



Phoenix House Social Impact Report

The Wellbeing of
Young People in
Northern Sydney

March 2021

Prepared by





Contents

Introduction	3
Why Measure Social Impact	4
The Phoenix House Mission	5
Program Summary	6
Demographics of Program Participants	8
The Measurement Approach	9
Theory of Change	10
Social Impact Measurement Findings	11
The Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework	20
The Data Lifecycle Transparency Page	21
Awards	22
Get Involved	23
Get in Touch	24



Improving the **Wellbeing** of At-Risk Young People

Family breakdown, family violence, isolation, mental health and addiction issues do not discriminate and cut across the whole community – the Northern Sydney area is no different. One in eight young people in the area aged between 15 to 19 years are not in education or employment putting them at greater risk of long-term unemployment, cycles of low pay, employment insecurity and social exclusion.

Phoenix House exists to stop this cycle before it begins, providing holistic support to the most challenged young people in Northern Sydney and ensuring they can realise their full potential, achieve their goals and transform their lives.

With 30 years of experience, Phoenix House places young people at the heart of everything they do, ensuring their programs meet the specific needs of more than 300 individuals they work with each year.

In partnership with Huber Social, Phoenix House has embedded an active measurement system, giving greater insight into the young people they work with and the ability to prove and improve the social impact of their programs.

For three years now, Huber Social has specifically measured the impact of the Transit Program – an education program that provides young people who are struggling in mainstream schooling an alternative pathway to achieve a Year 10 equivalent qualification. Huber Social's established measurement system demonstrates how the program contributes to participants overall well-being and the levels of capability and access to opportunity provided by the program.

This report is the third in a series of annual Social Impact Reports to track the impact of the Transit Program, ensuring that Phoenix House can continue to refine the program to have the greatest impact.



Phoenix House provides **early intervention and support services to the most challenged young people in Northern Sydney and delivers **life-changing outcomes.****



Why Measure Social Impact?

Social impact measurement demonstrates the success of the Transit Program at Phoenix House and provide indications of areas for improvement in the delivery of the program.

1. Prove

The measurement framework measures a shift in the well-being (impact) and outcomes for the young people participating in the Transit Program each year.

It provides data and insights that allow Phoenix House to articulate its social value to internal and external stakeholders.

2. Improve

The measurement framework provides a data driven approach to understanding the needs of young people in the program. This informs targeted investment to maximise social outcomes going forward, and to facilitate effective collaboration where appropriate.



The Phoenix
House Mission

We help young people to realise their dreams and aspirations, **unlock their potential**, achieve their goals and transform their lives.



Transit Program

Summary

The Transit Program is one of four Phoenix House programs with the aim to inspire a life-long love of learning. The program targets young people for whom mainstream schooling has been challenging, where they have not been able to realise their full educational potential.

The Transit Program is an alternative pathway to education with wrap-around support of case management and counselling for each disengaged young person. In partnership with Macquarie Community College, the Transit Program enables students to complete a Year 10 equivalent qualification in a flexible learning environment, a Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways.

Key features of the Transit Program include:

- **Flexible** - a self-paced supportive learning environment that accommodates different styles of learning.
- **Supportive** - wrap-around support services help address all barriers to education.
- **Engaging** - Students are encouraged to build on natural talents throughout the course and discover where their passion and interests lie.
- **Tangible** - students are given real trade and work experiences equipping them with tangible skills they can use to gain further employment or study.
- **Future focused** - individual learning plans have a focus on preparing students for entry into further studies or employment.

The Outputs of the Program

From the launch of the program in 2016 until 2020, we have had 10 cohorts totaling:



121
students



and celebrated
97
graduates*

We worked with
34 schools

in Northern Sydney during that time period, and continue to work with many of these schools into 2020



**Some students who don't graduate re-engaged back to schools or into vocational programs.*



Other Phoenix House Programs and Services

Resourceful Adolescence Program (RAP)

RAP is an evidence-based educational approach to address the need for positive wellbeing and life-skills; offering strategies to address issues such as anxiety, depression and disengagement, by promoting mental health in teenagers.

Parenting

Phoenix House parenting programs offer parents a wide variety of support via live events, monthly groups and connection to service providers. They are aimed at meeting the needs of parents of teens who are struggling to stay engaged.

Case Management

An integral element of the wrap-around-support provided for young people at Phoenix House is the relationship developed with our Youth Development Specialists, through case management. This working relationship is underpinned by a strength based approach, that facilitates identification and utilisation of the young person's values, existing strengths and abilities.

It is centred on the individual person, based on their needs and goals. Young people engaged in case management build strong, positive, & collaborative working relationships with their Youth Development Specialist.

Counselling

We at Phoenix House understand that young people often need extra support in forging their own way in the world, especially if they have faced hardship, adversity and have been socially marginalised, like a lot of the youth we meet.

Individual counselling for young people aged 15 to 24 is provided in a safe, respectful and supportive environment by caring professionals, for young people to explore challenges, develop coping strategies and helps foster hope. The approach is strengths based and respectful of a person's history and circumstances; focusing on client goals and client desired outcomes.





Phoenix House Transit Program **Impact Thesis**

An Impact Thesis outlines how a program intends to achieve its overall impact.

Through measuring each level of impact, Phoenix House can use a data driven approach to demonstrate what works and what is needed to maximise impact and outcomes.

The following model is based on the Transit Program.

1. **Impact**

Phoenix House aims to improve the Wellbeing of young people, so they are in the best position to reach their full potential and to live a life they value.



2. **Outcomes**

Phoenix House aims to help young people become learn ready, life ready and work ready by building capability and increasing opportunities in the following areas:

- Wellness (mental and physical health)
 - Resilience
 - Life skills
 - Self-development
 - Access to societal structures and services
 - Access to relationships
 - Access to resources
-



3. **Outputs**

The above impact and outcomes are achieved through the following outputs:

- Students who have successfully completed the Transit Program over a semester
 - Students who go on to engage in further study or gain employment
-



4. **Activities**

These outputs are a result of the following activities:

- Educational program based on individual learning plans
 - Counselling
 - Case management
 - Study support
 - Social activities
 - Providing lunch
 - Marketing and fundraising activities
-



5. **Resources**

The above impact requires the following resources:

- Funding
 - Staff: Teachers, admin and support, case managers, counsellors
 - Physical space
 - Technology and equipment
-



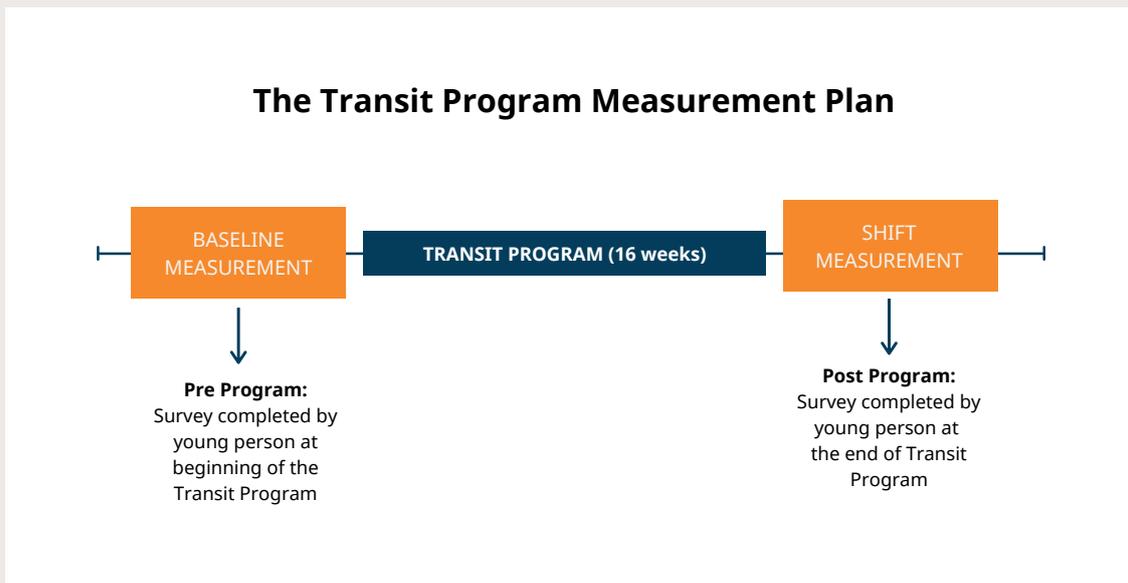
The Measurement Approach

Phoenix House has been working with Huber Social to embed a measurement system for the Transit Program since 2018. This report summarises findings based on data collected from six Transit Programs held in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

To measure the impact of the Transit Program Huber Social measures the 'shift' in the subjective well-being of the young people in the program, along with their levels of personal capability and access to opportunities. For further information on the Huber Social Well-being Measurement Framework see page 17.

To demonstrate this shift for Phoenix House, Huber Social collects data from the young people in the program using surveys. These surveys are completed on the first and last days of the program, as indicated in *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1. Transit Program Measurement Plan





Demographics of Program Participants

The Transit Program is targeted at young people in Northern Sydney. The data used in this report is gathered from 6 cohorts of Transit Programs run from 2018 - 2020. The sample was made up of 77 young people who completed a survey. This group of young people, at the pre-program measurement, looks as follows:

Age: The majority of students were 17-18 years old (82.5%).

Gender: 60% were female, 39% were male and one participant was transgender.

Employment status: 20% of participants were in some form of employment. 40% were students and 40% were unemployed.

Sexuality:

- 71% of the participants identified as heterosexual;
- 23% as homosexual, bisexual or other; and
- The remainder either selected 'not sure' or did not respond.

Relationship status:

- 61% were single;
- 29% in a casual or long term relationship; and
- 10% selected 'other' or did not respond.

Living situation:

Accommodation:

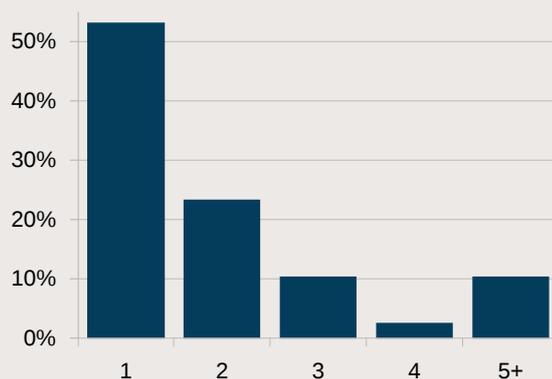
- 10% lived in some sort of supported housing (e.g. government housing or residential care);
- 70% lived with family;
- 3 people reported being homeless;

Number of places lived:

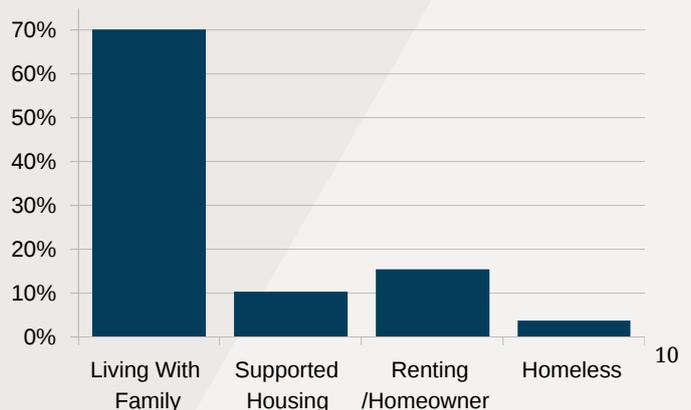
- Over 50% had relative stability, living in one place in the past year;
- 36% lived between 2 and 4 places in the past year;
- 10% reported living in 5 or more places.



Number of places lived



Current Accomodation





Key Findings: The Impact of the Transit Program

1. Improves Overall Well-being

Phoenix House creates a positive shift in overall well-being for the young people who participate in the Transit Program.

2. Addresses Priority Needs

Through statistical analysis comfort with vulnerability, pride in accomplishments and the ability to track and set goals, were identified as priority needs that contribute the most to overall wellbeing.

Not only did participants in the Transit Program see growth in all three of these areas, pride in accomplishments and comfort with vulnerability saw two of the biggest shifts across all factors measured.

3. Achieves Target Outcomes

Participants in the Transit Program experience positive shifts in key areas Phoenix House target including life skills relating to relationships and employment; self-acceptance; building resilience; and reducing feelings of sadness.

4. Graduates know how to care of themselves and are job ready

The highest scoring factors for Graduates of the Transit Program show that they have a good understanding of how to care for their health and how to keep a job.

5. Graduates greatest challenges are in mental health

Graduates leaving the Transit Program face challenges relating to feelings of anxiety, guilt, anger and shame which sometimes disrupts their work or study. While not surprising, this insight provides Phoenix House with information to best support young people as they leave the program.



Phoenix House Improves the Wellbeing of Young People in the Transit Program

+30%
increase in Wellbeing

The Well-being Metric measures an individual's satisfaction with life using a globally recognised scale.

On average, the young people in the Transit Program experienced a 30% positive shift in their well-being between starting and finishing the Transit Program.

The shift in well-being is statistically significant (p-value 0.032). This indicates we can be 95% confident that the shift is real and tangible i.e. we would be likely to see the same results if a similar, but different group of Transit Program participants were surveyed.

This 'shift' measurement includes data from 47 participants who successfully graduated from the program from 2018 - 2020.

See the Demographic and Transparency pages for more information on the sample and treatment of data throughout the data lifecycle.





Wellness and life skills are **most important to the Wellbeing** of young people when they join the program

In order to inform how to best support the young people in the Transit Program, analysis was performed to understand the factors that have a significant relationship with overall well-being.

Across all factors measured, the below factors were most important to the well-being of young people when they first start the Transit Program program. These findings provide Phoenix House with areas of focus in order to maximise their impact on overall well-being.



Wellness Vulnerability

The ability to be emotionally open and vulnerable to other people



Wellness Pride

Having pride in yourself and your accomplishments



Life Skills Goal Setting

The ability to set goals and track progress towards them

An Opportunity to Focus

Further analysis was then conducted to understand priorities within these needs. This is achieved by overlapping the predictors of well-being above and the lowest scoring factors for the young people at the start of the program, thereby identifying what is important to the participants, but also what has not been sufficiently addressed in their lives leading up to the program.

Of the above three predictors of high well-being, vulnerability was one of the lowest scoring factors at the baseline measurement with a score of 2.96 out of a possible 7. In order to have the most effective impact on overall well-being, the Transit Program would do best to target and improve in this area. As evidenced on the following page, the program is already working to achieve this.

Predictors of High Wellbeing - The Statistics

FACTOR	P-VALUE
Feeling comfortable being vulnerable	0.007
Feeling pride in accomplishments	<0.001
Setting and tracking goals	0.002

A low P-value indicates a greater level of confidence that the relationship is statistically significant. In this case we can say with greater than 99% confidence that all these factors meaningfully contribute to wellbeing.

This statistical analysis was conducted using all 77 baseline survey responses collected since 2018, regardless of whether they completed the program. See the Transparency Page for more information on the treatment of data throughout the data lifecycle.



The Transit Program Addresses the Needs for Young People in the Program

Participants in the Transit Program saw increases in all three predictors of high well-being. Two of the needs saw some of the biggest positive shifts of any factor measured, which demonstrates that the program is not only well-targeted to the needs of the young people who take part, but that it's effective in meeting those needs.



Comfort with Vulnerability

+67%

Through improving self-acceptance and mental health with counselling and the promotion of positive, healthy peer and community interactions, the young people in the Transit Program experienced a statistically significant ($p=0.05$) increase in feeling comfortable being vulnerable with others.



Pride in Self

+69%

Phoenix House improves self-pride and self-esteem by assisting young people to achieve their goals through case management support. Young people in the Transit Program experienced a statistically significant ($p=0.02$) increase in having pride in their accomplishments.



Setting and Tracking Goals

+22%

Through creating individual learning plans and encouraging young people to focus on their natural talents, the young people in the Transit Program saw improvement in feeling that they were setting goals and tracking their progress towards them. This change was not statistically significant to a 95% confidence level ($p=0.25$). However, we can be 75% sure that these results would hold if the measurement was conducted again with a similar group of people.



The Transit Program Achieves its Target Outcomes

Huber Social measured the impact of the Transit Program across a range of different wellness, resilience and life skills capabilities to see how the young people were affected in different areas. The percentages below represent the largest statistically significant positive shifts that those who graduated from the Transit Program experienced between their pre and post-program surveys.

Aligned with the Transit Program's target outcomes (see the Theory of Change), the **biggest areas of impact were achieved in relationship and employment skills, pride, emotional health, and the ability to cope**. These outcomes contribute to Phoenix House's mission to put at-risk young people in the best position to fulfill their potential and live a life they value.

Life Skills - Relationship Skills

+95%

Increased capability in relationship skills e.g. knowing who to trust

Life Skills - Employment

+69%

Increased ability to apply for and secure employment

Wellness - Self Acceptance

+69%

Increased pride in accomplishments*

Life Skills - Vulnerability

+67%

Increased ability to be vulnerable with others*

Wellness - Sadness

+57%

Reduction in feeling sad or unhappy

Resilience - Coping

+56%

Increase in feeling of ability to handle multiple priorities



* indicates this factor is also a priority need (i.e. a predictor of high Wellbeing).



Phoenix House "makes me feel comfortable and that I belong"

"Before I came [to Phoenix House] I used to get anxious about meeting new people, and I didn't really want to be around people. Since I have been here I have made friends with the other students and I find it easier to talk to people.

Each staff member takes time to get to know me and help me, and that makes me feel comfortable and that I belong.

I am also proud of myself because I am doing work. I have done more work here in the last term than I did in my whole high school. There is a really big difference between here and school. I now put effort into coming, much more than I did when I was at school."

- Phoenix House participant



Transit Program Graduates know how to take care of themselves and are **job ready**

As part of the measurement process, Huber Social assesses a broad range of factors to give a holistic picture of the young people in the program. The following strengths have been identified by assessing the highest scoring factors for young people at completion of the program.



Life Skills - Health Management

Perceived knowledge of safe sex practices and risks



Life Skills - Job Attitude

Able to do what is important to keep a job



Life Skills - Health Management

Perceived knowledge of the health risks of using drugs, medication, alcohol and smoking



Wellness - Gambling

Low rate of gambling



Life Skills - Health Management

Knowledge of where to get reliable information on health





Challenges at Graduation

Despite the Impact and Outcomes achieved by the Transit Program, young people who graduate from the program still have a number of challenges to overcome.

The following challenges have been identified by assessing the lowest scoring factors for graduates to help inform how Phoenix House can best support graduates as they leave the program. Phoenix House takes a holistic approach to supporting young people and so there is an opportunity to support graduates with other programs, or through community referrals.



Wellness - Anxiety

Feelings of anxiety



Wellness - Guilt, Anger or Shame

Feelings of guilt, anger or shame



Wellness - Sadness

Feelings of sadness



Wellness - Substance Use

Perceived use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco putting health at risk



Wellness - Health

Physical mental or emotional health disrupting work or study

Please note:

- While these are the lowest scoring factors, this does not mean that the young people have not improved on them between the start and end on the project. For many of these factors there has been significant improvement (such as feelings of sadness), however they remain a challenge moving forward.
- In many instances, such as with substance use, the young people may be more aware of the how their use of substances puts their health at risk than they were at the start of the program



"Transit has allowed me to use my own strategies that help me focus and complete my work. The staff, the other young people and the Phoenix Fridays programs allow me to be part of a community program so I have met new people. I have more motivation to do work and look for a job. I also have a lot more confidence to talk to people I know.

I am a lot less stressed, which means I now am happier and I sleep much better."

- Phoenix House participant



The Huber Social Well-being Measurement Framework

For society to achieve collective well-being we require a universal measure of well-being that is holistic enough to account for each of our unique needs, but that can also be applied in practical terms. To answer this call, Huber Social has developed the Huber Social Well-being Measurement Framework.

To be able to fulfill their potential and achieve well-being, each individual needs to have the capability and the opportunity to do so. Everyone has different needs within these categories depending on their context.

The goal for each of us is the same; well-being. The part that differs, are our individual needs.

When it comes to measuring the social impact of a service, Huber Social measures the 'shift' the service creates in terms of well-being and the specific programs outcomes achieved to create this. Results are then consolidated at a sector, community and global level.

Longitudinal measurement monitors effectiveness of programs to meet these needs; ensuring resources are directed to have the greatest impact. The vision is a well-being measurement system that delivers us the whole picture, to put each of us in the best position to achieve Wellbeing and leave no one behind.

IMPACT

Well-being

To be in the best position to fulfil your potential and live a life of value. The overall goal for all services working with people.

OUTCOMES

Through building

Capability

- Resilience
- Life skills
- Mental wellness
- Physical wellness

OUTCOMES

and providing

Opportunity

- Resources
- Self development
- Societal structures
- Relationships



Data Transparency Page

To ensure the integrity of findings always, Huber Social includes a Transparency Page for every project. This ensures both the rigour of evidence and rigour of analysis is clear for each project, across every stage of the data lifecycle.



Phase	Questions on the Treatment of the Data	Points allocated	Yes or No	
Design	SAMPLE	Everyone in the program included in the measurement	2	2
		OR Survey sample population designed to be representative of group	1	-
	BASELINE	Control group (independent of the intervention)	3	-
		Group baseline measured (pre -intervention)	2	2
		Baseline inferred from time in program (e.g. 1 vs. 3 years)	1	-
EXCLUSIONS	Details of people specifically excluded from the measurement: <i>All program participants that finished induction and started the program completed a baseline survey. All graduates completed a shift survey.</i>	N/A	N/A	
Data Collection	DISTRIBUTION	Online surveys		Y
		OR hardcopy surveys		-
		Data collection supervised by Huber Social consultant	1	-
	DATA SOURCES	Translation or guidance provided	N/A	N/A
		Data Mining of other sources	1	-
Cleaning	CLEANING	Data included from previous years/measurements	1	1
		Partial responses removed or no partial responses	1	1
	SHIFT MEASUREMENT	Details of any responses removed: <i>Partial answers removed where demographics completed, but not answers for wellbeing, capability or opportunity questions.</i>	N/A	N/A
		Calculated on time in program		-
		Calculated on group average	1	-
Analysis	SAMPLE	Calculated based on individual scores	2	2
		Description of same: <i>77 individual measurements, with 47 'paired' responses (Same ID number with a pre and post program measurement). Sample of 77 used for demographic and statistical analysis. 47 paired responses used to determine 'shifts'.</i>	N/A	N/A
	TEST APPLIED	Basic analysis		Y
		Testing for significance in shifts	1	1
		Regression Testing	2	2
Reporting	REPORTING	Client published Outcomes Report (prove)	1	-
		Client received Social Performance Report (improve)	2	2
		Client published full Social Impact Report	3	3
RIGUOUR SCORELOW: 1-9; MED 10-14; HIGH 15-19		HIGH	14	



Phoenix House Awards

Phoenix House have received the following awards in recognition of its social impact.



**North Sydney Council
Community Group
of the Year 2021**
Awarded to the Student Reference Group at Phoenix House Youth Services



**NSW Government
Community Group
of the Year 2019**



**NSW Government
Young Citizen of the
Year 2020**
Awarded to Zoe Moore



Help Turn Young Lives Around

DONATE

Did you know that 1 in 8 young people in the affluent North Shore are not in education or employment? They are stuck in a place where there seems to be no way out, no future, no hope. Yet these young people have dreams, just like you and me.

Please consider Phoenix House Youth Services and those we serve. No gift is too small. Your generosity will enable us to serve more young people in the Northern Sydney area. All donations will go directly to the cost of running programs and activities for the young people. Investing in our youth will not only unlock their potential, it will create a more vibrant and safer community.

Donate page can be found on the website:
phoenixhouse.org.au/transforming-young-lives/.

VOLUNTEER

Phoenix House relies on the support of businesses and community organisations to deliver its programs for young people. We run a number of projects and activities such as Mentorship for Youth, Friday lunches, Workplace giving, group volunteering onsite and corporate fundraising and encourage you to volunteer with us and for us!

Details of how you can contribute can be found at:
phoenixhouse.org.au/volunteer/



Get in Touch



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