difference in the world. They are creating new pathways for Green Team volunteers to engage in meaningful service and are deepening our collaborative efforts with partners and stakeholders. As this area of work evolves, it is laying a strong foundation for long-term impact locally and beyond.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE JOURNEY

Operation Japan 2024 was more than a trip – it was an amazing and life-changing journey. From the moment they arrived, the team were immersed in new cultures, languages, and experiences that challenged them, inspired them, and created memories that will last a lifetime. Whether sharing meals with host families, laughing through language barriers, or connecting with the local community, every interaction offered an opportunity to learn, grow, and build meaningful relationships. The reflections below capture just a glimpse of the moments that made this trip so unforgettable.

"One of my favourite moments was dinner with my host family the night before the fireworks. It was the second homestay weekend with the family, so we didn't have to get to know each other, we just had some great conversations over food and then did some karaoke at home. It was so special to be invited and welcomed into their home."
– Izzy

"I loved getting to know new people and making headway with some interesting conversations with my host families, despite the language barrier, was really cool – especially the way we figured out how to talk despite the barrier. Laughter is universal, and we did laugh together a fair bit!"
– Annie

"I really enjoyed building relationships with the senior high school students during the presentations and shared lunches."
– Daniel

COLLABORATE

IMPACT PARTNERS PROGRAM

Now in its third year, our Impact Partners Program continues to grow in both reach and impact. With our endorsement as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), donations of $2 or more are tax-deductible in Australia, helping us broaden support and deepen engagement.

We are especially grateful to the generous individuals, churches, and corporate partners who have stepped forward to partner with us. Many of our Green Team volunteers have gone beyond their practical service to also contribute as Impact Partners — a powerful reflection of their commitment to young people. Special thanks go to ICAM, a South Australian institutional fund manager, and the Austral-Asian Community Church for their remarkable contributions this year.

Impact Partners stay closely connected with our work, from hearing exclusive stories from the frontlines to participating in unique opportunities such as the *Behind the Scenes Tour* of the 2024 Schoolies Operation. These experiences provide a meaningful glimpse into the life-changing impact their support makes possible.

We also warmly welcome our newest Impact Partners who joined us through the *Hope Starts With You* end-of-financial-year appeal. Your generosity fuels our vision and ensures we can continue reaching young people with hope, safety, and support. Thank you for standing with us.

COLLABORATE

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

In our Hindley Street and Schoolies Operation programs, we partner year-round with the state government, local authorities, and emergency services to effectively support young people.

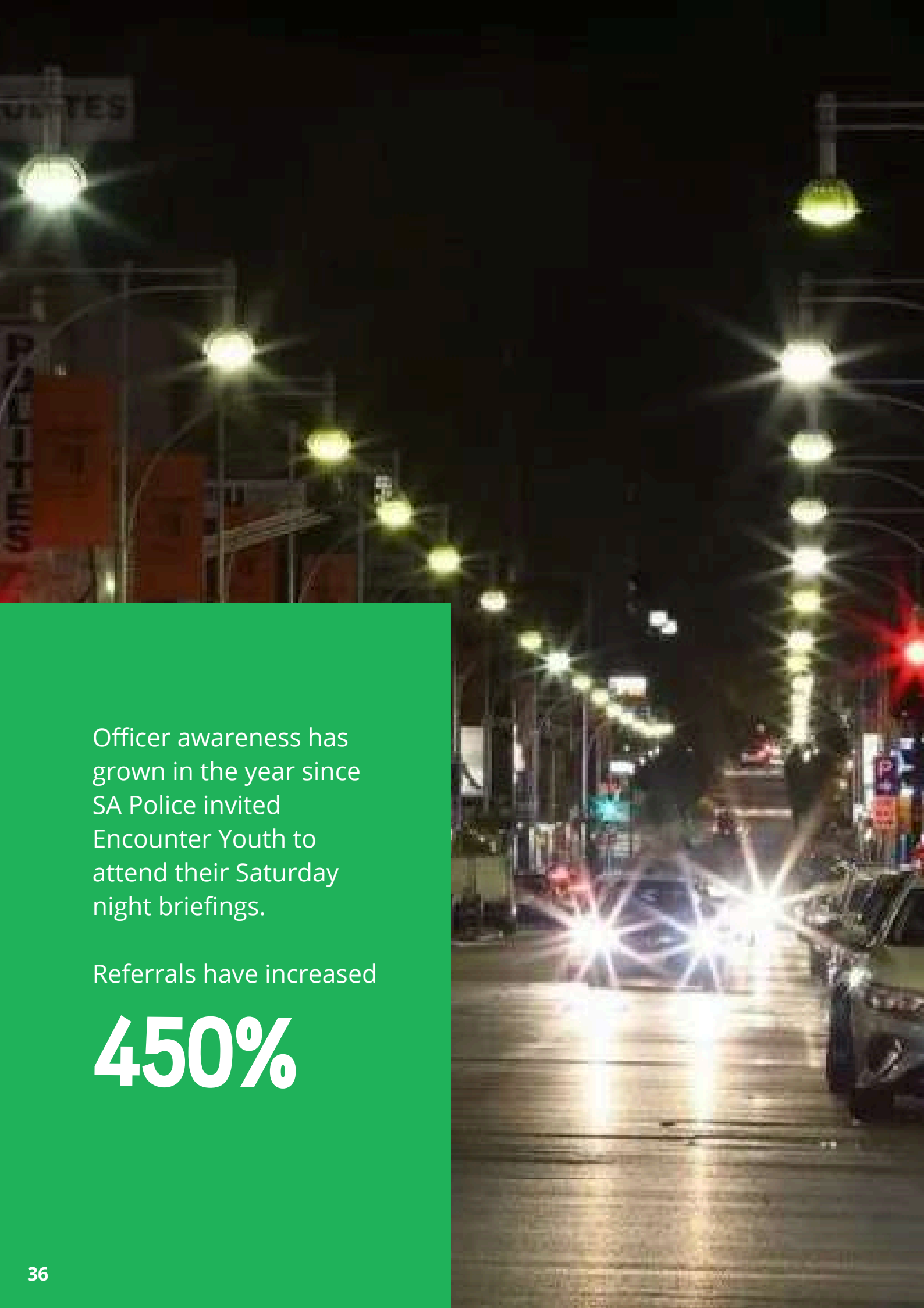
We worked closely with local government to provide a safe and welcoming environment for school leavers to celebrate their achievements, while maintaining strong partnerships with key stakeholders in Hindley Street to ensure young people received the care and support they needed.

Our amazing Green Team is made up of individuals from diverse church communities across South Australia. For more than 26 years, our church partners have faithfully supported us by sending volunteers to serve in the Schoolies Operation, Hindley Street Program, and other initiatives throughout the year.

The volunteers overseeing the Schoolies Operation met regularly to plan and coordinate the 2024 event. Their responsibilities included leading training sessions, recruiting and supporting team members across zones, and providing essential on-the-ground coordination during the festival weekend.

Our Hindley Street Program's key volunteer leaders organised events to train and equip volunteers for their Saturday night shifts. This year, we saw even greater collaboration among our church teams, with volunteers from different communities coming together to serve side by side.

Now in its second year, Green Team+ continues to thrive as a central hub for our volunteer community. The online platform has seen steady growth in engagement, with volunteers actively using its training materials and communication tools to stay connected and informed. Green Team+ has become an integral part of our volunteer experience, fostering collaboration, strengthening community, and enhancing readiness across all our programs. We're encouraged by its continued success and look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.



Officer awareness has grown in the year since SA Police invited Encounter Youth to attend their Saturday night briefings.

Referrals have increased

450%

STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION WITH SA POLICE

Since May 2024, at the invitation of the Operations Manager of the Hindley Street Police Station, Encounter Youth staff and volunteers have been attending and presenting at the Saturday night “Operation City Safe” briefings. Initially piloted for a short period, this initiative is now an established, ongoing practice that has raised the profile of the Hindley Street Program and the Green Team among officers from other policing districts who were previously unfamiliar with the referral procedure.

Police officers in attendance receive referral cards with volunteer shift contact numbers and examples of situations they may encounter, which can then be referred to Green Team volunteers. This allows officers to confidently hand over matters that can be safely managed by volunteers, freeing them to focus on other policing priorities and more complex incidents. By providing this structured support, the partnership ensures young people on Hindley Street receive timely assistance while officers can efficiently manage the broader safety and security of the precinct.

Encounter Youth continues to see a significant increase in engagement and referrals from SA Police. We will maintain our participation in these briefings to further enhance support and safety for young people on Hindley Street each Saturday night.

ADVOCATE

We continue to advocate for young people across South Australia in the unique settings we are involved in. Through the Hindley Street Program, Encounter Youth participated in the Hindley Street Stakeholders Group spearheaded by City of Adelaide. This opportunity allows us to further advocate for young people on Hindley Street through our unique and non-biased perspective.

Our Empower Education team were invited to present at the Tackling Smoking & Vaping Showcase, hosted by Cancer Council SA. It was a valuable opportunity to see the great work in this area and to learn from organisations and researchers about strategies to support the community, prevent uptake, and reduce harm. We also shared our vaping education experience — the conversations we've had, what we've noticed through school engagement, and how vaping is integrated within our broader Alcohol & Other Drug education. It was another opportunity to advocate for the positive choices most young people are making. We are excited to continue collaborating with Cancer Council SA.

In 2024, Encounter Youth marked its sixth year managing school leaver accommodation bookings with key providers during Schoolies Festival™, reinforcing our commitment to safety and community impact in the Fleurieu region. Bookings through Partner Accommodation Providers include enhanced safety features like fencing, first aid, and dedicated Green Team volunteer support, giving families peace of mind and ensuring young people could celebrate safely. In 2025, we continue partnering with accommodation providers, packaging a Schoolies Festival™ ticket with accommodation at two caravan parks — Victor Harbor Holiday Park and NRMA Beachfront Holiday Park — and two motels, Pan Co. Victor Harbor and Victor Harbor City Inn.

AN **AUSTRALIAN-FIRST** FOR A SCHOOL LEAVER CELEBRATION

At Schoolies Festival™ 2024 we were proud to introduce a sensory space – an Australian-first initiative at a school leaver celebration.

This dedicated space was designed to support school leavers with sensory sensitivities and hidden disabilities by providing a calm, quiet and inclusive environment away from the high-energy festival atmosphere. It gave young people the opportunity to regulate, recharge and rejoin the celebrations at their own pace, ensuring no one felt left out or overwhelmed.

The sensory space reflects Encounter Youth's holistic approach to harm minimisation and inclusion. We believe every young person deserves the chance to celebrate this milestone in a way that is safe, supportive and accessible. By creating environments like this, we are working to break down barriers so that all school leavers can participate fully and confidently in their end-of-school celebrations.

This innovation was made possible thanks to the partnership of Fleurieu Plan Management, a local NDIS plan management service, alongside five other local NDIS providers who share our vision of inclusive community celebration.

We are thrilled with the positive response from both young people and their families and are excited to bring the sensory space back in 2025, continuing our commitment to making Schoolies Festival™ a welcoming and accessible event for everyone.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following partners and supporters for their ongoing investment in and contribution to our programs and services.

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Government of South Australia
Attorney-General's Department

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We would like to acknowledge and thank the following bodies for their ongoing investment in and contribution to our programs and services.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Attorney-General's Department
Consumer and Business Services
Country Fire Service
Country Health SA
Department for Education
Metropolitan Fire Service
Safe Work SA
South Australian Ambulance Service
SA Health
South Australia Police

- Eastern District
- Hills Fleurieu Local Service Area
- Licensing Enforcement Branch
- Community Engagement Branch

South Coast District Hospital

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Alexandrina Council
City of Adelaide
City of Victor Harbor

NON-GOVERNMENT

Alcohol and Drug Foundation
BIG4 Breeze Holiday Parks – Port Elliot
Cancer Council SA
Hidden Disabilities Sunflower
Link SA
NRMA Victor Harbor Beachfront Holiday Park
Pan Co. Victor Harbor
St John Ambulance SA
Victor Harbor City Inn
Victor Harbor Holiday Park
Youth Options

IMPACT PARTNERS

CORPORATE IMPACT PARTNERS

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following businesses for their investment in and contribution to our programs and services.

Kilu Financial Services Pty Ltd

CHURCH IMPACT PARTNERS

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following Christian community, who in addition to the volunteers they provide, choose to financially support our programs and services.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following Christian communities for their ongoing investment in and contribution to our programs and services.

Aldinga Bay Baptist Church
Aldinga Community Church
Austral-Asian Community Church
Barneys Church Croydon
Blackwood Hills Baptist Church
Broadview Baptist Church
Broadview Uniting Church
C3 Church Hahndorf
Camden Baptist Church
Capernwray Torchbearers Australia
Christian Family Centre Seaton
Christian Family Centre Lefevre
Church on Albert
Church of the Nations
CityLight North Adelaide
CityLight Plympton
CityLight South
CityReach Marion
CityReach West
Clovie Modbury North
Clovie Gawler
Coast and Vines
Coastlands Brighton
Cornerstone Chapel
Coromandel Valley Uniting Church
Echunga Uniting Church
Edwardstown Baptist Church
Encounter Church Prospect
Encounter Church Henley
Enfield Baptist Church
Enjoy Church Adelaide
Equippers Church Reynella
Futures Mount Barker
Gathered Church
Glory City Church Wandearah
Golden Grove Lutheran Church
GospelLife Adelaide
Grange Baptist Church
Gully Church
Hackham Baptist Family Church
Hallett Cove Uniting Church
Hills Baptist Church Aldgate
Hills Baptist Church Verdun
Hope Chapel
Hope Valley Church
HWY Church
Langhorne Creek Community Uniting Church
Laura Baptist Church
Life Adelaide
Life Christian Centre

Lifeforce Church
Life House Church Murray Bridge
Lighthouse Community Church
Living Faith Church St Agnes
Mid North Bible Christian Church
Mildura Baptist Church
Mildura Church of Christ
Morphett Vale SDA Church
My New Life Church Port Pirie
Navigate Baptist Church
Northwestern Community Church
Oasis Baptist Church
Outpost Church
Overseas Christian Fellowship
Parkside Baptist Church
Playford Uniting Church
Redeemer Church Adelaide
Remarkable Church
Revival City Church
Seeds Uniting Church Aberfoyle Park
Seeds Uniting Church Kurralta Park
Seventh Day Adventist Church
Spicer Uniting Church
St Aidan's Anglican Church
St Bart's Norwood
St John's Church Carlsruhe
St John's Lutheran Church Unley
St Lucia Evangelical Church
St Mark's Lutheran Church Mount Barker
St Michael's Lutheran Church Hahndorf
St Paul's Lutheran Church
St Peter's Lutheran Church Loxton
Starfish Oz
SUNDAY Mount Barker
Tide Church
Trinity Church Adelaide
Trinity Church Colonel Light Gardens
Trinity Church Modbury
Trinity Church Para Hills
Trinity Church Tonsley
Trinity Church Unley
Trinity Church Woodcroft
Trinity Church Victor Harbor
Unley Park Baptist Church
Victor Harbor Baptist Church
Victor Harbor Lutheran Church
Waypoint Uniting Church
Westbourne Park Uniting Church
Young Life Barossa

HONOURING **20 YEARS** OF SERVICE

At the 2025 South Australian Volunteer Awards, Green Team volunteer, Brooke Derrington, was proudly nominated in recognition of an incredible milestone – 20 years of volunteering with the Schoolies Operation.

Brooke's unwavering dedication and care has shaped safer celebrations for countless young people over two decades.

We're so grateful for everything she's contributed — and continues to give — to our community.

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