



“EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS WELCOME ON THE CHATTERBOX BUS.  
WE DON'T JUDGE WHO THEY ARE OR WHERE THEY'RE FROM”

— WHITELION WORKER

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# CHAIR AND CEO REPORT

2012–2013 was our first full 12 months following the merging of Whitelion and Open Family Australia in late 2011. Bringing together two organisations is an enormous challenge and we want to acknowledge the staff, management and executive teams — as well as our Board, Leadership Councils and Ambassadors — for their enthusiasm and unwavering commitment to this undertaking and the professionalism with which they responded to the change.

We achieved so much in 12 months:

- We moved into our new head office in West Melbourne, bringing together 45 staff from Whitelion and Open Family Australia into one central location.
- We streamlined our back-of-house and administrative operations, resulting in significant savings that have been re-invested into our programs and the young people we work with.
- We began work on a service continuum to connect the expertise of both organisations to create stronger programs for young people. This resulted in our first jointly run program – the Whitelion and Open Family Australia Streets to Work Employment Program. This program targets homeless youth in Melbourne’s outer-western suburbs, drawing on Open Family Australia’s skills, and connecting them with employment using Whitelion’s successful employment program methodology.

Linking our services in a continuum of care for young people is the most exciting opportunity to emerge in the past 12 months. From homelessness through to mentoring, learning and employment, we can work alongside youth at risk at every stage of their journey, from disconnection to re-connection.

We also significantly increased the number of young people supported by our programs from the previous year:

- Open Family Australia increased the number of outreach contacts made by 26 per cent.
- Whitelion provided vocational support to an additional 138 young people, and placed 30 more in employment.
- Whitelion matched an additional 30 young people with mentors.

We are excited about what we have achieved in the past 12 months, and equally as excited about what the future will bring. We are strategically placed to expand our services, meaning we will be able to reach even more vulnerable and young people at risk.

Unfortunately, our workers are reporting greater numbers of young people with nowhere or no-one to turn to. It is our ongoing commitment to be there for these young people. To all those who have supported us to help young people, we thank you.



A stylized handwritten signature in black ink.

**MARK WATT**  
CEO



A stylized handwritten signature in black ink.

**ANNE BARKER**  
CHAIRMAN

# WHITELION AND OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA



supporting youth at-risk

## WHITELION

Whitelion was established in Melbourne in 1999. Whitelion's co-founders wanted to fill a gap in services for young people in youth detention, who, during the 1990s had few opportunities to rehabilitate themselves away from criminal behaviour. More often than not in detention due to their being affected by trauma, abuse and neglect, young people were being overlooked by most in the community because of anti-social and risky behaviour. Whitelion stepped in to seek out opportunities from the community and to add these opportunities to the intensive support of Whitelion's passionate and professional youth workers — offering troubled young people the chance of a better future.

In addition to supporting young people in youth justice, Whitelion has expanded to divert those who are at risk of entering this system — namely those from the child protection and out-of-home care systems, and those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

## OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA

Open Family Australia was established in 1978. For more than 30 years the organisation has provided practical and intensive support to young, homeless people. Homelessness means to couch-surfing, staying with friends, and temporary housing — right through to living rough on the streets. Open Family Australia believes that homelessness is the most extreme form of disadvantage and that young people in this position have a history of significant trauma, abuse and neglect. Open Family Australia uses assertive outreach and case management to move young people towards housing and stability.

Young people recognise Open Family Australia's street outreach workers and mobile bus programs as a safe and reliable source of support when they are at their most vulnerable.

## CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In late 2011, Whitelion and Open Family Australia merged their administrative, fund-raising and management functions in order to be more efficient. The more efficient we are, the more money we can put towards vulnerable, young people at risk, helping break the cycle of disadvantage.

Whitelion and Open Family Australia have a shared vision to support disadvantaged young people so they can live more positive and fulfilled lives. Our mission is to build meaningful relationships and create opportunities that enable highly vulnerable and high-risk young people to reconnect with society and reach their full potential.

## WHITELION AND OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA TOGETHER:

**Stand for the courage to choose a better future.**

**Work with vulnerable and at-risk young people aged 10-25.**

**Want young people in our programs to leave our service with the ability to access opportunity and make positive choices that help them achieve stable and secure housing; connection to community; employment and economic sustainability; educational attainment; and good health and general wellbeing.**

## A SNAPSHOT OF YOUTH DISADVANTAGE

Recent studies in Australia show us alarming levels of disadvantage among vulnerable youth. A snapshot of data from the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare and Homelessness Australia (2011) paints a disturbing picture:

**15,545 young people** are in contact with the Youth Justice system each year.

**26,238 young people** aged between 12 and 24 years were homeless on census night.

**35,895 children** are placed away from their families in out-of-home care each year.

**46,187 substantiated** child protection reports were recorded in a year.

Many young people reflected in these statistics are isolated and excluded. Their family networks are subject to complex, intergenerational neglect, abuse, serious mental health issues, substance misuse and dependency, disconnection from education and homelessness. Engaging and supporting these young people to achieve positive change in their lives is the reason Whitelion and Open Family Australia programs exist.

## THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE WORK WITH AND THE SERVICES WE OFFER

### OUR PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

Evidence-based practice and research is critical to our program design. Whitelion and Open Family Australia strive to deliver programs that are youth-centred and family-focused, culturally respectful, and that work holistically in collaboration with other services.

We base our programs on:

- Strengths approach.
- Trauma-informed practice.
- Relationship-based practice.
- Youth participation framework.
- Developmental framework.
- Experiential learning model.

### OUR SERVICES

Whitelion and Open Family Australia offer integrated programs and practice approaches that go to the heart of addressing youth disadvantage.

We provide the following services:

| Whitelion  | Open Family Australia   |
|--|---|
| Employment (VIC, TAS, SA, NSW)   | Chatterbox and NOSH mobile bus and van programs (Melbourne, Sydney) |
| Mentoring (VIC, TAS, SA)   | Street-based outreach for homeless youth (Melbourne, Sydney)        |
| Education (SA)   | Education (Sydney)  |
| Youth leadership and development (VIC, SA)   |   |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support services (VIC), and Employment (VIC, TAS, SA, NSW) |   |

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND AUSTRALIA...

Whitelion operates nationally in four states, from six centrally located CBD offices and 17 satellite offices in regional areas.



Young people supported by Whitelion and Open Family Australia programs and services.



### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUPPORT SERVICES



Young people supported through the Employment Program

Young people placed in employment through the Employment Program

Number of employment partners

| VIC | NSW | SA  | TAS |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 175 | 150 | 142 | 120 |
| 49  | 37  | 10  | 67  |
| 30  | 13  | 20  | 30  |



## EMPLOYMENT

Young people supported through the Employment Program  
 Young people placed in employment through the Employment Program  
 Number of employment partners

| VIC | NSW | SA  | TAS |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 175 | 150 | 142 | 120 |
| 49  | 37  | 10  | 67  |
| 30  | 13  | 20  | 30  |



## MENTORING

Number of mentors  
 Young people supported through in a mentoring relationship  
 Number of community days  
 Number of training sessions  
 Number of young people supported in Youth Justice Centres

| VIC | SA | TAS |
|-----|----|-----|
| 200 | 16 | 80  |
| 154 | 32 | 96  |
| 28  |    | 12  |
| 26  | 3  | 12  |
| 32  | 10 | 12  |



## STREET-BASED OUTREACH FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Outreach — episodes of support  
 Young people supported through by the Nutrition Outreach Support Health (NOSH) Van  
 \*since March 2013  
 Young people supported through the Chatterbox bus outreach service  
 Young people supported through Transitional Housing  
 Young people supported through Wyndham Outreach  
 Young people supported through the COM

| VIC  | NSW  |
|------|------|
|      | 1370 |
| 2560 | 1025 |
| 3520 | 2190 |
| 5    |      |
| 75   |      |
| 140  |      |



## EDUCATION

Young people engaged with Whitelion Learning Centres  
 Young people enrolled in Links to Learning  
**Leadership and development**  
 Graduates of Young Lions Leadership Program  
 Young People who attended community days

| NSW | SA  |
|-----|-----|
|     | 192 |
| 22  |     |
|     |     |
| 27  |     |

# THE SERVICES WE DELIVERED IN 2012-2013



# OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA STREET-BASED OUTREACH FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Youth homelessness in Australia continues to rise and a lack of suitable accommodation for young people is an ongoing issue. There are many reasons why young people aged 12–25 years end up on the street but the prevalent one is family breakdown. This is followed closely by abuse, and for young women we know that domestic abuse is a critical factor.

To respond to youth homelessness we have developed a mix of highly responsive, personalised and place-based programs that are all underpinned by assertive outreach. Assertive outreach involves targeted engagement with vulnerable young people within their personal environment. The aim of assertive outreach is to provide comprehensive support to young people allowing to reconnect them with their community and avoid a return to homelessness.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2012–2013

- **Opened new office in Frankston as a base for outreach workers.**
- **Launched the Wyndham House project in partnership with Yarra Community Housing and Werribee Supported Housing — the first of its kind in the region.**
- **The Chatterbox Bus program was expanded in NSW.**
- **The successful NOSH Van was expanded from NSW to Victoria, with the acquisition of an additional NOSH van and launch of the program in Melbourne's west.**
- **Expanded mobile outreach services in NSW to respond to growing demand in Claymore.**

## PROGRAMS DELIVERED

### SOUTH–WEST SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE CBD OUTREACH VIC NSW

The greatest number of homeless youth can be found on the streets of our capital cities. This puts young people at risk due to the proximity to late-night venues and alcohol and drug-affected adults. In addition, young people are often moved on by police from public spaces areas into poorly-lit and secluded areas. Outreach workers target these hot spots to engage vulnerable young people and help them connect with support services, such as Centrelink, health services and accommodation providers.

### THE CHATTERBOX BUS VIC NSW

The Chatterbox Bus is a mobile outreach service in Melbourne and Sydney. The Chatterbox is a regular fixture of the inner-city nightscape and is a trusted link to services for the many homeless youth. The bus visits popular areas in the Sydney CBD and Melbourne CBD and provides material aid, food, computer and internet access to the young as well as providing opportunity to talk to bus staff about issues they are facing. Young people who require intensive support are referred to an Open Family Australia outreach worker for case management.

## **NUTRITION, OUTREACH, SUPPORT AND HEALTH (NOSH) VIC NSW**

The Nutrition, Outreach, Support and Health (NOSH) Program complements the Chatterbox Bus as a health and wellbeing service providing nutritional healthy food options for young people. The NOSH Van services south-west Sydney visiting Rosemeadow, Wetherill Park and Fairfield throughout the week. In the first quarter of 2013, the service was expanded with the acquisition of a second NOSH Van for Melbourne, and now services the outer-western suburbs of Melbourne in the municipality of Wyndham.

## **TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SUPPORT VIC**

The Transitional Housing Support program targets the southern areas of metropolitan Melbourne. Two housing support workers engage with at-risk and homeless young people in the region to try to link them to the youth housing service system over 13 weeks. The program also helps young people access employment services, education and parental education.

## **CREATING CONNECTIONS VIC**

The Creating Connections program is a partnership between Open Family Australia, the Western Area Youth Support Service (WAYSS), Peninsula Youth and Family Services (PYFS) and

the Springvale Community Advice and Assistance Bureau (SCAAB). Our role in this partnership is to engage young people with complex needs and to provide intensive case management with participating agencies referring clients between 15 and 25 to our outreach worker.

## **THE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP PROGRAM VIC**

The Community Ownership Program (COP) in Frankston is funded by the local community through St John of God Frankston Rehabilitation Hospital and Peninsula Community Ownership Foundation (PenCOF). We have a dedicated outreach worker in Frankston working with the young homeless, or those who are at risk of becoming homelessness. There are a significant number of young women using this service who have experienced domestic violence and who have young children. At any one time, our outreach worker is assisting about 18 young people intensively through contact on the street or Centrelink referrals, in addition to about 15 young people less intensively.

## **WYNDHAM OUTREACH VIC**

In the City of Wyndham there are large numbers of disadvantaged youth, and homelessness is a growing issue. Our outreach workers, who

are based at the Wyndham Youth Resource Centre, engage with the young on the street and in places where the local kids are known to congregate such as the train station and Werribee Plaza. After identifying young people who are in need of help, our workers establish a sense of trust with the young person and assess how best they might be supported. They also develop face-to-face relationships with service individuals in other agencies and attend meetings with young people to forge stronger connections.

## **ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS VIC**

With funding from the Department of Health and Ageing, Open Family Australia runs the Wyndham Youth Alcohol and Other Drugs Service (WYOADS) in Wyndham. This program supports young people between the ages of 12 and 25 who are experiencing problematic use of more than one substance. A significant challenge for our workers has been the increased incidence of substance abuse in the outer-western suburbs -- a large percentage of this increase is being attributed to the 'ice epidemic' that has emerged in recent years. Alcohol remains the most common substance abused by young people followed by cannabis and stimulants.



## CASE STUDY

### BEN'S STORY

Before our outreach worker Vivian first met Ben, his life was somewhat challenging — filled for many years with fear and rejection. Ben's story is tragic — he started living on the streets when he was just nine. Throughout his short life, he had endured family breakdown, with a sole parent who suffered from mental health issues. Ben bore the brunt of regular outbursts of violence and took to running away to escape. There were many days and nights where Ben didn't know where he would sleep or get a meal. He was witness to many horrific events on the street that most of us would be shocked at.

Ben began hanging out with older teenagers who were also living rough. They watched over him and encouraged him to attend school,

but at night he was still homeless — sleeping on any available couch and when desperate, returning to the family home in which he had never felt safe or supported. This lonely, difficult pattern continued until Ben was 15, but matters worsened after his mother got a new boyfriend, who was violent towards him. This violence severed the last ties between Ben and his mother.

He felt he couldn't trust his family and would be safer on the streets. About this time Ben dropped out of school and lived in a share house where was threatened with a knife. He left and was once more on the streets.

Vivian's first priority for Ben was to find him safe accommodation. Due to a lack of suitable housing in

Melbourne's southern region, it took months for Vivian to find a bungalow with security and privacy where Ben could feel safe and at home. With Ben's living arrangements secure, Vivian started the long process of helping him build a positive future, which included returning to school and working towards employment.

Vivian never gave up. It took four years of time and patience, but Ben now has a bright future.

“There were some weeks when I couldn't find Ben, but I would always eventually get in contact. I am so proud of what Ben has achieved. He is now a young man, well-mannered and grateful for everything that we have helped him with.” Vivian, outreach worker, Victoria.

# WHITELION YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Many young people experience such complex circumstances of disadvantage that they do not have the skills, energy or capacity to engage with intensive support services such as mentoring programs, employment and education opportunities. These programs require young people to be emotionally and physically ready to commit, but also results in there being a group of vulnerable youth who are at great risk of falling through the gaps.

If young people are not capable of committing to a long-term program, they may miss out on being supported by community organisations or government programs. These require a lot of support combined with a low level of intensity. They need to be slowly introduced to the concepts of goal-setting and goal attainment, while being supported in building up their social skills, confidence, resilience and self-esteem. The best way to engage these young people is through intensive support, sport, music, art and recreational activities such as camps.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2012-2013

- **255 attendances at the Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies weekly workshops — a program that delivers a physical outlet and support to young women in custody in Melbourne.**
- **The launch of a new program, the Young Men's Support Service in Melbourne.**
- **The launch of an exciting new project with the School of Hard Knocks Institute, known as StreetBeats.**

## PROGRAMS DELIVERED

### YOUNG MEN'S SUPPORT SERVICE VIC

The Young Men's Support Service (YMSS) is an intervention in the lives of young men that is not tied to specific therapeutic or custodial imperatives, but rather empowers them to make positive changes in their own lives. The multi-faceted approach of the YMSS provides a framework to work with young men who are at risk of entering the youth justice system or who have already had exposure to it. It addresses issues such as lack of education or employment opportunities, self-esteem and peer pressure, lack of resources and community connection.

### STREETBEATS VIC

In association with the School of Hard Knocks Institute, Whitelion introduced Streetbeats in late 2012. This program engages young people in structured learning through African drumming workshops. Not only do the participants acquire an instrumental skill but they also develop other pre-vocational skills such as respect, communication, team work and commitment. It also encourages previously disengaged youth to meet new people, develop friendships and establish new peer networks.



### YOUNG WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICE VIC

The Young Women's Program is a flexible outreach program for women aged 15–24. The majority are referred from youth justice or out-of-home care programs. In many cases, young women are referred for mental health issues, drug and alcohol dependencies, a lack of life skills and child protection advocacy. The program is client-led and focuses on a holistic support model for young women moving from out-of-home care or custody back into the community. It provides opportunities to increase social, emotional, mental and physical health.

As part of the YWSS, Whitelion runs the Healthy Minds Healthy Bodies program in the Cullity Unit at Parkville Youth Residential Centre. This highly successful and well-received program engages young women in physical movement and provides the opportunity to release stress, be active and creative, build relationships and develop self-esteem.

### YOUNG LIONS PROGRAM VIC

Young Lions is a 12-month leadership program involving 15 to 24-year-olds from all over Victoria. Young people who have demonstrated leadership are referred to the program from

within other Whitelion programs or through external agencies. The program begins in February with up to 15 participants working on developing skills such as communication, group work and conflict resolution. The Young Lions develop their leadership skills through the planning and holding of two camps throughout the year — the Young Lions Camp and the National Camp, which is open to young people from every Whitelion program. The Young Lions program has inspired several participants to return to their studies, even to go on to university, while others are working and have been employed for some time.

# WHITELION MENTORING PROGRAMS

A Whitelion mentor is a valuable person who volunteers their time to offer a young person the support and advice they need to enable them to build basic life skills and independence.

The role of a mentor is to help a young person build skills and a support network so that the young person can be more resilient to crises as they emerge. The mentor also provides the young person with a picture of an alternative life, one full of the possibilities and hope that may be lacking in their current situation. Mentors are asked to commit to their relationship for a minimum of 12 months to provide stability for the young person, but in many cases these relationships, once established, continue on for many years.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2012–2013

- **Whitelion expanded its Leaving Care Mentoring Program into Tasmania.**
- **Mentoring community days were held every six weeks across Tasmania, offering young people and mentors recreational activities such as sailing on the Derwent River, fishing trips and rock climbing.**
- **Delivered over 2600 mentoring hours in South Australia.**

## PROGRAMS DELIVERED

### CUSTODIAL AND COMMUNITY YOUTH JUSTICE MENTORING VIC

The Custodial Mentoring program works with young people who have been referred to Whitelion while they are in youth detention. This program operates in Melbourne only, supporting young people who are on remand or who have been sentenced. Whitelion workers take trained volunteer mentors into the custodial facility to connect with young people through meaningful activities that provide positive, social interaction with adults. Mentoring then continues after release.

The Community Youth Justice Program provides mentors to young people who are involved in the youth justice system in the community. This can be due to contact with police, during court matters or community orders.

### LEAVING CARE MENTORING VIC TAS SA

The Leaving Care Mentoring Program operates in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, supported by state government funding. Young people referred to this program are in state care, having been removed from their family home by child protection. This program exists to support 16 to 18-year-olds as they approach independence from state

care — an extremely vulnerable time for young people. Mentors are a valuable support for young people at this time, helping them to work through this transition and supporting them through the changes. Mentors are encouraged to be task-focused, helping the young person to build life skills such as cooking, resume writing and applying for jobs.

### RAMP MENTORING PROGRAM VIC

RAMP is based in the eastern region of Melbourne, and is a mentoring program run in partnership with Reach, funded by the Department of Human Services. The program is in its eight year, and involves individual mentoring, workshops and a camp. Participants are primarily aged between 15 or 16 and are living in out-of-home care.

### NAVIGATING A NEW PATH MENTORING PROGRAM VIC

The Navigating a New Path Program is run in partnership with St Kilda Gatehouse, and focuses on intervention to break the cycle of exploitation experienced by young women involved in street sex work. The partnership model of the program with Gatehouse builds on the experience of each partner organisation to support young women to get out of street sex work or to not become involved in the first



place. The program works with young women aged 16–24 and uses intensive outreach and mentoring to support young women to form positive connections with the community, link with services and programs that reduce their reliance on the sex industry, and build protective factors that reduce the likelihood of their continued involvement.

### KIDS UNDER COVER MENTORING PROGRAM VIC

Whitelion and Kids Under Cover have come together to run a mentoring program that aims to provide young people with regular one-on-one contact with a trained adult volunteer mentor who will offer guidance and encouragement. The program is funded by Undercover Angels, the Portland House Foundation and the Matana Foundation for Young People.

Currently, the program is for young people residing in Kids Under Covers studios and houses across Victoria, but we hope to roll it out to

Queensland and the ACT in the near future.

### COMMUNITY INTEGRATION PROGRAM VIC

The Community Integration Program (CIP) was established to connect young people living in out-of-home care with their local community. It involves volunteers from the community getting to know a vulnerable young person and supporting them to connect with others involved in a local activity, group or event that interests them. So far, some young people have participated in sports clubs, spent time scrapbooking, learnt how to cook and taken dancing lessons, thanks to the generous support and time given by the volunteers.

Young people who are actively involved in their local communities are more likely to remain in school, get a job and lead a healthy and positive life.

# WHITELION AND OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA EDUCATION PROGRAMS

It is common for young people who are identified as being at risk to have disengaged from formal education; many have left school in year 9 or 10. Reconnecting them in to formal and informal education and learning pathways is a key factor in addressing youth disadvantage.

Whitelion and Open Family Australia provide alternative learning settings for young people who have disengaged from mainstream education, in addition to much-needed work-readiness or pre-employment training.

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2012-2013

- **130 young people who were disengaged from mainstream schooling were re-engaged in learning through our two independent learning centres in Croydon Park and Waikerie, South Australia.**
- **More than 50 per cent of young people engaged in learning in South Australia are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.**
- **An increase of enrolments in the Links to Learning program in Cabramatta with 22 young people re-engaged in education.**

## PROGRAMS DELIVERED

### WHITELION ICAN/FLO PROGRAM SA

Through the Innovative Community Action Network (ICAN) Whitelion operates two Independent learning centres and provides case-management services in primary and secondary schools in the Adelaide metropolitan regions of northern Adelaide; western Adelaide; eastern and hills; as well as in the Riverland. These services are open to young people who have been referred by their school.

Our Independent Learning Centres at Croydon Park and Waikerie provide flexible learning options (FLO) programs for young people aged 12-19 years that include alternative education, activities and mentoring. We also provide FLO education programs and activities through our Skills Hub at Glossop. Our Croydon Park learning centre predominately supports Aboriginal young people and contains a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal case managers and mentors.



A young man with dark hair, wearing a brown hoodie and a black t-shirt with a red rose emblem, is leaning over a green bush in a garden. He appears to be working, possibly weeding or pruning. The background shows more greenery and a building.

## CASE STUDY

# OMAR'S STORY

### OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA LINKS TO LEARNING PROGRAM NSW

The Links to Learning program was established in 2001 and provides a literacy, numeracy and employment training program for early, or at-risk, young school leavers. The program assists people aged 12–24 years who have significant difficulties in participating in mainstream education so they can complete schooling or employment training.

Some 20–25 young people participate in the program each semester, completing 270 hours over three days each week with students expected to attend regular school on the other days. In conjunction with distance education, the program co-ordinator organises tasks for the students and helps them to complete their work. The program has been successful in linking about 75 per cent of participating students back into school or other vocational pathways.

From an early age Omar was acutely aware of how tough it was to live on the streets. He had learnt to survive by relying on a gang of older street kids who watched over him, provided he did as they told him. Often this involved engaging in criminal activities and as a result Omar had been in contact with police on several occasions before being referred to Whitelion, including for several offences he did not commit, often taking blame to appease his friends. Displaced from stable accommodation for most of his teenage years, Omar spoke of his wish to escape the wrong crowd and his hope of creating a new life.

Not long after his first visit to Whitelion Omar was enrolled the South Australian learning program. In order to concentrate on learning, and with the help of his Whitelion worker, he began to disengage from the negative influences in his life. Tragically, Omar was punished for distancing himself from his peer group — under the pretence of meeting Omar to obtain his help with an old friend, he was ambushed and beaten up so badly that he was admitted to hospital with injuries to his face, head and ribs.

This gang-like retaliation for Omar's desertion of "the crew" did not deter him from his new path — he turned up to class the day after the attack. Omar called his Whitelion worker to collect him from hospital and take him to the learning centre, where he plans to remain until his graduation. Omar is planning an apprenticeship in carpentry as his next positive life steps.

# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUPPORT SERVICES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs are designed in partnership with Aboriginal community organisations, in recognition that there are distinct cultural influences on the young people who rely on these services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are grossly overrepresented in the Youth Justice, Child Protection, and Out-of-Home Care systems.

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2012-2013

- Exceeded targets for our Indigenous Employment Program in South Australia and gained subsequent funding of new contract to continue the IEP in 2013-15.
- Expanded the Indigenous Employment Program into Mount Druitt and Penrith in NSW.
- Established the Bundji Bundji Boomerangs football team in Melbourne.
- Started a state-wide Indigenous Employment Program in Tasmania.





## PROGRAMS DELIVERED

### INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (IEP) VIC NSW TAS SA

The Indigenous Employment Program began in 2010 and is funded by the federal government. The program assists young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders between the ages of 15 and 24 to become work-ready, and supports them through the process of finding and retaining employment. Participants are usually referred by their family or community to this voluntary program. IEP involves both mentoring and role modelling to prepare the young person for employment. There is also a cultural component, focusing on connecting the young person back into their culture by linking them to special events and specialised Aboriginal services, and introducing them to elders within their community.

Our staff identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders themselves, in recognition that they can understand many of the unique challenges that are faced by young people in this program. They look after more than 270 young people around Australia. The program has high rates of young people gaining employment and retaining their jobs. Part of the program's success is that it nurtures the employee and the employer, providing hands-on support that is reduced or increased as needed over an 18-month period.

### BUNDJI BUNDJI VIC

Bundji Bundji is a program delivered in partnership between Whitelion and Murrenda Aboriginal Community Care in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. The program aims to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people by providing culturally appropriate support and advocacy. The program is delivered in two streams, one for young men and one for young women.

### BUNDJI BUNDJI (YOUNG MEN)

Individual outreach support is provided to 15 young men in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system. Outreach support addresses issues such as drug dependency, mental illness, low literacy and numeracy skills, unemployment and financial difficulties, homelessness and transience. Workers provide emotional and practical support as well as supported referrals to specialist services. In 2013, this program started the Bundji Bundji Boomerangs football team. Sport is recognised as one of the most successful methods for engaging young men at risk and the creation of the Bundji Bundji Boomerangs provides a safe and healthy environment for the young men to socialise, learn teamwork skills and build positive peer networks. The aim of the team is to use the regular training sessions as a springboard into more intensive support work that will help these young men break through barriers that are preventing them from having full, positive engagement with their community.



### TIDDAS (YOUNG WOMEN) VIC

The aim of the Tiddas Program is to provide a culturally-appropriate outreach service for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) women. Operating in metropolitan Melbourne, the program seeks to alleviate barriers to community engagement for these young women, by facilitating a sense of identity through spiritual and cultural reconnection, as well as practical support to access therapeutic services. The program aims to limit the contact of at risk young ATSI women with the criminal justice system, increase the level of school retention for young women in the target group, work with the families and other networks of young women to support the development of positive goals and community engagement, and link young women into appropriate supports for drug and alcohol, mental health, housing and other issues.

### DEADLI VIC

The DEADLI Employment Program is a new program that has been developed in partnership with St Kilda Youth Services to provide both career and educational support to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged between 16–24 years. DEADLI offers support to a young person through case management, educational and job placement.

### PACIFIC ISLANDER YOUTH MENTORING PROJECT VIC

The Pacific Islander Youth Mentoring Program is for young people of Pacific Islander backgrounds living in Casey and Greater Dandenong. There is a large PI community in these areas with a large incidence of intergenerational disadvantage who experience complex issues such as family conflict, high levels of contact with the juvenile justice, low employment and education rates, social isolation and poor health and wellbeing outcomes.

They face additional difficulties by not being able to get permanent residency status. Added to these are low rates of high school completion, partly due to young people entering the workforce due to financial pressures on parents once family tax payments cease when children reach the age of 16 and no access to Centrelink benefits to assist during periods of unemployment. PI youth are also not eligible for Austudy, HECS or HELP should they want to continue their education.

Our dedicated outreach worker assists Pacific Islander youth from the ages of 13–25 who have been caught up in the judicial system, have been homeless or couch-surfing for long periods, and are generally disengaged from their families and community.

## CASE STUDY

### LEIGH'S STORY



2013 was a good year for Leigh. Employed by Telstra, Leigh was entering his second year at the company and relishing his role as a call-centre worker when he received the news that he had been nominated by the leadership team for a Telstra Quarterly Award. Leigh was even more surprised when he was announced as the winner of the award. Leigh's win on that day remains a source of great pride to him. He was recognised as an outstanding team performer based on a combination of factors including the number of sales he made, his performance against KPIs and his outstanding customer service. What

made this achievement even more remarkable was the difficult path that Leigh had navigated to reach this milestone.

Like many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Whitelion's Indigenous Employment Program, Leigh had had a long period of unemployment and financial hardship. After leaving school in year 10, Leigh had never managed to hold down a job for longer than a couple of months because of family problems that caused him to keep leaving home. At 18 he had no stable place of residence and was technically

homeless except for the times when he was allowed to couch-surf at the house of his girlfriend's parents — but that never lasted long. It wasn't until he was linked into Whitelion that things started to turn around. Not only was Leigh provided with assistance to become job ready and find employment, but his Whitelion-trained workplace 'buddy' provided much-needed emotional support when times were tough. Today, Leigh is a mentor to other young people and is a great example of the transformation that can occur when time, support and opportunity is provided to a young person.

# WHITELION EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

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Many employers are reluctant to hire young people who have a background of offending. And for many young people who experience disadvantage, the fact that they are homeless, dependent on drugs and alcohol, lacking literacy and numeracy skills, and without positive employed role models in their lives makes the prospect of employment nearly impossible.

Whitelion's Employment Program has developed a model that supports the employer and young person to bridge this gap. For many young people, entering into employment is a significant milestone in their lives and equates to much more than having a job and relative financial security. It is the beginning of a new pathway that leads away from dependence and towards independence. It inspires hope and confidence and provides a sense of direction while cultivating new opportunities for young people who have struggled to engage in the workforce and the broader community.

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2012–2013

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- The 30 Jobs in 30 Days campaign was launched in Tasmania by Premier Lara Giddings, resulting in 30 young people being placed into sustainable employment.
- State government of Tasmania supported Whitelion to deliver a 12-month employment program specifically targeting young people in Burnie. As a result 35 young people were engaged, 10 found full-time employment and 20 were connected back into further education and training.
- The Whitelion Employment Program in NSW was expanded into Bankstown and Campbelltown.
- Bain & Company undertook an evaluation of the Whitelion Employment Program in NSW and produced a Social Return on Investment Report that clearly articulates the economic and social benefit of Whitelion's Employment Program.



## PROGRAMS DELIVERED

### THE WHITELION EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

In 2012–13 Whitelion's Employment Program supported more than 450 highly disadvantaged young people aged 16–24 in their efforts to find sustainable employment. Successful intervention requires an individualised approach for every young person, one that takes into consideration the complex barriers that they face in finding work. Participants in Whitelion's Employment Programs are first assessed on their interests, abilities, skills and readiness to enter the workforce. Following this, they are placed into a tailored pre-employment program that is designed to maximise their potential and chances of finding a job role that they will succeed in. Pre-employment training can include vocational training, personal development, linking into job service providers and on-the-job work experience. Young people are placed with a Whitelion employment partner where they undergo the application and interview process. Whitelion workers then provide post-placement support for young people and employers to monitor the progress of the placement.

### WYNDHAM STREETS TO WORK PROGRAM VIC

The Wyndham Streets to Work Program is funded specifically to help homeless young people to find employment. These people, aged between 16 and 25, experience isolation, a lack of connection to the community and limited access to opportunities. We work in partnership with an extensive network of local and regional employers to create a range of employment opportunities in a variety of industries, including hospitality, construction, transport and logistics, retail and administration.

## EMPLOYMENT PARTNERS

KFC, Schweppes Australia, Australian Red Cross, aPlus, Boral, Britex, City of Melbourne, City West Water, Cumulus Inc, Deakin University, Kitjarra, Gforce Employment Solutions, TAC, Telstra, The University of Melbourne, Vision Stream, Max Employment



# EVENTS



## BAIL OUT NATIONAL

Bail Out is Whitelion's annual fund-raising campaign. In 2013 it was held in Hobart, Mount Gambier, Melbourne and Sydney. Participants, referred to as inmates, are locked up in venues such as the Old Melbourne Gaol and Port Arthur and must raise a minimum of \$1000 bail from family and friends in order to secure their release.

Bail Out exposes participants to life on the inside with activities that simulate prison life. Inmates are stripped of possessions, fingerprinted, photographed and are subjected to interrogation. They then appear before a magistrate in mock court proceedings before being sentenced to cell time where they are able to get on the phone to raise their bail.

Bail Out offers an emotional, eye opening and educational experience for inmates across Australia. In 2013, 355 inmates raised more than \$480,000 for Whitelion's programs with young people.

## JUNGLE RIDE 2012 NATIONAL

In 2012, some 160 cyclists raised more than \$18,000 in the picturesque Whitelion Jungle Ride, peddling from Port Douglas to Cape Tribulation. Some participants even rose all the way back. Riders were kept refreshed along the way with designated food and drinks stops. Upon completion of their ride everyone gathered together at a celebration barbeque where riders shared their stories with one another. Prizes were drawn by Glenn Manton from Whitelion, with all jungle ride participants going into the draw.

Whitelion is delighted to be the chosen beneficiary for the Jungle Ride and is overjoyed with not only the huge contribution, but also for the massive support this fund-raising event receives in the local community.

## OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA AND WHITELION AFL FINALS SERIES LUNCHEON VIC

The 2012 Whitelion AFL finals series luncheon provided a fabulous afternoon of fun and entertainment; however the real success of the event was the fundraising result. Every dollar raised from the luncheon contributed to changing a young man's life. The enthusiastic response to the Whitelion appeal illustrated the great appetite our supporters have to help the disadvantaged young people we work with.

The Young Men's Appeal which was highlighted on the day generated over 17 mentoring inquiries, six inquiries about employment opportunities for young people, four organisations inquired about Workplace Giving and over 40 people inquired about volunteering or attending future Whitelion events. The most notable was the increased commitment by those companies/individuals already involved with us, which clearly demonstrates the passion about staying involved and doing more.

## EUREKA CLIMB 2012 VIC

On Sunday, November 18, 2497 fearless climbers and walkers converged on the Eureka Tower to climb 1642 steps as they participated in the Eureka Climb. Congratulations to all the amazing participants, with their wonderful fundraising efforts the event managed to raise over a whopping \$308,000 for Charity Partners Whitelion and Interplast.

This year's event had its fair share of records broken and saw the number of participants and fundraising increasing by 25 per cent from last year. Mark Bourne broke his own record, finishing the climb with an amazing time of 7 minutes and 59 seconds, breaking his winning time from 2011. Alice McNamara won her second female title finishing with a time of 9 mins 51 secs. Congratulations



to Mark and Alice, only onward and upward from here. The day provided participants and their supporters with entertainment such as a Puma running competition against Usain Bolt, roaming stilt walkers, jugglers, product marquees and more.

A huge thank you must be extended to everyone who was involved and contributed to making this year's Eureka Climb one to remember, especially King Performance for organisation such a streamlined event. Thank you to the entire group of event sponsors for their significant contributing and support. A huge thank you much to the valuable volunteers, thanks for getting up so early! Congratulations to everyone who climbed or walked up the stairs on the day, whose support will directly

help disadvantaged young people at home and abroad

## FIVE IN FIVE

Whitelion, together with St Kilda Gatehouse, Kids Under Cover and LiveWires were the beneficiaries of the Five in Five campaign in 2013. Five in Five is a fund-raising campaign run annually in February that challenges single people to go on five dates in five weeks while raising funds to help combat urban poverty. The event attracted 220 registrants with \$60,000 raised in 2013 all funds were divided between programs for all three charities.

## KFC CHARITY GOLF DAY

The 10th annual KFC (Yum) Victorian Charity Golf Day was

held on Wednesday, October 16, at the Settlers Run Golf Course, Cranbourne. The day was attended by Yum head office management, KFC Franchisee owners and staff, Yum suppliers and various corporates with a strong interest in assisting the fund-raising efforts of Whitelion.

KFC has been an integral contributor to Whitelion over many years, supporting disadvantaged young people with employment opportunities and helping to raise much needed funds. This event alone raised in excess of \$12,000 through player registrations, donations and auctions — a fantastic effort from all those involved.

Congratulations and thank you to KFC (Yum) and all those involved on another very successful KFC (Yum) Charity Golf Day.

## THE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

The annual Three Peaks Challenge is a test of courage and endurance and we would like to congratulate all the brave fundraisers who stepped up and scaled the heights of Mount Tennent, ACT, Mount Kosciuszko, NSW, and Mount Bogong, Victoria, in just 33 hours. The challenge is certainly not for

the faint-hearted and aims to raise money and awareness for Whitelion. It is undertaken by young people who are engaged in Whitelion programs, along with staff, mentors and corporate supporters. The 2013 event raised almost \$50,000 to support our work.

## THIRD PARTY FUNDRAISING

### 2ND ANNUAL WHITELION TRIVIA CUP 2012 NSW

The second annual Trivia Cup was held in October at the Bowlers Club @ 99 on York in the city. The event was attended by several of Whitelion's corporate supporters from Westpac, Aberdeen Asset

Management, Qantas, HSBC, Schweppes and Toll Group. Team Westpac took home the trophy and are intent on defending in 2013.

Whitelion acknowledges the generous support of the Bowlers Club and CEO Rocky Massaria, Harvey Norman Balgowlah, Homedics, Schweppes, Le Sands Restaurant and KFC for assisting us with fabulous prizes.

### COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA 2012 NSW

Held in the local PCYC hall, more than 150 members of the local community gathered to enjoy a BBQ, entertainment and a visit by Santa who came bearing gifts donated by supporters and

staff. Open Family Australia have participated in the annual event for many years and with the help of Whitelion staff and supporters, this year's party was a resounding success. Such community events are vital in building and maintaining relationships in the areas we work in.

### BUSINESS BREAKFAST AT AAMI STADIUM SA

In November 2011, we held an enormously successful capacity Business Breakfast at AAMI Stadium. The theme was 'the courage to grow' with Whitelion co-founder Glenn Manton as MC. At this breakfast, we launched Bail Out bound for S.A 2012.

### 30 JOBS IN 30 DAYS TAS

The highlight in Tasmania was the launch of the 30 Jobs in 30 Days campaign. The Premier of Tasmania, Lara Giddings launched an innovative and challenging jobs campaign, aiming to get thirty Whitelion participants employed around the state over thirty days.

Through a kind and generous state-wide television campaign on Southern Cross Television and backed up by our other media partners, Tasmanian businesses were encouraged to register their details with Whitelion through a



“IN THIS JOB YOU MEET PEOPLE FROM ALL SORTS OF BACKGROUNDS, RACE AND RELIGION – HOMELESSNESS DOESN’T DISCRIMINATE AND NEITHER DO WE. HOMELESSNESS DOESN’T CARE WHERE YOU CAME FROM OR HOW OLD YOU ARE. I LOVE WORKING FOR OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA BECAUSE OF OUR ABILITY TO LINK IN WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE. IT’S A HARD LIFE ON THE STREETS – THAT’S WHY WE DO OUR BEST TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE’S LIVES BACK ON TRACK.”

— WHITELION WORKER

dedicated campaign website. The campaign was launched this year in North West Tasmania to highlight the high youth unemployment and opportunities in the region.

Other events in Tasmania included corporate golf days in Launceston and Hobart (sponsored by Budget) and the Launceston Lock-up.

### GREAT SOUTHERN TOUR

Participants from the Great Southern Tour have once again raised much-needed funds for Open Family Australia through their annual golf tournament. The 2010-11 tour raised more than \$11,000 bringing the total funds raised from the tour over the past four years to more than \$50,000. Our sincere thanks go to the tour organisers Josh Maddock, Nathan Rice and James Castley for their ongoing support.

### THE 21 CHALLENGE

The 21 Challenge asks what you can do, or do without, for 21 days to raise money for at-risk and homeless young Australians. The 21 Challenge runs from June 1-21 leading up to the winter solstice and the longest night of the year in the southern hemisphere. This year was the third for The 21 Challenge, raising more than \$115,000 for our outreach programs in Melbourne and Sydney. We would like to thank our event sponsors; George Patterson Y&R, C1 Studios, Programmed and Beat.

### THE CLUB

Our new networking group, The Club, held its first event, ‘An Audience with Phil Ruthven’ at the State Library of Victoria in November. As well as his previous role as chairman of Open Family Australia, Phil

Ruthven is the founder and chairman of IBIS World, an international corporation providing online business information, forecasting and strategic services. Phil is one of Australia’s most frequent and prolific commentators, contributing regularly in the media on business, economic and social issues.

The Club is for dynamic professionals wanting to network with other like-minded people, while raising funds and awareness for Open Family Australia’s programs. Not just your everyday charity or social club, The Club offers volunteer opportunities, exciting events, workshops with top tier industry professionals, as well as creating an exclusive members only based network of supportive individuals.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR ORGANISATION AND REPRESENT AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE THAT ALLOWS THE ORGANISATION TO HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT POSSIBLE. VOLUNTEERS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE CONTRIBUTE IN MANY WAYS ACROSS OUR PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND SERVICES, AND WE WISH TO EXTEND OUR SINCEREST GRATITUDE TO ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED WITH WHITELION AND OPEN FAMILY AUSTRALIA IN 2012-13.**

Below are just a few ways that you can volunteer with Whitelion:

- Event Volunteer.
- Mentor a Young Person.
- Corporate Volunteering.
- Volunteer Your Expertise.
- Donate Your Trade.
- Community Fundraising.

If you would like to find out more about any of the above volunteering opportunities please contact Whitelion on 1300 669 600 or send an email to [whitelion@whitelion.asn.au](mailto:whitelion@whitelion.asn.au)



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

## AMBASSADOR — GEOFF HARRIS

Open Family Australia and Whitelion would like to acknowledge Geoff Harris, a co-founder and major shareholder of Flight Centre Ltd, and vice-president of the Hawthorn Football Club as an ambassador of our organisations. Geoff has been a long-term supporter and advocate for young people at-risk and has supported Open Family Australia for several years.

With the merge of Open Family Australia and Whitelion, Geoff personally pledged a commitment of \$600,000 to be paid over a period of three years and has been instrumental in securing our new premises.

## MAJOR SPONSOR

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Our thanks go to the following sponsors of Whitelion:



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Melbourne Rebels Rugby Union

Melbourne Victory

The Old Bastards

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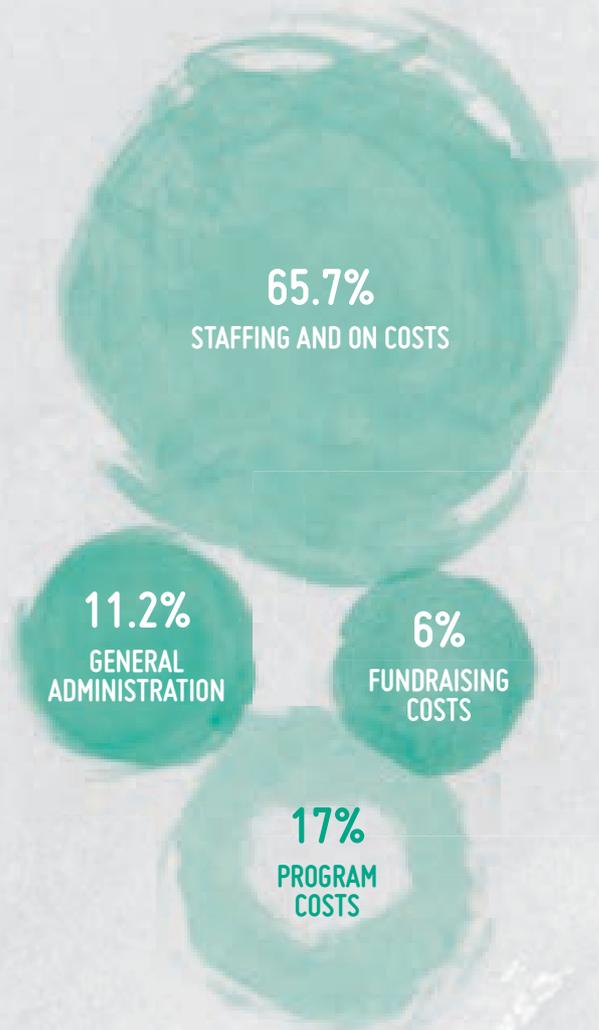
Open Family Australia

...knows the street.

## INCOME YTD JUNE 2012



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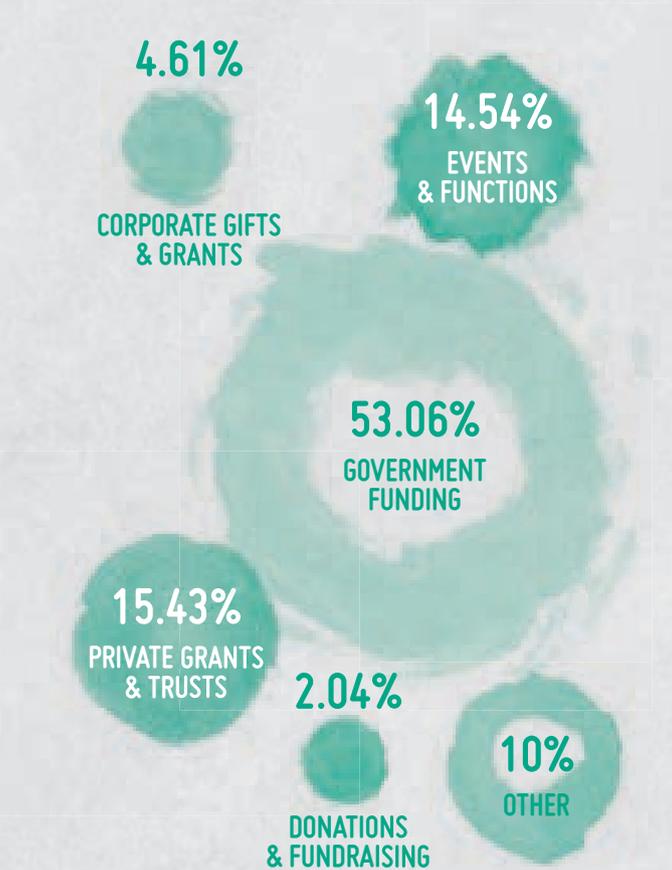


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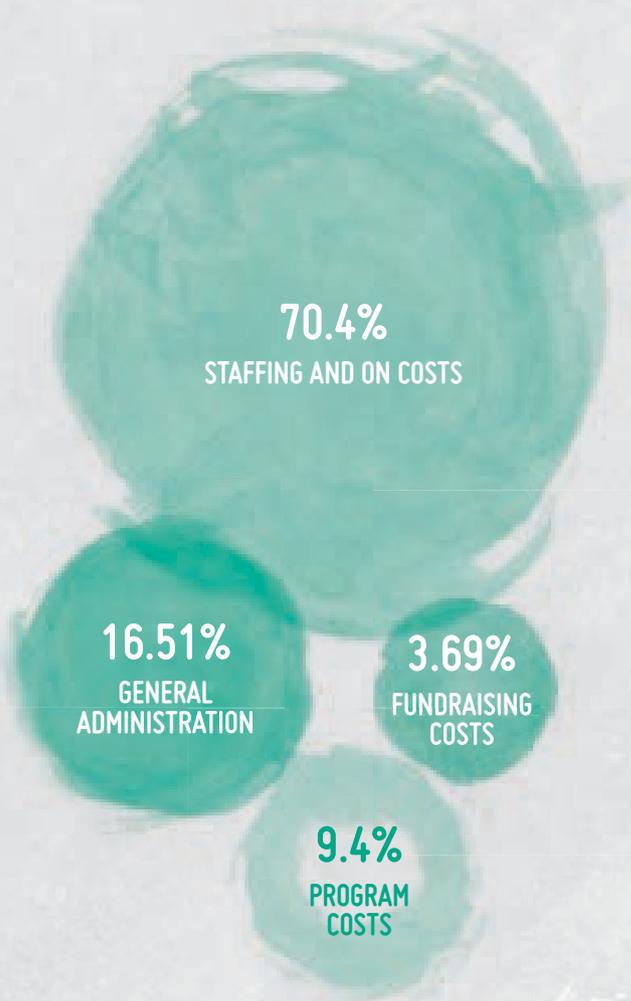


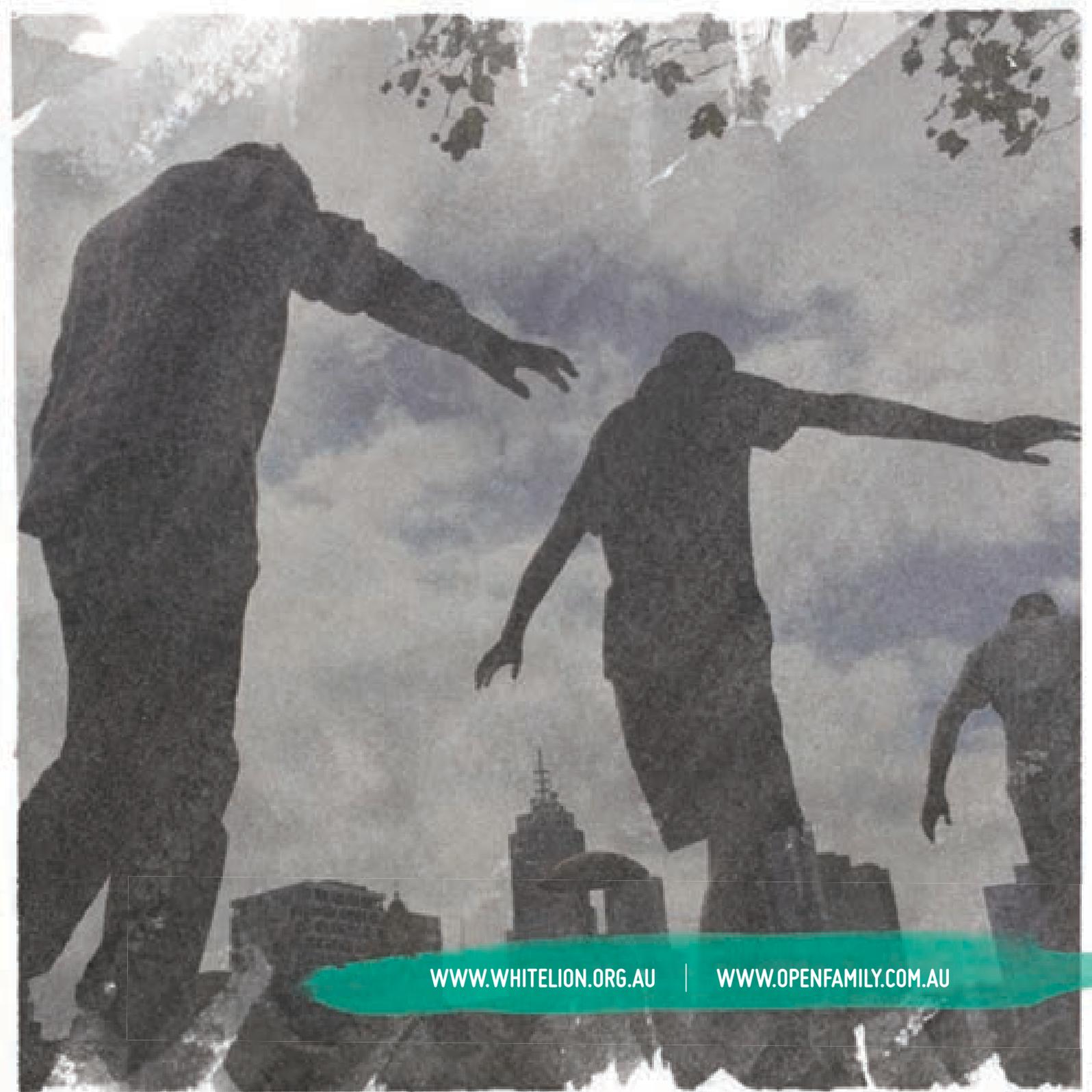
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## INCOME YTD JUNE 2012



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