



Young Minds Thrive

Connecting, Growing, Succeeding

Annual Report 2023-24

Thank you for your invaluable support in helping local children have a positive start to school.

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Young Minds Thrive

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Young Minds Thrive Inc. acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land in which our families, volunteers, Board and committee members work, live and visit. We pay our respects to the Elders of those many nations from past, present and emerging. Young Minds Thrive is a not-for-profit organisation. We are proud to display the Registered Charity Tick to highlight our charitable status through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commissions' Charity Register.



Empowering Futures Program Impact

651 FUNDED CHILD HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT, SCHOOL READINESS AND PARENT SUPPORT SESSIONS PROVIDED IN 2024

288 CHILD HEARING SCREENINGS PROVIDED

210 CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED

66% OF LOCAL SCHOOLS REACHED

145 ADDITIONAL PARENT CONSULTATIONS



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Our vision

A future where every child, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Our mission

To combat rising child developmental delays and improve school readiness in disadvantaged regional communities. We provide centralised child health, development, and school readiness screening services for children aged 2-7. Through early intervention, tailored support, and community collaboration, we empower families and create lasting positive change for children in regional NSW.

What we do

Young Minds Thrive is a community-focused charity dedicated to supporting children's health and development. Our work focuses on five key areas:

- **Early Intervention:** We detect and address developmental and behavioural challenges early to prevent long-term setbacks.
- **Holistic Approach:** Our services recognise the role of family and community in every child's development, fostering a supportive environment.
- **Empowerment:** We equip families with resources and knowledge to proactively support their child's growth.
- **Collaboration:** We partner with schools, health services, and community organisations to create a collective impact.
- **Inclusivity:** We ensure that all children, regardless of background, receive equitable access to health and education services and opportunities.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



KARYN THOMAS

Founder/Chairperson

It is with great pride and excitement that I present the inaugural annual report for Young Minds Thrive. This year has been a defining one for our organisation, as we embarked on the journey to improve the lives of children and families in our regional community through early intervention and school readiness programs. Our mission remains clear: to ensure that every child, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Empowering Futures: School Screening Program was a standout success in 2024, with participation from 12 local preschools and schools, representing over 66% of our local education centres. With student participation rates exceeding 90%, we were able to screen 210 children, identifying 60% as needing further developmental and school readiness support.

Through our Empowering Futures: Child Hearing Screening Program, we provided 300 hearing screens, identifying hearing loss in 30% of children—three times the national average. These children received timely follow-up assessments and referrals to primary health and specialist services.

One of our proudest achievements this year was Young Minds Thrive being officially recognised as a Registered Charity, solidifying our position as community leaders in raising awareness about the importance of early childhood development and school readiness.

Our organisation is entirely volunteer-driven, with every individual contributing their time, skills, and passion to create brighter futures for our children. This dedication has been the cornerstone of our success, and I am deeply grateful to all who have supported us along the way.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to the financial supporters who have been with us from the very beginning. Your trust in our vision and belief in the passion behind our work has been instrumental in helping us reach this point. Your early support has allowed us to make a meaningful difference, and we look forward to continuing this experience.

Looking forward to 2025, I am thrilled to announce the launch of our Empowering Futures: School Ready In-Home Learning Program, a 6-month initiative designed to support over 150 local children aged 4-6 in preparing for kindergarten. This program will provide interactive, play-based learning resources aligned with evidence-based developmental screening tools, ensuring children develop the foundational skills necessary for early learning success. It will also empower parents with the resources to support their children's development, making a lasting impact on families and communities.

Thank you to our dedicated board members, volunteers, schools, financial supporters, and community partners for your unwavering support and belief in our mission. Together, we are building a future where every child can thrive.

Thank You

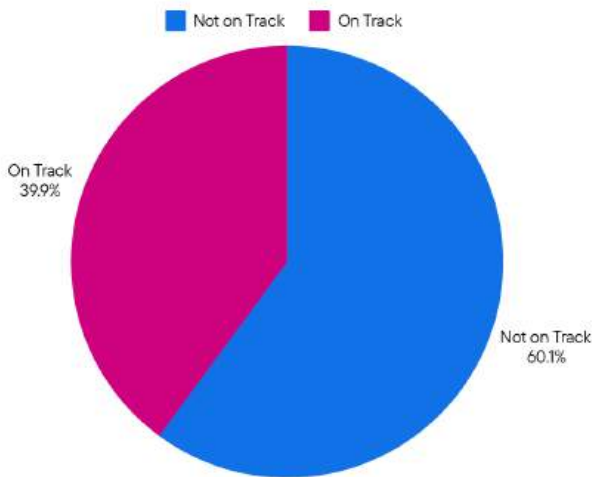


WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Young Minds Thrive is proud to partner with a variety of organisations and businesses to achieve our mission of supporting childhood development. We thank you for your support of Young Minds Thrive.



2024 School Screening Program Outcomes



2 in 3 local children start school not on track



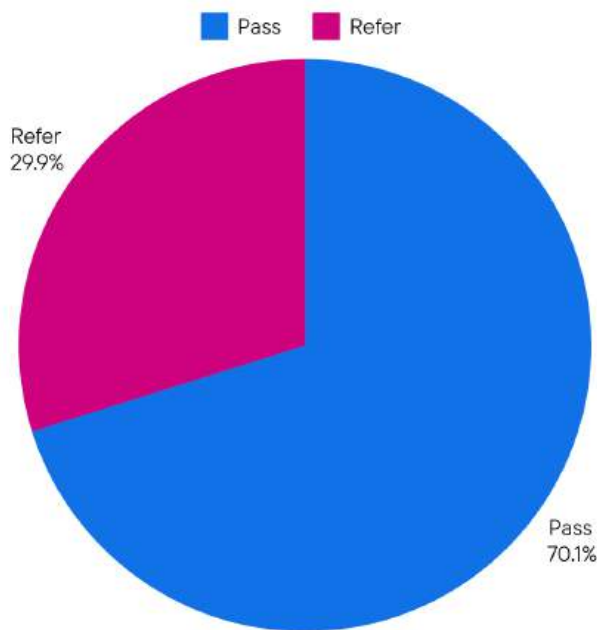
Program Summary :

In 2024, our **Empowering Futures: School Screening Program** conducted 210 comprehensive health, development, and school readiness assessments for local children aged 4-6 years. Our findings revealed that 60% of children in the region were not on track in one or more developmental milestone areas as they commenced kindergarten, which can significantly impact their ability to thrive in educational and social environments. Many of these children had not previously accessed routine health or developmental assessments, underscoring a critical gap in early childhood support services.

At **Young Minds Thrive**, our mission is to enhance the health, developmental, and early learning outcomes of children in our region. This program is just one of many initiatives aimed at ensuring no child is left behind, by improving access to essential services and early interventions that can transform the future for children and families in our community.

In addition to the assessments, the **Empowering Futures: School Screening Program** provided 145 parent information sessions and follow-up consultations, totalling 355 support sessions through this program alone. The results showed that 40% of children identified as not on track were referred to appropriate community support pathways. These referrals, facilitated by the **Young Minds Thrive** team, connected children and families with essential services to address their developmental needs, ensuring they can reach their full potential and succeed both in learning and in life.

2024 Hearing Screening Program Outcomes



1 in 3
local children experienced
hearing loss



Program Summary :

Our 2024, **Empowering Futures: Child Hearing Screening Program** provided **288 funded** Ear Health and Hearing Screenings to local children aged between 4–6 years.

Concerningly, our findings revealed that **1 in 3 children** in the region have unidentified **hearing loss**, which may significantly impact their ability to thrive in educational and social environments. The majority of these children had not accessed routine audiometry or hearing services before beginning school, highlighting a crucial gap in early childhood healthcare.

At **Young Minds Thrive**, our mission is to enhance the health, developmental, and early learning outcomes of children in our region. This program is one of many initiatives we implement to ensure that no child falls through the cracks, as we work to improve access to services and early interventions that can transform the future for children and families in our community.

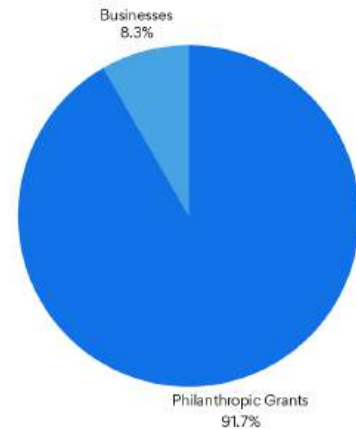
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

At Young Minds Thrive, our mission is driven by passion and collaboration. We are dedicated to ensuring that every dollar we receive is used efficiently to maximise the impact on children and families in need.

This year, we are proud to say that 100% of the funds received have been allocated directly to our Empowering Futures program initiatives. Every dollar has gone toward supporting children in accessing vital health, development, and school readiness resources. By focusing all resources on these critical areas, we ensure that our programs provide the maximum benefit to the children and families we serve.

For the past 12 months, we are proud to report a stable financial position, ensuring that we are well-prepared to meet future challenges and continue supporting local families. This achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our sponsors, donors, volunteers, and team members.

WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM



WHERE OUR MONEY GOES



Grants/Income

\$61,000



Program Expenses

\$41,000



Equity

\$20,000

"ALL CHILDREN DESERVE TO
BE SUPPORTED TO REACH
THEIR FULL POTENTIAL"



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LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

2025 Empowering Futures School Ready In-Home Learning Program

In 2024, our Empowering Futures: School Screening Program provided critical insights into the needs of our community, highlighting that many local children were beginning school without the foundational skills essential for a successful start. This data demonstrated a clear need for school readiness support to help children transition confidently into kindergarten, with long-term benefits for their learning journey.

Parents voiced a strong desire for more support at home—expressing a need for greater awareness around healthy child development, understanding milestones, and guidance on how to access local resources when delays were identified.

Our commitment to sustainability and impactful outcomes led us to reimagine our approach. While our school-based screenings were effective, they required extensive coordination with multiple external stakeholders. To better serve families and maintain stability, we developed the Empowering Futures: School Ready In-Home Learning Program, which brings school readiness resources directly into families' homes, where they are most needed and accessible.

The program includes the ASQ online tool, allowing us to identify children at risk and link families to local support pathways. By reducing the logistical demands of school-based programs, we can streamline our work and ensure that each child receives the support they deserve.

This insight-driven program includes an interactive workbook designed from our collected data, targeting key areas of school readiness through engaging, play-based activities that children can work through at their own pace. Parents receive support through an exclusive online community where the Young Minds Thrive team provides ongoing professional guidance, education, and tips for fostering learning at home and getting the most out of their in-home learning program.

This model allows us to reach more families, ensure financial stability, and reduce external barriers. Most importantly, it aligns with our mission to enhance the health, development, and learning outcomes of children in rural and regional communities, ensuring that every child has the support they need to succeed in school and beyond.

2025 PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Through our innovative Empowering Futures: School Ready In-Home Learning Program, Young Minds Thrive is dedicated to preparing children across the Mid-North Coast for a confident and successful start to school. This program addresses a crucial need in regional communities, providing families with valuable, evidence-based resources to foster school readiness right at home.

Program Highlights

- **Delivered to Families' Homes:** Accessible, in-home learning resources arrive directly at each participant's door, ensuring easy access to high-quality, structured educational support.
- **100 Fully-Funded Places:** In 2025, we are offering 100 fully-funded places, allowing children from socio-economically challenged families to access these crucial resources at no cost.
- **Evidence-Based Resources:** The program includes an interactive School Ready Learning Binder with engaging activities and additional educational materials, all designed to develop key skills for early learning success.
- **Professional Guidance:** Over a six-month period, families receive online support from Early Childhood Professionals, offering personalised guidance to reinforce developmental goals.
- **Building Connections:** A closed online community connects participating families, fostering a support network and shared learning environment.

This program's impact extends beyond individual families, contributing to a stronger community by investing in children's educational foundations. By supporting Young Minds Thrive, our community is helping create a legacy of readiness, confidence, and opportunity for the children of regional NSW.

MEET OUR BOARD



- * With 15 years of experience as a Primary School Educator in the Nambucca Valley, IDeb is dedicated to improving childhood learning outcomes in our community.
- * By partnering with education, health, and community stakeholders, Deb aims to foster collaboration and inspire young minds to thrive.

DEB SWAN

Secretary/Education Advisor



- * With 15 years of experience as a Chartered Accountant working as a partner in her accounting firm, Melissa brings expertise in financial advice, governance and leadership.
- * Melissa is committed to using her financial expertise to support Young Minds Thrive to make a positive difference for children and families, fostering collaboration for collective impact.

MELISSA ROFE

Treasurer/Finance Advisor

MEET OUR TEAM



- * Harlie is currently studying Medicine and brings 16 years of experience across nursing, midwifery, Aboriginal health, and rural and remote nursing.
- * As a proud Waradjari woman, Harlie provides invaluable advice to Young Minds Thrive on how to better meet the needs of First Nation families, while fostering positive change and collective impact within the community.

HARLIE BYRNES

Board Member/First Nations Advisor



- * Dr. Heather Ploeger is a Child Wellbeing Advisor and Senior Officer at the Commission for Children and Young People, with a wealth of experience in child wellbeing and child safety.
- * With a focus on amplifying the voices of children and supporting families, Heather is dedicated to improving outcomes for vulnerable children, reducing harm, and driving collective efforts towards a future where every child can thrive.

DR. HEATHER PLOEGER

Board Member/Child Safeguarding Advisor

It takes a village.

Our vision to ensure every child reaches their full potential and thrives in their early years is only possible because of the incredible support from the wider community.

The unwavering belief in our mission and generous contributions make all the difference in the lives of the children and families we serve.

Because of this support, we can provide vital health, development, and school readiness support to children in our community, giving them the best start in life.

Community support encourages our team to continue our important work, and we are deeply grateful for these partnerships.

Together, we are creating brighter futures for all our children.

Thank You

Health, Development
behavioural Screening
youngmindsthive.com.au



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CONTACT US

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