

‘SUPPORTED, EDUCATED AND UNDERSTOOD’



REACHOUT'S IMPACT ON THE WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA

A PARTNERSHIP THAT'S IMPROVING RURAL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

5 years ago Future Generation Global (FGG) committed long term support to ReachOut to help us to understand the barriers and challenges that young people living in regional, rural and remote (rural) areas face when seeking to access mental health support and translate these insights into practical service improvements.

Through drought, natural disasters and a global pandemic, this long term partnership has proven highly effective with improved user experience, more effective, tailored services and a rural lens becoming business as usual across ReachOut.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our partnership was underpinned by a 5 year research program that's helped us to better understand the challenges and unique experiences of rural young people – and change our communications approach to ensure young people know we're there for them.

Over the last 5 years we found:

- An increase in probable serious mental illness amongst rural young people (from 20.9% in year 1 to 27% in year 5)
- Probable serious mental illness peaks at 37% of 18-19 year olds
- A significant increase in the proportion of rural young people stressed about the future (15.2% in year 1 to 33.3% in year 5)
- A significant increase in ReachOut brand awareness amongst rural young people (19.3% in year 1 to 30.1% in year 5)
- Rural young people are increasingly willing to access online mental health services (from 20.9% willing to access online services in year 1 to 53.2% in year 5)

BETTER MEETING RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

The research FGG supported helped us to better engage and connect with rural young people and underpinned our new tailored resources and services that are proving to be highly effective and valued. Rural young people are now telling us:

78%

78% agreed ReachOut helps me to understand what I am going through.

100%

100% agreed ReachOut helps me to feel validated.

84%

84% agreed that ReachOut shows me I'm not alone.

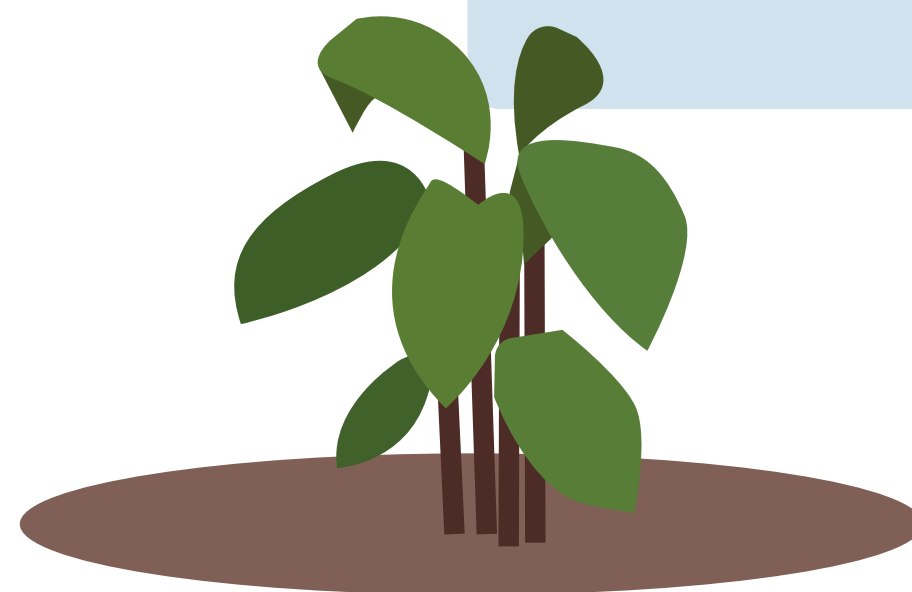
70%

70% agreed that ReachOut makes me feel part of a safe and supportive community.

81%

81% agreed that ReachOut gives me practical tips I can use to feel better.

By tailoring communications and resources to meet the specific needs and services preferences of rural young people we have achieved a 22% increase in service user favourability ratings – from 66% in Year 1 to 81% in Year 5.



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

ReachOut is now planning to build upon this successful approach – we'll take what we've learned about tailoring services for cohorts like rural, regional and remote even further by:

- investing in data and technology to power service personalisation – this means a 15 year old female from Dubbo and a 22 year old male from Ceduna will have a distinctly different service experience – one that's responsive to their unique needs
- deepening our service impact and accessibility by creating new services that engage young people in conversations and build community
- helping young people get the support they need by seamlessly connecting them to adjunctive services to maximise impact and improve mental health outcomes
- investing in making sure more young people know we're there for them – building on the increases in awareness and service use in recent years

With the growing understanding of mental health issues in rural, remote and regional Australia, and with mental health outcomes deteriorating in these areas after a very difficult last 5 years, we are at a critical moment for youth mental health. ReachOut now has an exciting opportunity to turn what we have learnt over the last 5 years into lasting impact for young people.