

# IMPACT REPORT

23/24



## Acknowledgement of Country

Canteen acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to providing inclusive and appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, their kin and community.



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## A message from our CEO

### Your support has made all the difference

We express our sincere appreciation for Canteen's generous community of supporters. Your generosity has allowed us to continue our diverse range of programs which have had a significantly positive impact on young people and their families.

Canteen operates across four strategic pillars to ensure that young people and their families get the best possible support to cope with the immense challenges of cancer:

1. Treatment and support
2. Research and policy
3. Leadership
4. Sustainability

These pillars are underpinned by Canteen's commitment to Diversity & Inclusion and Innovation.

We believe that every young person deserves access to life-changing cancer support. Thanks to your generosity, all Canteen services are completely free of charge. With your continued support we will be able improve our services, expand them and reach more young people than ever.

Thanks to your kindness, young people can discover new experiences on the flipside of the hard ones and find life in the face of cancer.

Thank you.

Peter Orchard  
Canteen CEO

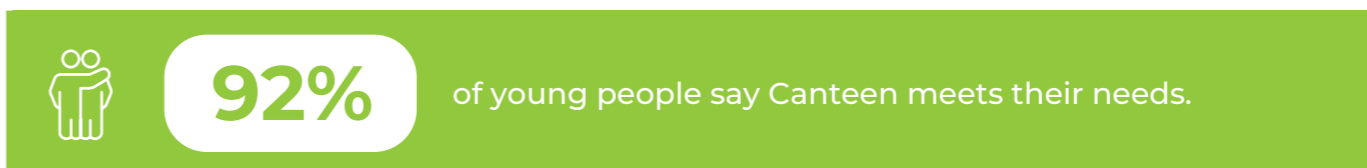






**How Canteen's Services Help Young People?**

-  Accessing cancer treatments
-  Receiving assistance in coping with challenging emotions
-  Obtaining information about cancer
-  Accessing practical supports like financial assistance, education and career support, that help young people develop despite the impact of cancer
-  Learning how to discuss their cancer experience with family
-  Seeking peer support from others who understand their situation
-  Accessing psychological guidance and support throughout and after the cancer journey



**Our purpose is to provide life-changing treatment and support**

**Every year, another 23,000 young people have their world turned upside down by a loved one's cancer or their own cancer diagnosis.**

Adolescence and young adulthood can be hard for anyone. It is a time of both discovery and disorientation where young people are cultivating their sense of self, figuring out their emotions, and rapidly transitioning to independence. But when you add cancer to the mix, the impact can be devastating.

For 12-25-year-olds, a personal or family cancer diagnosis often makes adolescence and young adulthood even more challenging. Cancer can create high levels of distress, disrupt education, make relationships unmanageable or deeply affect

someone's mental health. All these impacts can have lasting, even life-long, effects. Whether young people are dealing with their own diagnosis, a close family member's cancer or the death of a loved one, they often need support.

If these support needs are not met during their cancer experience, it can make it harder for young people to cope, leading to poorer mental health. Without proper support, managing everyday life, staying healthy, and keeping up with school or work can feel impossible.

Canteen's mission is to help young people find life in the face of cancer. Our programs and services are developed by our research and evaluation team who understand the specific struggles a cancer diagnosis brings. They are designed to help and support young people's needs every step of the way.





# About Canteen

**Canteen is an Australian not-for-profit that has provided free and tailored support to young people impacted by cancer for almost 40 years.**

Whether young people are dealing with their own diagnosis, a close family member's cancer or the death of a loved one, Canteen provides a wide range of free treatment and support services to help them overcome the specific challenges they're dealing with.

We also provide services for parents dealing with cancer in their family. Our studies show that when parents are supported through cancer, their children cope much better as well.

Our services are underpinned by Canteen's research and evaluation team. They conduct world-class studies on how cancer affects young people's mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. The results of our research and evaluation helps us to continually improve our services and to demonstrate our impact. The ultimate goal is to give young people all the tools they need to find some meaning in their experience and find life in the face of cancer.

Our evidence-based services, designed to meet the unique needs of young people and their families, include:



Connection with other young people that get it at retreats and events



Free counselling and individual support for young people and parents



24/7 online support services for young people and parents



Access to free information and resources



Specialist treatment and support services for young cancer patients



Education and career services



Cancer service navigation

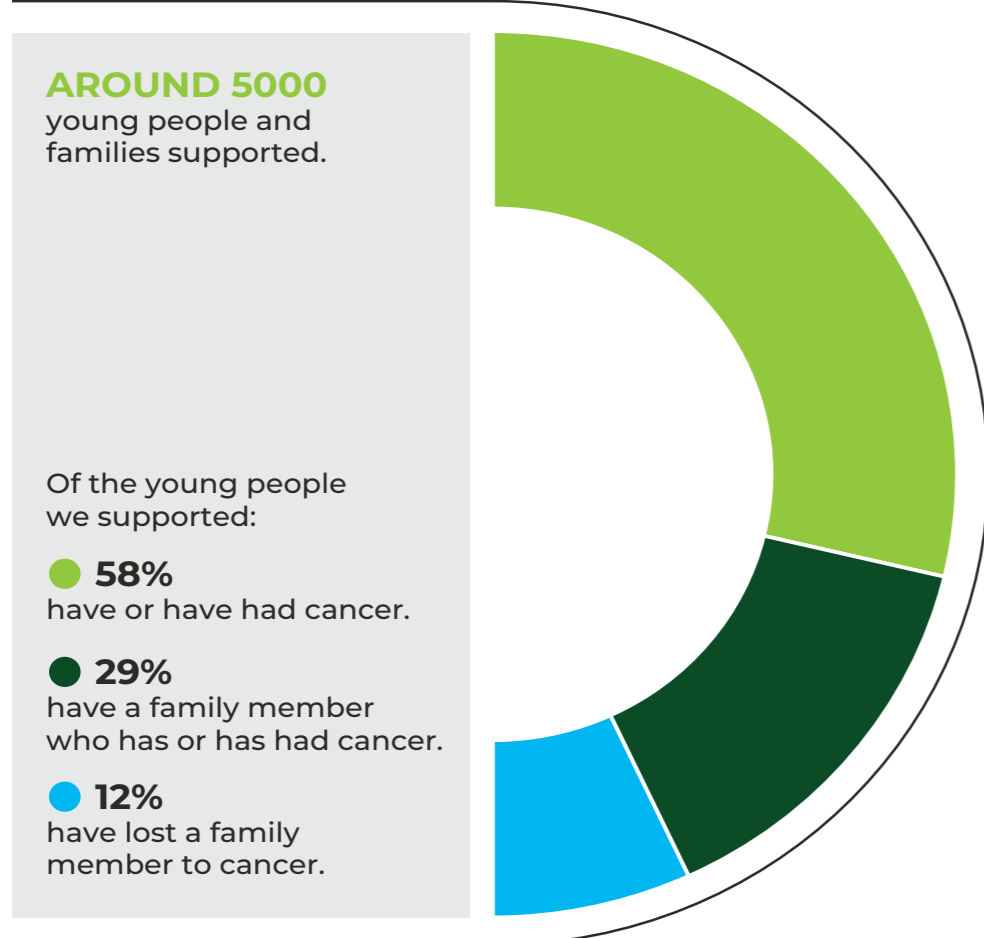
**Our mission is to help young people find life in the face of cancer.**





# How we help young people impacted by cancer

We provide support to young people and families spanning a range of ages, gender identities, cancer experiences and diverse backgrounds.



**Most young people supported by Canteen face over 10 critical cancer-related support needs urgently requiring assistance.**

Up to **86%** of young people seen by Canteen have 10 or more support needs requiring help. These needs vary depending on the nature of their cancer experience. Most young people impacted by cancer urgently need psychological support, information on cancer, and to meet others their age who understand what they're going through.

**“My counsellor provided me much needed validation and support that I was giving parenting support to my teenager to the utmost best of my ability.”**

Parent diagnosed with cancer







**“We are so grateful for Canteen support during a really difficult year. The staff are beautiful and caring. The high standard of services is incredible. There is no comparison. Canteen has made such a positive difference in our lives. Thank you so much. We will never forget the kindness, compassion and generosity.”**

**Parent diagnosed with cancer**

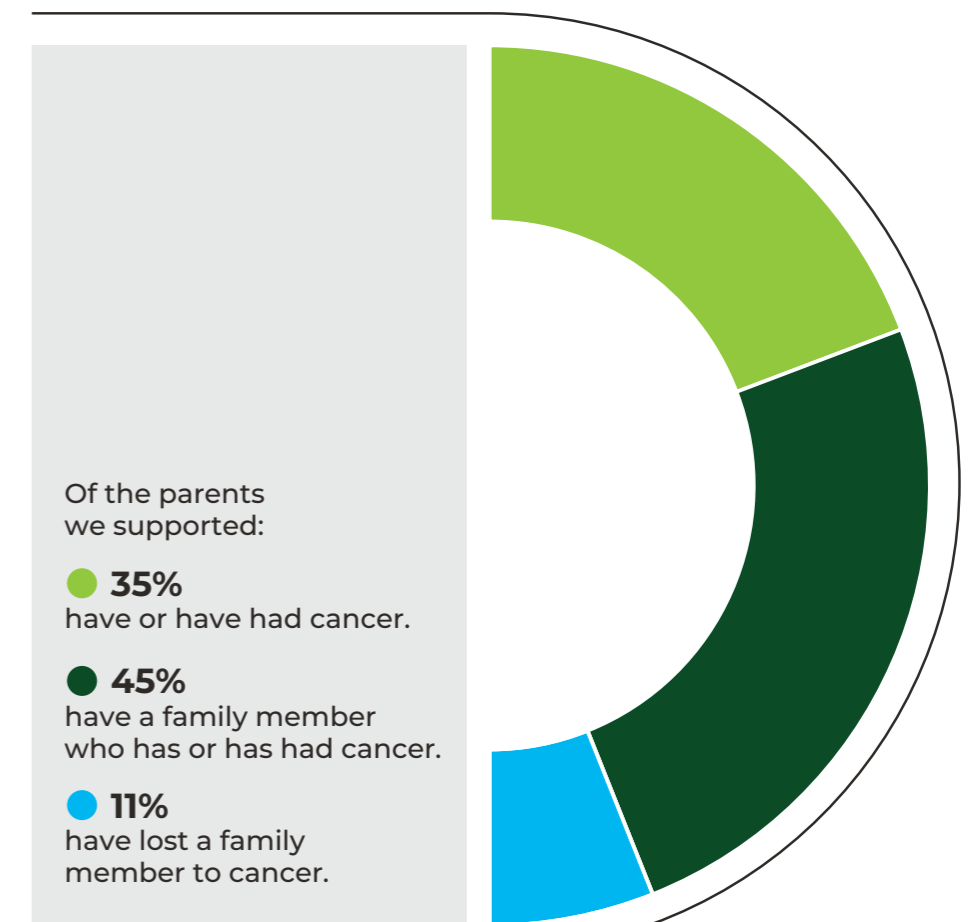
## How we help families impacted by cancer

**When parents cope better with cancer and communicate openly, their children are likely to experience less distress and anxiety.**

When a parent is diagnosed with cancer, there is a profound impact on the whole family<sup>1,2</sup>. Suddenly they face the daunting task of coping with their illness while looking after their children<sup>3</sup>. One of the biggest stressors parents face is talking about their cancer diagnosis and treatment with their children. Understandably, their major concern is how it will affect their children<sup>4</sup>. However, when parents with cancer prioritise their children’s well-being over their own, it often heightens their anxiety and depression.

We believe that addressing the support needs of parents impacted by cancer is essential for helping them cope, adapt, and maintain the overall wellbeing of both them and their children. We provide programs to support parents through this difficult time including online communities and specialised counselling.

### Parents helped by Canteen



1. Phillips F, Prezio EA, Panisch LS, Jones BL (2021) Factors Affecting Outcomes Following a Psychosocial Intervention for Children When a Parent Has Cancer The Journal of Child Life: Psychosocial Theory and Practice 2
2. Inhestern L, Haller AC, Włodarczyk O, Bergelt C (2016) Psychosocial Interventions for Families with Parental Cancer and Barriers and Facilitators to Implementation and Use - A Systematic Review PLoS One 11: e0156967
3. Babore A, Bramanti SM, Lombardi L, Stuppia L, Trumello C, Antonucci I, Cavallo A (2019) The role of depression and emotion regulation on parenting stress in a sample of mothers with cancer Support Care Cancer 27: 1271-1277
4. Moore CW, Rauch PK, Baer L, Pirl WF, Muriel AC (2015) Parenting changes in adults with cancer Cancer 121: 3551-3557



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## We are committed to measuring and improving Canteen's impact

Canteen is committed to measuring and reporting our impact to stay accountable and transparent. We want our community of supporters to know the results of our efforts. By quantifying the effects of our programs and services, we can see what's working well and identify ways to make greater impact for young people and their families. This enables us to create better programs and services for the future. Our robust measurement, evaluation, and learning practices allow us to continuously learn, improve and expand our impact on young people and their families affected by cancer.

### How we measure Canteen's impact

In 2023 we undertook a comprehensive evaluation to measure how young people felt about and benefited from accessing Canteen. To ensure our analysis gave us maximum insight we used various evaluation methods and collected data from a range of different sources.

As part of this process, we gathered information by conducting an online survey with the young people and parents or carers who used our services. The survey asked for feedback on their experiences, how satisfied they were and what outcomes they noticed.

In addition to the survey, we assessed young people's levels of distress, using a tool called Kessler-10. This gave us a detailed insight into their emotional well-being after engaging with Canteen services.

For more details about our methodological approach please contact us at [evaluation@canteen.org.au](mailto:evaluation@canteen.org.au)<sup>5</sup>.

5. The data in this report relates to calendar year 2023 apart from 'What your support has helped us achieve' which reflects data from our FY2023 Annual Report, and distress data which ran from 2022-2023

“The supportive and warm community of people formed who understood each other, had fun and were able to be vulnerable through social events, as well as having a clinician to support me consistently with my mental health journey.”

Young patient-survivor, over 18

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“Having someone to talk to about my cancer experience and access to a community of people who have been through something similar has been so important to me this year. I am so grateful to be able to access Canteen’s services. I feel very heard by my counsellor and always enjoy our sessions together even when it’s a difficult topic, it is cathartic to talk about it to someone else and be validated in my feelings.”

Bereaved young person, over 18



## What your support has helped us achieve

### Our programs supported around 5000 young people and their families

In FY2024 around 5000 young people and parents were supported in one or more of Canteen’s extensive programs and services. Canteen’s reach signifies our collective efforts in effecting positive change allowing us to maximise the impact for young people and their families.

### Our counselling and support services helped reduce the mental health impacts of cancer



4568

counselling and support sessions were provided to help young people and parents cope with the impact of



95%

of young people were satisfied with Canteen counselling



93%

would suggest Canteen counselling to a friend that needed help



86%

felt their wellbeing improved as a result of Canteen counselling



82%

felt they could deal more effectively with their concerns because of Canteen counselling

Counselling is available regardless of where in Australia young people live and is always provided free of charge. By talking to Canteen’s specially trained counsellors and psychologists, young people develop strategies to cope with the impact cancer is having on their life. Counselling provides a safe space for young people to discuss difficult thoughts and feelings they may feel unable to share with friends and family.





### We provided critical services for connection and respite

Having access to social networks is crucial for the wellbeing of young people experiencing cancer. It is positively associated with good physical and mental health and quality of life. Canteen supports young people's need for connection, time out, respite and psychosocial support. We do this through local events, online events, local in-person programs, national events and national overnight programs.

In FY2024 we had 1097 young people attending local and national programs and events across Canteen.

### Canteen helped build brighter futures through education and career support

A cancer diagnosis profoundly affects young people's education, career and future prospects. It creates substantial disruptions in their school and work life, which can lead to enduring consequences in their social and emotional wellbeing.

Our Education & Career Service helps young people stay connected to study and work during and after their cancer treatment through career consultants and our Telepresence Robots Program.

### We provided crucial access to support networks

When young people are navigating the challenges of cancer, they often feel isolated from their friends, school and communities. During this difficult time connection to networks, including friends, school and health professionals becomes pivotal to their emotional wellbeing.

Canteen's Community Education Service provides practical strategies through our face-to-face, live webinars, and on-demand training to teachers, students, health professionals and parents. This service equips attendees with the understanding and tools to navigate the challenges of cancer effectively. In FY2024, 2532 community members attended one of these community Education webinars.

### Youth Leadership is part of Canteen's DNA

Through youth leadership, Canteen aims to provide young people with opportunities to develop skills and connections that will benefit their long-term future while also contributing to the direction of the organisation. A recent evaluation of Canteen's Leadership Program showed that being part of Canteen's leadership activities:

- Supports young people's emotional and social well-being
- Helps young people connect
- Provides opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and competencies

### We connected young cancer patients with specialised, age-appropriate cancer care

In the past 4 years, there has been a **20%** increase in the number of young people accessing clinical trials.

The Youth Cancer Services initiative was established 15 years ago. It provides young patients and their families and carers, with specialised, age-appropriate treatment and support. Youth Cancer Services aims to improve the overall health outcomes and survivorship rates of young people during their cancer care.

Young people who received Youth Cancer Services support reported high levels of satisfaction with:

- How their diagnosis and treatment were communicated to them
- Information provision
- Information and support for fertility preservation
- Care and support provided by Youth Cancer Services health care providers.

#### Program spotlight 1: Explore

**"...it was good to hear how others felt about cancer being such a big part of their life – it helped me feel not so alone in my cancer experience"**

Young program participant

#### Program spotlight 2: Good Grief

**"through acknowledging our loved one and letting us talk about who they are, what they mean to us, what they will always mean to you, and how they shaped who we are... even though that they're not here, we're able to use this space to honour, to just speak about how we feel, and to always remember [them]."**

Bereaved young person

#### In FY2024

**640** Canteen Robot sessions were delivered to **33** new young people

**1090** Education and Career sessions helped young people stay connected to study or work both during and after their cancer treatment.

#### Program spotlight 3: Robots

**"I get really anxious if I'm falling behind. Just to be in the class, just to hear what's going on, even if I'm not doing work, just eased me a bit... [The best thing about the robot was that] it connected [me] with my friends, because it just lifted my spirits"**

Young cancer patient







# Canteen's impact on young people's lives

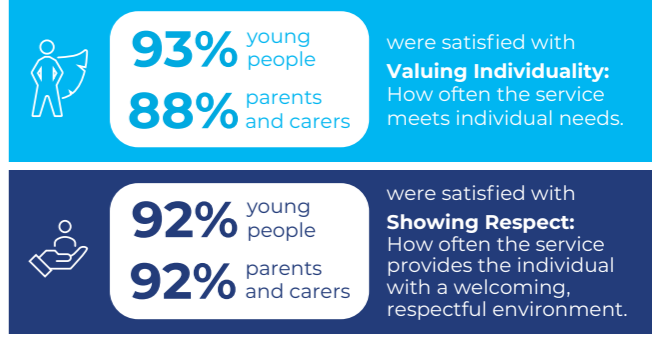
## Experience and satisfaction with Canteen services

At Canteen we are constantly seeking ways to improve and innovate. We continuously refine and adapt our services to maximise our impact on young people and their families. Understanding the experience of young people and parents attending Canteen is crucial to measuring our effectiveness.

We strive to tailor our programs and services to align with the needs, preferences and expectations of young people and their families. This alignment leads to greater satisfaction and engagement. By actively seeking feedback, we foster a culture of accountability and transparency.

**85% of young people** and **88% of parents** and carers reported a positive experience of service with Canteen in the last 3 months.

We achieved a **positive experience score of 85% or above** in two key areas identified as essential for quality care: **Valuing Individuality and Showing Respect**.



The responses of young people and parents highlighted many positive aspects of Canteen. There was a common emphasis on:

- **Support and Care from Staff:** Canteen team members play a crucial role in providing assistance, empathy, and guidance to individuals facing cancer-related challenges.
- **Peer Connection:** Canteen provides an opportunity to connect with other young people facing similar experiences leading to a sense of belonging and a community of peers who can relate to their cancer experience.

These responses highlight the significance of both professional support and peer connections in the positive experiences of young people and parents involved with Canteen.

# Psychosocial impacts of cancer

## Over 80% of young people impacted by cancer are in a state of psychological distress

This is reflected in the young people who access Canteen services - 55% have clinical (high or very high) levels of distress. Clinical levels of distress are also found in 48% of parents, who access Canteen's services.

Measuring levels of distress in young people impacted by cancer allows Canteen clinicians to identify mental health concerns early. It also helps us promote holistic wellbeing and improved treatment outcomes for young people navigating the challenges of cancer who may require additional psychosocial support and interventions.



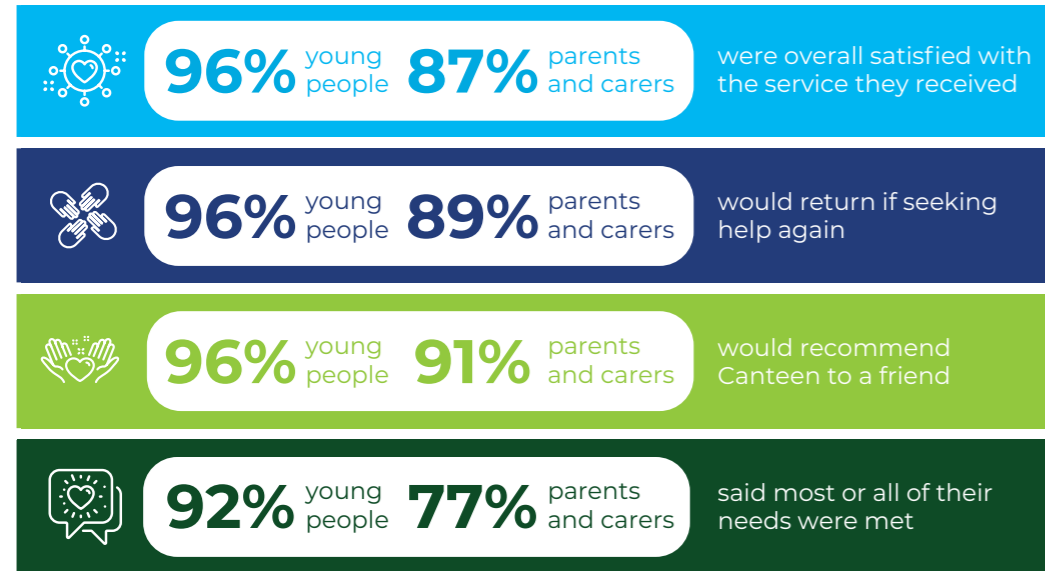


**When cancer turns a young person's world upside down, their most critical psychosocial needs are psychological support, information about cancer and connecting with other young people who understand what they're going through.**

**92% of young people say Canteen meets their needs.**

Most young people, parents and carers say they are satisfied with the help they received from Canteen, demonstrating the positive impact of our support services.

These high satisfaction scores show that Canteen meets the needs of the majority of young people, parents and carers. The strength of satisfaction is further highlighted by their willingness to return for help if they need to and reports that they would recommend Canteen to others.



### Our commitment to elevating Canteen's impact

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These high satisfaction scores show that Canteen meets the needs of the majority of young people, parents and carers. The strength of satisfaction is further highlighted by their willingness to return for help if they need to and reports that they would recommend Canteen to others.

These areas scored below our target of 85% positive experience. They have provided us with valuable guidance on how we want to develop and improve in future.

Area	Description
<b>Supporting Active Participation</b>	How often the service provides opportunities to be involved in service delivery
<b>Ensuring Safety &amp; Fairness</b>	How often the service ensures there is a safe environment for the individual
<b>Providing Information &amp; Support</b>	How well the service provides information and tailored service access.



In 2024 we are focusing on developing the following areas to increase our impact.



**Staff Collaboration:** Enhancing teamwork among Canteen team members in providing support or care.



**Involvement of Family and Friends:** Providing opportunities for the involvement of family and friends in support or care, if desired.



**Explanation of Rights and Responsibilities:** Ensuring clear explanations of rights and responsibilities when young people and their parents come to Canteen.



**Information Accessibility:** Improving the availability of information about Canteen.



**Development of Comprehensive Plans:** Collaboratively developing plans that address all support or care needs of individuals.



**Opportunities for Feedback:** Providing opportunities for young people and parents and carers to contribute to improving the service.



**Complaint Process:** Ensuring young people and parents and carers feel comfortable making complaints to the service if they have concerns about their support or care.



# Outcomes

After engaging with Canteen, **78% of young people** either experience clinically meaningful improvements in their distress or saw their distress levels stabilise.

Engagement with Canteen led to notable reductions in the distress levels among young people. Their average distress levels decreased from the clinical (high) range to moderate levels after assessing our services. These improvements occurred despite the ongoing challenges they may encounter related to their own or their family members' experiences with cancer.

After engaging with Canteen **85% of young people and 80% of parents and carers** reported improvements in their well-being.

A high proportion of young people and their parents or carers showed better coping with the challenges of cancer. They also reported

increased knowledge about cancer's impact, and improvements in various aspects of their lives, such as managing uncomfortable emotions.

Outcome	Young people	Parents
Well-being improved	85%	80%
Cope better with the impact of cancer	83%	74%
Know more about the impact of cancer	76%	67%
Other aspects of my life improved	75%	76%
Better at managing uncomfortable emotions	69%	63%
Feel connected to a community of people	68%	37%
Built friendships or relationships	61%	33%

When we asked young people, parents and carers what they got out of being part of Canteen, the responses highlighted the profound impact of Canteen's support on individuals' lives.

I know I am supported

I have made friends

I met other young people affected by cancer at events and activities - now I have friends that make me feel understood and uplifted.

I know I can rely on Canteen and turn to them when I need help.

It makes a difference to my life to have a professional to talk to, who respects me and who I can talk safely and honestly with about my feelings

# What is next for Canteen?

We are pleased to report that our findings highlight the significant impact of Canteen's services in improving the lives of young people aged 12-25, as well as their parents and carers. After engaging with Canteen, most young people and families experienced positive outcomes, including improvements in well-being, coping with the impact of cancer, and building friendships or relationships.

Our 2023 Impact Report shows that young people and their families have an excellent experience

when they attend Canteen programs and services. Specific areas such as valuing individuality and showing respect scored particularly well. However, we recognise we can further evolve, particularly in providing information and support.

In 2024 we will continue to adapt and refine all of our programs and services. Our aim is to maximise our impact for young people with the following key initiatives:

### The evaluation of new support programs for young people and parents impacted by cancer

- THRIVE**  
A survivorship program for young people aged over the age of 18 years
- ADVENTURE**  
A program for 12-25-year-olds to get out into nature, form new bonds and step outside their comfort zones
- BALANCE**  
An online program for young cancer survivors
- COMPASS**  
An online parenting program
- SPACE**  
A group program for young people aged 12-25 going through active cancer treatment

### Monitoring and Evaluation of key services within Canteen

- Cancer Hub
- Recreational programs
- Culturally Responsive Framework
- Education & Career Service
- Psychosocial support

We will also embark on a journey to develop a comprehensive Monitoring and Learning Framework, combining systematic data collection, analysis and reflection. This framework will not only facilitate the continuous and proactive evaluation of program and service progress and impact, but will help in identifying areas for improvement, thereby enhancing overall program and service effectiveness and accountability.

Through our robust impact measurement and evaluation practices, we aim to continuously learn and adapt. We want to ensure that our programs and services remain effective and responsive to the evolving needs of the community we serve.

Your support is an integral part of what we achieve. Without your benevolence and compassion, Canteen's extensive range of programs and services wouldn't be possible.

We're excited to expand our impact in 2024 and beyond. Your ongoing support will help make 2024 our most successful year to date. It will allow us to grow our presence and continue our vital research. Together, we can provide life-changing support that gets young people and their families through a world turned upside down by cancer.

The recommended citation: Cohen, J., Clarke, K., Bibby, K., Ryder, T. (2024). Canteen Impact report. Canteen, Australia