

# BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW, TOGETHER

Westpac Foundation  
2023 Impact Report

 Foundation



Reem, Trainee, The Beautiful Bunch.

# ABOUT WESTPAC FOUNDATION

## What we do

We provide funding and capacity-building programs to social enterprises and community organisations that create jobs for people in under-represented and disadvantaged communities across Australia.

## Our goal

We have a goal to support our social enterprise and community partners to create 10,000 jobs in the 15 years to 2030.

## Why we do it

Meaningful employment is a powerful pathway out of disadvantage. It helps add value to lives by providing a sense of purpose, a feeling of belonging and an opportunity to contribute to our communities. Yet many people across our nation face barriers to finding employment in the mainstream job market, where their skills and talent can be overlooked. That's why we aim to partner with organisations that are stepping up to tackle this challenge.

Together we are building a better tomorrow, helping to create a more inclusive Australia.

## Our approach

To achieve our goal, we direct our efforts in four key areas:

- Investing for job creation
- Programs to drive impact
- Collaboration for change
- Helping local communities

## Our history

Established in 1879, Westpac Foundation has been helping people in need for over 140 years.

We acknowledge the First Peoples of Australia and recognise their ongoing role as Traditional Owners of the land and waters of this country. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, partners and stakeholders, and pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present.

Westpac Foundation is administered by Westpac Community Limited (ABN 34 086 862 795) as a trustee for Westpac Community Trust (ABN 53 265 036 982). The Westpac Community Trust is a Public Ancillary Fund, endorsed by the ATO as a Deductible Gift Recipient. None of Westpac Foundation, Westpac Community Trust Limited nor the Westpac Community Trust are part of Westpac Group. Westpac provides administrative support, skilled volunteering, donations and funding for operational costs of Westpac Foundation.



 1. INVESTING FOR JOB CREATION



 2. PROGRAMS TO DRIVE IMPACT



 3. COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE



 4. HELPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

## 2023 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

**1,238**

jobs\* created by Social Enterprise Grant partners in 2023.

**\$2M**

awarded to Social Enterprise Grant partners in 2023.

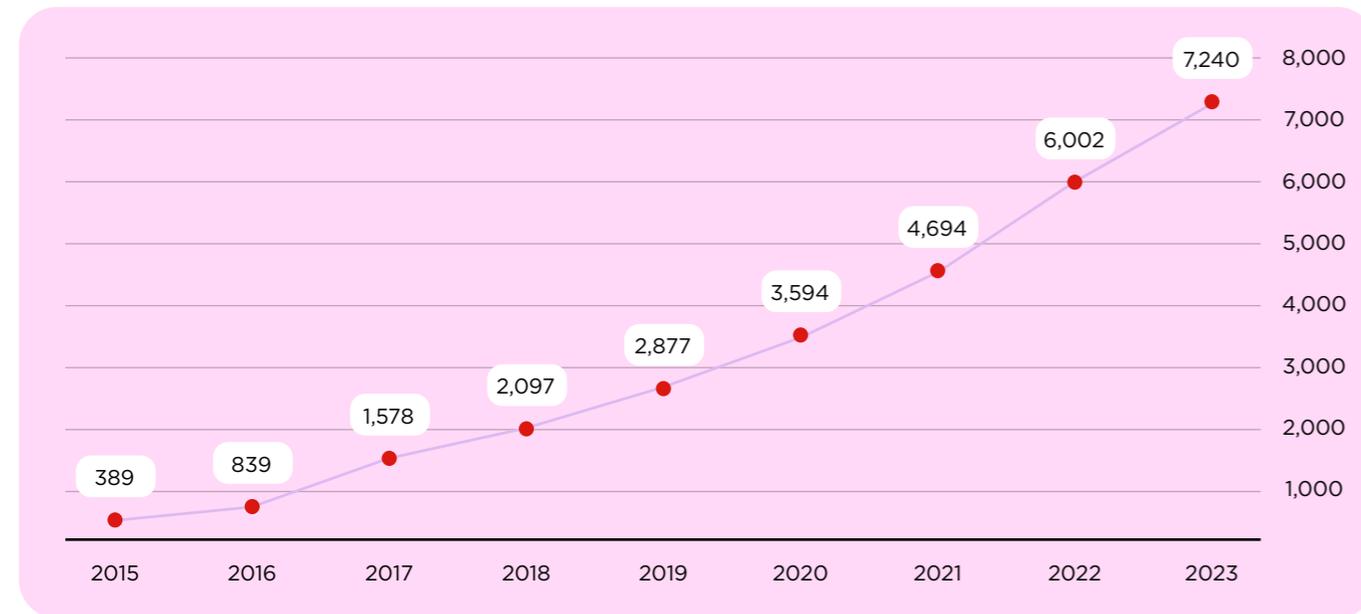
**7,240**

jobs\* created by Social Enterprise Grant partners since 2015, in line with our goal to support grant partners to create 10,000 jobs in the 15 years to 2030.

**\$1M**

distributed through the Inclusive Employment Grants.<sup>1</sup>

## OVERALL JOBS CREATED



\*Throughout this report: **Jobs** refers to the number of people from the social enterprise's disadvantaged target group that are employed on a full-time, part-time or casual/contract basis, as well as those that transition to another job as a result of our support of the social enterprise. Note: It is possible for a person to be counted more than once for being employed at the social enterprise and then again if they transition to another job as a result of the social enterprise's support. In this document 2023 refers to our financial year, 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023. 1. \$2M awarded to 40 organisations over two years in 2022.



Taran, Warehouse Team Leader, Worldview Foundation.

## FROM THE CEO

### **Building a better tomorrow, together**

**Throughout 2023, we've continued to be inspired by the tireless work our social enterprise and community partners do to tackle complex social issues, providing hope to many Australians experiencing disadvantage by offering meaningful training and job opportunities.**

These organisations play a vital role in our economy, particularly as the number of people experiencing vulnerability is on the rise.

It's these people who are at the heart of Westpac Foundation's strategy, as one of the first philanthropic organisations in Australia to have developed a grant program almost two decades ago specifically to support those social enterprises that aim to support the most marginalised people in our communities.

To track our impact, we set an ambitious goal to support our grant partners to create 10,000 jobs over the 15 years to 2030. I'm thrilled to say that goal is firmly in reach, as the total number of jobs surpassed 7,000 during the past year, with the addition of 1,238 in 2023.

Each one of the people who have stepped into those jobs will have had value added to their lives that comes from having meaningful employment and support.

### **Driving impact**

A few key initiatives helped to drive these outcomes during 2023.

Through our two primary grant programs – Social Enterprise Grants and Inclusive Employment

Grants – we invested more than \$3m in social enterprises and community organisations.

As always, while this financial support is important in helping our grant partners to scale, it's our unique non-financial support programs and networks that enable us to contribute meaningfully to their strength, growth and sustainability. Through these programs we are able to leverage the skills, experience and big hearts of Westpac employees who act as ambassadors or board observers for our grant partners; we can facilitate opportunities to increase their revenue and scale through procurement arrangements or promotion; and help bolster their operational strength through building leadership capability. It's heartening to see the value added through this support, over and above our funding.

### **Pioneering new grant**

In a significant development during the year, Westpac Foundation joined forces with a collective of Australia's leading philanthropic foundations to create a pioneering collaborative grant program, the Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) Grant program. By working together and pooling grant funding, the partners are seeking to have a greater impact, offering up to \$4.7 million in grants to help strengthen the outcomes created by jobs-focused social enterprises.

This is a wonderful development in Australia's philanthropic landscape, adding to the momentum that's been gathering across the social enterprise sector in the past few years. This momentum has been boosted by a number of galvanising milestones, including the formation of a national peak body –

Social Enterprise Australia – with a national strategy, and the hosting of last year's Social Enterprise World Forum. These and other events are bringing a greater level of cohesion to the emerging sector, which is laying a firmer ground for social enterprises to thrive. I'm proud of the role the Westpac Foundation team has been playing in advocating for these sector-wide initiatives, which we believe will ultimately lead to greater outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our society.

### **Thank you**

On behalf of Westpac Foundation, thank you to all those who have generously supported our mission in 2023, working together with us to offer funding and share time and skills through pro bono support.

Thank you to our board of directors for your continuing guidance and support over the year and, importantly, thank you to our grant partners for stepping up to improve our society.

All contributions, big and small, are helping to build a better, more inclusive tomorrow, together.



**Amy Lyden**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Westpac Foundation**



## CREATING LONG TERM IMPACT

Our grant partners are at the centre of our strategy. While funding is important to helping our grant partners to scale, it's our unique non-financial programs and networks that enable us to walk alongside our partners over the long-term and contribute meaningfully to their strength, growth and sustainability.

### Multi-year grant funding

#### Our Funding Programs

- Social Enterprise Grants
- Inclusive Employment Grants
- Access to additional funding opportunities

### Building capacity, networks and profile

#### Our capacity building programs

- Business mentoring
- Financial health checks
- Board Observer Program
- Capacity building workshops
- Community Ambassador Program
- Referrals for pro-bono legal support via MinterEllison
- Investment readiness to transition to social finance

#### Develop and connect social leaders

- Changemakers' events
- Leadership and peer-learning programs

#### Collaborate and advocate for social enterprise to scale

- Procurement opportunities and referrals
- Sector building support via research and advocacy (e.g. WISE Hub)
- Philanthropic collaborations (e.g. WISE Grants)



“It’s much more friendly here than where I used to work.”

*Carolyn, team member, Espresso Train Cafe.*

Espresso Train Cafe is an initiative of Nundah Community Enterprise Co-operative as part of its trailblazing business model to generate jobs for people keen to work, but struggling to find it because of the discrimination they often face as people living with cognitive difficulties. In 2023, Carolyn was among more than 50 employees across the co-op’s businesses. Westpac Foundation has been one of the co-op’s longest-running funding partners, granting the organisation more than \$500,000 since 2009.

For more, visit Westpac Wire: [Nundah wonder: the small enterprise blazing a big trail](#)



## 1. INVESTING FOR JOB CREATION



Westpac Foundation provide funding and programs to help jobs-focused social enterprises strengthen and scale their businesses to create more jobs and training opportunities for people overcoming barriers to employment.

Job-focused social enterprises operate like a regular business that trades goods or services. However, their primary goal is to create meaningful employment for people who face barriers to work.

### Initiatives

- Our multi-year Social Enterprise Grants support the long-term sustainable growth of social enterprises with a proven model for job creation.
- Our two-year Inclusive Employment Grants support organisations creating inclusive and sustainable jobs in local communities.
- We support our grant partners to build investment readiness and offer access to diverse funding opportunities.



These initiatives to create employment opportunities for under-represented groups contributes to Goal 8 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, “Decent work and economic growth”.

### 2023 Impact Highlights

**\$2M**

awarded to 10 organisations through our Social Enterprise Grants program.

**1,238**

jobs created by Social Enterprise Grant partners.

**1,766**

jobs created by Inclusive Employment Grant partners.

## OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GRANT PARTNERS



**Supported since 2009**  
An Indigenous-owned and led civil construction, building and landscaping services contractor.



**Supported since 2013**  
Recycles mattresses to keep waste out of landfill and create jobs for people experiencing barriers to work.

### THE SOCIAL OUTFIT

**Supported since 2017<sup>1</sup>**  
Supports refugee women to kick-start their Australian careers via their studio and retail clothing store.



**Supported since 2020<sup>1</sup>**  
Trains and employs neurodiverse young people in the field of data analytics.

### STREAT

**Supported since 2010**  
Tackles youth disadvantage and homelessness by providing careers in the hospitality industry.



**Supported since 2014<sup>1</sup>**  
Supports disadvantaged young people by offering careers in its retail bike stores and servicing, and car cleaning services.



**Supported since 2018**  
Creates jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through its IT and eWaste recycling services.



**Supported since 2021<sup>1</sup>**  
Creates job opportunities for those impacted by the justice system through its office pantry delivery service.



**Supported since 2010**  
Supports young people in the justice system with career pathways into facility maintenance services.



**Supported since 2016**  
Supports at-risk young people through its commercial landscaping and property maintenance business.



**Supported since 2018**  
Aims to increase capacity and income for APY art centres and artists.



**Supported since 2021<sup>1</sup>**  
A streetwear label helping young people affected by homelessness to gain confidence and work readiness.



**Supported since 2012<sup>1</sup>**  
Supports at-risk youth and refugees into careers through its recycling service for discarded office items.



**Supported since 2016**  
Trains and transitions people with disability into mainstream employment.

### Free to Feed

**Supported since 2020<sup>1</sup>**  
Empowers refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived communities through careers in shared food experiences.



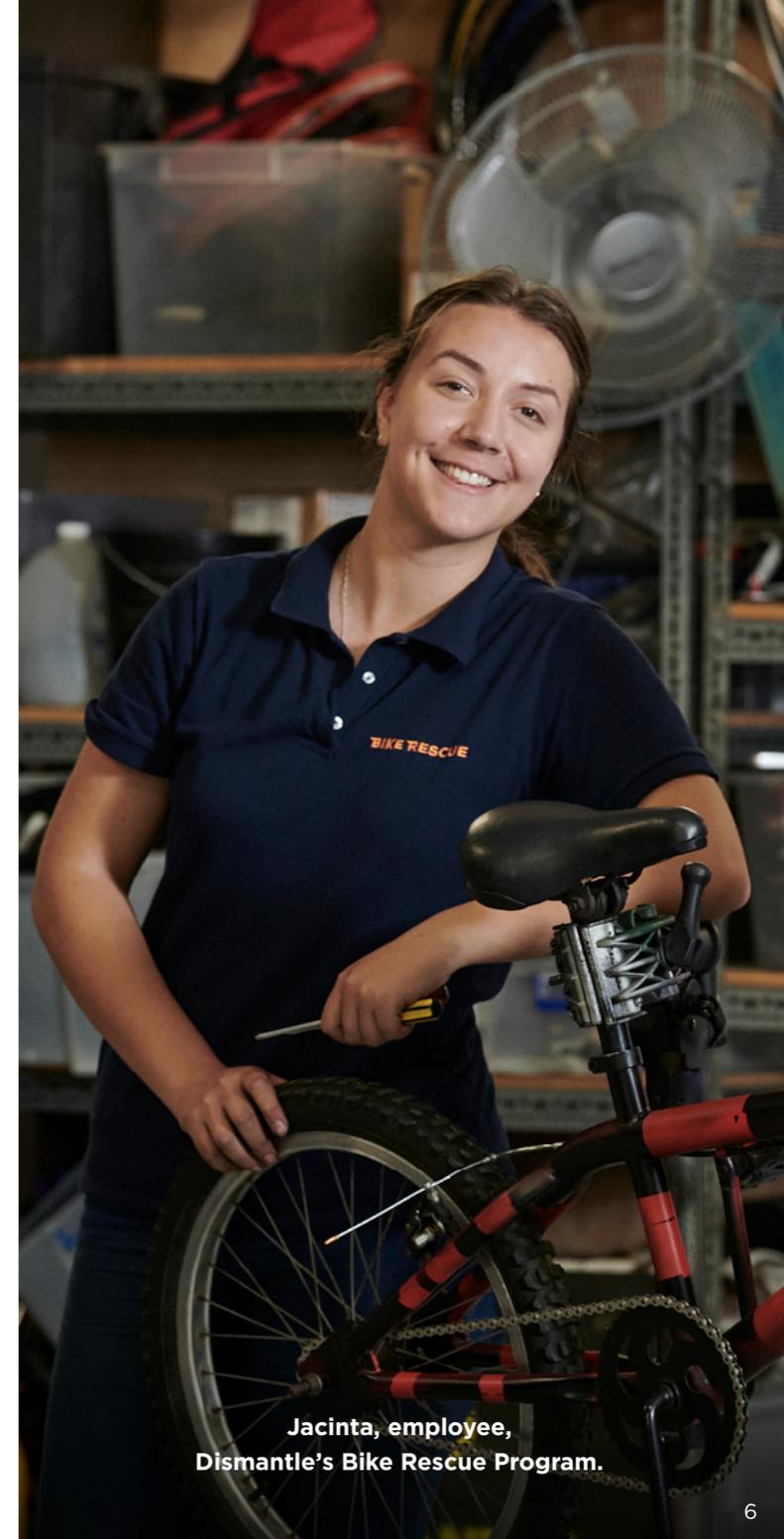
**Supported since 2021**  
Provides employment opportunities to marginalised people living in regional Queensland.

## WALKING ALONGSIDE OUR PARTNERS AS THEY SCALE

Through our Social Enterprise Grants we invest in long-term relationships with social enterprises with a proven model of job creation. Our goal is to help them make a bigger impact.

Our multi-year financial commitments and non-financial support is tailored to their needs as we work collaboratively with our social enterprise partners – some for more than a decade – to help them grow, scale and transition to financial sustainability.

During 2023, we worked closely with selected job creation social enterprises, providing more than \$2 million in funding plus non-financial support. Our grant partners collectively created 1,238 jobs in 2023 for people experiencing disadvantage.



Jacinta, employee, Dismantle's Bike Rescue Program.

1. Also awarded new funding in 2023.

# FOSTERING A PIPELINE OF PARTNERS FOR JOB CREATION

**This year marked the second year of our inaugural two-year Inclusive Employment Grant program, awarded to organisations across Australia that create jobs and training opportunities for people experiencing disadvantage.**

38 grant recipients each received \$50,000 (\$25,000 paid in 2022 and 2023) and access to non-financial support. Over time, as the organisations scale, they may become eligible to progress to Westpac Foundation's Social Enterprise Grant program. Two new organisations were awarded in 2023, each receiving \$25,000 - Junkuri Laka and Ngarrimili.

These Inclusive Employment Grant partners created 1,766 jobs in 2023.

The next round of Westpac Foundation's Inclusive Employment Grants will be awarded in 2024.

## WA

- Mettle Women Inc.
- The Underground Collaborative
- Enterprise Partnerships

## SA

- MarionLIFE Community Services Inc
- GOGO Foundation
- Mimili Maku Arts
- Bungala Aboriginal Corporation
- Youth Options

## NT

- Enterprise Learning Projects

## QLD

- Happy Paws Happy Hearts
- Nundah Community Enterprises Cooperative
- Shoreline
- The Mayi Market
- Junkuri Laka

## NSW

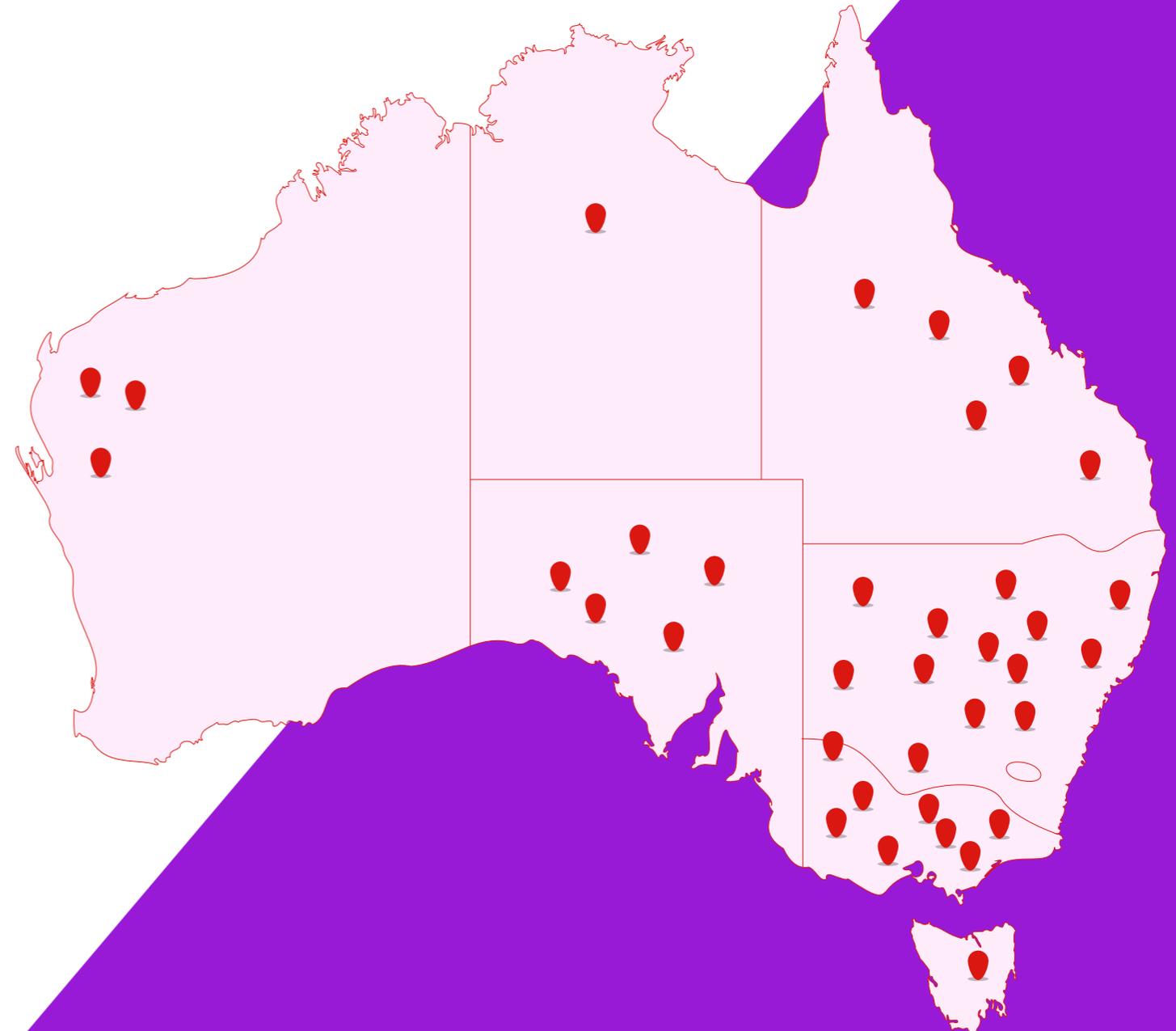
- Catalysr
- Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra
- Stepping Stone House
- Green Connect Illawarra
- Mates on the Move
- Bus Stop Films
- CareerSeekers New Australian Internship Program
- Confit Pathways
- The Freedom Hub
- Taste Cultural Food Tours
- Hotel Etico
- Plate it Forward
- BackTrack Youth Works

## VIC

- For Change Co.
- SisterWorks Inc
- The Beautiful Bunch
- SheWorks
- Ability Works Australia
- Christie Centre Inc
- Bridge Darebin
- Ngarrimili

## TAS

- Big hART Inc



SPOTLIGHT

## BAMA BUILDING MOMENTUM

Since starting in 2010 as a small building and landscaping business, Cairns-based Bama Services has scaled into a competitive player in North Queensland's civil construction and asset maintenance markets. This year, it became the first Westpac Foundation grant partner to tap into a new finance structure to support its next phase of growth.

As the Indigenous-owned social enterprise has been propelled by winning a number of big contracts for road upgrades, landscaping and other works, it has stuck fast to its founding mission: to create jobs and training opportunities for Indigenous people in the local region.

"The wellbeing of our staff and their families is of paramount importance," says Will Grayson, general manager of Bama, an entity of the Cape York Partnership.

"We take a holistic view of each team member, and help them to reach their full potential and achieve stable, healthy lives at home. As a result, we have a highly-skilled workforce delivering on big projects, while empowering individuals to achieve their professional and personal goals."

To date, more than 280 employees have benefited from Bama's award-winning approach, many going on to secure traineeships throughout the civil and landscape construction industries.

Westpac Foundation has been there from the beginning, providing Bama more than \$1.39M in grants and supplementary non-financial support

to help it scale since its initial seed funding more than 13 years ago.

Grayson says as Bama sets its sights on its next push for growth, it's reached a level of maturity that requires a finance injection beyond the philanthropic funding that's supported it to date – yet, for social enterprises, the transition to mainstream business lending is historically difficult.

"It's challenging for businesses like ours to access mainstream finance to fund growth because we don't have the typical trading profile or track record of a traditional construction business that banks look for," he says. "But given we've had such a long-term partnership with Westpac Foundation, and that's given us access to people who have helped us meet robust due diligence, it's opened the door to a funding structure that has the potential to help us overcome access to mainstream finance."

Under the new proposed lending structure, Westpac Foundation aims to act as a guarantor for Bama to take on a business loan from Westpac. The proposed guarantee will help secure the loan and reduce its cost, enabling Bama to create more job opportunities for Indigenous Australians.

Westpac Foundation's CEO Amy Lyden says Bama is a wonderful example of what the Westpac Foundation ultimately aims for. "Helping transition social enterprises to become sustainable in their own right to confidently qualify for mainstream lending products to support their growth can help those businesses create more employment pathways," she says.



**"Given we've had such a long-term partnership with Westpac Foundation, it's opened the door to a unique financing structure to help us grow."**

Will Grayson, general manager of Bama Services, a Westpac Foundation grant partner since 2009.



Joshtel, employee, Bama Services.

# “My life is so different now.”

Rory, crew leader, YMCA ReBuild.

“I’ve never been able to hold a job for longer than a few months, but now I’ve worked solid for four years and I’ve been out of jail the longest I have for my whole life,” says Rory.

Rory is among more than 400 young people to have turned their lives around with support from YMCA ReBuild, a social enterprise set up in 2010 to engage young people who’ve spent time in the criminal justice system by offering training, support and employment in trades and other industries. Westpac Foundation has partnered with YMCA ReBuild since 2010, providing \$500,000 in collaborative funding and pro bono support to help it scale and increase its ability to secure commercial contracts.



## 2. PROGRAMS TO DRIVE IMPACT



Westpac Foundation connects our community and social enterprise partners to a diverse range of capability-building, networking and pro bono opportunities.

### Initiatives include:

- Board Observer Program, which matches senior professionals at Westpac Group with community organisations looking to build the resilience and impact of their board.
- Group Leadership Coaching, a program funded by Westpac Foundation that enables leaders of community organisations to grow and develop, brainstorm ideas and form connections within the sector.
- Peer-learning programs to develop and connect leaders, including Changemaker events.
- Business mentoring and financial health checks.
- Access to Westpac Group networks and pro bono support such as the Community Ambassador Program, in which Westpac Group employees are matched with grant partners to share their expertise, networks and advocacy.



These initiatives to build capacity among our community and social enterprise partners contributes to Goal 4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, “Quality education”.

### 2023 Impact Highlights

# 95%

of community organisations involved in the Board Observer Program agreed their observer was able to add value by bringing skills and perspective to the organisation.<sup>1</sup>

# 100%

of Group Leadership Coaching participants reported the program created meaningful opportunities to engage with and learn from other leaders.<sup>2</sup>

# 100%

of Inclusive Employment Grant recipients matched with a Westpac Group Community Ambassador.

# 2,600

hours of pro bono business support delivered in partnership with Social Impact Hub.

# 500

community partner and Westpac Group employees attended our Changemaker events.

1. Board Observer Program - Board Feedback Survey 2022. 2. Group Leadership Survey Feedback 2023.

# DRIVING IMPACT TOGETHER

## From bystander to board observer

**During 2023, 33 senior professionals from across Westpac Group participated in our Board Observer Program, and were matched with 32 community organisations looking to build the resilience and impact of their boards.**

Co-designed by Westpac Foundation and MinterEllison, program participants join the organisation's board meetings as an observer over 12 months, and also attend a six-module governance program led by the Future Directors Institute. Since the program began in 2018, 238 observers have participated, including 155 Westpac employees.

Ongoing demand for positions in the program – both from employee participants and community organisation boards – demonstrates the value of the program. In an evaluation of last year's program, 95 per cent of participating boards said their observer added value to the board by bringing their skills and perspective.

"I've felt so welcomed by the Hotel Etico board, and the benefits of the relationship have been so symbiotic. For me, the experience has been fulfilling and fantastic in terms of where I want to take my career, and at the same time I've been able to contribute in ways that have been valued by the board."

*Lucy Masters, Chief Risk Officer, BT, and board observer with Hotel Etico*



**Andrea Comastri, Hotel Etico CEO and board observer Lucy Masters, BT Chief Risk Officer.**

## Developing and connecting leaders

**We believe that developing the leadership skills and peer networks of the people running the organisations we support plays a key role in their success.**

In 2023, we ran two Group Leadership Coaching Programs, attended by 24 senior leaders from grant partners, led by leadership coaches Peter Shepherd and Mary Freer. Evaluation showed participants found the programs overwhelmingly positive, with 100 per cent agreeing it supported their growth as a social change leader.

We also ran our third annual Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) Action Learning Program attended by leaders from seven grant partners, led by learning facilitator, May Miller-Dawkins. The virtual peer-focused program helps these leaders work through complex challenges and solve problems together while building trust and connection across the sector.

"I loved the opportunity to see our business alongside other social enterprises and connect with other leaders around some of their techniques and processes. Speaking to common challenges experienced by all of us had an immediate effect on how I now lead with more confidence."

*Anna Wattler, Art Centre Manager at Mimili Maku Arts, recipient of a Westpac Foundation Inclusive Employment Grant in 2022.*

## Ambassadors opening doors

**Through our Westpac Community Ambassador Program, we match Westpac employees with grant partners over 12 months to offer their professional expertise and networks, while gaining social leadership skills.**

During 2023, we had a cohort of 95 ambassadors matched with 57 grant partners of Westpac Foundation.

Each ambassador is supported with a training and coaching program, and by becoming part of our ambassador network, they commit to exploring ways to help and advocate for the organisation they are matched with, by leveraging their own skills and networks.

"Westpac ambassadors have been great to bounce ideas off. It's that recurring constant support that goes a long way and builds strong relationships."

*Jason Ryan, Managing Director, Shoreline, recipient of a Westpac Foundation Inclusive Employment Grant in 2022.*

## SPOTLIGHT

# GIVING GOOD SERVICE NEW MEANING

**As he recalls this year's graduation ceremony for trainees of the hotel he co-founded in the Blue Mountains in 2020, Andrea Comastri is emotional.**

"The feelings in the room were just indescribable," says Comastri, chief executive of Hotel Etico. "There was pride and joy, tears and laughter; it was exceptional."

What made it so special is that the grand 15-room hotel has a very different employment model to most, providing a luxury hospitality experience for guests, while running an immersive hospitality training and employment program for people with disabilities.

"Our big difference is that we match our hospitality training with an independent living program – our trainees live and work on-site and are completely immersed in every part of the business," Comastri explains. "They're front and centre of the hotel, from reception, to housekeeping, to the kitchen, on the floor, in the bar, everywhere – not just tucked away in little jobs here and there – and that creates this magical recipe for amazing results."

The hotel's two-year training program offers positions, with full award wages, to young people with an intellectual, neurodevelopmental or physical disability. After the first year, graduates are helped to find ongoing jobs with sector partners – such as Fairmont Resort, Sofitel, Fullerton and Mercure – and are supported in these new careers by the Hotel Etico team for at least another year.



Westpac Foundation was an early supporter and, beyond the funding, Comastri says the in-kind support provided has contributed to its success. He calls out the Board Observer Program in particular, where senior professionals from Westpac and MinterEllison have been matched based on their skills to join Hotel Etico's board meetings.

"We've had an intense level of support through our connection with the foundation, through promotion of the hotel, teams coming to hold team building weekends with us, and we've had three observers on our board who have made an amazing contribution," he says.

The observers brought skills that the Hotel Etico board had been seeking, such as culture and HR, and risk management. "Although they're not legally on the board, we treat them like a full-fledged board member," Comastri says. "They participate in the board discussions and their contribution, expertise and enthusiasm are just incredible. It's a great program and the contribution is deep."

Given the success of the hotel's training model, Comastri has plans to replicate it in every Australian state and territory. "By expanding, it allows us to knock down more barriers, because when people come to the hotel and interact with our trainees their perceptions are transformed about what disability employment means and doesn't mean."

**"The board observers' expertise and enthusiasm are just incredible. It's a great program and the contribution is deep."**

**Andrea Comastri, Co-founder and CEO of social enterprise Hotel Etico, a grant partner of Westpac Foundation since 2020.**



2023 Hotel Etico graduates with CEO Andrea Comastri.

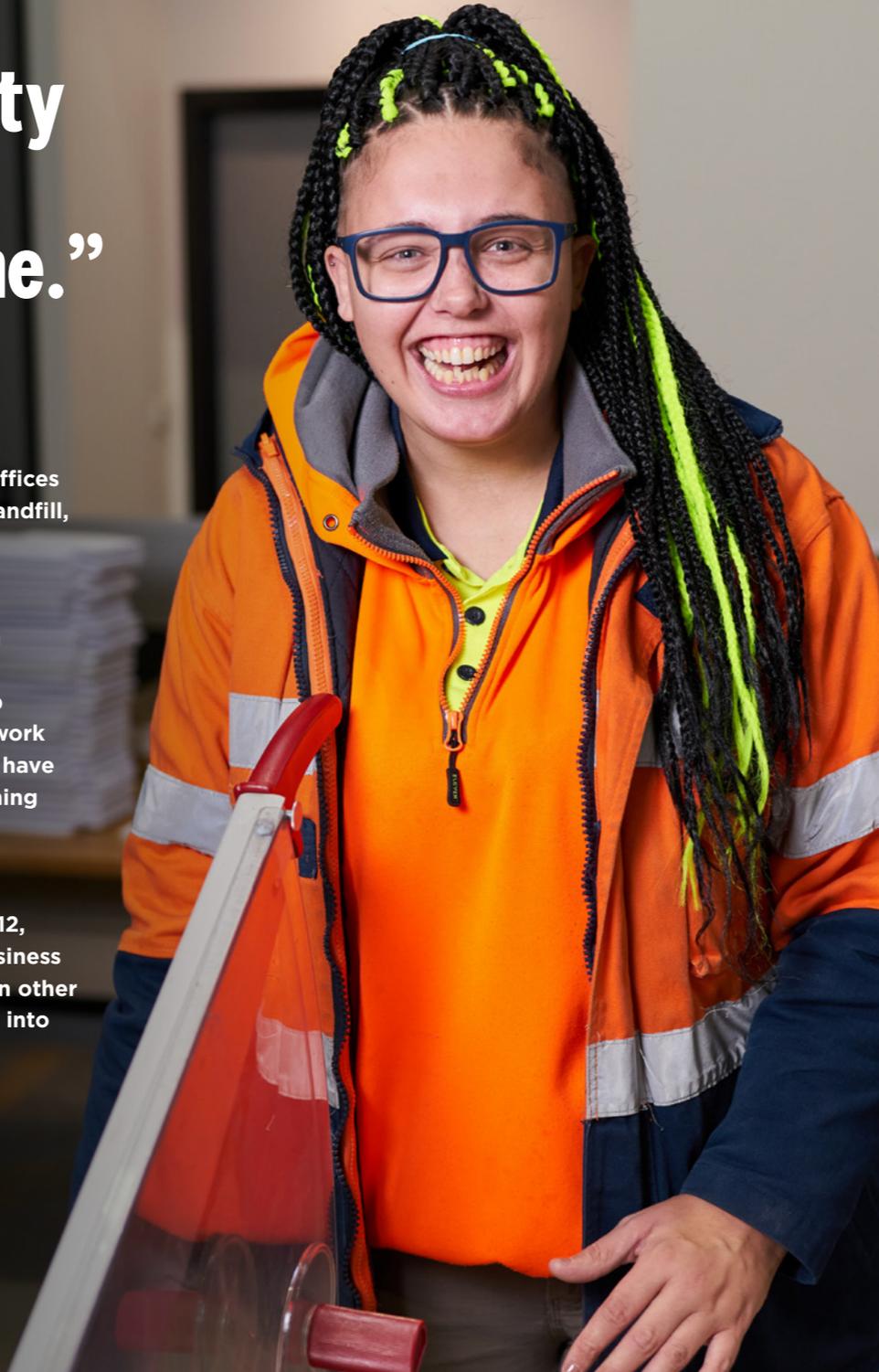
“The opportunity has been life changing for me.”

Victoria, employee at Green Collect.

Green Collect is a circular economy social enterprise that takes surplus items from offices and homes and finds them a life beyond landfill, with a team of staff who have previously experienced barriers to employment.

Victoria is among 30 people to have been employed at Green Collect over the last 12 months as part of the enterprise’s deep commitment to inclusive and supportive work practices. Since 2002, Green Collect staff have diverted more than 11 million items, weighing around 1.5 million kilograms, from landfill through reuse, repurposing or recycling.

Since its first grant to Green Collect in 2012, Westpac Foundation has provided the business \$800,000 in funding and helped it scale in other ways, including introducing Green Collect into Westpac’s supply chain.



### 3. COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE



Westpac Foundation builds long-term collaborations to create value for our community partners and support the social enterprise ecosystem more broadly.

**Initiatives include:**

- Philanthropic collaborations, including the launch of the Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) Grant.
- Pro bono partnerships including legal support via MinterEllison.
- Procurement opportunities and referrals.
- The Resilience & Impact for Social Enterprise (RISE) program, which provides tailored capability support to social enterprises led by The Social Impact Hub with partners including Westpac Foundation, Paul Ramsay Foundation, Macquarie Group Foundation, Snow Foundation and KPMG.



These collaborative initiatives contribute to Goal 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, “Partnerships for the goals”.

**2023 Impact Highlights**

**\$4.7M**

in collaborative funding secured through the new WISE Grant.

**56%**

of all social enterprise partners were provided additional support by our collaborative funding partners.

**35**

social enterprises received pro bono and advisory support through the RISE program.<sup>1</sup>

**85%**

of social enterprises participating in the RISE program agreed they are in a better position to operate going forward.<sup>1</sup>

**\$635,000**

in pro bono legal support provided to our community partners and collaborative funding partners by MinterEllison in 2023.

**\$327,000**

in goods and services were procured by Westpac Group from our Community partners in 2023.

1. RISE Program Evaluation Report December 2022.

# JOINING FORCES, FOR GOOD

## New \$4.76 million collaborative grant fund

In June 2023, Westpac Foundation was among a collection of leading Australian philanthropic organisations to jointly launch a pioneering grant program to support jobs-focused social enterprises. The Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE) Grant will provide up to \$4.7 million over two-years to social enterprises to help them strengthen and increase their employment outcomes for people who face challenges getting into the workforce.

By pooling grant funding, the partners are seeking to have a greater impact while also making it easier for earlier stage enterprises to access grant funding who often find it challenging to navigate funding options, each with different application criteria, conditions and reporting requirements.

The two-year grants range in value from approximately \$200,000 to \$500,000, depending on the stage of the social enterprise.

Alongside Westpac Foundation, partners of the program include Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (which will manage the program with the support of a steering committee), Paul Ramsay Foundation, Macquarie Group Services Australia, English Family Foundation, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and Minderoo Foundation. MinterEllison is providing pro bono legal advice on structuring the grant program.

## Partners of the WISE Grant program



## Rising to the challenge

2023 marked the third year of the Resilience & Impact for Social Enterprise program (RISE), led by the Social Impact Hub, supported by funding from Westpac Foundation and an expanding range of partners including Paul Ramsay Foundation, Macquarie Group Foundation, Snow Foundation and KPMG.

RISE is a capability building program that provides bespoke support for social enterprises with an aim to help them navigate and explore the evolving operating landscape, refine their business models and ways of working, cultivate resilience and grow their impact. Among the 35 social enterprises taking part in the program last year, 16 were Westpac Foundation grant partners.

Responses to an evaluation of the program shows it was overwhelmingly valued by participants:

**82%**

reported they were “well positioned” and “very well positioned” in terms of resilience, adaptability and being equipped to navigate challenges moving forward.<sup>1</sup>

**85%**

reported being “well positioned” or “very well positioned” to operate going forward particularly with support around governance, strategic planning and impact measurement.<sup>1</sup>

## Unique learning collaboration

Westpac Foundation formed a collaboration with a research team during the year with a mission to shed more light on the role social enterprise can play in improving employment futures for people experiencing disadvantage.

Melbourne Social Equity Institute Director Professor Jo Barraket AM will lead the three-year research project working closely with social enterprise sector organisations White Box Enterprises, Westpac Foundation, Outlook and STREAT to investigate and document how inclusive work through social enterprise can be grown, ultimately contributing to more effective employment models to increase the shared benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce. In February 2023, the project was awarded an Australian Research Council Linkage grant.

1. RISE Program Evaluation Report December 2022.

# JOINING FORCES, FOR GOOD

## Ramping up WISE Hub

Since playing a key role in the creation of the Work Integrated Social Enterprise (WISE) Hub in 2021, Westpac Foundation has continued to actively participate, this year providing a second year of funding to ramp up sector advocacy.

The WISE Hub is a collaboration between leading players in the jobs-focused social enterprise sector, now led by newly formed sector peak body Social Enterprise Australia. Its aim is to strengthen the sector ecosystem by driving coordinated cross-sector efforts, building profile and understanding, and securing access to government funding and public and private investment.

In February 2022, Westpac Foundation awarded the WISE Hub a two-year grant, totalling \$160,000. The first year of funding enabled the hub to commission research by the Centre for Social Impact Swinburne to provide a comprehensive evidence base to understand the impact costs of operating a WISE to influence more effective funding and payments to WISE for the employment outcomes they create. This year's funding is supporting the WISE Hub to advocate for and coordinate priority initiatives to secure the effective inclusion of jobs-focused social enterprises in policy settings within the employment services system to scale the sector's impact.

**"People have been working for decades to unlock the shared impact of job-focused social enterprises. We launched the WISE Hub for these people to combine forces to be more effective. This was only possible with funding and involvement from the Westpac Foundation."**

Jess Moore, CEO of Social Enterprise Australia.



Social enterprise sector representatives that hosted the first social enterprise policy briefings at Parliament House in May 2023.

## SPOTLIGHT

# EMPOWERING WITH FLOWERS



**The idea to create her social enterprise as a florist came to Jane Marx when she realised floral arrangements had been the only element of her Melbourne-based events business that seemed pandemic proof.**

She launched The Beautiful Bunch in 2020, a flower delivery service which offers training and employment to young women with refugee backgrounds, starting with those who'd lost their jobs when her events business folded during COVID lockdowns.

“The young women we train and employ have a range of backgrounds, but the thing they have in common is they experience some of the greatest barriers to securing work in Australia,” Marx says.

“We think the solution is simple: to provide a warm, welcoming, supportive workplace where we only require one thing and that is that the young women want to be here.”

The women, the majority having never worked before, are offered six months paid work experience in foundational floristry, training in transferable skills such as customer service and administration, and digital and financial literacy support. Graduates are then helped to gain longer term jobs in the open employment market. To date, 100 per cent of graduates have gone on to employment, further study or independent volunteering.

“There are so few barriers to employment here,” Marx says. “You don’t need fantastic English skills, you don’t need any experience, you don’t have to work nights – and so this opportunity is genuinely lifechanging for the young women we’re able to offer it to.”

The Beautiful Bunch was awarded an Inclusive Employment Grant from Westpac Foundation last year, which she says was crucial given the business was at such an early stage, giving her some “extra runway” to make it a success.

She also signed up to the RISE program, an initiative of the Social Impact Hub co-funded by Westpac Foundation. There she received hands-on support to refine her subscriber engagement strategy to gain a foothold in the competitive floristry market, and help to create the foundational documents needed to secure grant funding.

“It was just everything that I needed to make all the difference for our growth,” she says. “Having someone actually doing the work rather than just giving me a list of things I had to do, on top of running the business, it’s so rare.”

Given the early success of the model, Marx is keen to replicate The Beautiful Bunch in other cities, to achieve greater impact.

“I love that the women love being here, they love working with the flowers, improving their botanical knowledge, doing something creative and very restorative. It’s beautiful to see them grow.”



**“It was just everything that I needed to make all the difference for our growth.”**

*Jane Marx, founder and CEO, The Beautiful Bunch, recipient of a Westpac Foundation Inclusive Employment Grant in 2022.*

# “Before Mettle, I had no-one.”

**Monika, graduate, Mettle Women.**

Mettle Women is a national gift delivery service employing women experiencing homelessness due to domestic and family violence. “They helped so much with my ambulance bills, supporting me in court and helping me save for a better life. I am now a qualified childcare worker because they allowed me to study while I did paid work.” Monika was among 33 women to be supported by Mettle since 2019, through programs to equip survivors of domestic and family violence with skills, confidence and financial security.

Last year, Mettle Women received an Inclusive Employment Grant from Westpac Foundation and, by being paired with a Westpac employee through Westpac Community Ambassador Program, advocacy for the social enterprise has led to other support, including promotion of its gift delivery service, skilled volunteering and taking part in the pilot of Mettle’s new program – a gift-making team building service for corporates run by the women of Mettle.



## 4. HELPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Westpac Foundation’s support for local community organisations and social enterprises is helping people become job ready across Australia.



These initiatives to support local community organisations to create employment opportunities for under-represented groups contributes to Goal 10 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, “Reduced inequalities”.

### 2023 Impact Highlights

**76**

Westpac Group employees volunteered their time and skills across our programs.

**997**

hours of Westpac Group pro bono support provided to Inclusive Employment Grant partners.<sup>1</sup>

**95%**

of grant partners surveyed said the Inclusive Employment Grant was important for strengthening the capacity of their organisation.<sup>2</sup>

**90%**

of Inclusive Employment Grant partners surveyed said the non-financial support they have received so far from Westpac Group has been effective.<sup>2</sup>

1. Westpac Group Skilled Volunteering Survey 2023. 2 Inclusive Employment Grant Mid-Point Survey, August 2023 (38 responses).

## SPOTLIGHT

# HEALING FORCE OF NATURE'S MATES



**As the team at Happy Paws Happy Hearts began to see many of their program participants gain the confidence to take the next step towards independence, they created a new program – with care for animals at its core – to help those participants reach their vocational goals.**

“A lot of our participants come to us deeply socially isolated, so much so that leaving the house once a week is a terrifying challenge,” explains Kellie Ireland, deputy CEO of Happy Paws Happy Hearts.

The social enterprise was founded in 2014 to provide a safe environment where people care for rescue animals and, while helping the furry, feathered or scaley friends to be better prepared for adoption, they build their own social connections, skills and confidence. This year, around 500 people have joined facilitated sessions each week across seven locations around the country.

“Once they’ve been with us for some time, we see our participants transform and, for many, they start to want a little more,” Ireland says. “So, we created our ‘Explore’ program to help make that next transition not so scary – whether it’s into employment, or further study or independent volunteering. Around 70 per cent of participants are young people and most have dropped out of school, so it’s really important to us that we help show them they’ve got value and skills to offer.”

During the 24-week job-readiness program, first piloted in 2020, participants learn skills such as applying for a job, interview techniques and workplace communication – all brought to life through the thoughtful integration of animals into the training

curriculum. Graduates are offered a work placement or study opportunity aligned with their personal goals, providing them with hands-on experience. To date, 66% of participants have gone on to employment, further study or independent volunteering.

Ireland says the program was backed by Westpac Foundation from day one, both from a funding perspective – enabling the expansion of the ‘Explore’ program – and an “on-the-ground” operational perspective, support opportunities having been unlocked by the volunteer Westpac Group employees matched as Community Ambassadors to the social enterprise.

This has included coordinating Westpac Group branch staff to run financial literacy sessions as part of the ‘Explore’ program at their local Happy Paws Happy Hearts sites, making the process of banking a little less daunting for the young participants by improving their financial confidence.

“I can’t get over how invested our Westpac Community Ambassadors are,” Ireland says. “They’ve connected us to all these resources within the Westpac Group network that we would not otherwise have been aware of. Their beautiful hearts, their genuine passion, professionalism and networks have made a catalytic impact for us.”

For more, visit Westpac Wire: [Furry friends find a higher purpose at this social enterprise](#)



**“I can’t get over how invested our Westpac Community Ambassadors are. Their beautiful hearts, their genuine passion, professionalism and networks have made a catalytic impact for us.”**

*Kellie Ireland, Deputy CEO  
of Happy Paws Happy Hearts, a Westpac  
Foundation grant partner since 2017.*

Libby, participant, Happy Paws Happy Hearts.

# OUR STORY

Westpac Foundation's heritage dates back to 1879, when Thomas Buckland, then President of the Bank of New South Wales (which became Westpac Banking Corporation), donated his £1,000 annual bonus to establish the Buckland Fund, which today is part of Westpac Foundation. The original aim of the Buckland Fund was to help families of deceased bank employees who found themselves in financial hardship.

In 1999, the scope of Westpac Foundation expanded, with an aim to make a meaningful contribution to the wider Australian community through grants to not-for-profit organisations.

As social enterprises began to gain traction in stepping up to tackle some of the most complex social problems in our communities, in 2006 we began to direct our philanthropic funding to support the efforts of these emerging businesses.

In doing so, we've chosen to further refine our focus - to help strengthen and scale those social enterprises which have a purpose to create meaningful employment opportunities as a pathway out of disadvantage and financial hardship.

To track our impact, in 2018 we set an ambitious goal to support our grant partners to create 10,000 jobs over the 15 years to 2030.

We are proud that Westpac Foundation still encompasses the spirit, generosity and philanthropic intent of our founder Thomas Buckland.

## Our Board



**Jim Tate**  
Chair



**Distinguished Professor Jo Barraket AM**  
Director



**Carolyn Hoy**  
Director



**Keith Rovers**  
Director



**Jane Watts**  
Director

We would like to thank Ganesh Chandrasekhar, who retired from the board during 2023, for his contribution to Westpac Foundation, and we welcome Carolyn Hoy.



Kirsten, employee, Homie.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Throughout 2023, people from across Westpac Group and the wider community have supported Westpac Foundation in helping to create a more inclusive Australia. To all Westpac Group employees, customers, shareholders and suppliers who have so generously donated time, skills and money, thank you.

### Support us

With your contribution we can continue to help create jobs and opportunities for those who need it most. 100% of donations go straight to Westpac Foundation's grant programs and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Westpac Group employees have many opportunities to support Westpac Foundation through volunteering, donation matching, payroll giving or becoming part of our Changemakers program.



Rory, employee, Ability Works.

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 Westpac Foundation

 Subscribe to our newsletter

Westpac Foundation is administered by Westpac Community Limited as trustee for Westpac Community Trust (ABN 53 265 036 982). Westpac Community Trust is a Public Ancillary Fund, endorsed by the ATO as a Deductible Gift Recipient.



Luci, trainee and Yasmine, support worker, Hotel Etico.