

HIGHWAY

2023



Inspiring youth to find their own way



ABDI

SHANICE

ANNA

ABUBAKARI

CHELSEA

ANNA

ASH

ZAHRAH



CLAIRE

KITHMI

JAC

CZARINA

SINELI

CARLY

CAITY

ALEX



ISAAC

SHAWN

LACHLAN

HERSON

CINDY

ANDREA

ALANNAH

CHARLI



MALU

SARAH

NORA

LANI

LAURA

NATHAN

Our Tribe

HIGHWAY
FOUNDATION

INSPIRING YOUTH TO FIND THEIR WAY

WHERE LIFE'S CROSSROADS LEAD TO POSSIBILITIES



John Higgins AO
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

“Highway is truly unique and absolutely necessary. Its goal to help young people connect to their inner voice, find inspiration in their lives to move forward in life, and foster a sense of belonging is critical in our world fraught with loneliness, social media stress, and future anxieties.

At Highway young people feel empowered, connect to their true self, and embrace their unique journey with confidence.”

May 2023

ADDRESSING LONELINESS OF BEING

Highway presents an innovative pathway to youth wellbeing

What is clear today is that loneliness is a silent ailment for a lot of young people. Loneliness is on the rises. Loneliness is a significant contributing factor in a young person to go on to experience a mental health illness. For many young people, the experience of loneliness and isolation is overwhelming. Unlike a visible physical disease that can validate one's suffering, loneliness is not visibly identifiable. So it is a silent pandemic that walks within our midst going unnoticed. In Australia, before the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, the Vic Health Loneliness Survey already found that 1 in 6 young people aged 12-17 and 1 in 3 young people aged 18-25 years suffer from

loneliness and loneliness isolation. Post COVID-19 this has been projected to be ever greater.

At Highway, we are working to help address loneliness. Loneliness comes not only as a physical or geographical condition but as a mindset of feeling alone. We can all attest to feeling painfully alone even though we have people all around us. Loneliness can strike anyone. It is indiscriminate. It knows no gender, race, religion, education or social class. Young people today are overwhelmed with the narrative of success, life goals, money and achievement where it is socially desirable to hide failure or denying life pathways that may be more life-giving

or authentic for the young person. By helping young people to connect to their inner voice, uncover what is important to them and who they are, we help them to feel comfortable and confident in their own being. This ultimately empowers a young person to move in a positive direction in their life by feeling confident to move forward to build authentic connections with others and the greater world around them and to act courageously to follow their authentic goals.

The road to adulthood is never smooth sailing. Allowing a young person to experience positive and challenging experiences should be treated as a regular part of growing up and becoming a fully functioning adult. Unfortunately, there are no youth supports that work in this space. Our charity seeks to instil life practices in young people to gain the self-awareness, confidence and self-efficacy to ride through everyday life's challenges. We believe we are a mental health promotion

charity. We do not fix what is wrong, rather we empower a young person to find the best in themselves and harness that into building the future that they desire.

The anecdote for loneliness is connection. Connection with others is important but the foundation of connection always starts with having a true connection with ourselves. Highway's work is helping young people to connect with their inner self. In my work with young people, I have witnessed the powerful space of a contemplative companion session. A simple space held by one person for another, creating a sanctuary of relief and where we allow young people to speak about their own life journey with out judgement. Being able to provide a safe space for young people to feel heard, understood, and feel belonging is a silent and unspoken longingness for young people, if not all for all of us. That is my greatest hope for Highway.



Lela McGregor
FOUNDER & CEO HIGHWAY FOUNDATION

HIGHWAY FOUNDATION'S POSITION STATEMENT ON LONELINESS



Dr. Tan Chyuan Chin
CHIEF SCIENTIST

Loneliness is a critical issue and has been identified as the next public health epidemic of the 21st century. Loneliness has been associated with premature death¹, poor physical and mental health^{2,3} and general dissatisfaction with life⁴. Prior to the pandemic, there was robust evidence demonstrating the negative impacts on both mental and physical health⁵, including poor cardiometabolic health, physical inactivity, obesity, impaired sleep, cognitive decline, and increased risk for dementia⁶. Loneliness is associated with a 26% greater risk of premature mortality equivalent to rates of living alone or being socially isolated⁷.

Critically, loneliness is also a significant predictor of a range of mental health symptoms and disorders. Loneliness predicts future poorer mental health severity, including depression, social anxiety and paranoia⁸, and increases the odds of having a clinically diagnosed mental disorder, including phobias, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder⁹. Loneliness is also associated with increased suicidality and parasuicide¹⁰.

Those with severe loneliness are 17 times more likely to have made a suicide attempt in the past 12 months¹¹.

Internationally, loneliness and social isolation are clearly recognised as significant threats to public health and shown as major contributors to health system costs. Equivalent costs to Medicare in the United States have been estimated at \$6.7 billion annually¹². In Australia, one in four Australians aged 12 to 89 experience problematic levels of loneliness¹³. Loneliness can affect anyone, at any age. Research suggests that young people were more likely than other age groups to experience higher levels of loneliness¹⁴. This coupled with the onset of mental illnesses before age 14¹⁵, make young people particularly vulnerable to both loneliness and poor mental health. Highway Foundation is committed to raise awareness about loneliness and mental health in young people. Highway provides safe, confidential, and free programs to support young people to gain confidence to take action and alleviate distress from loneliness and social isolation.



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LONELINESS IS ON
THE RISE IN AUSTRALIA.
VICHEALTH STUDY IN 2019
FOUND 1 IN 2 YOUNG PEOPLE
AGED 18-25 YEARS REPORTED
FEELING LONELY OR
ISOLATED IN VICTORIA.¹

LONELINESS

/ˈlɒnlənəs/

noun

noun: loneliness

*VicHealth defines loneliness as “a subjective experience of social isolation. It is related to the perceived quality – rather than quantity – of a person’s relationships. Loneliness is characterised by feelings such as social disconnection and feeling misunderstood”.*¹

¹ Michelle Lim, Robert Eres and Claire Peck, *The Young Australian Loneliness Survey: Understanding Loneliness in Adolescence and Young Adulthood*, 2019, p.5

LONELINESS HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE NEXT PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIC OF THE 21ST CENTURY¹

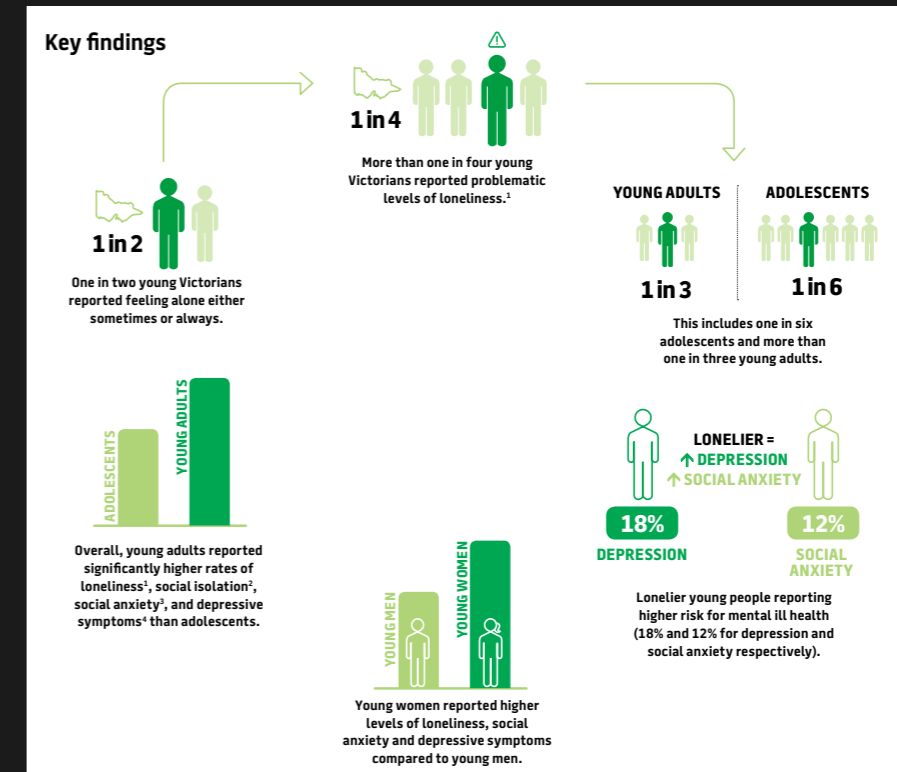
Over four decades of research has produced robust evidence that lacking social connection and in particular, scoring high on measures of social isolation - is associated with a significantly increased risk for early death from all causes.²

*Lacking social connection has the same health risks as smoking 15 cigarettes daily or drinking 6 alcoholic drinks daily.*²

¹ Dr. Michelle H Lim, "Is loneliness Australia's next public health epidemic?" August 2018, Australian Psychological Society

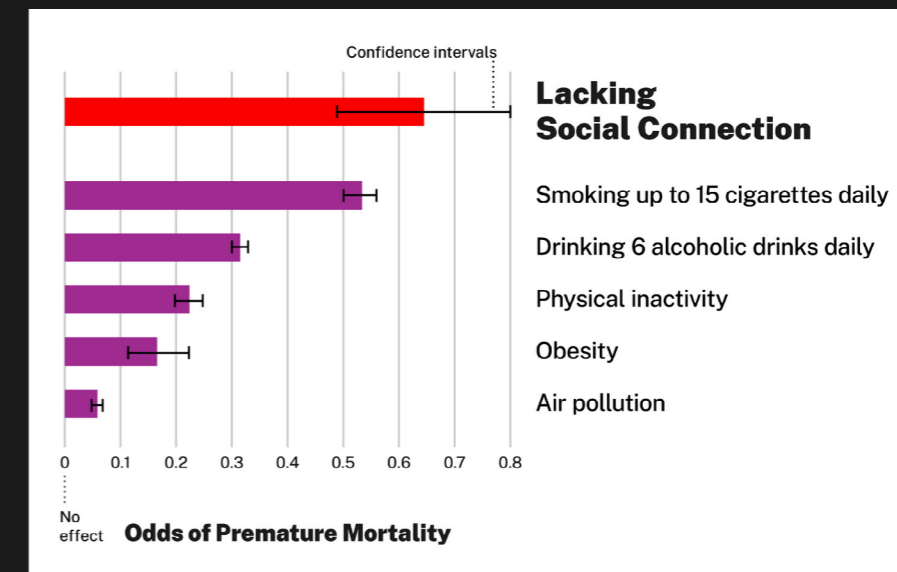
² 2020 Consensus Study Report - National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

1 in 2 young people feel lonely or isolated

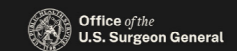


The Young Australian Loneliness Survey: Understanding Loneliness In Adolescence and Young Adulthood: Research Summary

Lacking social connection is as risky as smoking 15 cigarettes a day



Source: Holt-Lunstad J, Robles TF, Sbarra DA. Advancing Social Connection as a Public Health Priority in the United States. *American Psychology*. 2017;72(6):517-530. doi:10.1037/amp000103. This graph is a visual approximation.



URGENT NEED

Young people across Australia are increasingly experiencing loneliness, social isolation and poor mental health.

Our Vision

Inspiring young people to belong and become the person they want to be.

Our Guiding Principle

We believe all young people hold all their answers. By holding a safe space for them to explore their life and themselves they can uncover what is truly right for themselves.

OUR RESPONSE

Providing young Australians a safe, non-judgmental, culturally and gender diverse, youth-moderated online space where they can make authentic meaningful social connections with others which does not currently exist.

What We Do

Highway provides opportunities for young Australians aged 14-25 to find meaningful connections through transformational solo and group online sessions facilitated by an accredited Highway Youth Facilitator. In this peer-to-peer, innovative safe space, young people can be themselves, experience meaningful connections and feel inspired to do what is important in their life.

Impact

Young people can be their authentic self, confidently explore their journey and navigate life's challenges and uncertainties and have meaningful connections through youth companionship.

HIGHWAY FOUNDATION'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Creating Impact Through Empowered Transformation

We believe Highway can inspire our next generation of young people to feel empowered to take the steps to move forward and live their best life possible. Through our work, we promote optimal functioning and mental health, by fostering a stronger sense of authentic self-identity, self-determined purpose, meaningful engagement and connec-

tions. Our Theory of Change framework provides a concise process model of how our work at Highway contributes to the aspirational changes and impact for young Australians. Importantly, this is a collaborative, intentional and iterative process that will develop and evolve over time.

Highway Foundation Theory of Change



<p>Urgent Need</p> <p>Young people across Australia are increasingly experiencing loneliness, social isolation and poor mental health.</p> <p>Opportunity to respond to need</p> <p>Young Australians need a safe, non-judgmental, culturally and gender diverse, youth-moderated online space where they can make authentic meaningful social connections with others - this does not currently exist.</p>	<p>Our Vision</p> <p>Inspiring young people to belong and become the person they want to be.</p> <p>Our Guiding Principle</p> <p>We believe all young people hold all their answers. By holding a safe space for them to explore their life and themselves they can uncover what is truly right for themselves.</p>	<p>Highway provides opportunities for young Australians aged 14-25 to find meaningful connections through transformational online sessions facilitated by an accredited Highway Youth Facilitator. In this peer-to-peer, innovative safe space, young people can be themselves, experience and foster meaningful connections and feel inspired to do what is important in their life.</p>	<p>Highway Youth Facilitator</p> <p>Highway Foundation provides evidence-based training for our youth volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Facilitator Accreditation (3 months of training) • Youth Mental Health First Aid • Working with Children Check • Police Check • Child Safety Training • Emergency Protocol Training <p>Highway Journey</p> <p>A Highway Journey brings young people of similar ages across Victoria together online to talk about important things to them through a structured process. A journey is four 90-min sessions held every week for four weeks with a group of 5-8 young people of similar age.</p> <p>Highway Companion Session</p> <p>A Highway Companion Session provides free 1-to-1 support for young people between 18 to 25 years. The 1-hr session is typically scheduled within the same week that the young person registers with Highway.</p> <p>Highway WorkShops</p> <p>Highway provides in-person workshops for schools and community groups. The curated workshops enable young people to develop greater self-awareness, connection with others, and confidence to embrace change and uncertainty.</p>	<p>Highway Youth Facilitators are empowered to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a stronger identity by discovering and developing a strong sense of self, meaning and purpose; 2. Have greater agency by developing self-awareness, self-determination and self-regulation; 3. Be present, ready to engage with social activities and opportunities; 4. Have authentic, high quality and meaningful connections with others. <p>After a Highway Journey, participants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover and develop a strong sense of self (can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected) 2. Develop self-awareness, self-determination and self-regulation (raised awareness about their personal progress, know how to achieve their goals) 3. Learn to be present and listen (feel safe sharing their story, are inspired by the stories of other young people) 4. Develop authentic, high quality and meaningful connections with others (feel supported at Highway) <p>Over time, Highway Journey participants are empowered to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover and develop a strong sense of self, meaning and purpose; 2. Develop self-awareness, self-determination and self-regulation; 3. Be present, ready to engage with social activities and opportunities; 4. Develop authentic, high quality and meaningful connections with others. <p>After a Companion Session, participants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover and develop a strong sense of self (can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected) 2. Develop greater self-awareness (raised awareness about themselves) 3. Cultivate confidence to work through their challenges (feel supported to work through their challenges, feel safe sharing their story, feel less alone in their struggles) 4. Develop authentic, high quality and meaningful connections with others (feel supported at Highway) <p>After a Highway Workshop, participants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discover and develop a strong sense of self (can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected) 2. Develop greater self-awareness (raised awareness about themselves) 3. Cultivate confidence to make changes, embrace uncertainties and manage challenges in life (feel more comfortable about their future, feel less alone in their struggles) 4. Develop authentic, high quality and meaningful connections with others (feel supported at Highway) 	<p>Young people can be their authentic self, confidently explore their journey and navigate life's challenges and uncertainties and have meaningful connections through youth companionship.</p>
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We help youth connect to themselves, with others and the world by inspiring hope and confidence in an uncertain future beyond loneliness.

HIGHWAY'S INITIATIVES

We launched two flagship initiatives in 2021: Highway Youth Facilitator and the Highway Journey. Our goal is to inspire all young people who join Highway, either as a volunteer or participant, to become more of who they are, through our evidence-based, data-responsive initiatives.

In August 2022, we collaborated with Football Victoria to conduct a series of school-based and community-based Highway Wellbeing Workshops. This joint initiative was funded by the Victorian Department of Families (Office of Youth) and aimed to provide young people with an opportunity to develop greater self-awareness, connection with others, and confidence to embrace change and uncertainty. The workshops used a variety of creative arts, conversational, and football-based activities to suit a diverse range of student needs.

We also launched another flagship initiative in November 2022: Highway Companion Sessions. This was developed based on the overwhelming need for young people to obtain mental health support promptly. Throughout 2022, young people have encountered significant challenges in finding timely support as waiting times and costs of seeking professional services balloon.

In Victoria alone, young people are waiting weeks just to see a GP for a mental health plan or referral, and then the wait time to see a psychiatrist or psychologist is about six months, with the situation worsening in regional areas. With Highway's Companion Sessions, every young person who signs up is scheduled to speak with one of our trained facilitators within the same week.

This section is an overview of Highway's Engagement and Impact to date (September 2021 to mid-May 2023).

State/Territory	Female	Male	Other	Number of Young People from each state/territory
ACT	5	1	0	6
NSW	138	39	3	180
QLD	14	6	0	20
SA	10	3	0	13
TAS	1	0	0	1
VIC	392	358	30	780
WA	3	0	0	3
Students enrolled in an Australian Tertiary Institution but living overseas	3	4	0	7
Total registered	566	411	33	1010

- 1010 young people (56% female; 41% male; 3% other) between the ages of 10 to 25 (8% from 10-13; 43% from 14-17; 49% from 18-25) across 7 states/territories were supported by Highway's initiatives between September 2021 and mid-May 2023.
- The participants are culturally diverse and come from 42 countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Vietnam.

REACH & ENGAGEMENT

21 Months : Sept 2021 to May 2023

1,010
Young People
aged 10-25 years

56% female (565 people)
41% male (414 people)
3% other (31 people)

Young people come
from 7 states and
territories

Culturally diverse
from 42 different
countries

61% experience
low mood states

Top 3 Reasons for
using Highway
Figuring out what to do in the future
Self-acceptance and being true to oneself
Having more confidence

HIGHWAY'S PATHWAYS



Highway Companion Session (Solo)

One-on-one 60-minute online session between a trained Highway Youth Facilitator and a participant. This is a safe, non-judgemental space that allows a young person to unpack their life and feel connected to their life and the choices they make in life.



Highway Journey (Group)

These are four 90-minute online sessions done over four weeks consecutively. The sessions are held by a trained Highway Youth Facilitator and 3-5 participants. This is a safe, non-judgemental space that allows a young person to unpack their life in deeper detail and discover goals that are important to them.



Highway Compass Reflection Workshops

This is a 90-minute school workshop for Year 9 to Year 12 students that help them gain self awareness on their life direction and discover the power of change lies within their own choices and actions.



Highway Journey Youth Retreat

This is a two-day retreat in the country that helps young people connect to their inner self, with other young people and nature. Through restorative and calming activities, young people make authentic friendships and experience life-changing self discovery.

HOW WE CONNECT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

FACILITATORS
join via
 Interview process

PARTICIPANTS
join via
 Social Media Promotions, Schools

PROGRAMS

- Highway Youth 2 Year Facilitator Scholarship
- 6 months training
- Highway Outreach Program
- Highway Annual Retreat
- Highway Life Workshops

PROGRAMS

- Highway Companion Session (Solo)
- Highway Journey (Group)
- Highway Compass Workshops
- Highway Journey Youth Retreat
- Highway Life Goals Dashboard
- Highway Life Workshops

EXPERIENCE

- Personal Self Development and Support
- Community within the Cohort
- Meaningful friendships
- Monthly Companion Sessions
- Facilitator Social Activities
- Annual Highway Retreat

EXPERIENCE

- Personal Support as they walk through life
- Meaningful and authentic connection
- Learning skills for life

*Finding space to
reconnect and just “be”*



FACILITATOR EXPERIENCE

The Highway Youth Facilitator Scholarship program is a two-year unique and inspiring space for young people for leadership and self development.

Our Highway Youth Facilitators (HYF) have developed a strong sense of self where they can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected. By developing their self-awareness, self-determination and self-regulation they feel empowered to progress in their life and feel empowered to achieve their goals. They are present, able to listen and experience deep connection by feeling safe to share their story and feeling inspired by the stories of other young people. Through Highway's innovative program our HYF develop and maintain authentic, high quality and meaningful connections.



Impact: Highway Youth Facilitator Scholarship Program

“Our goal for our Highway Youth Facilitators is to feel connected to who they want to be, find authentic friendships to journey with in their life and do meaningful work by helping other young people do the same.”

1ST Year 100% Said

- Feel supported at Highway
- Can be themselves at Highway
- Feel heard and respected at Highway
- Feel safe sharing their story at Highway
- Feel free to express themselves at Highway
- Would recommend Highway to their friends
- Are energized by the connections they have at Highway
- Are inspired by the stories of other young people at Highway.

2ND Year 100% Said

- Have gained greater clarity in their life.
- Have a stronger sense of self.
- Have more confidence in themselves.
- Have more confidence in the decisions they make for themselves.
- Have greater confidence when making a change for themselves.
- Compared to the same time last year can now better manage life challenges.
- Compared to the same time last year feel less alone in their struggles.
- Compared to the same time last year feel more confident to embrace uncertainties.
- Feel their time spent volunteering with Highway is meaningful.

Based on an anonymous feedback survey provided by 21 Highway Youth Facilitators



60 HOURS OF TRAINING & SELF DEVELOPMENT

- Highway Facilitator Accreditation (6 months of training)
- Mental Health First Aid Accreditation
- Working with Children Check
- Police Check
- Child Safety Training
- Emergency Protocol Training

These very special young people volunteer their time to work with other young people to help them on their life journey. They live all over Victoria, aged between 18-28 years of age and come from 18 ethnic backgrounds.

Australia, Philippines, Singapore, Mauritius, Italy, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, Germany, China, Vietnam, India, Albania, France, Greece, Cuba, Samoa, Malaysia, Ethiopia



What young people say about our Highway Youth Facilitator Scholarship program

“My top 3 highlights from this past year with Highway are: Deeper connections to self and others; Sense of purpose; Improving communication and listening skills. Since joining Highway, I discovered I can get caught up in my own lies to myself when I tell myself that things are fine and I’m doing great. I need to be more patient and empathetic when reflecting on my situation.”

Highway Youth Facilitator Cohort 2021, 23 (M)

“I have been able to reach a deeper level of self love and acceptance...”

“I am generally an introspective and reflective person, but over the last year with the help and the support environment of Highway, I have been able to reach a deeper level of self love and acceptance. I have become so much more accepting of myself and proud of every aspect and version of myself. I have been able to look back at younger versions of myself and embrace them with love, accepting myself at any state. Even the difficult and hurtful parts.”

Highway Youth Facilitator Cohort 2021, 22 (F)

“My top 3 highlights from this past year with Highway are making long lasting connections, making a difference in others lives, and going out of my comfort zone. Since joining Highway, I discovered I can be brave. Sometimes I just need to be heard. I’m not a freak. I can make friends. I’m perfect just the way I am.”

Highway Youth Facilitator Cohort 2021, 19 (M)

“I have learnt that I can let others love me, see me, and hear me. I have learnt to trust myself, trust my inner knowing, and trust that I am loved and safe in the world. My energy is a resource to me, only I can choose where and how I deliver and give it to the world. I have learnt how to protect that energy, and first and foremost I must look after my nervous system. I know intuitively what is right for me, and Highway has shown me how to listen and know that.”

Highway Youth Facilitator Cohort 2021, 19 (F)

“I learned that no matter how much I think I have it figured out, I really still have so much to learn. But at the same time, no matter how lost or unsure I feel, I always have the answer inside me. Highway has always been about reflecting and learning continuously as I grow - I feel like I’m never going to stop discovering new things about me.”

Highway Youth Facilitator Cohort 2021, 24 (F)

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

Highway Journey Group Sessions

The Highway Journey is made up of four weekly 90-minutes online sessions which is done in a group with a Highway Youth Facilitator.

- 98% feel heard and respected at Highway.
- 98% can be themselves at Highway.
- 98% feel free to express themselves at Highway.
- 97% feel safe sharing their story at Highway.
- 97% feel supported at Highway.
- 97% are inspired by the stories of other young people at Highway.
- 97% enjoy their Highway sessions.
- 93% would recommend Highway to their friends.

Here's a snippet of what four young people said after each session

JOURNEY SESSION 1

"I really enjoyed sharing my stories with everyone in the group. I feel that this is a safe space where I can share what I'm going through. Even if no one is giving advice, it's nice to just say aloud what I'm going through. I think it's sometimes too hard to share the deepest struggles with a friend or family member, but to strangers, the anonymity really helps to shed any form of judgement or image you may hold of yourself. The level of authenticity I feel that I can get to in Highway will be conducive to finding my own inner happiness."

JOURNEY SESSION 2

It was nice to reflect on the week and look back on what we'd discussed last week to notice the little steps in the right direction that I probably wouldn't have acknowledged otherwise. Also comforting to see this recognition of progress (big or small) in others.

JOURNEY SESSION 3

I just kinda love having the space to share whats going on for me and listen to others stories, i feel safe and i can realise or safely confront stuff that has been bothering me, but hasnt reached the surface/ consious part of my brain/ i was avoiding it.

JOURNEY SESSION 4

As a young person, I feel it's highly useful and purposeful to have a platform that you can reflect on yourself with anything in your life but also having that power to speak to others without hindrance, restraint or judgement. By that, I hope every young person in the world will have the access to this platform as it has been super motivating sessions for me. Surely this could be very powerful to check on our mental health at any time. Thank you team for all of your efforts and I just want to express my gratefulness to you guys for making this more accessible to us :)

Based on anonymous feedback survey provided by 155 Highway Journey participants over the 18-month period.

Outcomes Achieved

Young people who joined Highway as Journey participants have developed a strong sense of self (can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected), raised awareness about their personal progress and know how to achieve their goals. They also feel safe sharing their story at Highway and are inspired by the stories of other young people. Importantly, young people feel supported at Highway and have developed authentic, meaningful connections with others.

Recommendation

"I actually already have recommended Highway to some of my friends! Highway made me realise that sometimes all you need to feel better is a safe space to talk through your thoughts and feelings, even if you're not getting counselling. Being with other young people also helped me put my thoughts into perspective and often made me change the way I look at things, in a positive way. At the same time as attending Highway, I also started seeing a psychologist. I acknowledge that I only had moderate-mild mental health issues, but I honestly feel like the effect of Highway was similar to the effect of the psychologist. I genuinely felt like my mindset had changed and improved significantly from the time I started my sessions to the time I ended. I really believe Highway is an amazing service that can offer young people, whether they're struggling or not, so much help, without having to spend hundreds of dollars on professional counselling."

- Journey participant, November 2021

"I genuinely felt like my mindset had changed and improved significantly from the time I started my sessions to the time I ended."

"Highway was a really unique experience that I haven't really experienced in friend groups or even in therapy. I found it really useful to find some ways + intentional opportunities to check in with myself and it was so good to meet others around my age & hear their stories. I'd definitely recommend it to anyone looking to find a group where they can reflect & connect."

- Journey participant, December 2021

"It was a really amazing experience that gave me something to look forward to every week. I would seriously recommend it to anyone looking for clarity - the reflection activities are really eye opening. My other favourite part was the restorative practices, they really helped me calm down and be with myself. I felt safe and heard at Highway and met some lovely people."

- Journey participant, March 2022

"I would recommend Highway because I found that the journey was a great way to reflect on the different facets of my life and begin to decipher what was meaningful to me. It helped me to understand where I was investing my energy and where I would want to focus more of it. I would recommend it as a way of journaling and reflection, and believe many would benefit from their insights."

- Journey participant, May 2022

"Highway is a great way for young people to express themselves and share their stories and feelings which may be difficult to share to family and friends. I would recommend this to young people needing to self reflect and gain support in times of life changes."

- Journey participant, December 2022

"Safe space to talk with people with real life experience. You aren't judged for who you are and everyone welcomes you with open heart. At times it feels like journals but in human form with other participants. I felt heard and respected throughout my sessions. The dashboard is a great way to see your goals and reflect on it. The visual representation of information is a great idea to connect ourselves with our journey."

- Journey participant, February 2023

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

One-on-One Companion Sessions

A Highway Companion Session is a one-on-one online 60-minute conversation between a participant and a trained Highway Youth Facilitator with the goal to help young people feel more connected to their life.

- 100% feel heard and respected at Highway.
- 96% can be themselves at Highway.
- 98% feel free to express themselves at Highway.
- 96% feel safe sharing their story at Highway.
- 92% feel supported at Highway.
- 96% found the session helpful for them right now.
- 87% found the session helped them work through some challenges they are going through right now.
- 89% feel less alone in their struggles after the Highway Companion Session.
- 85% reported that they understood themselves more after the Highway Companion Session.
- 100% would recommend Highway to young people like themselves.
- 100% would book another Highway Companion Session in the future.

Based on anonymous feedback survey provided by 52 Highway Companion Session participants over the 4-month period from November 2022 till February 2023.



Outcomes Achieved

Young people who joined Highway as Companion Session participants have developed a strong sense of self (can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected), and greater self-awareness (understanding of themselves). They have cultivated confidence to work through their challenges (feel supported to work through their challenges, feel safe sharing their story at Highway and feel less alone in their struggles). Importantly, young people feel supported at Highway and have developed authentic, meaningful connections with others.

Recommendation

“I would recommend it to young people who feel their voices and stories don't matter or don't deserve to be heard. Highway was a great way for me to express myself and share things I couldn't share with family or friends, and having someone who listened and valued my thoughts was so helpful because it is an important step to valuing oneself as well. I would also recommend it because it is a space to feel one's feelings and tap into what is important in life. Sometimes it takes someone to nudge you in the right direction.”

- Journey participant, November 2022

“I think it's a really great way to understand yourself, not everyone is given to opportunity to openly share what is in the back of your mind or get yourself out of your zone of people. Its sometimes easier to talk to a stranger than someone you know because its judgement free. It's a really great way to have a conversation about yourself and give yourself some 'me' time. The facilitator was amazing asked a lot of open questions that got me thinking a bit deeper, and validating why I felt this way or is it just an irrational thought.”

- Journey participant, December 2022

“ I would also recommend it because it is a space to feel one's feelings and tap into what is important in life.”

“I really love Highway and the heart behind the foundation. It has helped me in the past in 2021 and again tonight with some helpful and practical tips that I can apply in my day to day existence which will produce long term fulfillment of my goals.”

- Journey participant, February 2023

“I think it's really effective for those who don't have a friend, trusted adult, or someone else to talk to, everyone needs a listening ear from time to time.”

- Journey participant, December 2022

“It is a great way for young people to have someone to open up and connect with about their personal problems that they are dealing with so they aren't alone, especially since it is free and easy to access.”

- Journey participant, March 2023

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

Highway School Workshop

The Highway School Workshops are delivered in a school setting to engage young people in becoming more aware of who they are and what they would like to be.



- 87% enjoyed their learning session.
- 4 in 5 young people reported feeling more comfortable about their future after attending the workshop.
- 75% of young people reported positive learning outcomes which include greater levels of: self-awareness, self-confidence, confidence to make changes, embrace uncertainties and manage challenges in life.
- Nearly 74% reported that they now feel less alone in their struggles.

Based on anonymous feedback survey provided by 506 Highway Workshop participants in August 2022.



Outcomes Achieved

Young people who participated in Highway Workshops have developed a strong sense of self (can be themselves, feel free to express themselves, feel heard and respected), and greater self-awareness (understanding of themselves). They have cultivated confidence to make changes, embrace uncertainties and manage challenges in life (feel more comfortable about their future, and feel less alone in their struggles). Importantly, young people feel supported at Highway and have developed authentic, high quality and meaningful connections with others.



Recommendation

“I am grateful for not only learning but doing physical activities which have showed me how to think about myself and my abilities. 100% enjoyed this and would do this again. It was a great experience by which I learnt a lot about myself and how to face obstacles.”

- Workshop participant, 17 (M)

“ I learnt that I need to start to take care of myself more often by getting more sleep and to not put negative thoughts in my head anymore.”

“I learnt that I need to start to take care of myself more often by getting more sleep and to not put negative thoughts in my head anymore. I'm glad I came today because it helped me discover new things about myself.”

- Workshop participant, 19 (M)

“This program today has uplifted me to make change for myself. I was comfortable doing nothing when I hit rock bottom but when Abdi (Highway Youth Facilitator) had a talk with me he had helped make things honestly better for myself mentally and that was what was taught in this program today. Finding the root of the problem within myself and identifying it, once it has been identified then I know what changes to make, to make life much more better for myself.”

- Workshop participant, 18 (M)

“I learnt to pinpoint individual problems in my life as well as how to tackle these problems using my own built up confidence through mental techniques such as visualisation. I also was educated on the significance of self-belief and how much it plays a role in the reality I create for myself.”

- Workshop participant, 20 (M)

5 KEY THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE AT HIGHWAY



1. Highway is a safe space to explore self-identity, authenticity, meaning and purpose in one's life journey.

Everyone has the ability to work through their feelings and thoughts. Highway provides a non-judgmental and safe space to answer one's own questions and thoughts.

-
- "I felt very heard and was able to laugh and cry a little in a good way."
 - "It's a supportive program and very welcoming. The facilitators make you feel comfortable in a new environment."
 - "I really enjoyed the space, it was super casual and meaningful to reflect about my life and how far I've come. My group was amazing and my facilitator did a great job and made the sessions really engaging."
 - "It was a safe space for me to express myself and share my story."
 - "The facilitator was so nice and friendly and talked to us about our lives and knew the right questions to ask to get us to think about our lives."
 - "I had a lot of challenging moments! Between a break up, feeling stuck in my job and isolated from friends, I felt I was never good enough or like I didn't have enough worth. Highway helped me navigate where these feelings were coming from, what I was and wasn't in control of, and take charge of my actions to move forward in the way that showed love to myself."
 - "Over the past year I've been moved to make some changes in my career and work life. In the past these decisions would have brought a world of self doubt, confusion and the feeling of not living up to expectations or being good enough. I'm now about to embark on the most exciting, scary phase of my career and I KNOW where I'm going, why I'm here, and that I am capable and enough where I am right now."

2. The authentic connection with self and others, and the power of sharing personal stories.

Highway provides a safe and respectful space for all to be their authentic selves. By being present and listening to others, we can discover the answers to our problems within ourselves.

-
- “I felt that I connected to and resonated with other people and their stories.”
 - “There were some really in depth and thoughtful discussions today and it really helped me to work through some things and come out with a new understanding. Sharing with others and listening to their stories has been really helpful to me.”
 - “I felt safe and heard, it was nice to hear other's stories and reflect on myself.”
 - “Highway provides such a crucial platform for individuals to tell their story and reflect on their life and journey. It also provides an opportunity for others to hear and possibly resonate with the experiences of others. In my experience, the friendly atmosphere creates a sense of passion and wholesomeness.”
 - “I liked the way the program was structured and the freedom it gave us as well how we could freely express our thoughts and listen to other peoples stories and see how we could relate and how we are also different in our way.”
 - “The importance of deep listening and holding a space for others. It was wonderful to feel heard, which was honestly unexpected, particularly with strangers.”
 - “I've learned that different individuals have different struggles and different levels of managing those struggles. All these stories deserved to be heard, are valid and that all of us should be respectful and supportive in hearing them.”





3. I am not alone! I belong to a community now.

Everyone is living different lives but experiencing similar things.

- “The sessions made me feel less alone in my struggles.”
- “It was really great to be able to talk about our lives and what we’re going through with others our age who we didn’t know so there wasn’t the pressure of not embarrassing ourselves or anything like that.”
- “It was comforting to know that I wasn’t alone in some of the things I am struggling with. I will reflect on what was discussed during the session - try to be more mindful of negative thoughts that come up. Will try to avoid comparing my progress with the progress of others around me.”
- “I think it was very comforting to know that there are complete strangers who feel the same way as I do about many of the stressors in my life and I’m not alone.”
- “You feel like you aren’t going through your troubles alone. You have a facilitator who can run the group professionally and you get to feel heard and emotionally validated.”
- “I learnt that a lot of people share my problems. That I am not as alone and not the only one struggling with the same issues. I also learnt I have few ‘energy depleting’ friendships that do not energise me and contribute to my low mood and loneliness.”
- “Everyone needs connections and listening to everyone’s stories and backgrounds makes me feel less alone but also more understood.”

4. I can be a good listener, create authentic, deep and meaningful connections.

Everyone can learn the skill of deep listening and connect with others in a respectful and meaningful way.

- “In normal life you don’t really get the chance to just talk about what’s happening so it was really great to have structured time to do that in. I also felt like all the people in my group were amazing and we could have been great friends. My only wish is that we would be allowed to stay in contact via messages or social media after the sessions finished had we wanted to, to still respect those who wanted to be private but I think over the month we all grew really close and it would’ve been great to continue talking to everyone.”
- “It was really nice to talk to and meet the people in my group. It was also great to hear more about them and what’s going well for them and also what’s going not so well because it helped me to be able to relate.”
- “I loved getting to know everyone and just hearing others peoples thoughts and the instructor was very friendly and the team of Highway have been very helpful leading up to the session. I feel still quite lost but I have one goal and it will be great to come back next week and see how that’s progressed. The session was very insightful!”
- “I found the experience of listening to others' stories and sharing my own to be very powerful. I feel like I learned a lot about myself and really felt validated and seen.”
- “It’s a really lovely curated space for vulnerability. My facilitator was an amazing listener and always encouraged us to connect deeper within ourselves to acknowledge what we were feeling. I’d recommend the sessions to any friends who would like to be heard or feel loved and appreciated without judgement, and also to meet really understanding people who are also open for dialogue.”
- “I’ve come to realise that there are so many other people around my age who are living a life that is similar to my own. That they are experiencing the same struggles and although we are not overly familiar with each other that it is extremely comforting to be able to sit and chat and relate through our struggles and to find ways that work for one another. Knowing that we can all relate just gives me a sense of belonging and I love that warm fuzzy feeling.”
- “I learned that I am far more present in my connections with others when relaxed and allow my true self to be. I learned quality connections are actually energising and life giving. I learned more consciously that others are capable to hold space for me too. I can receive from, not only give to others. I want that for myself too.”





5. INSPIRED AND CONFIDENT TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL CHANGE FOR MYSELF.

Learning the importance of vulnerability,
recognising and letting go of my fears.

- “I think the questions were perfect to ease us into the bigger, deeper thinking. Looking forward to the later sessions.”
- “It made me realize how much I am focusing on getting others to talk and be open without being present with myself, something I’m aware of but I lost focus on. Made me think about trying to show people what they are doing rather than trying to help them find answer something I need to think about more.”
- “It was nice to hear about everyone’s weeks and the ways they deal with things that happen in their lives so I can implement that as well.”
- “A key takeaway is that I need to let go of my self-doubt and take steps towards self-trust. Another takeaway is honouring my experiences and feelings, and recognising always try to be resilient. I will continue to work on this.”
- “It was nice and refreshing to have the space to talk about my struggles and open the air on what goals I have to navigate some of my worries as I have changes come up in life and work on developing new friendships.”
- “Without doubt the most powerful thing I’ve learnt at Highway is self confidence, self belief, and to trust in my self. It has truly changed how I see myself, how I appreciate the world and its moving parts around me, and how I make decisions in my life.”
- “I have always avoided vulnerability and this is something that came up for me at Highway and something that I wanted to work on. It has been a very slow process and definitely is still a journey. But seeing others in Highway be so open and vulnerable was inspiring. That I can do it and others will not only accept it but be grateful for it.”

HIGHWAY

COMPASS REFLECTION SCHOOL WORKSHOP

Inspiring youth to find their own way in life

Helping young people feel connected to their lives

Highway's Compass Workshops are a valuable addition to your students' education. With our innovative and engaging approach to youth development, young people will find a greater connection to their life by clarifying their direction and feeling more empowered to be themselves. Through raising self-awareness, young people can change their mindset and their life trajectory.

Our workshops are designed to help young people develop greater self-awareness, meaningful connections with others, and confidence to embrace change and uncertainty. Through expertly curated activities using Highway's Compass reflection tool, students will explore their lived experience through four key domains of life:



Relationships - Family, Friends, and their Community

How connected they feel to the relationships in their life

Engagement - Learning, Growth, and Passion

How connected they feel to what they want to do in their life

Needs - Health, Wellbeing, Mental Health and Safety

How connected they feel to their needs

The Real Self - Identity, Personal Agency, and Self-Acceptance

How connected they feel to who they are inside

The workshops are facilitated by highly trained Highway Youth Facilitators, and students will receive personalised reports to help them unpack their own data. This will allow them to discover and develop a stronger sense of self and self-awareness, and cultivate the confidence to make informed choices and changes, embrace uncertainties, and navigate challenges in their senior school learning journey and beyond.

In addition, secondary schools, tertiary institutions and community organisations can choose to receive aggregate reporting of cohorts, year levels or classes/groups to gain insightful information about where their young people are at in their lives.

Embarking on this self-discovery journey will leave students feeling deeply connected to their true selves and uncover what truly matters to them. The process will empower them with a newfound sense of confidence, and inspire them to take bold action in becoming agents of positive change in their own lives.

THE HIGHWAY COMPASS REFLECTION WORKSHOP[©]

Looking at a young person's overall experience through 4 key domains of Relationship, Engagement, Needs and The Real Self.

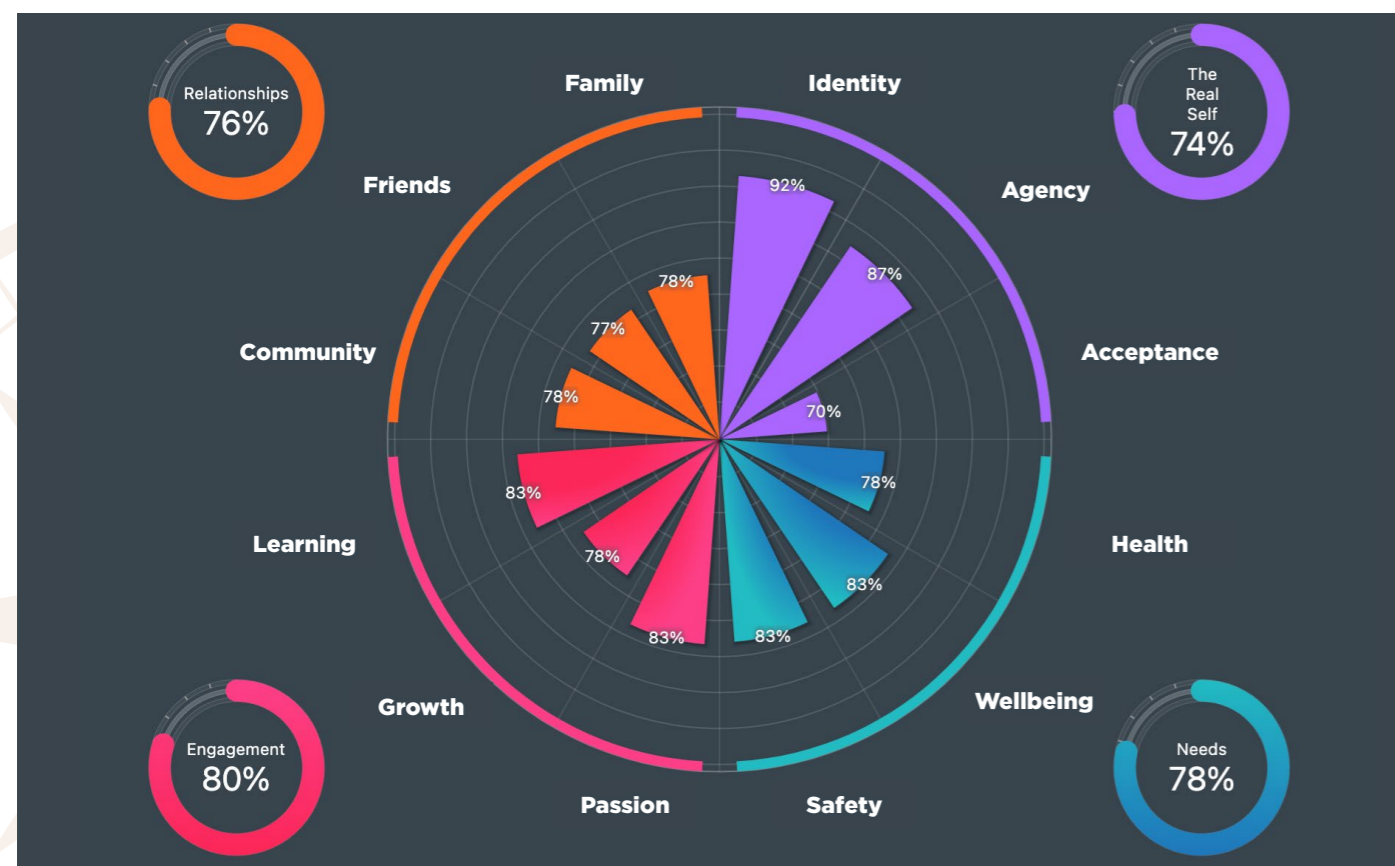
Best suited for:

Secondary students in Years 9 to 12 and vocational or tertiary students (18 years onwards).

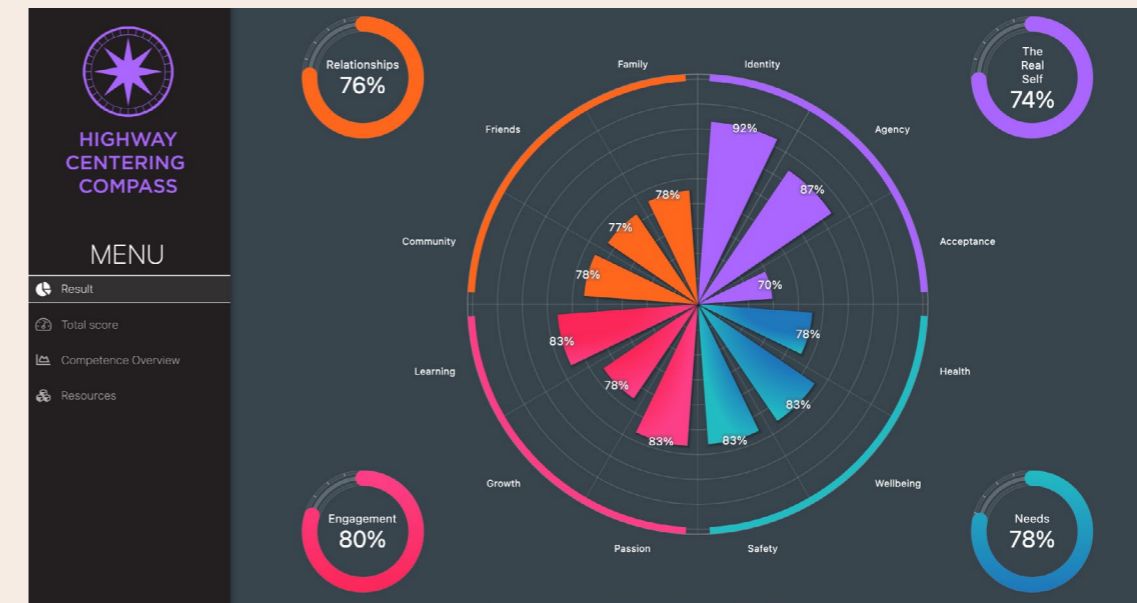
Objective

Inspire young people to connect to their life, feel empowered and confident for the future through self-reflection, awareness and perspective-taking.

Highway Compass Workshop	Highway Compass Workshop Plus	Highway Compass Workshop Premium
Highway Compass Reflection Tool	Highway Compass Reflection Tool	Highway Compass Reflection Tool with customised group options
All participants receive a Highway Compass Reflection Report – a personalised interactive online report upon survey completion	All participants receive a Highway Compass Reflection report – a personalised interactive online report upon survey completion	All participants receive a Highway Compass Reflection report – a personalised interactive online report upon survey completion
A 90-mins Reflection & Awareness Workshop with an accredited Highway Youth Facilitator	A 90-mins Reflection & Awareness Workshop with an accredited Highway Youth Facilitator	A 90-mins Reflection & Awareness Workshop with Highway Foundation's Master Facilitator Lela McGregor
An interactive Highway Compass Group Report with all responses in one group	An interactive Highway Compass Group Report with responses segmented by demographic information (age, pronouns)	An interactive Highway Compass Group Report with responses segmented by customised options (eg. study level, campus, faculty, subject, age, pronouns)
	1-hour online workshop with Dr TC Chin to review group report	1½-hours online workshop with Dr TC Chin to review customised group report
		Customised analyses



Highway Compass Reflection Report (sample)



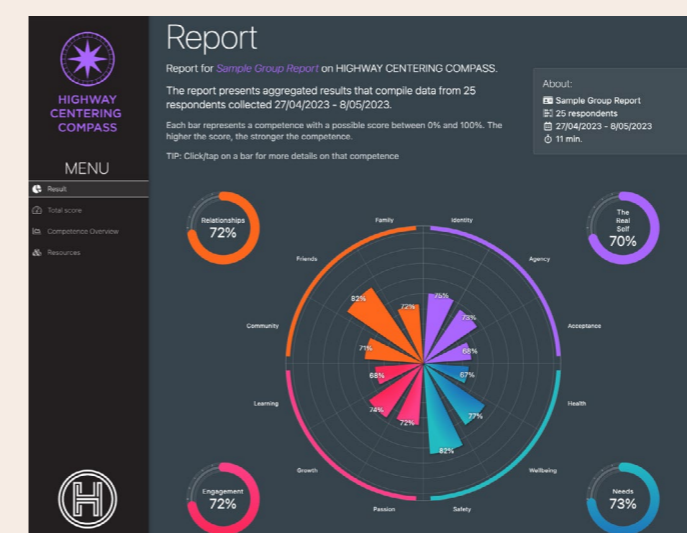
The Highway Compass Reflection Report includes:

1. Overall summary of an individual's current needs, experience and sense of connection to the 4 key domains in their life
2. Description of their score for each segment
3. Breakdown of key aspects of each segment for further self discovery
4. Tips and Resources
5. Ability to download report as PDF

Resources for Learning (sample)

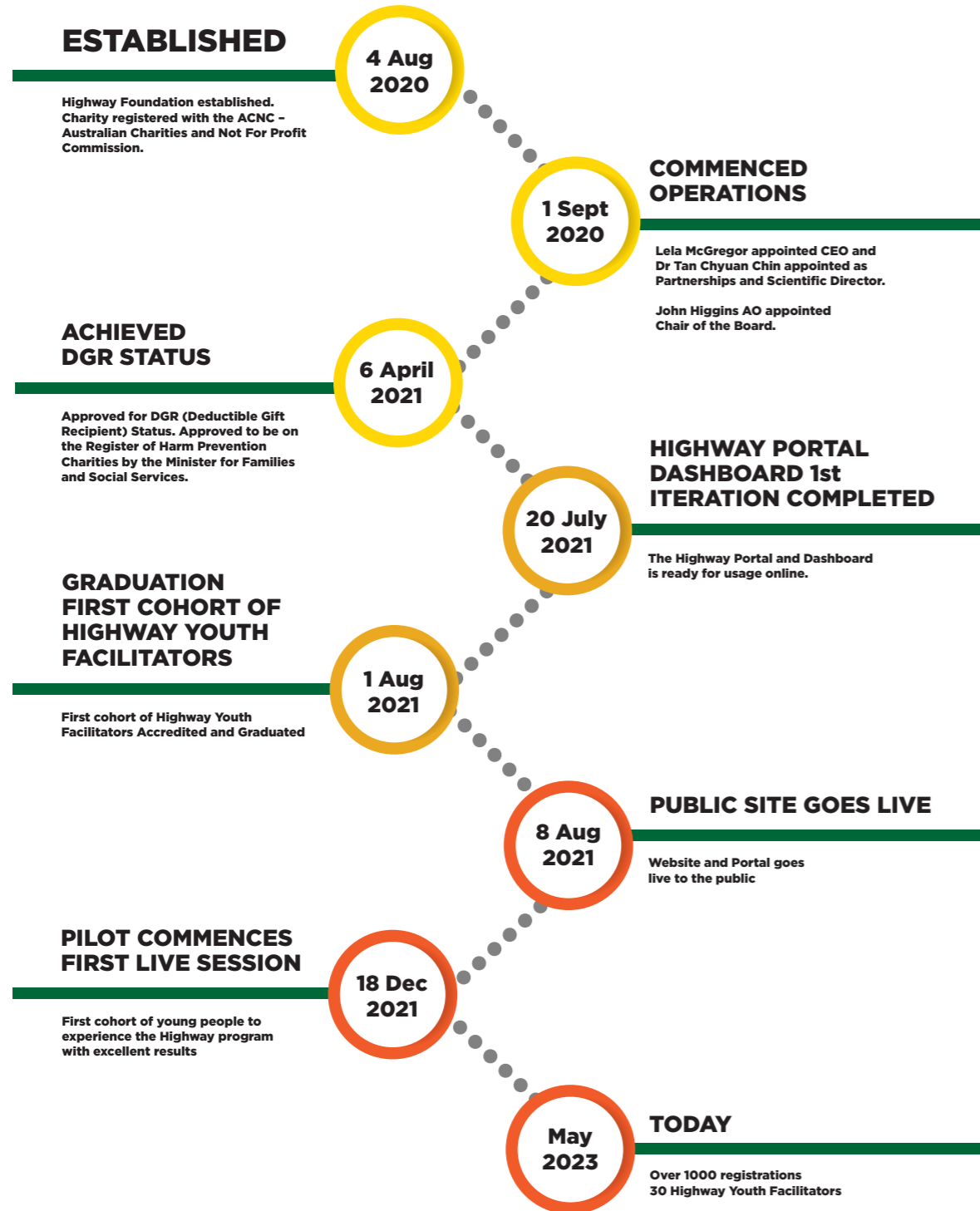
Resources for Wellbeing (sample)

Highway Compass Group Report (sample)





Our road unfolds...



Organisations who trust us



JOHN HIGGINS AO – CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



John's passion is to see young people thrive. This is evidenced by his tireless support for health, education and positive psychology. He has always believed that if you can just catch a young person right when they need it – you can change their life and their trajectory.

For that reason he is excited about Highway Foundation. John is respected and recognised for his distinguished service to the community through philanthropic contributions to education, cultural, social welfare, child cancer support organisations, and to business. John brings over 35 years of impeccable business experience. John is the Chairman of the Higgins Group of Companies, a privately owned business that invests and runs companies in Australia, Europe and North America with an increased focus on Medical Research in Cancer and Traumatic Brain Injuries. At the University of Melbourne, John funded the Gerry Higgins Chair of Positive Psychology and is also the Chairman of the Centre of Positive Psychology, now one of the leading wellbeing teaching and research centres in the world. John assisted the establishment of PESA (Positive

Education Schools Association), IPEN (International Positive Education Network) and was the underwriter of the most successful 2019 World Congress of Positive Psychology in Melbourne which was held for the first time out of the North America boasting over 1,600 delegates. He is a Life Member of the National Gallery of Victoria, as well as serving on its Foundation Board. He has also a Director of Camp Quality, a National children's cancer charity for the past 14 years.

LELA MCGREGOR - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

M.Pos.Psych, MMktg, BBus GAICD



Lela has experienced first hand the positive transformation of young people when given the space to be truly heard. She is excited to lead an organisation that can build inspirational and meaningful relationships for young people to find their way.

Lela is a consummate all-rounder. She is a wellbeing and spiritual teacher, master facilitator and scientific-based program designer; Lela has held senior global corporate roles across various industries, including Healthcare, Arts, Automotive, Hospitality, Property and Not-for-Profit. Her extensive international experience in leadership, finance, marketing, corporate strategy, and community and youth engagement has allowed her to understand what drives performance and makes people thrive. From coaching and mentoring professionals, teaching wellbeing to organisations, creating positive school programs now taught in 300 schools in 11 countries, and delivering diversity and wellbeing programs to over 250,000 students annually, her passion is inspiring young people to feel connected and empowered in their life.

DR. TAN CHYUAN CHIN - CHIEF SCIENTIST

PhD (Psychology), PG.Dip (Psy), G.Dip (Psy), BSc



Dr. Chin's research has led her to follow her heart. She is passionate about applying her research in the real world. She believes Highway Foundation's innovative model will provide relevant services to fill a gap in the market that her research has uncovered. She is excited to work with local councils, governments and organisations to make real world impact for youth today.

Dr. Chin is an award-winning researcher who has done extensive work across the interdisciplinary fields of education, psychology and wellbeing science. She has held an academic position at the University of Melbourne for the past 8 years. T-C has published over 30 peer-reviewed articles and chapters, as well as 18 commissioned reports for Local and State Government departments in Australia. She was the Founding Director of the award-winning Wellbeing Profiler. The Wellbeing Profiler is an innovative analytical service that measures and evaluates youth wellbeing for schools, councils and communities enabling effective planning and use of resources to meet the current and future needs of youth. She has led the

implementation of The Wellbeing Profiler in over 250 schools, reaching over 90,000 students across 6 countries in the last 4 years. She has also worked with Tennis Australia, AFL Academy and ArtsReady. The Wellbeing Profiler was the Finalist of the VicHealth Awards – Research in Action (2017) and was the Winner of the Australian Financial Review (2019) - Higher Education Awards for Community Engagement.

LELA MCGREGOR
Founder and CEO



DR. TAN CHYUAN CHIN
Chief Scientist



MALU FAATELE
Onboarding
Manager



ABDI HASSEN
Highway Compass
Workshop Program



LIAM BELL
Content Producer



TALISA MCGREGOR
Social Media and
Special Projects



Your Weight in Water

There is a weightlessness to

Allowing.

A moment of arrival,

Of cool watching.

Observe:

The weaves of a steady river;

The kisses between the ocean and the shore;

The see-saw of the bath water with every breath;

The graceful movements of our own bodies,

We, the water vessels.

Our own blood

Waits for nothing.

Just bends,

Flows,

Pushes and pulls,

Goes on sifting through the streams of our veins.

Do you feel the relentless withstanding

Of your own unstoppable, infinite, unfathomable seas?

The world happens

And all you can do is float on the ocean of yourself.

Swim desperately, in any direction and

Water will tell you

I cannot deliver you,

I can only hold you.

Sarah Little - HYF 2021



HIGHWAY

FOUNDATION

INSPIRING YOUTH TO FIND THEIR WAY



HIGHWAY FOUNDATION

www.highwayfoundation.org • 1/297 Ingles Street, Port Melbourne, VIC, 3207

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