



GREATER SHEPPARTON **LighthouseProject**

The Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project strives to build capability in our young people and families, unlocking their potential to participate and contribute to the prosperity of Greater Shepparton.

Our History

In 2011 and 2012 the Sir Andrew and Lady Fairley Foundation commissioned three reports investigating:

- The extent of disadvantage in Shepparton
- Trends in place-based philanthropy
- Social capital and social cohesion in Shepparton

These reports highlighted major deficits in education, health and employment including poor school retention rates, high unemployment, escalating youth unemployment, a growing number of single-parent families, high levels of reliance on disability payments and high rates of teen pregnancies.

In response to the information presented, community leaders committed to embracing a comprehensive community-wide strategy aimed at enhancing the well-being, education and employment outcomes of young people, spanning from conception to career. In 2014, this evolving movement was formally established as the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project.

Today Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project is a collective impact, place-based organisation dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people. Focusing on best practices and data-led approaches, Lighthouse invests in tackling complex societal issues through the lens of prevention rather than crisis intervention, leading to positive and fundamental social change.

We demonstrate, embed, monitor, evaluate and ensure sustainability to achieve positive change via a grassroots approach. Our 10-year proven record of delivery, advocacy and systems change has built the reputation of Lighthouse as a trusted partner within the community, service providers, and government.



The Opportunity

Greater Shepparton is a growing regional hub with a Gross Regional Product (GRP) estimated at \$3.7B*. The region generates 48.5% of Victoria's fruit output and is the base for 25% of Victoria's truck registrations^.

The Challenge

While a majority of Greater Shepparton's 69,135** residents benefit from our prosperous and robust economy, a significant cohort face a series of interlinked social challenges. This often means they cannot fully access, participate in or contribute to the opportunities our region offers. A snapshot of data representing 0-25 year old indicates the challenges this cohort faces:

- Over 25% of children are starting school developmentally vulnerable in one or more Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) domains (2021).
- The LGA of Greater Shepparton is ranked as the 9th most disadvantaged out of the 79 LGAs across Victoria (2021 ABS SEIFA)
- Young people in Greater Shepparton are 18% less likely to complete secondary school (41.5%) when compared with the State (59.5%) (ABS 2021).
- For the year ending December 2023 the criminal incident rate per 100,000 population for Greater Shepparton was 8,237.7 compared with the Victorian rate of 5,672.7 (Crime Statistics Agency).

^ Greater Shepparton International Engagement Strategy
* Regional Development Victoria (RDV) Regional City of Shepparton
** ABS Census 2023

Initiatives and outcomes delivered by the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project

Lighthouse is committed to leveraging social capital and connections that enable our young people to reach their full potential and thrive. Listed below are some of the initiatives and outcomes that have been delivered via this collaborative community approach.



The Family Haven is a prevention and early intervention space for young families. The initiative primarily caters to families experiencing complex social, emotional and health issues. Through building positive connections staff are able to make service referrals and assist families with achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

380 families supported
8683 total family contact hours
444 Service and support referrals
2544 in-kind volunteer hours
\$110K value of volunteering mentoring

2020 - current



The Community Hubs are inclusive spaces supporting culturally diverse women, preschool children and their families. Lighthouse supports 3 hubs: Mooroopna Park Primary, Wilmot Road Primary and St Georges Road Primary.

300 families engaged across
3 Community Hubs.
96 volunteers supporting families
517 referrals made to support Hub families

2020 - 2023



Supporting Primary schools connect with our community. Through industry tours, brokering community volunteers and giving kids the tools they need to thrive at school (laptops, GIVIT and bikes). Primary Projects also focus on supporting transition to Secondary school, with Aunties supporting Koorie kids through creative arts and Harmony Champs cultural inclusion in Grade 6.

1568 students engaged in industry tours
800+ students engaged in Harmony Champs
32 students engaged in CapeAbilities, inclusive sport.
800+ books in **29** languages distributed via the Brilliant Bookworms initiative.
60 student engaged in the Aunties program

2020 - current



OLLY (Opportunity and Life Links for Youth, formally the Youth Haven) is a welcoming and inclusive space for young people to access healthy food, positive social interaction and learning experiences. OLLY staff link participants to relevant services and support.

56 young people enrolled for support
7955 total engagements since 2018

2018 - current



Pit Stop is a strengths-based re-engagement program offering young people the opportunity to work on small engines and cars and other hands-on activities under the guidance of industry professionals. Pit Stop aims to build capacity, work and life skills to improve mental health and increase connection for young people within community.

149 young people enrolled in 2024.
467 total student enrolments since opening
313 bikes and scooters donated back to community through Second Spin.
14 Education Settings/Organisations engaged

2020 - current



Life Links in practice is a preventative Lighthouse Project program aiming to improve attendance and engagement in school. The Life Links workers meet with the student and works through the barriers to their participation in class and works with the student to set goals that will ultimately lead to better engagement in their education.

75 Students referred
35 active participants
\$110K brokerage spent to support students improve education achievements

2022 - current



The Lighthouse Crew comprises of community members who want to help contribute to better outcomes for children and young people in our in the Greater Shepparton region. Crew members can volunteer, share skills and resources, donate goods and more.

78 active community volunteers (2024)
500+ volunteers engaged across Lighthouse programs since 2018
\$705K value of volunteers hours contributed to the community

2018 -current



Laptops with Love sees laptops from partnership organisations refurbished and gifted to members of our community. The program aims to overcome the financial barriers of purchasing a laptop and enable digital access for ongoing learning and career aspirations.

360 Laptops have been donated, refurbished and given back to community.
6 community partners donating and refurbishing laptops

2021 - current



1000 Conversations is a cornerstone initiative that engages the Greater Shepparton community. This deep listening process provides an opportunity to stop and reflect and to hear the voices of our community and our young people.

4 iterations of the conversations completed
48.7 % of interviewees were 13-18 years old
1016 community members engaged during 2032-2024 conversations
3182 community members engaged over all 4 iterations

2015, 2018, 2020, 2023