



TRACTION

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Impact Report
June 2023



Welcome

From the Founder and CEO

We hope you enjoy learning more about TRACTION and the impact of our work with young people highlighted in our consolidated findings from data collected over 2021 and 2022. Our first impact report confirms the efficacy of our strengths-based, trauma-informed and culturally safe approach to mentoring young people. Our results strongly indicate that a relational approach to mentoring builds young people's self-belief, confidence and skills which contribute to a sense of hope and motivation for future goals.

TRACTION has proven over the past nine years that our mentoring programs have the potential to play a powerful role in Queensland's early intervention and prevention sector. Our results confirm that our stakeholders regard us as successful in helping young people take positive steps towards improving their wellbeing, engaging in learning, building pathways towards employment and developing stronger connections with their family and community.

The young people we have mentored have received a vital boost in realising their own productive potential. At a broader systemic level, we are also confident that our investment is creating opportunities for educational success and wellbeing which contributes to reducing burden on tertiary or other crisis oriented 'downstream' services, therefore contributing significant economic and social savings to communities.

The findings presented in this report include program outputs and measures tracked against our impact areas of learning engagement, wellbeing and resilience, and skills for lifelong learning. Additional findings highlight how stakeholders perceive the benefits of mentoring as a tool for growing young people's strengths, skills and capabilities.

We are continually seeking ways to improve how we support young people, the way we partner with schools and referral partners and serve communities in which they live.

Additional developments over the past 12 months include the trial of two additional program components – "Fuel Up" and "Take the Lead". Fuel Up is a health and nutrition program developed in collaboration between TRACTION and Health and Wellbeing Queensland. Take the Lead is a leadership development initiative funded by the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. Both programs are welcome additions to our signature program offerings, and are demonstrating promising early results that we will report on in future Impact Reports.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts and professionalism of the TRACTION team who day-in, day-out, meet our young people where they're at, and build rapport and trust as positive role models. It is a privilege to be part of such a wonderful community that makes a profound difference.

Thank you so much to our supporters for being the driving force behind our programs that support young people experiencing challenges in our community. Our heartfelt thanks also to our school and referral partners for providing the opportunity and trust to work alongside their young people.

For those new to TRACTION, we welcome you on the journey, and encourage you to reach out to see how you can get involved, help raise awareness, or provide support that makes a difference.

We look forward to sharing our progress as we continue to evolve as an organisation and reach more young people.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandy Murdoch".

Sandy Murdoch

CEO and Founder

TRACTION For Young People



The TRACTION Way

Since 2015, TRACTION has mentored over 2,100 young people aged 12-16 years predominantly during their middle years of schooling.

These years present wonderful, yet time-limited opportunities to help young people strengthen healthy identities, relationships and self-belief. However, we have also learnt these are the years where young people can become disconnected, disengaged and disillusioned. Fortunately, TRACTION is adept at leveraging this window of opportunity to provide young people with access to safe and supportive relationships that can assist them to better manage the challenges and risks that can be associated with transitioning through this stage of life.

Facilitating connections and a sense of belonging is crucial in promoting young people's social and community engagement, wellbeing, and growth. TRACTION mentors place significant effort in building rapport and trust with our young people and establishing supportive group work environments and safe and respectful relationships.

When we combine a relational approach with fun and practical hands-on social and emotional learning opportunities, young people develop confidence, capacities and skills that result in healthier identities, stronger engagement with learning and a desire and belief that they can meet educational and future life goals. Our results clearly demonstrate this.

TRACTION's approach to engaging young people has evolved and matured over the last nine years and we have built a reputation as a professional provider of early intervention and prevention youth support programs contributing to socially just and sustainable responses to the impacts of disengagement from learning, social isolation and compromised health and wellbeing.

Impacts

Maximising Potential for Impact

Research undertaken in the field of youth mentoring is conclusive that in order for mentoring to be successful, programs need to be well designed and structured, sufficiently resourced, and evaluated comprehensively.

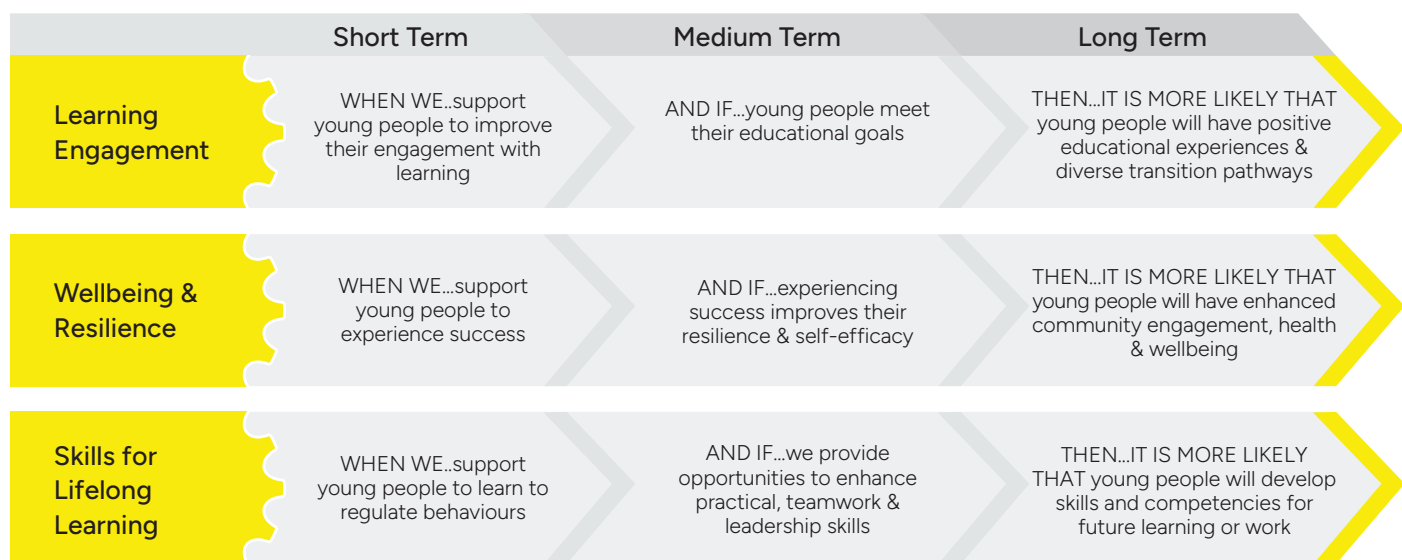
We understand that achieving maximum impact requires a whole of organisation approach and a suite of well-designed systems. Throughout 2021 and 2022, we strengthened our organisational capability to establish the frameworks and systems to guide and monitor the quality, effectiveness and impact of our mentoring with young people.

Our Theory of Change describes the issues we are aiming to address and our ambitions for change. Our Program Evaluation Framework establishes the mechanics for how we will do that. “The TRACTION Way” – our Practice Framework, establishes the rationale for our mentoring approach and the theoretical underpinnings for how we engage with young people. Our Strategic Plan and governance systems guide the delivery of our priorities and ensures we do so responsibly. Finally, our staffing and resourcing plans ensure we are financially sustainable and have a capable and supported workforce to engage young people, their communities and stakeholders.



Maximising Outcomes and Impact

Our Program Logic Model and Theory of Change specifies measures to monitor our short and medium to longer term outcomes across the domains of learning engagement, wellbeing and resilience, and skills for lifelong learning.



Evidence of Impact

TRACTION collects data from young people, their parents/guardians and from our referral partners – that are typically schools that identify young people experiencing challenges to participate in TRACTION programs.

In total, we have four data collection and review points per year using up to 10 individual measurement tools. Outcomes are reported back to program stakeholders four times per year ensuring that TRACTION has full capability to effectively monitor and measure real change over time.

The results included in this report are based on data collected over calendar years 2021 and 2022. Like many not-for-profits, we have found that tracking longer term outcomes requires significant investment and resourcing. Following the progress of young people after their time with TRACTION relies on support from referral partners, including schools, and parents/guardians.

We have been fortunate to reconnect with past participants who provide wonderful feedback about their TRACTION experience and share their progress in building positive pathways towards their hopes and dreams.

We are formalising systems to better track the journey of past program participants via our “Where Are They Now?” strategy and look forward to reporting their progress against longer-term outcomes.



Program Impacts

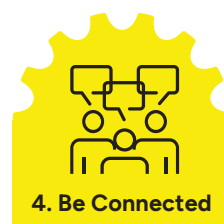
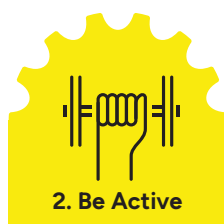
TRACTION prevents, as well as addresses, the impacts of disengagement from learning, isolation from critical relational supports and missed opportunities, to develop wellbeing and social and emotional skills for lifelong learning and participation.

There are five program elements that are scaffolded within our programs. These represent a platform for wellbeing and include:

1. Strengthen skills for learning, promote active and healthy lifestyles,
2. Foster skills for wellbeing,
3. Facilitate supportive connections and relationships, and
4. Build self-belief and potential for working with others
5. Having a positive influence within communities.

TRACTION incorporates these elements into a range of hands-on learning program formats that provide social and experiential opportunities where young people complete projects and experience a sense of success.

Our mentors foster a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment whether they are delivering our Bicycle Build, Boom Box or Small Engines programs, or facilitating our Fuel Up (healthy food and nutrition), Gear Up (bicycle riding skills and road safety awareness) or Take the Lead (leadership for young people) initiatives. These formats range from one-day experiences, to more intensive experiences of up to 54 hours over 9-10 weeks during a school term.

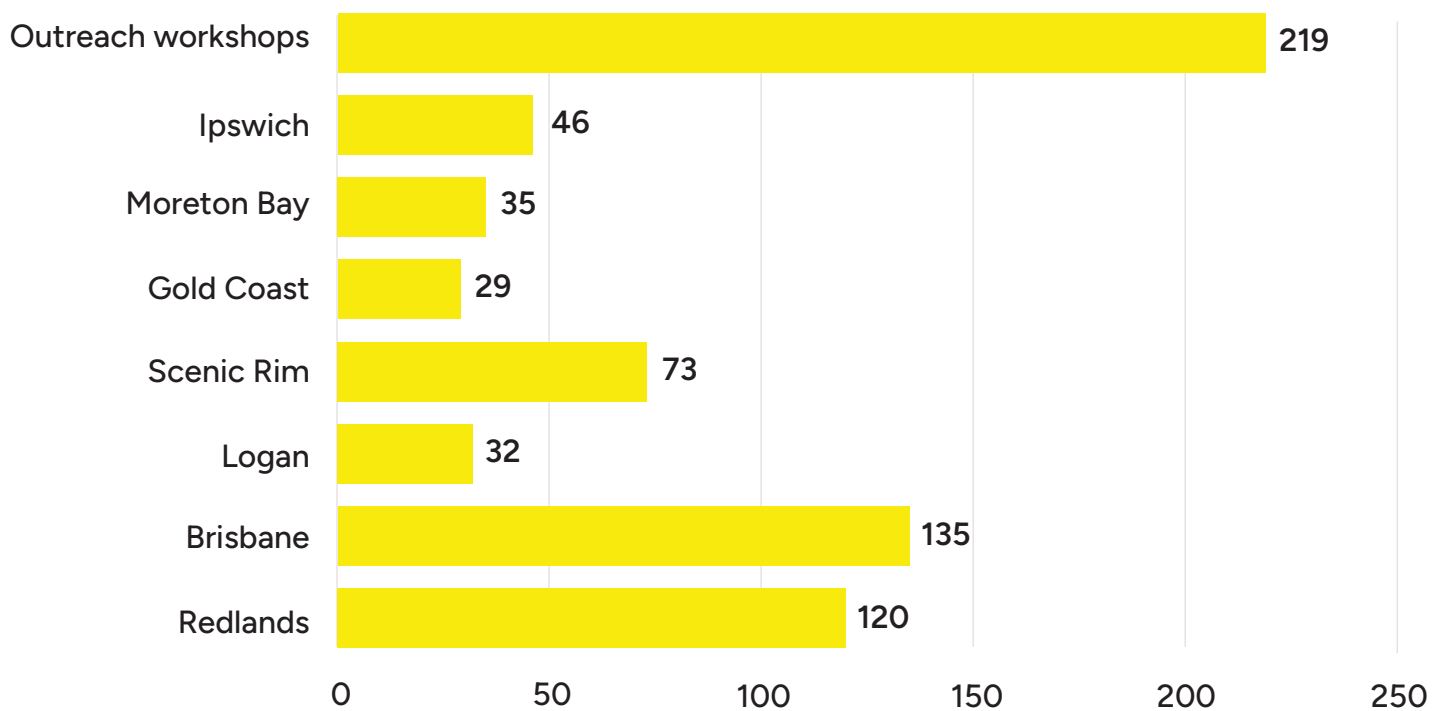


Outputs Dashboard

In 2021-2022 TRACTION:

- Delivered 81 programs
- Partnered with 122 referral agencies including schools across 7 Queensland regions
- Engaged with 689 young people with a 96.25% attendance and completion rate
- Mentored 79% males and 16% females and 2.30% who identified as non-binary
- First Nations 16.5%
- Provided 27,029 hours of direct mentoring
- Donated 543 bikes to young people

Delivery Locations and Number of Participants 2021-2022



Impact Dashboard One:

Learning Engagement

The challenges we are addressing

Successful participation in secondary school is not only an important milestone for the transition to adulthood and the workforce, it is also a precursor for improved health and wellbeing outcomes. While more students are staying at school (88% of females and 79% of males)¹ school is not always a positive experience and in the middle years of schooling many young people are missing out on opportunities to perform in literacy and numeracy.

- 24.8% (72,419) of young people nationally are below the minimum standard in literacy and numeracy and in QLD this number is higher at 28%²
- 20% of young people in Year 8 do not agree that school is a place where they feel happy³
- Across the regions TRACTION operates within, 8% (36,668) of students were recorded as having a short or long term suspension, an exclusion or their enrolment cancelled in 2021⁴

How we performed on learning engagement

- 76% of young people are more positive about being at school
- Schools indicate a 30% improvement in attendance for those where attendance was a concern
- Schools noted a 24% reduction in behavioural incidents for those whose behaviour at school was a cause for concern
- 66% of parents/guardians agree their child is more engaged and better able to cope at school
- 69% of young people agree that they are getting along better with teachers

How we performed on giving young people an opportunity to meet their educational goals

- 90% of young people completing TRACTION experience a sense of success in meeting their project goals
- 86% of young people feel more confident in how they are managing academic requirements
- Schools indicate that 55% of young people have improved their attitude towards school
- 60% of schools agree that young people have improved effort at school
- 65% of schools agree that young people have improved interactions with staff and teachers at school

¹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/secondary-education-school-retention-completions>,

² Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Wade, A., Maire, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J. & Endekov, Z. (2020). Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out. Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute: Melbourne.

³ Noble, K., Rehill, P., Sollis, K., Dakin, P., Harris, D. (2023). The Wellbeing of Australia's Children: A Story About Data, A Story About Change. ARACY and UNICEF Australia.

⁴ <https://qed.qld.gov.au/our-publications/reports/statistics/Documents/sda-by-region.pdf>

Tracking towards long term impacts – positive educational experiences and transition pathways

Data paints a clear trajectory that gaps in achievement grow as students get older. Tracking data into the senior years of school and into early adulthood establishes that 18.4% of students do not receive a Year 12 qualification or equivalent, and 29.7% are not engaged in education, training or work.⁵

Our results over 2021 – 2022 paint a positive picture in addressing risk factors for young people associated with poor learning engagement. Evidence suggests that if TRACTION continues to intervene early to address risk factors associated with school engagement we can positively impact educational outcomes thereby influencing a young person's confidence and outlook for future learning and employment opportunities.⁶



My listening has improved and I am not in trouble as much. Last term I was in the office a lot but not this term. I can handle listening now and can communicate better. I am learning how I learn.

Young Person



TRACTION works because it provides students with an opportunity to learn in a different and hands-on setting. It also encourages students to give things a try and provides a comfortable and safe environment where mistakes can safely be made and fixed. It was a pleasure to watch the students extend themselves beyond their comfort zone and complete their projects. The students and their parents were so proud of their efforts. TRACTION also has great mentors that build supportive relationships with the students.

School Representative



TRACTION engages kids in a really positive learning environment outside the traditional classroom. The traditional classroom environment isn't built for everyone. TRACTION gives kids the opportunity to be engaged with learning in a different way.

Parent

⁵ Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Wade, A., Maire, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J. & Endekov, Z. (2020). Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out. Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute: Melbourne

⁶ Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Wade, A., Maire, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J. & Endekov, Z. (2020). Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out. Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute: Melbourne



Success Story: Ella

Ella, aged 14, completed her TRACTION program in 2021. While Ella indicates that school is still somewhat challenging she draws on her biggest learning gained from TRACTION that

'I can do anything if I put my mind to it'

Ella is using the time management skills and mindfulness techniques she learnt to help her focus on school and reminds herself that TRACTION taught her that

'if you are having trouble with something, you don't have to be afraid to ask for help'.

Ella since has gained a job at McDonalds and is keen to finish school to pursue a career in childcare.

Impact Dashboard Two: Wellbeing and Resilience

The challenges we are addressing

In the middle years of schooling many young people are missing out on opportunities to develop a strong sense of efficacy or belief in self.

- 32.5% (94,904) of young people do not possess a strong sense of self belief⁷
- Just on 72.8% of Australian 10-11-year-olds exhibit the behaviours indicative of creativity such as an eagerness to learn new things and adaptability to change
- In 2018 17.7 % of young people aged 0-14 years were living in poverty⁸
- In 2020 only 58.6% of young people aged 15-19 rate themselves as happy or very happy⁹

How we performed on giving young people an opportunity to experience success

- 94% of young people report feeling more confident and 92% report feeling more positive about themselves
- Schools report 69% of young people are more confident at school
- 93% of parents report their child is more confident
- 86% of young people report they feel they can make a positive contribution to their community

How we performed on supporting young people to strengthen self-efficacy and resilience

- 83% of young people report improved confidence to seek help from an adult, support service or peer
- 80% of young people report improved capacity to make healthy and safe choices and higher motivation to eat healthier and be more physically active
- 88% of young people and 52% of parents report an improved capacity to think more about how choices and behaviour can affect others

⁷ Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Wade, A., Maire, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J. & Endekov, Z. (2020). Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out. Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute: Melbourne.

⁸ Noble, K., Rehill, P., Sollis, K., Dakin, P., Harris, D. (2023). The Wellbeing of Australia's Children: A Story About Data, A Story About Change. ARACY and UNICEF Australia

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Tracking towards long term impacts – enhanced community engagement, health and wellbeing

Teaching young people skills for help seeking, managing behaviours, connecting safely through respectful relationships and building habits for healthy lives can influence opportunity for a positive future health trajectory. There is also strong evidence available that suggests that non-participation in community in its various forms is damaging for health and wellbeing and is known to lead to feelings of powerlessness, which leads to feelings of chronic stress, with adverse consequences for health and wellbeing.¹⁰

Fortunately many factors that predict less than optimum health into the adult years are considered modifiable. Our data over the past two years indicates that we are equipping young people with the self-belief and resources so that they can be optimistic about their health, their wellbeing and their engagement with their community.



TRACTION has helped me with issues I didn't know could be fixed. My confidence and self-criticism has both been affected and I thank TRACTION for what they have done for me.

Young Person



TRACTION works because it provides students with the opportunity to development their confidence, resilience, leadership and teamwork skills in a fun and engaging way.

School Representative



My daughter has gone from not coming out of her bedroom to going out for a ride every day. She is working on the bikes at home. She is thinking about her future and what path she wants to go down. TRACTION is one of the best programs around. She has gotten so much out of the program.

Parent



Success Story: Lincoln

Lincoln, aged 16, completed his TRACTION program in 2020. Lincoln shares that since he last saw us he has been coping really well and now has a good group of friends. Lincoln recalls that his biggest learning was about teamwork and working with others. Lincoln also shared how he

'learned how to work with strangers and gained a lot of confidence. I was shy at the start and I became more comfortable. I did the 48 km Kokoda Challenge with confidence from TRACTION. I did a speech at a TRACTION dinner. I was nervous doing the speech but realised I could do it.'

Lincoln knows now that he can persist through things as he is more resilient. While doing TRACTION he wanted to leave school in Year 10, but he is now more motivated to complete Year 12 because he feels more connected socially. Before TRACTION, Lincoln said his confidence was low, he was shy and had no friends. Lincoln's advice to other young people is

'to try new things to gain confidence, give things a go, even if it is hard keep going, it will be worth it'

Impact Dashboard Three: Skills for Lifelong Learning

The challenges we are addressing

In order to succeed at school, young people need to develop skills that enable them to identify and understand one's feelings, accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, manage strong emotions and their expression, regulate one's behaviour, develop empathy for others, and establish and sustain relationships.¹¹

Providing opportunities to young people that offers the baseline of skills needed to participate fully offers significant individual, economic and social benefits to society as skill intensive occupations will account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030.¹²

21% of Australian students want to learn more practical life skills that will benefit them once they leave school and 51% want to learn more practical on-the-job skills.¹³ An average of 17 % of young people feel they left school without achieving basic educational skills of life.¹⁴

How we performed on supporting young people to learn ways to regulate behaviour

- Schools indicate that there is a 24% reduction in behavioural incidents (on average 33% of students are referred due to high levels of concern about behaviour)
- 62% of parents agree that their child's behaviour at home has improved
- 72% of young people and 57% of parents report improved relationships with family
- 50% of parents and 76% of young people noted improvements to the ability to deal with managing stress, anger or frustration

How we performed on supporting young people to strengthen practical, teamwork and leadership skills

- 91% of young people report improved practical skills, 79% of young people report improved leadership skills and 93% of young people report improved teamwork skills
- 86% of young people report improved connections with peers
- 80% of young people indicate they are thinking about steps for future job or career options
- 84% of young people are feeling more hopeful about future options and steps to achieve it

¹¹ Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2010). Conceptualisation of social and emotional wellbeing for children and young people, and policy implications. A research report for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Sydney.

¹² Deloitte Access Economic. (2017). Soft skills for business success. Deakin Co. <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/economics/articles/soft-skills-business-success.htm>

¹³ <https://www.unicef.org.au/about-us/media/november-2018/national-survey-results-secondary-school-students>

¹⁴ Hanushek, E., Woessmann, L. (2015). Universal Basic Skills: What Countries Stand to Gain, OECD Publishing, Paris,

Tracking towards long term impacts – workplace preparedness, workplace skills and competencies

Embedding the foundations for lifelong learning at school can set young people up for a positive future. TRACTION offers a flexible learner-centric approach, giving young people the opportunity to be confident and successful in mastering basic skills and linking what they are learning to the world of work. In doing so, we can establish pathways for lifelong learning and provide young people with the skills, confidence, hope and motivation for the lifelong benefits and importance of positive educational engagement.



I have learnt that I can do things that I thought I couldn't. I am proving I am capable and kind to others. I am learning to be more accepting and tolerant.

Young Person



It assists kids who don't feel like school is for them. It gives them life skills and shows them other options that are out there like TAFE and trades. TRACTION gives them confidence because they can see they can achieve something.

Parent



TRACTION helped him find an interest and has given him some confidence in his abilities to do new things. It has got him thinking about the workforce and what he might want to do. TRACTION helped him to think about new interests, skills or talents he can develop.

Parent



Success Story: Louis

Louis, aged 19, completed his TRACTION program in 2019. Louis recalls the positive benefit of the support he received at a critical time in his schooling years and the sense of achievement he felt when he completed his bike.

Louis states that his biggest personal learning gained from TRACTION was a sense of confidence and knowing he could achieve something important to him if he persevered.

Louis secured a job in a bike shop after completing TRACTION using the skills he gained to work as part of a team. He has since gone on to secure an apprenticeship as an electrician. Louis says that

'having the balance of a positive program while I was at school helped me to continue with school, get a job and achieve my goals'.

Impact Dashboard Four: The Key Elements of Successful Mentoring

The demonstrated effect of youth mentoring is to provide young people with life skills, self-confidence and capacity for positive decision making. Achieving these 'soft' outcomes for young people may contribute to instrumental outcomes over the long term and/or may avert negative consequences of further social disengagement. Nonetheless the evidence base clearly demonstrates that youth mentoring is effective for young people at risk of social disconnection and isolation because it builds capacity, resilience and social networks.¹⁵

A thematic analysis of qualitative data over 2021-2022 reveals the most common impacts and benefits of TRACTION mentoring programs as identified by young people, parents/guardians and schools. The table below showcases these results.

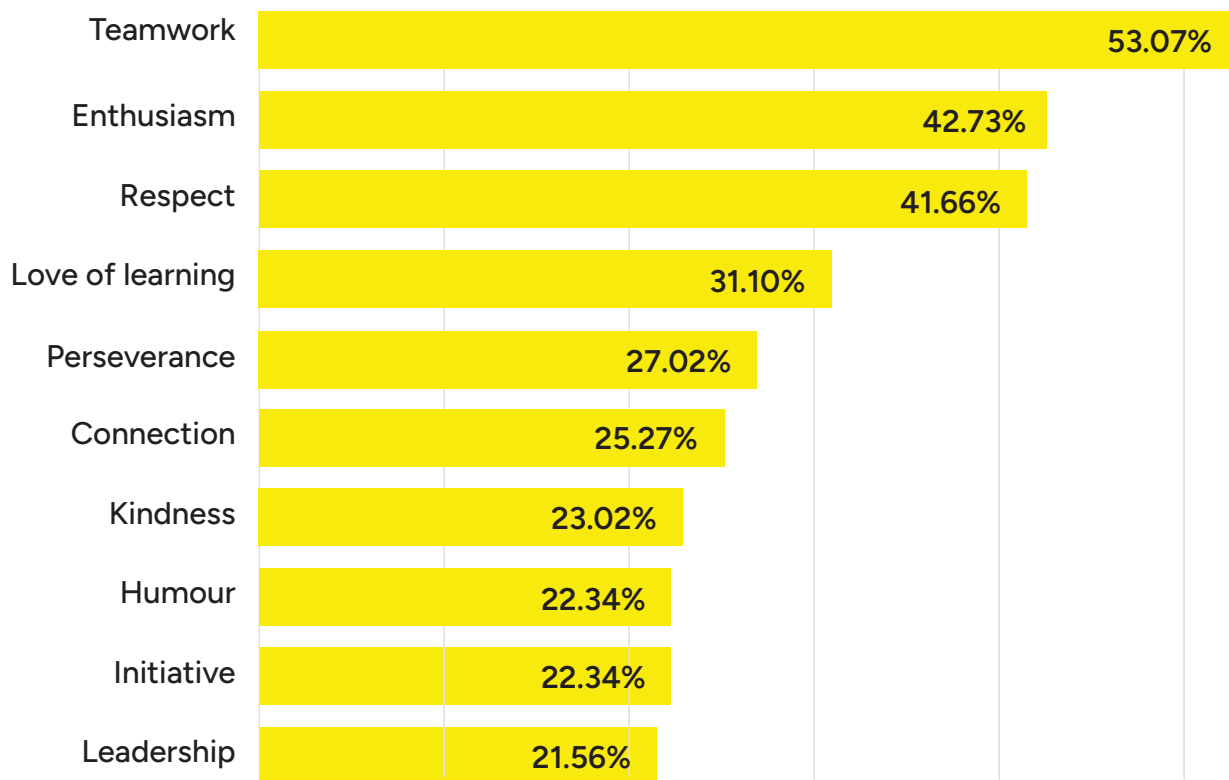
Impacts & Benefits	Young People	Parents/ Guardians	Schools
Builds confidence	✓	✓	✓
Increases wellbeing, mental health, coping skills and resilience		✓	
Provides sense of success	✓	✓	✓
Positive and fun learning experience	✓		
Builds social connections	✓	✓	✓
Builds practical, teamwork and leadership skills	✓	✓	✓
Builds hope for the future	✓		
Develops coping skills	✓		✓
Develops behavioural regulation skills	✓	✓	✓
Supports school engagement & attendance		✓	✓
Supports family engagement	✓		
Develops social capabilities		✓	
Offers positive experience of secure relationships with adults		✓	✓
Offer insight into world of work	✓	✓	

A blank space in columns does not denote that impacts are not evident, it instead highlights areas most commonly mentioned in verbal feedback

Tracking towards long term impacts – enhanced community engagement, health and wellbeing

TRACTION mentors complete a daily record for each participant from a catalogue of 25 strengths. To date we have over 1,000 entries for young people from 26 schools across South East Queensland.

This provides a rich snapshot of data for each school cohort as well as a mounting pool of evidence for the influence our mentoring has in the short term and towards the long term.





Success Story: Ella

Ella, aged 14, completed her TRACTION program in 2021. Ella shares that TRACTION taught her to be more self-confident and embrace her

‘individuality and uniqueness instead of trying to be like everyone else’.

Ella says that she is more focussed on her school work, is not afraid of asking for help and as a result she is getting great grades that are serving her well to achieve her career goal of becoming a cardiac surgeon.

About TRACTION

TRACTION is a charity that delivers evidence-informed, hands-on learning and mentoring programs for young people, typically aged 12-15, who complete projects and experience a sense of success.

Our most popular program is where our TRACTION mentors guide them through the process of custom-building bikes that they get to keep.

We emphasise building trust, developing confidence, teaching new skills, and strengthening work ethic to help our young people unlock their full potential.

We believe that everyone deserves the chance build their own future and investing in prevention is a smart choice.

To find out more about TRACTION, or to support our work, please visit www.traction.community, contact us at connect@traction.community or follow [@tractionbuilds](https://www.instagram.com/tractionbuilds) on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn





TRACTION

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