



# Annual Report

2023/24

This Annual Report offers a snapshot of our activities during the 2023/24 financial year.

For more information about our work, please visit our website [www.burdekin.org.au](http://www.burdekin.org.au).

Burdekin  
ABN: 98 571 551 434

Burdekin is registered as a charity with The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI), endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) and holds NSW Charitable Fundraising Authority 10994. Donations of \$2 and more are tax deductible.



Office of the  
Children's Guardian

This report is copyright Burdekin - Empowering Young Lives, 2024.



We acknowledge the Aboriginal people of the Cadigal and Gayamaygal Clans. We acknowledge the Country on which we live, work, and gather as being Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge the lands, waterways and skies that are connected to Aboriginal people. We honour them and pay our deepest respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We respect their rightful place within our communities, and we value their ancient cultural knowledge and practices.

We deeply respect that this will always be Aboriginal land and we will honour and follow the first people's values in caring for the Country and for preserving their culture.

We deeply value that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are the oldest living culture in the world and we will continue to work with their peoples and communities to ensure their cultures endure and remain strong.





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# President & CEO

## Jon Davies - President

## Justene Gordon - CEO

Burdekin has experienced a year of significant growth and development in the 2023/24 financial year.

Following rapid expansion in recent years, our focus has been on strengthening its systems and processes to ensure sustainable and high-quality service delivery to young people.

To enhance our governance and set us up for the future, Burdekin is transitioning from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Burdekin has also undertaken a brand refresh. This included shortening our name from The Burdekin Association to Burdekin, refining our logo and updating our colour palette to be vibrant and modern.

This process, which included staff from across the organisation and the Board, provided us with an opportunity to reflect on what drives us to do what we do every single day.

It also involved reviewing our vision, purpose and values, articulating what is important to us, how our work is delivered, and what we set out to achieve. This has set Burdekin on course for our future direction.

Our **ambition** is to see young lives lived to their full potential.

Our **promise** is to make a difference, inspire hope and to find a way for young people, their families and the community.

**Our values** - imaginative, responsive and determined - will drive the way we work, the structures we develop, our strategic direction and investments we make.

These simple, yet powerful statements will continue to be our north star, helping us to ensure that every action we take is in service of this purpose.

Burdekin continued to support record numbers of children and young people across the Sydney, Southeast Sydney and Northern Sydney regions.



Each night 127 children and young people aged 7-25 were accommodated and cared for in homes that Burdekin provides.

Hundreds more children and young people are supported in the community. This support addresses the risk factors that can lead to homelessness, such as educational disengagement, health and mental health matters, trauma, poverty and family breakdown.

We are privileged to be in the lives of children, young people and their families - to walk beside them and be their biggest cheerleader. We can do this because of two major factors - our people and our partners.

Every single one of our staff are incredibly important in delivering our services, led by an exceptional Executive Team and governed by a Board truly committed to the needs of young people.

Our Board and Executive Team have worked closely together to define and set our strategic priorities which continue to focus on three key pillars: people, partners, and platforms.

This financial year, we focused on ensuring our people have all the training they need to ensure the young people they support flourish.



Employee sentiment and staff retention are important, so that young people in care build trusted longer term relationships. Our team leaders and executives have continued to make the welfare of our people a focus for the year.

Regarding people, three new members joined our Board – Alex Maitland, Jordan Kuhnemann and Sid Gokani. Between them, they bring further depth to an already experienced and engaged Board.

We are particularly grateful for the addition of the Burdekin Aboriginal Unit, led by Aunty Barbara. Working alongside Aunty Barb has been genuinely life changing and is having a direct positive impact on how we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families connected with Burdekin.

Burdekin does not exist alone. Our success is achieved through the relational based partnerships we create with our young people, families, communities, agencies both private and public, funders from Government, foundations and individuals. These relationships have strengthened over the year, and Burdekin expects to expand its partnerships and services in the future.

We thank you all for the contribution you make to our work, ensuring young people can access the support they need, when they need it.

Life has often dealt the young people in our care an incredibly unfair hand, through no choice or fault of their own. We see their strength, resilience, determination, pain and fight every day as they navigate life, mature and grow up.

We thank our young people for their patience, tolerance, humour and gutsy efforts that we see every day.



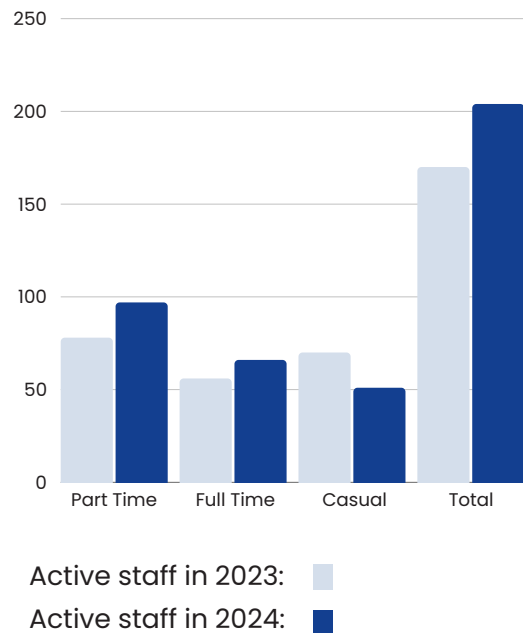
# The Team

To do great work, you need great people and we have an amazing team of caring, friendly, supportive and like-minded individuals who seek to empower young people's lives.

Our Burdekin team continues to grow, but at more of a steady pace than in previous years. We retain our Burdekin family ethos and essence.

We have a senior executive team in place, and this has resulted in focused and deliberate action in addressing operational demands, practice and workplace culture.

We began the financial year with 210 employees. Throughout the year we hired 21 permanent employees and reduced our casual pool by 17. This resulted in a total staff of 214 in June 2024, representing an increase of 5% on the previous year.



Full time  
66



Part time  
97



Casual  
51

## Our Executive Team



Justene Gordon

CEO

Graham Bargwanna

Head of Business and Stakeholder Development

Vikki Agostino

Head of People, Performance and Diversity

Jacqui Gildaly

Head of Client Services

Rebecca Carr

Head of Business Operations and Innovation

Charlotte Hughes

Manager of Quality, Risk and Safeguarding



# Our Staff, Their Voices

At Burdekin, we believe employee voices are essential in creating a positive and productive workplace. Our employees are encouraged to express ideas, concerns and perspectives in all aspects of their work.

There have been several initiatives implemented since the survey in December 2023, and it will be exciting to understand the positive impact of these in the next survey.

## 2023 Survey

The 2023 Survey was conducted to engage across both offices and reach all staff in place-based service delivery. There was a 40% increase in the participation of our largest work group, Youth Workers answering the survey.



### Your role

I am proud to work at Burdekin.



81% agreed or strongly agreed.

This question wasn't asked in 2022.

I receive recognition for good work at Burdekin.



64% agreed or strongly agreed.



Increase of 1% on 2022.

I am familiar with the organisation's vision, purpose and values.



86% agreed or strongly agreed.



Decrease of 2% on 2022.

### Your Team

The morale of my team is positive.



73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

This question wasn't asked in 2022.



## Who we are

Burdekin is an independent not-for-profit organisation that works with young people and their families in the community to prevent homelessness, provide safe housing and support wellbeing.

We provide a continuum of care for young people and their families through an integrated approach to intervention, support and housing. Burdekin brings nearly 40 years of proven experience in working with young people and empowering them to move forward within their community and culture.

## Our Vision

**Empowering young lives.**

## Our Values

### • **Imaginative: we find a way**

We know that we play an important role in supporting young people, families and communities. We keep an open and creative mind towards finding solutions that meet their needs and push the boundaries to advocate for them.

### • **Responsive: we embrace the individual**

We approach every young person as an individual, listening first to understand who they are and how we can support them. Only then do we respond, finding creative solutions that embrace the needs of the individual, and empowers them to move forward within their community and culture.

### • **Determined: we give it our all**

When someone needs us, we're there. We are resolute and staunch in fighting for the rights of our young people, their families and their communities. Without fail, we always act and make decisions for the benefit of our young people, and each other.

## Our Services



### Prevention

We provide practical and therapeutic support for at-risk young people and their families.

We support children, young people, their families, and the community through intervention strategies to address issues that can lead to homelessness, including family breakdown, education disengagement, mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse.



### Family Services

We support families through counselling and individualised case management to manage conflict, reduce stress and increase the potential for family reconciliation.



### Youth Housing

We provide semi-supported, affordable housing for young people aged 16-24 who are at risk of homelessness and who are ready to make the transition to semi-independent living. As part of this, we assist young people to successfully complete their education, find and keep employment and build the skills and confidence to live independently and reach their potential.



### Out-of-Home Care

We provide accommodation, a therapeutic care environment and individualised case management to meet the needs of each child and young person from 9-17 years.



# Our Strategic Direction

Every year, Burdekin's work is framed around a number of Strategic Objectives to ensure we are aligned on what our organisation is achieving for young people, how we present Burdekin in the community, and how we operate.

These Strategic Objectives were developed during the last financial year in conjunction with our Board, Executive Team and key leaders, and include measures of success.

## Investments

### People

### Partners

### Platform

## Milestones

**Created expectations & standards for all staff, leveraging retention.**

**All employee roles have clear KPIs. Each employee understands their role & is supported to do it.**

**Developed a set of engagement pathways for young people & families.**

**Reconciliation Action Plan to reflect our commitment to reconciliation.**

**Defined and communicated our brand internally and externally.**

**Listened and engaged with young people to increase inclusion.**

**Identified processes for assessment & planning, requirement gathering and design & development.**

**Developed a framework to determine expansion opportunities.**

**Engaged staff in Performance Development Planning, creating expectations and standards for all staff and ensured they are trained and supported to adopt them.**

**Completed Mission Critical gap analysis in systems and processes.**

# Our Strategic Direction cont.

During the last financial year, we made significant progress on each of the following Strategic Objectives:

- **Everyone knows who and what we are, and why we are different**

Historically our brand has been Northern Beaches specific, but with Burdekin's expansion in 2020, we now serve other areas and communities.

Our objective with the refresh of our brand was to reflect our work both north and south of Sydney Harbour, while maintaining our legacy and history.

### **Activities and Outcomes:**

Working with a diverse team across Burdekin, we undertook a brand refresh that has connected and excited our internal audiences. This brand will be launched externally in November 2024.

- **Diverse, sufficient and growing funding to deliver needs**

As Burdekin continues to grow, we need to grow our funding in a smart, efficient and goal orientated way.

### **Activities and Outcomes:**

A framework for assessing opportunities has been developed and ratified by the Board. The framework considers whether an expansion opportunity, including funding, fundraising or grant submissions, are suitable for Burdekin.

It takes into account the timing for the opportunity, and how any successful funding or grant will be managed internally and delivered, and is being used to guide decision-making.

- **Flexible & Robust Systems & Processes**

Burdekin has grown significantly in terms of the young people we support, and our geographical area of service. This has necessitated a review of our systems and processes to ensure we have the competencies in place to operate at scale.

### **Activities and Outcomes:**

During 2024, we completed a gap analysis and defined key priorities. A roadmap for upgrading identified processes was created, including:

- Assessment and planning
- Requirement gathering
- Design and development

Work is continuing on the upgrade of our systems and processes, and is expected to be completed in 2025.

- **Supportive of diverse cultures, identities, and Aboriginal Reconciliation**

Around a quarter of young people that Burdekin supports identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. By embracing and contributing to reconciliation, we will enhance the support we provide in a culturally appropriate way.

### **Activities and Outcomes:**

We developed a Reconciliation Action Plan, which has achieved conditional approval by Reconciliation Australia.

We engaged Aunty Barb as our mentor for our Aboriginal Unit to strengthen cultural awareness, and we continue to support key events like National Reconciliation Week.



# Our Strategic Direction cont.



- **Excellent & consistent services**

To help young people, we need to ensure communication is a two-way process. This means we listen to young people, to ensure our communications to them are clear and that we are supporting them to achieve their purpose.

### Activities and Outcomes:

We have created a way of working to listen and engage in dialogue and action with young people to increase inclusion. This approach has been reinforced with staff and included as part of our refreshed values.

As a result, there has been a significant increase in client inclusivity scores this financial year, indicating young people feel we are listening, and anecdotally, we are seeing better outcomes for our young people.



- **Highly engaged, aligned and skilled employees**

To be successful, we need our people to have the right skills and knowledge to use those skills in a consistent way. This requires defining what 'good' looks like, and supporting our people to achieve it.

### Activities and Outcomes:

During the last financial year, we focused on identifying training gaps for our people and teams. We also sought to complete all personal development plans, with KPIs and identified actions to support staff with achieving their goals.

As a result, over the year we've seen significantly improved employee sentiment and experienced higher retention rates.



# Brand Refresh

Months of collaborative workshops, thoughtful planning and creative design have gone into Burdekin's brand refresh.

The aim of the brand refresh is to reflect and support Burdekin's work south of the Harbour Bridge, while recognising our legacy and strength in Northern Sydney.

Our brand refresh is designed to inject freshness, modernity and energy into the Burdekin brand.

Our brand expresses who we are. It is based on our culture, is informed by our values and essence, and resonates with people who care about the future of young people in Australia. It shows the public who we are and what we stand for.

## Brand Guidelines

Our Brand Guidelines is a comprehensive document outlining how we present Burdekin to the world. This includes our visual identity, and use of our logo, colours, and design elements, ensuring consistency across all our communications.

## Brand Blueprint

This is a strategic framework defining who we are, what we stand for, and how we communicate our purpose and values. See the following page to read our Brand Blueprint.

## Logo

We now have a modern, vibrant logo reflecting our ambition and the hope we bring to empowering young lives. Our logo conveys Burdekin as a refuge to young people, incorporating a roof over the letter 'i', which is stylised as a person. The logo is stylised in lowercase type to feel open and inviting.

## Burdekin's new logo:



## Burdekin's new Favicon:



## Burdekin's Primary Palette:

Burdekin Blue

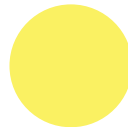


Navy



## Burdekin's Secondary Palette:

Lemon



Lime



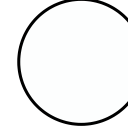
Aqua



Lavender



White



Black



## Colours

A refreshed colour palette representing the energy, creativity, and diversity of our work will be applied consistently across all our marketing collateral.

Our colours represent who we are and what we stand for. The primary blue colour symbolises trust, loyalty, and truth, while our accent yellow, aqua and green colours add warmth, energy and balance out the primary blue colours.

The colours are recognisable and relatable to our existing audiences, stakeholders and supporters.



**WHY** To empower young lives

**AMBITION** To see young lives lived to their full potential

**HOW** We champion the young person. With determination and creativity, we develop solutions to ensure they have a safe home and improved wellbeing in their communities.

**POSITIONING**

For young people in need of a safe home, Burdekin is the independent provider that develops creative solutions within the local community to advocate for the needs of every young person to feel safe and have a home, so they can be empowered to fulfil their potential.

**PROMISE**

Make a difference. Inspire hope. Find a way for young people, their families and the community.

**FUNCTIONAL OFFER**

A continuum of care for young people and their families and an integrated approach to intervention, support and housing:

- Prevention programs: practical, therapeutic support for at-risk youth and their families
- Outreach services, eg Beaches Youth Hub
- Individualised case management and support
- Tailored support towards independence
- Opportunities to volunteer/give
- Out-of-home care
- Youth Housing

**EMOTIONAL BENEFITS**

We focus on the young people that we help to move forward positively with their lives, and the referring services. These include fostering:

- Empowerment – a sense of the individual being seen and heard
- Safety – by providing essential housing support and services
- Trust – in our ability to care and deliver
- Hope – in the possibilities for the future
- Inspired – to help and support others (internal teams and volunteers)
- Fulfilled – in seeing the outcomes of our work
- Goodwill – within the local community



**AUDIENCES**

- Young people
- Donors
- Referrers
- Wider industry
- Volunteers
- Current & future employees

**REASONS TO BELIEVE**

Nearly 40 years of proven experience working with young people, their families and the community.

Broad range of industry-leading solutions covering the spectrum of youth homelessness and out-of-home care.

Trusted as the service provider of choice, especially for unconventional cases.

Independent and not-for-profit, with full industry accreditations.

Well connected within the wider industry of youth support, ensuring young people have access to wrap around support.

Demonstrated responsive community engagement and action.

**OUR VALUES**

**IMAGINATIVE (We find a way)**

We know we play an important role in supporting young people, families and communities. We keep an open and creative mind towards finding solutions that meet their needs and push the boundaries to advocate for them.

**RESPONSIVE (We embrace the individual)**

We approach every young person as an individual, listening first to understand who they are and how we can support them. Only then do we respond, finding creative solutions that embrace the needs of the individual, and empowers them to move forward within their community and culture.

**DETERMINED (We give it our all)**

When someone needs us, we're there. We are resolute and staunch in fighting for the rights of our young people, their families and their communities. Without fail, we always act and make decisions for the benefit of our young people, and each other.

# Youth Housing

Our Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) are funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, and include our:

- Youth Housing Program
- Family Services and
- Outreach Service

Our Youth Housing Program is delivered in partnership with Link Wentworth and Bridge Housing – Community Housing Providers.

Link Wentworth and Bridge Housing ensure access to 18 houses and apartments that accommodated 45 young people over the last financial year.

Youth Housing is for young people aged 16–24 who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness and need a safe place to find their feet.

The program works by providing young people with a stable place to live with subsidised rent, with Burdekin Case Managers providing individualised case management services - where the young person works on their goals and builds their independent living skills.

A placement can last up to two years, in which time Burdekin works alongside the young person to help them complete their education, find and keep employment, and build the skills and confidence to move into the private rental market.

## Numbers:

**234 young people supported.**



**19 is the average age of a young person in youth housing.**

**178 referrals for youth housing over the past year.**



**Local housing and apartments housed young people.**



## Youth Housing Case Study

In December 2022, we welcomed an 18-year-old single mother into our Youth Housing program. She arrived with her two beautiful children—her son, 2 years old, and her daughter, just 17 months. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in their lives, as they moved into a small home that became their first private space to call their own.

Over 18 months, this young mother made incredible progress. With support from Burdekin, she embarked on driving lessons and is now just steps away from obtaining her driver's licence.

Determined to create a better future for herself and her children, she chose to pursue a Certificate III in Beauty Services. Balancing motherhood and her studies was no small feat, but with a reliable childcare facility, she excelled in her coursework and passed with flying colours.

Her hard work and dedication paid off when she secured a job at a local beauty spa, where she now works three days a week.

Despite the difficulties she's faced, including navigating domestic violence orders and learning to manage her finances, she has grown stronger and wiser, mastering the art of budgeting and saving for her family's needs.

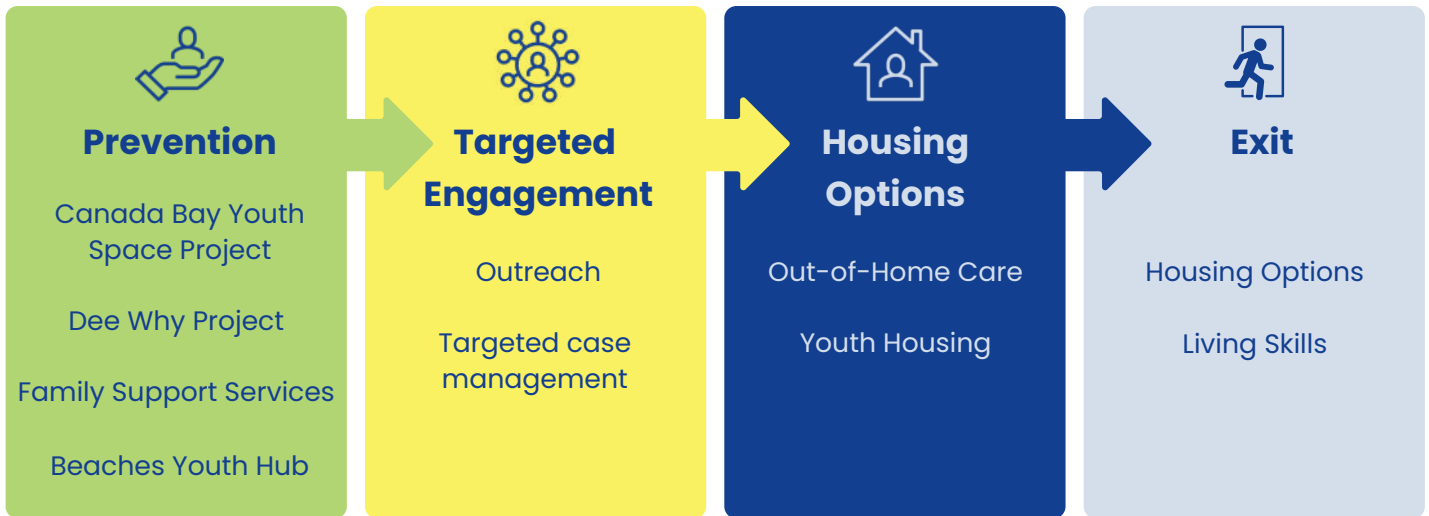
Burdekin's volunteer community came together to support her - repainting the interior of her home, repairing the bathroom, tidying up the garden, and donating new car seats, a mattress and kitchen supplies.

Her journey is a testament to her strength, courage, and unwavering commitment to create a better life for her children. We look forward to witnessing her growth as she builds a brighter future for her family.



# Continuum of Care

Burdekin provides a continuum of care for young people and their families:



## Beaches Youth Hub

Beaches Youth Hub (formerly Avalon Youth Hub) is a collaboration of support services, with Burdekin as the lead agency. It is a community service destination with the goal of providing a range of free wellbeing services to young people aged 12-24 in the Pittwater region of the Northern Beaches. Mental health services are provided by KYDS Inc, Mission Australia Northern Sydney, Sydney Drug Education & Counselling Centre, headspace Brookvale and Burdekin.

In May 2024, Northern Beaches Council endorsed a significant development for the Hub, in securing the former Avalon Customer Contact Centre, enabling the expansion of its services and the provision of additional support to tackle the challenges faced by young people.

## Beaches Youth Hub Key Program Outcomes

Key achievements for the Beaches Youth Hub during 2023/24 were:

- Reaching approximately 250 young people each week during Wednesday afternoon sessions at Dunbar Park, Avalon, supporting resilience in the community.
- Providing 247 counselling sessions.

- 390 young people participating in workshops and information sessions (well above the target of 100 people.)
- Conducting 'Healthy Relationship' workshops, RUOK Day Cookie Sessions and a Youth Services Expo at Narrabeen Sports High School.
- Hosting an interactive session on wellbeing at Barrenjoey High School.
- Being a key part of the Mental Health Month Activation, which involved Bubble Soccer; The Beats & Eats Youth Week event; the Narrabeen Market stall; and NSW Youth Week.



# Our impact

## Canada Bay Youth Space Project

The Canada Bay Youth Space Project is an opportunity for high school aged young people to drop into Five Dock and Concord Libraries one afternoon a week during school term. Around 40 young people attend across the two libraries each week, making connections with young people, engaging in activities, accessing therapeutic social education support and referral pathways to other suitable services from experienced Burdekin staff.

During the sessions, the high schoolers discuss issues such as relationships with friends, social isolation, parental pressure, cultural differences and LGBTQIA+ issues with qualified Burdekin Youth Workers.



## Dee Why Project

Last financial year, the Dee Why Project acquired an additional three years of funding from the Office of Responsible Gambling NSW.

Online gambling is increasingly affecting young people, due to the availability of numerous gambling apps, prevalent advertising, and smartphone use.

In 2019, an Australian Communications & Media Authority survey revealed that 75% of parents were concerned about their children's exposure to gambling advertisements.

Nearly half of gamblers are at risk of gambling harm (Australian Gambling Research Centre 2023), with Australians losing approximately \$25 billion annually on legal gambling (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare 2023).

The Dee Why Project has successfully:

- Worked with a cohort of Year 10 students from Balgowlah Boys High School on the 2024 *B A Game Changer Peer Education Project* on gambling and gaming. The project aims to prevent underage gambling by educating young people under 18 about the risks associated with gaming and its connection to gambling-related harms.
- Several wellbeing and life skills workshops were conducted by Peer Educators, who have more success in connecting with young people than traditional authority figures, increasing the credibility of the program and reducing the stigma around seeking help for gambling related issues.
- Forged partnerships with and trained Mission Australia Counsellors, with the assistance of GambleAware.
  - These counsellors provided support and assistance to young people referred by Peer Educators at Balgowlah Boys High School.



# Family Services

Burdekin's Family Services assist young people aged 12 to 24 and their families in cases where staying at or returning to the family home is a safe and suitable outcome.

Understanding the challenges that can lead to family breakdown, Burdekin provides support through Outreach, Case Management, and Counselling.

Young people can self-refer or be referred by various sources, including schools, police, and the Department of Communities & Justice.

Last year, our Family Support Services helped 45 young people and their families.

This program serves as an early intervention, offering practical and emotional support to strengthen family relationships, manage stress, reduce conflict and improve communication.

Unresolved conflicts can increase the risk of homelessness, so counselling is offered to those motivated to address these issues. Sessions can be held in person or online, depending on the situation.

During appointments, the focus is on understanding each person's role in the conflict and identifying unhelpful, reactive behaviours. By promoting healthier, more thoughtful responses, the program aims to reduce tension, improve communication, and lower the risk of homelessness.



**45 young people and their families helped.**

## Family Intervention Case Study:

A young person, Ben, was severely disengaged from school, often didn't return home at night and was on the verge of police intervention. Ben was consistently being labelled as a 'bad child'. Initial work by Burdekin's Family Support Case Manager involved understanding Ben and how he communicated with his school and family.

The Family Support Case Manager advocated for assessment testing of Ben, and several diagnoses were made. The diagnoses helped Ben to gain a renewed sense of self-worth and became the basis for informing Ben's family and school as to his future learning journey.

Ben has since been engaged with resumé writing and work experience, and is re-engaging with school. Ben's family is reporting that he is at home most nights and is actively engaging in local sport, youth organisations and a mentoring program.





# Out-of-Home Care

We offer accommodation and support options for children and young people aged 9 to 17 years who are under the care of the NSW Minister.

Our Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) program offers different housing and support options, including:

- Supported Family Group Home (Carer Program)
- Supported Independent Living
- Staffed Care Home
- Interim Care
- Restoration

The Carer Program is for children and young people aged 12 to 17 years. A Carer provides day-to-day support and a nurturing, safe home for the child or young person with back-end support provided by Burdekin.

Supported Independent Living options are available for young people, with the entry age being 16-17 years of age.

A Staffed Care Home program provides a home-like environment with up to four young people. This program is for situations when it isn't feasible for a young person to live in a home with a key adult.

Young people are offered opportunities to remain with Burdekin beyond 18 years of age through the Supported Independent Living Program, Youth Housing program or After Care support.

The Out-of-Home Care properties are provided in partnership with private landlords, community housing providers and the Department of Communities & Justice.

We are always looking for new partnership opportunities, to provide young people with quality housing options.

## Carer Program



- **11 young people were in the Carer Program in 2023.**
- **15 young people were in the Carer Program in 2024.**

Through the Carer Program, some of Burdekin's young people are connected with authorised Foster Carers who provide care as well as a safe and stable home.

In this environment, children and young people have a strong foundation to build confidence, learn essential life skills and share in positive, nurturing life experiences.

Burdekin is unlike traditional Foster Care, due to its unique, supported model. Burdekin offers extensive support for the Carer, including ongoing training, an allowance and rental/mortgage support to ensure that they are able to prioritise the needs of the young person.

Carers don't need to have been a parent themselves, or may have limited experience with teenagers. What is important is that they are open minded, have a caring heart and are committed to opening up their homes and families to children and young people in need of love and nurture.





This incredible outcome is testament to the volunteer coordinators, who have been working hard to welcome more volunteers to Burdekin, to give back to the community.

## Burdekin's Volunteer Program Approach

Our approach continues to be to ensure we match volunteers and young people in a way that they both benefit by finding activities that they both enjoy doing.

### Ways Burdekin volunteers help young people include:

- Learner driving supervision hours, with a young person in a Burdekin vehicle
- Education support
- Social support through an agreed activity
- Assistance with developing independent living skills

### Revamped volunteer training program

During the last financial year, we refined our volunteer training process to enable our volunteers to grow their skills and knowledge. Options for training have included:

- Three sessions of online training with inbuilt questions, to check a minimum level of knowledge had been attained
- Video links to short training sessions on relevant topics e.g. trauma-informed care, child protection, de-escalation strategies, self-care, mentoring skills
- In-person training evenings; focusing on the difference a calm, consistent, flexible and fun volunteer can make just by being present on a regular basis

# Volunteers

The kindness and generosity of volunteers are essential in helping Burdekin to provide much needed support to young people and their families.

As well as making young people feel part of a supportive community, volunteers help young people learn critical life skills, improve their educational outcomes, and build relationships.

## The valuable time provided by our volunteers

We had a marked increase in the number of volunteers hours provided during the last financial year, with a jump from just under 500 hours the previous financial year, to a total of 1,356 this financial year.



**168 volunteer driving supervision hours provided.**



**1,356 volunteer hours provided, an increase of 271% on the previous year.**



# Developing the Aboriginal Unit

In September 2023, Burdekin launched its dedicated Aboriginal Unit, with Aunty Barbara as the Unit's mentor and lead.

Aunty Barb is a well-respected Koori practitioner and advocate for Indigenous trauma, recovery trauma and mental health.

The Unit's initial activities centred around ensuring that Burdekin's processes and procedures as an Out-of-Home Care provider were harmonious with cultural and legislative requirements.

This was followed by a significant piece of work with Burdekin's Interim Care Unit, exploring and implementing new and more supportive processes into how Burdekin provides cultural support to young Aboriginal people in interim care.

Aunty Barb has been joined in the Aboriginal Unit by Evelyn, who has extensive knowledge of the Koori community and is being trained by Aunty Barb in the principles of Indigenous trauma work.

## Reconciliation Action Plan

One of the key initiatives in the last financial year was developing Burdekin's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Given Burdekin's close relationship with many young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, Burdekin also wants to put into action helpful strategies to give young people from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background appropriate cultural care.

The first level of RAP commitment is "Reflect", with Burdekin intending over the coming years to progress through the next RAP stages - "Innovate", "Stretch" and "Elevate".

Using Reconciliation Australia's template, Burdekin's RAP working group successfully developed an initial RAP draft, and is now working through a feedback process with Reconciliation Australia.

Burdekin's "Reflect" RAP will be launched in November 2024.





# Our Clients, Their Voices

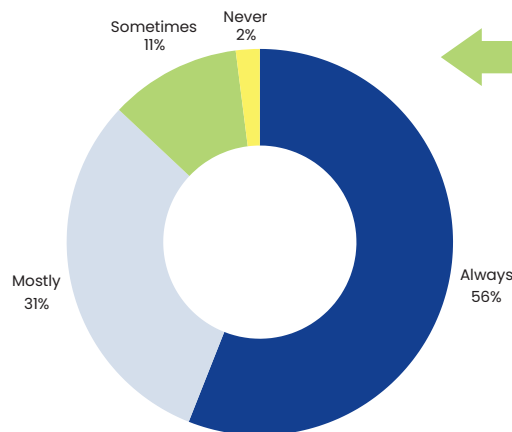
The findings from our 2023-2024 Financial Year Burdekin Client Feedback Survey provide insight into how supported and safe our young people feel, and their overall wellbeing. 60 young people took part in the survey - 32 female, 25 male and 3 non-binary.

Overall, young people appear to be happy with the support they receive from Burdekin. On a scale of 1 (not happy at all) to 10 (extremely happy), the average response was 7.7, which compares similarly to the 2022 Survey.

Burdekin clients were also surveyed about their ability to participate in decision making. Across the areas of education and health, young people recorded 57% and 59% respectively for 'always' being able to participate in decision making.

## Survey

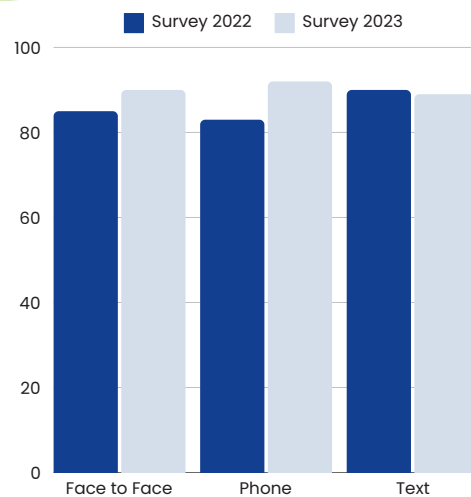
I feel supported and listened to by my Case Manager.



Steady - 87% of clients 'mostly' and 'always' feel supported and listened to by their Case Manager - the same result as in the 2022-2023 Survey.

I am happy with the amount of contact I have with my Case Manager via the following means:

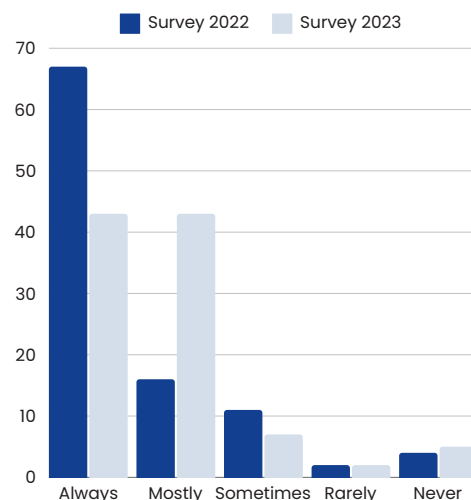
- Face to Face: 90%
- By Phone: 92%
- By Text: 89%



Comparatively, in 2022-2023, 85% of survey participants felt happy with the contact they received from their Case Manager 'face to face' - an improvement of 5%.

92% of participants felt happy with the contact they received via phone - an improvement of 9%.

I feel supported and listened to by Youth/Support Workers.



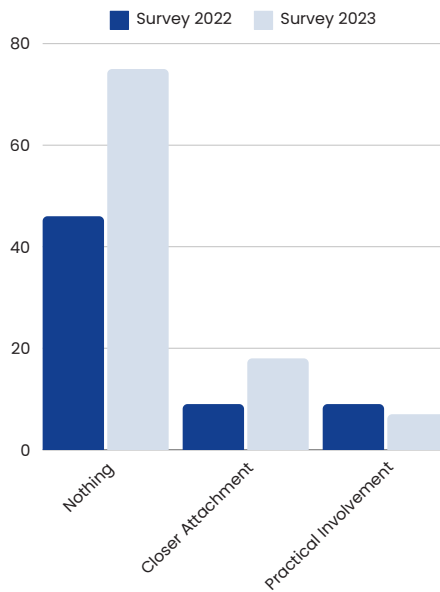
In 2023, 86% of young people reported that they 'always' and 'mostly' felt supported and listened to by their Youth Worker. This compares to 83% in the 2022-2023 Survey.

# Our Clients, Their Voices cont.

## Survey

What could your Youth / Support Worker do to support you further?

- Nothing, I am supported
- Closer Attachment
- Practical Involvement



In 2023, 75% of young people reported that they are supported and need no further support, compared to 46% in the 2022-2023 Survey.

### “Nothing, I am supported” responses:

“The Youth Workers are like my family members, they know me well and they always listen!”

“Pretty good - they take me to TAFE, support family contacts. I can’t think of anything that they could do.”

“Nothing. She has helped me a lot and got me to a better place than where I was.”

### “Closer Attachment” responses:

“Be there for me more.”

“Be more talkative and interact more.”

“Have a deeper connection with more communication.”

“I would like to see her more frequently.”

“Listen and communicate.”

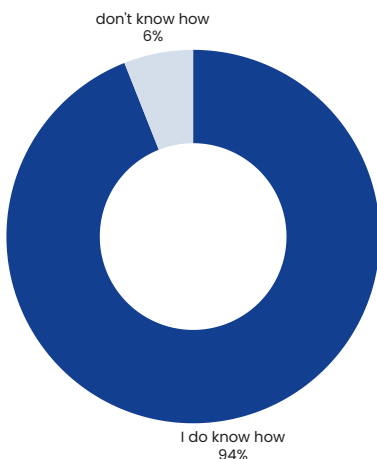
### “Practical Involvement” responses:

“Help with seeing my future options and pathways as well as understanding different policies.”

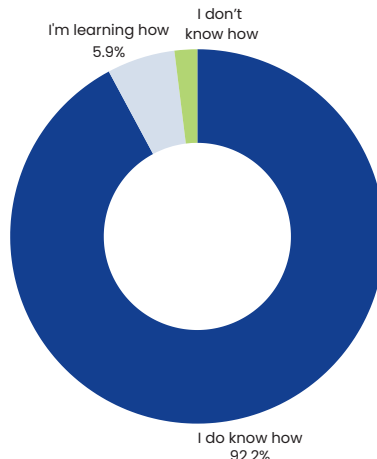
“Give more financial aid and support services that alleviate financial burdens...and inform me of education opportunities.”

Independent living skills encompass daily tasks such as cooking, laundry, cleaning, budgeting, as well as personal care. The following results showcase the participants’ self-assessed independent living skills.

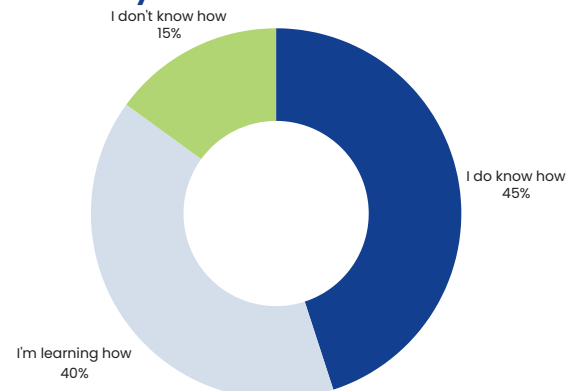
### I know how to do my own laundry



### I know how to cook



### I know how to budget & pay my bills



# Partnerships & Collaborations



By establishing working partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders, we work together to ensure that every child and young person has a safe home and the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Some of the key groups we work with include:

- Northern Beaches interagencies
- headspace consortiums - Brookvale/Chatswood, Ashfield/Camperdown
- Inner West Youth Alliance
- St George Youth Network

## Burdekin Services

## Out-of-Home Care

## Specialist Homelessness Services

## Beaches Youth Hub

## Canada Bay Youth Space Project

## Dee Why Project

## Safer Communities - Change Your Course

## Partners



# Partnerships & Collaborations cont.



Burdekin is part of a vibrant human services sector that constructively works together to address the needs of vulnerable children and young people. Over the last financial year, we deepened our relationships with the sector to improve outcomes for the young people we support.

We attended more than 50 interagency networking opportunities, including conferences, and established a new relationship with the Inner West Multicultural Network. These events enabled us to share knowledge, consider ways to work together, and cross-refer our young people to services.

Our collaborations with other not-for-profit organisations continued to have positive impacts. This included a renewal of Burdekin's role as lead agency for the Beaches Youth Hub (formerly the Avalon Youth Hub), which brings together several service providers to support young people and families in Pittwater.

Our not-for-profit partnerships in 2023/24:

- Beaches Youth Hub (formerly Avalon Youth Hub) – Burdekin lead agency.
- Change Your Course program – Burdekin is a service partner delivering case management.
- Headspace – Burdekin has seats on the Consortium (Advisory Committee) for two regional areas.
- Northern Beaches Youth Interagency – Burdekin has a seat on the Executive.

**During the last financial year, Burdekin was a member of:**

- Homelessness NSW
- YFoundations
- Youth Action
- Philanthropy Australia
- SNAICC – Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

Burdekin continued to work closely with local, state and federal governments.

## **State:**

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) continues to be the main source of funding and referrals of young people to Burdekin. We successfully built on our strong reputation with DCJ as a preferred supplier who delivers innovative and positive support to young people and families in need.

## **Federally:**

We worked with the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources to deliver the Change Your Course program.

## **Local:**

We continued to work closely with local government, including:

- Georges River Council
- Inner West Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- City of Canada Bay

Our close relationship with all levels of government, and membership of peak industry bodies, enables Burdekin to provide a frontline perspective to policy and decision-making that relates to, and involves vulnerable children and young people.

Our partnership with community housing organisations, Link Wentworth and Bridge Housing, remained strong, with the two organisations providing transitional housing for 45 young people supported by Burdekin during the last financial year.

# Our Supporters

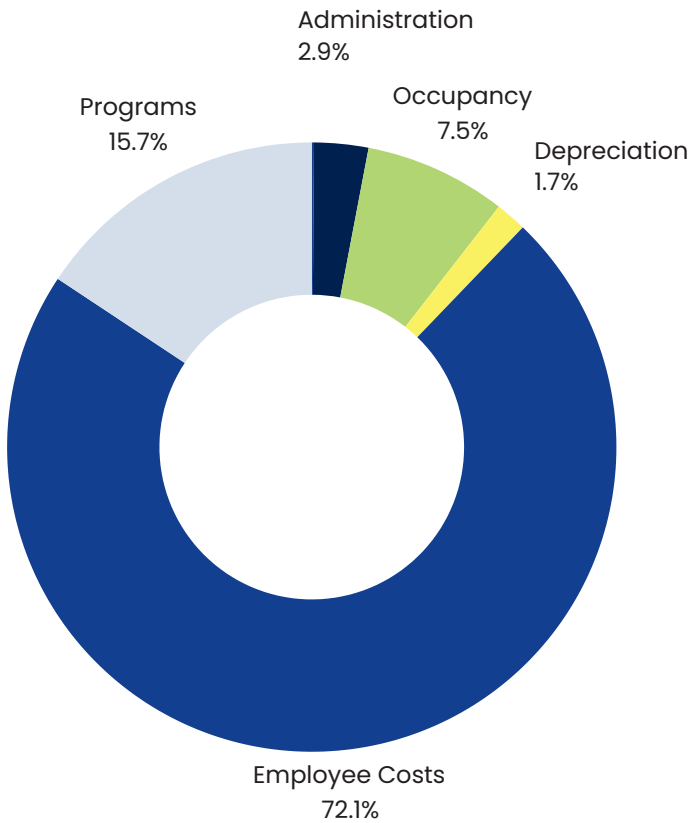
We couldn't do the work we do without our many generous supporters. We thank you and appreciate the trust you put into us and strive to do our very best by our young people.

Our community of supporters help us in a variety of ways, from donating to our Christmas and End of Financial Year Fundraising Appeals, donating goods, to participating in community fundraising events.



# Financials

## 2024 Expenses

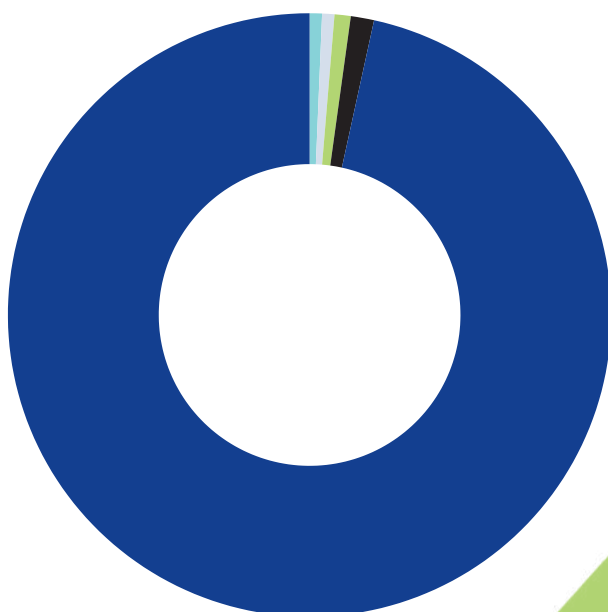


In this financial year, Burdekin made a surplus of \$127,485 (prior year \$133,440).

We received revenue totalling \$26,828,768 (prior year \$21,418,452) throughout the year from various government sources, including the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Department of Health and Northern Beaches Council.

In addition, our service delivery was enhanced by grants (other organisations), donations, fundraising and philanthropic support amounting to \$569,907 (prior year \$457,915).

## 2024 Income



- 0.66% - Other income
- 0.87% - Charitable income and fundraising
- 1.25% - Grants from other sources
- 97.21% - State / Federal Grants





# Governance

Burdekin is committed to good governance and best practice as we continue to grow, develop and support young people and their families. During the last financial year, our Board was strengthened with the appointment of three new Board Members. We also re-structured our committees to ensure our Board is assisted in discharging its responsibilities.

Our previous Finance, Audit and Risk Committee has been replaced by two new committees – the Finance and Audit Committee and the Risk and Compliance Committee.

To ensure clarity of responsibility, we developed new charters and both committees met regularly to support our Board’s work.

At an operational level, we appointed a dedicated Manager of Quality, Risk and Safeguarding to lead the team that ensures we’re meeting all legislative and contractual requirements.

Most importantly, this team provides oversight that focuses on keeping our clients, and the extraordinary people who care for them, safe.

## An Energised Board

In November 2023, we were pleased to welcome Alex Maitland, Jordan Kuhnemann and Sid Gokani to Burdekin’s Board.

Between them, they bring further depth to an already experienced and engaged Board, particularly in the areas of corporate governance and risk management.

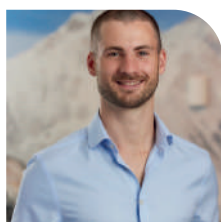
Alex is a Fellow of the Institute of Company Directors, the Governance Institute and the Chartered Governance Institute. He understands what is needed to run a successful not-for-profit organisation.



**Sid Gokani**  
Board Member



**Alex Maitland**  
Board Member



**Jordan Kuhnemann**  
Board Member



**Marianna Brungs**  
Board Member



**Jane Buncle**  
Board Member

Sid has held many senior leadership positions and has a track record of delivering results. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

An investment manager at a major firm, Jordan brings an ability to make smart judgement calls in any situation. He is also a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Alex, Jordan and Sid have joined Jon, Gill, Jane, Hayden, and Marianna, and have already made a meaningful impact.

## Transition to a company limited by guarantee

During the financial year, our Board began the process of transitioning Burdekin from an incorporated association to a company limited by guarantee, under the Corporations Act (Cth) 2001.

This transition became necessary due to Burdekin’s ongoing expansion, both operationally and financially.

We are extremely grateful for the support provided by PwC and its expert employees, who are supporting our Board through this process on a pro-bono basis. We expect to finalise this process by the end of the 2025 financial year.

## Our Board



**Jon Davies**  
President



**Gill Lawrence**  
Vice President



**Hayden King**  
Treasurer

# Donate now

We are keen to forge new small and large partnerships aligned with our vision, aimed at empowering young lives.

If you share our vision and would like to work with us, please get in touch.



Office of the  
Children's Guardian

 [burdekin.org.au](http://burdekin.org.au)

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Brookvale NSW 2100

99 Chapel Street  
Marrickville NSW 2204



  
Empowering young lives