



Youth
Services



National Agenda
2024 - 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Salvation Army acknowledges the First Nations peoples of Australia as the traditional custodians of this land.

We further acknowledge and pay our respects to past and present Elders, giving thanks for their wisdom that has sustained their people since the beginning of time, and we pledge to support emerging and future generations.

Commitment to Reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is to be a faith movement committed to equity, freedom and the righting of injustice.

We aim to respect, value and acknowledge the unique cultures, spiritualities, histories and languages of the oldest surviving culture in the world, and to engage in a unified and positive relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.

Youth Services are committed to delivering The Salvation Army's National Reconciliation Plan.

Our Commitment to Inclusion

The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders past, present and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and intersex status.

We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.



Artwork guided by a team of Salvation Army personnel under the leadership of Shirli Congoo and realised by artists Sue Hodges, Tanita Paige, Emma Park and Terrence Whyte in the spirit of collaboration and reconciliation.



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The Salvation Army

OUR MISSION

The Salvation Army Australia is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus. We share the love of Jesus by:

- » **Creating faith pathways**
- » **Building healthy communities**
- » **Working for justice**
- » **Caring for people**

OUR VISION

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time, with the love of Jesus.

OUR VALUES

Recognising that God is already at work in the world, we value:

- » **Integrity**
- » **Compassion**
- » **Respect**
- » **Diversity and**
- » **Collaboration**

We commit ourselves in prayer and practice to this land of Australia and its people, seeking reconciliation, unity and equity.

Introduction

Youth Services National Agenda 2024-2026 provides a roadmap that will guide us over the next three years towards our shared goals and aspirations. It represents a combination of research, collaboration, and strategic thinking to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

The national agenda highlights our collective commitment to supporting staff, young people, and the sector. It has been designed following national workshops and consultations with State Managers and Program Managers from across Youth Services.

As we begin this journey together, we are excited to deliver on the strategies outlined in this document, and drive meaningful change for young people, our stream, our organisation and the sector.



Our Achievements

Over the last three years, TSA Youth Services have been on an incredible journey of consolidation, development and innovation. Our National Agenda 2021 - 2023, saw us successfully achieve numerous key initiatives, whilst gaining valuable insights and learnings that will serve as a foundation for this national agenda. Our achievements and learnings stand as a testament to all staff, their creativity and unwavering commitment to young people.

Key achievements include:

Increasing national consistency and focus through the development and implementation of Journey to Independence, outcomes measurement framework, and the establishment of a range of practice manuals and supporting documents.

Strengthening governance across the stream through implementation of effective systems, processes, and structures that promote transparency, accountability and improved decision making.

Leading, alongside a range of other youth agencies, in the development and design of a Youth Housing Model, which has garnered strong interest with both State and Commonwealth Governments.

Advocacy within Victorian government for investment in youth specific housing. This led to an allocation of \$50 million dollars, resulting in the development of four new townhouses in the Frankston Peninsula area as well as many others across the youth sector.

National expansion of the Drive for Life program which supports vulnerable young people to gain independence through attaining their driver's license, increasing opportunities to fulfil education, employment and housing goals.

Collaborated with industry leaders to deliver the National Child and Youth Homelessness Conference, calling for a standalone Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

Innovative partnerships with Corps and Division to increase youth housing programs

Expansion of Youth AOD counselling programs, particularly our reach into regional areas

Successful funding applications and partnerships to develop new youth housing models and builds. This has provided over 40 longer term accommodation options for young people

Establishing youth specialist providers in the Northern Territory in partnership with Family Violence Steam

Engagement in Home Stretch campaign, advocating for the extension of the age young people leave care from 18 to 21 years. This resulted in successfully becoming a provider of Home Stretch across Perth metro.



Our Learnings

Whilst significant sector reforms across areas of the youth sector, have presented our teams and services with challenges, reforms have also provided us a platform to gain valuable insights that have paved the way for new and innovative service models, collaborative partnerships, and a focus on continuous improvement.

The importance of understanding and monitoring the external environment for presenting and emerging trends and opportunities.

The need for improved agility and adaptability to respond to emerging opportunities. Our new agenda aims to foster a culture that encourages experimentation and embraces change to enhance our ability to quickly adapt to emerging needs and local opportunities.

The importance of strengthening the socialisation and ownership of our strategic agenda across the stream. We are committed to implementing robust mechanisms that allow for shared strategic direction and outcomes

Whilst we acknowledge that we have made progress in fostering inclusivity, we know that we need to continue to strengthen our efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity across aspects of the stream.

Recognising that we are not the experts in all spaces, we have learnt that we need to leverage the strengths and expertise of others through enhanced partnerships. By working together, we can embrace the strengths and contributions of others and achieve greater change for young people and the community.

We have learnt that change can be challenging, and that we need to be responsive and open to adjusting our plans and strategies based on evolving circumstances.

Whilst we have made significant data improvements, we identify the importance of intentional, consistent, quality national data and the utilisation of data to gain valuable insights, drive decision making and promote quality improvements.

The Challenge

The challenges facing young people today are vast and complex. Our society still has systems, structures and attitudes that inherently create inequality in terms of privilege, access to resources and experiences of community, and this experience can be further exacerbated by intersectionality. We know that young people who have experienced trauma, poor mental health or homelessness, are more likely to disengage from education, training and employment, and are at an increased risk of drug and alcohol misuse, family breakdown, violence and involvement in the criminal justice system. Despite all of this, young people are incredibly resilient and have the potential to overcome anything with the right resources and support systems in place.

What the data tells us...

Housing and Homelessness



- 40,000 unaccompanied children and young people have nowhere to live
- 12,000+ are First Nations children and young people
- 10,000 are children aged 15-17 years old
- The main drivers of youth homelessness are family breakdown, experiences of Out of Home Care, low incomes and lack of affordable housing

Sources: AIHW, specialists homelessness services (21/22).

Health and Wellbeing



- 40% of 16-24 year olds reported experiencing a mental health disorder between 2020 and 2023
- 10,000 are children aged 15-17 years old
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for young people.
- 30% of young people drink alcohol at levels that put them at risk of harm and 1 in 4 young people engage in illicit use of drugs

Source: AIHW, Youth mental health

Education, Training and Employment



- 1 in 5 young Australians leave school early
- Early school leavers are more likely to experience disadvantage linked to unemployment, social exclusion, poverty and poor health outcomes compared to those who finish year 12.
- Youth unemployment sits over 9.6% and significantly higher in many regional areas.

Source: AIHW, engagement in education & employment, ABS data

Youth Justice



- On an average night, 900 young people are in youth detention
- 81% are aged 14-17 years old
- More than half are First Nations young people
- A further 8000+ young people are on some form of supervised order in the community

Source: AIHW, Youth Justice in Australia (21/22)

Our Offering

1 An Integrated Approach

TSA Youth Services offer an innovative and integrated approach to addressing the interconnected issues of homelessness, early school leaving, youth crime, unemployment and alcohol and other drug misuse. By offering integrated services that target different aspects of young peoples lives, we create a seamless and effective support system that assists young people to overcome these challenges and reach their full potential.

- Fair and equitable access to a broad range of housing responses for young people along the continuum from crisis to independence and ensuring support for the duration of each young persons need.
- Flexible, safe and welcoming spaces for young people to re-engage with learning and to pursue their educational, training and vocational goals.
- A range of therapeutic services, including access to mental health clinicians and AOD practitioners, providing comprehensive support and resources to promote health and well-being .
- Pathways to avoid further progression into the youth justice system and support to address the underlying reasons for offending.
- Internal and external partnerships that offer a network of support that address the diverse challenges and needs of young people.

Our integrated approach equips young people with the tools and resources they need to break the cycle of homelessness, poverty, and disadvantage, as well as 'turning off the tap' and delivering long-term solutions that will reduce the demand for services as young people transition to adulthood.

2 Underpinned by our Model of Care

Age and developmentally appropriate services that consider young peoples developmental needs, providing stability, safety, and guidance.

A psychosocial model that places young people's experiences, psychological and emotional needs, and their surrounding social environments and systems at the heart of everything we do.

A range of family focused practice initiative, based upon the belief that the best way to meet a person's needs is within their families and that the most effective way to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being is to provide services that engage, involve, strengthen, and support families.

A participatory approach, that equips and empowers young people to drive innovation and change in the services they receive.

Systems that ensure young people receive a response that is tailored and considers their unique experiences.



The Mission Ahead

2023–2025 Strategy

▶ The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by...



MISSION

WE ARE HERE

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

OUR VALUES

What to pack?

- Integrity
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Diversity

We commit ourselves in prayer and practice to this land of Australia and its people, seeking reconciliation, unity and equality.

Moving ahead consider **FOCUS-4**

VISION

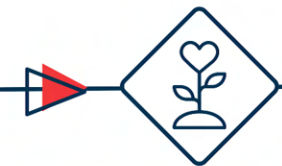
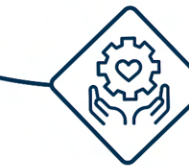
▶ Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live love and fight, alongside others, to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Embracing technology

How can we embrace technology to help more people?

Building innovative ministry leadership

What part do we play in building innovative ministry leadership?



Supporting those who need it most

What can we do to support the most disadvantaged?

Growing Christian faith pathways

How will we create a doorway to hope and a pathway to Christian faith?

The Agenda



TSA Youth Services have identified **five strategic priority areas** (the 5P's), which serve as the foundations for our National Agenda.

These priority areas are supported by **strategic objectives and key initiatives** that will guide our actions.



People



Participation



Practice



Partnerships



Performance

Our agenda aligns the refreshed strategy, known as Focus-4, with Youth Services objectives and key initiatives. Collectively working together to deliver and achieve our organisational mission and vision

The Salvation Army Focus-4 prioritise:



Supporting those who need it most

Growing Christian faith pathways

Building innovative ministry leadership

Embracing technology

The above icons will be used to link our national agendas strategic priority areas with the Focus-4



People

*Investing in our workforce will create an environment where staff feel valued, supported, and understood.
Fostering a culture that promotes understanding, empowerment and well-being for all.*

1

A safe and inclusive workforce culture.

- Annual culture workshops embedded
- Culture resources developed that support services to manage, monitor and enhance culture
- Intentional focus on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Initiatives embedded that celebrate excellence and achievements

2

Advancing leadership skills and capabilities.

- Leadership development plans and initiatives
- Comprehensive succession planning
- Build leadership capacity to further strengthen safeguarding practices
- Communities of Practice
- Establish peer leadership networks and supports
- Systems established and embedded to assist leaders

3

Developing staff skills, capabilities and competencies.

- Comprehensive plan developed that responds to skills required across the stream, staff, services and locations
- Robust induction programs embedded
- National health and wellbeing plan developed and embedded
- Student placement program developed
- Refreshed focus on Accountability Framework

4

Enhancing internal collaboration, sharing skills and expertise.

- Establish effective stream communication platforms
- Renewed engagement in Local Mission Delivery (LMD) and outcomes
- Targeted cross stream initiatives and collaborations
- National collaboration with Youth and Young Adults Ministry team
- Identify opportunities to engage youth focused Chaplains to support work with young people



Intended Impact

-  A workforce that is values-driven and inspires creativity, innovation and accountability.
-  Staff have the skills and capabilities required to meet current and future needs of young people.
-  Our leaders drive future service delivery, innovation and engagement.
-  Internal partnerships, drive innovation, and improve quality of services.

Participation

Contributing to young people's psychological well-being, participation promotes belonging, ownership, and purpose. It is also critical to learning, evaluating performance, creating change and plays an essential role in the development and delivery of quality services.



1

Promote mechanisms that ensure young people actively shape the services they receive

- Embed LEAP Framework
- Resource development to support LEAP implementation
- Safeguarding resources and practices embedded in all participatory activities
- Identify opportunities to learn from quality practices internally and externally
- Strengthened relationships with youth advocacy agencies

2

Lived experience informs practice, service delivery and service review

- Develop a national plan for Lived Experience roles
- Development and implementation of youth advisory groups
- Creation of employed Lived Experience roles across the stream

3

Advocate for meaningful change that delivers a strong voice to the issues, needs and achievements of young people

- Intentional and active participation in media and social media
- Increased visibility of Youth Services leaders at conferences and sector events
- Provide platforms, resources and opportunities for young people's voices to be heard by individuals in positions of power
- Increased submissions to government

4

Cultivate an environment that promotes the social and economic participation of young people.

- Targeted work experience and social enterprise opportunities
- Increased and diverse opportunities for community participation
- Increased opportunities for young people to connect with faith pathways through community connection
- Engagement in private sector partnerships that promote participation



Intended Impact

-  Young people's voice is heard and valued.
-  Services are responsive, tailored and effective
-  Young people have a more equitable future with opportunities to succeed and contribute to society.
-  Fostering a more inclusive and responsive society.
-  Enhanced understanding of the perspective of young people amongst policy and decision makers.



Practice

Practice underpinned by a psychological framework encourages the use of evidenced based practices and interventions that are rooted in psychological research, ensuring young people receive the most effective support.



Deliver quality evidence based practice

- Embed reflective practice in all aspects of our work
- Implementation of Communities of Practice aligned to Journey to Independence.
- Development of national service models for all service delivery types
- Further embed safeguarding practices, processes and resources



Embed family-focused practice that actively engages families in our work with young people.

- Develop and implement a Family Inclusive Practice manual
- Develop and deliver training and a range of supporting tools
- Establish strategic partnerships with specialist family service providers, leveraging their expertise and resources.
- Increased range of family focused practice initiatives



Develop and embed a Youth Domestic and Family Violence Framework

- Partner with TSA's Family Violence stream to develop a targeted response to young people in the context of family and adolescent violence
- Develop and implement a comprehensive school based prevention program
- Develop and implement an adolescent behaviour change program






Organisational frameworks, models and procedures are embedded in practice

- Develop, implement and embed a Spirituality Framework
- Develop a range of tools and resources to enhance implementation
- Embed established frameworks and models
- Establish a process of review for Youth Services models and practice manuals
- Implement an improved quality monitoring system



Intended Impact

-  Our practice holistically meets the needs of young people and delivers optimal outcomes.
-  Families are meaningful involved in our work with young people, increasing support networks, and promoting reunification outcomes.
-  Contribute to the reduction and prevention of incidents of violence and promote positive behavioural change that creates safer environments for all

Partnerships

Sector engagement facilitates innovative learning environments by bringing together cross sector partners in dynamic partnerships. These partnerships also create spaces for opportunity for young people to access the resources and supports they need, supporting both empowerment and connection.



1

Foster and strengthen relationships with the sector

- Intentional engagement and collaboration within youth sector and relevant peak bodies
- Increased engagement in sector meetings and events across the country
- Identification of required key state and national partnerships that will drive sector change, reform and advocacy

2

Cultivate collaborative relationships with service delivery partners

- Establish and foster partnerships that actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Strengthen and expand strategic partnerships that collectively enhance safeguarding practices
- Cultivate a diverse network of partnerships that are tailored to meet the holistic needs of young people

3

Empower leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in partnership management

- Develop tools to support leaders in strategically assessing and responding to local partnership needs
- Partnership review framework developed and implemented to ensure outcomes are being achieved
- Training delivered to leaders on developing and nurturing partnerships

4

Intentional focus on partnering with for-profit and philanthropic to maximise our collective impact

- Engage corporate sponsorships and strategic partnerships in service delivery
- Partner in tenders for initiatives that collectively address community needs
- Strengthen relationship with TSA's fundraising department
- Create a suite of resources aimed at effectively engaging the private and public sector



Intended Impact



Our partnerships leverage innovative approaches and drive sector development.



Our partnerships ensure equal representation and opportunities for all young people



Formal partnerships exist with a range of services that enhance young people's psychological, spiritual, emotional, physical, social development.



Leaders are equipped with the tools to effectively leverage partnerships to achieve shared goals.

Performance

Sustainability and growth are fundamental considerations in spaces for opportunity. By building and maintaining sustainable programs we can foster a sense of stability and security for young people and provide a range of service delivery responses tailored to their specific needs. Academic research, data and evidence play a crucial role in promoting learning and enquiry.



1

Achieve sustainable growth

- Expand the range of housing pathways for young people
- Actively seek tender opportunities for service expansion in line with Journey to Independence
- Expand vocational, education and training programs
- Actively identify, develop and pilot programs that address gaps and emerging needs of young people

2

Data, evidence and research is utilised to drive all program design, implementation, delivery and evaluations.

- Consistent quality data and outcomes are collected and utilised to drive service delivery, design and advocacy
- Increased use of external data in shaping programs and practice
- Partnerships are held with universities and other academic institutions to review and evaluate models and programs

3

Elevate and embed Youth Services internal and external identity and profile.

- Develop plan for identification of key internal and external relationships and partnerships
- Development and implementation of a storytelling strategy
- Training, mentoring and development of tools for leaders to effectively present externally

4

Establish and maintain effective funding models

- Commitment to develop and enhance integrated service models across the stream
- Advocating to government for appropriate funding models
- Actively seek aligned opportunities to diversify funding



Intended Impact

- A wider range of services and programs are available to young people, when and where they need them.
- A deeper understanding of our impact and effectiveness is gained and learning opportunities are identified.
- Increased evidence and evaluation enhances our ability to engage, educate, inspire and collaborate with the wider sector.
- Increased financial sustainability and stability, whilst ensuring aligned and effective service delivery.

Bringing the agenda to life

We are committed at a local, state and national level to promote a culture of learning and enquiry where practitioners, leaders and young people can share their knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

Drawing from our learnings and local insights, local goals and initiatives will be developed that translate this agenda into meaningful plans that are developed to meet unique state and local needs.

The developed plans will remain flexible and live documents, ensuring an ongoing commitment to achieving the identified outcomes.

