MISSING SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Missing School Incorporated

Social Innovation & Impact

2024 Annual Report of Missing School Incorporated

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MISSING SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

STUDENT SNAPSHOT

"She has dialed in almost every day for the past two weeks and it has been a very positive experience. The students have loved seeing her and she has fit right back into the classroom. Thank you very much for providing this robot as it has been incredible for having her back in the classroom."

- Teacher

A STUDENT CONNECTS TO CLASS

MISSING SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Across Australia, every day, into the hundreds of thousands of students with complex health conditions are at home or in hospital, missing school.

MissingSchool is dedicated to bridging the educational and social gaps experienced by these students and, often, their siblings by advocating for continuing connections to their own school.

We are the first and only organisation in Australia with a primary focus on keeping students with complex health conditions connected to their schools.

MissingSchool:

- Supports families with research, resources, strategies and helpful connections
- Raises awareness on the issue to inform the efforts of governments, educators, and health professionals
- Researches on embedding systems using best practice models and enabling technology
- Raises funds to achieve these objectives

Our mission is to
solve school isolation.

MissingSchool takes the view that school is a student's community.

Connection to their community can alleviate the stress and anxiety of a medical or mental health condition, promote resilience and optimism, and support students facing health challenges to remain positively engaged in learning and life.

This *important connection* **reminds students** with complex health challenges that **there is more to who they are than their condition.**

MISSING SCHOOL

PRINCIPLES

Student Centred
Placing students at the forefront of a partnering approach

Lived Experience
Recognising the lived experience as participatory evidence

Sound Evidence
Employing research and evaluation for responsive practice

System Solutions
Leveraging capacity in systems for strategic transformation

Ethically Applied
Ensuring activities and processes safeguard people

We remain dedicated to adhering to these principles when striving to connect students with complex health conditions to the most valuable educational and social experiences.

Protecting the privacy of our interactions with children and families is of utmost importance. We often hear sensitive stories that we cannot share publicly.

We share stories with complete consent and ethical approval, including the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Incorporated in the ACT, MissingSchool is a volunteer-led registered charity, with national registration.

We are endorsed by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

MISSING SCHOOL

MissingSchool recognises chronic school absence for students with complex health challenges for example >>>

- Anxiety
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Blood Disorders
- Brain Injury
- Injuries & Burns
- Cancer
- Crohn's Disease
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Diabetes
- Eating Disorders
- Epilepsy
- Heart/Liver/Kidney Disease
- Mental Disorders
- Rare Diseases
- School Refusal/School Can't
- Transplants, and more...

COVID-19 highlighted the profound impact that education gaps and lack of access to peers has had on the current generation of Australian students.

However, there is a growing cohort of children who miss school due to complex medical/mental health conditions that continue to be overlooked.

Despite the UN rights, and efforts from educators and parents, the gap between positive intentions and school support for students with serious health conditions remains. Waiting isn't an option. There is "no safe threshold for absence", and the global rise in chronic illness and trend of school refusal underline the urgency.

THE SOCIAL COSTS

Significant school absence for students with complex health conditions affects all genders, all socio-economic groups, all cultural and religious groups, all school ages, all locations and all abilities. It cuts across public, independent and faith-based schools.

Without introducing the costs of medical intervention and any ongoing medical care, the estimated lifetime cost to lost productivity from incomplete schooling per individual is close to $1million. Human, systems and social costs are high, making outcome measurement critical.

This is a challenge that affects students globally and Australia has the opportunity to be the global leader in best practice governance and solutions and make a valuable global contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4 (Health and Education).

MISSING SCHOOL

PROBLEM SNAPSHOT

"We don't really know the new principal, as they started after my child was diagnosed. The class teacher has been very supportive but is unsure how to best support them, having never worked with a student in this situation before. Managing illness, charities, and regular schooling has been overwhelming, and I wasn't sure who should be leading the process. I worry that we may have missed out on available support. Most resources are only accessible when my child is in the hospital, but now that they're at home, things feel much more challenging. I'm unsure of what steps we should be taking, and there's nothing formal in place to guide us."

– PARENT

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POLICY AGENDA

MissingSchool continues to advocate on behalf of students with serious illness and their families to the Australian Government to match existing legislation and technology with clear policy as outlined in CEO, Megan Gilmour's, policy paper

1. Make 'students with a health condition' a priority equity cohort in National School Reforms

2. Enhance the national evidence base through improved data (e.g., NCCD, ABS, schools)

3. Mandate and publish school responsibility to offer telepresence during absence

4. Set, train and monitor practice standards for schools, hospitals, and support at home

5. Adopt a 'health condition' absence code; set absence thresholds to trigger support

In March 2022, the Australian Government adopted MissingSchool's policy proposal to introduce a "health condition" code in the "approved absence" category so schools can differentiate between "approved" absences for short-term or minor illnesses, and longer-term conditions or serious injury causing ongoing chronic absence. Then progress stalled. Now the code, in a measurement framework, is back on the agenda through MissingSchool's government engagement across 2024.

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TARGET OUTCOMES

MissingSchool is targeting system outcomes across three domains of cultural and systemic change ›››

1. Amplifying Awareness

Students with complex health conditions increase school attendance through telepresence, reengage with teachers and peers, learn to manage anxiety about school absence.

Parents/carers facilitate increased school attendance through options and advocacy.

Siblings and peers cultivate concepts of diversity and inclusion, supporting sick students.

Health organisations contribute to development of illness-specific resources.

Educators use telepresence technology in their classrooms to support teaching and learning for students with complex health conditions.

Health professionals use telepresence for school connection during student's admission.

TARGET OUTCOMES

MissingSchool is targeting system outcomes across three domains of cultural and systemic change ›››

2. Cultivating Competency

Students with complex health conditions engage in their learning, receive face-to-face teaching, socialise with peers, increase their support network and opportunities for success and attainment.

Parents/carers support their kid's learning and social connection with reduced burden.

Siblings and peers have increased empathy about medical situations and absences, relationships with unwell peers continue.

Health organisations share information and provide peer-to-peer support to families.

Educators normalise the young person's presence in the classroom through technology-inclusive practice, support increases for sick students' education.

Health professionals incorporate school learning and social connection in medical plans.

TARGET OUTCOMES

MissingSchool is targeting system outcomes across three domains of cultural and systemic change ›››

3. Mobilising Management

Students with complex health conditions continue education in their own learning community, maintain a sense of belonging, find greater resilience through peer and school connection.

Parents/carers exercise confidence for their kid's learning and future..

Siblings and peers have greater ease and normalised relationships with unwell peers at school and during transitions.

Health organisations proactively support families with timely information resources.

Schools and hospitals implement practice guidelines for school telepresence technology for sick students in a sustainable approach.

MISSING SCHOOL

CHAMPIONING STUDENTS

POLICY GOAL

Mandate and publish school responsibility to offer classroom telepresence during absence

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE TOWARD POLICY GOAL

Our innovative technology service, including telepresence robots, provides a critical link to connect students with medical and mental health challenges with their classmates and gives them a physical presence in school.

Our technology is cleared for use in every state and teritory education system, with all school sectors engaging.

In FY 2024 we continued piloting support for students, schools and families to use school-owned technology for connection. Lessons from the pilot are emerging and will inform MissingSchool's approach to scaling and embedding telepresence connection as standard practice within school systems over the coming year.

MISSING SCHOOL

CHAMPIONING STUDENTS

ALL–TIME STUDENTS ENGAGED: 524

Since 2018, MissingSchool has engaged to support an estimated 5,970 classmates to be reconnected through telepresence including robots.

One of our proudest achievements in the 2024 financial year has been our engagement to support 144 students with school connection, connecting 59 students through assistive technology in line with the Disability Standards for Education.

The number of beneficiaries exceeds ~9,150 through modelling innovative inclusion practices to siblings, peers, and parents in school communities where technology supports student presence.

We have laid a solid foundation for the future through a strategy for targeted outreach to more than 9,600 schools (including hospital schools) across Australia and over 300 community organisations working on child and health matters.

From mid 2021-mid 2024, MissingSchool has donated on loan more than $284,000 in technology services to schools across Australia to support students with serious illness.
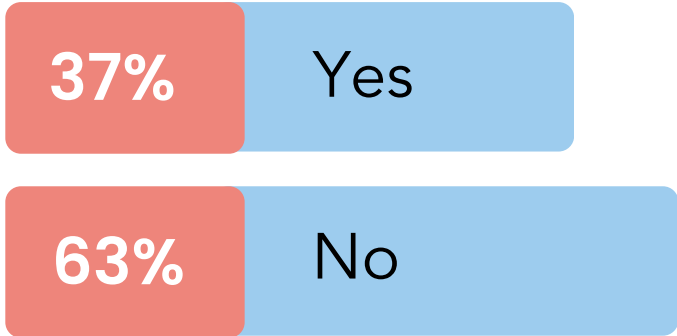
ALL TIME SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION

- ✓ **Primary: 50%**

- ✓ **Secondary: 24%**

- ✓ **Combined: 24%**

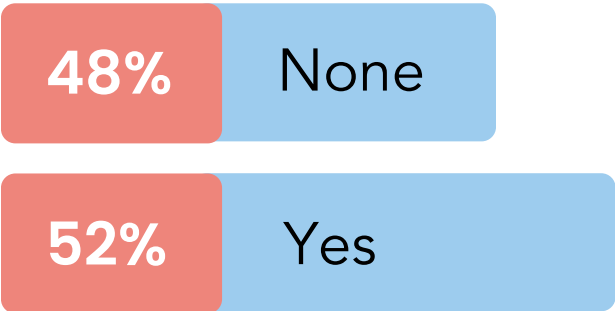- ✓ **Special: 2%**

JUL 23 - JUN 24 SCHOOL CLASSIFICATION

- ✓ **Primary: 47%**

- ✓ **Secondary: 24%**

- ✓ **Combined: 26%**

- ✓ **Special: 3%**

MISSING SCHOOL

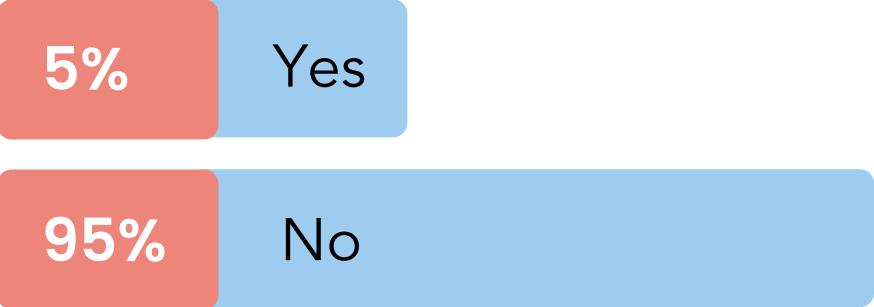# ALL TIME STUDENTS ENGAGED: DEMOGRAPHICS

IS THERE AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN IN PLACE?

37% Yes

63% No

CONNECTION TO CHARITIES OTHER THAN MISSINGSCHOOL

48% None

52% Yes

ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT

5% Yes

95% No

GENDER

58% Male

41% Female

1% Non-Binary

MISSING SCHOOL
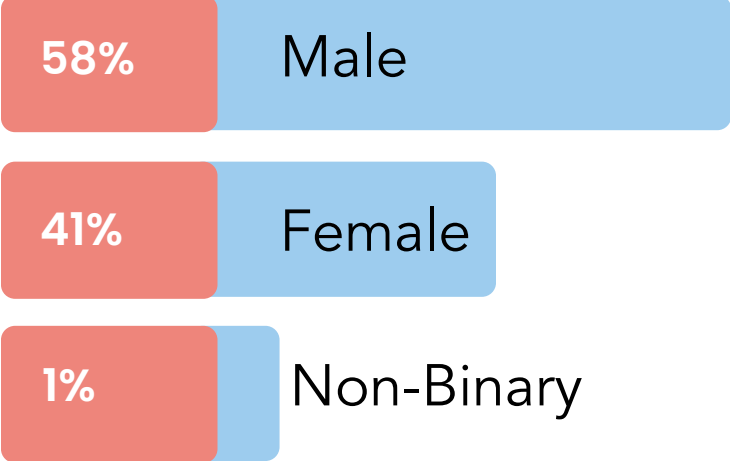
ALL TIME: SCHOOL ABSENCE

AMOUNT OF SCHOOL MISSED TO DATE

- Less than 1 month:
- 1-3 months:
- 4-6 months
- 7-12 months:
- 12+ months

% 25% 20% 20% 21
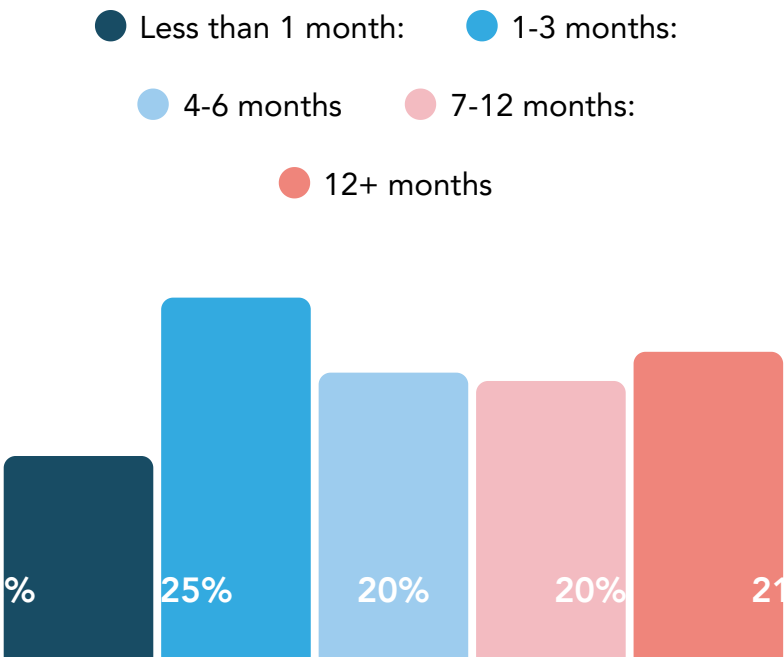
EXPECTED LENGTH OF ABSENCE

- Less than 1 month:
- 1-3 months:
- 4-6 months
- 7-12 months:
- 12+ months

6% 17% 22% 27%

PATTERN OF ABSENCE

- Intermittent-specified period:
- Full time-specified period
- Intermittent-indefinite
- Full time-indefinite
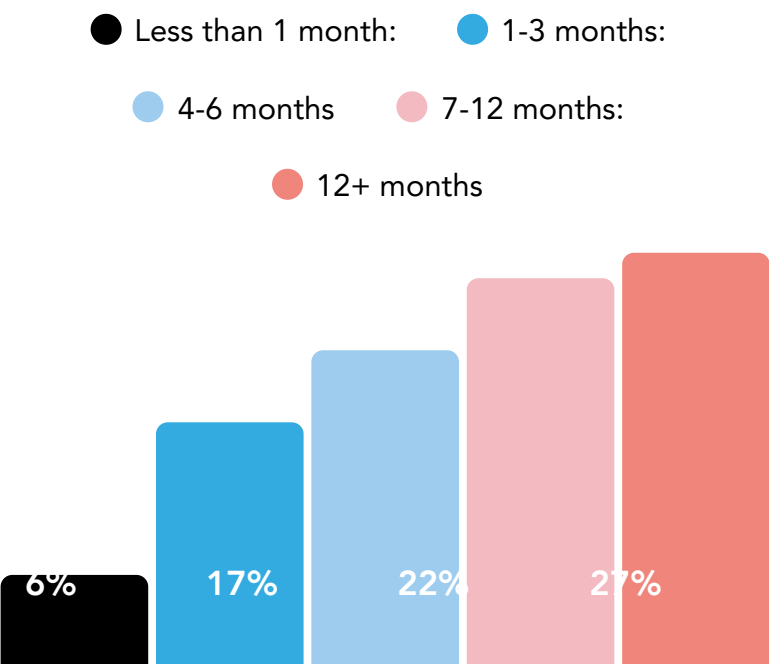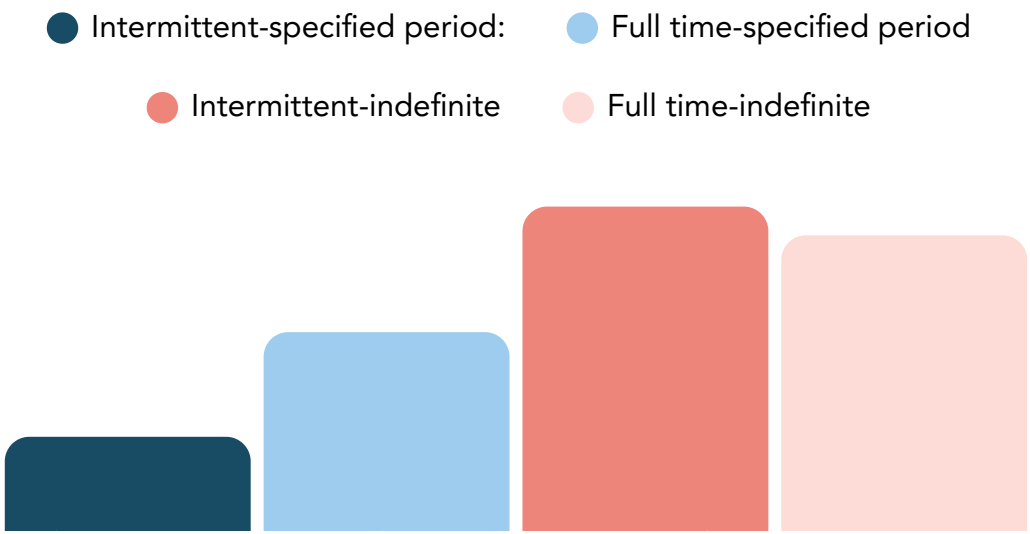
MISSING SCHOOL

WHAT HAPPENS TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT'S EDUCATION? (PRE-ROBOT)*
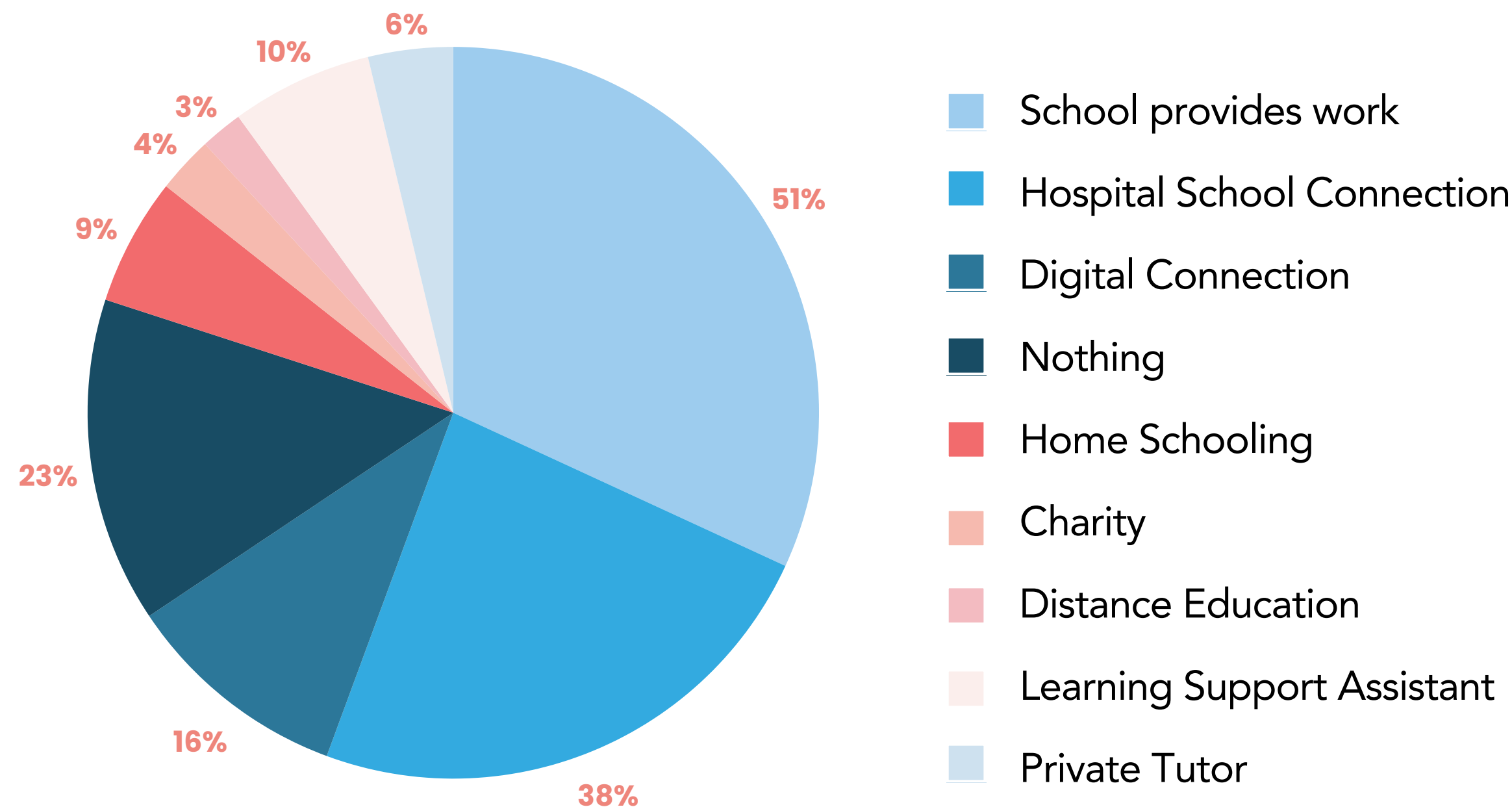
*Note:
percentages total
>100% as multiple
selections applied
to some students

Pie chart legend:
- School provides work — 51%
- Hospital School Connection — 38%
- Digital Connection — 16%
- Nothing — 23%
- Home Schooling — 9%
- Charity — 4%
- Distance Education — 3%
- Learning Support Assistant — 10%
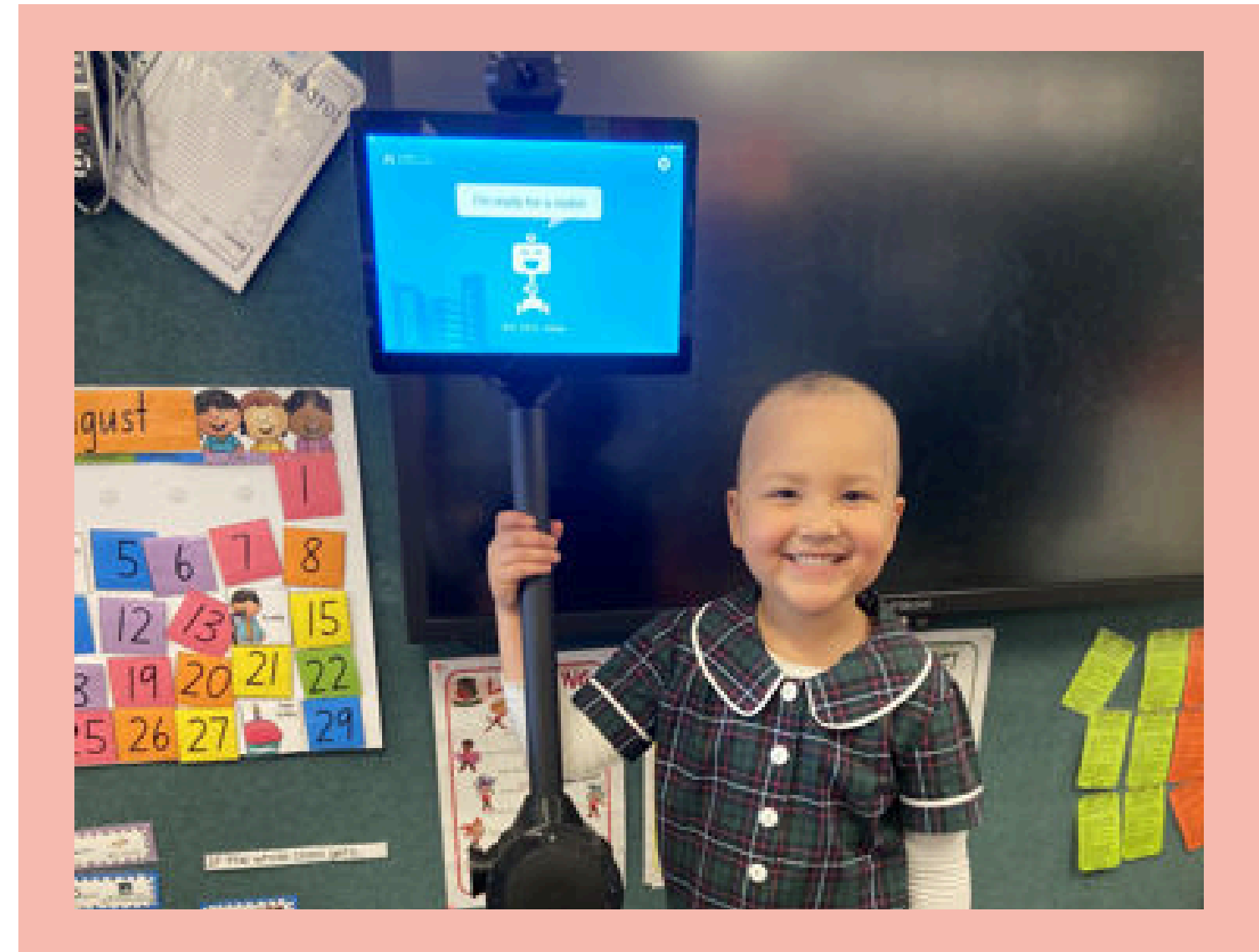- Private Tutor — 6%

SIDE EFFECTS OF MISSING SCHOOL

*Data is from pre-technology placement student baseline survey. % total is >100% as some students experienced multiple side effects of school absence (i.e., 72% means that 72% of parents asked, responded that their child experiences that side effect).

Side Effects	%*
Disruption of friendships	72%
Academic underachievement	54%
Increased anxiety	52%
Reduced opportunities for social support	46%
School refusal and reintegration difficulties	44%
Delays in developmental skills	38%
Difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships	38%
Attention and concentration problems	34%
Increased vulnerability to other stressors	32%
Low self esteem	30%
Specific learning needs	25%
Peer rejection	20%
Behavioural problems	15%

MISSING SCHOOL
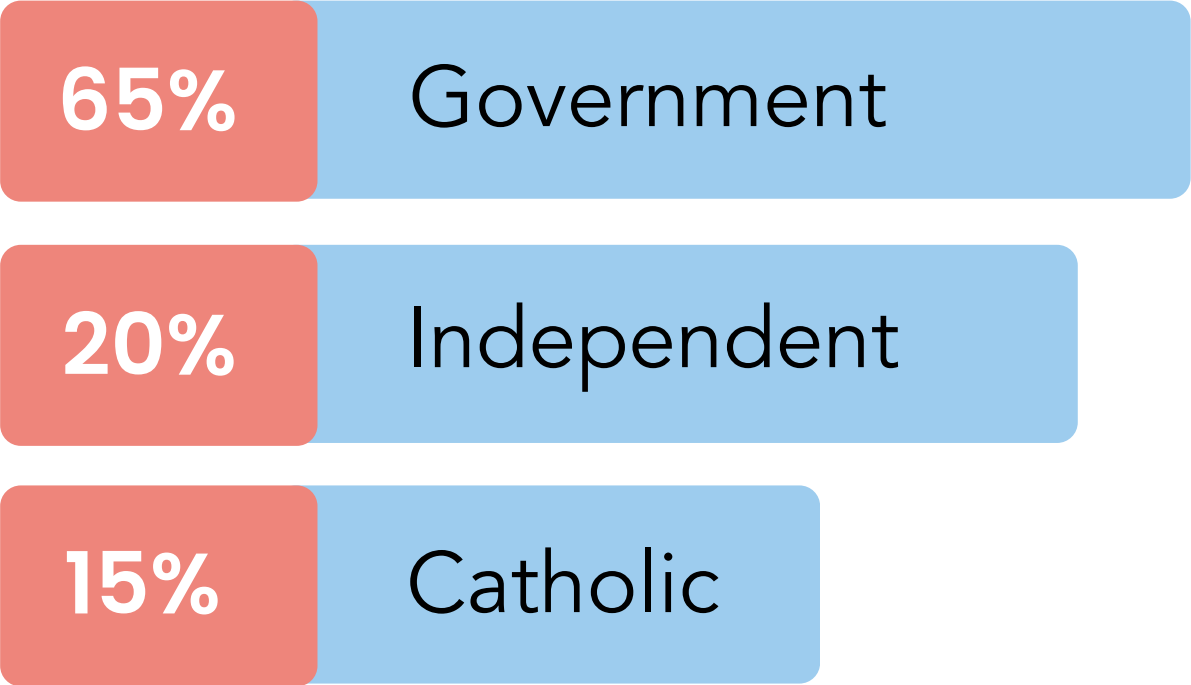
TOP 5 BENEFITS OF TELEPRESENCE TECHNOLOGY

1. Friendships and relationships supported
2. Classroom connection maintained
3. Student wellbeing increased
4. Education transitions supported
5. Peers positively impacted
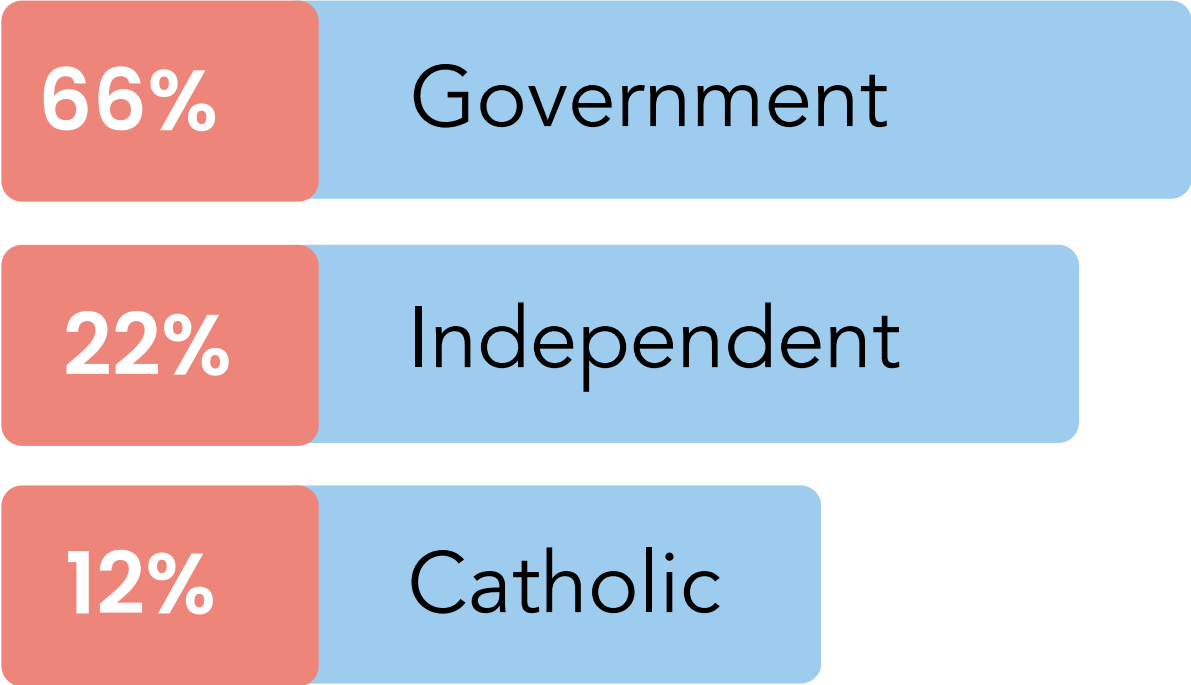

NIA MEETS HER ROBOT

MISSING SCHOOL

SCHOOL SECTOR

ALL TIME

65%	Government
20%	Independent
15%	Catholic

FY 2024

66%	Government
22%	Independent
12%	Catholic

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STUDENT CASE STUDY

GEORGE JOINS CLASS FROM HUNDREDS OF KILOMETRES AWAY.

George, a Year 3 student from rural New South Wales, is navigating one of the toughest challenges of his young life: a recent cancer diagnosis. A brave and curious boy with a passion for maths, science, and all things factual, George also deeply loves sport and farm life — parts of his everyday world he's missing terribly as he undergoes treatment away from home.

George faced a full-time, indefinite absence from school and his close-knit family of six was stretched across long distances during this difficult time. Maintaining connection—to school, friends, and his sense of normalcy—became more important than ever.

Technology stepped in to bridge that gap. A telepresence robot allowed George to attend school remotely, and it was life changing. "This robot has changed my son's commitment to school and given him something to look forward to each day," George's mum shared. "His teacher, peers and school have been more than amazing. I am lost for words. It has been more than amazing."

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MISSING SCHOOL

STUDENT CASE STUDY

George used the robot almost daily to join his classroom, where he was greeted each morning during roll call and participated in a variety of learning experiences, from digital technologies to guided reading sessions. His teacher reflected, "It's really nice to mark his name on the roll every morning and see him. I haven't seen him in person this year, but I still feel like his teacher."

Although there were some challenges, like occasional audio and Wi-Fi issues, these were outweighed by the powerful sense of inclusion the robot brought. "He joined during a rainy lunch the other day and just chatted with his friends while they coloured.

He was on the couch in Sydney, and they were in the classroom — it was really lovely", his mum said.

George's classmates embraced the technology, initially excited and then naturally including it in daily life. "They just take it in their stride. George is well-liked in our small community, and his presence, even virtually, means a lot," his teacher said. "They love seeing him, and the robot helps them process what's going on in his life. It makes him feel like he's still just one of the kids."

The social connection and continuity of routine were vital for George's wellbeing, with social inclusion and presence during lessons and reading groups helping him feel part of his class. His teacher added, "It's more for his mental health and that of the other kids than anything else. It's fantastic. I can't recommend it enough."

George's placement is now complete and thanks to the dedication of his teachers, family, and the power of technology, he remained connected — to learning, to friendship, and to hope.
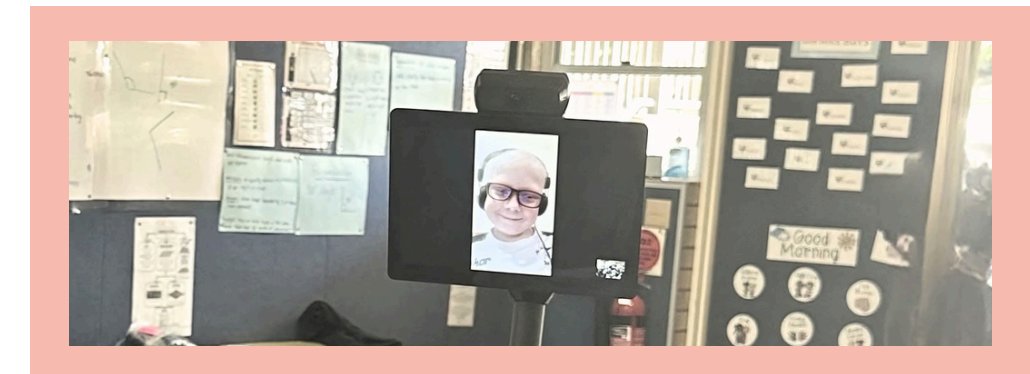
GEORGE JOINS CLASS ON HIS ROBOT

MISSING SCHOOL

ACTIVATING PEERS & SIBLINGS

POLICY GOAL
Train and monitor practice standards for schools, hospitals, support at home

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE TOWARD POLICY GOAL

When a student with a complex health condition is absent from school, they can experience feelings of isolation and disconnection from their peers.

MissingSchool data shows that peer connection has benefits for the absent student's social and emotional wellbeing, and learning.

Connection also has wellbeing benefits for peers and can help them grow in empathy, understanding and compassion.

"I can tell they "get" how big this is for [student] and they just feel great being a part of it. They learnt how empathy and inclusivity is like the tide, lifting all ships."

– PARENT

TEACHER –

"But in the class, these kids just became so much more empathetic, and so much more thoughtful. They do little cards and things like that, and I think the class became a lot more tight-knit friends."

MISSING SCHOOL

ACTIVATING PEERS & SIBLINGS

We're especially proud of reconnecting

1770+

classmates this year through support to students with complex health challenges who are absent.

## And we've finalised production of empathetic peer animations.

These are being rolled out in primary and secondary schools across Australia to support siblings and peers of students impacted by complex health challenges to minimise stigma and guide their role in maintaining positive connections. The animations will be complemented by a digital educational toolkit for schools, designed to amplify the importance of peer connections, with development planned for FY2025.

MIA JOINS HER SCHOOL ART CLASS FROM HOSPITAL

MISSING SCHOOL

ALL TIME: SIBLINGS

DOES THE STUDENT HAVE SIBLINGS?

57% Yes

8% No

35% Unknown
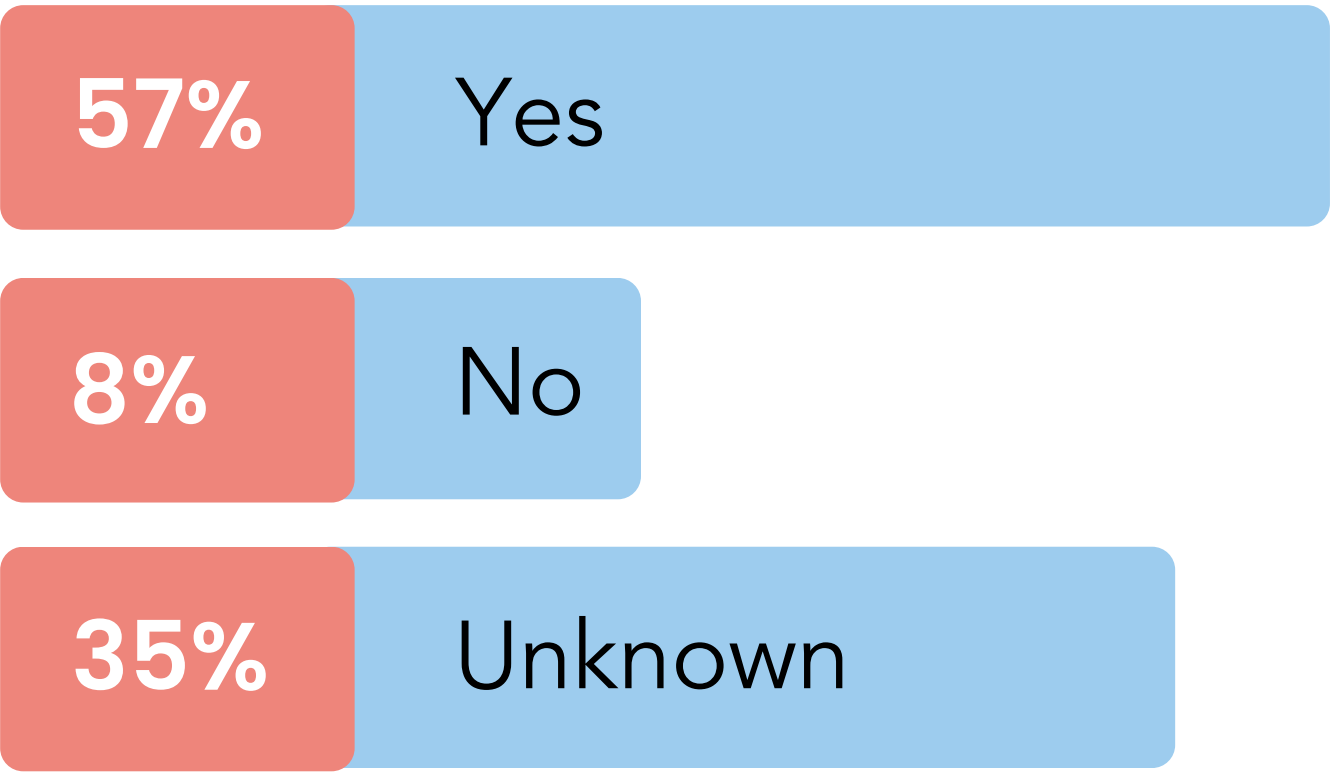
DO THE SIBLINGS MISS SCHOOL BECAUSE OF THE STUDENT'S ABSENCE?

14% Yes

42% No

44% Unknown

MISSING SCHOOL
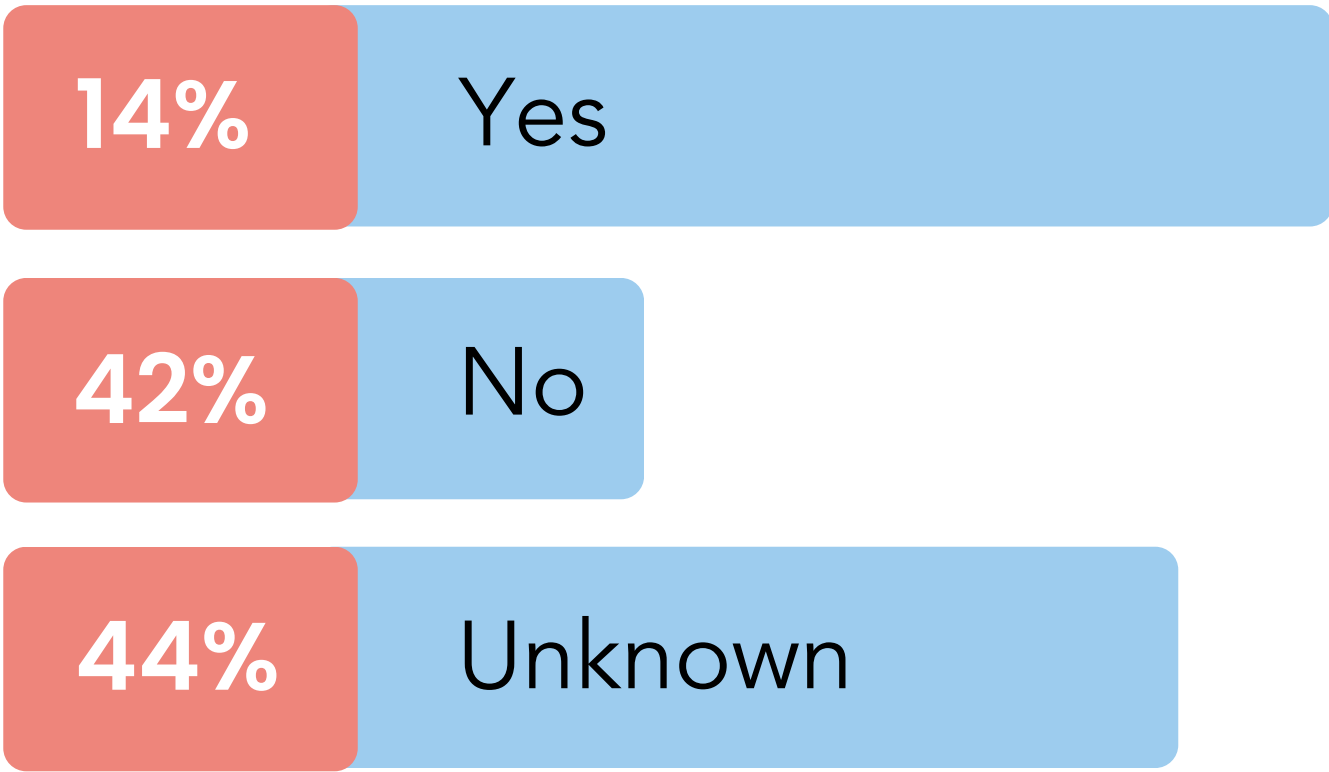
STUDENT SNAPSHOT: JOSHUA

"The robot helps if you compare it to home school or distance ed - because he's IN the classroom environment. He's hearing the discussions on the topics they are learning about, and is able to be a part of that. If that wasn't the case it would be just him and I talking about it. Also, when he goes back he hasn't missed out on a massive chunk. That's been really great."

 - Parent

JOSHUA (YEAR 5) AND HIS ROBOT

SUPPORTING PARENTS & CARERS

POLICY GOAL
Train and monitor practice standards for schools, hospitals, support at home

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE TOWARD POLICY GOAL

MissingSchool implemented our digital Helpline, Parent Facebook Group, and weekly 'Ask Us Anything' webinars, providing ongoing information and support for parents and carers on school connection options, health-specific education considerations, stakeholder partnering strategies for improved student outcomes, and troubleshooting. These activities help free up parents and carers to stay focused on their critical job of looking after their kids and not trying to be a teacher as well.

"It has connected him in ways we couldn't have imagined, the teachers know who he is! He really has a presence now, and he's been able to garner support in a community..."

– PARENT

SUPPORTING PARENTS & CARERS

In FY 2024 we received

158 ENQUIRIES

and piloted the expansion of our daily family and school helpline, staffed by specialist personnel.

We supported

144 SCHOOLS

and **176 FAMILIES**

through more than

8,000 HELPLINE INTERACTIONS

(calls, SMS, emails, enquiry forms, meetings).

Our helpline has been complemented by our pilot online parent support forum, through which we've delivered

36 WEEKLY

parent information webinars and regular information posts. in FY 2024. Targeted digital outreach to illness organisations is expected to reach a large parent audience and contribute to forum growth in FY 2025.

MISSING SCHOOL

BUILDING TEACHER CAPACITY

POLICY GOAL
Train and monitor practice standards for schools, hospitals, support at home

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE TOWARD POLICY GOAL

Since 2017, MissingSchool has engaged with schools totalling ~31,430 teachers. We work daily with school staff in every state and territory, and school system, including classroom teachers, school leadership, IT support and administrative staff through thousands of interactions each year.

We value our engagement with hospital schools around Australia who are at the frontline of education provision for students with complex health conditions.

MissingSchool has completed 117 surveys and 154 longform interviews with schools, and this data informs our approach to teacher training and advocacy for systems change. Our policy engagement and outreach to MPs, including Ministers, at federal and state levels, highlights our commitment to ensuring teachers are supported to fulfil their responsibility.

"I've learned that students who are really ill … can be involved when they're feeling well. This reinforced my belief in the importance of belonging—strong relationships with teachers and peers are key to helping them stay connected and ready to learn."

TEACHER –

MISSING SCHOOL

BUILDING TEACHER CAPACITY

In FY 2024, MissingSchool beta-launched our on-demand educator forum and digital training, enabling access to teaching resources, collegial conversations, webinars with multidisciplinary experts, wellbeing supports and more. We published 78 teacher training items, with 131 items in the publishing pipeline. A 30-unit teacher training course framework was mapped. Our associated Live&Learn podcast launched, with ongoing recording and production. A Quality-assured teacher training video was finalised for marketing the forum. Feedback from beta members will be collected across FY 2024 to ensure the forum is meeting teacher needs.

Critically, the forum will bridge the gap in available training specifically related to health condition contexts and supports to address chronic absence, including "teach once, learn from anywhere" telepresence assistive devices. The long-term goal is to unlock capacity for teachers across Australia to consistently apply the Disability Standards for Education, ultimately improving wellbeing, learning and social outcomes for students with complex medical conditions.

We are excited about the possibilities through this new way of engaging with amazing teachers at the frontline of education for students with complex conditions.

In the **reporting period, MissingSchool** has **trained**

177 TEACHERS.

MISSING SCHOOL

TEACHER SNAPSHOT

ALL TIME TEACHERS SUPPORTED

| 654 | Teachers trained |

| 2180 | Teachers observing |

FY 2024 TEACHERS SUPPORTED

| 177 | Teachers trained |

| 590 | Teachers observing |

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SCHOOLS SNAPSHOT

ALL TIME SCHOOLS ENGAGED BY STATE

Legend: ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC, WA

- ACT: 10%
- NSW: 44%
- NT: 1%
- QLD: 14%
- SA: 8%
- TAS: 7%
- VIC: 11%
- WA: 5%
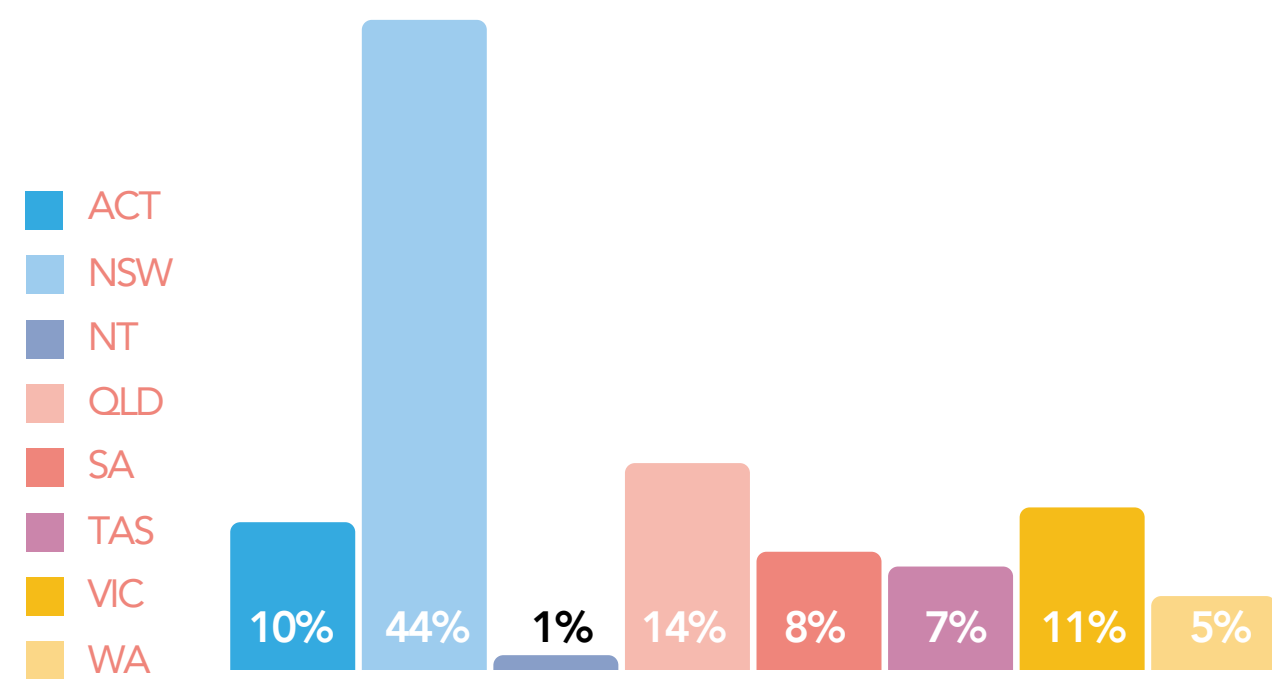
FY 2024 SCHOOLS ENGAGED BY STATE

Legend: ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC, WA

- ACT: 9%
- NSW: 30%
- NT: 3%
- QLD: 11%
- SA: 10%
- TAS: 15%
- VIC: 20%
- WA: 2%
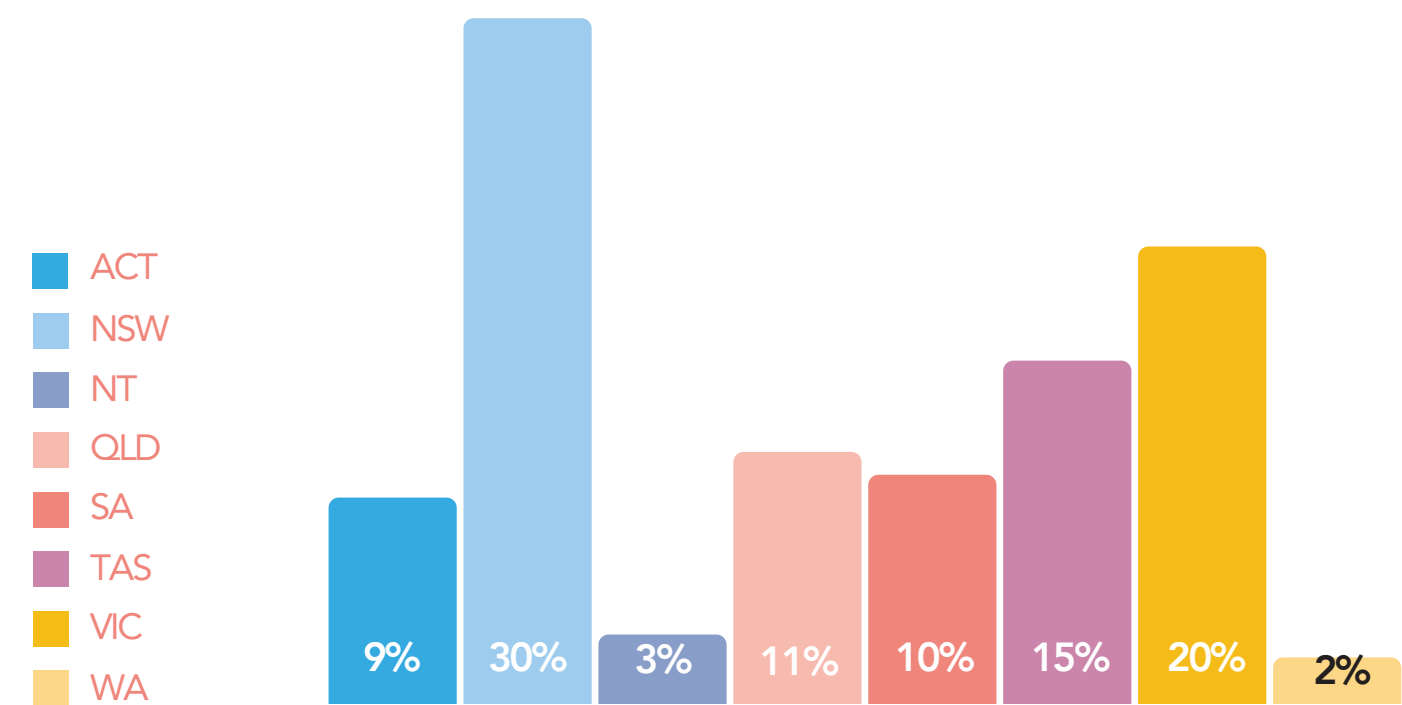
ALL TIME: HOSPITAL SCHOOL CONNECTION

Is the student connected with a hospital school?

- 46% Yes
- 54% No

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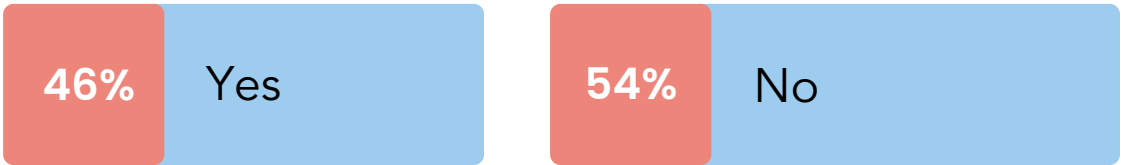
ACTIONING PARTNERSHIPS

POLICY GOAL
Make 'students with a health condition' a priority equity cohort in National School Reforms

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE TOWARD POLICY GOAL

National Insights for Education Directories (NIEDs) is a gamechanger at the intersection of health and education, putting reliable and actionable information in the hands of the widest support team for students facing complex health challenges. The goal is to prioritise the learning and wellbeing journeys of students alongside their peers by supporting their families and teachers at the point of pressing need.

NIEDs unlocks unique data, covering everything from teacher and parent insights to education system information contained in easily searchable digital directories of 250+ medical, health, mental health, and support service organisations, Australia's public, independent, and faith-based schools; and thousands of qualitative quotes and insights from parents and teachers.

At scale, NIEDs will inform policy efforts towards learn from anywhere systems for students who are chronically absent.

MissingSchool is doing an absolutely amazing job on this. You've done such wonderful, innovative and clever things. And I just really wish you well with that, because you already made a huge difference, and you're continuing to make a huge difference in bringing this to light and actually providing solutions.

**RUTH COLAGIURI, FOUNDER
JUVENILE ARTHRITIS
FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA**

MISSING SCHOOL

ACTIONING PARTNERSHIPS

In February 2024 we launched our 2024 national social education campaign which, through $3.4M of donated market rate media, put our mission in front of more than 14 million Australians. We achieved 25 earned media stories across reputable, positive media outlets and showcased wellbeing for students, families, teachers and school leaders. Details can be found in the Media section of this report.

Our social media campaigns reached over 6.5 million people to end June 2024 .

In Oct 2023 we launched our new website, with increased traffic thanks to optimisation and increased awareness due to our campaigns. We have achieved top SEO rankings for relevant keywords, resulting in 2,533 visits to the parents' page and 575 visits to the schools' page on the website, and 114 documents downloaded.

This year we continued delivering weekly newsletters sharing insights, stories and resources and have published ~36 this financial year (thanks for reading!).

Our National Insights for Education Directories (NIEDs) was launched in partnership with HeartKids. It's a digital hub with links to 320+ medical and mental health services, 9,600+ Austrlaian schools and over 4,600 data insights from parents and teachers. We conducted targeted outreach to all organisations listed on NIEDs, to establish the Health-Education Alliance for Learning (HEAL). Through this, we also undertook foundational work for our upcoming webcast and recorded our pilot episode.

Updated parent and school discovery kits, parent information brochure, school fundraising brochure and developed other digital collateral.

ORGANISATIONAL LINKAGES

MissingSchool connects sick students to their learning and classmates by supporting families, mobilising the capacity of governments, educators, and health professionals, evaluating and researching for best practice, and using telepresence technology. MissingSchool works in a national alliance with a long-term outlook across sectors and disciplines.

MissingSchool's alliance has a track record of collaborating for research, in practice, and on innovation projects. The work takes place in front-line "consumer" settings such as schools, hospitals, services, and homes, and for students at various ages and stages of serious illness.

A key feature of MissingSchool's relationships is the means to access diverse perspectives from students, parents/carers, researchers, educators, health professionals, policy-makers, and industry innovators. From design to delivery, MissingSchool is confident in translating evidence from the lived experience into sustainable policy and practice for scalable, affordable systems of care.

ORGANISATIONAL LINKAGES

Public Education System Partners:
- Commonwealth Education Department (consultation, policy, and pilot program management)
- ACT Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- NSW Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- Northern Territory Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- Queensland Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- South Australia Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- Tasmania Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- Victoria Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- Western Australia Education (consultation, operational and policy partner)
- State hospital and community services (referrer)

Hospital School Partners
- Bankstown Hospital School (referrer)
- Canberra Hospital School (referrer)
- Gold Coast University Hospital Class (referrer)
- Hospital School South Australia (referrer)
- Illawarra Hospital School (referrer)
- John Hunter Hospital School (referrer)
- Perth Children's Hospital School (referrer)
- Queensland Children's Hospital School (referrer)
- Royal Darwin Hospital School (referrer)
- Royal North Shore Hospital School (referrer)
- Sydney Children's Hospital School (referrer)
- The Hospital School at Westmead (referrer)
- The Royal Children's Hospital School (referrer)

Not for Profit Partners
- Parents and carers (consultation, operational and referral partners)
- Back on Track (referrer)
- Ronald McDonald House Charities (referrer)

ORGANISATIONAL LINKAGES

- UnLtd (creative and media industry partnership pro bono)
- 320+ community children's health organisations (outreach has begun, to scale the National Insights for Education Directories, an alliance at the intersection of education and health)

Private Sector Partners
- Australia Post (shipping pro bono)
- Bourke Street Advisory and Fifty Acres (government engagement and lobbying advisers)
- Coffee Cocoa Gunpowder (creative advertising agency pro bono)
- G-Squared (web developer services pro bono)
- OhmniLabs (robot manufacturer partnership)
- Pure Public Relations (strategic communications and PR)
- Robots4Good (service centre and technical support)
- Zenith Media (media agency pro bono)
- Various grant providers

Research Partners
- Deakin University (CEO is an Honorary Fellow and researcher - School of Education)
- University of Southern Queensland (partnership for research and data publication)
- University of NSW (data analysis)

School Partners
- Public, Independent, Faith-based Schools, Systems and Teachers (Over the past five years, we have actively engaged with 468 schools, accounting for 4.9% of all schools in Australia, to facilitate student referrals. The introduction to scaling the new Seen&Heard initiative, will expand our outreach efforts to encompass communication or engagement with 9,600 schools, and their teachers, nationwide).

PARTNERS

We are **grateful** for the **support of our pro bono** creative, *marketing* and *media* industry **partners**!

PARTNERS

We are grateful for the **support** of our
funding partners across the year!

SHARING IMPACT & RESEARCH

POLICY GOAL

Adopt a national 'health condition' absence code and set absence thresholds to trigger support

AWARENESS

Representations, consultations and submissions

Internationally, MissingSchool shared its approach and advocacy work and telepresence robot service lessons with interested parties across Australia and a range of overseas countries.

In Australia, MissingSchool's technology services are cleared for use in every state and territory and the organisation engages in operational arrangements with a range of hospital schools across Australia.

MissingSchool has engaged xx (see TPG report wording).

MissingSchool's argument to government is that there is no safe threshold for absence – children missing more than 5 days per term pay penalties in academic, physical and mental health outcomes.

A new 'health condition' absence code in the approved absence category will help detect chronic medical and mental condition absences early and trigger schools to make adjustments through the Disability Standards for Education (DSE). This would allow children (in hospital/at home) missing school often or for long periods to access their school classes, curriculum, and support – learn from anywhere – with assistive telepresence technology. Schools get "student with disability loading" funding. The code, and adjustments tracked through Nationally Consistent Collection of Data, will address our national data deficit.

MISSING SCHOOL

SHARING IMPACT & RESEARCH

SUBMISSIONS

For example:
- Aug 2023 Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System, Commonwealth Department of Education
- Jun 2024 Your Story : How were you affected by Australia's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic? Australian Human Rights Commission
- Jan 2024 Pre-Budget Submission to the Australian Treasury
- Apr 2024 Public Consultation on the refresh of the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions

REPRESENTATIONS

MissingSchool has focused on government engagement for policy change across this financial year. MissingSchool's CEO held four meetings with the Deputy Secretary (Schools) with regular and ongoing meetings scheduled. Additionally, meetings were also held with Commonwealth government officials at the Deputy Secretary level and including offices of the Finance Minister, Education Minister, Health Ministers, Disability Minister, Communications Minister. A meeting has also been secured with the Prime Minister's Senior Policy Adviser.

Meetings have also been held with other MPs from across major and minor parties, and with independents.

Complementing these efforts, MissingSchool vlaues participation in conferences as key opportunities to enhance advocacy work and build valuable connections. In July 2023 we presented at the ANU Australia-China Emerging Leaders' Summit on the Emerging Technology Panel.

MISSING SCHOOL

SHARING IMPACT & RESEARCH

POLICY GOAL

Enhance the education system evidence base through improved data

2024 SEEN&HEARD SOCIAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN…

FILM CAMPAIGN

Reached 70% of Australian households thanks to $3.4M of donated media value.

EARNED MEDIA

19 media stories - including A Current Affair, ABC News and education sector outlets

TRADE PRESS

Drove campaign credibility through media and advertising industry trade press.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Reached 3.2 million people via a targeted creative social campaign.
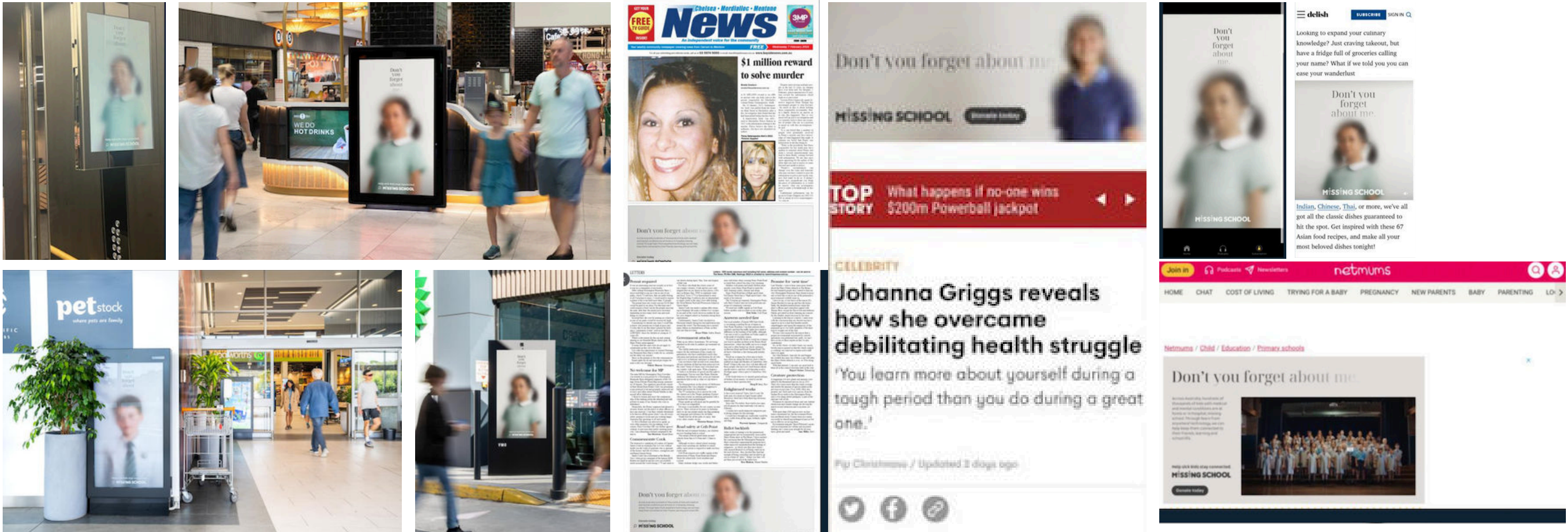
WEBSITE ACTION

Website traffic +50% on last year, boosted enquiries and donations.

DONATIONS

Donations received in response to campaign.

MISSING SCHOOL

CAMPAIGN SNAPSHOT

Thank You for 2024!

MEDIA

15/7/2023	A Current Affair (9Now): Special robots teleport sick children into the classroom
13/10/2023	Campaign Brief: Nine, EssenceMediacom and Cocogun inducted to Hall of Good at UnLtd: Big Dream Event
13/10/2023	Media Week: Nine, EssenceMediacom and Cocogun inducted to the Hall of Good at UnLtd
16/10/2023	AdNews: Nine, EssenceMediacom and Cocogun inducted to Hall of Good at UnLtd
20/11/2023	Bendigo Advertiser: Robot to Help Bendigo Girl with Rare Disease Attend School
21/11/2023	Education Today: Staying in School Part of the Remedy for Seriously Sick Kids
21/11/2023	Third Sector: MissingSchool launches Australia-first National Insights for Education Directories
8/12/2023	Kiddipedia: Lessons from COVID: Why it's time to revive the pandemic anthem, "We're all in this together"?
30/12/2023	ABC News: Queensland's first virtual hospital school helps children with chronic illness continue learning
4/1/2024	ABC News: Hospital offers virtual education program for kids with illness
8/3/2024	LBB Online: Cocogun, UnLtd, and Zenith Extend MissingSchool's 'Don't You Forget About Me' Campaign
8/3/2024	Campaign Brief: Cocogun, UnLtd + Zenith Extend MissingSchool's 'Don't You Forget About Me' Campaign, Focussing on the 1.2 million kids at risk of school isolation
11/3/2024	Bandt: Cocogun, UnLtd & Zenith Extend MissingSchool's 'Don't You Forget About Me' Campaign
22/4/2024	NewsReel: Illness keeping 100,000 students away from school
26/4/2024	Education News: Creativity and Innovation Key to Tackling Global School Attendance Crisis

MISSING SCHOOL

MEDIA

30/4/2024	The Advocate: Creativity and innovation key to tackling global school attendance crisis
6/5/2024	Education Matters Magazine: New resources to tackle global school attendance crisis
21/5/2024	Education HQ: Stuck at home in a health crisis: how we keep learning and wellbeing alive for all
18/6/2024	Education Review: Govt to review NSW distance education for first time in a decade
16/09/2024	AdNews: OMD and Zenith inducted to Hall of Good at UnLtd: Big Dream
16/09/2024	B&T: OMD & Zenith Join UnLtd Hall Of Good As $87K Raised For Dream Makers Project At Big Dream
16/09/2024	Little Black Book: OMD and Zenith Inducted to Hall of Good at UnLtd: Big Dream
16/09/2024	Media Week: OMD and Zenith inducted to Hall of Good at UnLtd: Big Dream
19/09/2024	360info: Blockbuster lesson for schools on kids in classrooms
28/09/2024	ABC News: Chronic pain and sickness has been a feature of Breana's life since she was born, now forcing her to defer year 12

SHARING IMPACT & RESEARCH

Our Social Return
The successful implementation of Seen&Heard, ongoing data collection and evaluation, readiness for research, and calculation of our Social Return on Investment (SROI) demonstrate our commitment to the cause.

MissingSchool's SROI analysis, undertaken this year, is based on a 40 year impact model. This SROI examines the social, economic and cultural outcomes created and the investment of stakeholders in the creation of these outcomes. We achieve $3.40 worth of Social Impact per dollar invested.

OUR SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

$3.40 in Social Impact is returned for every dollar we invest.

This year, we gave **$1.6 million dollars in social returns** to our community.

MiSSiNG SCHOOL

SHARING IMPACT & RESEARCH

MONITORING & EVALUATION

Seen&Heard initiative monitoring and evaluation

MissingSchool has fully activated our monitoring and evaluation plan, including deployment of all survey instruments, and data collection policies and procedures.

Activation included ongoing collection and coding of quantitative and qualitative data collection. The service wrote or updated team job inventories, 70 work packages and related policies and procedures, and over 130 Frequency Asked Questions.

This material sits within our tailored management information system.

MissingSchool's monitoring and evaluation instruments (for data collection) map and codify data to the program logic domains of cultural change. ~5500 service data points have been coded to date. These are reported to funders and through MissingSchool's network.

In the reporting period MissingSchool collected 35 student information forms (pre-data) from parents, and 82 surveys and 154 long form interviews with parents and schools.

We built out a pilot framework for results-based management for 84 KPIs and refined our systems and database architecture to manage the activity and capture data.

To assist with the capture of monitoring data against all activity areas for results-based management we worked with an automations and data specialist.

RESEARCH

Research collaboration

MissingSchool, in partnership with Deakin University, UNSW, and the University of Southern Queensland, is researching the impact of robot technology in keeping students with complex health conditions connected to their classrooms. The study covers K-12 students across government, independent, and faith-based schools in Australia. Findings will be shared through a peer-reviewed platform paper, followed by studies on parent and teacher perspectives and teacher self-efficacy.

In FY 2024, MissingSchool engaged a data management specialised to quality assure our research data management system. Data summary exports are in finalisation. Review of digital platforms publications suitable for mass distribution is underway.

With our research partners we co-developed an application to the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Child Mental Health initiative, with $3.6 million in co-contributions from 12 industry partners.

MissingSchool's CEO was appointed as an Honorary Fellow, Faculty of Arts and Education/School of Education at Deakin University.

ISOBEL MEETS HER ROBOT

MISSING SCHOOL

RAISING FUNDS

RAISES FUNDS TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES

MissingSchool is a nationally registered organisation, approved for fundraising in every Australian state and territory. Our revenue for the FYE 2024 was $489,648*.

Grants and donations
MissingSchool was successful in grant applications through:
TPG Telecom $150,000 (1-year).

We gratefully continued our impact with grant funds from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Tasmanian Community Fund, and TPG Foundation, and UnLtd.

MissingSchool acknowledges the donations it receives from a range of generous organisations and individuals. In the 2024 financial year, our donations totalled $15,673.

School co-contributions
MissingSchool received voluntary financial co-contributions from schools to the value of $11,000 and donated $101,500 in-kind to school technology services to support sick and absent students.

*In line with Australian accounting standards, our CPA audited accounts classified $231,979 in held grant funds as "income in advance," excluding it from the stated revenue figure.

RAISING FUNDS

PRO BONO CONTRIBUTIONS

MissingSchool acknowledges that a lot has been achieved with very little. The organisation's approach is to unlock existing capacity, attract high value pro bono contributions, and access in-kind contributions:

- Australia Post partnership for domestic shipping of robots.
- MissingSchool's CEO continues to make extensive pro bono time contributions in running and representing the organisation, overseeing its programs, and fundraising.
- MissingSchool's volunteer Management Committee provides valuable pro bono contributions to MissingSchool's governance and strategy.
- PwC provided pro-bono contract development for partnerships and financial arrangements on the robot service technology.
- Schools and school systems provide daily contributions through their regular work that enable MissingSchool to meet its mission to support students with serious illness.
- Cocogun, GSquared, Scoundrel Productions, UnLtd and Zenith Media for creative, website, advertising and media campaigns, and pro bono media from Nine, News, Paramount (10), Seven, SBS, SCA, ACM, Alliance, ARN, BOFB, Broadsheet, Cartology, Gumtree, Hoopla, JCD, News, oOh!, Playground, QMS, Teams, Tonic Media Network, and VMO.

OUR PEOPLE

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MissingSchool's management committee is staffed by people working on a fully volunteer basis. Volunteer staffing for the 2024 year approximated two full-time equivalent staff. The management committee remained stable in the reporting period.
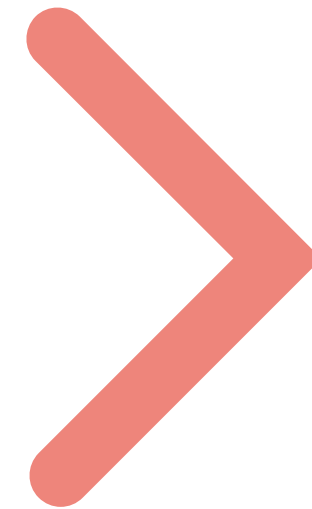
MISSING SCHOOL

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MissingSchool has achieved so much through a skilled and committed team.

MARCUS DAWE
Chair

MEGAN GILMOUR
CEO & Innovator

SCOTT ELLIS
Treasurer

LARA FLYNN
Secretary

HUGH DIXON
Public Officer

GINA MEYERS
Co-founder

CATHY NELL
Co-founder

MISSING SCHOOL
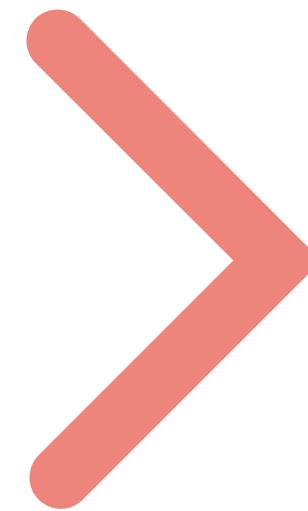
SEEN & HEARD INITIATIVE

The Seen&Heard Initiative has a skilled and dedicated team of practitioners funded in the 2024 financial year by donations and grants from auDA Foundation, Commonwealth Department of Education's Emerging Priorities Program, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Tasmania Community Fund and TPG Foundation.

The team provides quality practice, service and support, management, promotion, and monitoring and evaluation.

THE SEEN&HEARD INITIATIVE

MissingSchool has achieved so much through a skilled and committed team.

SARAH JONES
Impact Director

VIRA RUBENSTEIN
Community Manager

KIRSTY GUSTER
Partnerships &
Capacity Building

DOREEN MASAUDING
Community Assistant

NAKUL NAMBIAR
Technology Helpdesk &
Automation

QING HUANG
Evaluation Analyst

ELIZABETH PERRY
Content Analyst

**NICOLE ALIMES**
Executive Assistant

AMANDA SANG
Accounts & Finances

BRIDGITTE BATEMAN
Branding & Design

MISSING SCHOOL

MEMBERSHIP

MissingSchool retained five enrolled members at June 2024.

MissingSchool maintains a fee for membership, and reconfirmed member commitment to the organisation.

MissingSchool's membership continues to be open to parents and carers of children with complex health conditions and others who are interested in achieving sustained school connection for these students and their school-aged siblings.
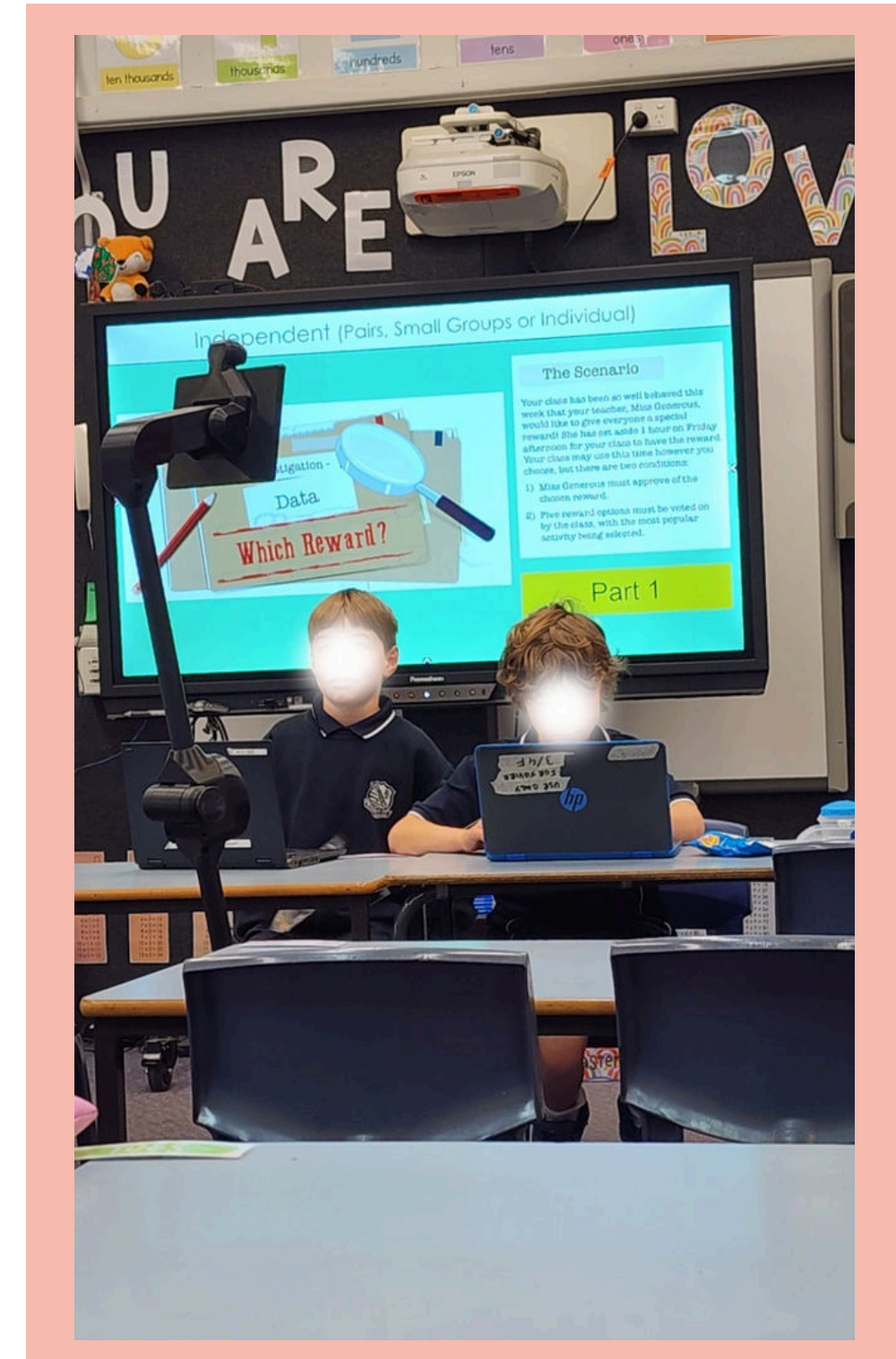
STUDENT SNAPSHOT: OLIVER

"I believe you are delivering an outstanding service and we feel very lucky that we have been allowed to access it. The team at MissingSchool is always a pleasure to talk to and your compassion and understanding for our unique situations is out of this world. It is a no brainer to me that this service needs to be made available to all families that require it. " - Parent

OLIVER, YEAR 2, ENJOYING READING TIME WITH HIS CLASS

GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIC PLANNING

MissingSchool's Seen&Heard initiative headlined our platform strategy in the 2024 financial year.

MissingSchool continued our impact filter frameworks for Public Actions, Partner Activations, and Government Relations and iterated impact filters for Seen&Heard pillars.

Team focus and efforts remain operationally aligned to the strategic plan at Objective, Activity, and Action levels which are integrated through our management information system.

STATUTORY REPORTING

MissingSchool maintains its statutory registrations and reporting obligations with the Office of Regulatory Services in the ACT, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), ASIC and state/territory fundraising bodies. The Management Committee meets monthly on the second Monday of each month (except January), agendas, minutes, and financial reports are kept for each meeting.

The Annual General Meeting takes place prior to the December Management Committee meeting and was held on 9 December 2024.

The Annual Information Statement was lodged to the ACNC on 14 January 2025.

MissingSchool is committed to good governance, and is continuously improving processes and approaches. In the reporting period, the organisation was strengthened through team time logging to actions and activities and updating 70 policies and work procedures.

MISSING SCHOOL

FINANCIAL REPORTING

At the end of June 2024, MissingSchool held assets totalling $349,631, with liabilities of $246,082 (of which $231,979 is grant funding held in advance).

MissingSchool's accounts were audited by Certified Practicing Accountant, Hardwickes. Certified Audited accounts and Annual Information Statement can be found on the ACNC Charity Register.

MissingSchool's imagined future is that today's "radical notion" of continuous school connection for students with complex health conditions is something that will someday be taken for granted. A time when all students with serious health conditions receive full support from their schools as a matter of course and MissingSchool can close its doors.

CONTACT US

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