



2024 Impact Report

Building strong, happy and healthy young people through exercise.



Welcome

We’re excited to share with you all the work we’ve done together this year to help improve the health and wellbeing of young people in Australia.

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to Country and community.

Specifically, we pay respect to the Whadjuk Nyoongar people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Thriving primarily operates. We pay our respects to all First Nations Elders, past and present.

Inclusivity Statement

We are proud to be an inclusive organisation and support all efforts to build a community, where individuals can live and work free from discrimination.

We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions.

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

Thriving would like to acknowledge those with lived experience who have contributed to service development and engagement within our programs.

It is through the feedback and input we receive from these people that we are able to improve our services, and develop educational content to up-skill other staff.

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Message from the CEO

Associate Professor Bonnie Furzer PhD (she/her)

On behalf of Thriving in Motion I am pleased to share our 2024 Impact Report, celebrating the achievements of our organisation over the calendar year. We welcomed new team members, restructured our organisation and operations from the ground up, set up our first Thriving administration office, and undertook a significant review of ‘what we do’ in order to develop a focused and sustainable 5-year strategy.



I am deeply grateful to our staff, Board, young people, families and collaborators for their continued dedication to our vision and purpose. It is through the collective efforts of the entire Thriving community that we are able to make a positive difference in the lives of young people – and whilst we are a small charity, our impact is mighty!

There are ongoing challenges facing the health of young people in our community, with far-reaching impacts on individuals, families, and communities, and we are energised to play a leading role in supporting young people, health and support services, and communities through exercise. This past year has been incredible, and we hope you are as inspired by this report as we are. The foundations have been laid for us to continue to expand our reach and impact as we move forward, side by side, with young people, families and communities.

Looking ahead, 2025 is set to be an extraordinarily busy year, with the launch of a new Strategic Plan to guide us towards 2030 as a medium sized charity. I look forward to working with our community to continue to build on impact and celebrate our 15 years in 2025.

Bonnie

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Thriving in Motion is a not-for-profit building strong, happy & healthy young people through exercise, education, and research. Thriving creates and fosters accessible and inclusive exercise environments for young people to support and improve their health and wellbeing.

Vision

All young people, regardless of their medical, behavioural or social barriers, should have the opportunity to participate in a positive exercise experience that supports their health. By engaging and working with communities, including schools and health services, we envisage an Australia where no young person is excluded from participation.

Mission

The mission of Thriving is to use exercise expertise to improve the health of kids & young people. We celebrate uniqueness and diversity and offer an inclusive exercise environment for all young people.

In order to achieve this, we aim to:

- A** Improve physical and mental health through evidence-based exercise services for young people.
- B** Increase family, community and health professional knowledge of exercise and its role in health.
- C** Provide & support opportunities for all young people to experience a positive exercise environment.

Values


Inclusiveness – Expertise & Collaboration – Determination – Engagement



YOUTUBE CHANNEL

2024 Highlights






53

Collaborating Partners


6428

Service delivery hours to over 900 young people



5


Funding Partners




158

People Educated


Across 11 Education Courses



Current Research Projects



- Thriving Kids and Teens
- Health, Eating + Exercise Behaviours of Trans Adults
- Auditory Cued Exercise
- Movement for Adolescent Gender Diverse Services



AusACTIVE National Winner

Most Inclusive and/or Diverse program

What we do matters!

Our Young People

Many of our Thriving participants and their families have selected to withdraw from peer or school activities or have been asked to “withdraw” due to their individual challenges.

Thriving provides these young people with a chance to participate in a supportive environment, improving their self-confidence and equipping them with improved physical literacy which in turn supports their long-term health, and supports their participation in a school or community environment.

Community trends

Physical inactivity is a growing problem worldwide. As sedentary behaviours for both work and leisure increase, there is a vital need to encourage and empower individuals to live a life which is physically active. We know that regular exercise contributes to improved overall health and wellbeing, specifically physical health (heart, muscle, metabolic and hormone balance) and mental health (mood, wellbeing, symptoms of depression and anxiety).

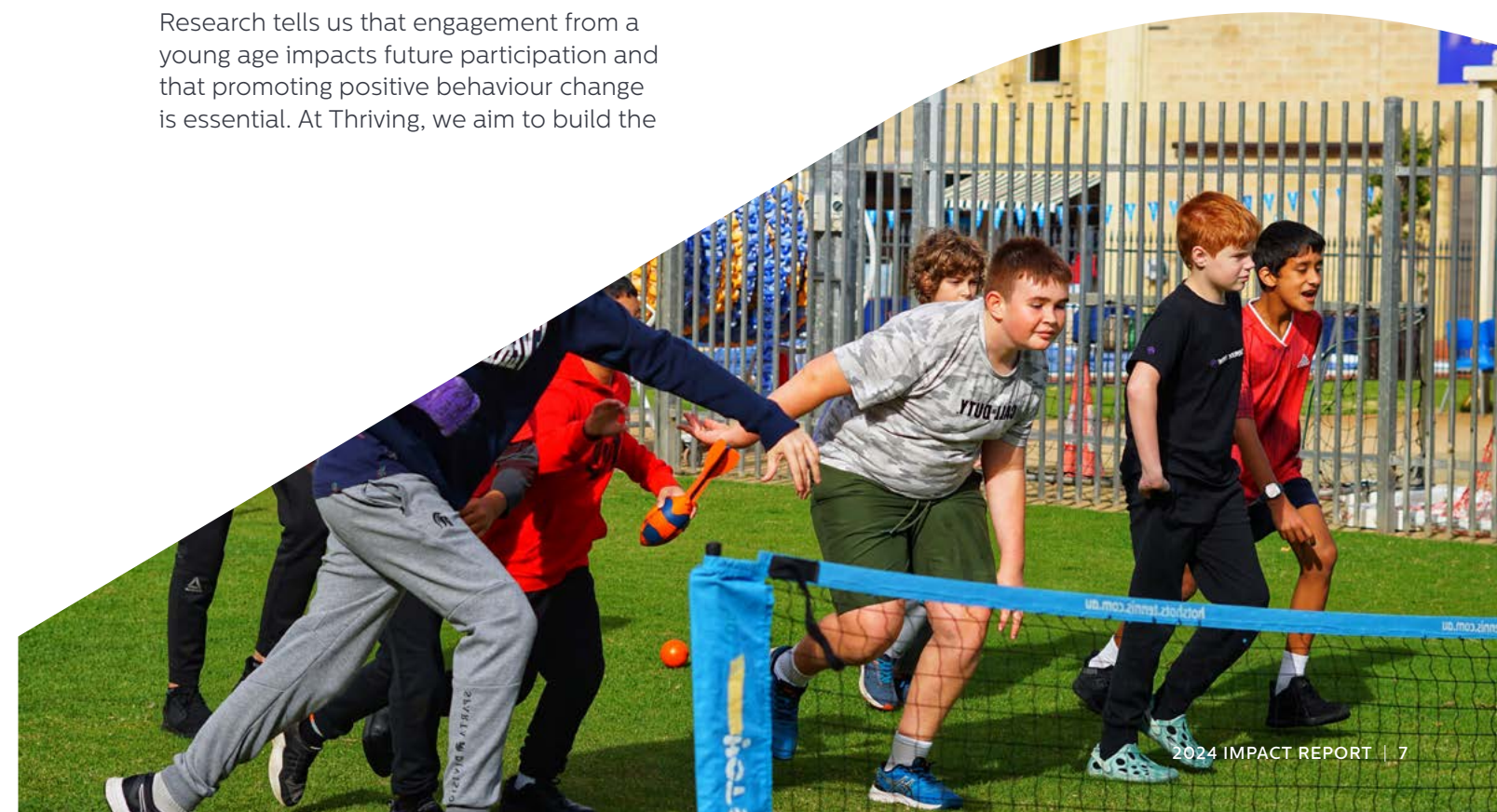
Research tells us that engagement from a young age impacts future participation and that promoting positive behaviour change is essential. At Thriving, we aim to build the

Physical Literacy levels of our young people so that they (and their families) are supported to participate via improved motivation, confidence and competence for physical activity.

How we help

At Thriving, exercise experts including exercise scientists and exercise physiologists, provide young people the opportunity to have a positive exercise experience, in an environment where they are supported and able to conquer personal goals and celebrate achievements without fear of failure.

Our team are clinical health experts who provided targeted and evidence based care within a positive and engaging environment. This promotes lifelong physical activity participation enhancing health and well-being if all young people, no matter their journey, lived experience or background.



Our Pillars



Service

Thriving in Motion provides young people with positive exercise experiences through enjoyment and achievement, in order to develop sustainable healthy lifestyle behaviours.

We provide specialised exercise services to disadvantaged youth and young people with barriers to physical activity engagement, to develop the social, motor, emotional skills to engage in community-based physical activity in the long-term.



Education

A longer-term aim of Thriving is to support the development and availability of community-based services and extend specialised youth exercise and health knowledge in communities throughout WA and beyond.

Knowledge sharing, through a variety of education courses offered to families, allied health and community, creates opportunities for change to existing services to better support young people from diverse experiences.



Research

Real, lasting change comes from the contribution to the science of physical activity, exercise and behaviour research and the translation and dissemination of results to the community, allied health practitioners, young people and families.

Thriving’s research is directly linked to our values and mission, focussed on the implementation and evaluation of best-practice exercise and health services through collaboration with research partners to develop and support evidence-based practice.

Exercise Services

Services are provided by experts in using exercise for health, including Accredited Exercise Physiologists &/or Exercise scientists, experience fitness instructors, and allied health professionals.

Thriving Kids + Teens

We provide all abilities and inclusive exercise programs that provide a positive exercise experience for all kids and young people.

Our kids and teens exercise services are open to all kids and young people from the age of 5 – 17, but we specialise in providing services for those who are unable or unwilling to participate in community or school activities or need a bit of additional support to engage in activity.

We aim to build physical literacy (e.g., fitness, strength, skills), motivation and confidence, and improve health but we make sure to do so in a supportive and fun way so that all young people have a positive exercise experience.

- **1-on-1 sessions:** tailored to the goals, developmental stage and preferences of the young person or family. Pre and post assessments are built into the sessions, along with end of term reports for families or referrers.
- **Strength + Conditioning sessions:** tailored specifically for young people to build their gym and movement literacy, muscle strength and confidence to be active.
- **Small Group Sessions:** small group sessions to build physical literacy and fitness, exercise enjoyment and social skills led.

Thriving Youth

Exercise and movement programs for young people (12 – 25 yrs) who experience challenges or barriers to being physically active.

Move It for Mental Health - The Move it for Mental Health program is run in partnership with education providers and is a mixed movement program for young people who are at risk of poor wellbeing and mental health. Services are delivered by exercise experts who create a safe, inclusive environment for young people of all abilities.

Youth Moves - Community based, inclusive physical activity program that is flexible and responsive to the needs of disengaged and vulnerable or ‘at risk’ young people who are currently underserved in community physical activity pathways in Western Australia. Each program is tailored based on preference of participants, ages and community needs, and may be targeted for a mixed group or a specific presentation for example:

- Trans and Gender Diverse; Neurodivergent; Mental Health Challenges or Distress; Substance Use



Exercise Services Impact

Service Delivery


6428 total exercise service delivery hours across all programs.

573 total enrolments across all programs.


33 locations from Perth metro – southwest across all programs.

100% of young people would recommend our exercise service.


Our Participants



85% are seeing another health professional or assistive service.




81% sometimes or often experience difficulties socialising and/or relating to other children.

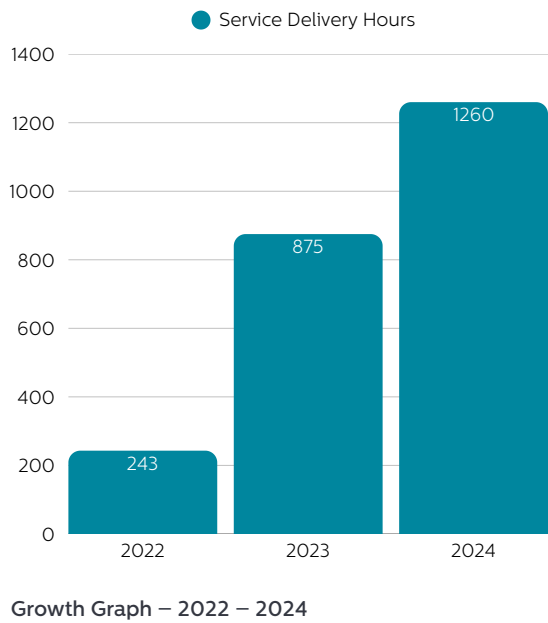


54% have situations or experiences which make them highly anxious, or they avoid.

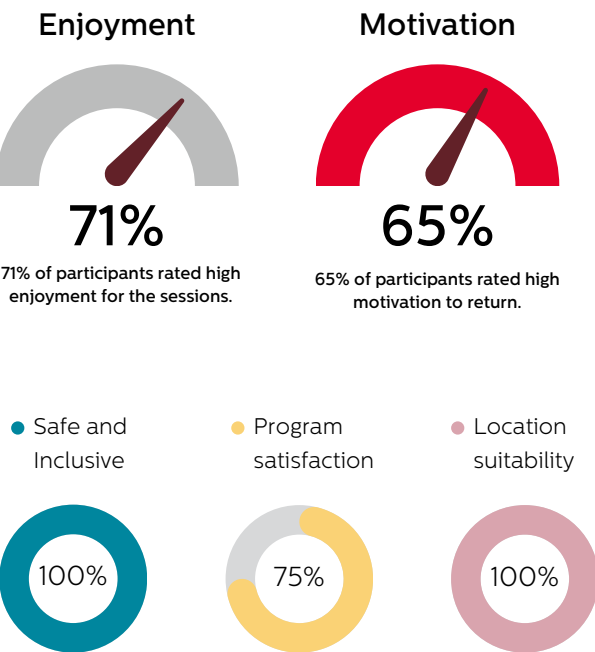
51% experience behavioural difficulties or challenges that need to be considered during exercise.



Mental Health Program



Youth Moves 2024 Program Feedback



Seth's Experience of Thriving Case Study

Seth

Seth was referred by his GP in October of 2023 due to difficulties engaging in activity and exercise as a result of chemotherapy related side effects. Seth was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukaemia at age 4. He had 3 years of active treatment and has been in remission for 4 years. Seth had vincristine as part of his treatment which caused peripheral neuropathy in his ankles and a left side foot drop, which has since improved. Seth also struggled with grip/wrist strength and his ankles occasionally just 'gave way' resulting in falls.

Seth previously tried to join a homeschooled sports club but the other kids did not understand why he was not at their level and asked lots of questions and kept pointing Seth out as different, so he did not continue.

Seth's Mum - Jacqui's Testimony

Seth was struggling with coordination and confidence after cancer treatment; he couldn't keep up with other children his age. Thriving has helped Seth immensely with his confidence and coordination. He has made incredible progress, and we are very grateful to his instructor for how wonderful she has been with him. The biggest strength of Thriving is the bond Seth has developed with his Thriving mentor, Greta and the progress he has made; he is much more confident and is happy to attend sessions alone, which is not something he would have done 6 months ago.

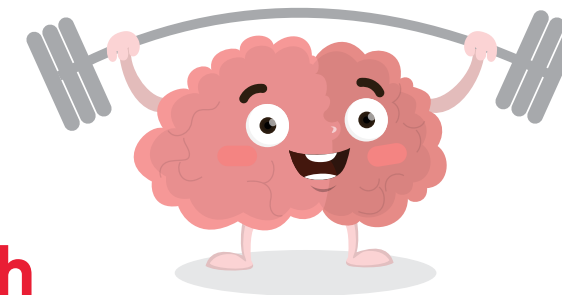
Seth's Testimony

One of the best parts is that Thriving is helping me with my various, different issues. I also like spending time with my trainer. I have gotten used to her and I feel comfortable being around her. I don't think there is anything I don't like about the sessions. Thriving is one of the best exercise programs ever.

Seth's instructor Greta's Testimony

Working with Seth has been so rewarding. He has made incredible progress over the last year: from wanting his Mum in the same room watching every exercise he completed, to being dropped off and completing the program independently (with instructor). From requiring frequent rests and being very uncomfortable with exertion and sweating, to pushing himself hard and only having short drink breaks. Seth's dedication and effort during sessions is wonderful and can be seen in the awesome improvements he has made. He has really come out of his shell and loves playing active, running games and tennis. I have enjoyed working with Seth so much over the last year and hope to be able to continue working with him in the future.





View of our Young People

Youth Moves

Supporting WA youth (15-25yrs) to engage in an evidence-based movement program, in a supportive, inclusive and non-judgmental environment.

Participant Testimonials

“Thanks to Thriving, I’ve discovered that exercise does boost my mood/energy and reduce my anxiety, and that I prefer social/team sports to individual ones. It’s helped me develop my self care toolkit: instead of distracting myself from stress by doomscrolling, I’m much more inclined to get off my phone and exercise or at least move about. This is the polar opposite to the start of the year, when I’d manage stress and low mood by bingeing YouTube or gaming all day.” – **Participant**

“Thriving in Motion is the perfect way for me to connect more with my body, community, and friends in an encouraging and welcoming environment! It’s also a great way to learn more fitness techniques and discover what exercises I do and don’t enjoy.” – **Participant**

“Since joining Thriving I have found a new sense of confidence within myself surrounding exercise. The thought of trying new sports or just entering an exercise area no longer fills me with dread and despair. Instead, I am able to be excited and encouraged about doing something new.” – **Participant**

Thriving Minds: Research and Education

Research

Thriving in Motion is a research and community partner across a range of projects exploring exercise and health in young people with the aim to build and share the knowledge around supporting exercise and health in young people.

Our research is conducted in along key partners including the Mental Health and Exercise Research Group, UWA, UNSW, and The Kids Research Institute with a shared commitment to cocreating knowledge with communities and for communities.

Explore our current research projects: <https://www.thrivinginmotion.org/projects/>

Education & Training

We are building knowledge to support health and exercise in young people through accessible training for both community members and health professionals.

Current course offerings include:

- Physical Literacy and Therapeutic Exercise for Young People
- Exercise in Severe Mental Illness
- Mental Health First Aid
- Inclusive Movement Practices

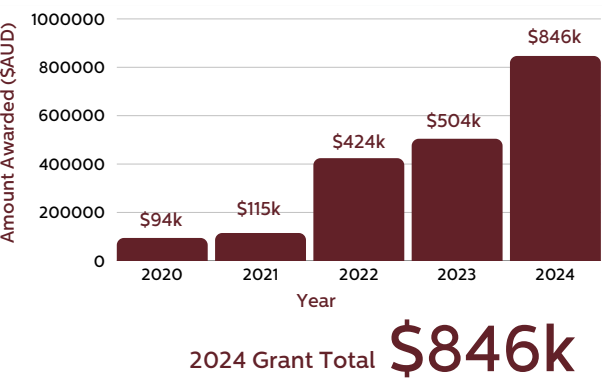
Learn more: <https://www.thrivinginmotion.org/education/>

We pride ourselves on a diverse, clinically active education and research team with broad expertise across multiple areas of practice, enabling us to effectively translate evidence and research into meaningful real-world application and community impact.

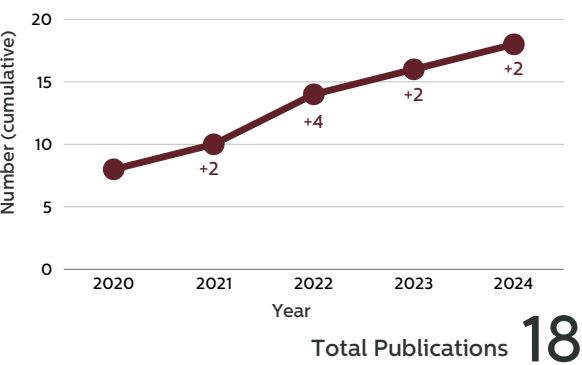


Research and Education: Impact + Outputs

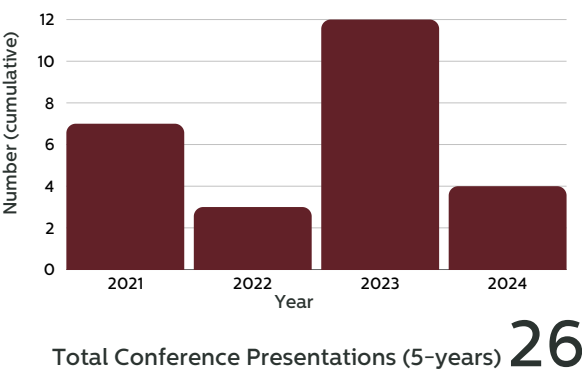
Annual Grant Funding



Publications



Conference Presentations



\$2.75 mil.

= Total Grants Managed by Thriving

Service + Evaluation = \$2.5mil

Research = \$240k

Funders including Telethon 7 Trust, Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, Healthway, WA Government, Exercise + Sport Science Australia.

+ \$980k

in Collaborative Grants

Clinical
Training
Students
Supported



86 Participants
Trained

7

Research
Students
Supported



Community
Education
Events

158

Participants Trained



Exercise and Eating Behaviours of Trans and Gender Diverse Adults Research Feature

Bonnie Furzer, Kai Schweizer, Felicity Austin, Kemi Wright and colleagues.

This research, recently published in the International Journal of Transgender Health, has for the first time captured and analysed qualitative perspectives from the voices of Australian trans adults, leading to recommendations such as improving exercise programs and changing diagnostic screening for eating disorders.

The research team interviewed 25 people who were either a trans individual or a healthcare provider specialising in trans health. From analysis of the responses, the team found three key overarching and interconnecting themes that contribute to both healthy and harmful eating and exercise behaviour: gender affirmation, neurodivergence and environmental influences.

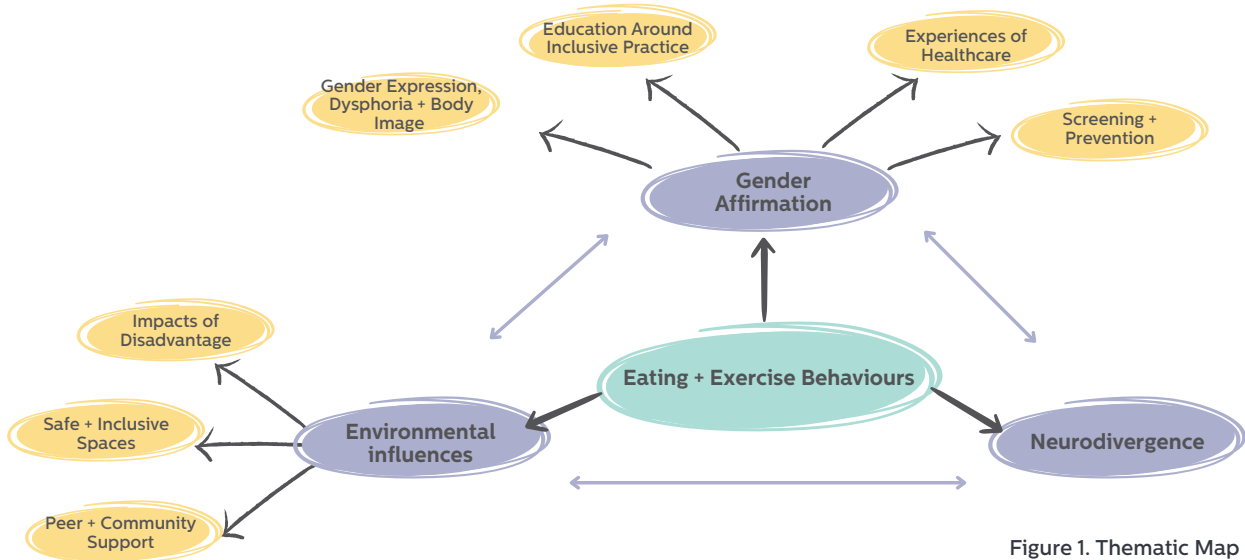


Figure 1. Thematic Map

Led by A/Prof Bonnie Furzer and Mx Kai Schweizer, this work was supported by through an IgnitED Grant from the Australian Eating Disorders Research Translation Center, and is a collaboration between the Mental Health + Exercise Research Group (MHEx), University of Western Australia, UNSW, and Thriving in Motion.

“In our work we not only established the risk factors that lead to complicated relationships with eating and exercise, but for the first time we were able to uncover how these could have unique, interconnected ways of presenting in a person.” Mx Schweizer said.

“When gender affirming medical care is too expensive or not available, it makes sense for people to turn to diet and exercise to allow them to embody their gender more fully,” he said.

Co-author and operations manager at Thriving in Motion Felicity Austin said multidisciplinary care was needed to make a real difference to trans young people.

“It’s about working together, not being so siloed and making care specific to individuals” Ms Austin said.



Figure 2. Participant Responses

Scientific & Community Implications

- TGD people face distinct challenges, including high rates of disordered eating and exercise behaviours driven by societal and internal pressures.
- Healthcare must be gender-affirming and person-centred, addressing both physical and psychosocial aspects.
- Multidisciplinary teams – including dietitians, exercise professionals, and mental health experts – are essential.
- Inclusive fitness programs and accessible nutrition resources can help reduce participation barriers.
- Respecting and integrating trans and gender diverse lived experiences is key to creating effective and affirming interventions.



Link to the full publication: Schweizer, K., Austin, F., Wright, K., Jackson, B., Lin, A., Strauss, P., & Furzer, B. (2025). Eating and exercise experiences of Australian trans and gender diverse folks: lived experience and stakeholder perspectives. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 1–24.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2447765>

Community Engagement

At Thriving in Motion, community is at the heart of everything we do. We work closely with our Youth Advisory Group and Parent Advisory Group to ensure our programs are responsive to the real and evolving needs of the young people and families we serve. Their lived experiences and insights shape our services and guide how we show up for our community.

Over the past year, we've been busy connecting, sharing, and learning with those around us – and every moment has reinforced why this work matters.

From meaningful conversations at events like the Leeming Health Expo, to engaging drop-in sessions with the incredible teams at Frontrunners, Headspace, Transfolk WA, we've deepened our local roots and built bridges of understanding.

We've proudly taken part in the Pride Fair, Neurodiversity week, Margaret River Ultramarathon, Telethon Family Festival, school parent information nights, and other community outreach events to ensure our programs are visible, inclusive, and accessible.

Our team presented at seminars, conferences and local forums, including the ESSA Research to Practice Conference, Asia-Pacific Society

for Physical Activity Conference, gaining fresh insights to support better outcomes in mental health, physical activity, and wellbeing.

When we come together, we build a stronger, more informed, and more compassionate community and that's at the core of everything we do at Thriving in Motion.

To follow our journey and stay up to date with the latest community happenings, visit our blog: <https://www.thrivinginmotion.org/projects/news-and-events/>

Message from our Community Engagement Officer – Ben Quick

"As a Community Engagement Officer, I co-facilitate exercise programs for young people, drawing on my lived experiences with queer identity, neurodivergence, and disability to create a supportive environment. I connect participants with additional resources and collaborate with organisations aligned to their needs using my network within WA's youth support sector."



Awards & Partners

Awards

Winner (2024)

AusActive Most Inclusive and Diverse Program Award, Youth Moves Program

Finalist (2024)

AusActive Mental Health Awareness Award, Move it for Mental Health

Winner (2024)

ESSA Practitioner Award, Move it for Trans and Gender Diverse Young People

Finalist (2022)

Impact 100



Partners

The success of our programs and services would not be possible without the support of our various funding partnerships. Thank you to all of our donors for helping Thriving to make a difference in the lives of WA young people. We cannot express how much we value the opportunity to work alongside these organisations. Thank you.

- Telethon 7 Trust
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- The University of Western Australia
- Stan Perron Charitable Foundation
- Courtney Media & Marketing



Our Team

Thriving would not be possible without the amazing team of administration, support, education and program delivery staff and students. The expertise and enthusiasm of our exceptional team is what allows us to continually offer a wide variety of programs and exercise experiences to kids and teens.

Our Board

Bonnie Furzer, Kemi Wright, Sally Edmondson, Juanita Allison Carly Willcox & Jon West

Chief Executive Officer

Associate Professor Bonnie Furzer

Chief Operations Officer

Dr Kemi Wright

Operations Manager

Felicity Austin

Business Manager

Ben Kramer

Senior Project Officer

Ashley Almarjawi

Senior Program Coordinators

Greta Edwards & John Hilston

Program Coordinators

Kayleen Russell & Meagan Davies

Community Engagement Officer

Ben Quick

Chief Enjoyment Officer (aka Therapy Dog)

Ernie



Get in touch

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