

BACKTRACK YOUTH WORKS

Society and Culture Association NSW 2021 Charitable Donation

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Every year, the Society and Culture Association makes a charitable donation on behalf of its members. The 2021 Donation was well received by BackTrack Youth Works an organisation that supports youth in regional NSW. As our subject promotes social inclusion, the committee felt organisations like BackTrack are demonstrating social and cultural literacy every day.



*“Children are the most honest barometer of how we are going as a society, When I look at what’s going on with our young people today in Australia where: **1 in 5** don’t go to school or have any formal education, **1 in 4** suffer with mental health issues and **28,000** are sleeping homeless, I say that’s not good enough”*

Bernie Shakeshaft CEO/ Founder of
BackTrack Youth Works and Australia’s 2020
Local Hero.

The 2020 UNICEF report on child well-being showed that despite Australia being a high-income country with good national conditions for child wellbeing, Australia is falling short in delivering consistently good health, education and social outcomes for children. On many issues like youth suicide rate, obesity and early childhood learning, Australia ranks poorly compared to its peers. There are already indications of COVID’s impact in heightening these issues.

Regional young people are particularly vulnerable due to the relative challenges in accessing quality education and care. In areas where there is high unemployment, drug abuse and a lack of positive role models, it is easy to understand that young people in those situations can struggle to find meaning and purpose, and quickly get off track.

In Australia, an estimated 1,000 young people are in detention with 80% likely to reoffend in the first 12 months of being released, 5,000 are in community supervision, all at a staggering cost of \$920M annually.

Across Australia, vulnerable young people are falling through the cracks of a system that does not meet their complex needs. That’s where BackTrack comes in. ***Our purpose is keeping kids alive, out of jail and chasing their hopes and dreams.***

BackTrack, a hugely successful and well recognised program, founded in Armidale NSW, works with young people who have lost their way to help them reconnect with education and training, become work-ready and secure meaningful employment.

The approach and its team, whose success has been recognised across Australia, helps get young people ‘back on track’ by developing strong, happy and healthy foundations that result in positive life pathways and full participation in their communities.

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Bernie Shakeshaft, awarded as Australia's Local Hero for 2020, and his extraordinary team have helped more than 1,000 young people reconnect with their education, training, families and the community, offering them love and support to live out their hopes and dreams. **87%** percent of these kids have gone into employment, or back into education and training.

With a mission **“to help as many young people having a hard time as possible”** and recognising that expanding in Armidale was not the answer, BackTrack Everywhere was born to support the hundreds of individual community enquiries to set up their own youth support programs.

The philosophy behind BackTrack Everywhere is it takes a village to raise a child, and it's our communities' responsibility to give every child the opportunity they deserve. The key to our success is our flexible and long-term approach to youth work that builds resilience in vulnerable young people and the communities that support them.

BackTrack's unique approach is expanding across the country, and are currently walking alongside sensational youth organisations having a powerful impact in their own communities such as Down the Track in Lake Cargelligo, Leader life in Dubbo, FlatTrack in Moree, RuffTRACK in the Hawksbury, ShoreTrack in Macksville, Making Tracks in Broken Hill and other communities across Victoria, NSW, and Qld who are preparing to launch.



Since 15-year-old Blake came to BackTrack in March 2018, we've seen him go from strength to strength. He has taken up every opportunity offered to him, making significant strides in the welding workshop, building his employability and now transitioning into a traineeship. However, Blake didn't always feel equipped to take on the world of work. He struggled in a mainstream school environment and his disengagement in the classroom often led to disruptive behaviour. Since joining our crew full-time, we have witnessed a transformation in Blake's resilience, as he tackles challenges with maturity.

Not only does BackTrack have a powerful impact on the young people and communities it supports but the economic benefits are astounding, surely investing in programs like BackTrack that have a solid track record working with the tough end of town is part of the solution.

To learn more, go to: www.backtrack.org.au

