



Empowering  
young people  
to build  
their own  
future

# The TRACTION Way - PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

# Our purpose



Our purpose is to empower vulnerable young people to discover, connect, and realise their own positive and successful future. We understand that without early intervention and access to positive role models, young people are at risk of disengaging, experiencing isolation, and potentially falling into predictable negative trajectories.

## Our Difference

Our difference comes from the relationships we develop with young people and the learning environment we create. Purposeful, safe, and trusting relationships have enduring and measurable effects. We collaborate and work in partnership with other agencies to complement the work that they are contracted to deliver. In addition, we also have the means to help create richer community environments for young people by inviting engagement with the business sector and other philanthropic foundations.

## Our Mission

Sparking potential  
in young people





## Our Values and Beliefs

We believe that by providing safe, inclusive and action-based learning environments, young people can build their self-esteem and find a sense of belonging. In turn, this can lead them to discovering their potential and creating their own futures. Our values underpin all that we do.

**Courage:** We try new things and challenge established ways when improvement is believed possible.

**Respect:** We listen to and seek to understand all perspectives. We believe in acceptance and honour diversity.

**Initiative:** We believe in ourselves and in the ability of others. We see possibilities and take positive action.

**Connection:** We believe in the power of positive connection and belonging in improving peoples' lives. We are empathetic, genuine, and trustworthy in our relationships.



## Our Approach

TRACTION's approach is informed via theories that help us recognise and respond to the reality that some of the young people that engage with our programs have had traumatic experiences, or don't always experience safe and secure connections to family and community.

We understand that social systems and structures play a vital role in keeping young people connected to a community where they have a voice and are listened to. We recognise the importance of keeping young people engaged and supported, especially as they navigate key transitional milestones from childhood through to adulthood so they may build resilience to help them cope with daily life.

We know that facilitating connections and a sense of belonging is crucial in promoting engagement, wellbeing, and growth. We place significant effort in establishing relationships and a supportive group work environment. Our mentors are key to this process as they promote social and emotional learning and build trusting and collaborative relationships.



## Our Impact

We see this resulting in young people developing and enhancing their strengths and abilities, and acquiring and applying new knowledge and skills.

We acknowledge and support young people's efforts in developing effective coping skills. We celebrate with them as they transfer these changes into other areas of their lives; be that in developing healthier identities, re-engaging with learning, identifying educational and future life goals, and in maintaining supportive relationships with peers and other adults.

# Why TRACTION?



## What we know - Young people in Queensland 2022

### What you see

Young people 'on the tools', supported by mentors, completing projects in a workplace-like environment.

### What's happening under the surface

#### Challenges

Some young people feel unsafe, unsupported and are struggling to see a better future  
Many young people do not feel safe at home or at school and they can struggle to feel a sense of control over what happens for them in their life. This can make it more difficult for young people to access support to imagine a different and better future.

Some young people are isolated and disconnected and can fall through the gaps in service systems  
Not feeling worthwhile, experiencing neglect or being at risk of harm can result in being isolated and disconnected from significant others. Complex problems and entrenched disadvantage can make it difficult to access help. Increasing demand on existing service systems exacerbates access.

Some young people don't have the tools or resources they need to cope with life's challenges and are at risk of disengaging from school and family life  
When young people develop positive and supportive relationships with others and receive support and encouragement, they can develop confidence to seek help to explore what they can do rather than what they cannot.

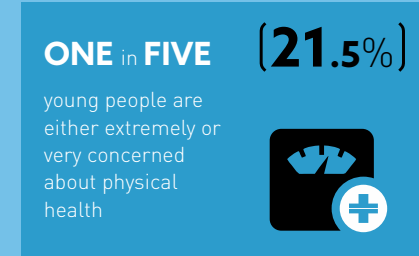
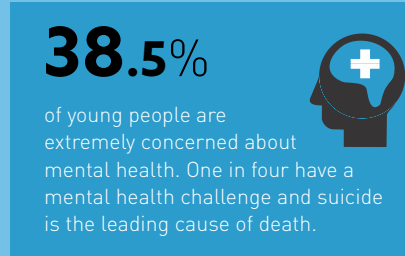
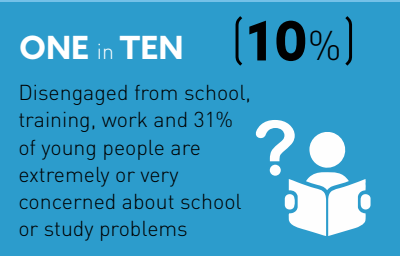
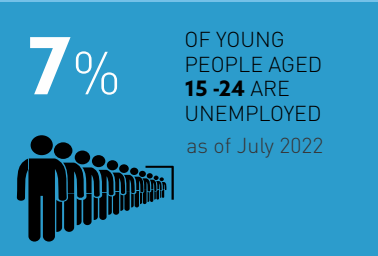
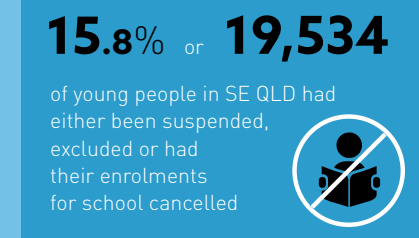
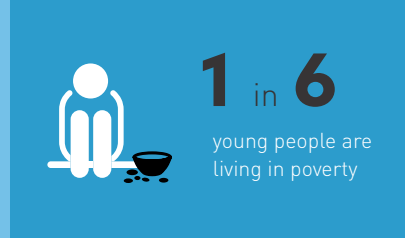
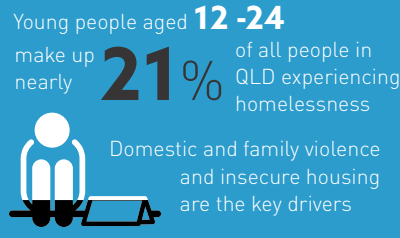
#### Contributing Factors

(for some young people)

Poverty, distress, adversity, housing and food insecurity, isolation, Poor physical health, Mental health challenges

Neglect  
Family addiction, domestic violence  
Fractured family & friendships, limited social connection, dysfunctional relationships, Lack of support, guidance, and assistance

A lack of confidence and poor sense of self worth  
Disengagement or school refusing  
Learning challenges or difficulties or behavioural disorders



# Our Approach

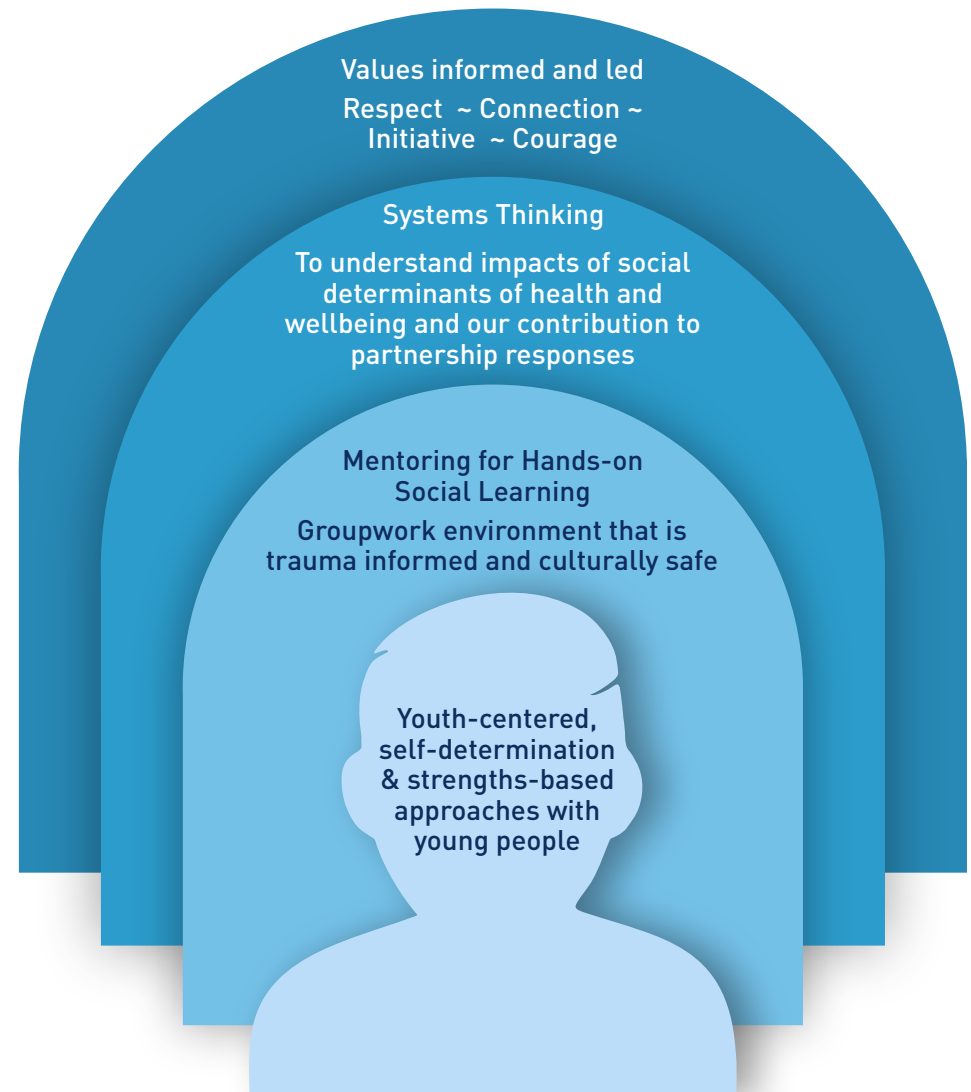
We know that most children and young people are happy, safe, loved and supported. We also know that this alone does not protect all young people all the time. Regardless of circumstances, additional support can positively promote young people's resilience and positive mental health.

We understand how family pressures can create stress and anxiety, and can impact young people's wellbeing and the resilience that they require to manage life's challenges effectively.

For some young people, the traditional school environment isn't equipped to actively engage them consistently all of the time. The pressure to attend school and perform to the level required can be beyond a young person's resources. The pressure and demands on the education system to be responsive to all students is an almost impossible ask.

We believe that TRACTION programs can help buffer some of these impacts and improve children and young people's well-being. Our programs are designed to build young people's strengths and capabilities to help them build resilience and skills to navigate life's complex experiences.

Our programs are developed in accordance with a range of theoretical approaches well known for providing the basis for positive relationships and creating conditions for growth, learning and development. These include youth-centered, strengths-based, trauma-informed approaches and social learning and self-determination theory. A systems-wide perspective also ensures we acknowledge the causes and impacts of structural disadvantage on young people's full participation in their community.



# Community Engagement

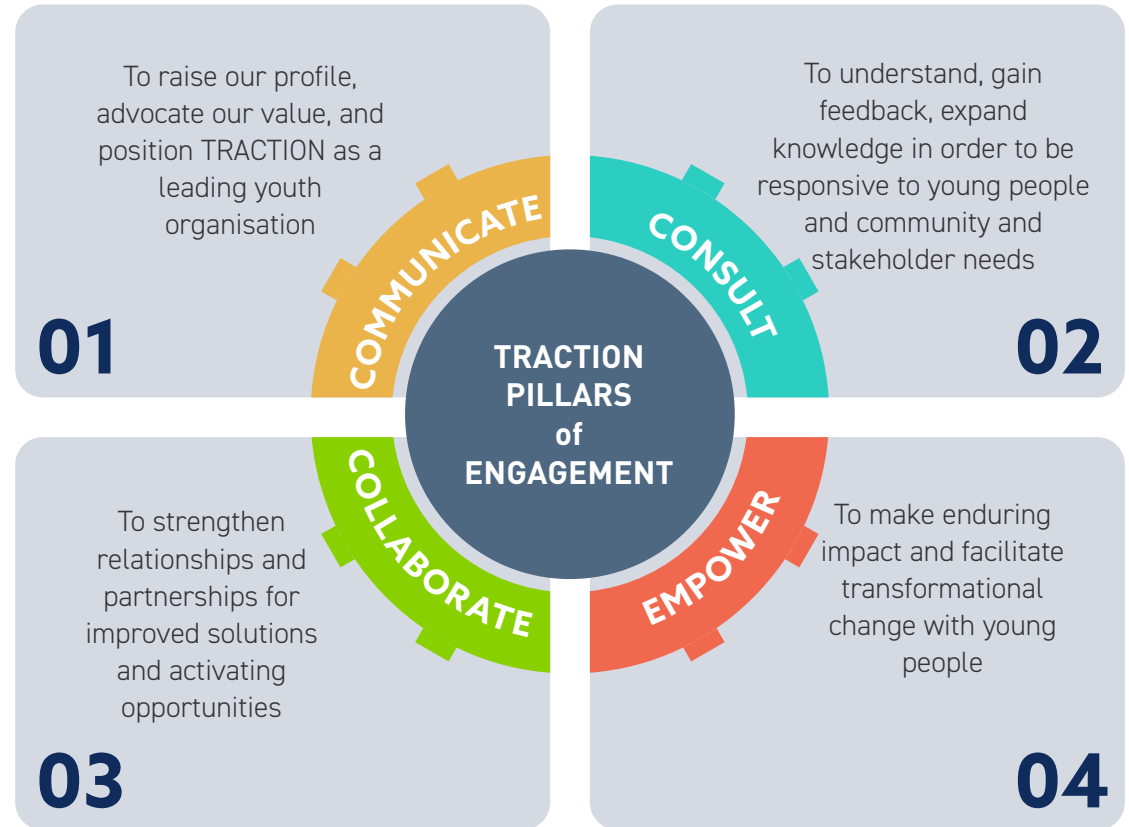
When we engage well with our communities and stakeholders, TRACTION is better placed to support young people on the journey towards empowerment.

Our partners and supporters from philanthropic, corporate and business sectors, government and non-government agencies, and invested individuals and groups, are the driving force that makes our work possible.

TRACTION provides a tangible and direct way for our committed benefactors to advocate for and support young people and communities. Mutually beneficial outcomes are achievable when partners collaborate towards a shared vision.

Our pillars of engagement are designed to support transparent two-way partnerships with stakeholders to meet the expressed needs of our communities where relationships are established for longer term benefits.

Our aim is to maintain open and inclusive partnerships that seek to build our capacity and capability for enduring impact with young people.



# Our Program Platform

Behind our signature bike build, small engines and boom box workshops is an intentional program structure that purposefully build young people's:

- potential and confidence,
- well-being and resilience,
- opportunities to self-discover strengths and,
- development and growth of practical, teamwork and leadership skills essential for learning and life.

There are 5 core components underpinning all of our programs. Over the duration of our workshops, mentors engage young people to; strengthen skills for learning, to embrace more active and healthy lifestyles, for supportive connections and relationships, and for appreciating their potential as influential community members and leaders. The 5 components support young people to:



**01 Be a Learner** – all our programs promote social and emotional learning to support a positive and independent future through goal setting for educational engagement and vocational and career pathways

**02 Be Active** – our bike build and 'Gear Up' curriculum promotes physical literacy, safe participation and social inclusion for an active and engaged lifestyle

**03 Be Well** - our bike build and 'Fuel Up' curriculum engages young people to develop confidence and capacity for positive choices, healthy habits, managing challenges, help seeking and holistic wellbeing

**04 Be Connected** – strong connection and relationships with individuals, family, community and culture foster inclusion, belonging and resilience

**05 Be Influential** – our 'Taking the Lead' curriculum supports critical thinking, and building potential for making informed and optimistic life choices.

Our youth-centred, hands-on learning approach provides the platform to be responsive to the unique needs of each group of young people across any one or more of our five program components.



Adolescents need investment from the individuals and institutions around them to promote positive development, to prevent health problems, and respond to them if and when they occur. Actions which build competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring will enable adolescents to stay healthy and to get back to good health. They will also enable them to cope with challenges they face and to use the opportunities that arise in their lives.

WHO. (2021) Promoting Adolescent Wellbeing.  
<https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-adolescent-well-being>

# Workshop Offerings

## Bicycle Build Program:



Provides the opportunity for young people to gain experience in bicycle building and maintenance. Participants build new bikes from scratch and along the way, develop their riding skills and road safety awareness whilst creating their own custom bike designs. Participants keep their completed bikes at the end of the program.

## Small Engines Program:



Participants are introduced to mechanical concepts and the operating principals of small engines, undertake fault diagnosis and problem-solving exercises and complete projects, such as rebuilding and reconditioning a Honda 'postie' motorcycle.

## Boom Box Program:



Participants build their own portable Bluetooth Speaker system from up-cycled e-waste, including laptop batteries and computer speakers, and ex-army ammunition boxes. The program introduces participants to innovative fabrication technologies based on 3D-printing, basic electronics, and shows how to recycle electronic waste to produce one-of-a-kind, sustainable sound systems, that participants keep following their graduation.

## Fuel Up Program:



Sadly, 40% of TRACTION participants arrive at the workshop without having eaten breakfast and without food for lunch. The Fuel Up program builds awareness of the importance of food and nutrition for physical and mental health, and as a foundation for learning. Participants learn how to prepare meals and enjoy the benefits of nutritional eating.

## 1-day Bicycle Programs:



TRACTION delivers 1-day bicycle build, maintenance, and riding skills programs for communities in need across south-east Queensland through our mobile outreach and 'pop up' options. Over the day, participants build bikes, learn about maintenance and bike safety.



# Our People

## Our people

We are committed to fostering a workplace that prioritises the holistic wellbeing of our team.

We aim to maintain transparent and sustainable workplace structures, systems and processes that are responsive to organisational needs and goals while also recognising the needs, strengths, and contribution of each team member.

While the work that we do with young people is inspiring and rewarding, we also acknowledge that at times it can be demanding, complex, and stressful. We value our people and are committed to being proactive instead of reactive in guarding against vicarious trauma, burnout, and stress that can result in team attrition, dissatisfaction with the work and undesirable interactions with our young people.

## Our values and wellbeing

**We believe that enacting our values fosters a safe environment that nurtures supportive relationships, and a sense of belonging and purpose that results in our team connecting well with one another and their work.**

### Respect -



Holding Respect as a core value requires each TRACTION member to enhance our own and each other's wellbeing in our workplace, by keeping each other safe, exploring individual differences, and acknowledging and working with diversity. Wellbeing thrives when team members feel respected and included. TRACTION outcomes will always be stronger when there are high levels of respect and care between all individuals in our broader team.

### Initiative -



Initiative takes root and grows when team members are confident, optimistic, and resourceful, and know that their safety and security are priorities for our business. We each have a unique contribution to make in achieving TRACTION purpose and impact. Wellbeing is supported when we collectively commit to making a difference.

### Connection -



Wellbeing is boosted through teamwork that cultivates learning and growth, and safeguards against isolation and stress. Strong relationships develop when our team members know they are valued and feel the support of a workplace that promotes positive connections and wellbeing.

### Courage -



TRACTION acts to support and challenge team members to overcome difficulties and find solutions that will lead to improved practices and results. Wellbeing is strengthened and courage enhanced in our workplace when individuals see challenges as opportunities for learning and growth, in a culture that seeks to maximise the wellbeing of all members.

# Theory of Change

TRACTION applies a social and experiential learning process where mentors support young people to build their resilience, teamwork and leadership skills.



## NEEDS

Positive learning environments

Resilience and mental health

Practical, teamwork, and workplace skills



## INPUTS

TRACTION mentors and support staff (experienced members of the TRACTION team)

TRACTION curriculum (designed and structured to effectively engage young people)

Spaces (safe, functional workshops and program delivery locations)

Referral Partners (schools, government and other agencies who refer and support young people)

Supporters (who provide funding and resources to help build capability and capacity)

Quality systems & processes (to ensure consistency in delivery and outcomes)

Effective governance mechanisms - including an active Board (risk management, continuous improvement and sustainability)



## ACTIVITIES

We

By

Provide programs that give hands-on learning experiences and the chance to complete projects.

Mentor young people to build a broad range of skills for learning, life and work.

Support young people to improve practical, personal and workplace skills and competencies.

Working with young people aged 12-17 in programs delivered in an educational setting.

Training and utilising mentors in a social and experiential learning environment.

Reinforcing and recognising positive behaviours, providing feedback, and providing team and leadership opportunities.



## OUTPUTS

- # participants supported
- % attendance rate
- % completion rate
- # programs delivered
- # programs developed / program formats
- # communities reached (across SEQ local government areas)
- # program delivery locations
- # referral agencies engaged
- # accredited mentors
- # hours of mentoring provided
- # bikes donated
- % participants given breakfast
- % satisfaction rate



## OUTCOMES

Short-term / key protective factors

Medium - long term

Improved learning engagement and achievement of educational goals

Improved resilience and self-efficacy through the opportunity of experiencing success

Improved ability to self-regulate behaviour and enhanced practical, teamwork and leadership skills

Positive educational experiences and diverse transition pathways  
SDG 4: Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all

Enhanced community engagement, health and wellbeing.  
SDG 3: Healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages

Workplace preparedness through development of workplace skills and competencies  
SDG 8: Inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

# Practice Framework Summary

## OUR PRINCIPLES

Youth - centered • Learning oriented • Culturally safe • Collaborative



## OUR KNOWLEDGE

### Organisational

- Systems & processes
- Technical knowledge

### Theoretical

- Eco-systems perspective
- Trauma aware & sensitive
- Capabilities approaches
- Person Centered Practice
- Social Learning Theory
- Self Determination Theory
- Resilience Theory

### Personal

- Values
- Beliefs
- Culture

### Practice Wisdom

- Boundaries
- Self-awareness
- Emotional intelligence
- Lived experience

### Participant

- Young people
- Adolescent brain development
- School & community engagement
- Family and kinship support
- Youth and family support systems



## OUR VALUES

### Respect

We listen to and seek to understand all perspectives. We believe in acceptance, and honour diversity.

### Connection

Positive connections and belonging improve peoples' lives. We are empathetic, genuine, and trustworthy in our relationship.

### Initiative

We believe in ourselves and in the ability of others, and we lead by example. We see the possibilities and invest our energy constructively.

### Courage

We try new things and challenge established ways when improvement is believed possible.



## OUR SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES

- Positive role modelling
- Building respectful relationships
- Foster safe learning environments
- Encourage creativity
- Foster teamwork and leadership
- Stakeholder engagement
- Interpersonal skills
- Culturally sensitive
- Trauma aware
- Professionalism
- Honesty
- Empathy
- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Respectful of diversity
- Humour



## OUR TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Young people mentored to develop and uphold group and individual values
- Wellbeing check-ins led by young people foster positive connections
- Goal planning with young people to identify their ambitions and the steps required to reach their goals
- Activities designed to build confidence and self-esteem
- Effective emotional and behavioural regulation techniques supported via mentoring & role modeling
- Team building and leadership activities to encourage connection and build social skills
- Group work and one-on-one support to work autonomously and as a team
- Supportive challenges to build resilience via practical tasks and activities
- Strengths-based feedback loops
- Safe & welcoming learning spaces that foster belonging and inclusion
- Supportive feedback to assist young people to reflect on and celebrate progress
- Hands-on-learning in a self-paced supportive environment
- Non-judgmental, positive and appropriate communication and interactions
- Practical support and resources for healthy habits

REVIEWING OUR WORK, MONITORING OUR PROGRESS AND TRACKING OUR IMPACT

# Program Evaluation Framework

Evaluation is embedded across all facets of our organisation assisting us to continuously improve and evolve to empowering young people in need and meeting community needs. We are dedicated to drawing collective learning from young people, team members and other agencies within the community service system.

As a team we are committed to building a culture of life-long learning, and we engage with ongoing reflection and review for the purpose of continual improvement. This action learning approach provides a process for how we manage learning and improvements. Evaluation facilitates a way for TRACTION to build internal capacity, adequately support staff and continue to grow and improve.

## Measuring success

The TRACTION Program Evaluation Framework (PEF) assists us to answer the following questions:

- Is TRACTION doing the right things?
- Is TRACTION doing things right?
- Is it making a difference?
- How can TRACTION learn from evaluation and redesign its approach?

## Program Evaluation Framework – measurement model

### Why us?

TRACTION programs positively engage and build the capability of young people in ways which enhance the efforts of schools and agencies that provide specialist support for young people in the human services sector.



#### Outcomes

(Key protective factors)

Improved learning engagement and achievement of educational goals

Improved resilience and self-efficacy through the opportunity of experiencing success

Improved ability to self-regulate behaviour and enhanced practical, teamwork and leadership skills



#### Outcomes

(medium – long term)

Positive educational experiences and diverse transition pathways

SDG 4: Inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all

Enhanced community engagement, health and wellbeing

SDG 3: Healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages

Workplace preparedness through development of workplace skills & competencies

SDG 8: Inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

### Why now?

TRACTION represents a modest investment in prevention and early intervention that gives young people a chance to achieve their potential, contributes to positive, sustainable and healthy communities, while alleviating pressure on the education, justice, welfare and healthcare systems.



#### Evaluation questions

How well do young people improve their capacity to develop positive connections with peers and mentors?

To what extent do young people improve their school engagement and identify educational goals, such as further training, work experience, apprenticeships and career options?

To what extent do young people increase their resilience and self-efficacy?

How well does this enhance their educational, social and behavioural competence?

To what extent do young people feel a sense of control over themselves and within their environment?

The degree to which young people have improved their practical, teamwork & leadership skills



#### Measurement tools and methods

Participant reports  
 Parent/Guardian reports  
 School attendance rates, behaviour incidences and staff reports  
 Program attendance & completion rates

Participant reports  
 Parent/Guardian reports  
 School reports

Strengths-based Journey Map  
 Participant evaluation reports  
 Parent/guardian evaluation reports  
 Mentor reflections and reports  
 School evaluation reports

# Reporting and Accountability

TRACTION is committed to closing the feedback loop and demonstrating to key stakeholders the impact that has been made through our programs.

In particular, we value the feedback provided by young people as active participants in their learning and development. In reflecting on their experience of TRACTION and the growth and developments that they have made, young people are continually encouraged to consider, notice, and celebrate their success, both individually and collectively as a team.

Feedback is also provided by young people, parents and guardians, industry partners and program supporters about possible program enhancements and we are dedicated to working closely with our stakeholders to evaluate and action identified improvements to our programs.

TRACTION also delivers Quarterly (Term) Reports to stakeholders that highlight participants' feedback and report program responses against key defined outcomes. We are working towards preparing annual Impact Reports to showcase program results. In addition, as part of our governance responsibilities, TRACTION provides an Annual Information Statement and Financial Reports on organisational performance and activities for the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, and acquittal reports to funders to demonstrate how funds have been invested and results realised.



# Our Results

**TRACTION offers a viable alternative and an additional way to positively engage and build the capability of young people. Our programs can enhance the efforts of schools and agencies that provide specialist support for young people in the human services sector.**

While TRACTION forms a part of the service system designed to support young people, our difference stems from the fact that we are apart from formal systems that many young people have already disengaged from.

To the uninformed outsider, TRACTION may look like an activity-based program that teaches young people bike building, riding, small engine mechanics, building 'boom boxes' from upcycled e-waste, or permaculture. Yet, what we offer provides so much more.

Since 2015

# 2000

young people have engaged with our programs from seven south east Queensland regions and

over **50** program delivery locations.

We are proud to have supported over **70** referral agencies that include schools, community service organisations and other agencies.

This has allowed us to provide close to **84,000** hours of direct mentoring support to young people.

Consistently young people report a very high satisfaction rating with our programs with an average **98%** completion rate.

Young people, parent/guardians and schools share with us their stories of change and growth via heartfelt feedback about the difference TRACTION is making to young people's ability to learn new practical, teamwork and leadership skills, manage emotions more effectively, engage positively with their peers, build positive relationships with adults and teachers, and develop their confidence for learning.



“ TRACTION helped me out of a bad mental health place by taking my mind off the negative stuff and having something to look forward to every week.

*Traction participant*

“ Traction gave our son a purpose outside of school and family at a time when he was really at risk of disengaging. TRACTION showed him what is possible and gave him the confidence and space to see that he could achieve great things,

*Parent of Traction participant*

Mentors taught me that little things make a big difference in the workforce and as an aspiring electrician it was a great lesson.

*Traction participant*

“ Ever since starting TRACTION I've found myself able to control my anger a lot better.

*Traction participant*

“ I notice many changes in students that attend TRACTION. They improve their ability to mix with other kids, they develop new connections and are more willing to ask for help in the classroom. They are more willing to work with teachers and school staff and their self-confidence and ability to relate with others grows.

*School Teacher*



Having the balance of a positive program while I was at school helped me to continue with school. It helped me get a job and I was more able to achieve my goals. Doing TRACTION helped me get a great job in a bike shop. I have also moved on to an apprenticeship as an electrician.

*Louis, TRACTION participant in 2019*



# TRACTION

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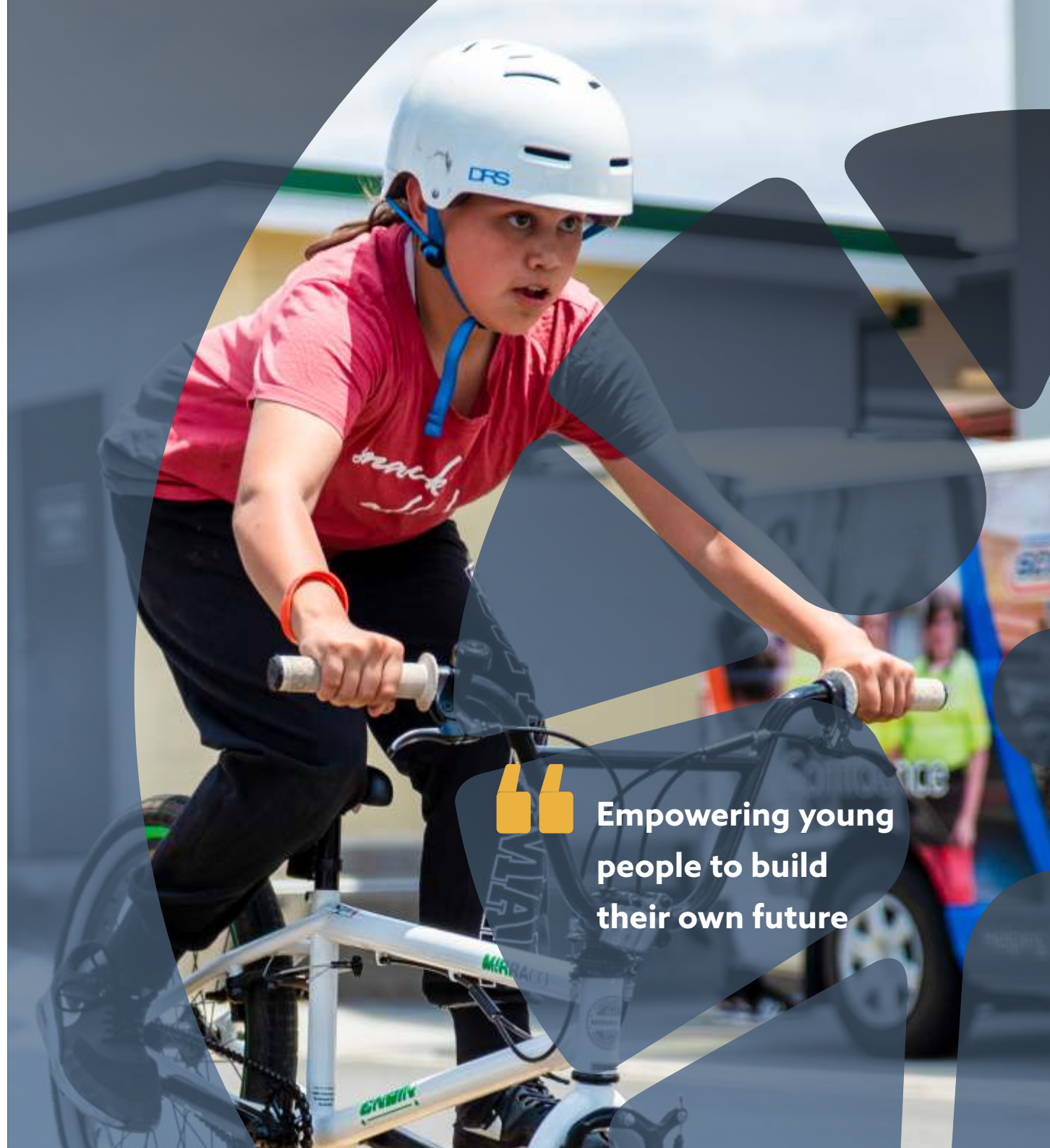
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