OPEN DOORS YOUTH SERVICE INC.

OUR IMPACT 2025/2026



open Doors
YOUTH SERVICE INC.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Open Doors Youth Service acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Turrbal, Yugerra and Yugambeh peoples and we pay our respects to their Elders and all Elders past, present and emerging. We give thanks to them for their generosity in sharing their wisdom and culture and acknowledge the testament this engagement is to their integrity, strength, and perseverance.

At Open Doors Youth Service we take the time to learn and consider the history and significance of the country on which we work in a way that highlights the spiritual connection and strengths of, while showing respect to, the Turrabal, Yugerra and Yugambeh peoples. We commit to encouraging staff and young people to improve their knowledge and understanding of First Nations' cultures. Most of the traditional cultural spaces in Meanjin have been destroyed over the past 250 years of colonisation, but by considering the space that these places were, the activity that was practiced, the culture that is lost and the culture that remains, we can connect with the powerful energy of past Elders and Country.



WHO WE ARE

For more than 25 years, we have walked alongside LGBTQIASB+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy young people, creating spaces where they can feel safe, find their people, explore who they are and know that they belong. Today, we remain Queensland's only dedicated LGBTQIASB+ youth service, but at our heart we are still what we have always been: community supporting community.

ODYS supports LGBTQIASB+ young people aged 12 to 24 and is dedicated to:

- Empowering LGBTQIASB+ young people to live with pride as valued, celebrated, and authentic members of community
- Engaging a workforce with lived experience and professional expertise
- Providing safe spaces for young people to connect with peers and community to foster a sense of belonging
- Advocating for the rights and needs of our young people to improve their access to resources, and to end discrimination and violence
- Improving mental health outcomes and lowering suicidality for LGBTQIASB+ young people

Our lived experience workforce is central to that story. We believe representation matters and that young people deserve to be supported by people who understand their communities, celebrate their identities and can show them what it looks like to live authentically and with pride. Through counselling, individual support, social groups, family support, education and advocacy, we create opportunities for young people to build resilience, strengthen their identity and connect with community.

ODYS has grown and changed considerably over the past 25 years, but the heart of who we are has remained the same. We are here for young people when things are incredibly hard, but also for the moments of joy, pride and celebration. Because sometimes being surrounded by people who understand you, finding a place where you belong, and having the freedom to simply be yourself can be life-changing — and life-saving.



THE BOARD



Hamish Bessant
Chair
he/him



Ryan Isaacs
Treasurer
he/him



Josie Tucker
Secretary
she/her



Kate Whittle
General Member
she/they



Matthew Clifford Jones
General Member
he/him



Brayden White
General Member
he/him



Leo McMonagle
Youth Representative
General Member
he/him



Shaun Chng
General Member
he/him

With Thanks to our Volunteer Board

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our volunteer Board for the time, expertise and care they have generously contributed throughout the year. Alongside their ongoing governance and stewardship of ODYS, the Board has played an important role in developing our 2027–2030 Strategic Plan, strengthening our approach to strategic risk, overseeing the development of our 2026–27 budget and financial performance, and welcoming new Board members. Their commitment, leadership and belief in our work help ensure ODYS continues to grow sustainably while staying true to our purpose and the young people we serve.

TEAM ODYS



Rachel Hinds
CEO
she/her



Alex Clements
Director of Services
he/him



Pete Evans
Fundraising & Partnerships Lead
he/him



Alex White
Education & Training Coordinator
she/her



Emily Julius
Fortitude Valley Hub Coordinator
she/her



Alfie Barclay
Senior Youth Work
he/him



Sylvie Protheroe
Youth Worker
she/her



Bradley Benson
Senior Counsellor
he/him



Morgan Watego
Senior First Nations Youth Worker
she/they



Jasper Mimica
Youth Worker
they/them



Vero Zheng
DSFV Counsellor
she/they



Haydi Ellis
Counsellor
she/her

TEAM ODYS



Jade Mirabito
Youth Worker
he/him



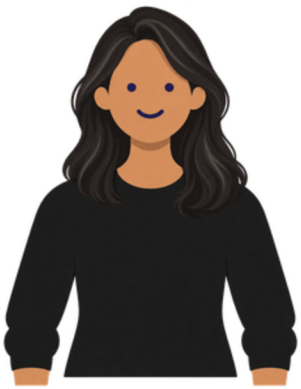
Olivia Sefo
Youth Worker
she/her



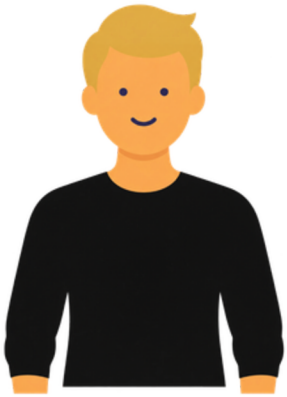
Sid Chand
Counsellor
he/him



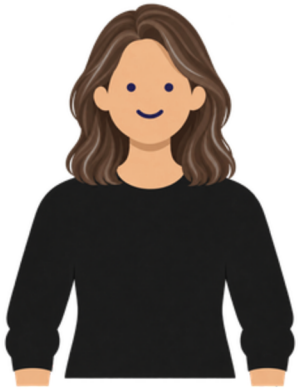
Deepti
Youth Worker
she/they



Kirthi Chetty
Data & Evaluations Coordinator
she/her



Toni
Youth Worker
he/they



Bette
Intake Worker
she/they



Faya
Counsellor
she/they



OUR PARTNERS

Open Doors Youth Service extends our deepest gratitude to our partners for their unwavering support and belief in our work. Your investment in the wellbeing of LGBTQIASB+ young people enables us to continue creating safe, inclusive, and affirming spaces.

We are proud to partner with organisations that share our commitment to equity, inclusion, and community. Together, we are making a tangible difference helping young people to feel seen, supported, and empowered to thrive authentically.

Thank you for walking alongside us in this vital work. Your partnership fuels every counselling session, group program, and advocacy effort that helps our young people build brighter, more hopeful futures.

OUR PARTNERS

Queensland Government
Queensland Health

Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

HAND HEART POCKET
THE CHARITY OF FREEMASONS QUEENSLAND

phn
BRISBANE SOUTH
An Australian Government Initiative

Queensland Government
Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety

Brisbane City Council

phn
BRISBANE NORTH
An Australian Government Initiative

Patrons of New Farm

Rotary Club of New Farm

Queensland Mental Health Commission

LORD MAYOR'S CHARITABLE TRUST

FRIENDS OF ODYS

Queensland LGBTQIA+ ALLIANCE

Institute for Collaborative Race Research

MinterEllison.

bric HOUSING

melt

LGBTIQ+ HEALTH AUSTRALIA

bluebird
PEOPLE. PURPOSE. PROPERTY.

MoB
MUSEUM of BRISBANE

Merthyr Road Uniting Church

Anglican Church
St Michael and All Angels New Farm

OZHARVEST



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Hamish Bessant (he/him)

Serving as Board Chair of Open Doors Youth Service during 2025-26 has been a privilege. It has been a year of significant change, thoughtful reflection and important preparation for the future.

The volunteer Board's role is to ensure ODYS remains strong, sustainable and focused on its purpose. This year, that responsibility was brought into sharp focus as we responded to a changing external environment and commenced work on the next chapter of the organisation's strategic direction.

The Board has spent considerable time looking beyond immediate challenges and opportunities to consider what ODYS must become over the next decade. Throughout the year, we commenced development of our 2027-2030 Strategic Plan, informed by extensive consultation with young people, staff, community members, partners, funders and stakeholders. This work reinforced something we have always known: ODYS plays a unique and vital role in the lives of LGBTQIASB+ young people, and demand for safe, specialist and affirming services continues to grow. It also led us to articulate a renewed vision for the future: Open Doors Youth Service provides safe and specialist supports to empower LGBTQIASB+ young people in Queensland to be their authentic selves and connect with their community. This vision reflects both who we are today and the impact we aspire to create in the years ahead. The strategic planning process focused on future priorities including service growth, organisational capability, impact measurement and funding diversification.

At the same time, the Board has remained focused on strengthening governance and organisational capability. As ODYS grows in scale and complexity, strong governance becomes increasingly important. We have continued to invest in our governance frameworks, risk oversight and long-term sustainability so that the organisation is well positioned to support future growth and deliver on its purpose for years to come. Governance, risk, organisational maturity and funding sustainability remain central to the organisation's future direction.

What gives me the greatest confidence, however, is not our plans or structures. It is the people. Every day, I see the dedication of our staff, volunteers, leadership team and fellow Board directors, all united by a genuine commitment to improving the lives of young people. I continue to be inspired by the courage, resilience and advocacy of the young people who engage with ODYS and who generously share their experiences to help shape a better future for others.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my sincere thanks to our funders, partners, donors, volunteers and community supporters. Most importantly, thank you to the young people who place their trust in ODYS. You are the reason we exist, and your voices continue to guide our decisions and shape our future.

As we look ahead, I am confident that ODYS is entering its next chapter from a position of strength. We remain ambitious for the future, grounded in our values and committed to ensuring LGBTQIASB+ young people across Queensland have access to the safe, specialist support they deserve. With a clear vision, strong foundations and an extraordinary community behind us, ODYS is well placed to continue creating meaningful impact for many years to come.



MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER

Ryan Isaacs (he/him)

It has been my privilege to serve the Open Doors Youth Service (ODYS) team as Treasurer for a fourth year, the financial year ended 30 June 2026 (FY26). As this is my last year on the Board, having been appointed Treasurer at the 2022 AGM, I would like to reflect on the year and on how ODYS has responded to the needs of our community.

FY26 was a year of continued growth and financial strength. Total income rose 40% to $2.126 million, from $1.515 million in FY25, driven by government grants, which increased by $559 thousand to $1.878 million. Queensland Health, Brisbane South PHN, Brisbane North PHN, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Families and Brisbane MIND all contributed. Other grants more than doubled to $148 thousand, and donations were $75 thousand (FY25: $118 thousand). Expenditure increased to $1.948 million from $1.348 million, reflecting a full year of our expanded team and the Logan hub, with employee expenses up 44%. ODYS recorded a net surplus of $178 thousand (FY25: $167 thousand).

Our balance sheet is stronger. Cash reached $1.133 million, grant funding received but not yet earned fell to $274 thousand as funds were delivered into services, and net assets rose to $718 thousand from $540 thousand. Funded programs were delivered in line with their funding agreements and finished close to break-even overall.

Government funding remains our primary source of income (88% in FY26). It is vital, but concentration brings renewal risk. Diverse and sustainable funding, including philanthropy, partnerships and earned income, alongside strong government relationships, is central to responsibly stewarding the funds entrusted to us and to ensuring our financial foundations allow us to keep delivering high-quality services to young people.

When I joined the Board in FY23, ODYS was a much smaller organisation. In FY26, our revenue and impact were more than double what they were then, and in FY27 they are set to be triple that of FY23. Financial maturity has been built alongside that growth. We transitioned from MYOB to Xero, which lets us track budgets more seamlessly, compare data year on year and extract reports with ease. We engaged an accounting services provider following the retirement of our finance officer. We saw the transition of CEO to Rachel Hinds. Over the past year we have taken the opportunity to improve, consolidate and formalise our finance policies, with my gratitude to fellow board member Brayden White for elevating our budgeting process in particular.

Audit Right has audited the accompanying financial report and formed the opinion that it presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of ODYS as at 30 June 2026 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the relevant legislation.

My sincere thanks to our funders, sponsors and donors, and to Rachel, the ODYS team, my fellow Board members and our Chair, Hamish Bessant, for their support. It has been a real privilege to watch ODYS grow, and I am confident it is well placed to serve young people in our communities for the years ahead.



CEO REFLECTION

Rachel Hinds (she/her)

The past year has been a year of reflection, strengthening and looking towards the future for Open Doors Youth Service.

Following the pause on gender-affirming healthcare for young people under 18 in January 2025, we knew ODYS needed to show up for our community. In the 12 months that followed, we did exactly that. Through Shimmer, Sparkle Saloon, our Share Your Story campaign, advocacy with government and decision-makers, and countless community events and conversations, we stood alongside LGBTQIASB+ young people at a time when visibility, connection and solidarity mattered enormously.

We achieved an incredible amount. But we also learned something important: this work is a marathon, not a race.

For a small organisation responding to growing demand and an increasingly complex environment, sustainability matters. We cannot be everything, everywhere, all at once. Our greatest responsibility is to remain a strong, safe and sustainable organisation that can continue showing up for LGBTQIASB+ young people for many years to come.

So this year, we made a conscious decision to look inward.

We returned our focus to our core purpose: providing high-quality, affirming support to young people. We invested in strengthening service delivery, our organisational culture and the environment in which our team works. We have looked critically at how we operate, where we can improve and what ODYS needs to become to meet the changing needs of young people and our community.

Several significant pieces of work are supporting this journey. We commenced our Lived Experience Audit, examining how lived experience is valued, supported and embedded across our organisation.

We began important work with the Institute for Collaborative Race Research, challenging us to think more deeply about intersectionality, cultural safety and our responsibilities as a service. And we commenced development of our 2027–2030 Strategic Plan, bringing young people, staff, community and partners together to shape the next chapter of ODYS.

These projects are different, but they are connected by the same question: How do we make ODYS the strongest, safest and most sustainable organisation it can be for LGBTQIASB+ young people?

At the centre of that question are young people themselves.

As ODYS grows and changes, we remain committed to ensuring young people's voices do not become lost within organisational systems, funding requirements or strategic priorities. We continue to listen, learn and create opportunities for young people to tell us what they need, what is working and where we need to do better.

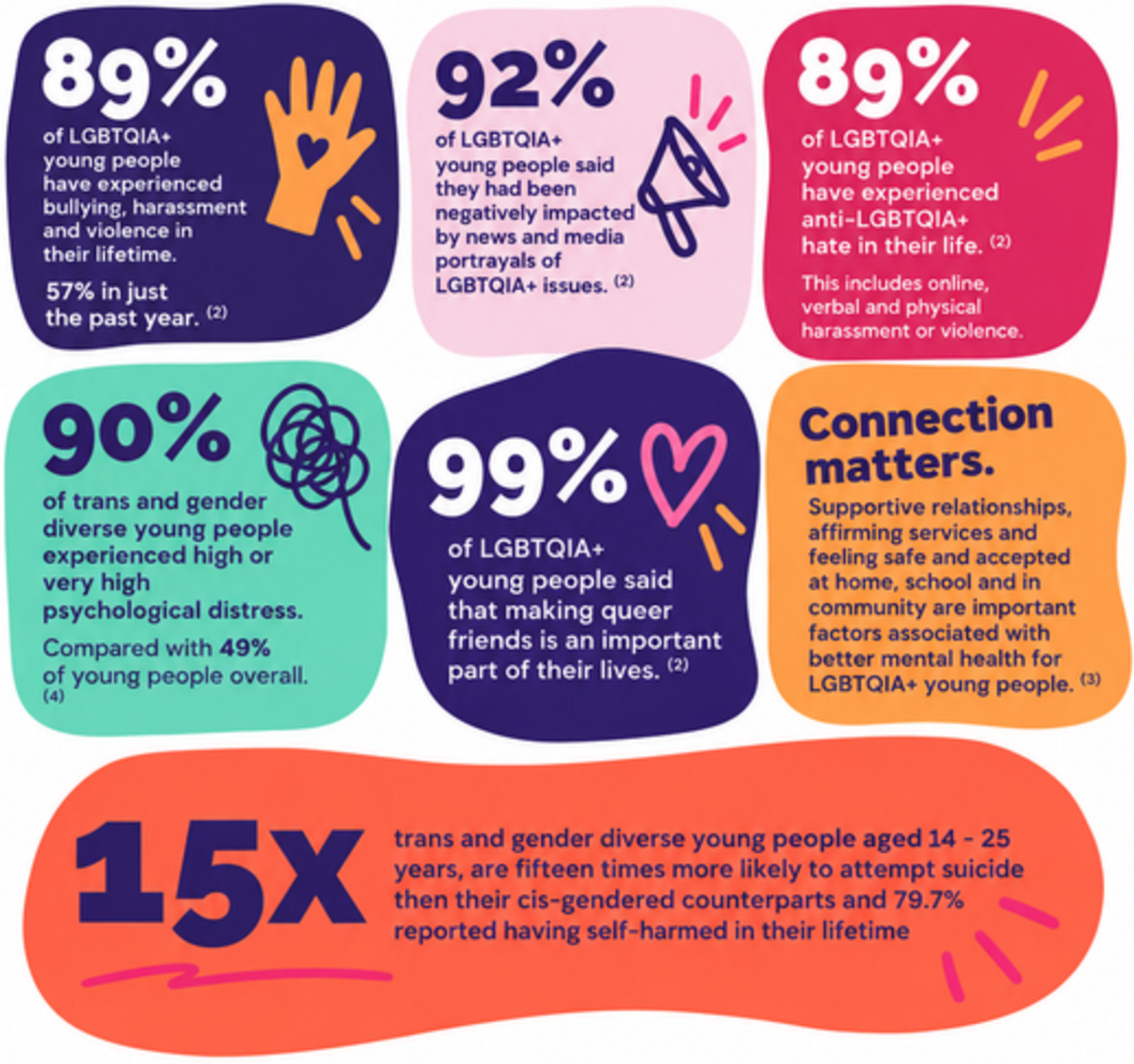
I am incredibly proud of what our team has achieved this year. Strengthening an organisation is not always the most visible work, but it is some of the most important. It creates the foundations from which better services, stronger advocacy and lasting impact can grow.

As we enter our next chapter, we do so with greater clarity about who we are and what matters most: young people, community, and an ODYS strong enough to stand beside them for the long term.

THE NEED

LGBTQIASB+ young people continue to experience significantly poorer mental health outcomes than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. But being LGBTQIASB+ is not the problem.

The environments young people grow up in, the relationships around them and whether they have places where they feel safe, accepted and understood all matter. Australian evidence shows that experiences of stigma, discrimination and social exclusion contribute to poorer mental health, while supportive relationships, connection to community and access to safe and affirming services can be protective.



1. 2026 headspace NationalYouth Mental Health Survey
2. Minus 18: Queer Youth Now 2025
3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
4.Trans Pathway Study

OUR SERVICES

We provide a range of free, specialist services for LGBTQIASB+ young people across South East Queensland. Our services are holistic, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our community.



INDIVIDUAL GOAL ORIENTED SUPPORT

One-on-one support with a youth worker to explore goals, build skills and navigate the challenges in your life.



COUNSELLING

Free, confidential counselling with LGBTQIASB+ affirming practitioners to support your mental health, identity, relationships and life challenges.



PSYCHOSOCIAL GROUPS

A range of social and therapeutic groups to build connection, explore identity, develop skills and be part of a supportive community.



DFSV PROGRAM

Specialist support for young people who have experienced or are experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence, delivered in a safe, trauma-informed and LGBTQIASB+ affirming way.



ADVOCACY

Individual and systemic advocacy to help young people access their rights, navigate services and create change in the systems that affect them.



INFORMATION AND CONNECTION

A welcoming space to access information, resources and referrals, and to connect with a community that understands and celebrates who you are.

OUR SERVICES

Our services are shaped by the young people who access them. By listening to their experiences and understanding the challenges they face, we can continue to adapt and strengthen the support we provide.

Across our Fortitude Valley and Logan Hubs, LGBTQIA+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy young people aged 12–24 can access free, specialist and affirming support through counselling, individual youth work, psychosocial groups, drop-in spaces and community connection. Our approach is person-centred and strengths-based, recognising that every young person comes to ODYS with their own experiences, goals, identities and strengths.

Demand for individual and therapeutic support continues to grow, and we have responded by expanding both our counselling and youth work teams. This increased investment from Queensland Health and Brisbane North PHN has significantly reduced our waitlists to a historic low. This means more young people can access specialist, one-to-one support when they need it.

For young people experiencing mental health challenges, family difficulties, discrimination or social isolation, waiting weeks or months for support can be incredibly difficult. Having access to timely support means we can respond earlier, build relationships with young people before challenges escalate, and provide ongoing support as their needs change.

Our counsellors provide free therapeutic support, while our youth workers walk alongside young people across the many parts of life that can affect their wellbeing — from mental health, identity and relationships to housing, education, employment and connection to community.

But support at ODYS is about more than responding when things are difficult. Our groups, drop-ins and community activities create opportunities for young people to find their people, make friends, explore their identity and experience queer joy. Sometimes the most powerful thing we can offer a young person is a place where they don't have to explain themselves.



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

869 YOUNG PEOPLE



10,281 OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

GROUP SUPPORT

364 young people
1,853 occasions of service

COUNSELLING

277 young people
1,897 occasions of service

DEMOGRAPHICS

90%	identified as trans or gender diverse
92%	have a diverse sexuality
11%	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
16%	CALD
36%	diagnosed mental health condition
44%	are diagnosed with neurodiversity
42%	have a disability other than ASD/ND

1,232 PROGRAM ENROLMENTS

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

591 young people
6,531 occasions of service

REASONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

48%	Gender, sexuality or intersex
41%	Mental health, suicide and self harm
43%	Social isolation
9%	Suicide specifically
22%	Parents, family and relationships
17%	Abuse, violence, discrimination

OUR IMPACT

In 2025/26, 869 young people accessed ODYS, with 1,232 program enrolments and 10,281 occasions of service delivered across counselling, individual support and groups.

Every young person we reach matters. But just as important is the difference our support makes in their lives.

99% of young people told us they feel safe, heard and respected at ODYS. This is one of the most important measures of our impact.

For many LGBTQIASB+ young people, feeling safe, accepted and respected is not something they can always take for granted. Whether at home, at school, in their communities or when accessing other services, young people can face discrimination, rejection or a lack of understanding. This is why dedicated services like ODYS are so important, and why more than 97% of young people told us that having access to a dedicated LGBTQIASB + service matters to them.

Safety and respect are the foundations of meaningful support. When young people trust that they will be listened to without judgement, they can begin to open up about what is happening in their lives. It might mean telling a counsellor when things aren't okay, asking a youth worker for help, walking nervously into a group for the first time, or simply spending time somewhere they don't have to explain themselves.



And we can see the difference this makes. Almost 90% of young people told us that engaging with ODYS had a positive impact on their mental health, and 95% said ODYS helped them feel more hopeful about their future. Among young people with repeat K10 measures, 56.5% recorded lower psychological distress at their most recent assessment.

Our social groups tell another important part of the story. More than 93% of young people said they felt part of a community where they could be themselves, 92% said groups contributed to improving their mental health and 85% said they felt less alone in what they were going through. These aren't secondary outcomes. Connection, friendship, identity, pride and joy are part of the impact.

For some young people, ODYS is where they come when things are really hard. For others, it is where they come to make friends, connect with community and have fun.

Often, it is both.

We are there when things are hard. But we are also there for the friendships, the first moments of belonging, the laughter, the pride and the joy. All of it matters.



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

50%
increase in program enrolments

9 in 10
of our young people identify as trans and/or gender diverse.



97%
of our young people would recommend ODYS to a friend.



99%
of our young people feel safe, heard and respected at ODYS.



59%
increase in the number of occasions of support.



94%
felt part of a community where they can be themselves.



97%
reported it was important for them to be able to access a LGBTQIASB+ dedicated service.

90%
report that ODYS has had a positive impact on their mental health.



FORTITUDE VALLEY HUB

26 Years of Community, Connection & Growth

For 26 years, Fortitude Valley has been home to Open Doors Youth Service. What began as a small community service has grown into Queensland's only dedicated LGBTQIASB+ youth service, supporting generations of young people to navigate challenges, explore their identities and find their place in community.

While much has changed over those 26 years, our commitment to LGBTQIASB+ young people has remained at the heart of everything we do.

Our Fortitude Valley Hub has experienced tremendous growth, reflecting both the increasing demand for specialist, affirming support and the trust our community has placed in ODYS over more than two decades.

In 2025/26, the Hub supported 611 young people through 7,554 occasions of service, including 4,747 individual support sessions and contacts, 1,565 counselling occasions and 1,242 group support occasions.

This growth has seen our services evolve considerably. What was once a much smaller operation is now a busy, multidisciplinary Hub, bringing together counselling, youth work, specialist support and an expanding range of social groups. It is a place where young people can access professional support, build friendships, participate in community and find opportunities to celebrate who they are.

Importantly, our growth has not changed what makes ODYS special. Relationships, lived experience and a genuine understanding of the young people we support remain central to our work.

Our Next Chapter

In 2027, we are looking forward to another significant milestone in the history of our Fortitude Valley Hub.

Thanks to funding from LGBTIQ+ Health Australia and The Department of Health, Disability and Aging, we are planning to expand our Drop-In program to five afternoons a week, giving LGBTQIASB+ young people somewhere to go after school every weekday.

For many young people, Drop-In is their first connection with ODYS. It offers an informal, welcoming way to meet others, access food and practical support, spend time with friends or simply enjoy being somewhere they belong.

Expanding to five days a week will mean more opportunities for young people to connect with their community and access support without needing a formal appointment.

After 26 years in Fortitude Valley, we're proud of how far we've come — and excited about what comes next.



FORTITUDE VALLEY HUB
TESTIMONIALS

"I was really struggling with my mental health and was told about ODYS by the hospital. I have been coming for about 6 months now and access groups, youth work and counselling. It is so important to me to access a service like ODYS. ODYS has improved my mental health drastically and it is the thing I look forward to every single week. I love the people especially my counsellor and youth worker. There is not a bad day at ODYS. ODYS is different because it has provided me with a community and I dont feel as left out."

"ODYS is different to other services because of the groups and community which is hard to find elsewhere. It's a safe place to come to because it's a designated space and also has workers who are super nice and you can access other resources like food, showers and clothing. I was at an all girls' school as a trans man and it really impacted my mental health. I tried to move schools but I just ended up dropping out. ODYS has helped me land a traineeship which I am really excited about."

"I had a pretty negative experience with a mainstream org, it just wasn't what I needed. That's when I found ODYS. What I love about ODYS is that it has provided me with the accessibility I need to access services and resources.

It's provided me with a community. It is so important to feel like you have a place where you belong. ODYS is my queer home. It is so important to me to feel like I have people behind me."

"Having space to learn about myself in a safe environment."

"I love that ODYS offers support for queer young people. It means a lot to me because I get the support I need and get to make new queer friends."

"I love the support that is available through ODYS and its diverse community. ODYS to me means an open place."

"Coming to ODYS is like being able to take a breath."

LOGAN HUB

Building Community Closer to Home

In 2025, Open Doors Youth Service proudly opened our long-awaited Logan Hub, made possible through the generous support of Hand Heart Pocket and Brisbane South PHN.

This was an important milestone for ODYS, bringing specialist LGBTQIASB+ support closer to young people living in Logan and surrounding communities.

For many young people, accessing specialist support has meant travelling into Brisbane or navigating services where they may not always feel understood. The Logan Hub is changing that, providing a welcoming space close to home where young people can access support, build friendships and connect with others who share their experiences.

In 2025/26, 258 young people accessed the Logan Hub, receiving more than 2,700 occasions of service across counselling, individual youth work and psychosocial groups. Young people come to Logan for many different reasons. More than two-thirds identified mental health, suicide or self-harm as an area where they needed support, while half identified social isolation. Family and relationship challenges, experiences of discrimination, and questions around gender, sexuality and identity were also common. These experiences are often interconnected, which is why having different types of support available in one place matters so much.

Through programs including Fruit Basket, Tea Time and Friday Drop-In, young people have opportunities to make friends, explore their identities and feel part of a community.

What young people tell us about their experience at Logan is particularly meaningful.

Every young person surveyed through our individual support evaluation said they felt safe, heard and respected, and 100% said they would recommend ODYS to a friend. Almost 98% told us that having access to a dedicated LGBTQIASB+ service was important to them.

We are also seeing the difference this support is making beyond the Hub. 94% of young people reported feeling more hopeful about their future, 92% reported improvements in their mental health, and 74% felt more proud and confident in their identity.

These results reflect what we hoped to achieve when we first imagined a dedicated space in Logan. Somewhere young people could come when things were difficult, but also somewhere they could laugh, make friends, celebrate who they are and know they belong.

LOGAN TESTIMONIALS

"I love the accessibility of it, it is always there, with open and consistent support. When I need to reach out it is available."

"Having free counselling and support has helped ease the burden of taking care of my mental health as I feel like less of a strain on my families finances."

"Surrounded by queer people - coming from an environment where being queer was like being set up for a "death sentence". Coming to Logan provided belonging and safety."

'I love that ODYS is a safe space for all people, getting so much support, having multiple options of support and meeting so many new people, friends and feeling safe with everyone.'

GROWING WITH PURPOSE

Strengthening our Leadership

With the generous support of Hand Heart Pocket, we have also invested in new positions that strengthen the way ODYS operates and prepare us for the future.

The introduction of our Fortitude Valley Hub Coordinator position has been an important step in strengthening support for both our young people and our staff.

As our busiest service location, Fortitude Valley brings together a growing team delivering counselling, individual youth work and psychosocial groups. Having dedicated leadership within the Hub means staff have greater access to day-to-day guidance, supervision and support, while young people benefit from a more coordinated and responsive service.

This investment recognises something we believe strongly at ODYS: looking after the people who support our young people matters. Strong leadership and a supported workforce are essential to delivering consistent, meaningful care.

Taking our Work Beyond our Walls

We have also welcomed a new Education and Training Coordinator, expanding our ability to support LGBTQIASB+ young people in the places where they spend so much of their lives.

For many young people, school can be a place of connection and belonging, but it can also be somewhere they experience misunderstanding, exclusion or discrimination. Through professional development for educators, student workshops, support for school Pride groups and practical advice, this role is helping schools build environments where LGBTQIASB+ young people feel understood, included and supported.

It is an exciting development for ODYS. While our direct services remain essential, we also want to help create change in the environments around young people, so that support and acceptance extend beyond our Hub doors.

Building a Sustainable Future

As ODYS has grown, so too has our responsibility to ensure our services can continue to meet the needs of young people into the future.

This year, we established a dedicated Fundraising and Partnerships Lead position, recognising the importance of building stronger relationships with supporters and developing more diverse sources of funding.

With the majority of our income coming from government funding, investing in fundraising and partnerships is an important step towards greater financial sustainability. It will help us strengthen philanthropic and corporate relationships, grow community giving and create new opportunities to support young people in ways that existing funding does not always allow.

Growing with Purpose

These three positions represent much more than an increase in our workforce. They reflect a deliberate investment in the future of ODYS.

We are strengthening the support available to our frontline teams, taking our knowledge and experience into schools and communities, and building the partnerships that will allow us to keep responding to the needs of LGBTQIASB+ young people.

RECOGNITION

Open Doors Youth Service was honoured to have its impact and leadership recognised at the **Queens Ball 2026.** ODYS proudly took home Community Support Group of the Year.

This recognition reflects the strength and dedication of our team, and the profound impact they have in community. This recognition affirms ODYS's ongoing leadership in building a future where every LGBTQIASB+ young person can live with pride, safety, and belonging.







SHAPING OUR FUTURE

As we grow, our commitment remains the same: to be there for young people when they need us, to create spaces where they can find connection and belonging, and to build an organisation that can continue doing this work for many years to come.

The past year has been a time of significant growth for Open Doors Youth Service. As our services, workforce and reach have expanded, we have also made a deliberate decision to look inward and consider what we need to strengthen to support our organisation into the future.

We are proud of what ODYS has achieved, but we also recognise that growth brings new challenges and responsibilities. Building a strong organisation means being willing to listen, reflect on our practice and make changes where they are needed.

This year, we have invested in three important pieces of work that will help shape the next chapter of ODYS.

Valuing Lived Experience

Lived experience has always been central to ODYS. Our workforce is overwhelmingly made up of people who share the identities and experiences of the young people we support, and this brings enormous knowledge, understanding and connection to our work.

But valuing lived experience means more than employing people with lived experience. It means creating a workplace where that knowledge is genuinely respected, where staff feel supported to draw on their experiences safely, and where lived experience influences decisions at every level of the organisation.

This year, we commenced our Lived Experience Organisational Audit, examining how lived experience is recognised, supported and embedded across ODYS.

Through confidential staff consultations, anonymous surveys and opportunities for collective reflection, the audit is designed to help us understand what we are doing well and where we need to improve. It explores everything from workplace culture and wellbeing to shared decision-making, leadership, recruitment and the ways we work alongside young people.

Importantly, this work is being shaped by our own staff, with frontline perspectives central to the process. We want the findings to lead to meaningful improvements that strengthen both our workplace and the support we provide to young people.

Embedding Anti-Racism in our Practice

We have also begun working with the Institute for Collaborative Race Research (ICRR) to strengthen our commitment to racial justice and better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

We recognise that being an affirming LGBTQIASB+ service does not automatically mean we are getting everything right when it comes to cultural safety and anti-racism.

This work asks us to critically examine our own organisational practices, including how race, power and privilege operate within our service, and how we can better recognise and respect Indigenous sovereignty and ways of working.

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Working alongside ICRR, our intention is to develop a practical foundation for embedding anti-racism into our everyday work, policies and organisational culture.

This is important work, and we know it requires more than a training session or a policy. It requires ongoing reflection, accountability and a willingness to change how we do things.

A Shared Vision for our Future

Alongside this work, we have been developing our Strategic Plan 2027–2030, setting a clear direction for the next chapter of ODYS.

Rather than developing this plan behind closed doors, we wanted it to be shaped by the people who know ODYS, care about its future and understand the needs of the young people we support.

Through surveys, interviews, workshops and consultations, young people, staff, community members, sector partners and funders have contributed their experiences, ideas and aspirations.

The resulting plan focuses on four priorities: Adapting With Purpose, strengthening our core services while responding to young people's changing needs and expanding access to support; Demonstrating Our Impact, celebrating and sharing the difference we make in young people's lives; Growing Stronger Together, investing in our people, culture and organisational strength; and Securing Our Future, building on our partnerships and funding successes to ensure ODYS remains sustainable for years to come.

Together, these priorities will help us make thoughtful decisions about where and how we grow, while ensuring that the wellbeing of our workforce and the needs of young people remain central to our work.

Building the Organisation our Young People Deserve

These three pieces of work are connected by a shared commitment to doing better.

We want ODYS to be a place where young people feel safe and supported, where our staff can thrive, where lived experience and community knowledge genuinely shape decisions, and where our values are reflected in how we operate every day.

Strengthening ODYS from within is an investment in the young people who rely on us, the communities we are part of, and the future we want to help create.

With thanks

The Strategic Plan belongs to everyone who helped create it. The volunteer ODYS Board warmly thanks the young people, ODYS team members, sector partners, funders and community members who shared their ideas, experiences and aspirations through an extensive co-design process that included surveys, interviews, workshops and stakeholder consultations.

Your insights, lived experience and willingness to engage openly have been instrumental in shaping our direction for the years ahead.

We also extend our sincere thanks to MinterEllison for their generous pro bono support and expertise throughout the development of this Strategic Plan.



Melt Festival Launch 2026



Hand Heart Pocket visits the Logan Hub



Health in Difference Conference 2026 with Twenty 10



Logan Pride 2026



Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Hon. Ged Kearney & Madonna Jarrett MP visit ODYS



Farewelling Necho Brocchi & welcoming Alex Clements to ODYS



Consultation for the Second Action Plan to end gendered violence



Community engagement



Carswell Forum 2026



ODYS Social Groups



Gold Coast Pride 2026



ODYS & Oz Harvest


open Doors
YOUTH SERVICE INC.