



Annual Report

Financial Year
2024-2025



Every child deserves to thrive

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Life Ed NSW/ACT acknowledges and pays respect to the many First Nations and Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where we live, work and provide our services. We recognise and celebrate their spiritual and ongoing connection to culture and Country. We pay respects to all Elders past and present, and with their guidance are committed to working to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are safe and inspired with the freedom to flourish.

Life Ed NSW/ACT adheres to the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Child Safe Principles. We are committed to promoting and prioritising child safety and uphold the rights of children and young people to be safe.

Looking back on a milestone year

Message from the Chair and CEO

In the past financial year, over 260,000 children and young people from more than 2,800 schools and early learning centres benefited from the Life Ed program - an outstanding achievement.

The 2024-25 financial year has also been a defining chapter for Life Ed, marked by growth, new opportunities, and meaningful milestones. This year, we proudly celebrated 45 years of empowering children and young people with the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices and build positive futures. This anniversary is a testament to the enduring impact of our work and the trust placed in us by communities.

A major highlight was becoming custodians of the Peer Support Program, an internationally respected, evidence-based initiative that nurtures young leaders to foster resilience, empathy, and positive relationships within schools. This new partnership aligns with our mission, enhancing our capacity to provide a holistic approach to student wellbeing that supports an even wider network of schools.

We also expanded Healthy Harold's Festival of Health in Parkes, Moree, and Kempsey. These vibrant community events brought together schools, families, and local health services in a united effort to promote wellbeing. The Festival exemplifies our commitment to a whole-of-community approach, recognising that lasting health outcomes are achieved when everyone works together.

This year, we enhanced our Reality Now program for secondary students by expanding teacher lesson plans, assignments, and parent video resources, providing practical support around vaping and substance use. Life Ed also contributed to the NSW Government's Parliamentary Inquiry into vaping, ensuring the voices of young people and educators helped shape important health policies.

Additionally, we proudly launched Talk About It, our puberty education program for primary students, designed to foster confidence and understanding during this important stage.

This year also marked an important leadership transition. The Hon. Alan Cadman OAM, whose visionary leadership and unwavering dedication have been instrumental in shaping Life Ed's success, will transition to Chair Emeritus in 2025. Alan's legacy is woven into the fabric of our organisation, and we are deeply grateful for his continued guidance and inspiration.

None of these achievements would be possible without the passion and commitment of our incredible staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters.

Together, we are building healthier futures for children and young people across NSW and the ACT. As we look forward, we remain focused on collaboration, innovation, and impact ensuring Life Ed continues to be a trusted partner in the health and wellbeing of every child we serve.

Thank you,

Ken Keith, OAM
Chair

Jonathon Peatfield
Chief Executive Officer



Message from our Patron

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales



As Governor of New South Wales and Patron of Life Ed NSW, I am pleased to extend my warmest regards to all members, supporters, and partners of this remarkable organisation.

This year, Life Ed celebrates its 45th anniversary, a significant milestone that highlights the organisation's enduring commitment to empower children and young people to lead healthy, fulfilled, and vibrant lives. Life Ed remains a vital force in equipping young with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to thrive.



Pictured L-R: Christine Bowen, Board Director; Jonathon Peatfield, CEO; Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales; Terese Hooper, Chief Operating Officer

Adding to this legacy, 2025 also features an exciting new chapter as Life Ed NSW becomes custodian of the Peer Support Program. This partnership unites two respected and enduring wellbeing education providers, each with a proud history of empowering young people to make positive choices, build resilience, and foster strong connections within their school communities.

Throughout my time as Governor, I have witnessed the enduring impact of Life Ed's work, particularly in reaching children across metropolitan, regional and remote areas. The beloved Healthy Harold remains a symbol of accessible and engaging health education for generations of young Australians.

I commend Life Ed for its ongoing commitment to innovation and adaptability, ensuring programs respond to emerging challenges such as digital wellbeing, mental health, respectful relationships, and the impacts of alcohol and other drugs. Initiatives like Healthy Harold's Festivals of Health have expanded regional outreach and strengthened whole-community engagement.

These achievements are made possible by the tireless dedication of educators, volunteers, partners, and supporters. I thank all those involved for their collaboration and commitment to nurturing the wellbeing of children and families across New South Wales.

With my warmest regards and best wishes for the year ahead,

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales
Patron, Life Ed NSW/ACT



Life Ed's 45 years of impact

When most Australians think back to drug education in schools, a core memory is unlocked. It centres on an iconic giraffe named Healthy Harold and the way this cheeky character transported children into a world where the stars twinkle at the flick of a switch, technology brings science to life, adventures leap off the walls, and students walk away with lessons for life.

It's magic. It's Life Ed.

Like the magic of education, if you reveal what's behind the curtain you will see much more. For Life Ed, the largest and most recognised provider in preventative health education in schools, a rich 45-year history is unveiled, laden with stories of impact, moments of joy, and generations of empowerment.

Welcome to the "classroom of the 21st century"

The year was 1979 when Reverend Ted Noffs, of the Wayside Chapel, founded Life Ed. His vision was built on a powerful concept: "each and every child is unique, a true marvel in body, mind and spirit." During a time when illicit drugs and the fear of its widespread impact were rife, this was a novel response to the growing crisis.

While the community struggled with trying to rehabilitate a new generation of drug users, and shock and awe were the focus of most education campaigns, Ted challenged these approaches and became an advocate for early prevention.

Instead of scare tactics, he saw the value in empowering young people with knowledge, so he created a room above his Chapel which would be known as the "classroom of the 21st century" — inspired by The Robert Crown Health Education Centre in Chicago.



1979

- Life Ed inception
- First Healthy Harold



1982

First Life Ed van launched
(in the Tweed region)



1987

Life Ed Colyton Office
opens



2000

TAM circa 2000

When education becomes a movement

When the demand for the newly founded program soon outgrew the Kings Cross classroom, the first mobile classroom (van) was built in 1982.

It was during this time that it became obvious that Life Ed was more than just a program. It was a movement that mobilised education, as well as passionate individuals and groups impacted by the drug crisis. These advocates began to raise funds and awareness, and with this, came the expansion of the program.

“The 80’s saw Life Ed become trailblazers in key focus areas like social and emotional learning, before it was included in the Australian curriculum,” Jonathon Peatfield, CEO, Life Ed NSW/ACT explained.

“While the program was created to address the rising drug problem, it was always designed to look at the child as a whole and included opportunities for students to learn about physical health and wellbeing which explored topics like individual strengths, self-respect, assertive communication, stress management, and help-seeking to build overall confidence and resilience in children.”

As we entered the 2000s, with the advent of camera phones, smartphones, the internet, the 24/7 news cycle, and social media, Life Ed developed one of Australia’s first eSafety education modules in 2013. bCyberwise explores cybersafety, cybersecurity, and cyber ethics, helping children navigate issues like online bullying, fake news, and unwanted contact.

As discussions about respectful relationships gained importance due to rising gender-based abuse and violence in the early 2000s, Life Ed launched the Respect, Relate, Connect module in 2018. This program takes a comprehensive look at relationships through empathy, communication, body clues, and help-seeking behaviours, emphasising how we value, accept, and treat each other.

More recently, as vaping has become a growing concern nationwide, Life Ed introduced an Australian-first education experience for primary students. Co-designed by secondary students for Years 5 and 6, it uses peer-to-peer learning to deliver evidence-based messages on this evolving issue.

“While these modules differ in topic, what they all share is the way in which they deliver evidence-backed, curriculum-aligned and strengths-based lessons for life to students by celebrating what makes them unique, in keeping with Ted Noffs’ vision 45 years ago,” Jonathon Peatfield said.



2014
Program reaches
5 million children

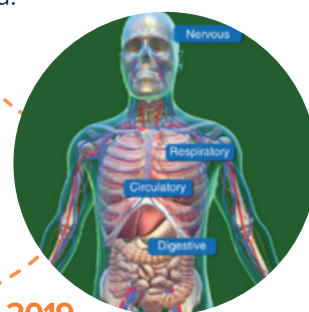


2016
Decisions program
launched



2018

- Reality Now launched
- Pop-up classrooms launched



2019

- Life Ed celebrates 40 years
- Augmented reality app, TAM-e launched



2013
bCyberwise launch



2025
Keep reading to learn our
exciting new innovations
and initiatives



2020

- Early Years Learning program updated

Year in numbers

A data snapshot



2,800

schools and early learning centres accessed our program



268,500

students participated in a Life Ed session throughout the year



5,500

teachers observed and assessed the learning outcomes of the Life Ed program



114,200

students living in regional, rural and remote communities participated in a Life Ed session



6

junior primary school modules refreshed



5,200

primary students shared their feedback on the Life Ed program

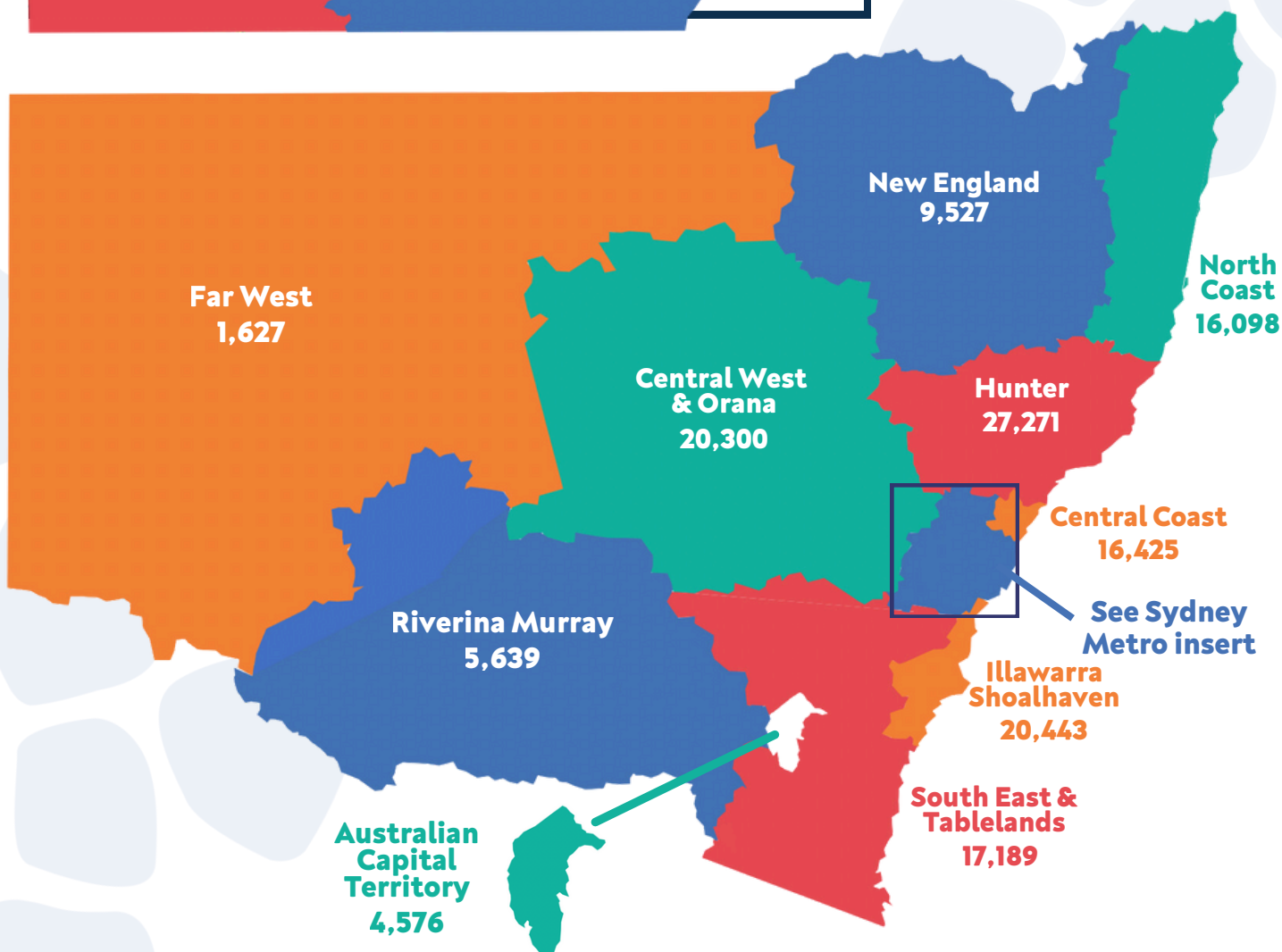
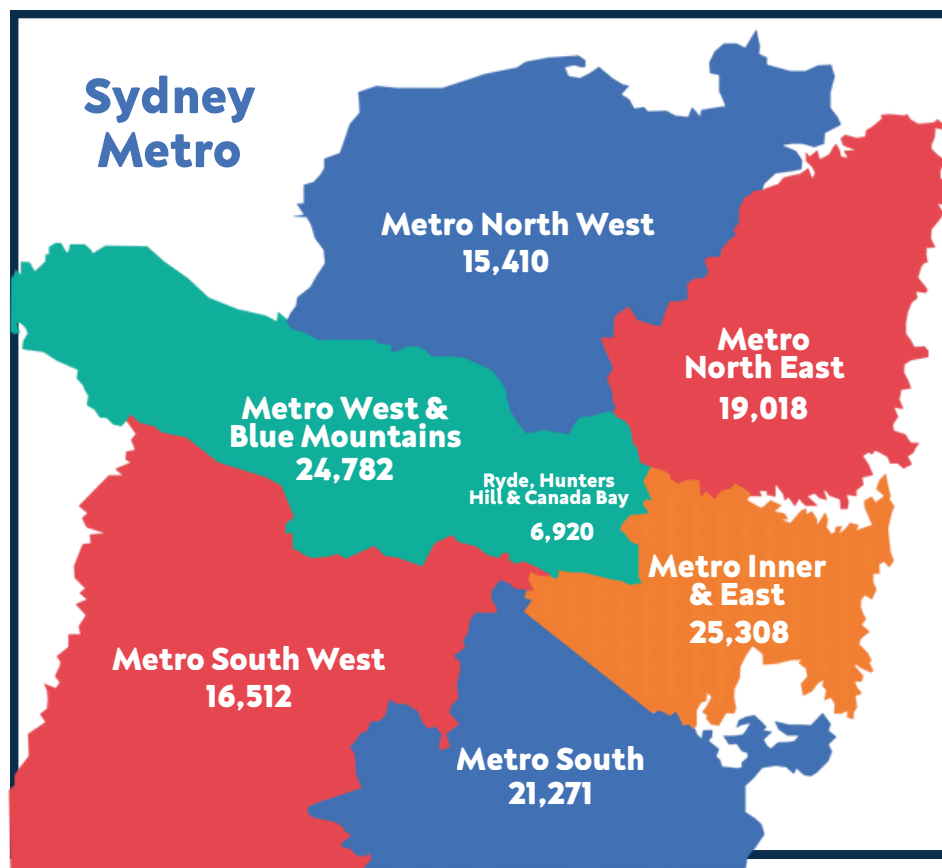


2

programs launched by Life Ed, including Talk About It and Harold's Online World



Reach across NSW/ACT





Impact in 2024/25

What students had to say

In FY24-25, Life Ed surveyed more than 5,238 students who participated in our modules, to assess the effectiveness of our program in improving their health outcomes.

Positive results were found both in behavioural change intention and increase in knowledge awareness.



83% of students reported that they learned something new during the Life Ed session

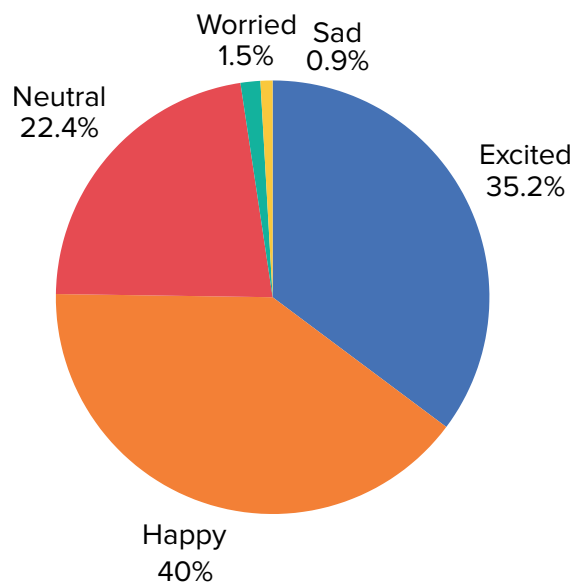


75% of students reported being 'excited' or 'happy' about the Life Ed program



83% of students reported the Life Ed Educator made the session interesting

How students felt about the Life Ed session:



94%

of students said they will make good decisions about alcohol and drugs after what they have learnt

96%

of students said they know some of the effects of alcohol on the body

93%

of students said they know the laws relating to using and buying alcohol

90%

of students said they understand the positive and negative use of online communication

87%

of students said they can recognise, react and report unsafe or unwanted contact

88%

of students said they understand that drugs change the way the body works

84%

of students said they know body clues that can tell them when they are unsafe

80%

of students said they understand how healthy eating, exercise and medicines affect the body

"I learned that just because your friends are doing something doesn't mean you have to"

"I learned how drugs affect different parts of the body."

"Harold told me that eating lots of different good foods will give me more energy to play with my friends and learn."

"That the impact of a decision, either it be good or bad, affects you and others"

"I learned about giving people consent before they take or share a photo of me"

"I learned there are ways we can protect ourselves from cyberbullying"

What teachers had to say

This year, **5,500 primary school teachers** utilised Life Ed's Teacher Assessment Tool (TAT) to observe and assess the learning of over **114,000 primary students** across all thirteen primary Life Ed modules. The results below indicate the percentage of primary teachers who observed their class achieve the following learning outcomes:

Evidence of Learning (Participation Overall):

77%

Cooperatively solved problems

79%

Participated in activities that supported and challenged understanding

75%

Engaged in collaborative learning

77%

Explained problems or solutions to peers

78%

Explored concepts through questions

Healthy Harold and Peer Support unite

Building stronger, more connected school communities

In 2024, Life Ed became the custodian of the Peer Support Program - a trusted, student-led wellbeing initiative that has empowered generations of young people to build connections, support one another, and step into leadership.

As custodians, Life Ed is entrusted with the legacy and future of a program that has empowered generations of young people to lead, support, and inspire one another. By integrating Peer Support with existing Life Ed programs, the organisation delivers a holistic, whole-school approach that builds resilience, fosters inclusion, and strengthens school communities across New South Wales.

Helping students thrive

At Oxley Park Public School in Western Sydney, Year 6 students lead younger peers in small groups focused on relationships, resilience, optimism, and anti-bullying. The Peer Support Program represents a sustained, school-wide commitment to building connection and belonging across the student body.

“Peer Support has become one of our foundational programs,” said David MacVean, Deputy Principal. “It empowers students and builds their confidence to manage life and the complexities of school.”

The school, with over 700 students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, has embedded a culture of peer connection to ensure every child feels included and supported.

Research supports this approach. Jonathon Peatfield, CEO of Life Ed NSW/ACT, noted that “students who feel connected at school tend to do better academically, socially, and emotionally. They are more likely to attend school, engage fully, and seek help when needed.”

Addressing social disconnection

Schools are increasingly facing challenges related to student disconnection and emotional distress, issues that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

“While immediate disruptions have lessened, schools continue to navigate significant mental health challenges,” said Jonathon Peatfield.

The Peer Support Program supports schools in helping students rebuild social and emotional skills through structured peer interaction. This initiative promotes empathy, problem-solving, and teamwork alongside academic skills.

Expanding leadership opportunities

Peer Support schools, including Oxley Park Public School and Newcastle High School, offer leadership roles to all senior students through the program, broadening the definition of leadership beyond traditional roles such as captains or councils.

This approach fosters confidence and responsibility among students who may be shy, neurodivergent, or still developing their leadership style. According to classroom teacher Fiona Flavell, some students who typically avoid volunteering demonstrate significant growth and ownership through participation in the program.



“I’ve seen students who wouldn’t normally volunteer for anything take ownership of a group and grow week by week”

Classroom teacher Fiona Flavell

Shaping school culture

Building a culture of belonging also involves preventing bullying. Beyond formal policies, the everyday culture - how students and staff interact and which behaviours are reinforced - is crucial. At one primary school who participated in the Peer Support Program, students collaborated to create a “bully blocker pledge,” reinforcing positive values and shifting attitudes within the school community.

“Building an inclusive culture is about embedding expectations into the daily rhythm of school life,” said Jonathon Peatfield.

Activating the wider school community

Inclusion begins at home and extends into the school community. Through the Peer Support Program, families are encouraged to discuss belonging and social connection with their children, while supporting schools to provide spaces and opportunities for all students to connect and participate fully in leadership.

The Peer Support Program’s impact is enduring. Ruby, a Year 6 Peer Leader at Oxley Park Public School, reflected on the friendships she has developed across year levels and the joy of supporting younger students in their growth and confidence.



“I love that I can make new friends that are younger than me” she says. “If they see me, they come up and give me a big hug. I love teaching little kids so they can grow up and be big like me”

Ruby, Year 6 Peer Leader at Oxley Park Public School



Talk About It

Helping kids navigate puberty

This year Life Ed launched the Talk About It program, offering a series of innovative, age-appropriate sessions designed to address crucial topics in Sexual Health Education such as puberty.

Aligned with the NSW Syllabus and Health and Physical Education Australian Curriculum, the program equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the physical, social and emotional changes they experience as they grow.

Talk About It provides age-appropriate, evidence-based information on key topics such as:

- the physical and emotional changes of puberty
- personal safety and protective behaviours
- introduction to menstrual products
- building confidence to navigate this important transition

Delivered by specialist sexual health educators in the classroom, the program creates a safe, supportive environment where students can ask questions anonymously and engage in open conversations, empowering young people with knowledge and self-care strategies.

Recognising that puberty can be a challenging and sometimes uncomfortable topic, Talk About It is also designed to support teachers and parents. We provide practical tools, resources, and guidance to help adults confidently navigate these important conversations, ensuring students receive consistent, accurate information both at school and at home.

Feedback:

Since its inception, Talk About It has reached 50 schools.

“Thank you so much for coming to our school to deliver such wonderful and informative lessons. The feedback from teachers and students has been excellent, and we look forward to having you back next year.”

Teacher, Carlton Public School

“The Talk About It session was interesting, and helped me to feel less worried about going through puberty”

Student - Wisemans Ferry Public School



Healthy Harold keeps kids safe online through earlier education

With recent data from the eSafety Commissioner* revealing a 450 per cent surge in cyberbullying over the past five years and continuing news reports of the tragedies that occur as a result of online activity, Healthy Harold and the Life Ed team are bringing online safety education forward to keep kids safe earlier.

Through the launch of the new module, Harold's Online World, Life Ed aims to equip Year 1 and 2 students early with the tools to stay safe online.

"Like all of Life Ed's modules, Harold's Online World is designed to teach kids about topics they may soon confront in their world, empowering them to critically evaluate the issues at hand.

We want to give kids the chance to practice making positive choices in a safe environment before being confronted with difficult decisions." says Jonathon Peatfield, CEO of Life Ed NSW/ACT.

Harold's Online World encourages students to balance screen time with offline activities, recognise and report harmful content, engage in positive online interactions, and seek help from trusted adults.

"It's not just about online safety. To effectively embed learning about this topic, we must explore how we value, accept and treat each other across all domains. That's why this new module takes a comprehensive, age-appropriate approach to education that addresses the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of students.

This type of holistic education is what Life Ed prides itself in. Our more than 45 years of experience in schools has taught us that scare tactics don't encourage long-term change. It's about empowering children to learn about their bodies and celebrate their strengths, to instill confidence and resilience," shares Jonathon.

As a Trusted eSafety Provider, endorsed by the eSafety Commissioner, Life Ed has been supporting school communities with education on online safety and wellbeing since 2016, with the bCyberwise module for Years 3 and 4, and Relate Respect Connect for Years 5 and 6.

Harold's Online World addresses a critical need in the early years of primary school and allows for a more impactful whole-of-school approach, which sees learning evolve and grow as students do.

In addition to the iconic face-to-face Healthy Harold visit, Life Ed provides free pre and post visit resources and support for teachers and parents, to continue the conversation in and beyond the classroom.

Harold's Online World is evidence-informed, strengths-based and aligns with the Australian Curriculum, eSafety Commissioner's Best Practice Framework for Online Safety Education, and World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommendations on digital health for children and adolescents.

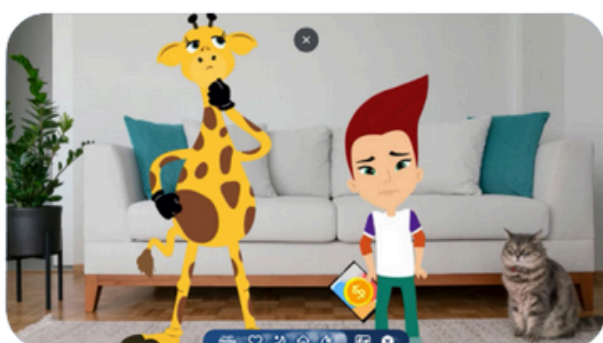
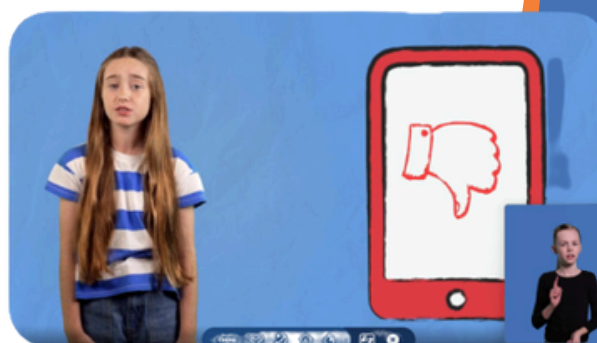
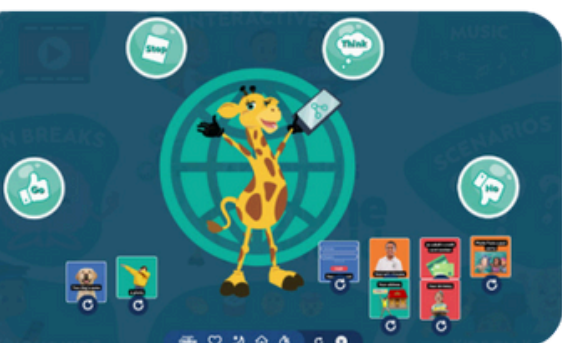


Refreshing the Junior Primary Experience

In FY2024/25, Life Ed remained committed to ensuring its programs are evidence-informed, syllabus-aligned, and strengths-based. As part of this commitment, Life Ed launched a renewed Junior Primary Offering.

The updated program features engaging content and streamlined modules, with each Junior Primary session incorporating a combination of interactive experiences, bespoke music, age-appropriate scenarios to encourage open discussion, brain break activities, and videos. These videos include new episodes of the popular 'Kids Talk' series and the new 'Curious Kids' series, which showcase children exploring various topics, leading by example, and empowering their peers to do the same.

Children remain at the heart of Life Ed's work. The organisation is dedicated to amplifying student voice and involving them as active partners in program design and delivery, with the goal of ensuring every child can see themselves reflected in its content.





16,500

Years 5 & 6 students participated
in Take a Breath during FY24-25

Take a Breath

Empowering primary students and leading the conversation on vaping

This year, Life Ed's Take a Breath program made a significant impact in primary schools, equipping Years 5 and 6 students with the critical thinking skills needed to navigate the growing challenges of vaping. As Australia's first primary school vaping education module, Take a Breath encourages students to pause, reflect, and make informed decisions about their health. The program's interactive lessons and resources help young people evaluate information, understand the risks of vaping, and build confidence to resist peer pressure.

The success of Take a Breath has been reflected in strong school uptake and positive student feedback. Teachers report that students feel more empowered to question what they see and hear about vaping, supporting a culture of healthy, informed choices in the classroom and beyond.

Life Ed's leadership in vaping prevention extended beyond the classroom this year. Chief Executive Officer Jonathon Peatfield and Chief Operating Officer Terese Hooper were invited to contribute to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into E-cigarette Regulation and Compliance.

Their evidence and formal submission highlighted the urgent need for early, evidence-based education and shared insights from Life Ed's work with students, parents, and teachers across the state. By participating in the inquiry, Life Ed ensured the voices of schools and families were heard in shaping policy responses to youth vaping.

Together, Take a Breath and Life Ed's advocacy at the parliamentary level are helping to build a healthier future for young Australians, empowering students, supporting schools, and informing the public debate on vaping prevention.

Student Feedback

98% of students said they understand how vaping and smoking affects the body

94% of students said they feel they can say 'no' if offered a vape or a cigarette

"I learned that vaping and smoking doesn't only affect our lungs, it affects our emotions too"

"1 vape has nicotine equal to 50 cigarettes, which means that it's a lie that vapes aren't as bad as cigarettes for your health"

"I learnt how others can help people who vape or smoke, and that is important to inform others how smoking and vaping affect the body"

"I learned that vapes and cigarettes have a drug called nicotine, and that is highly addictive which means it's really hard to stop."



Pictured L-R: Terese Hooper, Chief Operating Officer and Jonathon Peatfield Chief Executive Officer of Life Ed NSW/ACT

Empowering students with the facts

Understanding teen perceptions and behaviours on vaping and tobacco



This year, Life Ed's Reality Now program continued to break new ground in secondary school drug education. Using a social norms approach, Reality Now tackles one of the most persistent challenges in prevention: the gap between what students believe about substance use and what's actually happening among their peers.

Reality Now is the state's largest social norms-based drug program for secondary students, focusing on preventative education. At the heart of the approach is a live, anonymous survey tool capturing student perceptions of their classmates' behaviours and attitudes about alcohol, nicotine and other drugs.

Using the purpose-built survey, real-time reporting, and comprehensive education practices, Life Ed works with schools to equip young people with the skills to avoid drug-related harms.

Reality Now closes the gap between perception and reality about the usage of vape and other drugs by young people, with questions designed to draw comparisons to their results compared to national norms.

Expanding resources for greater impact

Taking a 'whole school immersion' approach, in 2024 Life Ed launched a suite of online vaping resources for parents and lesson plans for teachers to build their knowledge and confidence in discussing vaping with students to build further awareness of the negative impacts of vaping.



Groundbreaking research: A reality check on teen substance use

This year, Life Ed and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) released one of the largest Australian studies on student-reported substance use, drawing on data from nearly 30,000 students across 135 schools who participated in Reality Now with Life Ed NSW/ACT, and also our state counterparts at Life Ed SA. The findings, published for World No Tobacco Day, offer a nuanced look at the realities, and misperceptions, of vaping and smoking among secondary students.

“The session was very informative and engaging, and the Life Ed presenter did a wonderful job. Our students have learned to face the facts about drugs, especially vaping, and how to stand up for their right to say no in any peer-pressured situation. Thank you, it was truly a worthwhile life lesson for all of us.”

Secondary school teacher

Vaping

- **74% of students reported never trying vaping, but only 10% believed most of their peers had never vaped.**
- **Weekly vaping rates rise from 4% in Years 7–8 to 16% by Year 11, yet most students overestimate how common regular vaping is.**
- **Female students were slightly more likely to have tried vaping and to vape weekly.**
- **90% said vaping is a problem at their school.**

Cigarette use

- **Over 20% had tried cigarettes, but only 3% reported weekly use.**
- **Students believed their peers smoked more than they actually did.**
- **Weekly smoking rose from 2% in Years 7–8 to 6% by Year 11.**
- **Gender differences in cigarette use were minimal.**

Trends over time

- There has been a slight decline in students trying vapes or cigarettes, but weekly use rates remain steady.
- Attitudes are also stable, with around 13% of students believing vaping is acceptable.

Social norms-based outcomes: Building skills and confidence

“Programs like Reality Now are vital because they show young people the true picture, that most of their peers are making positive choices,” said Jonathon Peatfield, CEO of Life Ed NSW.

“By correcting misperceptions and encouraging honest conversations, we can help students feel more confident to make the best decisions for their health and wellbeing.”

Reality Now’s strengths-based approach is making a measurable difference. In several NSW Local Health Districts, where the program was specifically requested. Here’s what students had to say:

92% of participating students said they now understand substance use and its consequences

90% feel more equipped to manage peer pressure.

Changing the narrative and the future

The data reveals a clear message: while most students are already making healthy choices, many underestimate how widespread these positive behaviours are among their peers. Reality Now addresses this gap by correcting misperceptions and encouraging strengths-based, open conversations - empowering young people to confidently resist peer pressure and make decisions that enhance their wellbeing.

“Reality Now goes beyond awareness. It’s about building lifelong skills that empower young people to navigate complex social pressures and make healthy decisions throughout their lives. By embedding prevention early and working closely with schools and families, we’re creating supportive spaces where young people can explore ideas, build confidence, and make informed choices that align with their values.”

Jonathon Peatfield, CEO of Life Ed NSW



In 2024/25, Healthy Harold's Festival of Health brought joy, colour, and connection to regional communities across NSW. Hosted by Life Ed and its beloved mascot Healthy Harold, the festival celebrated health, safety, and wellbeing through fun, inclusive events that united schools, families, and local organisations in a shared vision for healthier communities.

The centrepiece of each festival was Healthy Harold's Colour Run, where children, parents, and community members of all ages came together to walk, run, or dance through a kaleidoscope of colourful chalk powder. The Colour Run wasn't just about fun and physical activity – it symbolised community spirit and the importance of looking after our health, leaving participants smiling, laughing, and celebrating a day they won't soon forget.

Alongside the Colour Run, local health services, councils, and organisations hosted interactive booths and activities, providing vital information and resources on mental health, physical wellbeing, and safety. In an approachable and engaging environment, families were able to connect with support services while children participated in hands-on activities that reinforced positive health messages.

The festival's impact was felt across Parkes, Moree, and Kempsey, where more than 4,100 students and over 1,100 community members took part in the celebrations.

Each location had its unique highlights: in Parkes, the festival aligned with National Road Safety Week, encouraging meaningful conversations around road safety and family wellbeing; in Moree, interactive activities like the affirmation fishing game resonated with children and fostered stronger trust between local organisations and the community. Kempsey's festival was a celebration of inclusion, bringing families, Aboriginal organisations, and health services together to strengthen cultural and community ties.



The feedback from community partners has been overwhelmingly positive. Partners praised the engaging and inclusive nature of the events, recognising their value in connecting families with essential services while creating a fun and supportive environment. The festival also strengthened collaboration, with local organisations eager to return in future years and build on these community conversations.



Healthy Harold's Festival of Health has proven to be more than just a one-day celebration – it is a catalyst for ongoing community engagement and a platform for promoting positive health and wellbeing messages in regional areas. By extending Life Ed's reach beyond the classroom, the festival reinforces the importance of physical activity, mental wellbeing, and community connection.

Life Ed is excited to grow the Festival of Health and continue empowering children, families, and communities to lead healthier, happier lives. With strong support from local partners and communities, the future of this initiative is bright, promising even greater impact in the years to come.



GO BANANAS DAY AT SCHOOL

On October 16, 2024 classrooms across Australia were buzzing with excitement and bursting with yellow as over 7,300 students celebrated Go Bananas Day with Healthy Harold.

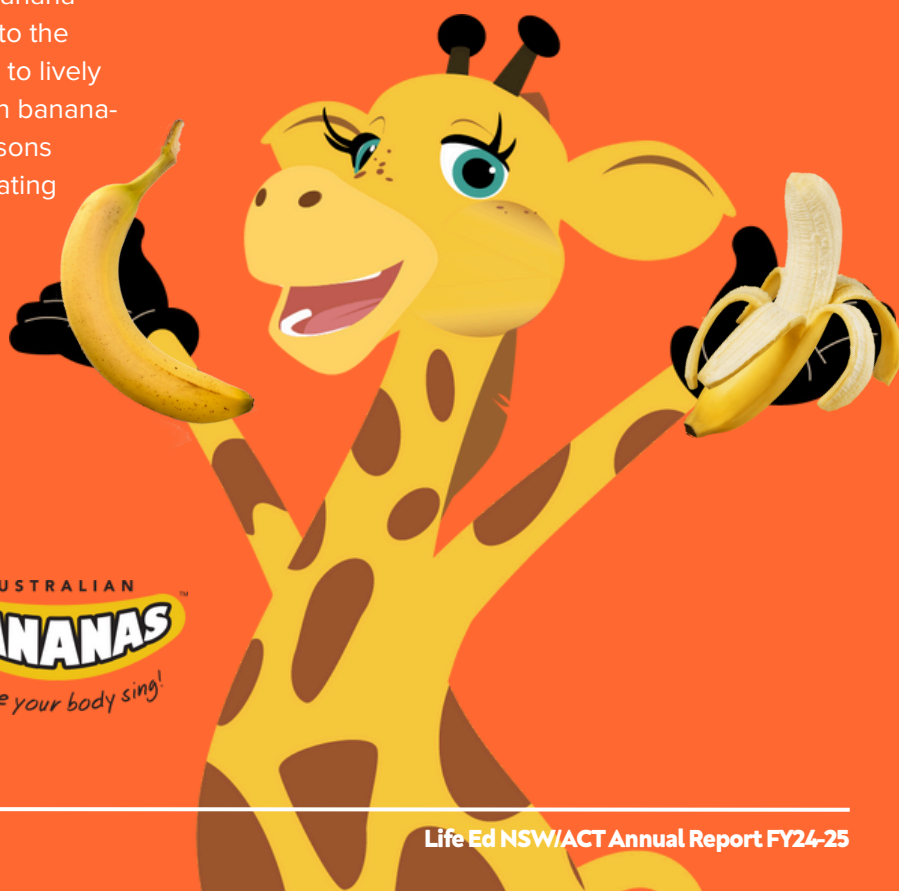
This vibrant initiative, brought to life by Life Ed in partnership with Hort Innovation and Australian Bananas, shone a spotlight on the importance of nutrition and the many 'a-peeling' benefits of bananas. It was a day filled with fun, laughter, and learning, as students discovered how making healthy choices can fuel their wellbeing.

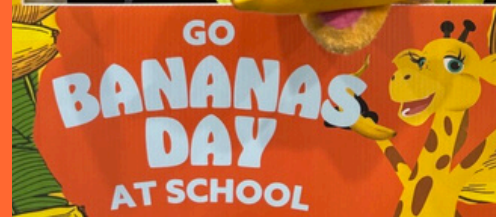
Life Ed Educators and Healthy Harold embraced the theme with flair, sporting creative banana-inspired outfits that added extra cheer to the day's lessons. From hands-on activities to lively discussions, students were immersed in banana-themed fun while learning valuable lessons about balanced nutrition and healthy eating habits.

Thanks to the generosity of Hort Innovation and Australian Bananas, the celebrations were packed with special surprises. Bright banana stickers and fun prizes brought wide smiles, rewarding students for their enthusiasm and active participation.

Life Ed ensures that learning about healthy habits is engaging and memorable, and Go Bananas Day was a perfect example of this commitment in action - inspiring thousands of young Australians to embrace healthy living in a fun and lasting way.

**Hort
Innovation**





Board of Directors

Life Ed's success is built on the foundation of exceptional leadership and the unwavering dedication of its Board of Directors. These skilled professionals volunteer their time and expertise to help shape the organisation's vision, strengthen its operations, and ensure that every child has access to the knowledge and tools needed to thrive.

In 2025, the organisation celebrates The Hon. Alan Cadman OAM as he transitions to the role of Chair Emeritus of Life Ed NSW/ACT. Alan's steadfast commitment to the mission and his passion for empowering young Australians have been instrumental in the organisation's journey. His leadership and belief in giving every child the best start in life will continue to inspire Life Ed's work for years to come.



Cr Ken Keith OAM

Chairman

Ken has recently stepped down as Mayor of the Parkes Shire after 16 years in that position. Having already completed 40 years in local government, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Local Government NSW in 2023. He has served on numerous committees over the years including Chair of the Country Mayor's Assoc. NSW, Melbourne Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance (Inland Rail), Newell Highway Taskforce and Centroc, now the Central NSW Joint Organisation. He has been involved in Life Ed since it came to Parkes over 35 years ago.



Mr Aaron Chen

Vice Chairman

Aaron brings governance and financial strength to the Board as a Chartered Accountant and his wealth of corporate experience both in senior risk and commercial roles across diverse sectors, including Professional Services, Property, Construction, Infrastructure, Government, Agriculture, and most recently, Retail/Logistics.

In addition to his professional skills, he brings a passion for ensuring our young people are provided the best opportunity to fulfil their potential.



Ms Christine Bowen

Board Director

Chris is an experienced director and senior executive in financial services. She now runs a boutique consultancy, drawing on her 30+ years' professional expertise in corporate marketing, and investor relations assisting clients to build stronger stakeholder engagement.

Chris' board experience is in the private, superannuation and not-for-profit sectors, including as past Chair of the Parents' Association at an independent school and as P&C President at the local primary school.



Ms Karen Gould

Board Director

Karen is a Managing Director of Palisade Investment Partners, an Australian infrastructure investment manager with \$4 billion in funds under management. She has extensive governance experience and is a Non-Executive Director of the Australian Clean Energy Council, Sunshine Coast Airport, Coffs Harbour Airport, Granville Harbour Wind Farm and Ross River Solar Farm.

Karen has a background in finance, policy and law. She was a Senior Vice President with Macquarie Bank in London where she focused on principal investments in renewable energy projects. Prior to this, she was a commercial lawyer with Baker & McKenzie, a senior policymaker and UN climate change negotiator with the Australian Government, and an engineer with CH2M Hill (now Jacobs).



Ms Alexandra Hodgkinson

Board Director

Alexandra is an experienced journalist, television producer and communications executive. A multi-award winner, her experience spans a wide spectrum of programming including short-form documentaries, investigative journalism, entertainment and current affairs on flagship programs Sunday Night and 60 Minutes, where she worked for 16 years.

Alex has most recently worked as Director of Communications and Engagement at Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS). Previously, she worked as Executive Media Advisor to the NSW Police Commissioner and executive team, and at the GO Foundation, founded by Sydney Swans legends Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin, providing education, access, and opportunities to young Indigenous Australians.



Dr Julian de Meyrick

Board Director

Julian has held a number of senior higher education governance positions including membership of private sector academic boards. He was Dean of Students and a member of Academic Senate at Macquarie University, Director, Higher Education at Sydney Institute of TAFE and the Dean of a private higher education provider. Before the disruption caused by Covid-19, he was also a sessional lecturer at Macquarie University.

Julian previously worked in marketing management for major local and international organisations including Unilever, American Express, Bushell's Tea and Coffee, and the Hong Kong Tourist Association. He is a Certified Practising Marketer and a Fellow of the Australian Marketing Institute.



Mr Neville Parsons

Board Director

Neville had 40 years in the credit union industry including 31 years as CEO and a total of 16 years as a director. Neville also spent 4 years working as a lawyer and as a Board member on the NSW Mid North Coast Health Board. Neville has extensive experience in strategic planning, corporate governance, management and financial accounting, risk management as well as legal and compliance.

Neville is a member of the Rotary Club of Wauchope since October 1981 having served in many leadership positions within Rotary. In addition to the Rotary and Life Education roles, Neville is the Independent Chair of the Clarence Valley Council Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and Chair of Lifeline Mid Coast.



The Hon. Alan G Cadman OAM

Chair Emeritus

The Hon. Alan G Cadman OAM served as the Federal Member for Mitchell for 33 years including Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Relations and Small Business and Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

A long-term supporter of Life Ed, The Hon Alan G Cadman OAM is a former director of the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce Board and Patron, Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence. He is experienced in station and property management, small business and orcharding.

As the year's achievements are celebrated, Life Ed extends heartfelt gratitude to its MP ambassadors, partners, supporters, donors, and dedicated team.

Their unwavering commitment and generosity make the organisation's mission possible - empowering young Australians to lead safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. This collective effort is helping to create a brighter future for the next generation, and each contributor is recognised as an integral part of that journey.

Ambassadors

- The Hon. Kevin Anderson, MP
- Mr Clayton Barr, M.P
- Ms Liza Butler, MP
- Mr Roy Butler, MP
- The Hon. Prue Car, MP
- The Hon. Susan Carter, MLC
- The Hon. Yasmin Catley, MP
- Mr Justin Clancy, MP
- Dr Amanda Cohn, MLC
- Mr Mark Coure, MP
- The Hon. Timothy Crakanthorp, MP
- Mr Matt Cross, MP
- Mr Adam Crouch, MP
- The Hon. Michael Daley, MP
- Mrs Tanya Davies, MP
- Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua, MP
- The Hon. Jihad Dib, MP
- Mr Philip Donato, MP
- Ms Trish Doyle, MP
- The Hon. Wes Fang, MLC
- The Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC
- The Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC
- Mr James Griffin, MP
- Mrs Judy Hannan, MP
- The Hon. Jodie Harrison, MP
- Mr Alister Henskens, MP
- Mr Mark Hodges, MP
- The Hon. Ron Hoenig, MP
- The Hon. Sonia Hornery, MP
- The Hon. Courtney Houssos, MLC
- Mr Tim James, MP
- The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine, MLC
- Mr Matthew Kean, MP
- Mr Michael Kemp, MP
- The Hon. Mark Latham, MLC
- The Hon. Aileen MacDonald, MLC, OAM
- The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC
- The Hon. Adam Marshall, MP
- Dr Hugh McDermott, MP
- Dr Joe McGirr, MP
- Mr David Mehan, MP
- The Hon. Tania Mihailuk, MP
- The Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC
- The Hon. Tara Moriarty, MLC
- The Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC
- Dr Marjorie O'Neill, MP
- The Hon. Ryan Park, MP
- The Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP
- Ms Eleni Petinos, MP
- The Hon. Greg Piper, MP
- Ms Robyn Preston, MP
- Mr Geoff Provest, MP
- Mrs Sally Quinnell, MP
- The Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP
- The Hon. Rod Roberts, MLC
- Ms Janelle Saffin, MP
- Mr Dugald Saunders, MP
- The Hon. Paul Scully, MP
- Ms Kobi Shetty, MP
- Mr Gurmesh Singh, MP
- Ms Kellie Sloane, MP
- Ms Maryanne Stuart, MP
- The Hon. Bronnie Taylor, MLC
- Mr Mark Taylor, MP
- Ms Liesl Tesch, MP
- The Hon. Paul Toole, MP
- Mrs Wendy Tuckerman, MP
- Ms Lynda Voltz, MP
- Mr Greg Warren, MP
- Ms Anna Watson, MP
- Mr Ray Williams, MP
- The Hon. Leslie Williams, MP
- Mr Richie Williamson, MP
- Ms Felicity Wilson, MP

Partners



A big thanks to our Life Ed Local Area action Groups in
Ryde Hunters Hill and Canada Bay - Chaired by Victor Tagg
Illawarra - Chaired by Wayne James
Tweed and Northern Rivers - Chaired by Tonny Van't Riet



**Every child deserves to
thrive.**

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