

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

YMCA SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FY26

Welcome

Catherine Helen Spence (1825–1910), one of South Australia's and the nation's great thinkers and reformers, described our state as *"an expanding society"* in which *"nothing seems impossible"*.

She believed every person matters, and that healthy communities are built on purpose, through participation, opportunity, care and service. She was deeply optimistic about our community's capacity to keep advancing in wellbeing, equity and inclusion, education, child welfare, youth development, civic engagement and economic prosperity.

Spence's outlook closely parallels the YMCA's enduring mission. Founded in Adelaide in the same era of optimism, enterprise and social reform that shaped modern South Australia, the Y has opened doors for generation after generation to learn, belong, contribute and thrive.

Today, YMCA South Australia is one of the state's greatest contributors to community wellbeing and one of the fastest-growing YMCA associations globally. **Over the past five years, our reach and impact have grown more than 15 times faster than the state's population.**

During FY26 (2025–26), there were **2.56 million participations in a YMCA South Australia program or service.** At this scale, we play an increasingly important role in shaping how South Australians connect, move and learn.

This report helps explain how we got here. No one achieves this alone and so we dedicate these world-class outcomes to the communities, partners, staff and volunteers who made them possible.



Simon Campbell
President
YMCA South Australia



David Paterson
Chief Executive Officer
YMCA South Australia

> "Nothing seems impossible."
>
> CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE
> (1825–1910)


the
OSHC

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Year in Review

South Australians visited a YMCA service more than 2.5 million times in 2025–26. Here is what that looked like across our programs.

Reach and people

2.56m
Visits across all our services

8,749
Families supported in OSHC

7,960
Gym and health club members

9,329
Swim school and gymnastics students

1,249
South Australians employed

Participation by program

520,920
OSHC and Vacation Care attendances

22,670
Early learning attendances

649,191
Stadium sports participations

218,683
Swimming lesson participations

198,081
Older adult participations



1 OUR IMPACT MODEL

The YIELD Framework

Our Impact Model

YMCA South Australia's **YIELD framework** can be summarised as follows.



Micro

Meso

Macro

Personal level
Enhancing whole-person wellbeing

Program level
Delivering impactful YMCA programs

Sector level
Contributing to the vitality of our sector

Societal level
Helping make SA a healthier place to live

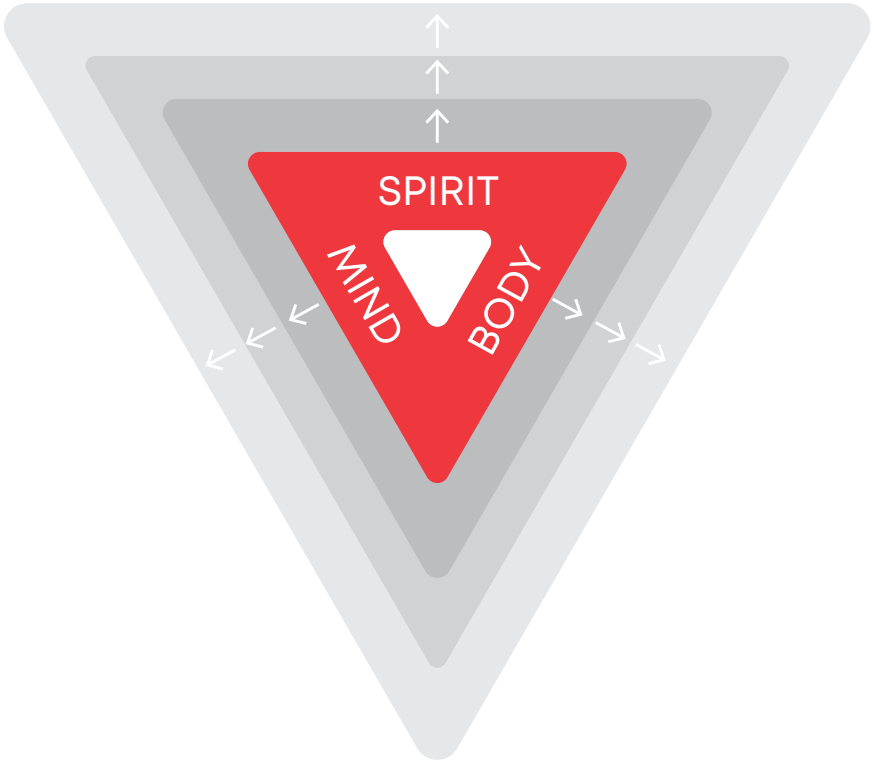
Our YIELD model drives impact across four levels: Personal, Program, Sector and Society.

Impact flows in both directions. Stronger communities support individual wellbeing, and individual wellbeing strengthens communities. A model that works in only one direction does half the job. YIELD works in both. That reflects how YMCA South Australia operates, and it underpins the profound results outlined in this report.

Our Impact Model

Personal level

Enhancing whole-person wellbeing.



This 'body, mind, spirit' construct reflects the YMCA's heritage and mission, and it has stood the test of time. While central to our impact logic, we don't measure it for every individual. Rather, it serves as a foundational framework that guides our thinking and honours each person's unique journey.

Examples of each aspect include:

Body *Physical wellbeing*	• Cardiorespiratory fitness and endurance • Musculoskeletal fitness, strength, flexibility • Physical literacy and health foundations – such as safety, nutrition, sleep, weight management.
Mind *Mental (and emotional) wellbeing*	• Psychological health and safety • Cognitive function and learning capacity • Emotional regulation and resilience • Personal, relational, work and life skills.
Spirit *Social (and spiritual) wellbeing*	• Identity, values and sense of worth • Meaning, purpose, direction and hope • Relationships, belonging, and community • Connection to something greater, beyond oneself.

This aligns with both historical and current conceptualisations of whole-person wellbeing. For example, the World Health Organization Constitution (1948) states: ***"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being…"*** This is the foundational definition that establishes the modern tripartite concept of health and wellbeing.

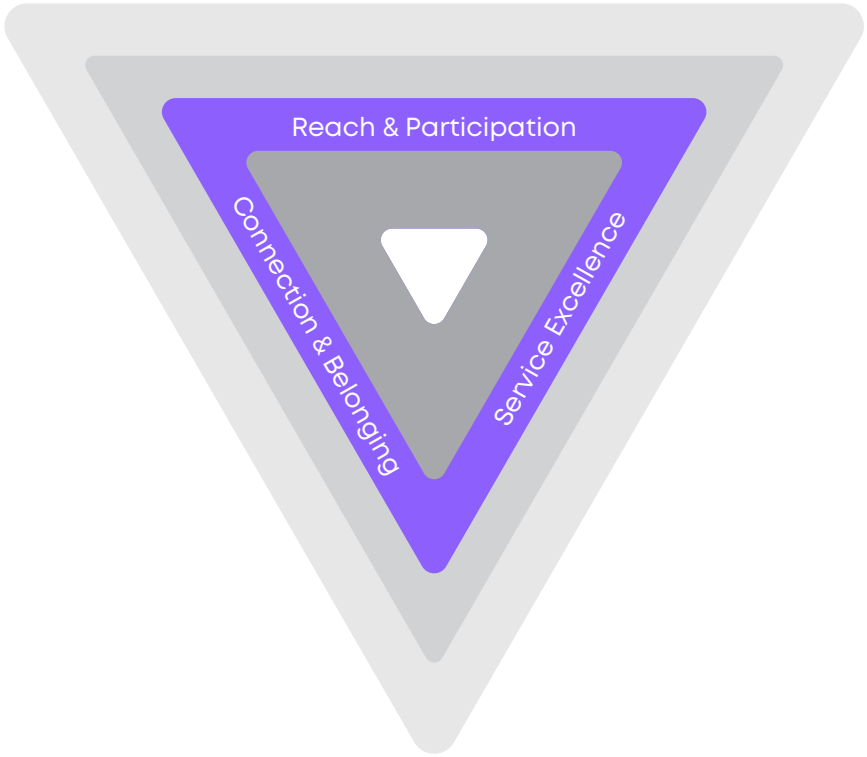
Research consistently supports the idea of an intricate interconnection between these three dimensions. For example:

- regular **exercise** can be effective in managing one's mental health
- **physical fitness** encourages greater participation in social activities
- chronic **stress** can contribute to high blood pressure
- **relational** conflict contributes to emotional dysregulation
- research by UC Berkeley found that people exemplifying a **spirit of generosity** are less lonely and stressed, have lower blood pressure, have more friends, have better relationships, and **live longer!**

Our Impact Model

Program level

Delivering impactful YMCA programs.



By ‘community programs’ we mean…

structured and repeatable sets of activities designed to meet a clear community need and achieve certain health, wellbeing and/or developmental outcomes.

People participate either as individuals or in groups/teams, usually through community facilities such as a recreation centre or school.

The programs outlined in this section are aquatics, gymnastics, stadium sports, health & fitness programs, allied health services, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), early learning centres, and youth programs.

The impact logic being…

about delivering micro-level impacts (to individuals and families), **at scale** (across South Australia). Hence, we seek to grow:

Reach and participation

Engaging more people, from all parts of the community, in more locations.

Service excellence

Ensuring we deliver the desired experience, quality and outcomes.

Connection and belonging

Ensuring people feel they belong, stay engaged, and stick with it.

Our Impact Model

Sector level

Contributing to the vitality of our sector.



By ‘sector contributions’ we mean…

the YMCA’s presence having a constructive effect on those parts of the South Australian sectors we operate in. That could either be a direct contribution (e.g. supporting the partners we work closely with) or an indirect one (e.g. lifting the standard that other providers must rise to if they are to compete with the Y).

Or, in other words, being the **“rising tide that lifts all boats”**.

In our case this could be the broader “community sector” or more specific segments such as the sports, health, education, and youth sectors.

The impact logic being…

about strengthening the **institutions** and **networks** that support the wellbeing and development of South Australians. This “meso” level focus bridges the space between (micro) service provision at a personal level and the (macro) conditions that encourage wellbeing at a statewide level.

This is often the missing middle in social impact strategy, but it’s critical for us as a means of strengthening our community. We especially focus on:

Sector leadership

Strengthening the direction, cohesion and collaboration of the sector.

Employer of choice

Building the engagement, capacity, and quality of the SA workforce.

Genuine partnerships

Building enduring, synergistic partnerships that achieve more together.

Our Impact Model

Societal level

Helping make SA a healthier place to live.



By ‘societal impact’ we mean…

the **shifts that affect the flourishing of South Australia as a whole**. These are consequential advances that move the needle on factors such as public health outcomes, educational results, job creation, environmental impacts, social capital, civic engagement, and the like.

Sometimes the Y may have a direct role in bringing about positive change, such as when our senior leaders or Youth Parliamentarians inform beneficial policy or legislative change. Perhaps more commonly, it will be a flow-on effect of the work we do (and the way in which we do it).

The impact logic being…

… about positively contributing to, and influencing, the **social determinants of wellbeing** at the **macro** level. We see three key areas in which YMCA South Australia has a significant impact in this regard:

Social responsibility

Our citizenship, governance and accountability as a leading not-for-profit.

Economic contribution

Local procurement and the retention and reinvestment of economic value in South Australia.

Creating jobs and enabling wider workforce participation.

Environmental sustainability

Efficiencies in our practices around energy, waste and water use.

Reductions in carbon emissions.

The greater our impact in these areas, the better South Australia becomes as a place to live, work, and raise a family.



2

SOCIETAL IMPACT

Helping make SA a healthier place to live

Social Stewardship

Wellbeing and social impact go to the heart of what we value as a community. Entrusting one's personal and family wellbeing to another organisation requires them to act with deep integrity.

South Australians have trusted YMCA South Australia for generations, and our longevity is the clearest sign of it. We were founded in 1850, when Adelaide had about 14,000 residents. In late 2025 we marked 175 years of service. Today we serve a population more than one hundred times larger. An organisation does not last that long – and continue to innovate and grow – by accident. Each generation has asked more of us, and each has kept choosing the Y.



This milestone drew recognition at the highest levels. **Her Excellency the Governor**, our Patron, hosted a reception at Government House, celebrating our 175th Anniversary. In the **Legislative Council**, Government and Opposition members supported a motion acknowledging the anniversary and the Y's contribution to the state. Our centres and services held celebrations across South Australia, from free family fun days to an intergenerational "human library" pairing Life Members (aged up to 96) with our youngest staff.

Such longevity matters. It's hardly surprising that studies of organisational heritage find that a long, consistent track record builds trust and commitment. Independent market research shows the same pattern: people who know the Y consistently rate it trustworthy, welcoming and safe.

YMCA brand associations
(amongst those who know the Y)

97% Trustworthy	**96%** Welcoming	**95%** Safe
92% Nurturing	**88%** Creative	**84%** Modern

We never take that trust for granted. We steward and renew it every day, through the application of consistent values, sound governance, high standards and service that adapts as communities change.

The body of evidence that supports that proposition will progressively unfold throughout this Social Impact Report.

Social Stewardship

As a registered charity with the **Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC)**, we meet all associated governance, compliance, reporting, and accountability standards.

In each of the sectors in which we operate we are typically the **only not-for-profit organisation** amongst the major service providers.

Our **Board of Directors** comprises accomplished South Australians who oversee the governance and strategic direction of the organisation, ensuring it continues to meet community expectations. All reside in SA, and serve as volunteers, although many have also had national and international careers.

YMCA South Australia is formally **accredited as a social enterprise** by Social Traders. In FY26 it continued to be the only such social enterprise in our key service areas of Recreation Management, Aquatics, Gymnastics, OSHC and Early Learning.

We are also the **oldest accredited social enterprise in Australia** (founded in 1850), and **one of the largest**.

As a not-for-profit, locally-based enterprise, **all surplus is retained and reinvested in South Australia**.

YMCA South Australia is also verified under People and Planet First, the **global social enterprise standard** stewarded by the Social Enterprise World Forum. Fewer than 1% of Australian social enterprises hold this recognition.

In FY26 we were **the only verified operator in our key service areas**. This requires an enterprise to meet all five standards, including reinvestment of surplus in its purpose and ensuring that social purpose is hard-coded into the organisation's legal and governance structure.

YMCA South Australia was the **first organisation in Australia** to have all its gym operations **quality accredited by AUSactive**.

AUSactive is Australia's peak body for the active health sector, providing nationally recognised accreditation programs that ensure gyms, health and fitness centres meet rigorous standards of quality, professionalism, and continuous improvement.

In 2026 we received the **national** Multiservice Business of the Year award. We were also a national finalist in the Social & Community Impact category.

Our Children's Services (OSHC and Early Learning) are regularly **assessed by the Education Standards Board** against the seven quality areas of the **National Quality Standard**. Ratings are public on the ACECQA national register.

For schools and families, this provides an independent check on safety, learning and leadership before they choose where to enrol their children.

YMCA South Australia **consistently rates above the South Australian sector average**, reinforcing its reputation for safety and quality.

Social Stewardship



YMCA South Australia upholds the highest child safeguarding standards in our sectors.

YMCA South Australia runs a comprehensive set of safeguarding processes. They cover governance and strategy, recruitment and screening, induction and training, day-to-day practice, and incident response and reporting. Their purpose is to keep children and adults at risk safer in our programs.

Building on our 2023 certification by the Australian Childhood Foundation, we plan to seek accreditation in 2027 for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk, under a standard endorsed by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua). This adds an independent and international-standard level of scrutiny to our approach.

Our Early Learning and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services meet further obligations under the National Quality Framework.

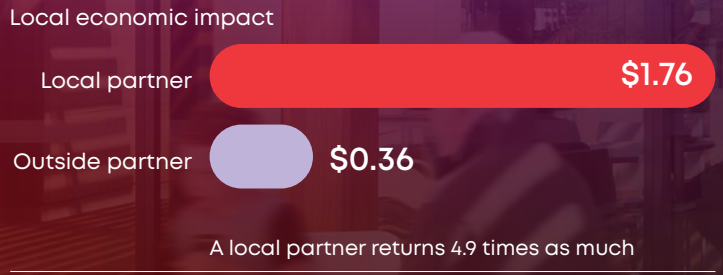
The Education Standards Board, South Australia's regulator, assesses and rates every service against the National Quality Standard, which gives child safety increasing weight.

Our educators complete child safeguarding training, and systems ensure that training stays current. A specialist Quality & Safeguarding team within YMCA South Australia builds internal capacity. We hold ourselves accountable to the regulator, to families and to our own reviews. Every service maintains a continuous improvement plan.

Economic Contributions

Every dollar spent in South Australia either keeps circulating here or leaves the state. The choice of provider decides which. That is true of everything from a gym membership to a school or council budget.

The difference is substantial. UK research found that $1 spent by a local council with a local supplier generated about $1.76 for the local economy. The same $1 spent with a supplier based elsewhere left only about 36 cents in the local economy.



Source: Sacks, J. (2002). The Money Trail: Measuring Your Impact on the Local Economy Using LM3. New Economics Foundation.

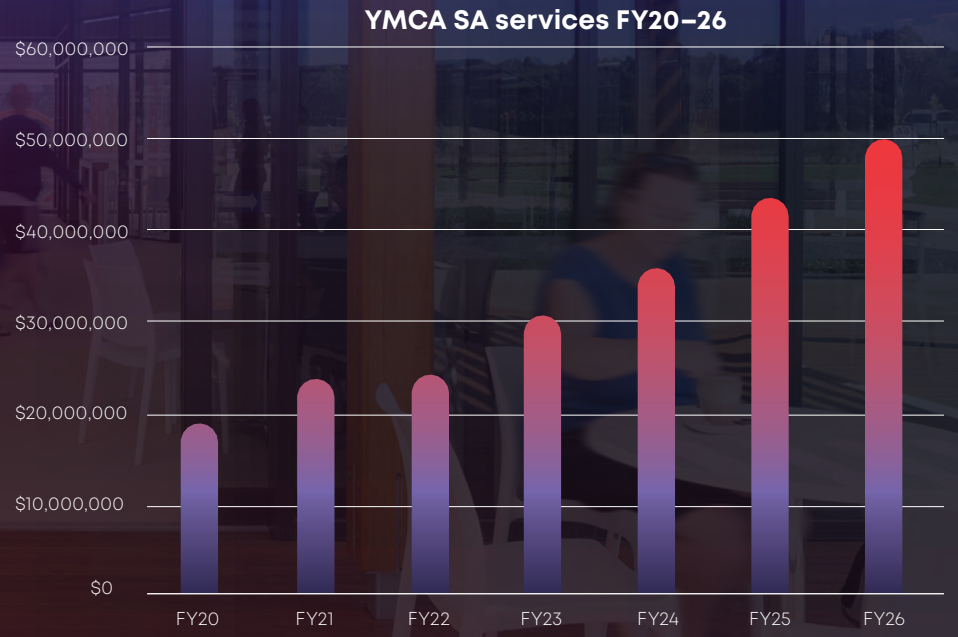
The local economic benefit logic is clear. The South Australian Government's Industry Participation Policy (SAIPP) reflects this, as do the local and social economic procurement policies of many councils.

Amongst the major providers, YMCA South Australia is typically the only prospective partner that is based in this state.

We are **not-for-profit** and an **accredited social enterprise, headquartered in Adelaide**. We **focus solely on the South Australian community** and reinvest **100% of any surplus here**. In FY26 YMCA South Australia **employed 1,249 South Australians**, with the clear majority of our expenditure being with local suppliers.

BUY SA. FOR SA.

YMCA South Australia has **grown significantly faster than Australia's economy** over the past 6 years. In FY26, that value grew by a further 14%. When combined with the local multiplier effects of our model, this means that we are having an outsized impact on South Australian economic (as well as social) wellbeing.



Economic Contributions



The social value generated through YMCA South Australia's recreation operations has a measurable effect on how safely, healthily and productively South Australians live.

The **ActiveXchange Social Value methodology**, developed by KPMG to align with Federal reporting standards, converts participation data from our recreation centres into estimated dollar savings for the community.

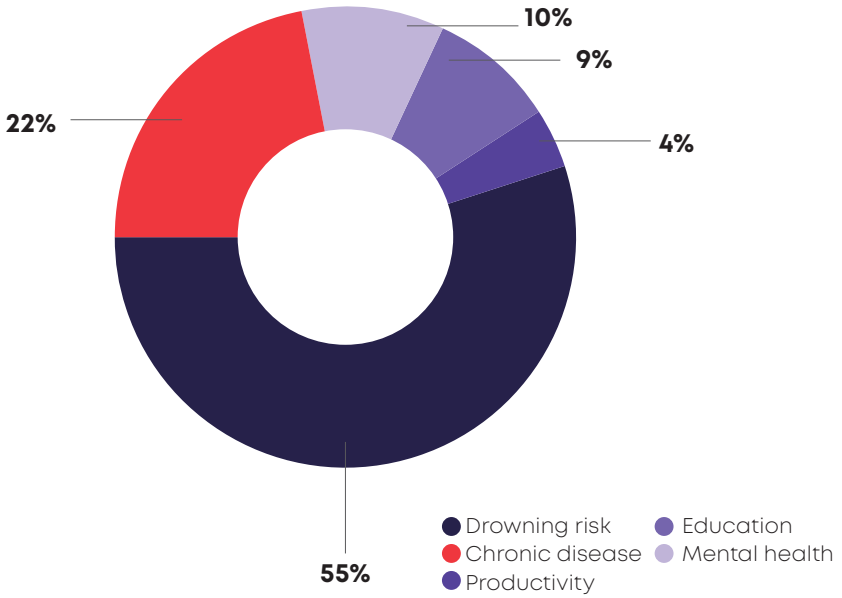
In FY26 it **valued the impact of our recreation operations at more than $11 million**.*

More than half of that value comes from learn-to-swim, because children who learn water safety face a lower risk of drowning. The rest comes from preventing chronic disease, including dementia and heart disease (22%), improving mental health (10%), lifting educational outcomes (9%) and supporting productivity (4%). These benefits reach individuals and families, employers and the public health system.

Visits across our recreation and gymnastics sites rose by 5%+, reaching more than 2 million for the first time.

The model counts only certain recreation activities and only benefits with agreed valuations. It excludes OSHC, early learning, allied health and several sites, so it considerably understates our total contribution. Nevertheless, this serves to illustrate YMCA South Australia's substantial economic contribution to the state in terms of wellbeing outcomes.

FY26 Social Value



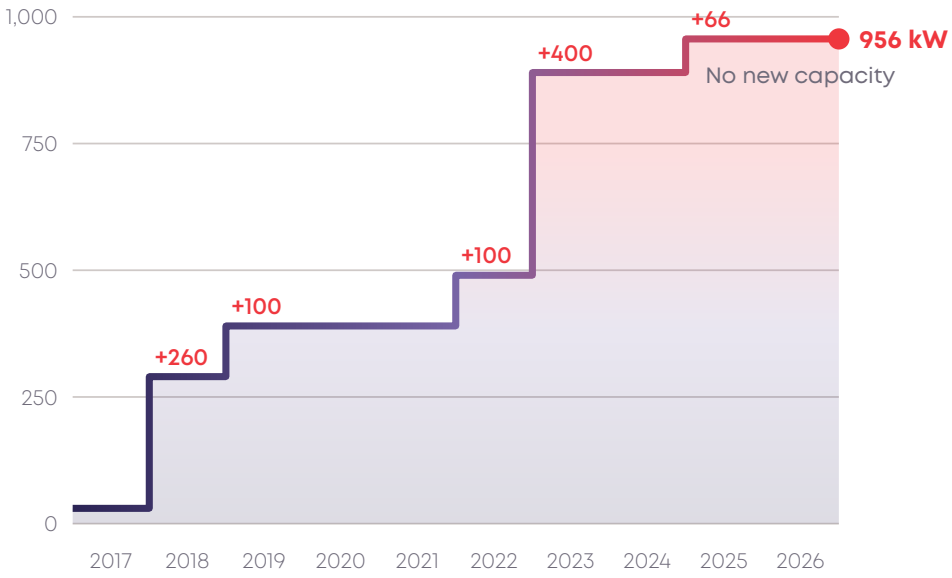
* FY26 figures use ActiveXchange's updated model. Prior reports used a previous version, so figures between years are not directly comparable.

Environmental Sustainability

No new solar capacity was added in FY26, although the long-run growth in renewable energy capacity across our recreation centres sits at 47% per annum.

Community recreation centres are typically substantial users of electricity given their scale (e.g. St Clair Recreation Centre has 9,000 m² of court space). The same applies to aquatic centres given the unique operational demands of maintaining a safe, comfortable, and hygienic swimming environment. The Y and its partners work together in reducing such consumption, including the installation of solar panels. In some facilities the YMCA has co-invested with local government partners in doing so.

Solar capacity has grown in steps, and held steady in FY26
(total kW across YMCA SA-run recreation centres)



Sustainability is a shared effort at the Y.

An Environmental Working Group brings staff together to find new ways to reduce our impact, from engaging the children in our OSHC services to updates in our largest recreation centres.



An environmental roadmap co-developed with children at our Moana Primary OSHC service.



A waste audit at St Clair Recreation Centre, teaming up with Waste Reduction SA, leading to new strategies to maximise resource recovery.



3

SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributing to the vitality of our sector

Sector Leadership

Excellence drives social impact in two ways.

First, it **opens pathways**. Young South Australians with high aspirations can pursue them at home, whether that means competing nationally or internationally.

Second, it **lifts the sector**. A leader acts like the pacemaker in a distance race: once others see the pace is possible, they must match it to stay in the race. A rising tide lifts all boats.

The recognitions that follow show how widely that excellence runs. They span metropolitan and regional centres, every age group, and every program area. Many were won in national fields, against larger organisations.

This clearly shows that though we are a South Australian not-for-profit, we can and do operate at national and international standards. We bring that high level of quality to every community we serve, setting our collective sights higher, opening more doors and delivering social impact well beyond the pool, court or gym floor.







AUSactive national award for best multiservice business (The Parks Recreation & Sports Centre), 2026.





Recognised for excellence across our sector

Our people, programs and services continue to be recognised at state, national and industry levels, reflecting our commitment to creating healthier, stronger and more connected communities.

41 Total recognitions

23 Award wins

5 Finalist selections



Awards and recognitions by area

Social impact and organisation-wide

People & Planet First (global social enterprise accreditation) YMCA South Australia	Accredited
AUSactive National Awards 2026: Social Value & Community Impact YMCA South Australia	National Finalist

Recreation

AUSactive National Awards 2026: Multiservice Business of the Year The Parks Recreation & Sports Centre	National Winner
The Power of Her Awards 2026: Outstanding Organisation YMCA South Australia	Winner
Y Australia National Awards 2025: Community Wellbeing Allied Health team (Agile mYnds program)	Winner

Children & Youth

Y Australia National Awards 2025: Sustainable Planet Moana Primary School OSHC	Winner
Theatre Association of South Australia: Matt Byrne Award 2026 Ceri Hutton, The Parks Youth Theatre	Winner

Employment and workplace

SafeWork SA: Workplace Activity 2025 YMCA South Australia	Winner
Y Australia National Awards 2025: Meaningful Work Leadership Foundations Program	Winner
World YMCA Change Agent Program (2025-26) Angela Mudri, The Parks	Graduated (global)
Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Centre for Women's Sport program Hayley Booth	Selected
Duke of Edinburgh's International Award: Employer 2026 YMCA South Australia	Accredited

Sector

Aquatics

Y Australia National Awards 2025: Just World The Parks, learn-to-swim program for young offenders	Winner
SA Aquatic Industry Awards 2025: Community Aquatic Program of the Year The Parks (Adelaide Youth Training Centre swimming lessons)	Winner
SA Aquatic Industry Awards 2025: Medium Swim School of the Year Thebarton Aquatic Centre	Winner
SA Aquatic Industry Awards 2025: Swim Australia Teacher of Excellence, Babies & Toddlers Natalie Bruce, Fleurieu Aquatic Centre	Winner
SA Aquatic Industry Awards 2025: Pool Lifeguard of the Year Andrew McKay, Thebarton Aquatic Centre	Winner
SA Aquatic Industry Awards 2025: Best New Teacher Tarcan Kupsch, Purruna Spencer Newton Centre	Winner
SA Aquatics Awards 2026: New Swim Teacher of the Year Xiaohan Shang, The Parks	Winner
SA Aquatics Awards 2026: Small to Medium Swim School of the Year Port Lincoln Leisure Centre	Winner
Swim Australia Awards 2025 (SwimCon25): Teacher of the Year Samantha Wise, Swimming Lessons Specialist	Finalist
Swim Australia Awards 2025 (SwimCon25): Customer Experience & Impact Thebarton Aquatic Centre	Finalist
SA Aquatics Awards 2026: Teens and Adults swim program Thebarton Aquatic Centre	Finalist
Swim Schools Australia Awards 2026 The Valleys Lifestyle Centre swim school	National Finalist
Swim Australia Awards 2025 (SwimCon25): Outstanding Community Service The Parks	Highly Commended
SA Aquatics Awards 2026: Swim Teacher of the Year Lilly Henwood, Whyalla Recreation Centre	Highly Commended

Gymnastics

Gymnastics SA Annual Awards 2025: Overall Club of the Year State Sports Park Gymnastics	Winner
Gymnastics SA Annual Awards 2025: Large Club of the Year State Sports Park Gymnastics	Winner
Gymnastics SA Annual Awards 2025: Trampoline Gymnastics Female Youth/Junior Athlete of the Year Misha Colebrook, State Sports Park	Winner
Gymnastics SA Annual Awards 2025: Gymnastics for All Active Participation Award O'Sullivan Beach Gymnastics	Winner
Gymnastics SA Annual Awards 2025: KinderGym Program of the Year Seaford Gymnastics	Winner
Junior World Championships and World Age Championships, Spain State Sports Park tumbling athletes and coaches (x5)	Competed for Australia
World Age Group Championships (Trampoline Gymnastics), Spain Misha Colebrook, State Sports Park	Selected for Australia; placed fifth
Australian Gymnastics Championships 2025 Misha Colebrook, State Sports Park	Podium finish
Australian Gymnastics Championships 2025 17 YMCA Gymnastics Athletes represented South Australia	Represented SA
Australian National Championships (July 25) Tumbling Podium Finish – Misha Colebrook – State Sports Park	Podium finish
National Clubs Championships (Sept 25) 3 podiums | 1 National Club Champion	3 x Podium finish
Victorian State Championships 2 x Victorian State Champions	Winner
Gymnastics SA Champion Tumbling Club State Sports Park	Winner
YMCA SA – Active Excellence Team Award State Sports Park	Winner
South Australian State Championships State Sports Park: 9 State Champions (Tumbling) Glengowrie: 12 State Champions (various apparatus and All Around) O'Sullivan Beach: 4 State Champions (various apparatus and All Around)	State Champions

Sector Leadership

Pioneering AI, applied responsibly.

In a time of rapid technological change, a sector leader needs an approach to AI that is both pioneering and responsible. At YMCA South Australia, we are using artificial intelligence (AI) to increase safety and to free our people to spend more time with those we are here to serve.

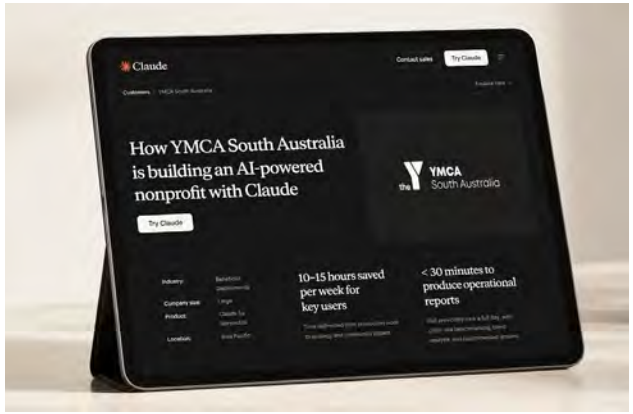
At The Parks Recreation & Sports Centre, we became the first YMCA in Australia to deploy **Lynxight**. The AI-powered system monitors our pools continuously and alerts lifeguards on their smartwatches when a swimmer may be in distress. It supports our lifeguards with an extra layer of real-time situational awareness.

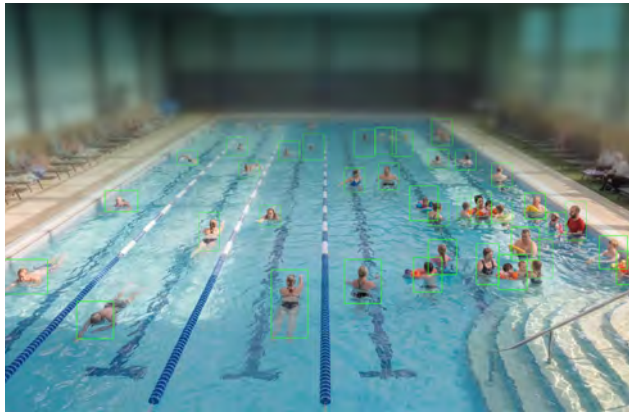
Our managers use **Claude**, Anthropic's AI assistant, to analyse and optimise operations and strengthen compliance, from auditing risk assessments to analysing swimming class data. Appropriate-use training and policies help protect privacy and data security, and leaders remain accountable for every decision.

Others are taking notice. Speaking to **World YMCA** senior leaders on AI ethics, **Anthropic** held up YMCA South Australia as an example of advanced AI use guided by "human judgement and a human focus". Anthropic has also named us a Claude for Nonprofits Partner and published our story globally as a case study. World YMCA and the **McKinsey Health Institute** have featured us in the Built to Thrive Report as a noteworthy example of AI use in community wellbeing.

YMCA South Australia is further strengthening our **data architecture, cyber safety and security** with the assistance of independent experts. The work identifies routine administrative processes to streamline and systematise, freeing staff time for community service. For example, our first project cut a reporting process from 8 to 9 person-days a month to under two hours.

For members and communities, this means **safer spaces and richer customer service**. For councils, schools and regulators – such as the Education Standards Board – it means **more timely and comprehensive evidence that we are meeting all quality, safety, developmental and compliance standards**.





Sector Leadership

YMCA Impact Fund

The YMCA Impact Fund enables any YMCA South Australia staff member to turn a validated idea into community benefit. It backs innovative new program designs and local partnerships that address unmet social needs.

In FY26, the Fund committed $52,382 in small grants, alongside staff time and in-kind support.

The installation of **Multiball** technology turned a quiet weekday space in a recreation centre into a fun, interactive place where new groups connect and move, lifting participation and sense of belonging. The introduction of **Clinical Pilates** gave people with injuries or chronic conditions a safe, supported way back to exercise, building independence. A **new school swim program** developed water safety skills and confidence and removed the cost and transport barriers that keep many children out of the pool.

A highlight of the year was our partnership with the African Communities Council of South Australia on the **African Nations Cup of South Australia (AFCON)**. The Y supported the 2025 tournament and became major sponsor in 2026. Around 20,000 spectators and participants are expected in 2026. For young African Australians, it offers a place to play, belong and be celebrated. It is also a pathway: several Socceroos at the 2026 World Cup are South Australians of African descent who came through this competition. The YMCA works in 22 African nations, so many of these families already know and trust the Y.



Opening game of the YMCA African Cup of Nations football tournament, 2026.







Stronger communities start with opportunities to connect, participate and belong.

Partner Engagement

Social impact builds through long-term relationships.

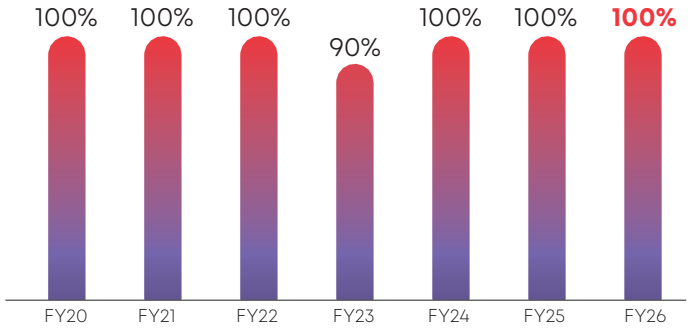
True partners invest in that relationship, share what they learn, solve challenges together and keep refining what works. Community services research supports this: lasting, trust-based relationships tend to achieve much more than transactional ones.

This kind of partnership approach is embedded in the DNA of YMCA South Australia, having served South Australians since 1850. Our leadership, governance and specialist teams are all based here. Our partners work seamlessly with local Y staff and an accomplished board drawn from the South Australian community. When our mutual interests align so naturally, the work becomes more productive and rewarding for everyone involved. Opportunities are more readily identified and seized. In turn, that strengthens outcomes for the people we serve together.

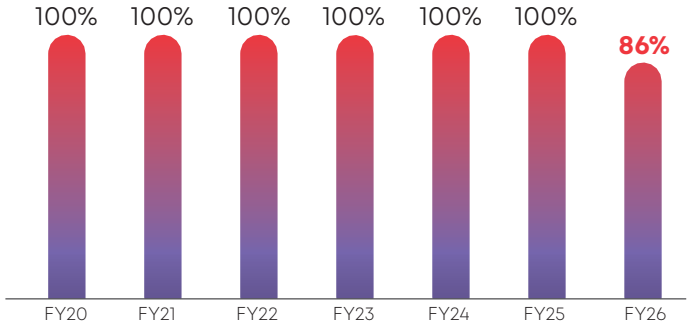
The evidence that follows illustrates how our partners have assessed this relationship: through their decisions, their initiatives and their own words.



Contract renewals | Children's Services
(Share of contract options taken up by partners)



Contract renewals | Sport & Recreation
(Share of contract options taken up by partners)



Whyalla Recreation Centre: A Community Hub

With 48 hours to go and the forecast passing 40 degrees, the City of Whyalla had to cancel or move its Australia Day event. We offered the Whyalla Recreation Centre. Council was so pleased with the result that it has made the Centre the 2027 venue.

That trust grew from years of working together. The Centre regularly co-hosts other events with Council, headspace, the NAIDOC Week Committee, Hope Whyalla, and many other community organisations.

A $12,000 Council grant bought a roller skate fleet for free community events. A 33-metre NAIDOC Week mural is now a permanent part of the stadium. When a Code Blue displaced the Whyalla Sleep Out, we opened the Centre, and the community raised more than $40,000.

The Steel City Toy Run, an eight-year Whyalla tradition, moved to the Centre in 2025. It returns in November 2026 with a community fun day. For a week, the Centre will host the handout of more than 750 Christmas hampers to local families doing it tough.

Many operators can manage a facility, but our partners often say the Y activates one for greater social benefit and makes it a true community hub. Because our purpose and values align so closely with those of Council and local organisations, these community assets become more of what they were always meant to be.

As a result, partners often reflect that the Y has become *"part of the fabric of their community"*.

750+

Christmas hampers distributed to local families

$40,000+

Raised through the Whyalla Sleep Out

$12,000

Council grant for a community roller skate fleet

8 years

Of the Steel City Toy Run tradition







Partner Engagement



Sports Vouchers Plus

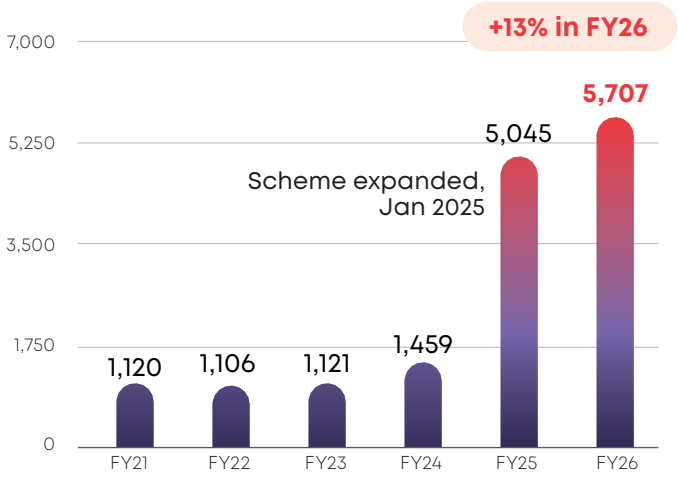
The **South Australian Government's Sports Vouchers** give every child from Reception to Year 9 two $100 vouchers a year towards sport, swimming lessons, dance, active recreation and music. The aim is to reduce cost as a barrier, so more children are active and connected.

In FY26, families **redeemed 5,707 vouchers at YMCA South Australia** programs. That is a **13% increase** on FY25 and almost four times the FY24 figure. At $100 each, it represents an estimated $570,700 in relief for families, and **more than $1 million over two years**.

YMCA South Australia broadens what the scheme reaches. Swimming is the most popular organised activity for children, yet it accounts for only about 11% of all vouchers claimed since 2015. Most of our redemptions go to swim lessons and gymnastics, which build water safety, movement skills and confidence for life. That is, we bring the scheme to activities where children's participation is high, but voucher uptake has been lower.

That makes the Y a strategically important channel for government. Of more than 1,900 active providers, only the SANFL redeemed more vouchers than we did. We achieve that outsized impact through early digital sign-up, the widest scope of eligible programs in the state, and reach across metropolitan and regional communities. With eligibility expanding to include 16 to 18-year-olds from January 2027, our reach and potential impact will grow even further.

Sports voucher redemptions
(YMCA SA, last six financial years)



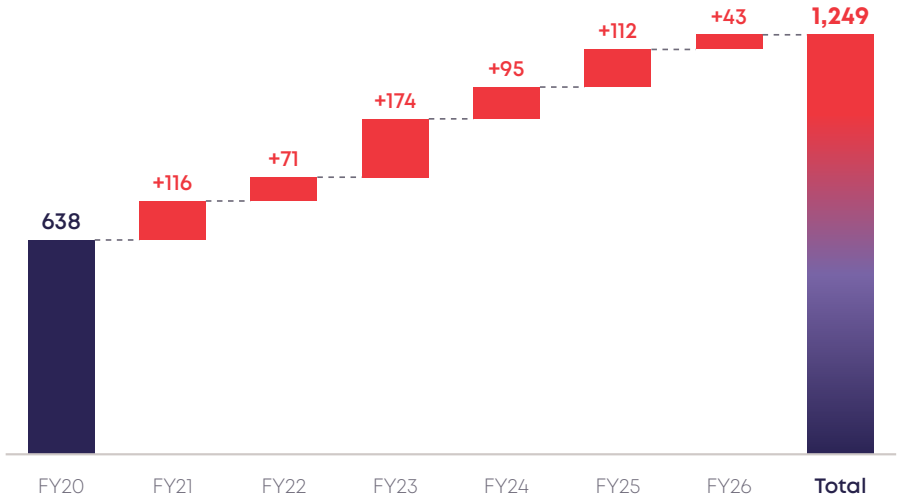
Employer of Choice



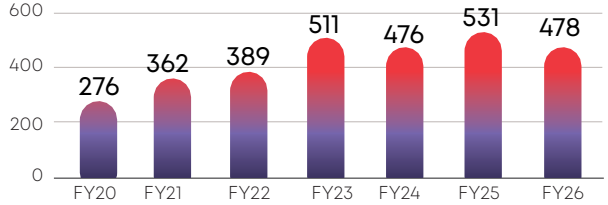
YMCA South Australia's staff numbers increased to 1,249 during FY26. Over the past six years we have created and sustained an average of more than a hundred new jobs *per annum*.

From 638 to 1,249 staff in six years

(YMCA SA workforce, headcount, net change each year)



New employees onboarded to YMCA SA



Australia has 293 occupations experiencing a skills shortage, and sectors from early learning to aquatics feel it. Emerging talent is voting with its feet by choosing to join YMCA South Australia.

Our workforce has grown by more than 600 over the past several years. For example, in FY26 alone, our OSHC educator team grew 20%, to 679. We onboarded and developed 2,747 new employees over six years, including 478 in FY26.

People choose the Y because the work is meaningful and leads somewhere. For our partners, that means centres and services run by capable, motivated teams. Good jobs also strengthen local wellbeing.

Employer of Choice

Gender equity is a critical driver of employer-of-choice status. YMCA South Australia is a standout performer in this regard.

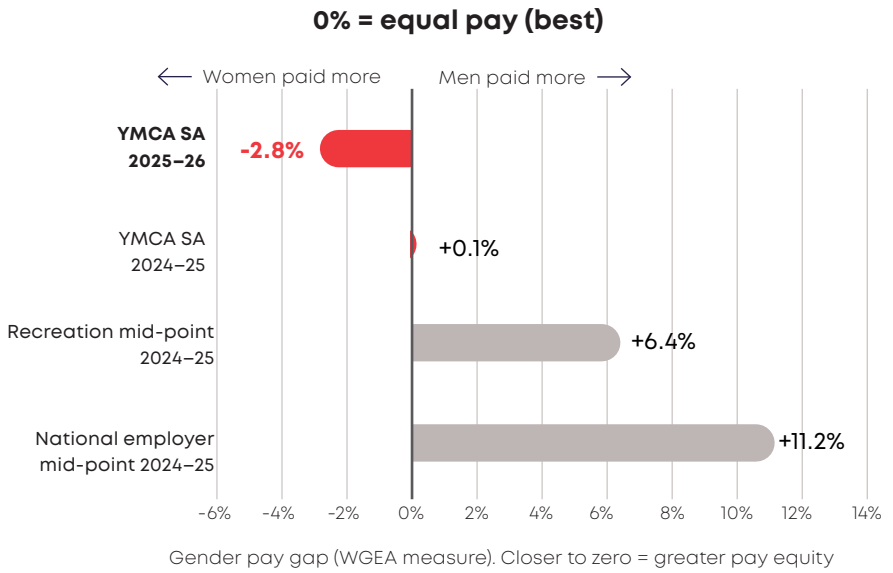


YMCA South Australia managers receiving the 2026 Power of Her (Outstanding Organisation) Award.

YMCA South Australia **won Outstanding Organisation** at the **2026 Power of Her Awards**. The South Australian Government created the awards to recognise organisations removing barriers for women and girls in sport. A panel of Women in Sport Taskforce members and sector leaders judged four criteria: impact on barriers to participation and leadership; growth in activity; reach and influence; and commitment to gender equality.

Today, women make up 76% of YMCA South Australia's workforce and received 78% of promotions in FY26. This award provided further evidence that the Y is a great place for women to build their careers. In 2025–26, female employees at YMCA South Australia earned 2.8% more than men on average (which sits inside the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's target range). In 2024–25, the typical Australian employer's gap favoured men by 11.2%, and in recreation by 6.4%. Fair pay is one reason why we're a favoured employer for women.

Average gender pay gap, total remuneration



Gender pay gap (WGEA measure). Closer to zero = greater pay equity

Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). 2025–26 data not yet published by WGEA

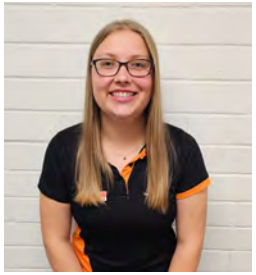
We pay for the role, not the gender. Our pay is within WGEA's target range, versus 11.2% nationally.

Employer of Choice

Part of something greater: a global movement

Imagine **a thriving movement of more than a million people**, across 120 countries, all working to help communities thrive. That is the YMCA when viewed in its global context.

Every four years, current and emerging leaders from around the world gather to share insights and ideas on how to grow social impact. In 2026, that gathering was **World Council** in Toronto. More than 1,300 delegates filled the halls, and the energy was electric. YMCA South Australia had four representatives present: our Board President, Head of Sport & Recreation, our Change Agent, and our CEO who was also an invited speaker. We were also nominated for a global impact award, as the first YMCA association in the world to become an accredited social enterprise at the whole-of-organisation level.



Angela Mudri, 2026 World YMCA Change Agent.

Angela Mudri, Programs Team Leader at The Parks Recreation & Sports Centre, is our **2026 World YMCA Change Agent**. Entry into this 18-month leadership development program is fiercely competitive, with fewer than 100 places available in a movement of a million people. We're proud to have had two young South Australians accepted into the program, over the past two intakes. This is a rare privilege but it serves to illustrate the calibre of our people and how much we value the development of young social changemakers. Angela's capstone project, STRIDE, helps people find their own reason to move through joyful, inclusive activity. Piloted at three recreation and three OSHC sites, STRIDE Week delivered six events, all of which were a great success. We love the fact that, through the YMCA, a young team leader from Adelaide can take a seat at the world table.



YMCA World Council 2026 gathering in Toronto, Canada.





4

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

DELIVERING IMPACTFUL YMCA PROGRAMS



Aquatics

What

Aquatics includes YMCA Swimming Lessons and the full range of activities one would expect to find at community aquatic facilities, including programs for schools, squad training, disability and the like – as well as for recreational enjoyment.

Who

Children aged 0.5 to 12 years represent the largest learn-to-swim segment, both through **schools** and enrolment by **parents**. Many of these young people later progress onto squad training and other water-based sports.

Adult users span the full spectrum of ages and needs, ranging from aqua aerobics and lap swimming to injury rehabilitation.

Why

The **National Drowning Report** found there were 313 drowning deaths in Australia in 2025/26. Almost half of children leaving primary school have not achieved the National Benchmarks for swimming and water safety education for 12-year-olds, so there is still a significant and serious community need.

The YMCA is the original creator of group swimming lessons and lifeguarding as a discipline. It continues to have significant impact in aquatics here and around the world.

How

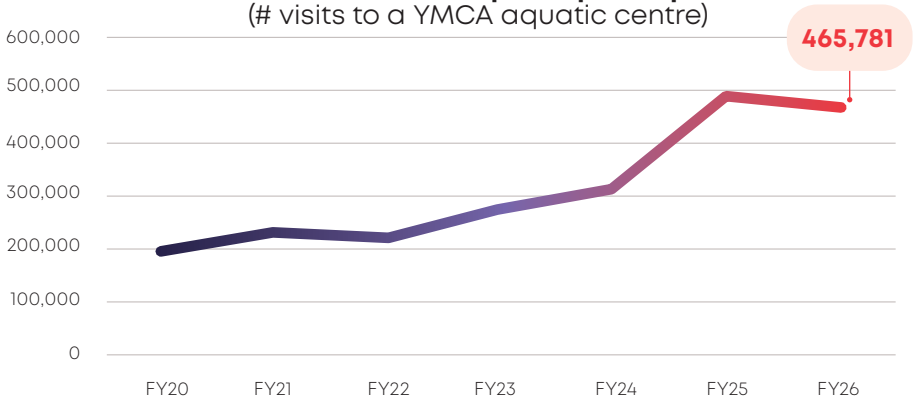
Research studies report a variety of wellbeing benefits. Amongst those of particular importance to the Y are:

- reduced rates of drowning, particularly in high-risk groups such as young children and people born overseas
- whole-body, low-impact exercise that improves cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health, motor performance, weight loss, mental health, etc
- social and family connection, reduced isolation
- health of older adults and those with chronic conditions.

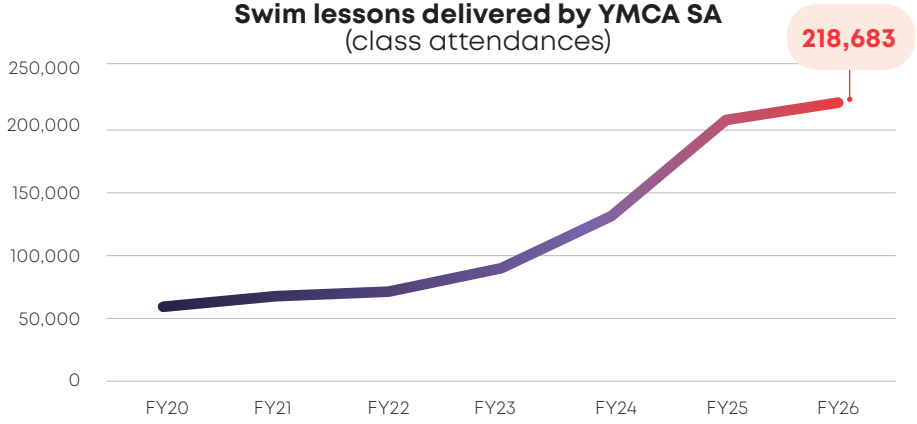
15%
Average annual growth in visits to a YMCA aquatic facility since 2020

24%
Average annual growth in swim lesson participation over the same period

Number of YMCA SA aquatic participations
(# visits to a YMCA aquatic centre)



Swim lessons delivered by YMCA SA
(class attendances)



* refer research citations on page 46.

Aquatics



YMCA South Australia continues to lead the SA aquatic sector in terms of customer satisfaction and advocacy.

This amplifies social impact by encouraging greater participation, frequency, connection and retention.

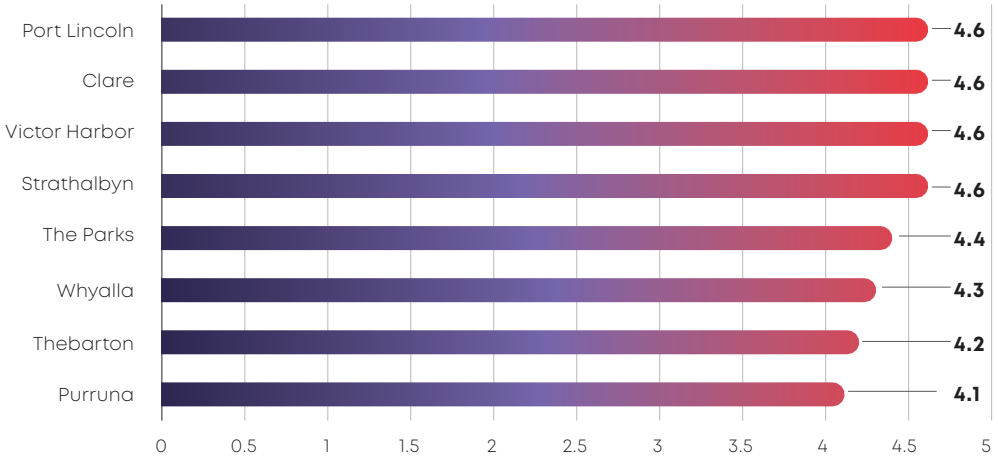
FY26 Net Promoter Score

64.4

Average NPS across aquatic and recreation centres operated by YMCA South Australia

(50 is considered the benchmark for "Excellent")

Customer Ratings by YMCA SA Aquatic Centre
(Google Reviews 2026)



Source: Google. Accessed July 2026

The highest-performing aquatic centres in Australia have customer ratings of **4.0 and above**. **Notably, 100%** of aquatic centres managed by YMCA South Australia were above this benchmark in FY26.

Gymnastics

What

Gymnastics includes both recreational and competition gymnastics and other associated acrobatic sports such as trampolining, tumbling and the like.

YMCA Gymnastics is an affiliated Gymnastics SA Program with high standards of quality, professionalism and safety.

Who

YMCA Gymnastics caters for toddlers right through to Australian National Levels representatives. The largest cohort is **children aged 1 to 15 years**. Typically, there is a 70-30 female-to-male split. Some continue their participation by becoming qualified gymnastics coaches. Others branch off into complementary activities such as diving and dance.

Why

According to AusPlay (Sport Australia), gymnastics is the **2nd most popular national sports activity** for children aged 1-4 years, and the **5th for children aged 5-14 years**.

Gymnastics is an inclusive sport that develops foundational skills, strength and flexibility, discipline, focus and confidence. It's especially appealing to parents who want their children to develop a broad athletic base.

How

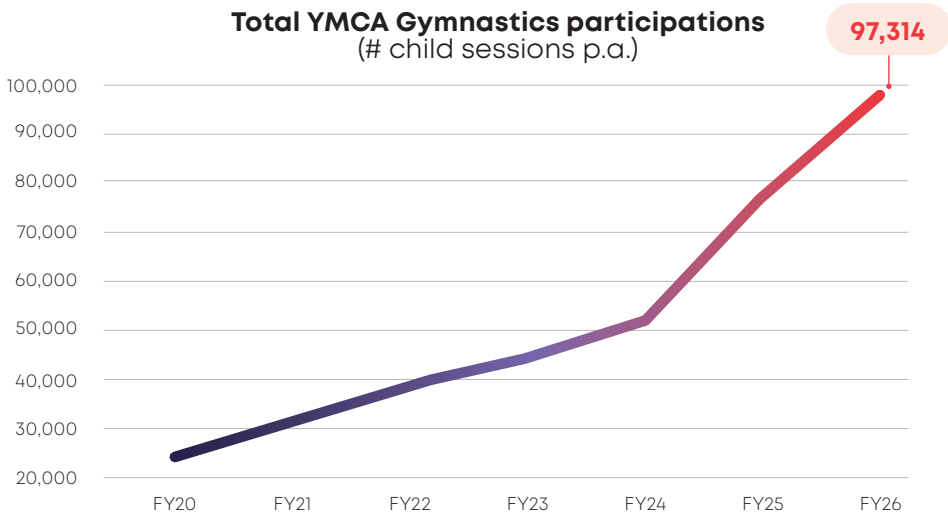
Research indicates a variety of benefits for physical, mental, social and sporting development. These include:

- development of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)
- improved physical self-concept and confidence
- balance and coordination development
- cognitive development (mastery mindset, productive perseverance, spatial reasoning, sequential memory, etc)
- social skills (incl. teamwork, listening, emotional regulation).



27%

Growth in gymnastics participations at YMCA South Australia in FY26, continuing the five-year trend



This represents a four-fold increase in participation at the Y over the FY20-26 period, outperforming the national gymnastics membership growth rate (by a factor of 10x). In turn, this represents substantial inroads into improving children's foundational skills and wellbeing.

Today we are the largest provider of gymnastics in South Australia.

* refer research citations on page 46.

Stadium Sports

What

Stadium sports refers to the broad range of (mostly team-based) sports played in **community recreation centres** such as basketball, volleyball and futsal (all of which were created by the YMCA). Others include netball, badminton, squash, pickleball, roller skating, and associated school competitions.

Who

A wide range of **children, youth and adults** play stadium sports – ranging from school programs and social competitions through to first-class competitions.

Why

Community recreation centres provide year-round, all-weather, day-and-night access to sporting facilities. This plays a critical role in increasing the participation rates, frequency and consistency of healthy physical activity in Australia (with 28% of all sport and fitness activity occurring in such centres). They also serve as important social hubs.

By way of example, **basketball** ranks as the second-highest team participation sport in Australia, with 1.3 million players. This is split around 50-50 between informal and organised sport. In that sense it has greater community participation than high-profile team sports such as Australian rules football.

How

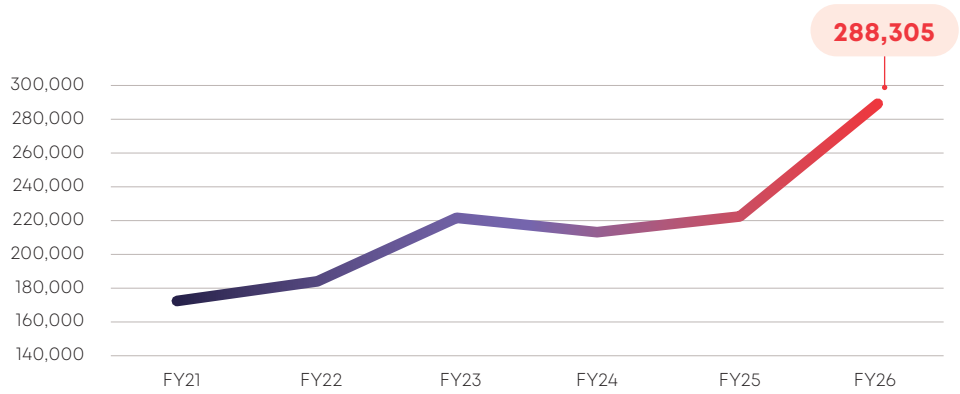
Research consistently supports the benefits of facilitated community sport and recreation – including enhanced physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connectedness. Amongst many others the benefits also include:

- reduced risk of chronic diseases
- fostering belonging and connection (reducing loneliness)
- improving social cohesion across diverse populations.

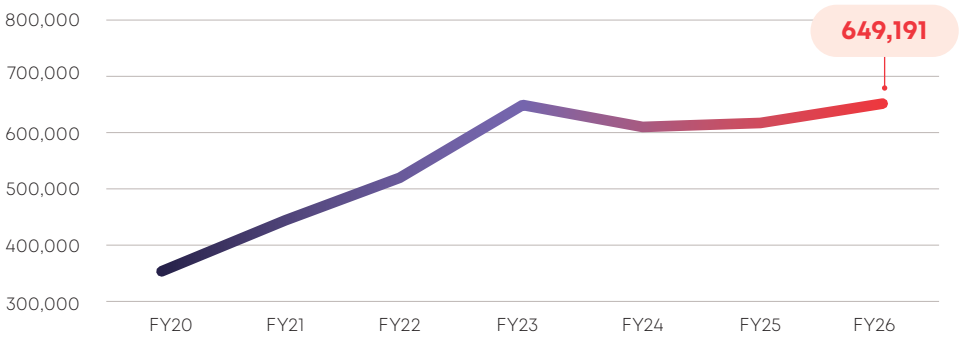
30%

Growth in participation in YMCA-run competitions at South Australian recreation centres in FY26.

Participations in YMCA social competitions
(# participations in YMCA SA-organised social sports)



Total stadium sports participations
(# visits to a YMCA SA-managed stadium)



* refer research citations on page 46.

Health & Fitness

What

Health and fitness in our context refers to gym and studio-based activities from strength-based gym work and personal training, through to group fitness classes and Pilates.

Who

A wide range of South Australians are involved— from Active Youth members (13-15 years) through to older adults. The Y runs such programs in both Adelaide and the key regional centres of Victor Harbor, Clare, Whyalla and Port Lincoln.

Why

Fitness/gym activities are the **2nd most popular physical activity among Australians** aged 15+, with 6.4 million participants nationally (34% of the adult population), ranking only behind recreational walking. This makes it around five times more prevalent than even the most popular team sports.

That said, 78% of Australian adults aged 18–64 are insufficiently physically active, relative to national guidelines. So, there is much more to be done. For these reasons, it continues to be a core part of YMCA South Australia's social impact efforts.

How

Research consistently reinforces the general understanding that such gym and fitness programs (and the associated public investment in community facilities) have significant effects on overall health and wellbeing, including:

- prevention and management of noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes
- improving cardiorespiratory health and body fat measures
- reducing symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety, improving cognitive function, and enhancing sleep quality
- in adolescents, promoting bone health, encouraging healthy growth and development of muscle, and improving motor and cognitive development.

9%

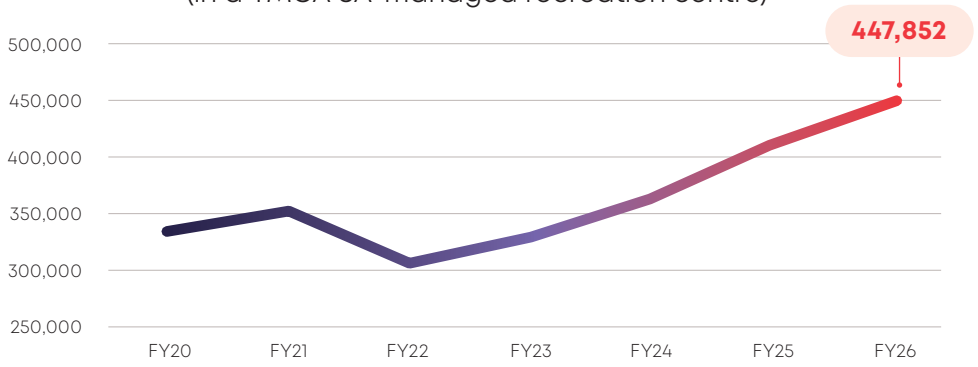
Growth in our gym and fitness class participation in FY26, well ahead of the national average.

An additional 37,200 participations during the year

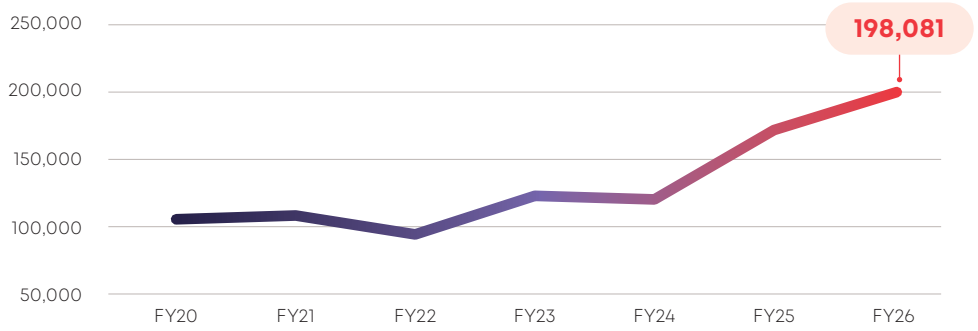
15%

Growth in participation among older adults.

Total gym & group fitness visits
(in a YMCA SA-managed recreation centre)



Gym & fitness participation by older adults
(in a YMCA SA-managed recreation centre)



* refer research citations on page 46.

Allied Health

What

YMCA South Australia's **Allied Health practice** comprises a team of four physiotherapists and five exercise physiologists (EPs), delivering individual consultations, aquatic therapy, clinical Pilates and group clinical exercise programs across five Adelaide locations.

Who

The Y serves the **full spectrum** of South Australians —ranging from those playing sports in school, through to older adults and those who are managing chronic health conditions and/or disabilities. Given the Y's mission and not-for-profit model, those **from vulnerable or at-risk cohorts** are a particular focus.

Why

Allied Health services play an increasingly important part in **improving the physical and psychological function** of Australians, particularly as the population ages and the prevalence of chronic conditions rises.

Having physios and EPs on-staff helps us develop an **evidence-based, whole-person, integrated approach** to improving the health and wellbeing of SA communities—both as standalone services and as advisers and as a complement to other Y programs such as aquatics, fitness and gymnastics.

How

Research has found Allied Health services have positive, meaningful impacts on:

- chronic condition management (with 80% of Australians over 65 years having one or more chronic conditions, representing 75% of the total non-fatal burden of disease)
- quality of life and psychological wellbeing, including for people experiencing isolation and psychological distress
- reducing overall health costs and encouraging a more cost-efficient health system in Australia

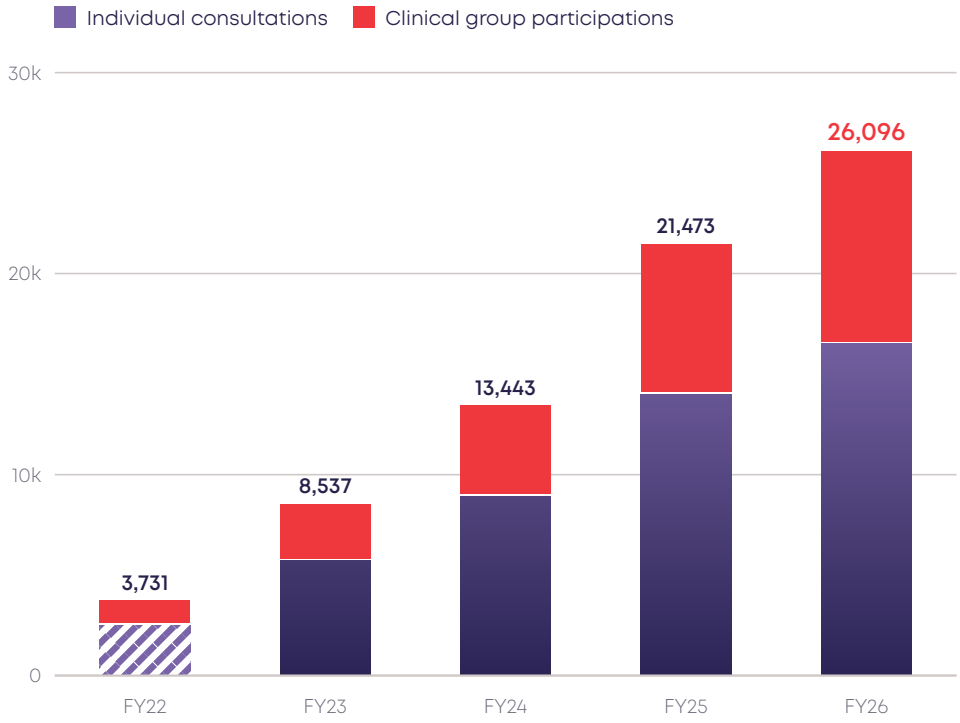
A Deloitte Access Economics report found that accredited EPs deliver an average return of $10.50 in benefits for every $1 a client spends engaging their services.

* refer research citations on page 46.

6x
Growth in Allied Health reach over the past four years

60%+
Average annual growth

Allied Health reach has grown more than 60% a year for four years
(consultations and group participations, FY22 to FY26)



FY22 individual consultations (hatched) is an estimate.

Allied Health

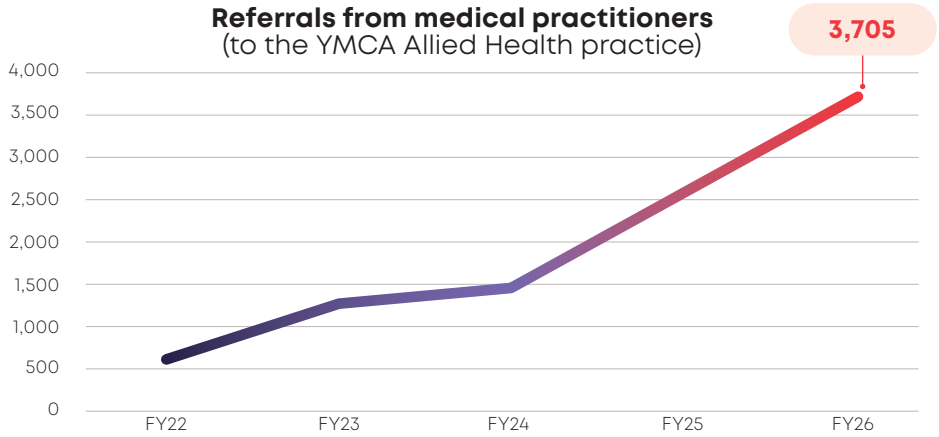
50%

Growth in GP referrals to YMCA South Australia's Allied Health team in FY26.

A growing proportion of clients are older adults or people living with disability.



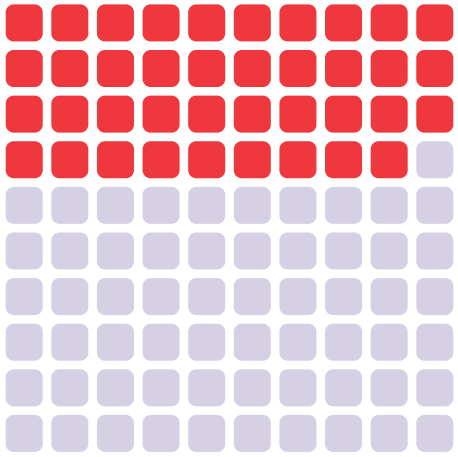
Referrals from medical practitioners
(to the YMCA Allied Health practice)



Vulnerable clients are those with chronic or complex conditions or other vulnerability factors, including clients funded through:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
- MyAged Care
- Medicare (Chronic Disease Management program).

Vulnerable clients (FY26)
(% of individual consultations with vulnerable or at-risk clients)



39%

6,403 of 16,504
individual consultations with vulnerable or at-risk clients

* refer research citations on page 46.

OSHC

What

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) programs are provided by YMCA South Australia (YMCA SA) in partnership with primary schools— before and after school, and during vacation periods.

Who

OSHC programs are for **children aged 4–12 years** across metropolitan and regional areas of South Australia, across all school sectors (government, independent and Catholic).

Why

Parents need to participate in the workforce, and to find their own work-life balance – knowing their children are in a safe and supportive environment.

Children need healthy developmental, physical, play, social, safety, nutrition and wellbeing support throughout their day.

YMCA SA is the largest OSHC provider in our state, with a dedicated team of 679 educators (up 20% on FY25).

The YMCA has been a global pioneer in after-school programs. Collectively it is one of Australia's largest providers.

How

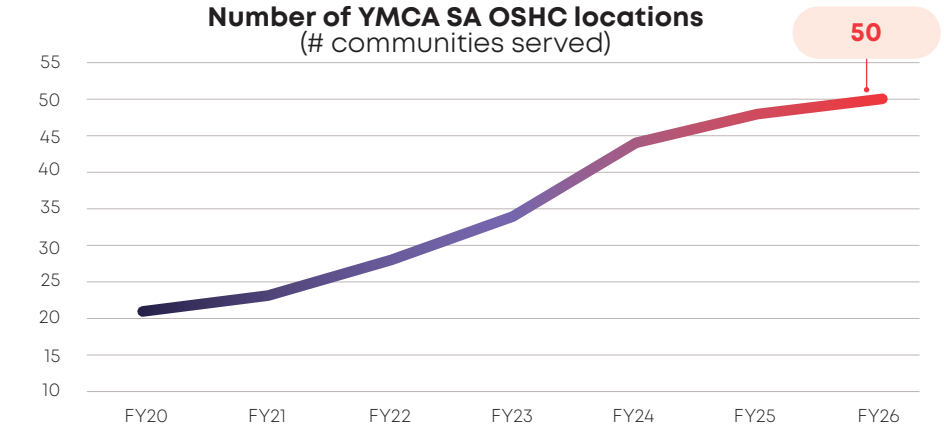
Research studies have reported a variety of benefits for family and child wellbeing and development, including:

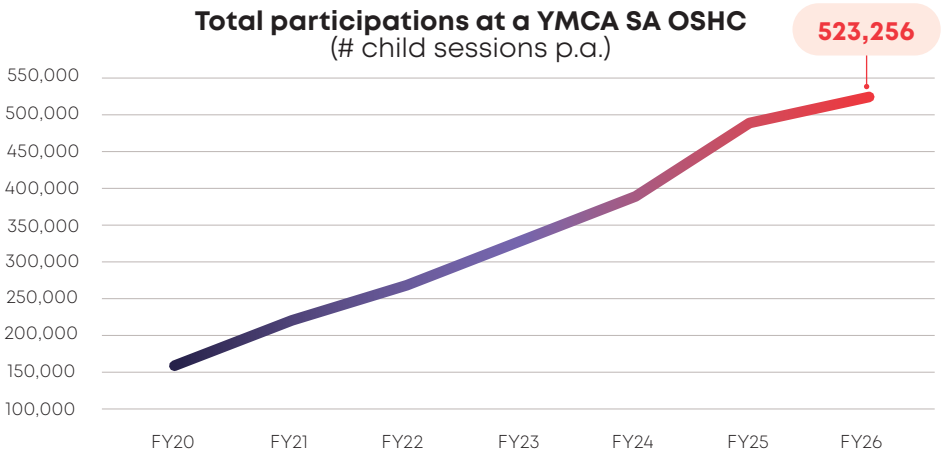
- enhanced social connection and sense of belonging
- prosocial behaviours (acting in a way that benefits others)
- safe spaces and support for emotional wellbeing
- cognitive development and early identification of issues
- increased physical activity and reduced screen time
- increased creative engagement (e.g. arts, music, drama)
- inclusion for children with additional needs
- practical support for working families, leading to greater workforce participation and reduced family stress.

* refer research citations on page 46.

50
Communities reached through YMCA South Australia's OSHC services in FY26.

650+
Additional families supported over the past year.





Early Learning

What

YMCA SA runs **Early Learning & Care (ELC)** centres in selected locations where there is unmet need – both independently and as part of a Public-Private Partnership.

Who

Early learning programs are for **children aged 0-5 years**. Currently these operate in the northern and southern metropolitan areas of Adelaide, and in Strathalbyn.

Why

Parents need to know their young children are getting off to the best possible start in life. Additionally, they need to continue with (or restart) their own careers and income streams at a key time in the lives of young families.

Support for **children** to learn and thrive in their first five years has a disproportionately positive effect on their entire lives. Children learn more during those years than at any other time in life. Hence, early learning is one of the most important social impact interventions we can make, for both young people now and our community and economy in the long run.

Collectively the Y is one of the largest providers of early learning in Australia, with around 150 locations nationwide.

How

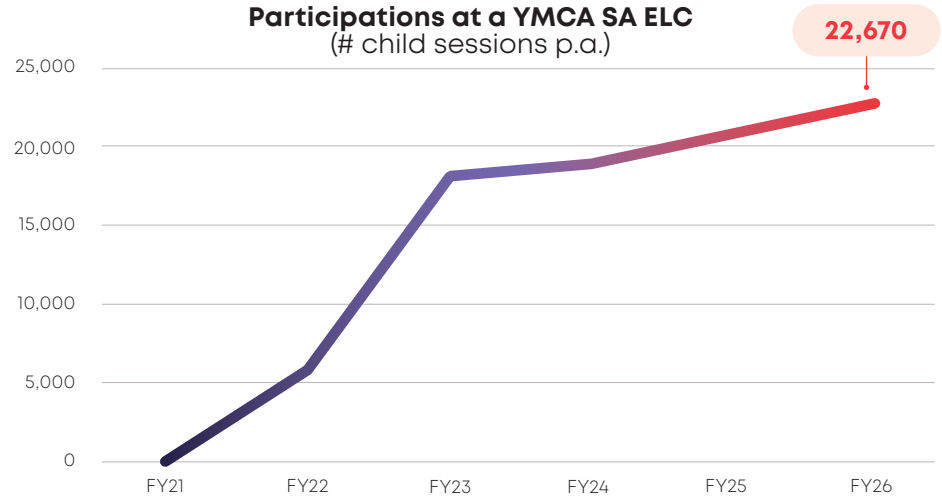
Research studies have reported a range of developmental benefits for children in quality early learning programs:

- developing learning-related skills, there being a positive association between ELC and greater school readiness
- social development and teamwork
- self-regulation (adapting behaviour, emotions, concentration)
- communication skills (e.g. language development, articulating thoughts, creative expression).

* refer research citations on page 46.

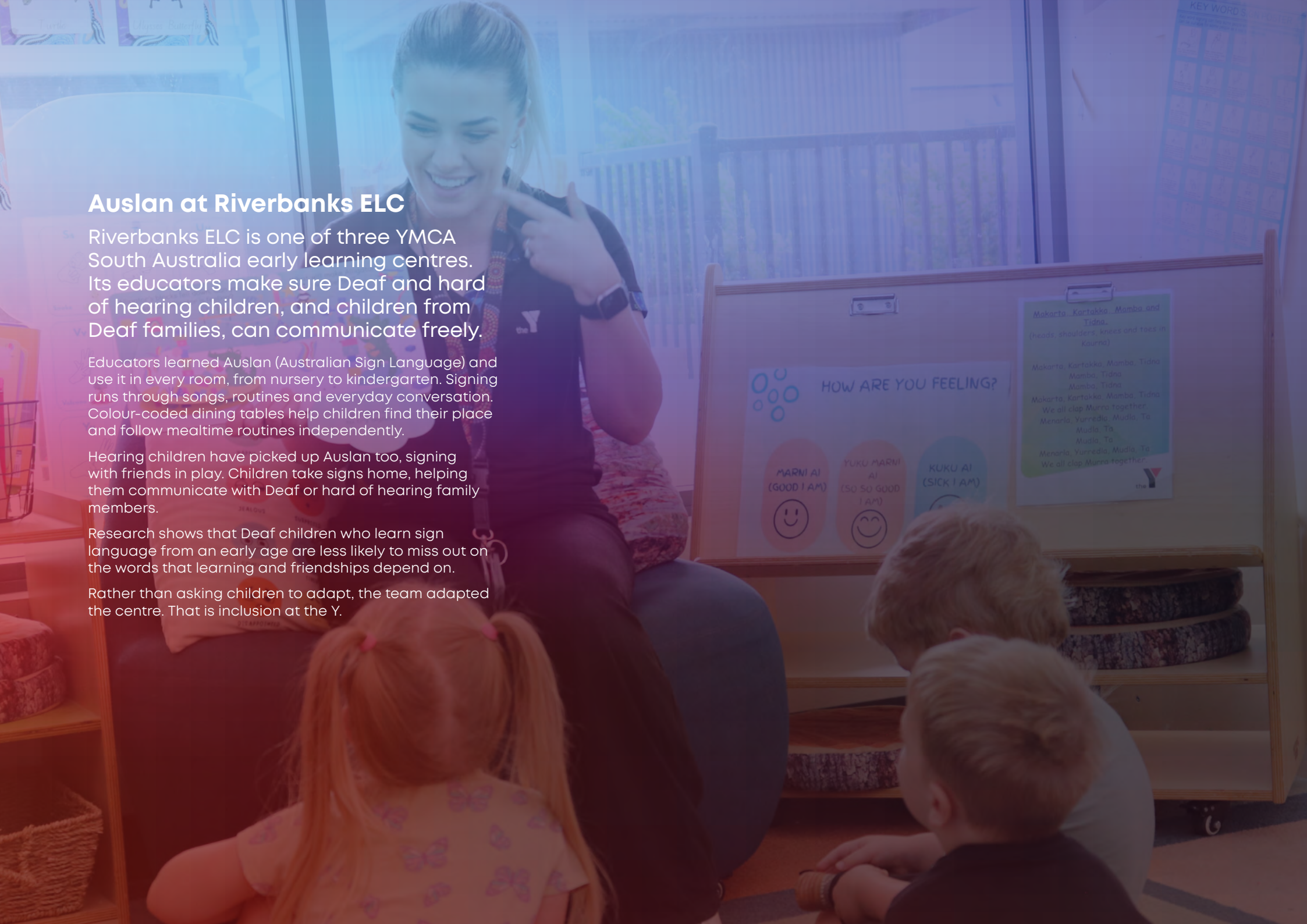
10%

Growth in YMCA South Australia Early Learning Centre participations in FY26, outperforming national sector growth.



Aldinga ELC: Flying Start 3-Year-Old Preschool

In Term 1 2026, YMCA South Australia's Aldinga Early Learning Centre began delivering Flying Start, the South Australian Government's teacher-led 3-year-old preschool. It was the only centre in the area to offer it, with learning shaped around local needs. In 2024, 24.5% of South Australian children started school developmentally vulnerable, slightly above the national 23.5%. Flying Start aims to address that gap. The Aldinga model will guide a second YMCA South Australia rollout in 2027.



Auslan at Riverbanks ELC

Riverbanks ELC is one of three YMCA South Australia early learning centres. Its educators make sure Deaf and hard of hearing children, and children from Deaf families, can communicate freely.

Educators learned Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and use it in every room, from nursery to kindergarten. Signing runs through songs, routines and everyday conversation. Colour-coded dining tables help children find their place and follow mealtime routines independently.

Hearing children have picked up Auslan too, signing with friends in play. Children take signs home, helping them communicate with Deaf or hard of hearing family members.

Research shows that Deaf children who learn sign language from an early age are less likely to miss out on the words that learning and friendships depend on.

Rather than asking children to adapt, the team adapted the centre. That is inclusion at the Y.

Youth Theatre



What

YMCA SA's **Youth Theatre** builds confidence, social skills and creative expression through improvisation, play and performance. The program runs year-round workshops, performance bootcamps and two major productions annually, welcoming everyone from first-timers to experienced performers. Our multi-award-winning Broadway Bootcamp develops musical theatre skills in singing, dancing, acting and stagecraft under experienced tutors.

Who

Youth Theatre is for young people aged 6-19 years. A daytime program is also run for adults. Participants come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, talents and interests.

Though the program is based at the YMCA SA-run Parks Theatre complex in the Western suburbs of Adelaide, it attracts people from around the metropolitan area.

Why

Youth Theatre addresses **critical developmental needs** during adolescence when young people are forming identity, building social connections, and developing character. It's a great option for those with artistic flair or aspirations, and those for whom sporting activities may be less attractive.

How

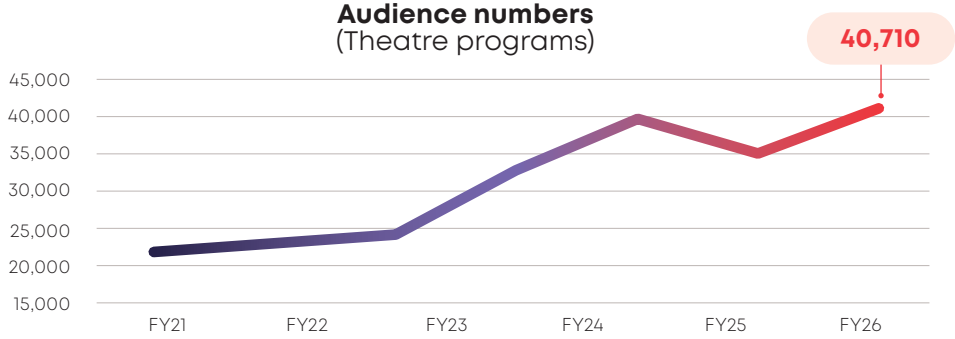
Research has found significant benefits for young people:

- a University of Sydney study with Australian Theatre for Young People found significant improvements in mental health, self-esteem and self-efficacy among 12 to 17-year-olds
- development of prosocial behaviours including cooperation, assertiveness and self-control, while building empathy through experiencing different perspectives
- cognitive development and critical thinking through collaboration and communication.

40,710
Record theatre audience numbers in FY26.

100%
Capacity reached again in Youth Theatre programs in FY26.

Audience numbers
(Theatre programs)



Theatre Award

In 2026, Ceri Hutton, the YMCA's Manager of Performing Arts & Events, received the Theatre Association of South Australia's Matt Byrne Award for her outstanding work in creating first-time opportunities in theatre.



* refer research citations on page 46.

Youth Parliament

What

The YMCA South Australia **Youth Parliament** is a non-partisan program designed to offer young people a platform to develop and voice their views on topics of importance to our society. It fosters leadership and advocacy skills, enhances civic engagement and understanding of democracy, and builds social connection with other passionate young South Australians.

Who

Youth Parliament is for young people aged 15-25 years.

Junior Parliament is for those aged 12-15 years.

Participants come from across metropolitan and regional SA and a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and interests.

Why

While young Australians care about civic issues, many feel **disconnected from formal political processes**. For example:

- civics knowledge among students is at its lowest since testing began: in 2024, only 43% of Year 6 and 28% of Year 10 students met the proficiency standard
- 63% of young adults have low confidence in Australia's political system.

The South Australian Government is now making civics and citizenship a cross-curriculum priority in our schools.

How

Program evaluations of Youth Parliament programs around Australia have found several consistent benefits:

- increased self-assurance, confidence to speak publicly, and a stronger sense of personal agency
- deeper understanding of parliamentary processes, democratic systems, and civic responsibilities
- a greater sense of belonging, cross-cultural dialogue, and community engagement.

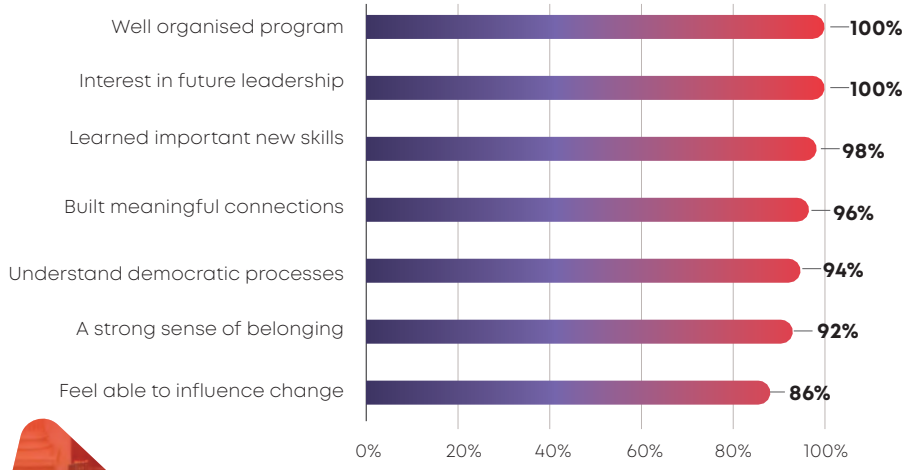
* refer research citations on page 46.

90%+

Positive participant feedback across most measures of Youth Parliament program effectiveness in 2026.

Participants reported gaining new skills, building meaningful connections and developing a stronger understanding of democracy.

Youth Parliament program effectiveness
(2026 participant survey, n=53)







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