



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

HelpingMinds acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, live and care. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and community, and honour their enduring culture and contributions.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

HelpingMinds acknowledges and honours all individuals with lived experience of mental health challenges, including those who identify as consumers, carers, families, supporters, students, and advocates. We recognise the strength, insight, and leadership that lived experience brings to shaping compassionate, responsive, and inclusive mental health systems.

As we approach 50 years of service, we reflect with deep respect on the diverse communities we have walked alongside. Their experiences have guided our journey, informed our practice, and inspired our purpose. We remain committed to listening, learning, and co-creating a future where every voice is valued and every story matters.



# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR & CEO



## FRANCO GUAZZELLI

HelpingMinds Chair

As we reflect on this past year, we do so with deep gratitude and humility. The journey of mental health recovery is never linear, and yet, every day, we witness extraordinary courage, resilience, and connection across the communities we are privileged to be a part of.

It is this spirit—of hope, collaboration, respect, trust, and integrity—that continues to guide HelpingMinds in everything we do as we enter our 50th year.

Hope is the thread that runs through our work. It is found in the quiet moments of breakthrough during counselling, the laughter shared at a school holiday program, the learning in WARCA courses—sometimes quiet, sometimes not so quiet!—and the strength discovered in peer support circles. We remain committed to nurturing this hope—for individuals, for families, for carers, and for entire communities.

Collaboration has been our compass. Whether partnering with local organisations, co-designing programs with individuals, families and carers, delivering education sessions through WARCA, or working alongside sector leaders, we have seen firsthand the power of shared purpose. Together, we have built more inclusive, responsive, and compassionate systems of support and education.

Respect is embedded in our relationships—with clients, carers, colleagues, and communities. We celebrate lived experience, cultural identity, and personal journeys, alongside learned experience, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

Trust is earned, and we are proud of the trust placed in us by those who walk through our doors. We strive to be consistent, transparent, and accountable, knowing that trust is the foundation of healing.

Integrity is our promise—to do what is right, even when it is hard. It is reflected in our advocacy, our service delivery, our education programs, and our commitment to continuous improvement.

## CLIENT FEEDBACK MENTAL HEALTH CARER 2025

I never felt judged. I felt supported, encouraged, and motivated. Thank you HelpingMinds, for helping me stay sane and alive the past months.

Eternally grateful.

We have so much appreciation to share.

To our funding partners—the Western Australian Mental Health Commission, the Australian Government, WAPHA, Telethon, and the NDIA—thank you for believing in our mission and enabling us to reach those who need us most.

To our Board of Directors—your guidance and commitment continue to shape our culture and strengthen our impact. We are grateful for your time, expertise, and unwavering support.

To our donors and fundraisers—every contribution, no matter the amount, makes a meaningful difference to the mental health supports we can provide to the community. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

To our incredible HelpingMinds' team—thank you. Whether you work directly with families, young people, and individuals, or provide vital support behind the scenes, your compassion, dedication, and professionalism make a profound difference every day. Your work empowers others to live with hope and dignity, and you are the heart of our organisation.

To those who share their lived experience, teach, learn, advocate, support, and care—you inspire us with your courage and compassion. Your work is a powerful testament to recovery in action.

To our students and volunteers—thank you for sharing your journey with HelpingMinds. Your presence enriches our community and brings fresh perspectives to all we do.

And most importantly, to the families, carers, and individuals who trust us with their stories and strive to live their best lives—thank you. You are the reason we do what we do, and you inspire us every single day.

As we look ahead to our 50th anniversary in 2026, we remain committed to walking alongside you—with hope in our hearts and purpose in our stride. Thank you for being part of the HelpingMinds journey this year.

Franco Guazzelli, Chair  
Debbie Childs, CEO



## DEBBIE CHILDS

CEO HelpingMinds

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Thank you so much for your time, effort, dedication and hard work with our daughter. We definitely made the right choice choosing your company for support and hope there is more funding soon for you to continue to support her now that she's in her early 20's and beyond.

# IMPACT

The Family and Carer Support Services program provided a range of supports for Mental Health Carers, including counselling, workshops, support groups, advocacy, peer support, and respite. These services ensured carers were not only heard and supported but also meaningfully connected to the resources they needed to navigate their caring journey with confidence, enhancing their mental health and wellbeing.

Support was delivered through offices and co-located services across the Perth metropolitan area, including Perth, Mandurah, Rockingham, Fremantle, South Lake, Armadale, Midland, Hillarys, and Joondalup, as well as regional locations in Geraldton, Carnarvon, South Hedland, and Broome. Digital health services were also provided to carers over the age of 18 throughout Western Australia.



**YOUTH, ADULT & FAMILY CARER SUPPORT**

**PERTH METRO**

**2544**

**Clients supported**

**7765**

**Hours of support**

**YOUTH, ADULT & FAMILY CARER SUPPORT**

**REGIONAL WA**

**443**

**Clients supported**

**2428**

**Hours of support**

**CLIENT FEEDBACK**  
MENTAL HEALTH CARER COUNSELLING

I am extremely grateful for this service. My counsellor was very knowledgeable and understanding. She not only listened, she also helped me to see things differently and supported me to change the way I respond and deal with difficult, ongoing situations. I never felt judged, I felt supported, encouraged and motivated.

## THRIVESS FAMILY RECOVERY PROGRAM PILOT

This collaborative project brought together HelpingMinds and members of the Western Australia Child and Adolescent Health Services' Complex Attention and Hyperactivity Disorders Service (CAHDS) Recovery Working Group.

The community-based pilot program offered parenting or carer couples, as well as single carers, of children and adolescents aged 6-18 years with a recent diagnosis of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), the opportunity to work with project partners to develop a family recovery action plan.

Seventeen carers participated in the pilot, which was delivered over four weeks with two-hour sessions each week. The program evaluation will assess the feasibility of delivering a recovery-oriented program to parents and carers of children and adolescents living with ADHD. It will also review the acceptability of program materials and their delivery, identify potential risks or challenges, and determine whether a full-scale program is viable.

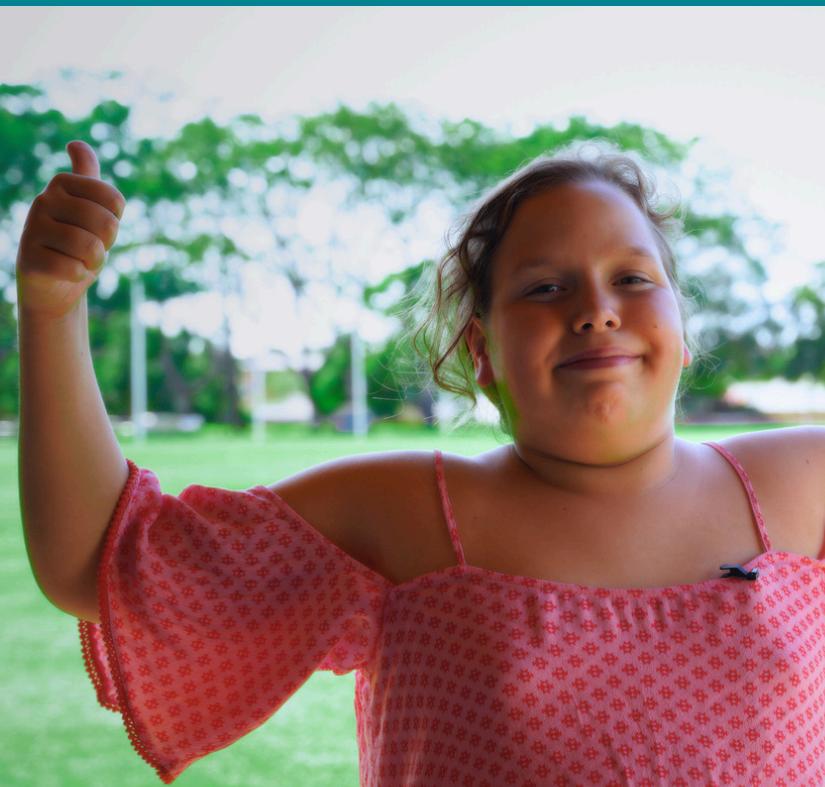
## SOUTHWEST YOUTH ADVENTURE CAMP

Thanks to the flexibility provided by the Mental Health Commission, HelpingMinds extended services across Western Australia during the reporting period. The team travelled to the Southwest region to deliver a Youth Adventure Camp, designed to provide young mental health carers with a much-needed break from their caring roles.

Demand for programs of this kind in the Southwest continues to grow, with many communities expressing the need for more accessible support. Feedback from both young participants and their parents was overwhelmingly positive, noting the camp's success in fostering new friendships, building confidence, and promoting personal wellbeing.

### CLIENT FEEDBACK MENTAL HEALTH CARER WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Powerful experience for me. It enabled me to recognise that my experiences were valid and my feelings were normal and acceptable. Being around other carers gave me the confidence to understand my own ambiguous loss which once acknowledged has given very complex emotions a way of being dealt with.



# STATEWIDE INDIVIDUAL CARER ADVOCACY

HelpingMinds Carer Advocates continued to provide invaluable support to mental health carers across Western Australia. There was a noticeable increase in requests from carers living in regional areas, reflecting the growing demand for advocacy services outside metropolitan zones. Many advocacy referrals originated from Family Support Counsellors, with needs often identified during the counselling process.

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Your presence was invaluable and enabled me to focus on the outcomes we required. HelpingMinds was such a positive experience.

The Carer Advocates delivered a comprehensive, wrap-around service, offering tailored support at various stages of a client's engagement. This continuum of care enabled them to assist families and individuals as they navigated the complexities of the mental health system, while also providing practical guidance.

HelpingMinds maintained an active presence at State Administrative Tribunal hearings, frequently representing carers at the request of multiple agencies. Advocacy support also extended to HADSCO, hospital, and residential care settings, where advocates assisted carers in preparing written reports and engaging constructively with healthcare professionals.

In collaboration with other community-based services, the organisation facilitated workshops focused on independent advocacy, current issues impacting carers, carer legislation, and strategies for self-advocacy.



191

Clients supported

1247

Hours of support

# MENTAL HEALTH CARER RESPITE

Respite services remained highly valued by carers and mental health carers across the Perth metropolitan area. However, growing demand and limited geographic coverage led to increased feedback from carers outside the current service zone—highlighting the need for additional resources.

Despite these challenges, HelpingMinds delivered a varied calendar of activities during the reporting period. Highlights included massage therapy, Carer Day Out excursions, Carer High Tea and Christmas outings, as well as Young Carer Youth Adventure Days.

**217**

Clients supported

**224**

Hours of support

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Being able to connect with other people who have similar experiences to me in my local community has been freeing. Sometimes I don't want to tell family and friends everything that is going on because they do not understand, attending the Carer Day Out gave me a space to connect and not explain, with people who were understanding and not judging me or my loved one.



# FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICE

HelpingMinds delivered a diverse range of evidence-informed programs to support children and young people at risk of developing mental health challenges across the City of Swan, Kimberley, Gascoyne, and Mid West regions.

Through creative, hands-on, and therapeutic workshops, participants built emotional resilience, self-awareness, and essential life skills in supportive and culturally safe environments.

Each program was designed to meet participants' emotional, developmental, and cultural needs, providing a safe space to foster connection, confidence, and coping strategies for the future.

**282**

Clients supported

**2477**

Attendances

**1768**

Sessions

**32**

Workshops delivered



# NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

HelpingMinds delivered a range of NDIS support services including Support Coordination, Psychosocial Recovery Coaching, and Core Supports (Assistance with Daily Life and Assistance with Social, Economic and Community Participation).

These services aimed to assist NDIS participants with a psychosocial disability to understand and implement their NDIS plans, connect with the supports they needed, and work towards their individual recovery goals.

Services were delivered across the Perth metropolitan area, with remote Support Coordination also provided in the Mid West region.

Across these services, the team supported 221 NDIS participants, delivered 14,718 hours of support and travelled 43,717 kilometres of activity-based transport to help participants access their communities.

117

Support Coordination participants

31

Psychosocial Recovery Coaching participants

73

Core Supports participants



## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Just want to give my support worker Dawn, a huge thumbs up and appreciation for being an excellent support worker, always being a step ahead in making things easier. Very attentive, very caring, just wonderful and pleasant to be around, makes a difference to my day, enjoyable and cared for so thank you.

# NDIS OUTCOMES

While each NDIS participant's journey and outcomes were unique, several key themes emerged.

- Greater community connection – Increased engagement, participation, and social inclusion, helping to reduce isolation and loneliness.
- Improved independence – Greater confidence in managing daily life tasks and overcoming everyday challenges.
- Enhanced emotional wellbeing – Improved ability to manage mental health challenges, with many participants reporting reduced anxiety, disengagement, and feelings of overwhelm.
- Stronger sense of purpose – Through routine building and goal setting, participants reported a clearer sense of direction in their daily lives.
- Skill development – Participants gained new skills in areas such as communication, using public transport, personal admin, household management, and exploration of new interests.
- Improved access to supports – Strengthened connections to a wide range of services and supports, contributing to improved functional capacity and progress toward meaningful life outcomes.

**221**

**NDIS participants supported**

**14,718**

**Hours of service provided**

**43,717**

**Kilometres of Activity Based Transport supplied**



## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Thank you very much with your assistance in managing Steve's care over the past few months, particularly when Steve was admitted to hospital. Your input, assistance and communication is very much appreciated, and it was a pleasure to collaborate with both of you.

# COMMONWEALTH PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Community Psychosocial Support Program (CPSP), funded by WAPHA, provided short- to medium-term, non-clinical psychosocial support to adults with severe mental health challenges and functional impairments who were ineligible for the NDIS or other state supports. Operating across the Primary Health Network (South) from South Perth to Mandurah, the CPSP team delivered case management and service navigation, supporting 63 individuals with 1,794 occasions of service and linking them to a broad range of clinical and non-clinical services, including:

- General practitioners and allied health professionals
- Government and community services
- Philanthropic and private organisations

Through these connections, participants were able to access:

- Mental and general health care
- Clinical assessments and exercise programs
- Financial and psychological counselling
- Emergency food relief
- Housing and maintenance support
- Legal assistance and family custody/access support
- Social inclusion and community engagement activities
- Emotional and wellbeing support

Demand for CPSP remained high, with 47 individuals on the waitlist at the end of the reporting period. However, limited funding continued to restrict the program's capacity to respond to this growing need. Access to alternative services for individuals experiencing psychosocial challenges also remained limited.

## GROUP PROGRAM: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

With additional funding from the Western Australian Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA), the CPSP team introduced the Social Connections & Skills Development Group—a fortnightly program alternating between social engagement and practical life skills development. The group was designed to support all CPSP clients, particularly those on the waitlist for one-on-one support.

Each session engaged between four and six participants and received positive feedback. However, barriers such as transport limitations and participants' psychological readiness for group settings impacted attendance levels.

Topics explored throughout the sessions included:

- Creating vision boards
- CV writing and employment strategies
- Meal planning, budgeting, and grocery shopping
- Building and maintaining healthy relationships
- Relaxation techniques and self-care
- Navigating public transport
- Financial literacy
- Decluttering and housing navigation
- Social skills development through board games and photography

63

individual clients supported

1794

hours support provided

70%\*

reported 'significant improvement'

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

The support I received from Melissa has kept me alive. There had been dark days but she helped me see and explore how to get better. It's an ongoing process but I'll do my best. I just hope I'm strong enough already, because of her help, that when I have thoughts of hurting myself, I'd be able to fight them.

## NDIS ACCESS SUPPORT

34 clients were supported to compile evidence and submit applications to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Despite these efforts, only four clients were deemed eligible.

The most common reasons for ineligibility included:

- Insufficient evidence of a formal diagnosis
- Lack of documentation demonstrating consistent engagement with therapies over the past two years

Additional systemic barriers—such as extended wait times and the high cost of clinical assessments and therapies—further limited access to the NDIS. As a result, a growing cohort of individuals continued to require long-term support but did not meet eligibility criteria for the NDIS, CPSP, or other available programs.

## CARER GATEWAY

In partnership with Carers WA, HelpingMinds continued its role as the regional champion for Carer Gateway across the South West, Mid West, and Kimberley regions.

Through ongoing collaboration with local communities, the organisation worked to identify and support carers, ensuring they had access to essential services that promoted wellbeing, resilience, and connection.

**454**

Carer Gateway Plans completed

**33**

Carer Gateway Workshops

**317**

Hours of counselling support through Carer Gateway

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

I am grateful for the consistent support of [Case Worker], who followed up with me and provided information on resumes and career letters, along with practical information to improve my mental health. As a result I have now improved my mental health and got a new job. I am looking forward to a positive 2025.

# WA RECOVERY COLLEGE

The WA Recovery College continued to grow and strengthened its service delivery outcomes. The year saw the consolidation of internal operations, ongoing community engagement, and the development of strategic partnerships, all of which supported the College's goal of reaching more individuals—particularly those from marginalised populations—across Western Australia.

The College achieved strong service delivery results, including:

**27**

**Locations reached across Perth Metro, South West, Wheatbelt, Goldfields, and online**

**318**

**Group sessions delivered across 334 course units.  
(34% increase from the previous year)**

**84**

**course topics delivered by 71 Educators**

**2,900**

**student enrolments  
(23% increase from the previous year)**

# WA RECOVERY COLLEGE EDUCATOR COMMUNITY

The WA Recovery College experienced growth in its educator community, with:

- 7 Educator Foundation Programs (EFPs) delivered, including 6 public sessions across four regions (Perth, South West, Wheatbelt, and Goldfields) and 1 private EFP for partner organisations including Shelter WA, Soldiers & Sirens, and WACOSS Community Champions
- 165 EFP enrolments received, with 70 new or returning educators trained
- Since establishment, 276 students have completed the EFP, with 47 active Educators holding signed Service Level Agreements
- 84 individuals waitlisted for future EFPs as of 30 June 2025
- The EFP was re-developed into a hybrid model (in-person and online), now comprising 11 unique sessions to offer greater flexibility and accessibility for students

## ALTERNATIVES TO SUICIDE

- The WA Recovery College became the host and promoter of the Alternatives to Suicide (Alt2Su) program, running 47 weekly online sessions facilitated by three staff members, which attracted 112 total attendances.



## CLIENT FEEDBACK

WEAVE YOUR WORRIES AWAY, ROCKINGHAM

The value of the course to the people that attended - for some it was a reason to lift their depression or anxiety and come out and socialise and learn a new skill.

# RELATIONSHIPS

As an organisation, HelpingMinds recognises that the wellbeing of its team is fundamental to delivering high-quality services and fostering a resilient, values-led workplace. Over the past 12 months, HelpingMinds prioritised initiatives that supported the mental, emotional, and physical health of its workforce, acknowledging that a healthy team is key to long-term sustainability and impact.



A focus on team wellbeing through an annual wellness calendar led to stronger engagement and improved retention. By fostering a supportive, inclusive workplace, HelpingMinds encouraged personal and professional growth, enhancing performance, collaboration, innovation, and organisational outcomes. Throughout the year, the organisation implemented a range of wellbeing initiatives, including targeted workshops and recognition and appreciation programs, all designed to build a positive and connected workplace culture.

## CREATING WELCOMING SPACES FOR ALL

HelpingMinds joined the Welcome Here Project, further strengthening its commitment to fostering environments that are visibly welcoming and inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer communities. By participating in this national movement, the organisation took meaningful steps to ensure that everyone engaging with its services felt safe, respected, and valued.

**98**

**Team Members**

**90**

**Permanent  
(33 FTE & 36 PT)**

**598**

**Professional  
Development hours**

**8**

**Casual / Full time**

# VOLUNTEER FRAMEWORK

HelpingMinds developed its Volunteer Framework, marking an important milestone in creating a more inclusive, structured, and rewarding experience for volunteers. By aligning volunteer opportunities with the organisation's strategic goals, HelpingMinds established a strong foundation that not only supports its mission but also empowers individuals to make a meaningful impact. The organisation remains committed to expanding this initiative to engage a broader community and continue building a strong, dynamic volunteer workforce.



## YEARS OF SERVICE

**3+**   
Carla Robbins  
Caroline Shaw  
Jane Sullivan  
Kate Fitzsimons  
Kate Shackleton  
Kayla Brown  
Michelle Richardson  
Monique Craig  
Rebecca O'Brien  
Rebekah Faldon  
Stephanie Soulous  
Briarna Popis

**5+**   
Alexa Witney  
Tina Garces  
Lindsey Kenyon  
Lorraine Hastie  
Lorraine Sapet  
Paula Braimbridge  
Shaneen Steele  
Shani Alexander  
Sue Urquhart  
Teresa Fletcher

**10+**   
Anunda Merz  
Danielle Darragh  
Dawn Ryder  
Deborah Childs  
Glenda Marshall  
Jennifer Cramer  
Rie McAuliffe  
Sandra Baudach  
Trudi Baker-Flach

# MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

The Mental Health Promotion service focused on raising awareness about mental health, improving mental health literacy, reducing stigma, and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing within schools and the wider community.

This was achieved through a range of initiatives, including educational presentations, workshops, and community events.

HelpingMinds delivered mental health and wellbeing presentations across 90 schools in the Perth metropolitan area. A growing interest from primary schools prompted the service to adapt and tailor content to more effectively engage younger audiences.

This expansion enabled the team to meet children where they were—using age-appropriate language, relatable scenarios, and interactive tools to build emotional resilience and self-awareness early in life.

By fostering a safe and open space for conversations, the service contributed to laying the groundwork for long-term mental wellbeing in future generations.

**575**

Program Instances

**1839**

Hours of Educational Presentations, Workshops and Community Events



**CLIENT FEEDBACK**  
PARTICIPANT – HEALTH PROMOTION PRESENTATION

A big thank you for running such great workshops with our Year 12s today! It was so timely with their exams coming up, and you covered so many important topics and really practical strategies. I know the students took a lot away from it - and I did too! I'll definitely be reinforcing those key messages around resilience, helpful thinking styles, and coping strategies in my own work with them.

# EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- HelpingMinds partnered with Human Resources to deliver three presentations to South and North Metro TAFE Certificate IV in Mental Health students, focusing on the Psychosocial Support Worker role, the NDIS, and HelpingMinds' services.
- HelpingMinds actively participated in the TAFE/Mental Health Industry Reference Group, a collaborative network that addressed current training and workforce development needs within the mental health sector.

## SECTOR COLLABORATION

- HelpingMinds contributed to the COMHWA Collaborate 2 Connect Project Group, which co-designed tailored training and resources to enhance community participation among people with psychosocial disabilities. The project targeted community organisations, local governments, and businesses.

## COMMUNITY PRESENCE & OUTREACH

- HelpingMinds provided an information stall at the Able Plus NDIS Providers and Participants Networking Event in Rockingham, increasing awareness of HelpingMinds' services and building connections within the sector.
- HelpingMinds facilitated two Christmas Connection events for NDIS and CPS participants across the North and South metropolitan regions, offering an inclusive opportunity to celebrate the festive season.



# WA RECOVERY COLLEGE COURSES

The College remained committed to engaging with marginalised communities through flexible and inclusive learning formats. This was reflected in the delivery of pop-up courses in a variety of community settings.

These initiatives aimed to meet people where they were—geographically and emotionally—breaking down barriers to participation and enhancing accessibility to recovery-focused education.

## Alliance Partner Populations

AODCCC · Holyoake · Luma · Richmind WA

## AOD Services

Beela Valley Therapeutic Community · Fresh Start

## CaLD / Aged Care

Chung Wah Association

## Community Resource Centres & Other Community-Based Regional

Hopetoun Community Resource Centre · Mary Davies Library · Rockingham Library · Safety Bay Library · Serpentine Jarrahdale Community Resource Centre · Warnbro Library

## Employment & Financial Services

APM Employment Services · ESCARE

## Justice

Bunbury Regional Prison · Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison · Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison

## Mental Health Support Services

Collie Family Centre · MIFWA · Neami National · Purple Space Women's Support Group

## Youth

The Base@Belmont

# EVENTS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The College maintained strong engagement with the broader community through a variety of activities:

- 1.2K page likes and 1.5K followers on social media as of June 2025 – reaching the 1K milestone during this period
- Multiple presentations delivered and attendance at employment, community, and sector-specific events
- Media coverage including interviews featured in local newspapers and radio programs
- Ongoing support from Alliance Partners through promotion, venue provision, and involvement in College development



## CLIENT FEEDBACK

WARCA EDUCATOR FOUNDATION PROGRAM, BUNBURY

I have attended several Recovery College courses and I really value the diverse topics, locations and facilitators. It is also wonderful to learn from other participants via discussion and sharing our experiences. It is significant in my recovery and also the caring role I have for a member of my family.

# TELETHON PARTNERSHIP

HelpingMinds was named a Telethon beneficiary for the 2025 year. Through the support of the Western Australian community, Telethon funded two programs aimed at promoting mental health and wellbeing among disadvantaged young people.

## YoungMinds Artful Journeys:

Exploring Mental Health Through Creativity engaged disadvantaged youth in rural areas to explore the role of art in building emotional resilience. Combining mental health education with creative expression, the program provided a safe and supportive environment to enhance mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. Several workshops were delivered in Broome in collaboration with Aisha's Art and local schools.

## YoungMinds Dance Connection:

This program supported vulnerable and disadvantaged young people experiencing mental health challenges by incorporating principles of dance movement therapy into educational workshops. The sessions explored physical, cultural, emotional, and social aspects of health, enabling participants to enjoy dance, express themselves creatively, relieve stress, and build resilience. The program was delivered during school holidays across the Perth metropolitan area, as well as in Broome and Geraldton.

At the halfway point of delivery:

- Artful Journeys – 2 programs delivered, reaching 20 participants.
- Dance Connection – 7 programs delivered, reaching 46 participants.



**CLIENT FEEDBACK  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

It was good with taking control of my feelings and getting to know each other

It was good. A few things I might teach to my brother. Like he's loud. I learnt how to quieten down and shush my mouth

We did some butterfly breathing and (\*flied) like butterflies



## FUEL, FOCUS & CONNECT WELLBEING BRUNCH

Thanks to a donation from Red Dot customers, HelpingMinds hosted a brunch for carers, community members, and sector professionals at the picturesque Burswood on Swan.

The event celebrated connection, creativity, and care, featuring a series of wellbeing activities designed to nurture the mind, body, and spirit. Guests enjoyed a program that included shared food, collaborative experiences, expressive dance, art, and the use of essential oils.



## PARTNERSHIP WITH WESTERN POWER

HelpingMinds partnered with Western Power to deliver a series of 40 mental health and wellbeing presentations across Western Australia, reaching more than 1,400 employees. This initiative marked a significant step forward in workplace mental health education, normalising conversations about mental health, encouraging self-awareness, and promoting self-care strategies.

The sessions focused on reducing stigma, fostering resilience, and creating safe spaces where individuals feel empowered to seek help.

## WARCA ALLIANCE PARTNERS

The WA Recovery College acknowledged and appreciated the continued support of its Alliance Partners, whose collaboration was instrumental in raising awareness of the College and ensuring that course content reflected the diverse needs of local communities. Given the vast geographical size of Western Australia, in-kind contributions—including co-facilitation, promotional support, and venue access—enabled the College to expand its reach, particularly in rural and regional areas.



# SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



The HelpingMinds Marketing and Communications team expanded the organisation's reach, engagement, and brand impact through targeted campaigns, high-quality creative content, and resource development.

The team promoted an average of 50 workshops per month on the Eventbrite platform.

Google AdWords campaigns delivered record results, with click value increasing from \$1,222 to \$19,988, supported by the adoption of Google's Performance Max model, which enabled broader ad placement.

Newsletters and EDMs achieved above-industry open rates, with the Minds Matter eBook driving new subscriptions. The team also produced a series of real-life stories featuring carers and staff, and developed internal training animations, including modules on SharePoint use.

Key projects included the launch of the Carers Resource Library on behalf of Mental Health Carers Australia, the redesign of brochures, the production of welcome packs, and contributions to the design of the new SharePoint platform.

The WA Recovery College Alliance (WARCA) website was redesigned to improve information accessibility, encourage community engagement, and support course attendance through regular updates and reminders. The WARCA Educator Intranet was also developed—a centralised online platform for educator resources, training materials, and streamlined communication.

The team expanded its fundraising presence by joining platforms such as Giving Machine, Grill'd, and Containers for Change.

Marketing also supported key strategic priorities, including the launch of the Strategic Plan, ongoing brand review initiatives, and preparations for the organisation's 50th anniversary in 2026.

Collectively, these initiatives strengthened HelpingMinds' public profile, improved access to services, and deepened community engagement.

# ONLINE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

The organisation's website, social media platforms, YouTube channel, and Mailchimp campaigns worked together throughout the year to strengthen engagement with its community. The website remained a central hub for information, resources, and updates.

YouTube evolved into a key platform for sharing stories and showcasing impact in dynamic, accessible ways, while Mailchimp newsletters kept audiences informed and connected.

\*Notably, while average engagement rates for not-for-profit organisations are approximately 0.046% on Facebook and 0.56% on Instagram, the organisation's combined engagement across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn reached 7.16%, demonstrating the strength of its digital connection with stakeholders.

**53,303**

Website visitors from Australia

**5,704**

Mailchimp Subscribers

**1,933**

Followers on Eventbrite

**24,814**

Views on YouTube

**7.16%\***

Average engagement rate across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn



# INNOVATION

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

HelpingMinds strengthened its commitment to quality, safety, and risk management across all areas of the organisation. A total of 154 quality improvements were implemented, reflecting a proactive approach to continuous improvement and operational excellence.

These enhancements spanned governance, incident management, psychological wellbeing, and compliance frameworks. The organisation made significant progress in embedding a safety culture, refining risk processes, and aligning with relevant national standards.

This ongoing investment in quality strengthened internal systems and ensured HelpingMinds remained a trusted, high-performing organisation capable of delivering impactful, values-led services.

## DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

As an organisation, HelpingMinds made significant progress in modernising its digital infrastructure to support a more agile, secure, and collaborative working environment. A key milestone was the successful migration from a traditional file server to a fully cloud-based system using Microsoft SharePoint. This transition streamlined document management, enabling real-time access, version control, and seamless collaboration across teams and locations throughout Western Australia. It also strengthened data security, improved disaster recovery capabilities, and reduced reliance on physical infrastructure—aligning with the organisation's broader digital transformation strategy and enhancing its ability to serve the community efficiently.

In addition, all Windows 10 devices were upgraded to Windows 11 ahead of the operating system's end-of-life. This upgrade delivered enhanced security features, improved performance, and a modern user experience, ensuring HelpingMinds remained compliant with current technology standards.

To further bolster network security and simplify administration across multiple sites, the organisation standardised its network equipment by replacing WatchGuard routers with Fortinet devices. This change supported a consistent and robust security framework across the organisation.

# AIM WA COMMUNITY TRAINING GRANT

HelpingMinds was awarded an AIM WA Community Training Grant, supporting the professional development of its Individualised Services frontline leaders in key areas of leadership. Ongoing training remains vital to maintaining high-quality, person-centred services. This grant enables the organisation to invest in staff development, enhance service delivery, and build a more resilient and skilled workforce –ultimately leading to better outcomes for the communities it supports.

## DANCE CONNECTION

HelpingMinds delivered a poster presentation at the 2025 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Conference sharing the success of our new innovative Dance Connection program. The conference, held annually, features expert speakers, practical workshops and provides networking opportunities to share strategies, programs, research and insights on child and youth mental health and wellbeing.

Dance Connection, is a strengths-based early intervention program which explores physical, cultural, emotional and social elements of health, allowing children and young people to experience the joy of dance, be creative, relieve stress and build resilience.

For the past 12 months, HelpingMinds has been delivering Dance Connection and Mind Dance workshops for children and young people both in the community and within schools. The program has received positive feedback and outcomes for participants with overall program outcomes aiming to;

- Improve mental health literacy and overall wellbeing
- Expand movements vocabulary and improve physical wellbeing and
- Increase protective and help seeking behaviours.



# ADVOCACY

## SUICIDE PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

HelpingMinds facilitated four targeted consultations with carers, family members, friends, and educators to gather insights that informed the development of the Suicide Prevention Framework 2025-2030. In addition, community members were invited to contribute through an online survey.

Feedback from participating mental health carers consistently highlighted the need for tailored support services to address their specific challenges. A comprehensive report outlining key findings and recommendations was submitted to the Mental Health Commission.

## MENTAL HEALTH CARERS, FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS

HelpingMinds continued to lead advocacy for mental health carers, families and individuals unable to access the supports they need, particularly those ineligible for NDIS-funded services. Throughout the year, we highlighted the widening service gap for people experiencing psychosocial distress without funded packages and reinforced the essential role of mental health carers in supporting them. Through formal submissions, sector collaboration and direct engagement with government and peak bodies, HelpingMinds advocated for a more inclusive, coordinated and responsive mental health system that recognises and supports the unique needs of mental health carers and the people they care for.

A key achievement during this period was HelpingMinds' active involvement in the first funded year of Mental Health Carers Australia (MHCA). As a founding member, we contributed to shaping MHCA's national advocacy agenda to ensure the voices of mental health carers were represented at the highest levels of policy and reform. This included input into national submissions, participation in strategic planning and support for the development of a unified national voice for mental health carers. The establishment of MHCA as a funded entity represents a significant step forward in recognising the critical contribution of mental health carers across Australia.



## IN THE MEDIA

Throughout the year, our HelpingMinds Chief Executive Officer contributed a series of opinion pieces to The West Australian, establishing a strong public presence on key mental health issues. These articles explored topics ranging from the impact of everyday community attitudes and behaviours on mental health to broader systemic challenges requiring urgent reform. Through this ongoing commentary, our CEO has become a recognised and trusted voice in the public conversation, supporting HelpingMinds' role as a leading advocate for mental health carers, families and individuals.

## Social ban will only push kids' internet use into the darkness

**DEBBIE  
CHILDS**



When my daughter turned 21, she shared something with me that left me speechless: throughout her teenage years, she had managed to secretly drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes. Despite the strict age limits on these substances, she found ways around them.

I was lucky. She survived those risky years and felt safe enough to tell me eventually, but what if she hadn't?

Her experience reminds me that while alcohol and cigarettes are prohibited for young people, those prohibitions don't always stop them from engaging in risky behaviours.

Teenagers are resourceful. And if we think imposing an age limit on social media will keep them off these platforms,

we're fooling ourselves. The reality is, if they want to be online, they'll find a way, even if it means hiding it from us. This is dangerous.

It's easy for parents to say, "It's illegal, so you can't use social media," but that won't stop determined teenagers. They'll find workarounds, just like my daughter did with alcohol and cigarettes.

And when they start hiding their online behaviour, it opens the door to risks — risks we won't even see until it's too late.

The Government's proposed legislation to impose an age limit on social media access feels like a 20th-century solution to a 21st-century problem. Many parents might welcome the idea, relieved to have a law on their side when telling their kids no.

But we have to ask ourselves — will it actually work?

Or will it drive teenagers underground, making their online habits harder to monitor

and even more dangerous? History tells us the latter is far more likely.

It's worth remembering that age limits didn't stop my daughter from experimenting with alcohol and cigarettes. It did not stop her friends either. These laws may have given us a sense of control, but they did not stop risky behaviour — they just pushed it into the shadows. The same will happen with social media if we rely solely on restrictions. And once secrecy sets in, trust is eroded, leaving teenagers navigating the internet on their own, without the support they need from parents and trusted adults.

This brings us to a bigger issue: what is the role of government in all this? Shouldn't we be focusing on creating systems that support young people's mental health rather than policing which apps they can use? Legislation might give the illusion of control, but

it does not solve the real problem. When trust between parents and their kids breaks down, teenagers are more likely to suffer from anxiety, loneliness, and depression. Secrecy and isolation are fertile ground for poor mental health, and if we are not careful, that's exactly what we're cultivating by pushing social media use into the dark corners of teenagers' lives.

Governments and parents who believe age limits are the solution are missing the point. We need a forward-thinking approach that doesn't just rely on prohibition.

We need to build trust with our kids, encourage open conversations about social media, and give them the tools to navigate it safely. Schools could play a vital role by teaching digital literacy — not just the dangers of social media, but how to use it in positive, constructive ways.

Rather than relying on

legislation, the real work needs to happen in our homes, our schools and our communities. We need to create an environment where young people feel comfortable talking about their online experiences, both good and bad, without fear of punishment or judgment.

If they can trust us, they'll turn to us when they need help. If they can't, they'll handle their struggles alone, and that's when the real danger begins.

Social media isn't going anywhere, and simply banning it by age won't stop kids from using it.

What we need is a balanced, thoughtful approach that prioritises mental wellbeing by encouraging open dialogue and trust — not secrecy and fear. Because while legislation might seem like an easy fix, it won't protect our kids. Only we as parents can do that.

**Debbie Childs is CEO of HelpingMinds**

## Ugly parent syndrome ruining kids' relationship with sport

**DEBORAH  
CHILDS**



With the Olympic Games still fresh in our minds, we're left with the inspiration and exhilaration that only such a global sporting event can provide.

The stories of athletes pushing their limits, achieving their dreams, and representing their countries with pride remind us of the value of sport in our lives.

Sport is more than entertainment; it's a celebration of human potential and a vital component of physical and mental wellbeing. This enthusiasm extends beyond our television screens and into our daily lives as we encourage our children to participate in sports, hoping they too will experience the benefits of teamwork, discipline, and the joy of competition.

Yet, alongside the positives, there exists an increasingly concerning trend that threatens to undermine the very essence of sport. It's called Ugly Parent Syndrome, and this

phenomenon is characterised by parents who exhibit poor behaviour at their children's sporting events. And it's not just a minor irritant; it's a serious issue with far-reaching consequences for both the children involved and society as a whole.

Anyone who's attended a youth sporting event has likely witnessed it: the parent who yells at the referee, argues with coaches, or even berates their own child for a perceived lack of effort. In fact, a recent study by University of South Australia found 70 per cent of junior athletes had witnessed negative behaviour from the sidelines. These behaviours are not only embarrassing but can also be damaging to the children they're intended to support. Children are sensitive to the actions and emotions of their parents, and when those actions include anger, aggression, or unrealistic expectations, the results can be detrimental to their mental health.

The question we must ask ourselves is, what impact is this having on our next generation? The answer, unfortunately, is not a positive one. Children who are exposed to such

behaviour may experience increased anxiety, a diminished love for the sport, and, in some cases, long-term issues with self-esteem. The UniSA study confirmed that parents who were overly critical, second-guessed referees, or became abusive, had a higher chance of seeing antisocial behaviours in their child. Moreover, these children may internalise the idea that success is tied to aggression and that failure is something to be met with anger or shame rather than as an opportunity for growth.

In some cases, these behaviours spill over into other aspects of life.

For example, in a sailing club where I've personally witnessed this syndrome, misogynistic and bullying behaviours are displayed by parents in some misguided belief they are helping their child. These actions set a terrible example for children, who may come to see such conduct as acceptable or even necessary for success.

At footy matches, parents screaming at the referee or berating their child from the sidelines contributes to a toxic environment that's far removed

from the ideals of sportsmanship and fair play that sports are supposed to teach.

There's also the troubling possibility that a parent's belligerent behaviour might also occur in private. Children growing up in such environments are at risk of repeating these patterns in their own relationships, perpetuating a cycle of aggression and bullying.

So how do we address this issue? The first step is awareness. Parents need to recognise when their behaviour crosses the line from supportive to destructive. Sports clubs and organisations must take a stand, implementing codes of conduct that clearly outline acceptable behaviour and the consequences for violating these standards.

Education is key. Just like being educated on the risks of getting behind the wheel before sitting a driving test, parents need to be provided with resources and workshops that help them understand the psychological impact their actions have on their children before they do real damage to the next generation.

It's also important to foster a

culture of positive reinforcement, where the focus is on effort, enjoyment, and personal growth rather than solely on winning. Encouraging parents to cheer for all participants, respect the officials, and model good sportsmanship can go a long way in creating a healthy environment for young athletes.

Finally, as a society, we need to reflect on what we truly value in sports and in life. Are we prioritising our children's well-being, or are we more concerned with winning and reliving our own dreams through them?

The next time you find yourself at a youth sporting event, take a moment to observe the behaviour around you.

If you see something troubling, consider how you might intervene, whether by setting a positive example or by having a conversation with the offending parent. The future of not only our children but our healthy communities — and our relationship with sport — depends on it.

**Deborah Childs is the CEO of HelpingMinds**

## WEEKLY BLOGS

HelpingMinds launched Sunday Self-Care Reflections, a weekly online blog authored by CEO Debbie Childs. Evolving from our earlier Self-Care Sunday tips on social media, the series provides thoughtful reflections on mindfulness, balance and wellbeing, with a focus on practical strategies to support mental health for carers, families, leaders and the wider community. Through this ongoing initiative, HelpingMinds continues to promote proactive self-care, resilience and intentional living as integral components of mental health and wellbeing.

- [Celebrating Small Wins Blog](#)
- [The Joy of Disconnection Blog](#)

## RADIO INTERVIEWS

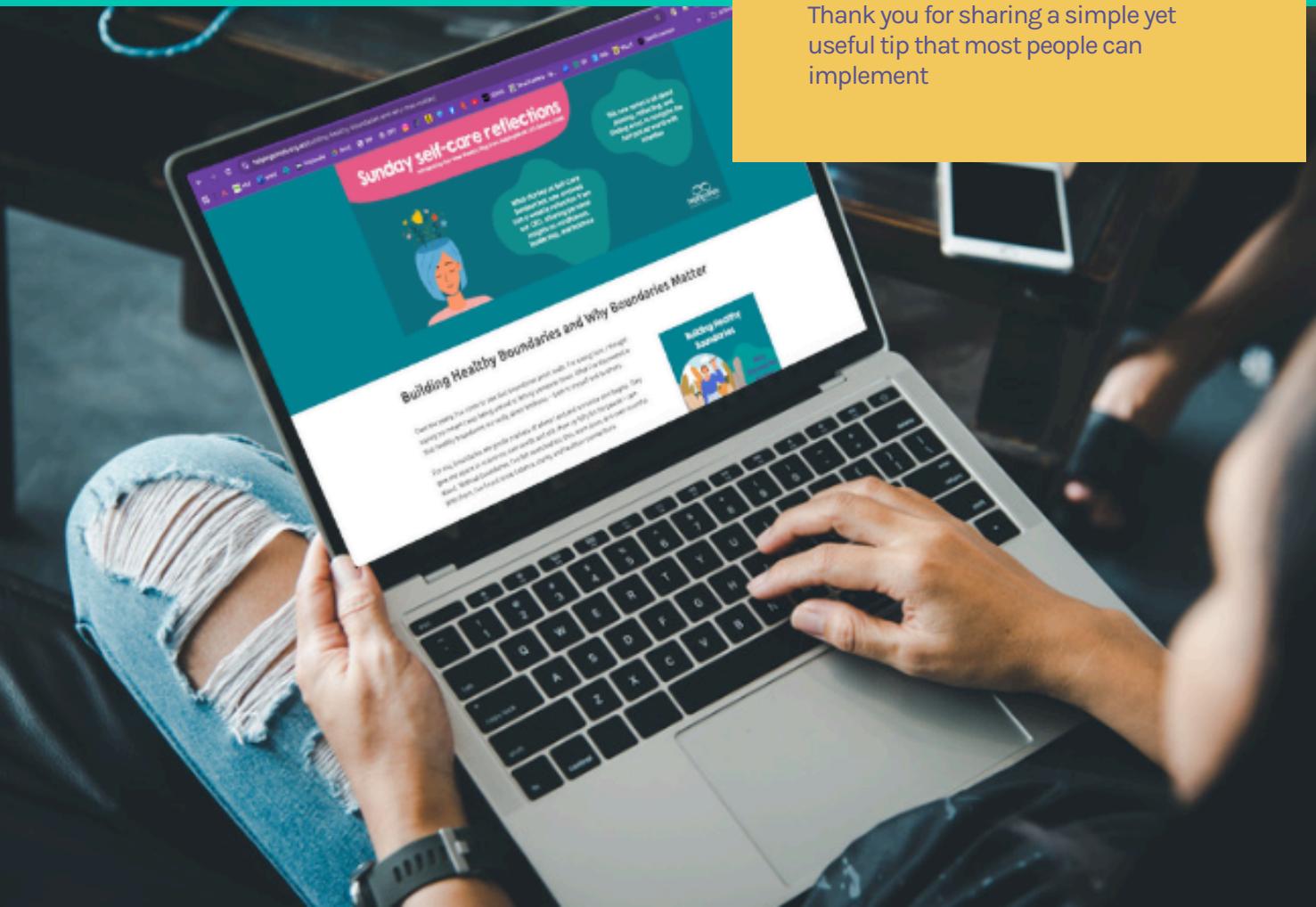
The wide variety of topics covered in the weekly blogs quickly captured the attention of broadcasters, leading to numerous radio interview requests for Debbie, who was recognised as an engaging and insightful voice on the issues that matter most to their audiences.

- [Decluttering Link](#)
- [Sandwich Generation Link](#)

## FOLLOWER FEEDBACK

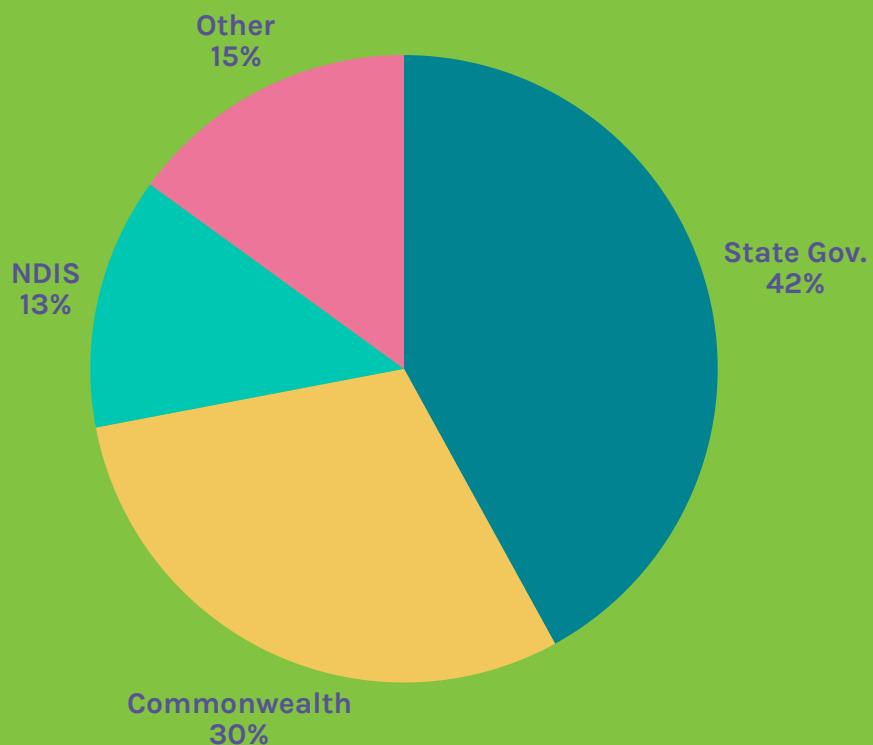
I love reading these every Sunday – they always hit home.

Thank you for sharing a simple yet useful tip that most people can implement

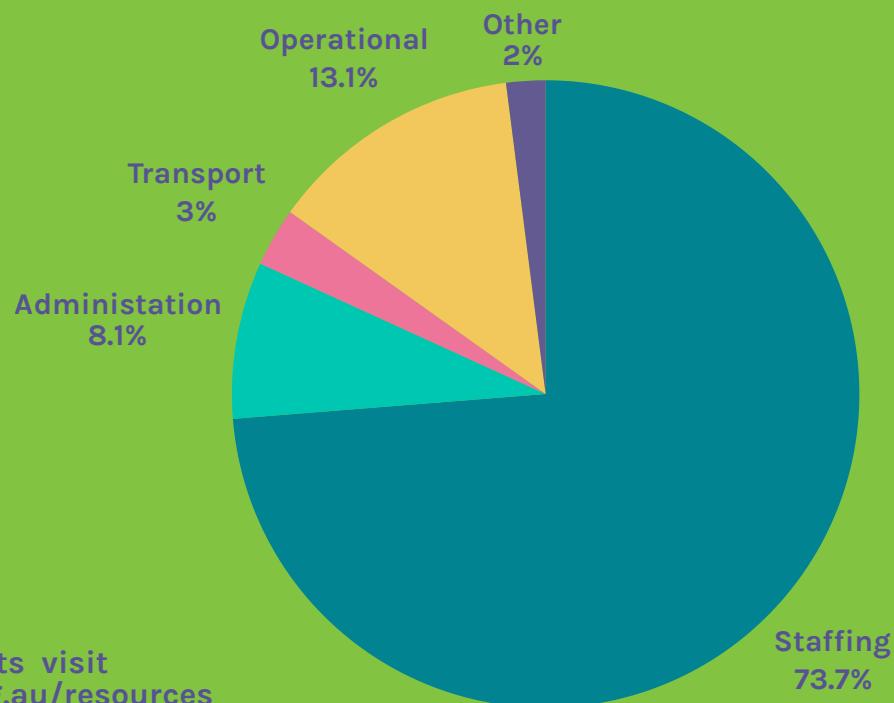


# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**INCOME**  
**\$10,683,330**



**EXPENSES**  
**\$10,389,524**



For full financial reports visit  
[www.helpingminds.org.au/resources](http://www.helpingminds.org.au/resources)

# THANK YOU



Government of **Western Australia**  
Mental Health Commission



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services



**WAPHA**  
WA Primary Health Alliance

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A special thank you to our funders and donors for making our work possible:

- Western Australian Mental Health Commission
- Australian Government Department for Social Services
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- WA Primary Health Alliance
- Telethon
- Red Dot

Thank you to our HelpingMinds' team members, interns, volunteers and Board for their hard work, dedication and commitment to our organisation, and for demonstrating our values of respect, trust, collaboration, hope and integrity.

We thank our clients for their valued feedback, assisting us to make our services relevant and engaging. Without you, we wouldn't be able to do what we do, each and every day.

Thank you to all our community stakeholders for their time and collaboration.

Thank you to our sponsors, donors and supporters who have organised fundraising events on our behalf.

## **Head Office**

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## **Other Locations**

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