



2025 Impact Report



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



“What began with a magazine sold on the streets has grown into a national movement. From *The Big Issue* magazine to our Women’s Workforce, Community Street Soccer Program and Big Issue Classroom our work continues to evolve in response to the changing needs of our community.”

For almost 30 years, The Big Issue has stood as a unique and proven solution to homelessness and poverty.

Since 1996, we have been creating genuine, lasting solutions to poverty, helping people build stability, confidence and connection through meaningful work and community inclusion.

As we approach our 30th year, we reflect on a legacy of impact and the thousands of Australians who have been part of our story. Through every challenge and transition, our purpose has remained clear: to create opportunities and pathways out of poverty. Our programs restore dignity and transform lives.

But we also recognise that our work is far from over. Poverty in Australia is deepening, and its face is changing — from older women experiencing housing insecurity, to young people disconnected from education and employment. Homelessness, a visible symptom of poverty, cannot be solved by temporary fixes. The real solution lies in providing income and community inclusion, and this is what The Big Issue has done.

This year’s report shows the difference that commitment makes. Vendors earning income and rebuilding independence. Women finding confidence and connection through meaningful work. Players in our Community Street Soccer Program improving their health and wellbeing.

Students learning empathy through the Big Issue Classroom. Each of these stories reflects the power of opportunity, and the ripple effect it creates across families, communities and generations.

As we look towards our 30th year, we do so with deep gratitude for everyone who has made this journey possible, our vendors, participants, customers, partners and supporters. Together, we’ve built a community that believes in fairness, inclusion and the potential of every person.

There is still much to do. With one in seven Australians struggling to make ends meet, The Big Issue’s mission has never been more vital. We will continue to adapt, to listen and to lead — delivering real, lasting solutions to poverty and empowering people to shape their own futures.

Join us. Together we can turn the tide on poverty and build a future where everyone has the chance to thrive.

S. Persson

Steven Persson
Chief Executive Officer
The Big Issue Australia

The Big Issue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and creating work opportunities for people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage. Empowering people through financial independence and connection to community.



“I never went to school and I’m three quarters blind. When I came to The Big Issue, they gave me work and helped me enroll in a class to learn to read. Now I can read the signs where I’m working and the magazine I’m selling. I’m 74 now but I’ll never retire from The Big Issue — it’s not just the money, I like getting out and meeting the people.”

RON, THE BIG ISSUE VENDOR, 10 YEARS

THE PEOPLE WE HELP

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

Participants:



79%

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



69%

are aged 45 years or older



11%

are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background



33%

women

63%

men

4%

transgender or non-binary

Reduced demand on community services because of their involvement with The Big Issue#:

67%

have avoided health crises that require emergency care

60%

have reduced interactions with police and law enforcement

74%

have reduced their need for support from social services or charities

#Surveys asked participants to select ‘yes’, ‘no’, or ‘not applicable’. Percentages shown reflect answers for when the question was applicable.

For every dollar invested in The Big Issue, \$5.50 is returned to the community, that’s \$240 million in social value returned since 1996.*

*Calculated using a ‘costs avoided’ methodology.



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 ability to help themselves.



8,344

vendors
since inception in 1996



\$41.9m

in vendors' pockets
since inception



572

vendors
in the 2025 financial year



\$1.8m

in vendors' pockets
in the 2025 financial year

Improved lives for participants since becoming involved with *The Big Issue*#:

71%

have found more stable housing

88%

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

36%

have participated in other employment

48%

have participated in education or training

67%

have spent less money on gambling

#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 directly supporting vendors like Chris.

Chris sells *The Big Issue* magazine on Bourke Street bridge at Southern Cross Station, Melbourne. He is also a speaker with The Big Issue Classroom.

“Before I joined The Big Issue I had just come out of homelessness, during which time I was couch surfing and sleeping rough on public transport. I had to do it alone, I had to keep on keeping on.

“My father, who was a vendor, said to give it a go, so I started in Canberra. The first day I sold 10 mags. I thought that was freedom. Now I have the independence and stability of work.

“The Big Issue has given me opportunities more than just being a vendor. I’m a classroom speaker, and, outside of The Big Issue itself, I’m a member of both the V-Line and Yarra Trams Accessible Reference groups, helping make their networks more accessible for people with disabilities.

“It gives me pride to wear the uniform and sell the magazines. It has given me independence and the strength to speak up and advocate for myself and for others.

“As I grew selling, I grew as a person. I started selling when I was 18, I’m now 25 and I’ve grown in myself and as a person who wants to be out there working. I’m making a difference in my community.”



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.



12,862

players since starting the program in 2006



30

active sites around Australia



1,126

new players in the 2025 financial year

Improved health for participants since becoming involved with The Big Issue#:

87%

eat better food

59%

have reduced smoking

63%

have reduced their use of alcohol or other drugs

95%

have a more positive outlook

For every dollar invested in the Community Street Soccer Program, \$14.30 is saved in healthcare and other costs. That is \$300m in Social Return since 2007.

#Surveys asked participants to select 'yes', 'no', or 'not applicable'. Percentages shown reflect answers for when the question was applicable.



When you support the Community Street Soccer Program, you're directly supporting players like Malika and Faz.

Malika (pictured opposite) and Faz (pictured below) are regulars with our Community Street Soccer Program in Victoria and New South Wales.

Faz has been playing for many years. "I've been playing soccer since I was a kid," says Faz. "When I came here [from Iran] I didn't have much to do, and Street Soccer gave me that missing link."

Malika also found community through Street Soccer. "I was studying the English language and was introduced to The Big Issue in January 2021. Before I hadn't played football or kicked a ball because in Afghanistan it was not allowed for girls."

"We chat and everyone feels welcome," she says. "The moment we enter the field to play soccer we forget every negative thing and just focus on the ball. We wait all week for Street Soccer!"

Together Faz and Malika wore the green and gold, representing Australia at the 2024 Homeless World Cup in Seoul, South Korea.

"It was great meeting new people. I was not as independent before I went to Korea because I was with my parents all the time, but when I went to Korea I was there alone without my family. I felt independent," says Malika.

Faz shares the feeling about the power of sport. "[The Homeless World Cup] was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. There's a soccer language, you just kick the ball and start having a laugh and that's the main thing."



WOMEN'S WORKFORCE

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



220

employees
since starting in 2010



\$1.24m

in women's pockets
since inception



32

employees
in the 2025 financial year



\$50,278

in women's pockets
in the 2025 financial year

Improved lives for participants since becoming involved with The Big Issue#:

80%

have connected with services that improve their lives

100%

care for themselves better

100%

have made new friends

100%

have improved self-confidence

For every dollar invested in the Women's Workforce, \$5.50 is saved in healthcare and other costs. That is \$6.8m in Social Return since 2010.

#Surveys asked participants to select 'yes', 'no', or 'not applicable'. Percentages shown reflect answers for when the question was applicable.



When you engage the Women's Workforce, you're directly supporting women like Gen.

Gen works with the Women's Workforce in Perth and has used the program as a stepping stone to gain work experience and a community in Australia.

"I studied business, but I couldn't get a job. No one would hire me, as I had no Australian experience. I hate when they say, 'Oh you need experience'. It's like, how am I supposed to get the experience if you don't give me experience?"

"The first time I met [Women's Workforce supervisor] Celia, I was so nervous. It was my first job interview ever in Australia. But she made it so easy for me. And then straight away, she's like, 'you got the job'."

"It's good exposure, you know, because when I speak to the ladies, everybody's isolated. We've all had some kind of experience, but by being exposed to the work and to other things we make connections. So the Women's Workforce is not just physical work, we have other things that really help us."

"Through this job I got another job. So now I have Australian working experience. That's why this workplace is a safe place as a stepping stone. I'm so grateful. I love it. Everywhere I go I tell people I work at The Big Issue!"



CLASSROOM

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



230,000

students' engaged since starting in 2009



\$605,420

in guest speakers' pockets since inception



21,500

students engaged in the 2025 financial year



\$55,495

in guest speakers' pockets in the 2025 financial year

“I just wanted to share my deep appreciation for [lived experience speaker] Dave speaking with the kids. They absolutely adored him and were so moved by his story. The talk really opened their eyes to the reality of homelessness in a way that was both powerful and compassionate.”

CHLOE GREEN, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, SYDNEY





When you book a workshop with the classroom, you're directly supporting guest speakers like Dave.

Dave started selling *The Big Issue* magazine in 1996. Now he mainly works as a guest speaker, talking to school, community and workplace groups in Sydney.

“I started *The Big Issue* when I was in the men’s hostel in Melbourne. It was a terrible place, but I saw a sign on the wall to sell *The Big Issue*. I sold newspapers in Brisbane as a kid, so I went and ended up selling the same day. That was in 1996, I’ve been around a while.

“When I settled down in Sydney and started doing magazines full time, I was offered to do the classroom and I said I’ll give it a go! I started doing classroom about 10 years ago and have been recently doing more as I’ve slowed down the selling and more classrooms started coming up.

“The primary school kids are great, they come up with the best questions ever, they don’t hold back! It’s rewarding and after they come up to you and say they really enjoyed it. I’ve seen kids in tears after my story, but that’s the reality. Down the track they say ‘Dave, I remember you from the classroom’. They still come up to me and know who I am.

“When I started in 1996, I had a bad gambling habit and now I don’t gamble at all. Doing the mag and this classroom work I’ve become more financially responsible. It’s changed the way I think now. I’ve been able to enjoy my money instead of worrying about where it comes from.”

JOIN US

**As we head towards our 30th anniversary,
join us and help alleviate poverty in Australia.**

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

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.

