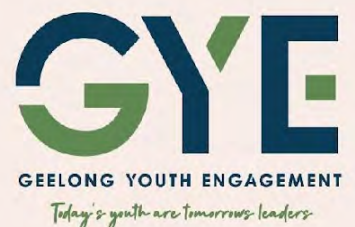




Geelong Youth Engagement Sponsorship Package



Acknowledgement of Country

The Geelong Youth Engagement Sponsorship Package project team acknowledges the Wadawurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands, waters, seas, and skies on which we operate.


We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Nations people.



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Andy Brittan, Chief Executive Officer, Geelong Youth Engagement.

Christopher Oppert (Alumni Mentor).

Catherine Bell, Leadership Portfolio Facilitator, Committee for Geelong.

Karen MacAdie, Leadership Portfolio Coordinator, Committee for Geelong.

Committee for Geelong.

A very special thank you to the participating **schools, mentors** and **past participants** who shared their experiences with us.

The Kokoda Program images and participant quotes used in this report are included with permission from Geelong Youth Engagement.

The Leaders for Geelong Program is made possible through the support of our generous Program Partners and Scholarship Providers

Government Partner



Major Partner



Partner



Scholarship & Grant Providers



Project team



Tim Crowley: Worksafe – Team Leader

I am passionate about the local community, volunteering, sport, and understanding more about the current climate crisis and how this can be addressed. I was inspired by GYE's pitch to the LFG program and honoured to be selected. Andy and Kelly are two quality individuals achieving great results with the Geelong and Bellarine, making a real impact and difference to young lives



Mia Jha: NDIA

I was so pleased that we had the opportunity to nominate for this project and support the amazing work of Geelong Youth Engagement.



Alister Green: GHD – Technical Director

I grew up in a regional area with significant youth disengagement, so I understand the opportunities that organisations such as Geelong Youth Engagement provide to young people. I was thrilled to have a small part in assisting them continue to do the terrific things that they do.



Rebecca Dew: GenU – General Manager Residential & Aged Services

The Leaders for Geelong program exceeded my expectations and being part of the Geelong Youth Engagement project highlighted the positive impact they are having on the youth within our region.



James Brown: Geelong Football Club – Head of Food & Beverage

Having worked in commercial and membership-based organisations my entire career, from the United Kingdom to Geelong, the opportunity to be involved in a project which can genuinely assist a non for profit organisation has been very rewarding. The great work Geelong Youth Engagement does to change the direction of young people's lives in the region has inspired me to ensure I assist in this space ongoing for those less fortunate than I have ever been.

Message from Geelong Youth Engagement

Geelong Youth Engagement (GYE) facilitates mentoring based programs targeting vulnerable young people from our community focusing on - encouraging engagement with education, employment, family and to Increase Youth Confidence, Building Resilience, Increase Self-Belief.

Our flagship program - Geelong Kokoda Youth Program (GKYP) is a yearlong mentoring program which includes 20 weeks of physical training along with program mentors from local business and government organisations to at the end walk the 96km Kokoda Trek in Papua New Guinea.

We have seen over the last few years more young people in need and the program expanding to include students from 17 local schools.

The 'Leaders for Geelong' program was a great opportunity for GYE to lean on the skills of our allocated project team to help us cement the Kokoda program's long-term future by providing the staff at GYE with a tiered marketing strategy to entice new program sponsors.

The team of Tim, James, Alister, Mia and Rebecca have gone above and beyond with this project and kept us very well informed with every step along the way.

With the data the team has gathered we are now able to approach potential sponsors/organisations with more benefits of "why" to support GYE, provide multiple levels of sponsorship options which also encompass our fundraising events and exposure to the greater community.

Further sponsorship would guarantee that our second GKYP is secure and allows GYE to support more young people in need but also creates connections and a sense of community for our mentors who are such an integral part of why our programs are successful.

Thanks to the Committee for Geelong for giving GYE the opportunity to be a beneficiary of this year's Leaders for Geelong program.

Executive summary

Geelong Youth Engagement (GYE) runs a flagship program – the Geelong Kokoda Youth Program – which provides support to ‘at risk’ young people through a 20-week program culminating in the Kokoda Trek.

The Kokoda Program is aimed at Year 11 students from local schools in Geelong, Surf Coast, and the Bellarine region.

GYE represents an innovative opportunity for expanding the prosperity and vitality of the Geelong community by actively involving and empowering young people through the Kokoda trek program.

Participation in the GYE Program provides those young people an opportunity to realise their potential and shape a bright future for themselves.

The Leaders for Geelong project aimed to identify an effective sponsorship package that GYE could offer to current and potential sponsors and donors that would

enhance the engagement of contributing individuals and organisations and assist GYE with expanded sustainability options.

The tiered sponsorship strategy developed by the project team aims to address the evolving needs and aspirations of GYE to secure and expand the Kokoda Program. The project sought to create a dynamic and sustainable strategy that will enhance engagement of stakeholders and foster participation within the local community to contribute and support GYE into the future.

The GYE Kokoda Program seeks to create lasting positive change and contribute to a strong, connected and engaged Geelong community for generations to come. Our hope is that GYE can implement the tiered sponsorship package proposal and project recommendations to generate further community awareness, engagement and support.

Background

Program background

Geelong Youth Engagement (GYE) exists to enhance outcomes for vulnerable youth in our region through mentoring based programs. The flagship program they deliver is the Geelong Kokoda Youth Program which is a 20-week program which involves personal development, fitness, health, diet, and most importantly - role modelling with stable and genuine support. The program culminates in the young people completing the 96km Kokoda Trek in Papua New Guinea alongside program mentors from local business and government organisations.

The Kokoda Program is aimed at Year 11 students from local schools in Geelong, Surf Coast, and the Bellarine region and due to demand, GYE has expanded the program to from one to two cohorts per year (10-12 participants per cohort).

Students are nominated for the Program by schools or community intervention organisations. To date, 149 students have completed the Kokoda Program. 85% of those

students then successfully completed secondary education and 65% furthered their career education at university, TAFE or with apprenticeships. These statistics are important to note with the likelihood of career succession. minor prior to doing the GYE Kokoda Program for these students. The mentors, who are vital to the program, are everyday people, mostly from local sponsoring businesses. Sponsoring organisations that provide mentors generally fund the cost for the mentor as well as funding the cost for a student.

Overall, GYE's main sources of funding are grants and sponsorships. Fundraising activities and donations (including in-kind) also support GYE operations.

To ensure the program remains viable into the future, GYE needs to reduce the reliance on grant funding by increasing the proportion of the program funded via sponsorships.



Why Kokoda?

Papua New Guinea is Australia's closest neighbour and has a deep history with our country and has shaped the way we live today. In 1942 during the WWII campaign a group of young and inexperienced soldiers were tasked with intercepting the invasion of Japanese forces from taking the PNG capital of Port Moresby. These young soldiers were in their early twenties with many still just teenagers. They were outgunned with very little training and ill-equipped. The Kokoda trek is physically, mentally, and spiritually demanding and known to be in the top 3 most difficult treks in the world.

This historical significance is one of the key reasons why the program is based around walking the Kokoda Track, as the program includes an element of the students learning this history and ultimately putting themselves in the shoes of these young people who came before.

They also spend time in villages along the way which provides opportunities for the participants to reflect on and appreciate the opportunities that they have in Australia and for their future.



Walking this trek is a physical, mental, and emotional challenge requiring deep commitment and resilience.

By undertaking the trek, participants call on character strengths and develop fortitude and resilience. The remoteness of the trek also provides the environment for the connection between mentors and student participants to be solidified and the sense of achievement that is felt upon completing the trek is a significant part of the program's impact on the youths feeling strong, resilient, and positive about the future.



Our project

Deliver recommendations on actions to aid and increase the funding model of Geelong Youth Engagement for long term business continuity.

Project drivers

The need for this project is driven by:



GYE's current approach to sourcing and securing sponsorship is based generally on individual negotiation of sponsorship, donation, contra deal or in-kind partnership which, although being personable, is labour intensive and potentially limiting opportunities for a broader business partner base.



Expansion of the program from one to two cohorts per year, requiring double the funding and twice the number of mentors to be provided from sponsoring organisations.



The need for GYE to increase the proportion of the program that is funded via sponsorships to reduce the reliance on grant funding to ensure the future of the program.

Project brief

In response to the project drivers, the scope of this project is to:



Make strategic recommendations to assist GYE in being able to source and secure corporate sponsors.



Develop sponsorship packages which will enable GYE to gain broader access to potential sponsors and mentors.

Project outcomes

As a result of the project, GYE looks to achieve the following outcomes:



Expansion of the current business supporter base in terms of both sponsorship and provision of mentors.



Increased business continuity and certainty to enable at least two cohorts of students to access the program and accordingly to provide the lasting benefits to the students, mentors, and the region that the program offers.



Increase the proportion of funding that is sourced through business sponsorships to at least 50% of program expense.

Benefits to the Geelong Region

This project aims to position GYE to increase long-term sponsorship support to secure program sustainability for the ongoing benefit of Geelong youth.

Participants gain confidence and future career opportunities through community engagement and continuing education outcomes which reduces societal risk factors and enriches regional youth civic participation as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Through the involvement in the program of the mentors, who participate from local business sponsors, further benefit to the region is gained by the expansion of regional leadership capability gained by the mentors.



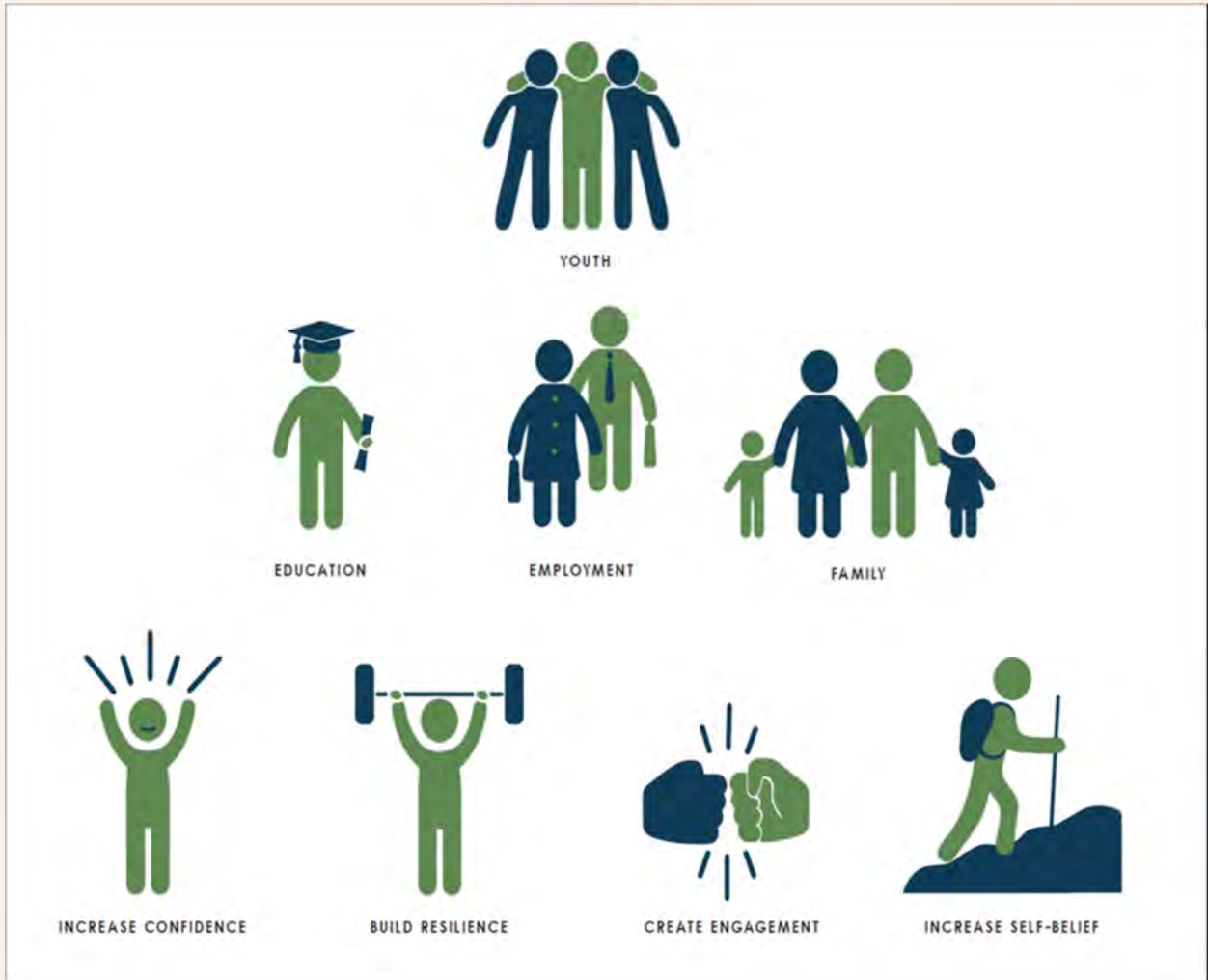




Figure 1

Through the involvement in the program of the mentors, who participate from local business sponsors, further benefit to the region is gained by the expansion of regional leadership capability gained by the mentors.




Our approach

Our approach to developing this project followed an iterative approach between April – September 2023 in line with the indicative timeline below.

Initial research: Comprising two key aspects:





-  Identification of and engagement with other similar not-for-profit organizations and programs to gather relevant insights
-  Review of best practice approaches to not-for-profit sponsorship package development.

Program specific data collection: Capturing the impact of the program, including the following:

-  Past participant testimonials
-  Individual meetings with a past mentors to capture the life changing impact that the program has from the perspective of a mentor
-  Individual meetings with participating schools to capture real anecdotes of broader program benefits beyond the participating individuals

Business community engagement: Understand sponsorship appetite and insights to inform the proposed sponsorship package

Development of core project deliverables: Drawing on the above, including:

-  Recommendations for a more structured sponsorship strategy
-  Development of proposed sponsorship packages
-  Identification of potential future sponsor opportunities for GYE
-  Further recommendations for GYE

Development of Final Report and Project Presentation

Research findings

The project team undertook desktop research relating to organisations delivering similar programs and not-for-profit sponsorship best practice.

Engagement with similar organisations

Key insights from this research included the following:

- GYE delivers a Kokoda program which is uniquely characterised by support for at risk youth within the region and the inclusion of mentors in the program structure.
- Organisations that deliver similar programs use a tiered sponsorship model which provides greater flexibility and opportunities for a larger sponsorship base.
- Fundraising events were also used by these organisations to raise essential funds for program sustainability.

Not-for-profit sponsorship best practice

Accessing good quality information in a timely and resource-effective way is important for a small organisation like GYE. The project team undertook targeted desktop research on best practice approaches to sponsorship in the not-for-profit sector, with the aim of informing the recommendations for the sponsorship marketing strategy and sponsorship package.

Of particular relevance to this project was the **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission** website which provides guidance to charities on corporate partnerships.

Whilst the research for the project was focussed on sponsorship guidance, the project team recognised the value to GYE in being able to access good quality sector information to support their organisation. There are a number of organisations providing guidance and advice on sponsorships and other matters for the not-for-profit sector, including the **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission**, **Our Community**, and the **Institute of Community Directors**

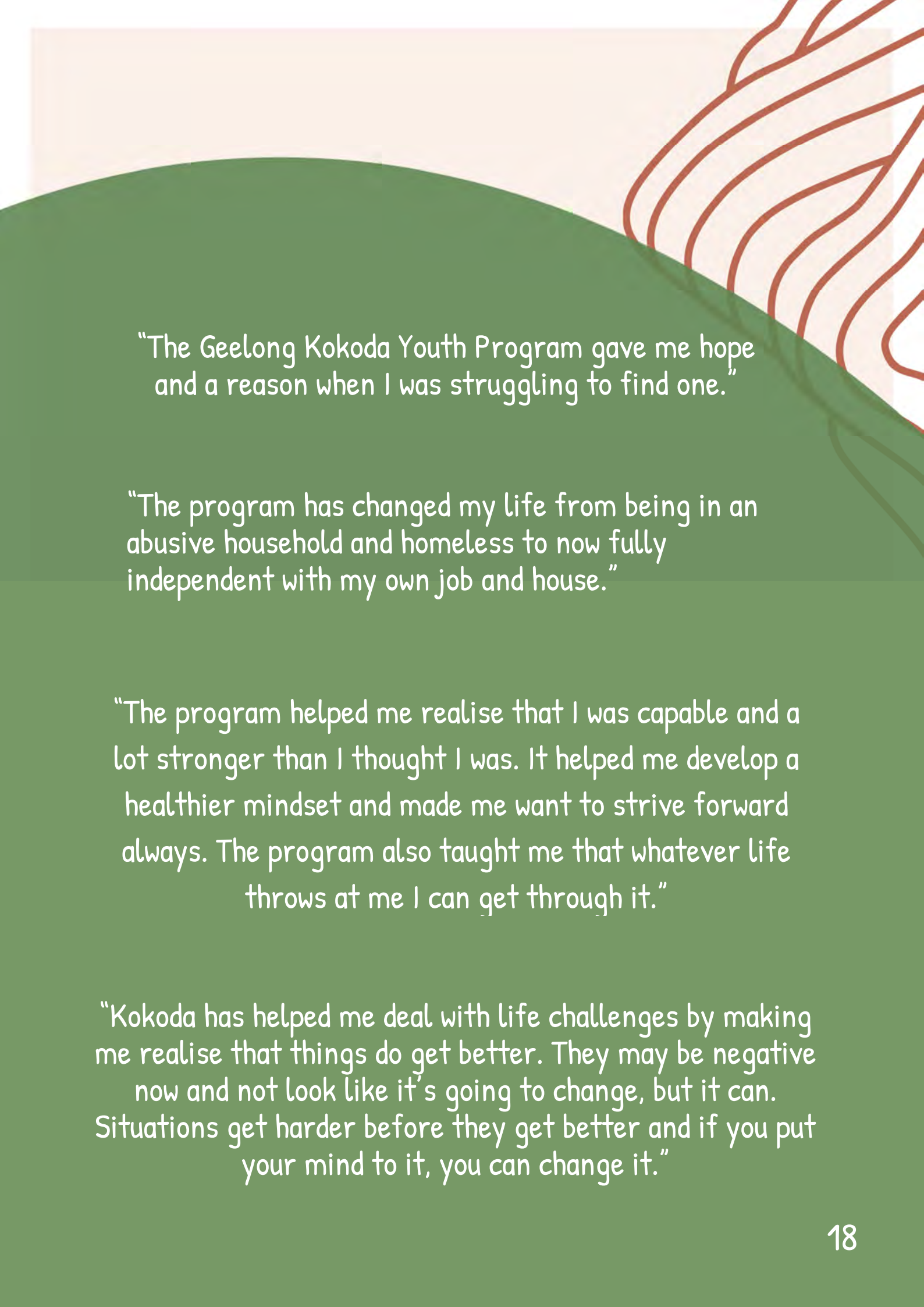
Program impact

A vital component of our project research was to gain insights from current and past student participants, mentors, and participating schools. Key takeaways from this engagement are outlined below.

Past participants testimonials

The most powerful elements of the project research were the stories of past participants about the incredible personal challenges they had faced and the immense impact that the program had on them. The following quotes are provided from GYEs own research and are included with their permission.





“The Geelong Kokoda Youth Program gave me hope and a reason when I was struggling to find one.”

“The program has changed my life from being in an abusive household and homeless to now fully independent with my own job and house.”

“The program helped me realise that I was capable and a lot stronger than I thought I was. It helped me develop a healthier mindset and made me want to strive forward always. The program also taught me that whatever life throws at me I can get through it.”

“Kokoda has helped me deal with life challenges by making me realise that things do get better. They may be negative now and not look like it's going to change, but it can. Situations get harder before they get better and if you put your mind to it, you can change it.”

Past mentor reflections

Mentors play a key role in the success of the Kokoda program. As part of our research, we met with two past mentors and the insights from those discussions are outlined below. It was clear that the program impact extends to the mentors as well, providing them with a life-changing experience, and impacting their own lives and perspectives in positive ways they did not always expect.

Mentor A

Mentor A completed the program in 2016 and reflected on the general rapport that was built through the weeks of training leading up to the trek. This rapport developed into an incredible bond as the trek progressed.

Mentor A still catches up with the student he mentored in 2016.

Year 10 = 20 days of School attended

Year 11 = 20 days of School missed

Mentor B

Mentor B completed the program in 2022. He has continued to play an active role in the schooling and development of the student he mentored as part of the program.

Mentor B reflected on the fact that prior to undertaking the program, the student he mentored attended only 20 days of school (in Year 10), whereas throughout Year 11 (during the program) they only missed 20 days of school. The student is currently completing Year 12 VCE studies.

Post completion of the program, Mentor B has been a key support to the student in obtaining their learner driver's permit and securing their first paid employment position.

Participating schools

The team met with the Deputy Principal and a Principal of two participating schools in the region. Key insights from those discussions are outlined below.

Deputy Principal insights

The Deputy Principal advised that two students are selected each year to be interviewed by GYE for participation in the program who they believe would take maximum value out of the program. Students chosen for the trek generally have a history of disengagement in school, drug use and/or family traumas.

The Deputy Principal commented on the observable personal growth and development in the students who completed the program and the ongoing support for the program from the school.

Principal insights

The Principal from the school in Geelong spoke extremely positively about the program and about GYE. One interesting reflection from the Principal was that when students complete the program, they are offered the opportunity to be a part of the leadership program in their final year. They are also asked to present their story of the program on Remembrance Day in front of 800 peers at school.

The participating students' experiences and their leadership growth also benefits other at-risk students when they return from the trek which was a significant benefit that the program offered this school community.

Program research by GYE

GYE provided the project team with survey data that had been collected from student and mentor participants between 2013 and 2019, some of which is presented in the figures below. Further to the anecdotal information collected from past participants documented previously, this survey data confirmed the impact of the program.

Education

70 of the 87 students who completed the course between 2013 and 2019 provided feedback via the survey. Some of the relevant educational outcomes of the program are demonstrated on **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** below.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of the 70 students who responded to the survey in terms of whether or not they progressed to further education after completing secondary school. This shows that 38 of the 70 went on to do further studies post-secondary school. Of the 23 students that did not complete further studies, only four left school prior to completing VCE.

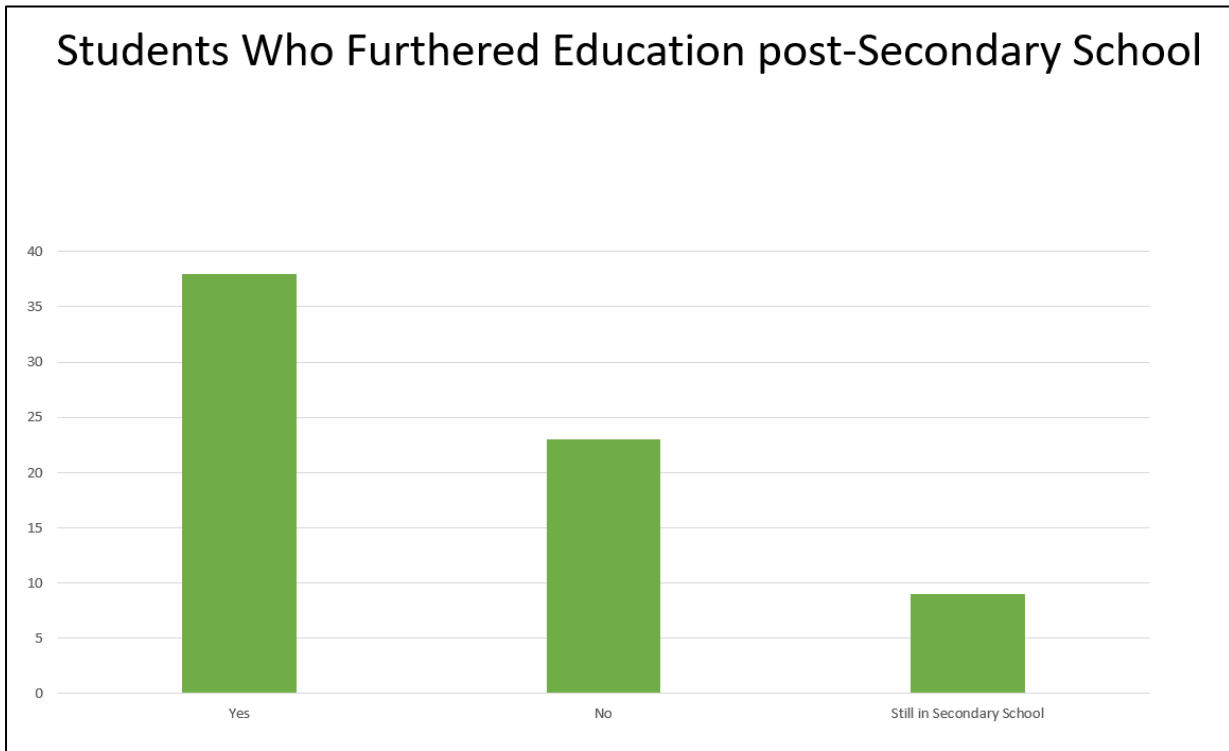


Figure 2

Figure 3 represents the breakdown of the further education undertaken by those 38 students out of the 70 respondents showing the split between university (21%), Tafe (42%) and Apprenticeships / Traineeships (37%).

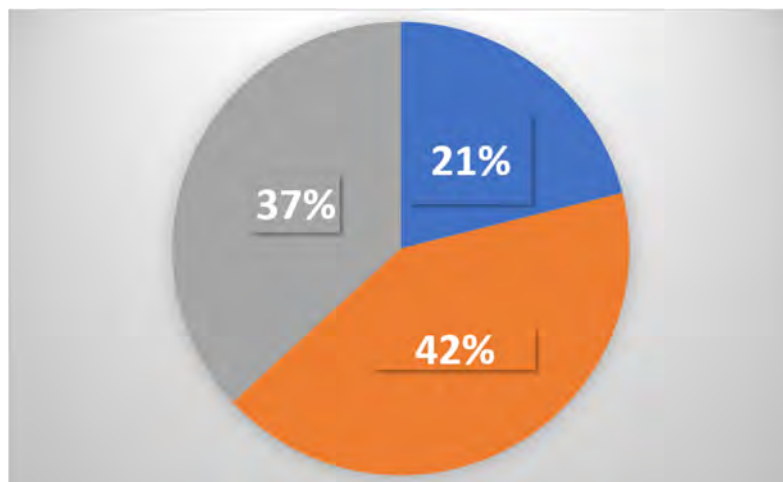


Figure 3

Changing lives

Figure 4, represents the responses to the question of how the student's life has changed since completing the program.

This shows that 35 of the students responded with "a great deal", 20 responded with "a lot" and eight responded with "a moderate amount".

Critically, all students that responded to the survey indicated that their lives had changed because of the program.

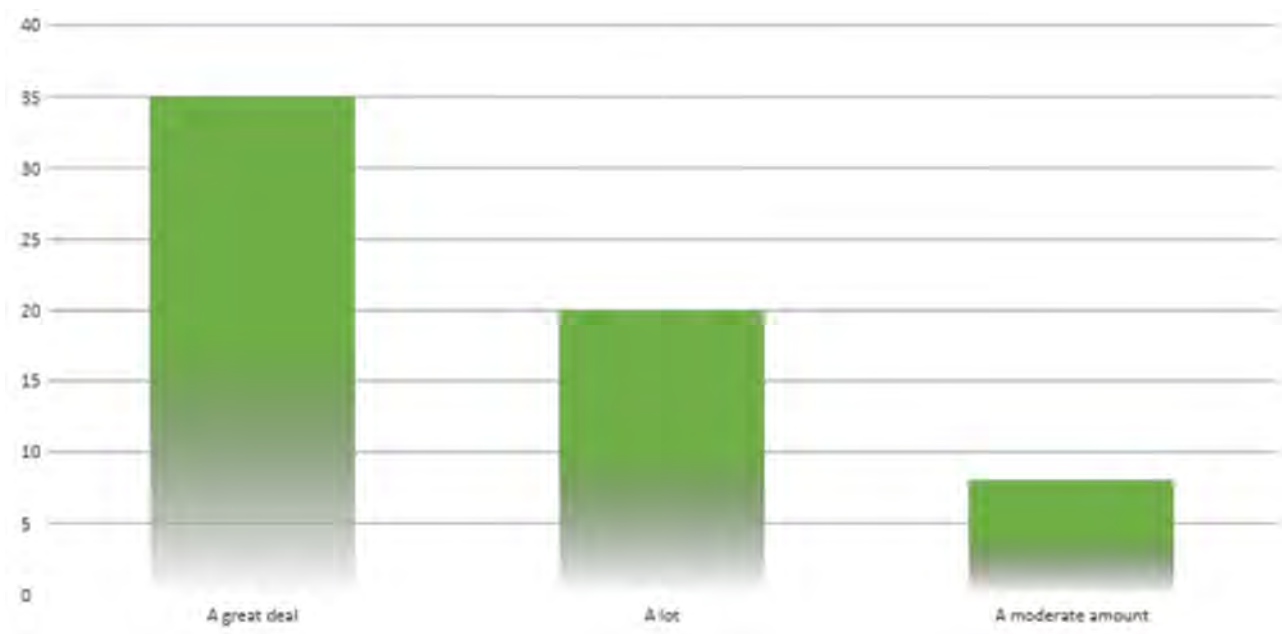


Figure 4

Employment outcomes

Figure 5, below shows past participants' employment status, based on the GYE survey from 2013-2019. The data indicates positive program outcomes as many of the participants responded in the survey that they would not have applied to work, or believed they were capable to do so, prior to completing the program.

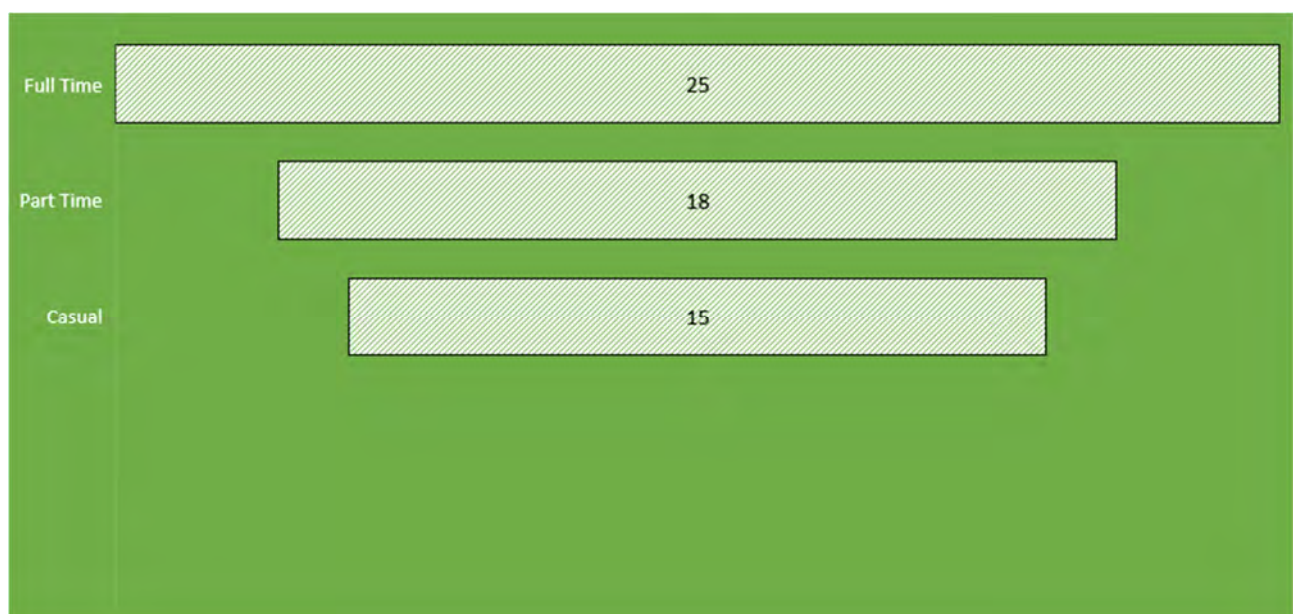


Figure 5

Post-program connections

Of the 70 students who responded to the survey, 82% said they keep in contact with their peers from the program.

Business insights

The following section outlines some of the insights received from the business community in relation to supporting, sponsoring, and donating to not-for-profit organisations in the local Geelong Community.

Sponsorship timing



The majority of businesses that we engaged with want to finalise what they are spending on sponsorship in May and June, starting the sponsorship in July with the new financial year.

Donations



Due to the financial year, April and May is a beneficial time to engage businesses for donations as they are looking to support good causes prior to the end of the financial year.



Businesses donating in May and June, whilst signing up to start a Sponsorship in July, provides an opportunity for multiple funding avenues for GYE during these months.

Personalisation



A unique advantage to the GYE program, compared with other local charities or organisations, is witnessing first-hand the life changing impact the program has on the student.

Connection

Businesses are looking to ensure that any funding support they are committing to through donations, sponsorship, or contra deals, have a direct link to either their organisation or personal life.

Aligning sponsorship with business values is a key element of “why” an organisation would sponsor or donate. However, over the past 12 months, businesses and individuals are increasingly making these decisions based on personal interests and connection to not-for-profit organisations.

Feedback from local business owners mirror this sentiment on a smaller scale, as they want to see their money being used to make a difference. The idea of becoming a “partner” or “sponsor” was much more appealing than “donating”, as they feel more connected to the program.

GYE has a unique ability to demonstrate a direct and tangible outcome on how funding is utilised, along with compelling stories of the way they change the course of young individual’s lives.

Challenges

- There are time pressures for sponsoring organisations that provide a mentor.
- Most of the businesses interviewed, would prefer to contribute smaller amounts to many organisations rather than larger amounts to a single not-for-profit.
- GYE are negotiating on an individual basis which, although is a personable way to interact, it is time consuming, and reduces the potential reach and sponsorship growth.

Donor fatigue

- Speaking to a number of local businesses, both large and small, there is a strong feeling of donor fatigue around the Geelong area.
- Businesses who are wanting to support causes are overwhelmed by the large number of organisations seeking charitable funding.
- Many not-for-profits are over-valuing the return on investment in terms of exposure, reach and marketing worth, that businesses will receive from their sponsorship.
- Feedback from both large and small businesses indicated that the current economic climate dictates the need for a more structured approach to planning for their support of not-for-profits.



Sponsorship term

Businesses were surveyed about long term sponsorship deals and provided the following feedback.

Current financial climate

With many industries still experiencing financial instability post-COVID, businesses are reluctant to commit to sponsorship terms beyond 12 months.

Options

There are a number of worthy causes seeking funding support with more emerging every year. Businesses want to retain choice in sponsorship decisions. Although all businesses surveyed indicated that when they sponsor an organisation such as GYE, they typically commit ongoing on an annual basis.

What is in it for them?

When asked about multi-year sponsorship, businesses queried what the benefits were to the sponsoring organisation.

Renewal process

Ensuring the renewal process is refined was a common theme amongst businesses who have continued to provide ongoing sponsorship to NFPs. They are looking for engagement at times which suit the financial year, along with ensuring there is a considered and understood timeframe of when organisations will re-engage to discuss the following year's potential contributions.

Tiered sponsorship opportunity

The project team discussed the potential for a more structured tiered sponsorship approach with some local businesses and received positive feedback.

Tiered sponsorship packages allow businesses to commit to one of a range of options which suits them best and allows them to sponsor and be part of the program.

Potential risks

- Current sponsors downgrading to a lower-level sponsorship.
- New sponsors defaulting to the lowest sponsorship tier.
- Capacity to manage a higher volume of sponsors and meet their expectations

The above risks are considered low due to current sponsors understanding the value and importance of the program.

Our research with GYE suggests that once businesses or individuals engage in the program as a sponsor, retaining them is not one of their main challenges. A tiered sponsorship approach will allow current sponsors to consider expanding their support rather than reduce it.

Project recommendations

Based on the research undertaken, the project team has developed key recommendations for GYE's consideration. Further to these recommendations, the team also met with the Project Sponsor in September 2023 to present more detailed insights from the research phase relating to sponsorship strategy and packages.

Recommendation one

GYE considers the proposed enhancements in their sponsorship strategy.

Recommendation two

GYE considers developing a structured communications campaign to boost community and corporate awareness.

Recommendation three

GYE considers adopting a tiered approach to sponsorships, with delineated funding options and sponsorship benefits.

Further detail of these three key recommendations is provided in the following sections.

Recommendation one

GYE considers the proposed enhancements in their sponsorship strategy.



Expand package offering

Expand the current sponsorship strategy to include detailed options for organisations to provide in-kind support, expertise, and one-off financial donations.



Mutual benefits

Promote the value of sponsors for mutual benefit, such as shared local community standing and support, and the opportunity for sponsor organisations to promote their involvement.

Strategy approach

Underpin the implementation of the sponsorship marketing strategy, with the development of:



- A structured approach to managing the lifecycle of corporate partnerships, including undertaking a risk assessment before entering into a partnership.
- A sponsorship engagement plan that can be shared with sponsors to highlight opportunities for engagement throughout the year.

Website enhancements



Consider further enhancements to the website to include more detailed information on how to offer in-kind support, one-off donations, volunteering, fundraising, merchandise e-sales; make it resource-neutral through finding in-kind support/ expertise for web design.

Recommendation two

GYE considers developing a structured communications campaign to boost community and corporate awareness.

Communication strategy

Getting the word out to the local community about GYE and the Kokoda trek program requires an ongoing communication and awareness strategy.

The following communication channels are recommended to assist with GYE future sustainability:



- Expanded local media coverage.
- Expanded social media engagement.
- Re-design GYE website.
- Email newsletters.
- GYE merchandise to sell online.
- Providing past mentors and participants with a communications package they can use to become Program Ambassadors.



Recommendation three

GYE considers adopting a tiered approach to sponsorships, with delineated funding options and sponsorship benefits.

Tiered sponsorship

Based on the project research, GYE may be able to expand their sponsorship base through the inclusion of tiered sponsorship options.

The ability to onboard new sponsors to support GYE, even at an entry level sponsorship, gives the ability to connect and engage with them.



This approach would seek to yield the following outcomes:

- Ability to engage, connect and gain sponsorship with more businesses across the region.
- Ability to build on introductory level sponsorships over time and develop long-standing relationships.
- Structured approach to event sponsorship for the future

Highlight benefits

Articulation of sponsorship benefits linked to the different sponsorship package tiers would enable GYE to manage sponsor relationships more effectively over the life cycle of the sponsorship arrangement.



Renewal process




Commence the renewal process with current sponsors within 6 – 8 weeks of the program ending and provide sponsors with feedback on program outcomes at the earliest opportunity to support their renewal considerations.



Consider offering payment terms at times which suit the fiscal year, as this will assist businesses planning.

Proposed tiers

INCLUSIONS	SPONSORSHIP COMMITMENT				
	NAURO	MENARI	KAGI	DENIKI	KOKODA
Commercial recognition opportunities and exposure at all GYE Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product placement - Sponsored golf holes - Speaking or demonstration opportunities 					✓
Participate in the trek and provide mentorship for one youth inclusive of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flights - Trek equipment - Footwear - Clothing - Meals - Guides - Accommodation - And much more Financially supporting the trek backpacks and contents required to complete the trek				✓	✓
Company Logo recognition on all trekker's shirts			✓	✓	✓
Two tickets to our GYE Trivia night			✓	✓	✓
Two tickets to one of our Corporate Golf Days			✓	✓	✓
Two tickets to our GYE Corporate Long Lunch		✓	✓	✓	✓
Financially support a youth to participate in the Kokoda Trek and 22-week program		✓	✓	✓	✓
Company Logo recognition on GYE website/socials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Company Logo recognition at GYE events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GYE Sponsorship Pack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GYE Stubby Holder x 2 - GYE Hoody or Polo x 2 - GYE Information pack 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

EVENT SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	
<p>Long Lunch Sponsorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event naming rights - Three-minute commercial or speaking opportunity. - Table of 10 attendees - Advertising opportunities throughout the event - Expanded reach through GYE network across Geelong, Melbourne, and Regional Victoria - Company recognition on GYE website/ socials 	
<p>Golf Day Sponsorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event naming rights - Three-minute commercial or speaking opportunity. - Group of four attendees Golf & Lunch - Advertising opportunities throughout the event - Expanded reach through GYE network across Geelong, Melbourne, and Regional Victoria - Company recognition on GYE website/ socials 	
<p>Sportsman's Night Sponsorship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event naming rights - Three-minute commercial or speaking opportunity. - Table of 10 attendees - Advertising opportunities throughout the event - Signed memorabilia piece. - Geelong Cats Social Club Membership x 2 - Expanded reach through GYE network across Geelong, Melbourne, and Regional Victoria - Company recognition on GYE website/ socials 	

Challenges



Throughout the project, the team were faced with several challenges, with the key ones outlined below. The challenges presented gave the project team the fantastic opportunity to work more closely with each other and with GYE which ultimately resulted in a greater outcome for the project.

Sensitivity

The project team remained mindful of the fact that the student participants of the Kokoda program are Year 11 High School students. The group consulted with GYE and the associated High School to undertake an interview. This meant that the information and stories that were provided were of a small subset.

Engagement

There were a number of competing priorities for the project team throughout the project period. The project team avoided engaging with some local organisations identified by GYE as having conflicts of interest. The project group relied upon personal/professional relationships to obtain information from businesses to support the project deliverables.



Opportunities

The development and implementation of a tiered sponsorship package and targeted communications provides opportunities for GYE, including the following.



Potential to increase **financial sustainability** through an expanded sponsorship and donor base.



Potential to increase **community awareness** of the Kokoda Program through a dedicated social media profile, leveraging local media interest and empowering program alumni with the communication tools to become Program Ambassadors.



Potential to **expand** the number of young people on the Program each year by taking a continuous improvement and refinement approach to the sponsorship package and communications campaign.



Limitations

The project recommendations and outputs have been developed following the research and engagement activities outlined in the report. The project team acknowledges the following limitation with regards to implementation of the project recommendations.

Resources

GYE is a small organisation which currently operates with only two FTEs. These staff are responsible for the management of all GYE's operations, which includes other programs in addition to the Kokoda Program. Therefore, enacting all recommendations may be challenging from a resourcing perspective.



Conclusions

Group reflection

As a group, we all gained more than we had initially expected from our participation in this project.

After speaking with Kelly, the project champion, and Andy, the CEO of GYE, we were captivated by the inspiring success stories of the participating students and the positive outcomes for the Geelong region.

The stories extended to past students, who were 16–17 years old at the time and facing the challenges of transitioning into young adulthood, navigating high school, and dealing with issues such as mental health, substance abuse or family struggles. Mentors also shared their journeys with us, with many continuing to support the students in subsequent years.

We feel honoured to have supported GYE with a project aimed at assisting their financial sustainability and we look forward to a lasting connection.

Similar to the Kokoda trek, our support for GYE, along with students and mentors who take part in the trek, creates a lasting connection with no specific end date.



Summary

In conclusion, GYE requested a sponsorship strategy that would position them for increased financial sustainability, to continue offering the Kokoda trek program to students who may be at risk.

With the tired sponsorship package approach, our project team developed a sustainable solution to assist future planning and increased funding to support and business continuity.



