



Social Impact 2024



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



As Australia's longest-standing and most significant social enterprise, The Big Issue has created work opportunities and enterprises for people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage to earn an income, but importantly, to build confidence and their capacity to help themselves. The people we help come from a range of backgrounds including mental illness, homelessness, long-term unemployment, intellectual and physical disability and drug and alcohol dependency.

Our journey started in 1996 with *The Big Issue* magazine, and through the years has expanded to the Women Workforce, Community Street Soccer Program and The Big Issue Classroom, all from seeing a need and opportunity to grow and help more people help themselves.

Over the last 28 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.

We're excited to share with you the 2024 Social Impact report, a snapshot of what happens every time you buy a magazine, book a Classroom, visit Street Soccer or engage our Women's Workforce. We're happy to once again report positive outcomes that engaging with

The Big Issue creates for those directly involved with us and those in their immediate and wider circles, including earning an income, better physical and mental health, connection with the community and greater wellbeing. Your impact has created incredible change for those living on the margins.

As we reflect our successes and challenges found from 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.

7,779	vendors since inception (1996)
\$40.1m	in vendors' pockets since inception
600	vendors in FY24
\$1.83m	in vendors' pockets in FY24

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.

220	employees since inception (2010)
\$1.17m	in women's pockets since inception
48	employees in FY24
\$66,539	in women's pockets in FY24

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.

216,000	students' engaged since inception (2009)
\$549,926	in guest speakers' pockets since inception
15,871	students engaged in FY24
\$56,426	in guest speakers' pockets in FY24

Community Street Soccer Program

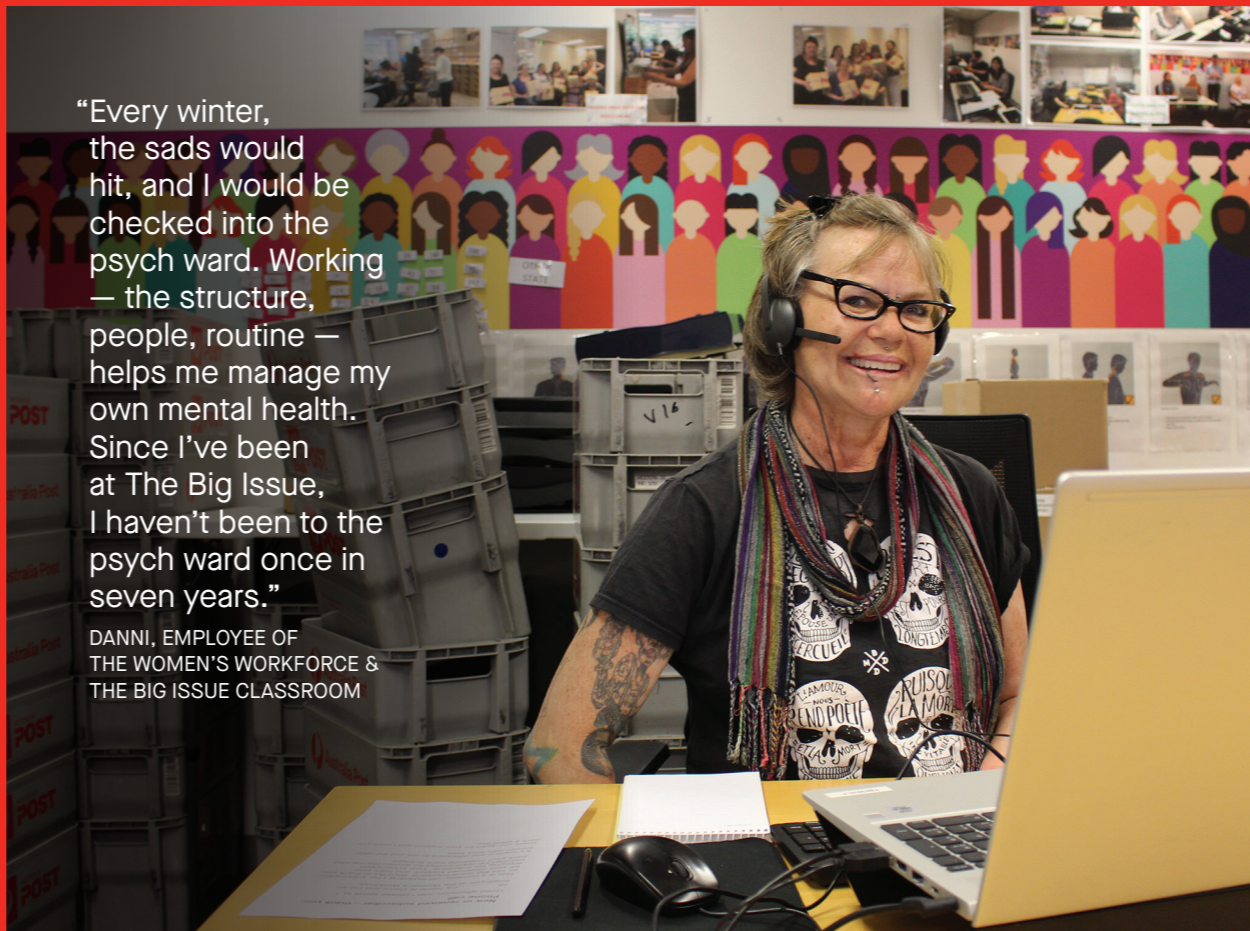


The Community Street Soccer Program uses the power of sport to help people positively change their lives and reconnect with the community. The program offers weekly training around the country, giving participants an opportunity to get active and make new friends.

11,735	players since inception (2006)
27	sites currently active
1,235	new players in FY24
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



“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

Participants:

77%
live with a long term physical or mental health condition or disability

45+ **75%**
are aged 45 years or older

12.3%
are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

36% women **58%** men **6%** transgender or non-binary

Since beginning work at The Big Issue:

66%
have found more stable housing

78%
have maintained stable work at The Big Issue for three or more years

90%
have made new friends

96%
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.

Improved lives for participants:

Since becoming involved with The Big Issue#:

46%
have been able to participate in other employment

95%
have been able to connect with services that improve their lives

64%
have improved digital literacy

88%
have been able to manage their money better

88%
have learned new skills

96%
have been able to care for themselves better

46%
have been able to participate in education or training

62%
have been able to spend less money on gambling

#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.

Improved health for participants:

Since becoming involved with The Big Issue#:

87%
have been able to eat better food

61%
have reduced smoking

65%
have reduced their use of alcohol or other drugs

Reduced demand on community services:

Because of their involvement with The Big Issue#:

64%
have been able to avoid health crises that require emergency care

100%
have reduced interactions with police and law enforcement

82%
have reduced their need for support from social services or charities

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 7,779 vendors who have sold *The Big Issue* magazine since 1996.



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 216,000 students since 2009.



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 50,609 hours of work to marginalised women since 2010.



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 11,735 players since 2006.



HELPING PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES.

THE BIG ISSUE

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.

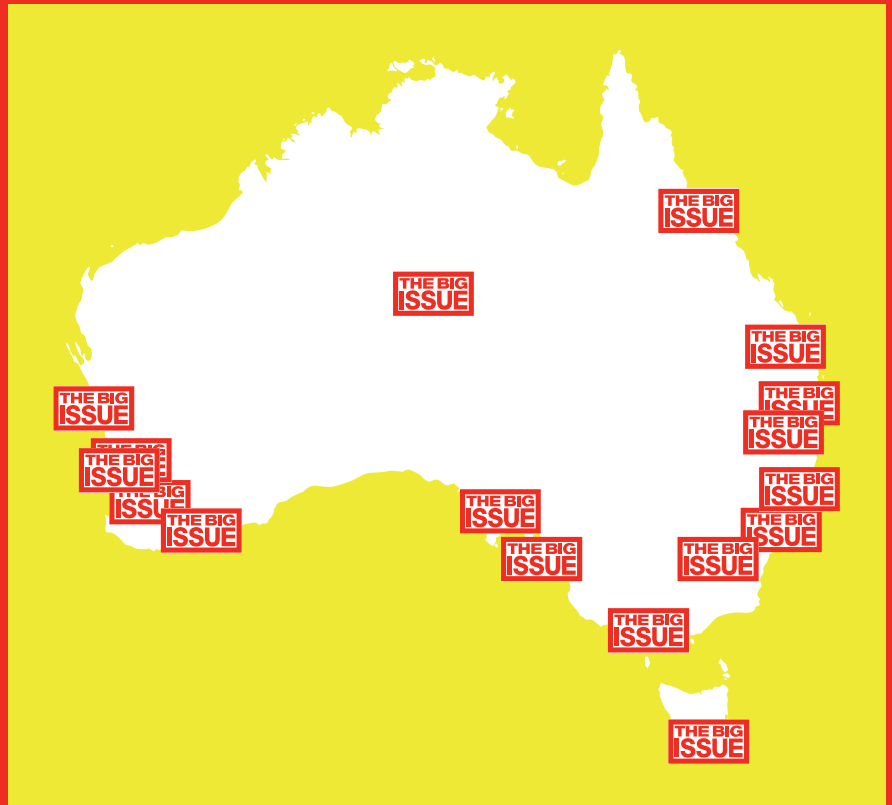
National Reach

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.

