

# A GUIDE TO CANTEEN

# Acknowledgement of Country

Canteen acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and sovereign Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing inclusive and appropriate support for First Nations young people, their kin and community impacted by cancer. First Nations peoples are respectfully advised this resource may contain images, names or stories of people who have passed away.

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



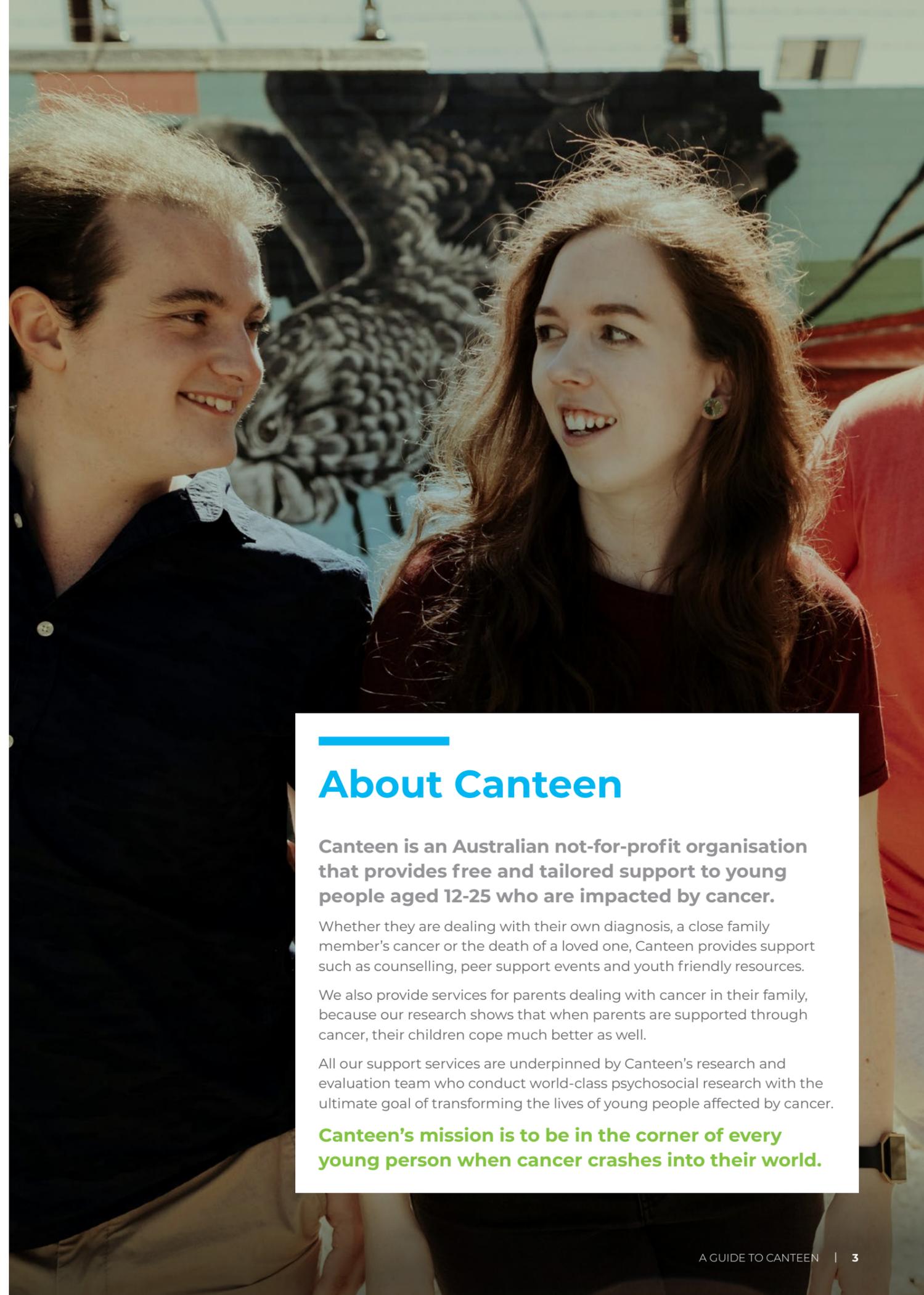
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This resource is printed on 100% recycled paper as part of our [CanGreen Action Plan](#). December 2022.



MedAdvisor has partnered with Canteen to relieve people living with cancer from the stress of managing their medication, so that they can focus on spending time with their loved ones and doing the things they enjoy. [mymedadvisor.com](https://mymedadvisor.com)



## About Canteen

**Canteen is an Australian not-for-profit organisation that provides free and tailored support to young people aged 12-25 who are impacted by cancer.**

Whether they are dealing with their own diagnosis, a close family member's cancer or the death of a loved one, Canteen provides support such as counselling, peer support events and youth friendly resources.

We also provide services for parents dealing with cancer in their family, because our research shows that when parents are supported through cancer, their children cope much better as well.

All our support services are underpinned by Canteen's research and evaluation team who conduct world-class psychosocial research with the ultimate goal of transforming the lives of young people affected by cancer.

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

# Our impact

Canteen is fully committed to continuing our work in improving the social and emotional wellbeing of young people affected by cancer in effective and efficient ways.

Here are some of the ways we supported young people last year:

**12,000** counselling and support sessions were provided to help young people and parents cope with the impact of cancer.

**57,596** interactions between young people on Canteen Connect and more than **3,000** on Parenting Through Cancer.

**6,648** young people and parents were directly supported by our local staff in each state and territory.

**1,196** young people attended 121 events, programs or recreation days.

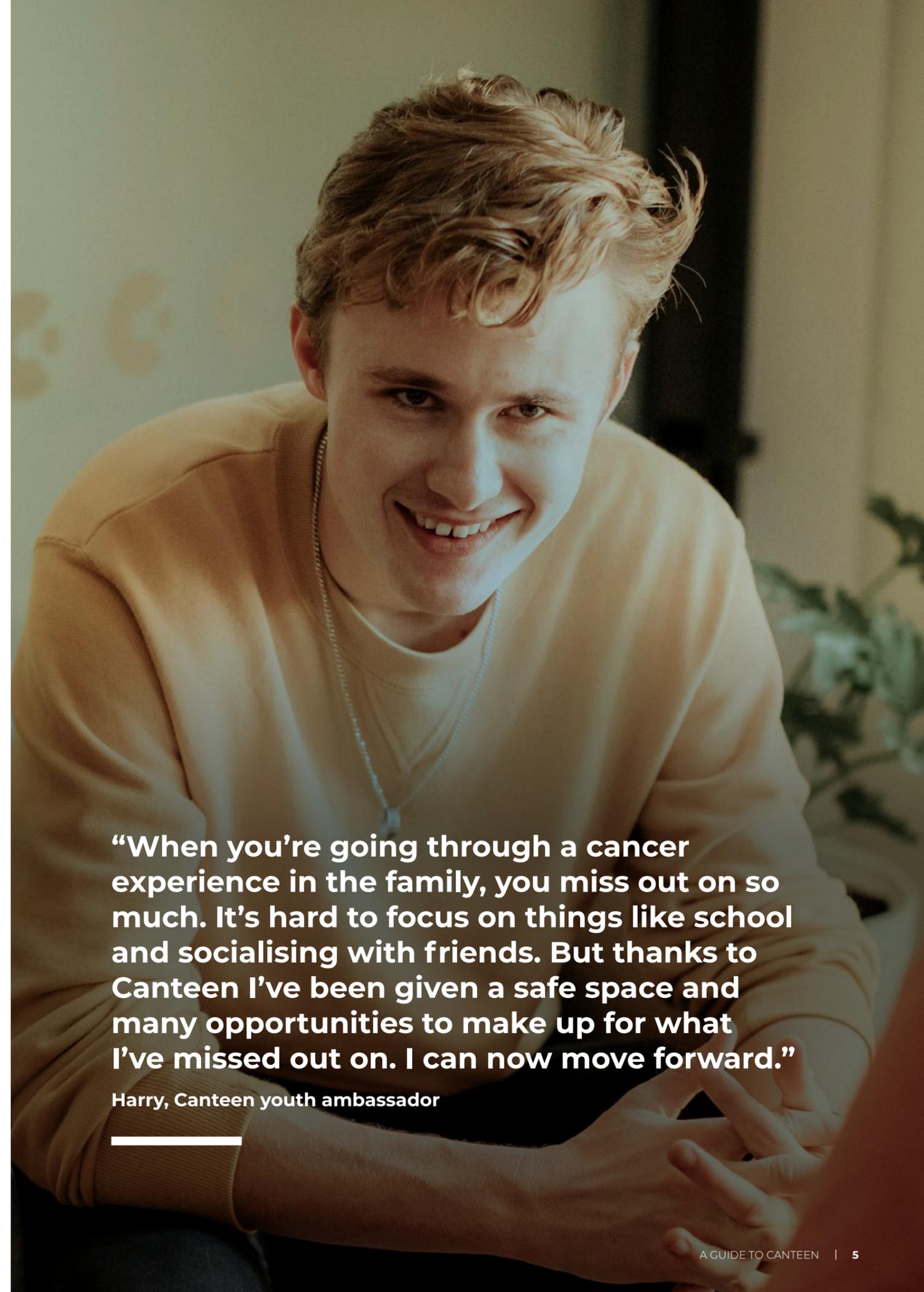
**46,016** people in the wider community were guided through the challenges of cancer through our education programs and free resources.



Deloitte's Social Impact Analysis considered the impact that Canteen has for young people impacted by cancer, their families and the broader community.



\* The duration of each outcome varied based on the estimated years the benefits would be realised beyond the year of intervention. The maximum duration used was five years, in accordance with the World Health Organisation (WHO) methodology for calculating the burden of disease from cancer.



“When you’re going through a cancer experience in the family, you miss out on so much. It’s hard to focus on things like school and socialising with friends. But thanks to Canteen I’ve been given a safe space and many opportunities to make up for what I’ve missed out on. I can now move forward.”

Harry, Canteen youth ambassador

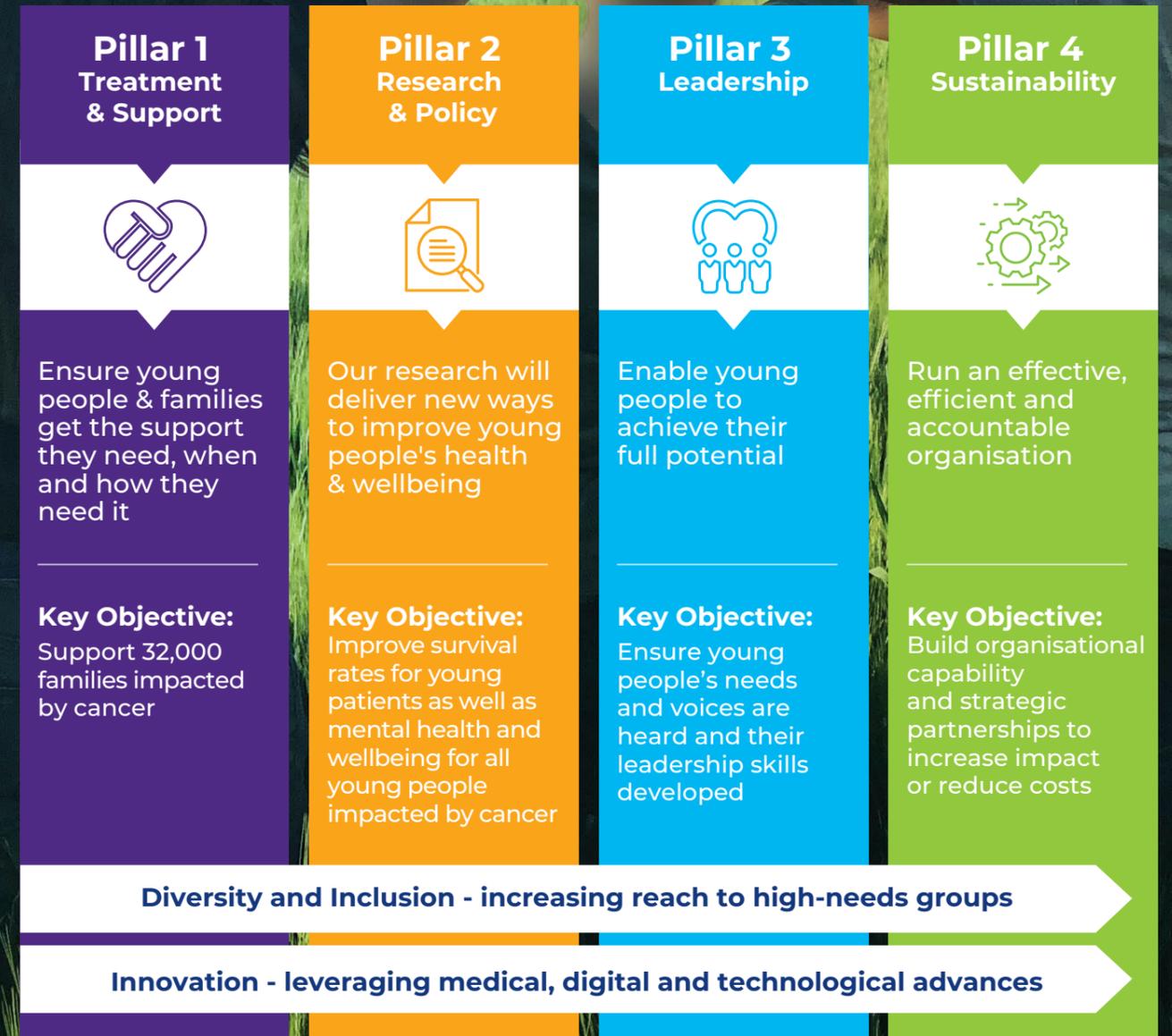
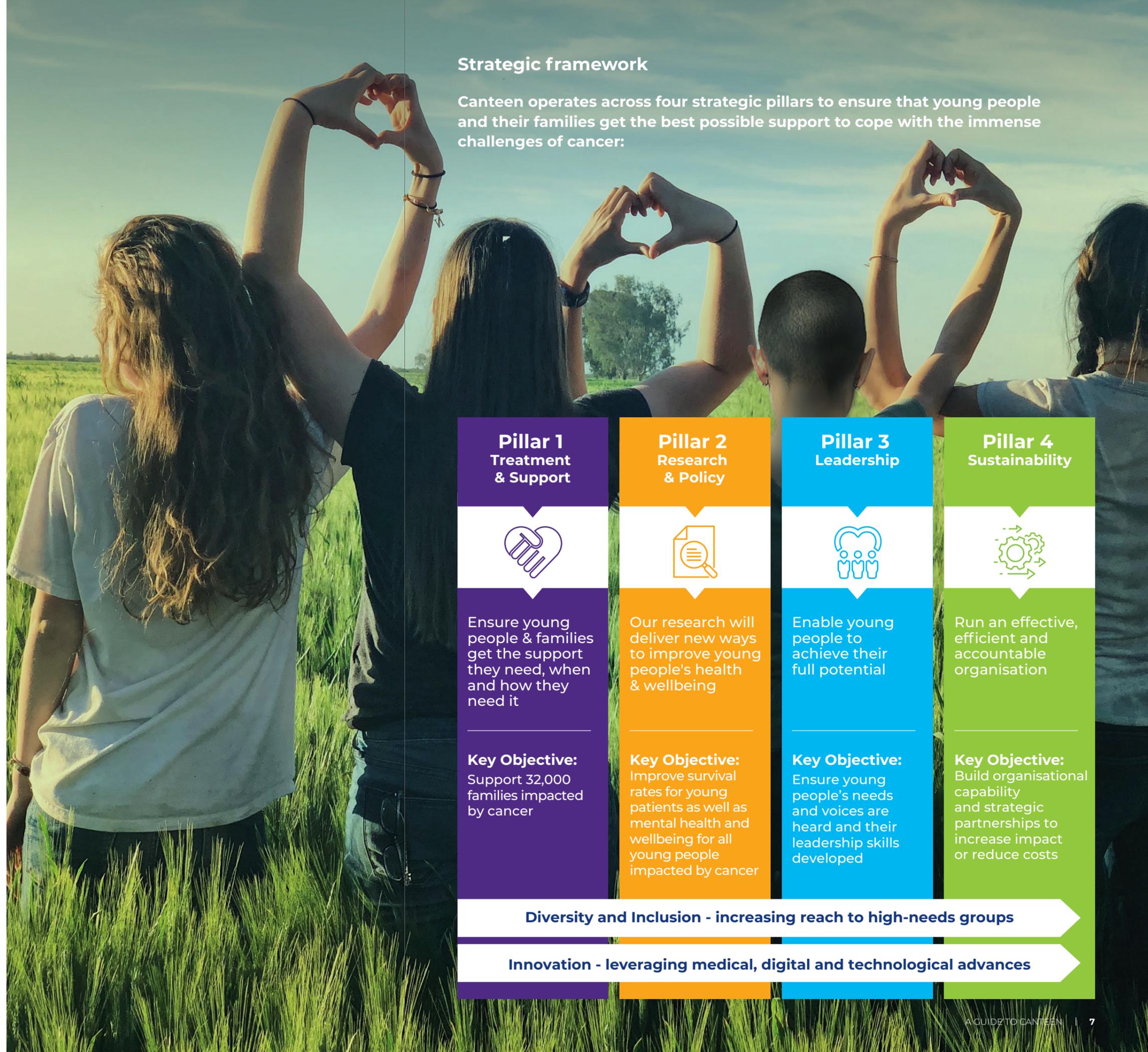
# Strategic plan

## What success looks like in 2026:

- 1 Canteen will have helped **32,000 families cope with the immense challenges of cancer** while also increasing our reach amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the LGBTQI+ community as well as culturally and linguistically diverse young people.
- 2 Canteen led service models will **continue to inspire changes** in practice internationally and nationally while our research unit will remain at the forefront of psycho-oncological and youth specific psychosocial research into the most effective interventions for issues affecting young people's wellbeing.
- 3 Canteen will be at the **forefront of medical, digital and technological innovation** in order to enhance the treatment and support provided to young people and families dealing with illness in the family and other adversities.
- 4 Canteen will **lead advocacy in national and international arenas** which will see governments and other stakeholders prioritising the needs of young people dealing with issues which heavily impact their wellbeing.
- 5 Canteen will investigate the needs of **young people dealing with the impact of significant health issues (other than cancer)** or struggling with **grief and loss** and explore the potential for extending our high-quality support services to them.
- 6 Canteen will apply our strong organisational capability **to build powerful partnerships with other charities** in a way that enhances the missions of all organisations and/or streamlines costs for the partners involved.

## Strategic framework

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



# Support for young people

We understand that every young person deals with cancer differently. That's why we work with each young person individually to develop a support plan that meets their unique needs and goals.

To find out more about any of the support services below, visit [canteen.org.au/youngpeople](https://canteen.org.au/youngpeople)



## Counselling

Our counsellors and psychologists are specially trained to understand the challenges cancer brings and will help develop strategies for young people to deal with the impact cancer is having on their life. They're available for phone, email, online and face-to-face counselling.



## Online support

Canteen Connect is a secure, online community available 24/7 where young people impacted by cancer can connect with others in a similar situation, check out events around the country or online and chat to a counsellor.

In 2021/2022, 3,614 young people used Canteen Connect, with more than 57,000 interactions throughout the year.



## Youth friendly resources

Information is one of the highest unmet needs for young people living with cancer which is why Canteen provides a wide range of resources to help guide young people through their unique cancer experience, all written in a language they can understand.



## Events and programs

Canteen offers a variety of events and programs which are tailored to the young person's age and cancer experience. They give young people much-needed space away from the pressure of living with cancer and allows them to have fun with others who 'get it' while also developing coping skills and resilience that will last a lifetime.



## At school

Canteen provides support to schools as well. We've developed a free, interactive school-based program When Cancer Comes Along that educates young people about:

- What cancer is;
- Cancer warning signs;
- Cancer risk factors; and
- How to support a friend who is impacted by cancer.

The program also aligns with the national curriculum for health and physical education.



## For young people with cancer

Canteen provides a range of specialist services, learn more at [canteen.org.au/youngpatients](https://canteen.org.au/youngpatients)



### Robots Service

Young people diagnosed with cancer often have to spend long periods in hospital undergoing treatment. This means they can miss weeks, sometimes months of school, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection from their peers and social life. Canteen's innovative robots use video-conferencing technology to enable young people to attend school from their hospital bed or from home, allowing them to stay connected to their school and friends, and maintain daily routines so they can continue feeling a sense of normalcy.



### Youth Cancer Services

Youth Cancer Services are specialist treatment and support services for young people with cancer, designed to meet their unique treatment, care and support needs through a multidisciplinary approach. The YCS receive federal funding through Canteen as well as state and territory government funding. There are five lead Youth Cancer Services, based in major hospitals in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. These lead services work with over 25 hospitals and health services across Australia.

Around 75% of all newly diagnosed young cancer patients are supported by the Youth Cancer Services. Last year, 1,571 young cancer patients were supported through the YCS.



### Clinical trials

Canteen funds nationally coordinated clinical trials run by some of Australia's brightest researchers in cancer types with the highest death rates for adolescents and young adults. This is vital as clinical trials are the fastest way to access cutting-edge cancer treatment and young people are often ineligible due to age restrictions. Clinical trials help researchers learn whether new treatments will work for young cancer patients which will improve survival rates as well as reduce short and long-term side effects.

**“Younger people have significantly poorer survival rates than children or older adults for cancer types that are common in their age group. Clinical trials are a huge step forward for young Australian cancer patients, particularly those diagnosed with rare or deadly types of cancers.”**

Peter Orchard, Canteen CEO



### Education and Career Support

Our Education and Career Support Service (ECS) helps young cancer patients aged 15-25 get back to study, work and life. This service helps mitigate the long-term impacts of cancer by supporting young people to reengage with tertiary education or redefine career aspirations while overcoming complex barriers.

“Just knowing Canteen is around and there is someone there to develop you and hold you in that space, the benefit is hard to explain in words. You feel very lost and helpless, especially when you have to take care of your teenage kids. I had so much support from family and friends, but nothing is comparable to the mental support Canteen has given us.”

Yoav, father of Teva and Eden



## Support for parents

Canteen supports parents because our research has shown us that when parents cope better with cancer and communicate openly, their children are likely to experience less distress and anxiety.



### Cancer Hub

Cancer in the family brings immense challenges. Finding support shouldn't be one of them. That's why Canteen, Camp Quality and Redkite are working together to deliver Cancer Hub. It's a one stop shop to help families impacted by cancer more easily access the practical and emotional support they need. [cancerhub.org.au](https://cancerhub.org.au)



### Counselling

Our counsellors and psychologists can help parents manage their own mental health and support them through the parenting challenges cancer can bring. They're available six days a week for phone, email and online counselling. Face-to-face sessions are also available at most Canteen offices during normal business hours.



### Online support

Parenting Through Cancer is an online community from Canteen and Camp Quality, where parents impacted by cancer can connect with each other, find evidence-based resources and chat to a counsellor. The community is for all parents impacted by cancer with children aged 0-25. [parentingthroughcancer.org.au](https://parentingthroughcancer.org.au)



### Parenting through Illness webinars

Our webinar series provides practical tools, strategies, resources and services for parents impacted by a significant illness. Supported by Metricon. [canteen.org.au/parentingwebinars](https://canteen.org.au/parentingwebinars)

Find out more at [canteen.org.au/parents](https://canteen.org.au/parents)

# Distress in young people and our clinical model

Every year, another **23,000** young people in Australia have to face the challenge of cancer.

- **21,000** find out their parent has cancer
- **1,000** find out their brother or sister has cancer<sup>1</sup>
- **1,000** are diagnosed with cancer themselves

Many young people affected by cancer feel very alone and become disconnected from their peers, which can lead to social isolation and an increased risk of mental health issues. In fact, young people affected by cancer are up to six times more likely to face mental health issues like depression and anxiety than their peers.

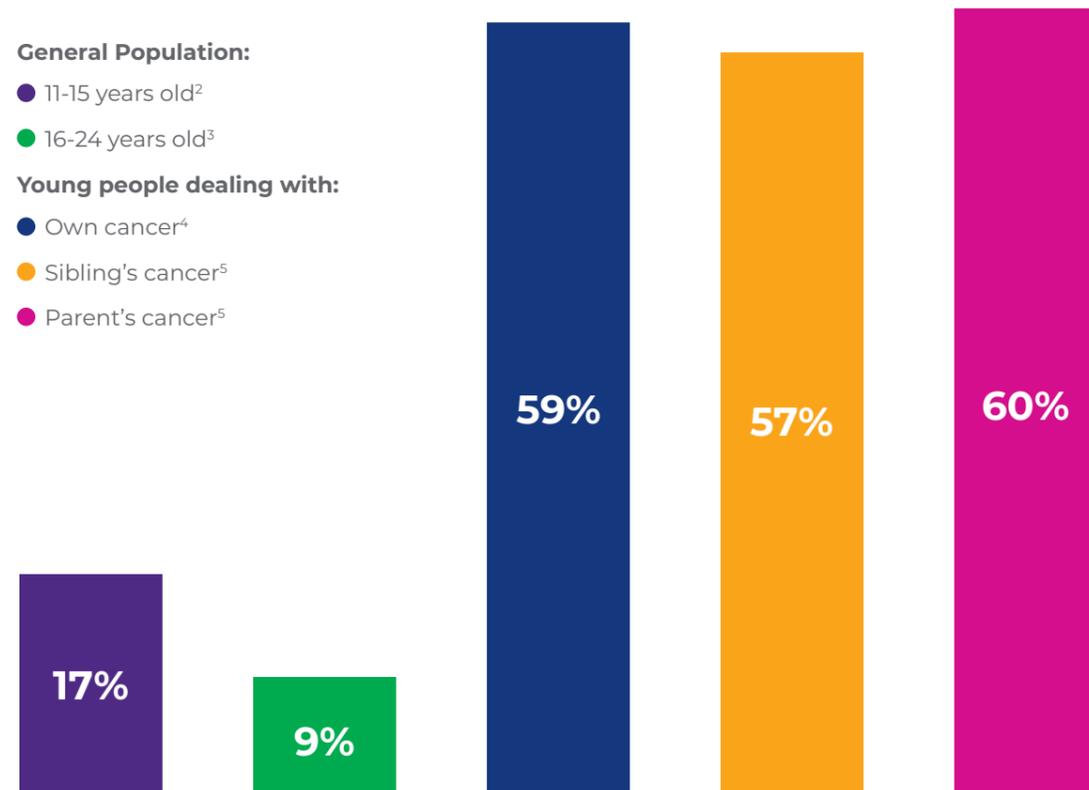
## Percentage of young people experiencing high or very high levels of distress

### General Population:

- 11-15 years old<sup>2</sup>
- 16-24 years old<sup>3</sup>

### Young people dealing with:

- Own cancer<sup>4</sup>
- Sibling's cancer<sup>5</sup>
- Parent's cancer<sup>5</sup>



Without support, high levels of psychological distress can lead to difficulties at school, university or work, along with problematic and unhealthy coping strategies such as drug or alcohol abuse.

In response, Canteen has developed an evidence-based clinical model that aims to assess each young person's needs and goals. We then create an individually tailored support plan with the Canteen services that are best-suited for them.

**After just six months of support from Canteen, almost two thirds of young people affected by cancer report improvements in their mental health and overall wellbeing.**



## References

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) Cancer in adolescents and young adults in Australia. Cat. no. CAN 110. Canberra: AIHW.
2. Lawrence D, Johnson S, Hafekost J, Boterhoven De Haan K, Sawyer M, Ainley J, Zubrick SR (2015) The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. Report on the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Department of Health, Canberra.
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4. McDonald FEJ, Patterson P (2015) Evaluation of a resource for adolescents and young adults diagnosed with cancer. J Ped Oncol Nurse, doi: 10.1177/1043454214563408.
5. Patterson P, McDonald FEJ, White KJ, Walczak A, Butow PN (2017) Wiley. Psycho-Oncology: Levels of unmet needs and distress amongst adolescents and young adults (AYAs) impacted by familial cancer.

## Internationally renowned research

The Research, Evaluation and Social Policy (RESP) team at Canteen conducts leading research into the emotional and social impacts of cancer, to ensure that we truly understand how cancer is different in a young person's world.

The RESP team demonstrates best practice and is recognised around the world. Canteen research is published in peer-reviewed journals and presented

at national and international conferences to share important findings and outcomes, as well as to increase awareness of young people's needs. These insights are key to shaping the support services we provide for young people and parents impacted by cancer.

Last year, our research and evaluation team published 11 peer-reviewed publications for the year. They were also invited to deliver on 19 digital Australian and international presentations.

[canteen.org.au/research](https://canteen.org.au/research)



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

## Reconciliation Action Plan

**At Canteen, we are committed to providing our young people, their families and our staff with a culturally safe and inclusive environment and workplace.**

This commitment is particularly important as we think about ways to contribute to equality in health and life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Research highlights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a higher prevalence of health and wellbeing-related risk factors and may be less likely to access support and treatment services.

In determining our approach to better engage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples we have been mindful of the strategic priorities

outlined in Cancer Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Framework and the Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration formed by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health (NATSILMH). These two documents will guide us to strengthen Canteen's clinical health policy and practice, program delivery and information when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organisations.

Canteen has provided cultural competency training for all staff and Board members and continues to make meaningful progress towards fulfilling the Reconciliation Action Plan in our work practices and decision making.

[canteen.org.au/reconciliation](https://canteen.org.au/reconciliation)

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## Youth leadership

Youth leadership is a part of Canteen's DNA. The culture of youth empowerment and the strong sense of belonging has been a cornerstone of Canteen's ability to effect change in young people's lives for more than 30 years.

Founded by a group of young cancer patients in 1985, Canteen still has young people involved at every level of the organisation. This ensures we truly understand how cancer is different for a young person and are best able to meet their needs. The Canteen leadership program enables young people to work on their strengths in many different areas of the organisation, providing them with training opportunities and programs to help build their confidence and skills. The youth leadership program is a strong component of Canteen's success. Canteen is unique in that the majority of the Board of Directors are young leaders. Canteen's Board of Directors consists of five Member Directors (young people) and four Associate Directors, volunteers who bring relevant expertise to the Board. The Board Chair is elected by the Board and must also be a young person.

[canteen.org.au/youthleadership](https://canteen.org.au/youthleadership)

**“My time as a young leader within Canteen has had a profound impact on how I not only make meaning from my own cancer experience but also how I see my future career unfolding.”**

**Kathryn Woodward,  
Canteen Board Member**

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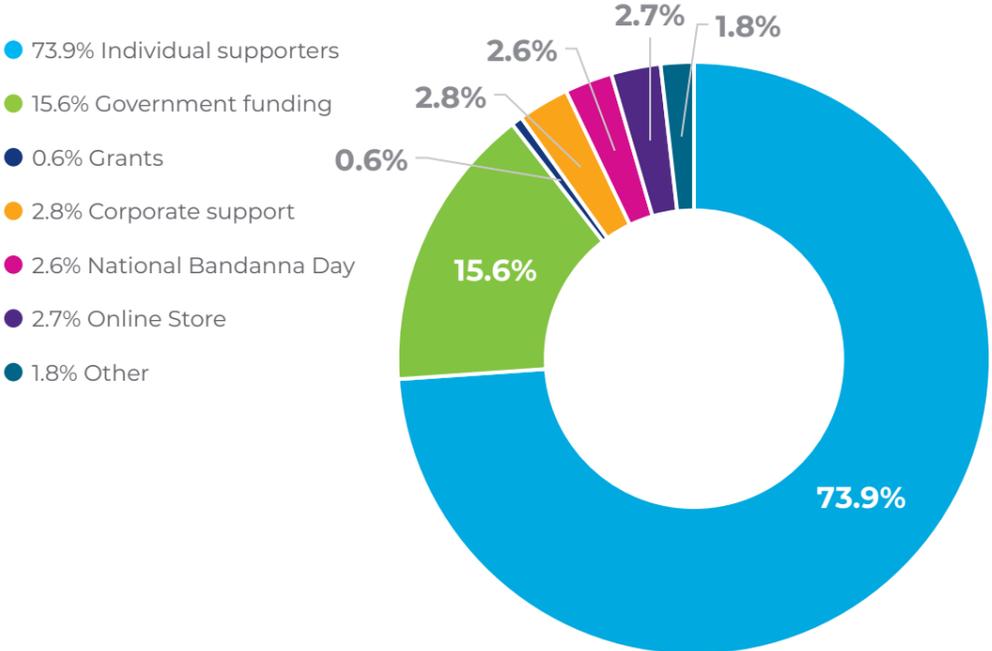




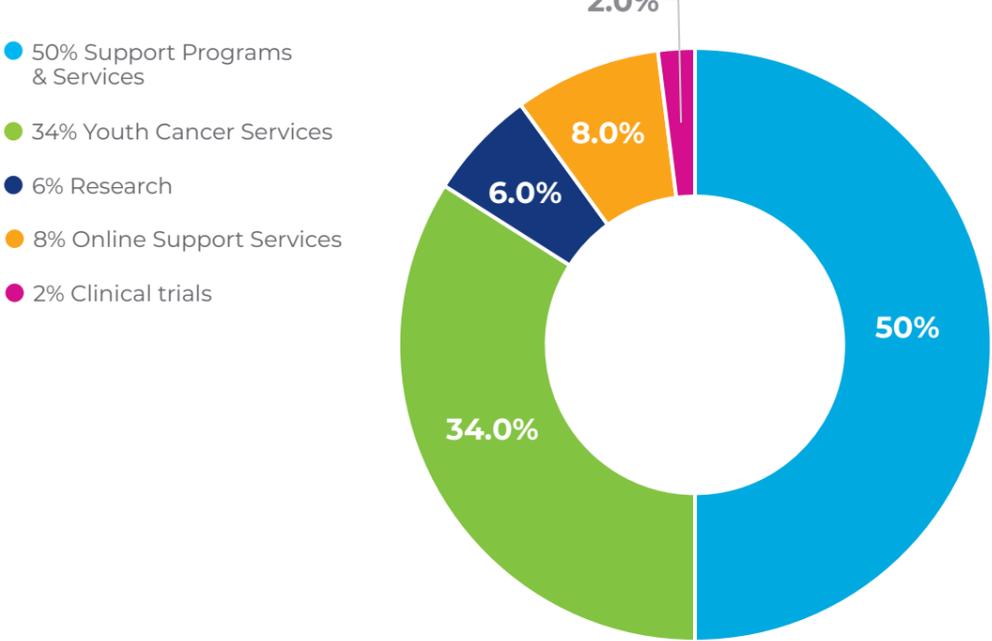
# How Canteen is funded

Canteen relies on the generosity of the Australian community to continue our vital work. The vast majority of our funds come from individual supporters, with government funding making up less than 16% of Canteen’s income last year.

**Income summary:**



**Program expenditure:**



[canteen.org.au/reports](http://canteen.org.au/reports)

# How to support Canteen

Canteen relies on the generosity of the Australian community to continue our vital work. Find out how you can get involved and help us support families affected by cancer.



## Donate

Make a single donation or commit to a monthly gift to make a real difference to the lives of young Aussies affected by cancer.

[canteen.org.au/donate](https://canteen.org.au/donate)



## Fundraise for us

Raise it for Canteen by hosting an event at work or in your local community, running a marathon, shaving your head or collecting donations in lieu of birthday or wedding gifts.

[raiseit.org.au](https://raiseit.org.au)



## National Bandanna Day

Host a fundraiser for National Bandanna Day or buy a bandanna from our online shop to show your support.

[bandannaday.org.au](https://bandannaday.org.au)



## Volunteer with us

At Canteen we know that the people who make up our team are crucial to us delivering the best programs, services and resources.

[canteen.org.au/volunteers](https://canteen.org.au/volunteers)





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## Contact Canteen

To find out more, visit  
[canteen.org.au](https://canteen.org.au), call 1800 226 833  
or email [support@canteen.org.au](mailto:support@canteen.org.au).

