



ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25



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Acknowledgement of Country

Canteen acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects 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.



Ngalaya (Dharawal for ally or friend in battle), is an artwork commissioned by Canteen created by Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman and artist Jasmine Sarin.

Diversity and Inclusion

We are guided by our values and commitments to ensure that everyone at Canteen feels respected, included and safe. We welcome the LGBTQI+ community and people from all cultures, backgrounds and abilities.



Digital Mental Health Standards

Canteen meets all the Digital Mental Health Standards. This signifies that our support services, governance structures and the way our teams operate are of high quality, safe, and meet international standards.



WHO WE ARE



Purpose

To provide life-changing treatment and support to young people facing cancer.

Mission

To be in the corner of every young person when cancer crashes into their world.

Our values and commitments

We are guided by our values and our commitment to ensure that everyone at Canteen feels respected, included and safe.

WE CONNECT

Connection is our core. We connect young people with others their age who 'get it' and with specialist staff who truly understand cancer's challenges.

WE EMPOWER

We empower young people to lead within and beyond Canteen to shape the organisation they need and the world they want to live in.

WE CHALLENGE

We use research and evidence to constantly challenge ourselves and others to be better in order to deliver the best outcomes for young people.

WE ARE REAL

Young people's real experiences are at the heart of everything we do. We don't shy away from the tough stuff – we use it to build hope, resilience and meaning.



A SNAPSHOT of 2024/25

This year, Canteen delivered more impact to more young people, in more meaningful ways. We provided almost 32,000 vital cancer support services made possible by 130,000 generous supporters and partners.



31,884

cancer support services delivered, a 28% increase compared to last year



99%

of young people supported by Canteen would recommend us to others



97%

of young people say Canteen gave them the cancer support they needed



9/10

young people feel less isolated after using Canteen services



80%

of funding came from the community



130,000

generous people and partners supported Canteen





“My cancer was rare, but the pain, confusion, and loss we all felt was something we shared. That retreat changed everything. I found my people.”

Scan here
to watch
Saskia's story



CANTEEN SUPPORTS young people when they need it most

Canteen support helped Saskia learn that she doesn't have to just survive cancer, she can thrive.

When I was 17, I was in my final year of high school, dreaming of studying medicine and hanging out with friends. My whole life was still ahead of me. Then one day, everything changed.

I was diagnosed with a rare form of oral cancer, something usually seen in people decades older than me.

It started with what felt like a harmless ulcer, but within a year, I had undergone major surgery that removed most of the roof of my mouth. I couldn't eat properly, I lost 15kg and I had to relearn how to speak.

That year was brutal. I didn't recognise myself anymore, physically or emotionally. I went from being a happy, social teenager to someone who barely left her room. Friends stopped calling. I felt isolated, ashamed, and like I didn't belong anywhere.

That's when Mum suggested Canteen.

At first, I didn't think I deserved their help. I hadn't had chemo or lost my hair, I didn't "look" like a cancer patient. But Canteen didn't see it that way. They saw me as a young person who needed support.

I started with one-on-one counselling and it was exactly what I needed. I could talk to someone who didn't judge me for my anger, fear, or frustration and someone outside my family. My Canteen counsellor, Elyssa, helped me untangle the mess in my head and reassured me that I wasn't a burden.

Then I joined one of Canteen's programs. The Summer Retreat in Cairns was the first time



(Above) Saskia attending a Canteen program with friends.

since my diagnosis that I felt like myself again. I snorkelled in the Great Barrier Reef, slid down waterfalls in the Daintree, and laughed, really laughed, with people who just got it.

My cancer was rare, but the pain, confusion, and loss we all felt was something we shared. That retreat changed everything. I found my people.

Canteen also helped me take my next step with the Thrive program. It gave me the confidence to return to university, and now I'm studying to become a nurse. I want to use my experience to help others who are going through tough times.

I still have hard days. I'm still healing, but I've learned I don't have to just survive, I can thrive.

Saskia



OUR LEADERSHIP

Madeleine speaking at Peter Orchard's farewell event in July 2025.



Making our voices HEARD

Welcomes from Canteen's Board Chair and CEO



Youth leadership is at the heart of Canteen. From our founding by six young cancer patients to today's boardroom, young people continue to shape our direction, challenge our thinking, and inspire

our impact. This year, we saw their voices amplified through the Youth Leadership Festival, our YARN group, and the development of our Strategic Plan 2025–29. These initiatives ensure that culturally safe, inclusive, and relevant support reaches more of the 100,000 young people who will face cancer's impact in the coming years. Our young leaders are not just participants, they are changemakers. Their lived experience drives innovation, advocacy, and hope. As we mark 40 years of youth-led impact, I'm proud to stand alongside them in building a future where every young person impacted by cancer feels seen, heard, and supported. Thank you for believing in our power and in Canteen's mission.

Dr. Madeleine Way,
Board Chair



This year has been one of growth, innovation, and deep connection. We delivered almost 32,000 cancer support services, expanded Cancer Hub to meet rising demand, and hosted

the largest ever Global Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Congress. These milestones reflect our commitment to reaching more young people with life-changing support. Our evidence-based approach ensures we continuously improve and adapt to meet the evolving needs of young people and their families. None of this would be possible without our incredible community of supporters. From regular donors to volunteers, corporate partners to fundraisers – you are the reason we can offer every service free of charge. Your generosity fuels our mission and brings hope to thousands. As we mark our 40th anniversary this year, I'm honoured to lead a team so deeply committed to making a difference. Thank you for standing with us.

Siona Hardy,
CEO

(Top) the original founders of Canteen, (Bottom) Youth Advisory Team at the 2024 Youth Leadership Festival.



THEN
NOW



YOUTH LEADERSHIP is part of Canteen's DNA

Canteen was set up by a group of young cancer patients in 1985 and young people are still actively contributing to the organisation at every level. We regularly consult young people on important issues to ensure their voices are heard. Uniquely, the majority of Canteen's Board of Directors are—and have always been—young leaders who are impacted by cancer.

Focusing on youth leadership has an immensely positive impact on Canteen and on our young leaders. It helps the organisation stay relevant and accessible while enabling young people to develop the skills, connections and confidence that benefit their long-term future.

“I wouldn't be who I am [and] as confident as I am. I wouldn't dream so big. I think Canteen has taught me to look to the stars. That person that you're inspired by can become you, if you work hard enough for it.”

– 19 year-old young leader

YOUTH LEADERSHIP FESTIVAL

Canteen's Youth Leadership Festival is an annual, conference-style weekend event attended by around 100 young people from across Australia and Aotearoa / New Zealand. They develop their leadership skills by participating in workshops, networking events and Canteen's Annual General Meeting.

The festival theme in August 2024 was 'Exploring Depths and Reaching Heights'.



93%

of attendees said they developed skills they could apply outside of Canteen



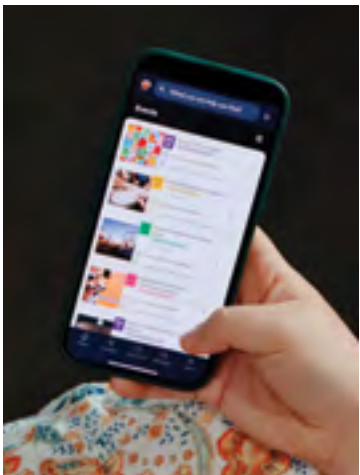


OUR IMPACT

HIGHLIGHTS

How we help young people facing cancer

Canteen is proud to have delivered almost 32,000 vital support services to young people impacted by cancer in 2024/25. The year included many highlights such as hosting the Global Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Congress, expanding Cancer Hub and celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Bandanna Day.



31,884

cancer support services delivered



2,137

chances to connect at 219 programs



119,174

Canteen Connect interactions



58,247

people supported with cancer resources



6,481

counselling sessions delivered



2,439

young patients supported via Youth Cancer Services

ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT CANCER CONGRESS

In December 2024, Canteen hosted more than 470 delegates from a record-breaking 39 countries for the 6th Global Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Congress. This conference series delivers the only global event with a dedicated focus on the unique medical and psychosocial needs of adolescents and young adults (AYAs) with cancer. It's also the key outcome of the AYA Cancer Global Accord between Canteen Australia, the UK's Teenage Cancer Trust and Teen Cancer America.

Centred on the themes of Ethics, Equity, and Emerging Ideas, delegates were invited to consider how we might increase equitable access to AYA cancer care, the ethical aspects of cancer treatment and practice, and the role of innovations such as artificial intelligence.

Minister for Health and Aged Care, The Hon Mark Butler MP underscored the importance of specialised cancer care for AYAs, announcing that the government would provide Canteen with a total of \$26 million in support for Australia's Youth Cancer Services over the next four years.

Young cancer patients and survivors played a crucial role in the 2024 Congress, serving as chairs, presenters and as part of a working group to ensure young voices shaped the Congress narrative. Importantly, the Congress also included First Nations young people from around the world, who were able to spotlight health inequities across the healthcare system, including in cancer care.



(Above) Canteen staff on the second day of the Global Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Congress. (Left) YAPS from music video created by young people. (Below) Dr Kathryn Woodward, Deputy Chair of the Board.

The launch of a music video created by young people in collaboration with Australian singer-songwriter Luke Escombe was a Congress highlight. The video follows the experiences of "YAPS", a Youth Advocate Puppet Survivor, representing the challenges of the patient journey in an innovative, accessible way.



Read more about it and watch the video at canteen.org.au/patient-storytelling

“This is the first congress I've attended where survivors play such a huge role and I think it is essential that the community we serve have a voice.”

– Congress attendee



CANCER HUB



Vanessa and her family with the Hon Mark Butler MP at the Cancer Hub launch.

Cancer Hub, a service collaboration between Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite was launched two years ago with the aim of making it easier for families impacted by cancer to get the range of support services they need.

In August 2024, Minister for Health, the Hon Mark Butler MP, announced the expanded vision for the next phase of Cancer Hub. Recognising the service as setting a benchmark in cancer care, the Minister committed an additional \$9.4m in funding to address higher than expected demand. This will enable Canteen and our partners to double cancer navigation support and create dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander roles.

“We think of them like lamp holders. They shine a light on the path so we can finally actually see a way forward.”

– Vanessa, Cancer Hub service user and Mum of four



100%

rate the quality of the Cancer Hub service as high or very high



95%

say they could deal more effectively with their problems

RECONCILIATION

In February 2025, we successfully completed our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), marking the next step in our reconciliation journey. Since beginning with our Reflect RAP in 2020, we have deepened our commitment to advancing reconciliation and are recognised for fostering culturally responsive, safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their kin impacted by cancer.

Co-designed with Canteen’s Young Adult Reconciliation Network (YARN) and our

Professional Advisory Group, the Culturally Responsive Framework was a key milestone, guiding how we deliver services with cultural sensitivity.

Through culturally driven programs, training initiatives, and strategic partnerships, Canteen continues to listen, learn, and walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Looking ahead, we are proud to have been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia to proceed with a Stretch RAP.



These achievements are a demonstration of Canteen’s commitment to listening, learning and walking together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advance reconciliation within our sphere of influence and beyond.”

– Aunty Glendra Stubbs, Chair of Canteen’s RAP Working Group and YARN mentor



YARN member Gemma Trueman and Aunty Glendra



Celebrating 30 YEARS of Bandanna Day

October 2024 marked 30 years of Canteen's iconic Bandanna Day campaign, an inspiring day of support and solidarity for young Australians impacted by cancer. With more than \$35 million raised since its inception, every bandanna sold provides access to life-saving treatment, specialised counselling and programs that connect young people with others who get it, because they've been through it too.

30 YEARS
national
bandanna
day



To mark the anniversary, Canteen launched the limited-edition 'BanDannii', designed in collaboration with Dannii Minogue and Canteen youth ambassadors Nate, Franki, Emily and Jupiter to symbolise strength, hope, and resilience in the face of cancer.

“We want the message to be really personal, we want it to be heartfelt, and we want it to be inspiring. [These four amazing Canteen ambassadors] are doing an incredible bunch of work with the community, and inspiring other people.”

– Dannii Minogue



The 'BanDannii' range includes a bandanna, silk scarf, and eye mask.



OUR PEOPLE

THE BEST PART OF CANTEEN



Our people are our strength and form the core of the cancer support services Canteen provides. From counsellors specially trained to understand cancer's impact to programs officers facilitating respite and connection for isolated young people, our team members' efforts and contributions make a meaningful difference every day.

As part of our evidence-based approach, we regularly survey our young people about their experiences at Canteen to understand what is working well and where we can improve. When asked what the best part of Canteen is, the answer often is our staff.



(Top) Staff and our young people at a Lifecycle event.
(Above) Tara speaking with a counsellor.

“
[The staff] support met all my needs and exceeded my expectations. My key worker and leadership staff have been instrumental in my growth as an individual. ”

– Canteen young person

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play an integral role in Canteen service delivery as well as across research, fundraising and other initiatives. From individuals providing medical support on programs to corporate teams selling bandannas, volunteers enable Canteen's work in a wide variety of ways.



71%

increase in Canteen volunteers in 24/25 compared to the previous year.



"The biggest highlight is playing a part in fostering connections. On recreational programs, you see young people who might initially feel isolated by their experiences with cancer, find common ground and build genuine friendships. Being able to facilitate activities that encourage that interaction, and then stepping back to see them laughing, supporting each other, and just enjoying being young together – that's incredibly powerful and makes every moment volunteering so worthwhile."

– Stuart, Program Volunteer

AKQA was proud to mobilise our people to support the sale of bandannas, directly contributing to Canteen's vital work. It was inspiring to see our efforts translate into tangible support for young people impacted by cancer, and we look forward to future collaborations that make such a meaningful difference.

– Stephanie, AKQA



It's easy to get caught up in the pace of our jobs, but giving back keeps us grounded, connected and human. It's a privilege to support causes that matter and contribute to something bigger than ourselves.

– Lauren, Corporate Volunteer

TP ICAP helped to pack hundreds of comfort bags, filled with practical items such as toiletries, silk pillowcases and eye masks, to help make hospital visits more comfortable for young cancer patients.



Keep young people SAFE, HEARD AND EMPOWERED

How Kathryn Lenton, Senior Practice Lead, supports young people at Canteen.

I've worked at Canteen for two years, and I've been a social worker for over two decades. My role is to make sure that every young person impacted by cancer who comes through Canteen's doors gets the safest, highest quality mental health support possible.

I work with clinical staff across the country, supporting them through training, guidance, and supervision.

One of the most exciting parts of my job is shaping what support looks like at Canteen, not just now but for all young people in the future.

"The impact of what we do is best captured in four words from a former client that I'll never forget, 'Canteen saved my life'."

None of it would be possible without our amazing Canteen supporters and partners. You help create those safe spaces, those life-changing moments of connection and the services that guide young people through their toughest battles.

Thank you for standing with us and for standing with them.



Kathryn (far right) on a program trip to Uluru.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

OUR FUNDING

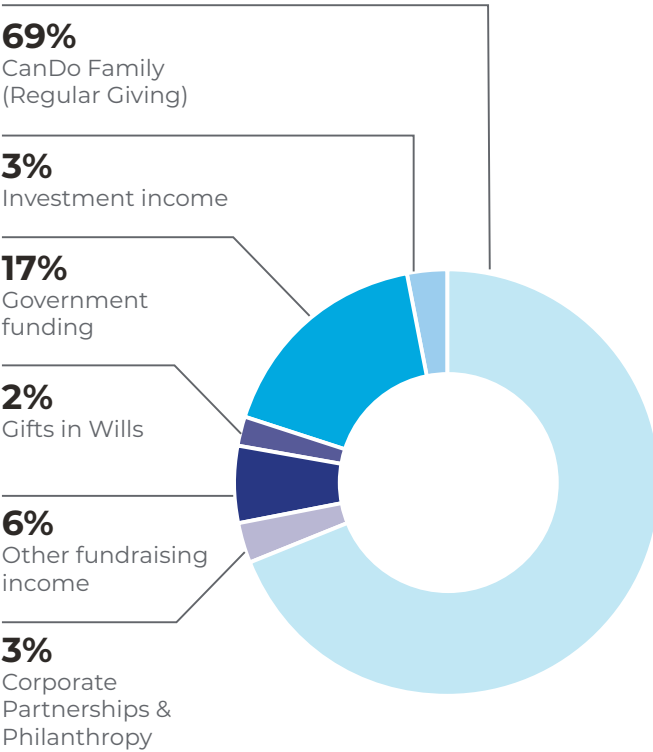


Seek proudly supports Canteen through workplace giving and other initiatives.

Canteen relies on the generosity of the community for the vast majority of our funding. We believe that every young person deserves access to life-changing cancer support and thanks to our incredible partners and supporters, all Canteen services are completely free of charge.

In 2024/25, Canteen raised \$47.5 million, thanks largely to our incredible CanDo Family of more than 106,000 generous monthly donors. Over the past 15 years, strategic investment has built one of Australia’s most successful regular giving programs. This reliable income stream empowers Canteen to make long-term commitments, adapt to emerging needs, and deliver high-impact services for young people affected by cancer.

Canteen income 2024/25



OUR INVESTMENT STRATEGY



People
Our people form the core of the services we provide. Canteen employs specialist cancer clinicians, counsellors, youth workers and researchers providing vital and long-term support to young people living with cancer.

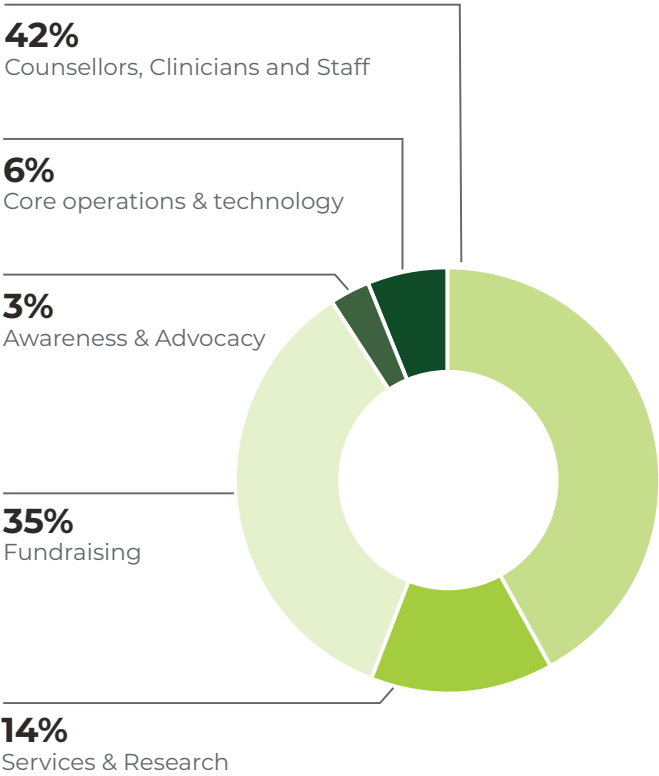
Core operations & technology
Governance, finance and digital infrastructure like Canteen Connect to keep services safe, effective and accessible.

Awareness & Advocacy
Influence policy, increase our reach and raise more funds to support young people.

Fundraising
Investment in our fundraising programs to power our mission. These investments generate the majority of our income and ensure long-term sustainability.

Services & Research
The services we provide change lives. Canteen offers free counselling, programs and hospital-based support, and research to ensure our services are evidence-based and continuously improving.

Canteen expenditure 2024/25



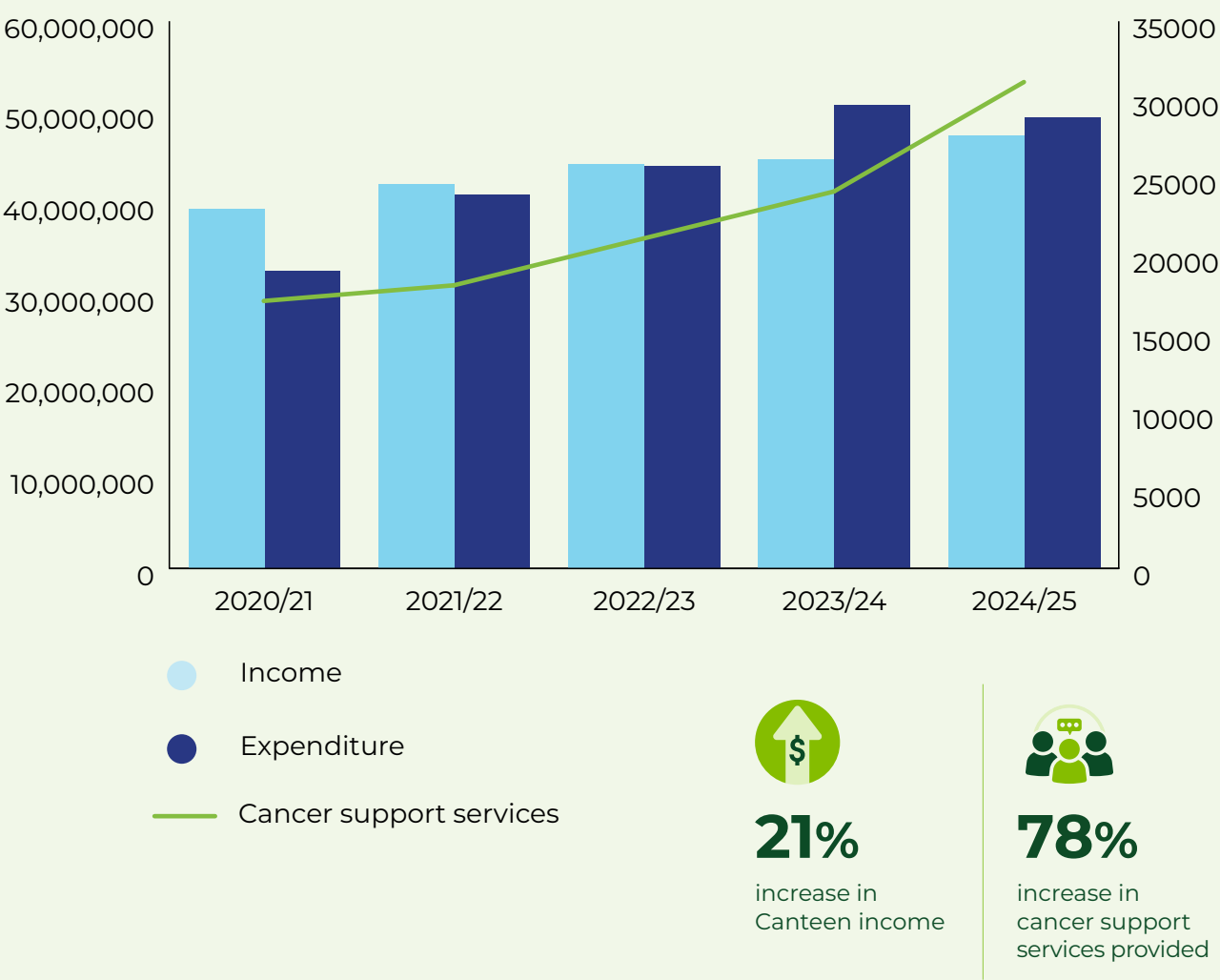
Our total expenditure for the year was \$49.4 million, reflecting a Board-approved investment strategy that resulted in a planned deficit. This deliberate approach ensures we can strengthen the people, systems and sustainability needed to guarantee support for young people both now and into the future.

Our largest cost is our people – the clinicians, counsellors, youth workers and program staff who provide direct support.

We also invest in research, technology and hospital partnerships to ensure our services are effective and widely accessible. A significant portion of our budget is invested in sustaining our regular giving program, which underpins our financial resilience and enables us to deliver life-changing support year after year.

These are essential investments that enable Canteen to deliver impact today and build resilience for tomorrow.

Annual income, expenditure and cancer support services



PARTNERING FOR IMPACT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



Siona Hardy CEO at Canteen, Jaclyn Wood CEO of The Lottery Office, and Cindy Packham Senior Corporate Partnerships Manager at Canteen.

When cancer crashes into a young person’s world, the psychological impact can be immense. Young people dealing with their own diagnosis, a family member’s cancer or the death of a loved one are often feeling scared, anxious and overwhelmed.

Canteen provides counselling services that are confidential and completely free. Thanks to a generous \$80,000 commitment from The Lottery Office, young people in the Northern Territory will now have access to a dedicated counsellor to guide them through one of the toughest times in their lives.

The partnership also enables Canteen to introduce a Senior Programs Officer, further strengthening support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people by fostering cultural connections and providing holistic care.

“As an Australian owned and operated organisation, we believe giving back is the ultimate jackpot in life, and we are proud to partner with Canteen to improve access to critical support for young people in the NT.”

– Jaclyn Wood, CEO of The Lottery Office

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

PRINCIPAL & MAJOR PARTNERS



PROUDLY SUPPORTING AND IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

We would like to thank our philanthropic supporters, whose generous gifts raised over \$789,558, enabling Canteen to deliver crucial programs and services to our young people impacted by cancer.

24hr business plan	Department of Health & Aging	Melanie Holden Memorial Fund
ADP Employer Services	Equity Trustees Charitable Foundation – Malcolm Forbes Memorial	Mt Thorley Warkworth CFMEU Lodge
ANZ	Frank Montagnese Foundation	Orix
Assetinsure	Gresham	Paypal giving fund
Blackmores	Hindmarsh	Peach Trust Fund
Brisbane Convention & exhibition centre	Hilti	PMA Global
BHP	ING Bank	QMV Solutions
Bluestone Home Loans	Lillian and Ralph Sangster	Ritchies
Brookfield properties Australia	Loftus-Hills Fund, a Charitable Fund Account of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation	Scentre Group
Club Draws	Maggie Butt Foundation as managed by Equity Trustees	State Growth Household
Coca Cola Amatil		The James and Jutta Lauf Foundation
Department of Environment		Toyota Finance Australia
Department of Finance		Tour de Cure
		Westpac



CONQUERING cancer

**Abhi is pushing himself to the limits
to raise funds for Canteen.**

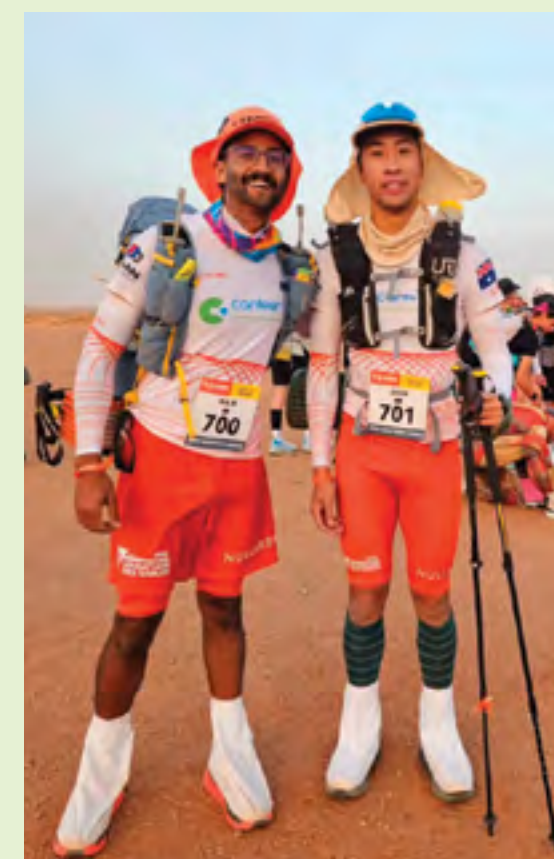
Cancer survivor Abhi Malik completed the gruelling 250-kilometre ultramarathon in the Sahara Desert in May 2024 in support of Canteen. After enduring 40–50° heat and sleeping in the desert, he managed to complete the stage race in 51 hours over six days.

Being diagnosed with tongue cancer at the age of 22 changed his perspective on life and motivated him to push his limits. Sports people and adventurers inspired Abhi to give it a go now that he's got a second chance.

Abhi's first major challenge was conquering the English Channel swim and having completed the Marathon des Sables, he is now setting his eyes on Mount Everest having already raised around \$35,000 for Canteen.

“I'm trying to raise funds and awareness for Canteen, an organisation that was there to support me during my cancer journey.”

– Abhi



(Left) Abhi holding his neck buff bandanna to represent Canteen. (Above) Abhi and friend in the Canteen-sponsored kit.



LOOKING AHEAD

Shining a spotlight on YOUTH CANCER

The year ahead will see us mark
Canteen's 40th anniversary.

Our aim is to use the milestone to shine a spotlight on youth cancer. Our first key initiative was launching the inaugural Youth Cancer Awareness Month in April 2025.

We have made incredible progress in Canteen's first forty years – including delivering gold-standard care for young cancer patients in hospitals across Australia through the Youth Cancer Services (YCS).

There is however still so much to do including finding new treatments for the deadliest cancers young people face, increasing the reach of the YCS and improving quality of life for the 30,000 survivors of youth cancer in Australia.

The challenges of cancer don't end when treatment does. There are more than 30,000 young cancer survivors in Australia, but no research to date has assessed the physical, mental and financial issues they face later in life.

As part of Youth Cancer Awareness Month, Canteen urged all Australians to support our call for Federal Government funding for Australia's first research project aimed at understanding the long-term physical, mental and financial impacts of youth cancer.

Visit canteen.org.au/youth-cancer to watch our video.



“Canteen is leading the way – nationally and globally.”

– Paralympian and Canteen
Ambassador Chris Bond



Launching Youth Cancer Awareness Month
at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane.

40 YEARS OF IMPACT AND LIFE-CHANGING CANCER SUPPORT

Together, we have achieved amazing milestones and victories for young people impacted by cancer — and will continue to work towards our future vision where **no young person faces cancer alone**.



1985 Six young cancer patients established Canteen as the “Teenage Cancer Patients Society”.

1993–2003



Andrew Denton highlights youth cancer in two ground-breaking documentaries.



1994

The iconic Bandanna Day is born.

2001



Canteen expands to support young people dealing with a parent's cancer.

2010

Canteen starts offering counselling services to enhance the power of peer support.



2009–2013

Youth Cancer Services begin delivering specialist medical treatment and support for 15-to-25 year-olds with cancer in hospitals across Australia.

**YOUTH
CANCER
SERVICE**

2018

Canteen starts providing free counselling, expert advice and resources to parents impacted by cancer.



Canteen successfully secures Federal Government funding for clinical trials targeting deadly youth cancers.

2016

2014

Canteen Connect launches, providing 24/7 online support



2022



Cancer Hub, a collaboration between Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite, launches to help families impacted by cancer more easily access the support they need.

2024

Canteen celebrates 30 years of Bandanna Day with the unveiling of the ‘BanDannii’, designed by youth ambassadors and Dannii Minogue.



2025



Canteen launches the inaugural Youth Cancer Awareness Month, marking 40 years of being in a young person's corner when cancer crashes into their world.

2029

Completing the 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, Canteen delivers 1 million meaningful touchpoints ensuring young people impacted by cancer access the support and care they need.



CANTEEN'S 2025–2029 STRATEGY

Canteen is embarking on a new strategic plan for the next four years with a clear focus on growing our reach, deepening our impact and amplifying our voice in order to be in a young person's corner when cancer crashes into their world.



OUR AMBITION
Over the next four years, we commit to deliver over **1 million meaningful touchpoints**, to ensure that every young Australian impacted by cancer can access the support and care they need.

**Canteen's mission is to
be in the corner of every
young person when cancer
crashes into their world.**



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