



Social Impact 2023



Providing solutions to end poverty since 1996

The Big Issue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and creating work opportunities for people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage. Simply put, we help people help themselves.

thebigissue.org.au

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND CEO



For 27 years, the magazines you have purchased, connections forged with vendors, simple hellos and so much more have changed the lives of some of Australia's most vulnerable people.

As Australia's longest-standing and most significant social enterprise, The Big Issue has provided many ways for people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage to earn an income, but most importantly, to reconnect with the community and make positive changes in their lives.

Our journey started with *The Big Issue* magazine, and over time expanded to the Women Workforce, Community Street Soccer Program and The Big Issue Classroom, all from opportunities in the community to grow and help more people help themselves.

The Big Issue provides a platform, but it is through your actions that our participants can flourish. We want to thank you for everything you have done, and show you the impact of your incredible support.

We're excited to share with you the first ever Social Impact report, a new report from The Big Issue. This report provides an insight into the positive outcomes that engaging with The Big Issue creates for those directly involved with us and those in their immediate and wider circles.

The benefits for those in our programs are life-changing but often immeasurable, so we are pleased to now share this inaugural report and capture a snapshot of what happens every time you buy a magazine, book a Classroom, visit Street Soccer or engage our Women's Workforce.

The Big Issue is a community and its effects extend beyond those who are connected to us. You are part of our community, part of the scale and success of our organisation. As we reflect on the successes and challenges in this report, we look to the future and ask for your support as we continue our commitment to social change.

Thank you for being on this journey with us.

S. Clancy
Sonya Clancy AM
Chairman

S. Persson
Steven Persson
Chief Executive Officer

ENTERPRISES AND PROGRAMS

Street Magazine Enterprise



The Big Issue is our fortnightly, independent, general interest magazine sold on the streets by people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage. For every magazine sold, vendors earn half; earning an income, as well as building their confidence and capacity to help themselves.

7,570 vendors since inception (1996)

\$38.3m in vendors' pockets since inception

630 vendors in FY23

\$1.9m in vendors' pockets in FY23

The Big Issue Classroom



The Big Issue Classroom provides school, tertiary and corporate groups with insight into homelessness and disadvantage. Participants hear from people who have experienced homelessness, helping to break down stereotypes, and create work for our guest speakers.

200,000 students' engaged since inception (2009)

\$493,500 in guest speakers' pockets since inception

23,000 students engaged in FY23

\$51,900 in guest speakers' pockets in FY23

Women's Workforce



The Women's Workforce creates work for women experiencing homelessness and disadvantage packing subscriptions to *The Big Issue* magazine and fulfilling social procurement work. Women work in a safe and supportive environment, with an income and access to training and mentoring.

200 employees since inception (2010)

\$1.1m in women's pockets since inception

50 employees in FY23

\$68,900 in women's pockets in FY23

Community Street Soccer Program



The Community Street Soccer Program uses the power of sport to help people positively change their lives and reconnect with the community. The program offers weekly training around the country, giving participants an opportunity to get active and make new friends.

10,500 players since inception (2006)

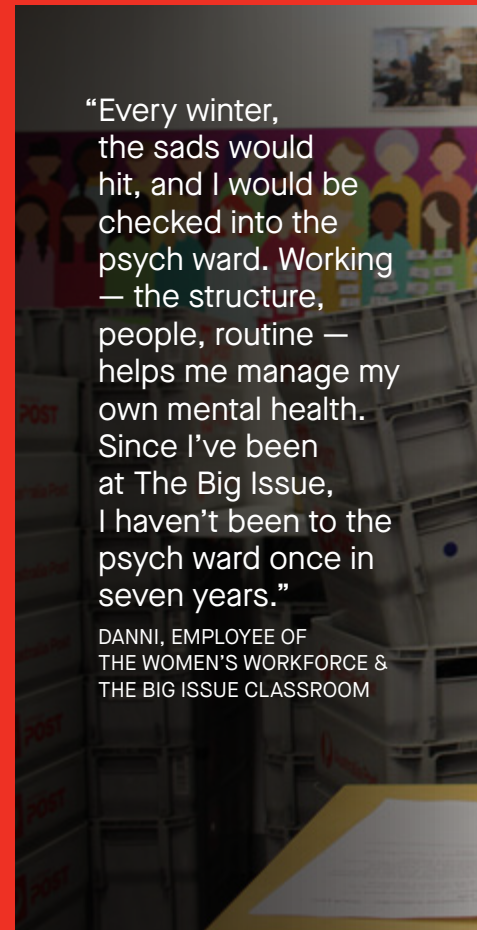
25 sites currently active

1,200 new players in FY23

98% have a more positive outlook

FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN THE BIG ISSUE, \$5.50 IS RETURNED TO THE COMMUNITY, THAT'S \$210 MILLION IN SOCIAL VALUE RETURNED SINCE 1996*

*THIS SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR THE BIG ISSUE'S STREET MAGAZINE ENTERPRISE WAS CALCULATED USING A 'COSTS AVOIDED' METHODOLOGY.



“Every winter, the sads would hit, and I would be checked into the psych ward. Working — the structure, people, routine — helps me manage my own mental health. Since I’ve been at The Big Issue, I haven’t been to the psych ward once in seven years.”

DANNI, EMPLOYEE OF THE WOMEN'S WORKFORCE & THE BIG ISSUE CLASSROOM

Participants:



79%

live with a long term physical or mental health condition or disability

45+

74%

are aged 45 years or older



13%

are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background



39%

women

60%

men

1%

transgender or non-binary

Since beginning work at The Big Issue:



65%

have found more stable housing



81%

have maintained stable work at The Big Issue for three or more years



90%

have made new friends



95%

have improved self-confidence

Accessing the benefits of work in a social enterprise, including income, routine, community, and support, builds participants' capacity to make positive changes in their broader lives.



“I tried to quit booze for more than ten years, but I’d always relapse in my old environment. I lost everything. Playing Street Soccer I met the right friends to help me stay away from it and now I’ve got my own place, I’m studying, I’m working, I feel good about myself.”

JAMES, COMMUNITY STREET SOCCER PLAYER AND EMPLOYEE OF THE BIG ISSUE CLASSROOM

Improved lives for participants:

Since becoming involved with The Big Issue#:

46%

have been able to participate in other employment

87%

have learned new skills

71%

have been able to connect with services that improve their lives

97%

have been able to care for themselves better

62%

have improved digital literacy

43%

have been able to participate in education or training

88%

have been able to manage their money better

66%

have been able to spend less money on gambling

Improved health for participants:

Since becoming involved with The Big Issue#:

87%

have been able to eat better food

58%

have reduced smoking

97%

have reduced their use of alcohol or other drugs

Reduced demand on community services:

Because of their involvement with The Big Issue#:

60%

have been able to avoid health crises that require emergency care

89%

have reduced interactions with police and law enforcement

85%

have reduced their need for support from social services or charities

#ALL PARTICIPANTS HAVE DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS THAT LEAD THEM TO THE BIG ISSUE. SURVEYS ASKED PARTICIPANTS TO SELECT 'YES', 'NO', OR 'NOT APPLICABLE'. PERCENTAGES SHOWN REFLECT ANSWERS FOR WHEN THE QUESTION WAS APPLICABLE.

When you buy a magazine, you're supporting vendors like David.

David is vision impaired and has sold *The Big Issue* magazine since 2019.

"In the early days I found it really hard to sell, but then you develop a lot of regulars," David said.

Currently, David has many regular customers, many of whom use digital payments to purchase magazines.

"The percentage of people [using digital payments] has increased. There's not a day where I don't have digital sales. They've become more popular now.

"It doesn't matter [when you're selling] whether you have your vision or not, it's more about your personality and if you want to work."

David is one of 7,570 vendors who have sold *The Big Issue* magazine since 1996.



When you engage the Women's Workforce, you're supporting women like Bec and Kasey.

Bec and Kasey are former Women's Workforce employees. They are currently working with a corporate partner of *The Big Issue*, proof reading and sending bills to customers.

Bec was with the Women's Workforce for 10 years after finding the program through homelessness services.

"I went through some tough challenges and while working through them they were just so supportive and amazing," Bec said.

"The Women's Workforce helped me practically, emotionally, socially. In some cases if it weren't for *The Big Issue* I probably wouldn't be where I'm at right now. I'm most definitely grateful that I had that opportunity to work and meet some amazing people through *The Big Issue*."

After also experiencing homelessness, Kasey found the Women's Workforce.

"The first session was very nerve-wracking, but then meeting all the ladies made me feel very comfortable. The bonds I've made have amazed me. *The Big Issue* has given me a new way of looking at life and I've loved every second of it."

The Women's Workforce has provided over 45,000 hours of work to marginalised women since 2010.





When you book a workshop with The Big Issue Classroom, you're supporting guest speakers like Shane.

Shane is a guest speaker for The Big Issue Classroom, sharing his story of homelessness and disadvantage.

“When my dad had a stroke I quit my job to care for him. It was the best ten years with him but after he died I couldn't get a job. Even though I had 25 years' experience as a good worker! They said I was too old. I was unemployed and homeless for a long time.

“My mental health got really bad and it was only thanks to some good friends

that I came out the other end.

“Getting a job with The Big Issue Classroom has given me my confidence back and I've spoken to over 15,000 students in the last 13 years. I hope hearing my story helps them. Now I'm in a really good place with my housing and my life, I got married this year and I have a lot to look forward to.”

Shane and his colleagues have spoken to over 200,000 students since 2009.

When you support the Community Street Soccer Program, you're supporting players like Rok.

Rok arrived in Australia as an asylum seeker, and after becoming involved with the Community Street Soccer Program is now a coach for the program.

“When my brother told me, ‘Hey, there's a soccer program going. Come have a kick,’ we were still new to Australia. I didn't have any friends, barely spoke the language.

“Stuart, the Street Soccer coach, made me feel welcome. I didn't need to say a single word. Once you're on the pitch, you just understand. You understand how every player feels. It's the best thing about the game.

“I started studying youth work and was looking for work experience, so I spoke to Stuart. He's like, ‘Would you like to come to work?’ Everything lined up.

“I've met some of the best people through this program. Without these guys, I don't know where I'd be today. And here I am, passing those lessons on to other people. So I'm set. The only thing I want is to pay it forward.”

Rok is one of 10,500 players since 2006.



OUR HISTORY

The *Big Issue* magazine concept came to Australia in 1993 when a group of prominent citizens came together to explore solutions to help address Australia's increasing homeless population.

They proposed a model based on the UK's successful *Big Issue* street magazine model. The first magazine was launched in Australia on the steps of Melbourne's Flinders Street Station on June 16 1996.

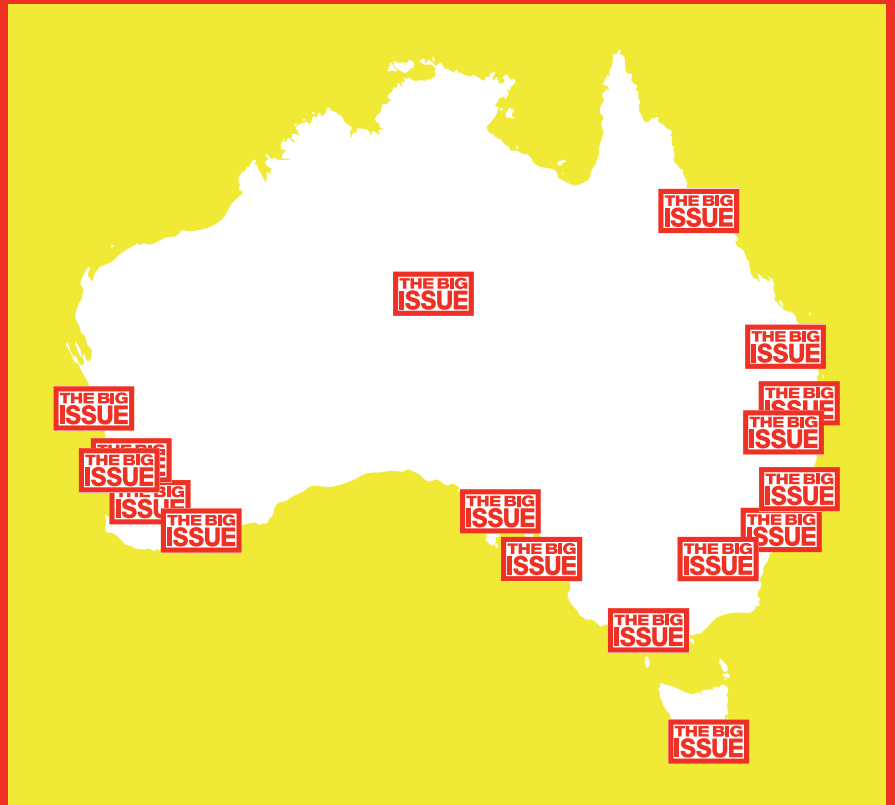
National Reach

Our national program footprint has now expanded into every state and territory in Australia.

Get Involved

To find out how you get can involved, scan the QR Code below, or go to thebigissue.org.au

Thank you for your support.



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thebigissue.org.au

The Big Issue acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

