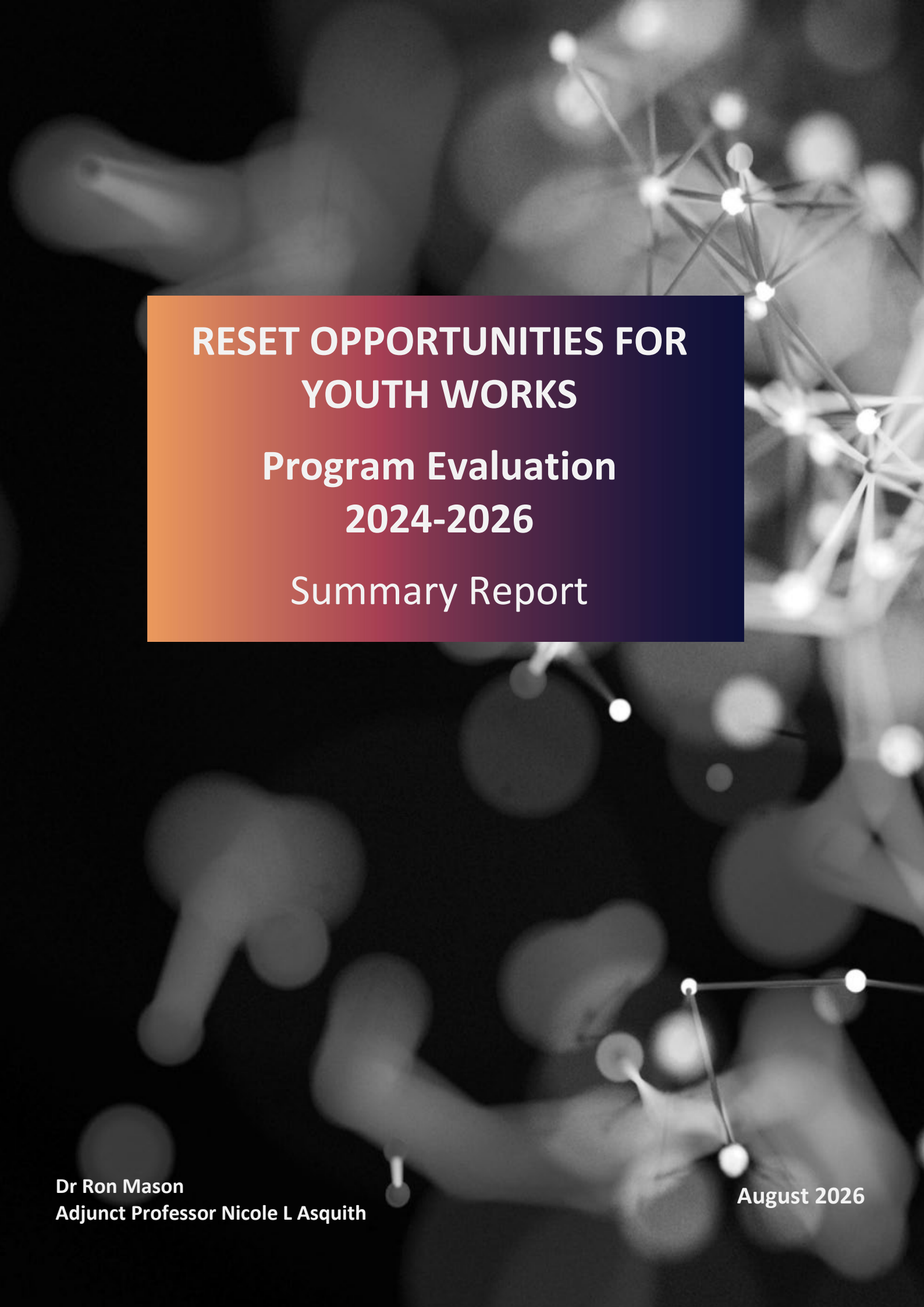


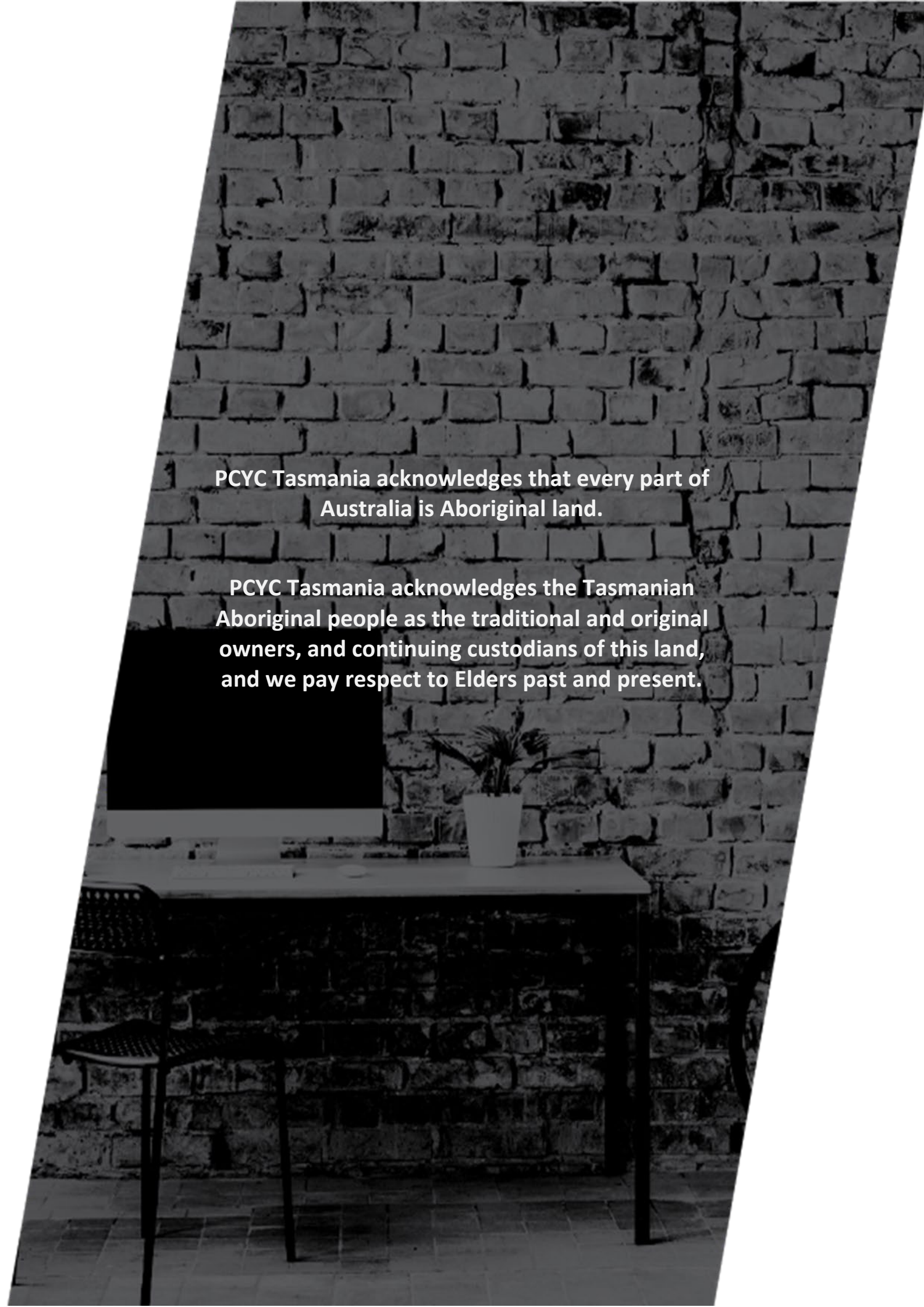
# RESET OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WORKS

## Program Evaluation 2024-2026

Summary Report

**Dr Ron Mason**
**Adjunct Professor Nicole L Asquith**

**August 2026**



**PCYC Tasmania acknowledges that every part of Australia is Aboriginal land.**

**PCYC Tasmania acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of this land, and we pay respect to Elders past and present.**

# INTRODUCTION

Reset Opportunities for Youth Works (ROYW) was managed by PCYC Tasmania in delivery partnership with Regional Clubs (PCYC North and Hobart PCYC) between October 2024 and June 2026. Funded through the Australian Government's U25-GO Grant Opportunity, the program aimed to support young people through early intervention, positive engagement, skills development, mentoring and participation in pro-social activities.

While the program sought to strengthen protective factors associated with educational engagement, wellbeing and positive community participation, it is important to note that ROYW was not designed as an offending specific intervention. Participation in the program was not contingent on criminal behaviour, justice system involvement, or identification as an "at-risk" young person. Participants were referred for a range of reasons, including opportunities to strengthen engagement with education, build confidence, develop social connections and participate in positive learning experiences.

PCYC Tasmania is committed to evidence-informed practice, continuous improvement and ensuring that programs delivered to young people are responsive, effective and grounded in demonstrated outcomes. While PCYC clubs have historically collected participation data, feedback and outcome information across a range of youth programs, ROYW provided an opportunity to undertake the organisation's first formal independent evaluation of a statewide initiative. This evaluation reflects PCYC Tasmania's commitment to building a stronger evidence base for its work, understanding program impact, and identifying opportunities for ongoing improvement.

To support this process, PCYC Tasmania engaged Adjunct Professor Nicole L. Asquith and Research Associate Dr Ron Mason to independently evaluate program outcomes using participant survey data, demographic information and criminal justice data collected throughout the life of the program. The evaluation examined outcomes across four program cohorts spanning primary and secondary school participants in both northern and southern Tasmania over a one-year delivery period (2025). Particular attention was given to changes in participants' attitudes, confidence, sense

of belonging, conflict resolution skills and, where data was available, contact with police following program participation.

This report presents the findings of that evaluation. It outlines the program model, evaluation methodology, participant characteristics and outcomes across each cohort, while identifying key strengths, limitations and opportunities to inform future program delivery and development.

**Cassie Grimwood**

Project Manager | PCYC Tasmania

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# THE PROGRAM

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Reset Opportunities for Youth Works (ROYW) was a statewide early intervention initiative delivered across Tasmania to support young people aged 10–17 years who were at risk of educational disengagement and associated negative outcomes. The program was managed by PCYC Tasmania and delivered in partnership with PCYC North and Hobart PCYC.

Commencing in October 2024, ROYW provided targeted interventions for young people across primary school, lower secondary school, and senior secondary cohorts. The program was designed to address risk factors associated with disengagement from education, antisocial behaviour and future justice system involvement through a combination of mentoring, experiential learning, vocational exposure, adventure-based activities and structured skill development.

Underpinned by strengths-based and trauma-informed practice principles, ROYW sought to strengthen young people's connection to education, family, community and positive peer networks while building confidence, resilience and practical life skills. The program was delivered across urban, regional and remote communities and worked in collaboration with schools, Tasmania Police, local government, government agencies and community organisations.

## FUNDING CONTEXT

ROYW was funded through the Australian Government's U25-GO Grant Opportunity. The grant was initially administered by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, with responsibility later transferring to the Department of Home Affairs during the project period.

The project commenced in October 2024 and was originally scheduled to conclude on 31 March 2026. The funding agreement was subsequently extended, allowing program delivery and evaluation activities to continue until 30 June 2026.

The U25-GO Grant Opportunity was established to support community-based initiatives that provide alternative pathways for young people at risk of engaging in criminal or antisocial behaviour.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program objectives included:

- Providing alternative pathways for young people at risk of criminal and antisocial behaviour.
- Promoting inclusion, community resilience and family support.
- Reducing cycles of offending and recidivism.
- Supporting the development of life skills that reduce the likelihood of future justice system involvement.

The intended outcomes of the funding program were improved engagement in education, work-readiness and community participation, together with reductions in antisocial behaviour and increased positive family and community engagement.

## INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Improved engagement of young people at-risk in education, work ready programs and the community more generally
- Decrease anti-social behaviour or engagement in criminal activity and an increase in positive community and family engagement.

## PROGRAM RATIONALE

The ROYW program built on school-based engagement initiatives previously delivered by PCYC North and Hobart PCYC, which brought established approaches together within a coordinated statewide model. The program was developed in response to evidence linking educational disengagement with an increased risk of social exclusion, antisocial behaviour, and future contact with the justice system. Grounded in early intervention principles, ROYW aimed to strengthen protective factors through positive relationships with adults, skill development, and increased participation in pro-social activities, in order to support improved outcomes for young people.

Rather than focusing solely on risk reduction, the program aimed to build on individual strengths and interests that provided young people with opportunities to develop skills, confidence, social connections and positive pathways to support future participation in education, training, employment and community life.

## PROGRAM DELIVERY MODEL

ROYW was delivered through a flexible statewide model that enabled activities to be tailored to local needs while maintaining consistent practice principles and program objectives. Delivery included mentoring, group programs, experiential learning opportunities, vocational and work-readiness activities, adventure-based experiences and community engagement initiatives.

The implementation phase focused on establishing staffing, governance arrangements, referral pathways and stakeholder partnerships. As the program matured, delivery evolved in response to participant needs and local community contexts while maintaining a consistent focus on early intervention, engagement, and prevention. This combination of statewide coordination and locally responsive delivery became a defining feature of the ROYW model.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- Mentoring
- Capability-building activities focusing on relationship building, community connection, making positive choices and educational engagement
- Outdoor adventure therapy
- Health knowledge sessions
- Skill-based learning, workplace exposure, exploration of employment pathways
- Cultural experiences

## PROGRAM CONTENT

Approximately 57 separate activities were offered and comprised both education and employment sessions, and recreational activities. Approximately one half of all activities revolved around education, employment, and learning while the other half revolved around sporting and recreational activities.

Educational sessions included:

- Bullying workshops
- Circle of control and decision making
- Cultural learning sessions
- Drug awareness sessions
- Emotional regulation and control
- Employment readiness sessions
- First aid
- Goal setting workshop
- Healthy choices workshop
- Healthy relationships workshop
- Life skills workshops
- Mental health sessions
- Police sessions

Recreational activities included:

- Archery
- Abseiling
- Badminton
- Basketball
- A beauty lab
- Barista training
- Beatboxing
- Wildlife park visits
- Bowling
- Trampolining
- Boxing
- Bushwalking
- Cooking
- Dodgeball and pickleball
- Equine therapy
- Escape room
- Fishing
- Go karting
- Golf
- Gym sessions
- Laser skirmish
- High ropes course
- Hiking
- Netball
- Rock climbing
- Soccer
- Survival skills
- Robotics
- Tennis
- Woodworking

Generally, participants undertook an education or learning session in the morning followed by a recreational activity in the afternoon or vice versa.

Primary risk factors targeted included:

- Recreation
- Employment
- Attitudes
- Behaviour
- Peer relationships
- Substance use

Skills development included:

- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Decision making
- Risk taking
- Communication skills
- Teamwork
- Problem solving and empathy
- Health and body awareness
- Connection to the community
- Life skills
- Online safety
- Bullying
- Healthy relationships

Approximately 50 separate organisations were involved in the program including health and community organisations, government organisations, and sporting and recreational clubs. The overall attendance rate was 75%, with no difference emerging between regions, with 19% nonattendance and 6% either deferred or cancelled.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Reset Opportunities for Youth Works does work to reduce anti-social attitudes and behaviours, and enhance participants' confidence, and pro-social attitudes and behaviours. The program enhanced participants confidence in trying new things, resolving conflict, handling difficult situations, and addressed key environmental risks that may create barriers to healthy, safe, and happy childhood development. The content of the program was especially impactful in addressing participants' leisure and recreational gaps and increasing their opportunities to try new things to build their self-confidence in handling conflict and tough situations. The program was also impactful in building participants' relationships to others, including their families, communities, and peers.

However, the impact of the programs delivered to the four cohorts (Northern Primary Schools, Southern Primary School, Northern High Schools, & Southern High Schools) varied considerably in terms of overall mean scores, as well as in relation to gender, attitudinal risks, behavioural risks, and police contact. Importantly, though, the difference in outcome measures as summarised below may be an artefact of the risk profiles of participants. This was most obvious with the lower impact of the program objectives on northern primary school participants, of whom, 100% entered the program with attitudinal risks and 98% had pre-existing behavioural risks. Conversely, the evaluation of program outcomes clearly demonstrates better outcomes for southern primary school participants, and to a lesser extent, southern high school participants.

While care must be taken in comparing the four cohorts due to the differences in program content and delivery—along with differential completion of monitoring pre- and post-program surveys—in this summary of results we offer the key findings in a consolidated way to highlight where each program has an impact on participants' pre- and post-program assessment of their achievements. Also provided is a high-level comparative analysis of the program's impact by participants' contact with police. More detailed information about each cohort is provided in the body of the report.

The key findings of the ROYW evaluation relate to the significant shift in attitudes and behaviours that deflected participants' contact with police post-program. Across all four cohorts, there is significant drop in police contacts post-program, with those participants on lower (or no) support

tier rating, and no attitudinal or behavioural risks more likely to disengage from attitudes and behaviours that lead to police contacts, and to do so over the long-term post-program. These findings point to the need to consider either the aims of the program or the target audience of the program, with the need for enhanced programming for participants who enter the program with higher attitudinal, behavioural, and environmental risks, and possibly as a consequence, more contacts with police.

Police contact (both pre- and post-program) is a key indicator of possible anti-social attitudes and behaviour; however, as the research clearly shows, young people—especially those from marginalised backgrounds such as those of our participants—are more likely than more privileged young people to have contact with police, irrespective of whether they engage in criminal behaviour or not. Marginalised young people are more likely to be in public, perhaps as a consequence of unsafe home environments, and therefore, they are more visible to police.

Additionally, while the findings in relation to pre- and post-program police contact are significant across the cohorts, care should be taken in attributing this change in attitudes and behaviours to the program alone. ROYW participants come into the program with significant individual and social risk factors (as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, below), and while completion of the program may remediate some these risks, many are beyond the scope and aims of the program. Disengagement from attitudes and behaviours that may lead to police contacts are subject to a wide array of individual and social factors.

Across all four cohorts, the gender of participants emerged as a critical factor in self-assessed program outcomes. Girls come into the program with different risk factors—especially, their high risks in relation to drug and alcohol misuse—different assessments of personal characteristics, in some cohorts, significantly different program outcomes as they relate to ongoing contact with police. Girls were significantly less likely than boys to come into the program without police contact (25% v 40%), and significantly more likely than boys to complete the program with both pre- and post-program contacts with police (27% v 15%). As documented in The Program chapter of this report, the content of the program is highly skewed towards traditionally masculine activities, with very few traditionally feminine activities included for all participants. In particular, of the 29 identified program activities, 13 were traditionally male, 13 were gender neutral, and only three

were traditionally female activities. Enhanced programming for girls may have a significant impact on the program outcomes for girls.

Given the high levels of environmental risks associated with family and the home environment (which ranged from 45% to 77% of participants) we also recommend that more and enhanced program content is developed on relationships to peers, family, and community—and the collection and analysis of associated monitoring data. Outcome measures for connection to family and community were only asked in the ROYWS survey with southern high school participants. Of these participants, there was a 2% increase in their self-assessed perception of feeling supported by teachers, and 7% increase post-program of feeling support by family. Given the critical importance of family and community to the development of pro-social attitudes and behaviours, the impact of the program on these factors is important.

Given that individual, social and environmental contexts of participants' lives (see Figure 3 and 4, below), increased psychoeducation programming could increase the impact of the program. Apart from substance abuse risks, the lowest pre-program environmental risk was in relation to leisure and recreation (24-55%). Yet the majority of the program delivers leisure and recreational opportunities. Increased activities to build participants' resilience in the face of their family and home risks (45%-77%), and peers and relationships risks (59%-85%) may result in enhanced program outcomes.

An emerging issue for at-risk children and young people is their use harmful sexual behaviours and adoption of harmful attitudes to girls and women. As some ROYW participants are likely to have experienced child maltreatment, child sexual abuse, witnessed family violence, and may have engaged in harmful sexual behaviours, taking the opportunities that ROYW offer to enhance participants' understanding of healthy relationships, consent, gender equality, and bodily autonomy may be strategic.

The ROYW program staff were largely considered by participants as friendly, and the program enjoyable. Participants' assessment of these program engagement measures were high on entry to the program, and increased to very high post-program, with means scores for friendliness ranging from 4.35 to 4.72 (out of five), and enjoyment ranging from 4.07 to 4.53. While more work is needed

to finesse the program for girls, and for participants who enter the program with high attitudinal and behavioural risks, and high number of police contacts prior to program completion, the approach to the program content meets the needs of participants, especially in relation to their leisure and recreation risks.

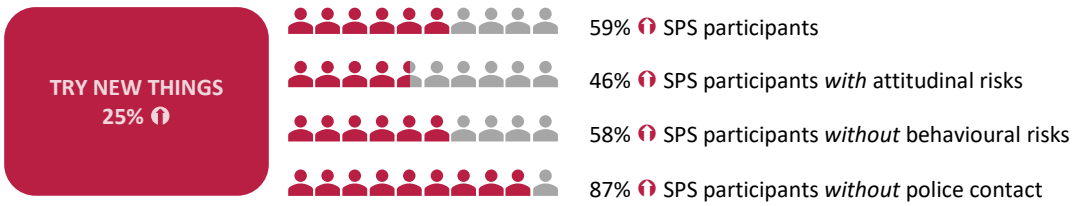
This ROYW Summary Report only contains the top-level results across the four cohorts of program delivery. The full data analysis and methodology used to evaluate the ROYW program is available in the full report.

# KEY FINDINGS

As detailed in the Methodology chapter, participants in all four cohorts[1] were asked to rank their agreement across the same eight statements; four of which related to perceptions of ROYW and the other four relating to participants' confidence. Southern primary and secondary participants were also asked to rank their agreement with eight additional statements; five of which related to belonging, and the other three relating to conflict resolution. Only southern high school students were also asked to rank their agreement with a further four statements relating to their attitudes to work and study.

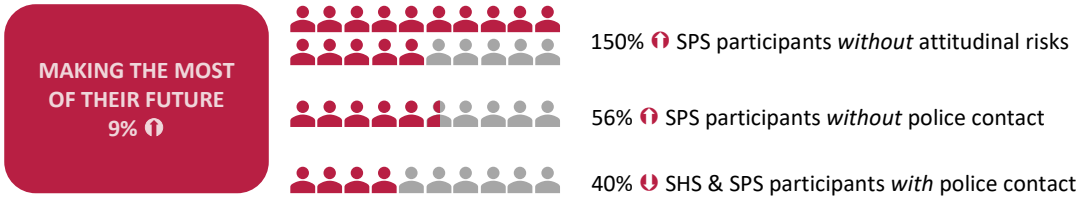
In this overall summary of the results, we present the topline findings in relation to these statements, along with key findings from the criminal justice data across the four cohorts, and the differences in assessment between girls and boys. Importantly, significant findings were not identified for all statements, as such, only those with standout findings are reported in this summary. Consolidated findings across the four (or two) cohorts are presented in each statement box.

### Perceptions of ROYW




There was an overall 25% increase in participants' self-assessment of the ROYW program. However, there were significantly higher outcomes for southern primary school participants, including those *with* attitudinal risks, *without* behavioural risks, and *without* police contact.

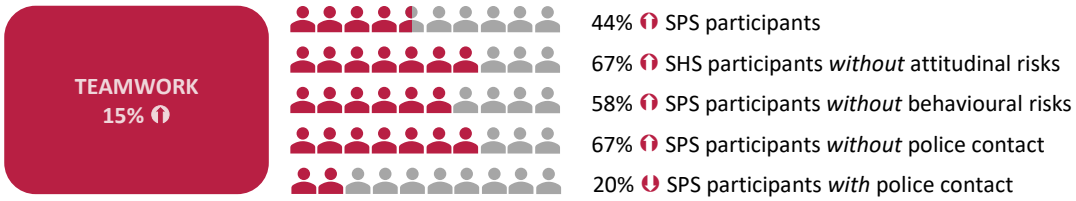
[1] SHS = southern high school, SPS = southern primary school, NHS = northern high school, NPS = northern primary school




There was only a 9% increase overall in participants' perceptions about making the most of their futures, but this varied across cohorts. Southern primary school participants *without* attitudinal (150%) or *without* police contact (56%) reported a significant increase in their self-assessment. Conversely, southern high school and primary school participant *with* police contact reported a 40% decrease in their self-assessment of making the most of their futures.

## Confidence

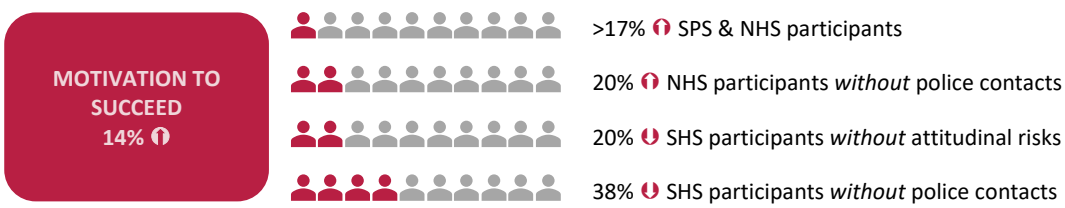
The most significant differences in self-assessment of confidence in working as a team were recorded by SPS participants, especially those SPS participants *without* behavioural risks or *without* police contact pre- and post-program. There was a 67% increase in SHS participants without attitudinal risks' self-assessment of teamwork. Conversely, SPS participants with police contact reported a 20% decrease in confidence to work as a team.



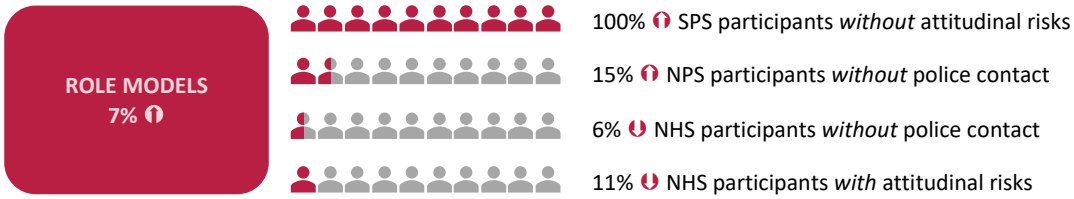

While there was a 14% increase in all participants' self-assessment of their capacity to solve problems on their own, there were few other significant findings in relation to this measure. SPS participants, however, reported a 37% increase in their confidence to problem solve.




There was an overall 14% increase in participants self-assessment; however, SPS and NHS participants reported a slightly higher increases in their motivation to succeed. Those participants *without* police contact reported both an increase (NHS, 20%) and decrease (SHS, 38%) in motivation

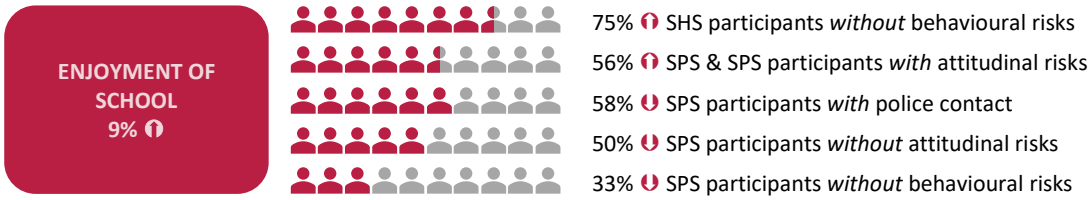


to succeed. SHS participant without attitudinal risks also reported a decrease in their motivation to succeed post-program.

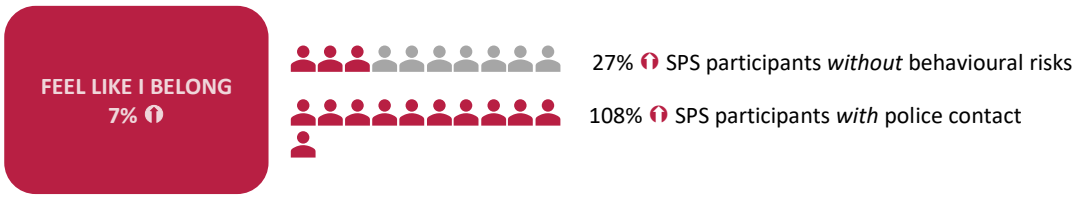



The overall increase in participants' self-assessment of having role models to look up to was marginal (7%); however, there was great variance in this measure across the cohorts. There was a 100% increase in SPS participants *without* attitudinal risks and 15% of NPS participants *without* police contact. Conversely, there was a small decrease in the self-assessment of NHS participants *without* police contact (6%) and those *with* attitudinal risks (11%).

## Belonging

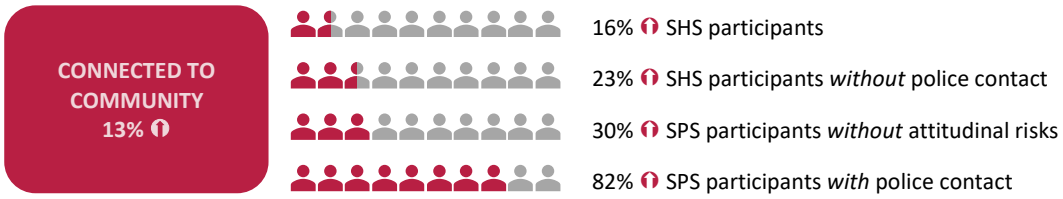



According to the NAB Education survey,[2] only 23-27% of students enjoy going to school. It is therefore unsurprising that ROYW southern participants indicated low levels of school enjoyment, with SHS ($\bar{x}$ = 2.67) and SPS ($\bar{x}$ = 2.89) participants self-assessing their enjoyment at a low to neutral level. However, school enjoyment was moderated by a range of factors, with increases for SHS participants *without* behavioural risks (75%) and SPS participants *with* attitudinal risks (56%). Conversely, SPS participants *without* attitudinal (50%) or behavioural (33%) risks and those with police contact (58%) all reporting decreased enjoyment of school.

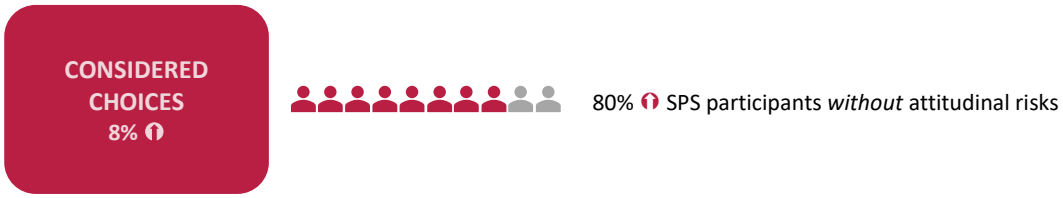



There was only a 7% increase in southern participants assessment of belonginess, with significant increases in self-assessment for those SPS *without* behavioural risks (27%) and those *with* police contact (108%).

[2] Cited in Henebery, B 2024 (31 October), How do student feel about life at school? *The Educator Australia.*



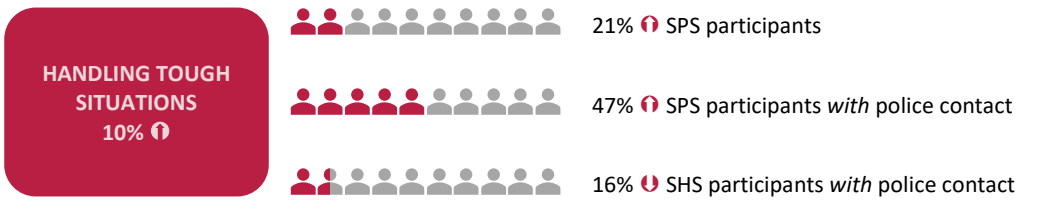

Southern participants reported an overall 13% increase in connectedness, with southern high school students reporting 16% increase in connectedness. Connection to community was enhanced for SHS participants *without* police contact (23% increase), and there was a 30% increase post-program mean scores for SPS *without* attitudinal risks and 82% for those *with* police contact. The contradictory findings between SHS *without* and SPS *with* police contact may point to differential impact of the program on these two cohorts, with greater impact for primary school participants with police contact.




While there was only an 8% increase in southern participants' self-assessed ability to think about how their choices affect their futures, 80% increase in SHS participants *without* attitudinal risks. However, due to the small number of these participants (*n*=7), we cannot draw any conclusions from this finding.

### Conflict Resolution

Southern participants' self-assessed ability to handle tough situations increased 10% overall; though, SPS participants reported a 21% increase, while SHS participants reported a 2% decrease. The ROYW program clearly has a significant impact on primary school participants' ability to handle tough situations, especially those SPS participants *with* police contacts (47%). Conversely, SHS participants *with* police contact reported a 16% decrease in their self-assessment of confidence in handing tough situations.



**DEAL WITH CONFLICT**
**11%**



50% SHS participants *without* attitudinal risks

There was an 11% increase in southern school participants self-assessment of their ability to deal with conflict, with primary school participants (13%) slightly more likely than high school participants (9%) to report an increase in their capacity to deal with conflict. SHS participants *without* attitudinal risks recorded a 50% increase in their capacity to deal with conflict.

## Attitude to work

Only southern high school participants were asked about their attitudes to work. There was a 10% increase in participants trying their best in class, 2% increase in relation to knowing what job or career they want, and 7% increase in confidence in applying for a job. The only significant attitude to work finding was in relation to participants believing that good things are ahead of them. While there was a 12% increase in this outcome measure for all SHS participants, those SHS participants without attitudinal risks reported a 29% increase.

**GOOD THINGS AHEAD**
**12%**



29% SHS participants *without* attitudinal risks

## Police contact

Some of the most significant outcomes of the ROYW program relate to participants' contact with police before and after completing the program. Across all four cohorts, there was a 41% increase in the number of participants who had pre-program police contact but none post-program. While there were similar rates of police contact pre-program (33%-40%), the outcome of no police contact post-program for NPS participants (26%) was not as significant as it was for SHS (41%), SPS (45%), or NHS (50%). There were also significant increases in no police contact post-program for SPS participants *without* attitudinal risks, and NHS participants *with* attitudinal risks.

**NO POLICE CONTACT POST-PROGRAM**
**41%**



>41% SHS, SPS & NHS participants



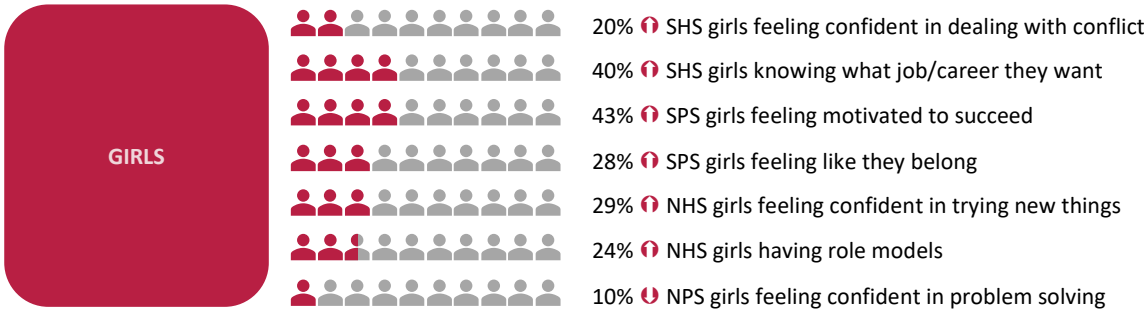
31% SPS participants *without* attitudinal risks



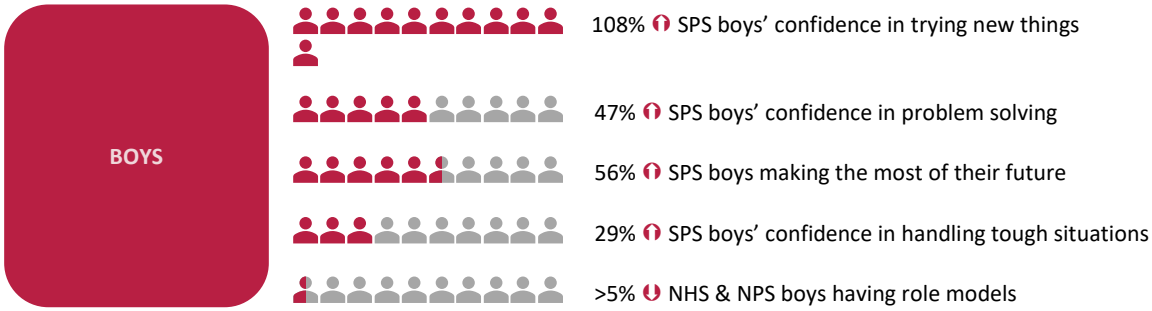
52% NHS participants *with* attitudinal risks

## Gender

There were significant differences in program outcomes for girls and boys across a range of measures. Forty per cent of participants across the four cohorts were girls; though, this varied considerably between 47% of SPS and NPS, 35% of SHS participants, and 32% of NHS participants. While, overall, boys and girls with pre-program police contact had similar rates of no police contact post-program (43% v 45%, respectively), boys were significant less likely than girls to continue to have police contact post-program (15% v 27%), with the difference most stark for NPS participants (15% v 49%).




Some girls were more likely than boys to report increases in their self-assessment of outcomes measures, including dealing with conflict, knowing what job or career they want, motivation to succeed, belonginess, and having role models. In contrast, boys reported increases in their self-assessment against the outcome measures of trying new things, the ROYW program helping them to make the most of their future, problem solving, and handling tough situations.




Boys reported significant increases in their self-assessment of some outcome measures, especially SPS boys; of whom, there was a 108% increase in their confidence in trying new things, 56% increase in their perception of the program helping them to make the most of their futures, and 47% increase in self-assessed confidence to problem solve. Importantly, there was a decrease in NHS and NPS boys' self-assessment of having role models to look up to.

## LIMITATIONS

Apart from data on contact with criminal justice agencies, all remaining data are subjective, and based on self-completed psychometric surveys, of which, northern participants were not always asked to complete these surveys or did not do so consistently. As with any subjective assessment of achievements, and attitudinal and behavioural change, the results may be subject to a social desirability impact, where participants answer in ways that either make themselves look good, or in ways that they think program staff want them to do so.

As we have documented in the Methodology chapter—and a separate report on the instruments used to measure program impact—in future iterations to this program, we have recommended that the ROYW survey Likert statements are carefully revised to ensure these are measuring the stated program aims. We have also recommended that the ROYWS survey is further developed and that it is delivered to all ROYW participants.

We also suggest that the referring person is asked to re-assess participants' individual and environmental risks post-program to more fully explore whether the program has the stated impact on these factors. Re-assessment of the attitudinal and behavioural risks identified on referral will provide additional data that is not reliant on participants' self-assessment of achievement, attitudes and behaviours.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of available monitoring and evaluation data, we recommend that the following matters are carefully considered before the further roll-out or delivery to the program to Tasmanian students.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Recommendation 1:** | That PCYC Tasmania work with social science researchers to develop new monitoring and evaluation outcome measures that better reflect the program objectives |
| **Recommendation 2:** | That PCYC Tasmania works with its program facilitators and coordinators to upskill all staff on the importance and understanding of pre- and post-program testing |
| **Recommendation 3:** | That PCYC Tasmania appoints a single person in the north and south to oversee the delivery of monitoring surveys to deflect the impact of social desirability on participants' assessment of their achievements and ensure consistency in delivery of these surveys |
| **Recommendation 4:** | That PCYC Tasmania seek the re-assessment of participants' individual and environmental risks by the referring person |
| **Recommendation 5:** | That PCYC Tasmania explore the opportunities for developing the program content so that girls' interests and activities are comparable, and consider whether girls-only activities and learning may be required to address their unique risk profiles and learning needs |
| **Recommendation 6:** | That PCYC Tasmania consider the integration of the Shark Cage program into the ROYW program for girls, and that boys are provided with enhanced learning around gender equality, healthy relationships, consent, and bodily autonomy |
| **Recommendation 7:** | That PCYC Tasmania works with specialist family and sexual violence services to provide additional support to participants who enter the program with experiences of family and sexual violence |
| **Recommendation 8:** | That PCYC Tasmania explore opportunities for enhancing pre-program support and program content for participants who enter the program with high attitudinal, behavioural, and environmental risks, including whether additional support from allied social services is required by these participants to facilitate their increased engagement with the program |
| **Recommendation 9:** | That PCYC Tasmania publishes the evaluated program outcomes to increase community awareness of the program and its outcomes for participants |
| **Recommendation 10:** | That PCYC Tasmania engages with participants and their families about the aggregate and individual outcomes from program participation |



**Suggested citation: Mason, R. & Asquith, N.L. (2026) *Reset Opportunities for Youth Works: Program Evaluation – Summary Report*. Hobart: PCYC Tasmania.**