

a sound life

2022 Annual Report



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Acknowledgement of Country

A Sound Life acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which our organisation is located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging.



Message from ASL.

We believe in the healing power of music, yoga and meditation to build resilience and inspire greater unity. While this power can be felt through screens, phone lines and from a distance, we also believe that it is most potent when shared face-to-face and heart-to-heart.

After several years of running our programs virtually due to the pandemic, this year marked the return of our engaging and uplifting live programs – a huge highlight for our staff, volunteers and program participants.

Thankfully, we didn't spend the lockdown time idle. After two years of solid planning behind the scenes, this year we were also able to start new programs, onboard new volunteers, conduct in person training, and continue to deepen our impact with the resumption of existing programming.

Along with achieving our own goals, we were also able to use our skills and community connections to help others experiencing acute need. During the height of the flood crisis in the Northern Rivers (NSW) region, we responded by helping to raise much-needed funds and distribute them for immediate flood relief.

In addition to fundraising, we also helped out on the front-line. Our team set up our sound life dome to help disaster-stricken communities with a temporary schooling solution for the Living School.

Being able to provide a safe space for children and families to meet, share and hopefully experience joy amongst the chaos was truly humbling and rewarding for the entire team of staff and volunteers.

We wouldn't be able to continue to do this work without the ongoing support we have received from our funders and partners. Your trust, generosity and encouragement has meant we can continue to grow and deliver our transformational offerings to people in need. Thank you – we love and appreciate each and every one of you.

We are exceptionally proud of how the ASL team has grown and matured this year. Our core team has been incredibly agile and resourceful during this period. Their perseverance, creativity and resilience during these times has been phenomenal. In reality, we would be nowhere without our core engine of dedicated volunteers. Through everything, they continued to turn up and share their hearts, souls and talents to make ASL's vision a reality.

Love and gratitude to our amazing volunteers, the ASL team, our partners, funders and our entire community. May we all be blessed and thrive into 2023 and beyond.

With gratitude and love
Edo & Natasha



The state of our health & wellbeing.

In the wake of the pandemic and increases in the cost of living, people are struggling with their physical and mental health.

In Australia alone:

- 11.8 million people were hospitalised in 2020-2021 which was a 6.3% increase on the previous year.



- 1 in 5 Australians (20%) aged between 16-85 experienced mental health disorder in the last year.



- 1 in 6 people in Australia (18%) live with a disability.



Accompanying these numbers is an associated symptom of poor mental and physical health: social isolation.

- 1 in 10 people over the age of 15 report a lack of social support.



- 1 in 4 people report episodes of loneliness, social isolation is on the rise, especially amongst the most vulnerable people in our communities.



The state of our health & wellbeing.

Since the outbreak of COVID:

- 30% younger Australians (aged 18 to 34 years) experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress.



- More than one in four people with disability experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress.



These experiences have a direct impact on people's health and wellbeing.

The services we deliver aim to support people living with these current health and wellbeing concerns. Our expertise in building community, teaching wellbeing techniques, encouraging connection and spreading care are needed now more than ever.



2022 A SOUND LIFE

Who We Are

A Sound Life (ASL) is Australia's first charity to deliver free music, yoga and meditation to people in need.

Our Vision

More resilient individuals and communities who can cope with adversity or stress.

Our Mission

To help those in need to experience transformation, physical regeneration, inner peace and develop a resilience that can help them through any adversity.

Our Hope

To help inspire harmony between the heart and the head so more Australians can tackle life's challenges.

What Drives Us

We believe in the healing power of music, yoga and meditation.

We want to empower and educate individuals and inspire wellbeing.

We aspire to help the most vulnerable in our community.



2022 OVERVIEW

Our Impact



63

Facilities
Serviced



3,596

Free
Sessions



39,455

Positively
impacted



450

Volunteers



We help our most vulnerable to build resilience to tackle life's challenges.

Unfortunately, it is also the most vulnerable who often have the least access to the tools and support they need to build resilience, establish and maintain connections, and transform their lives for the better.

We are committed to changing that.

Since 2014, we have serviced over **63** facilities including hospitals, schools, women's refuge, at-risk youth and community outreach centres, disability services, and drug and rehab centres, positively impacting **39,455** people throughout Australia who need it the most.

To do this work, we have committed ASL volunteers who have delivered over **3,596** free music, yoga and meditation sessions to date. These numbers are a testament to who we are as an organisation, the culture we have created, our ambition and dedication, what we've achieved and the way we serve.

Our sessions range from bedside musical performances in hospitals, interactive drumming, music mentoring, singing and songwriting sessions for youth, to therapeutic yoga and meditation sessions for eating disorders, mental health, trauma, rehabilitation and disabilities.

Through the **connections, experiences and discoveries** these sessions unearth, we are helping our most vulnerable to confidently ride the waves of life and realise they can experience joy within their lives.

We've witnessed this **joy** and the resulting **resilience** our tools can deliver time and time again. This is what drives us to continue the work we do. We see the difference it makes and this energises us to keep doing more to realise our vision: **more resilient individuals and communities who can cope with adversity or stress.**



How we help.

Our programs transform lives through greater social inclusion, equality of access, connection, improved mental health and reduced levels of anxiety, loneliness and pain.

We use the modalities of music, yoga and meditation to help participants improve balance and wellbeing. By combining modern science with ancient wisdom, our programs are evidence-based, therapeutic and specifically tailored to meet the individual needs and objectives of each group we serve.

The benefits and impact of our programs are measured using qualitative data based on research conducted by KPMG.

Music



- ASL music sessions increased happiness in participants by 26%
- 93% felt the music session was very or extremely beneficial
- Anxiety decreased by 30% after the session

Yoga



- ASL yoga sessions reduced participant anxiety by 40%
- 25% of yoga participants felt less lonely & isolated after their session
- 61% improvement in feelings of sadness

Meditation



- Reduces stress, worry and anxiety
- Provides emotional regulation and connection
- Helps participants to feel happier and more relaxed



Who we help.

In 2022, our participants included youth at risk and students in regional schools, vulnerable people in community facilities, children and adults in hospitals, and aged and palliative care patients.

Our dedicated team of volunteers are making a real difference with every interaction, every song, every movement. They are bringing much needed respite, joy and hope to the vulnerable people we serve.

Youth

Community Services

Hospitals



- School
- Shelters
- Community Centres

- Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation
- Disabilities
- Women's Shelters
- Aged Care

- Palliative Care
- Psychiatric
- Children's Wards



Our impact



2022 impact snapshot.

We provide free music, yoga and meditation services that transform lives.

Our target this year was to deliver 450 sessions to 4,000 participants.

We **exceeded** this goal by **34%** delivering **603** sessions to **4,716** participants.

That's a **38%** increase in sessions from last year, and a **23%** increase in participants experiencing our programs.



249

music
sessions



2811

music
participants



13

special
events



281

yoga
sessions



1819

yoga
participants



73

music
mentoring
participants

"I sang Chinese songs to a female patient in palliative care. Her son listened and sang together with me. It was really beautiful" Music volunteer Chenchen Li, Auburn House



Benefits & outcomes.

93% of participants felt good or great after the session



94% of participants said the sessions were beneficial



Participant anxiety decreased by 40% after the session



Participant loneliness decreased by 25%

61% improvement in feelings of sadness



22% improvement in mood after session

Thanks to generous pro-bono support from KPMG, we've been able to develop in-depth SROI analysis to further demonstrate our social impact. We conducted multiple studies in hospitals, healthcare and community facilities to better understand the social impact of our programs.

Along with the assistance of KPMG, we've been able to better determine the benefit to participants and others who experience our programs.

For **every dollar spent** on the delivery of ASL's programs there is a **\$9.65 social return on investment**.

ASL's Yoga and Music Programs provide our participants and volunteers with a **965% social return on investment** (with an estimated **\$8.5 million of benefit**).



Our programs change lives.

Loewe's Story

Meet Loewe. He is one of our Sound Mentoring mentees who recently completed the mentoring program.

His songwriting speaks to his struggle to be an artist and making enough money to support himself.

Loewe's mentor, Charlie White, is an accomplished producer in his own right who produces for ads and TV. Charlie provided Loewe ongoing music mentorship and the opportunity to record Loewe's track 'Benjamins' in his studio.

The song was aired on 2RRR radio the day after recording, and a lifelong dream realised.

We are so proud of all the amazing work that comes out of our Sound Mentoring Program and look forward to seeing more from Loewe and our other talented mentees.



Our contribution



Our Music programs.

Our first year back delivering in-person music programming post-COVID was a rewarding and fulfilling one.

Overview:

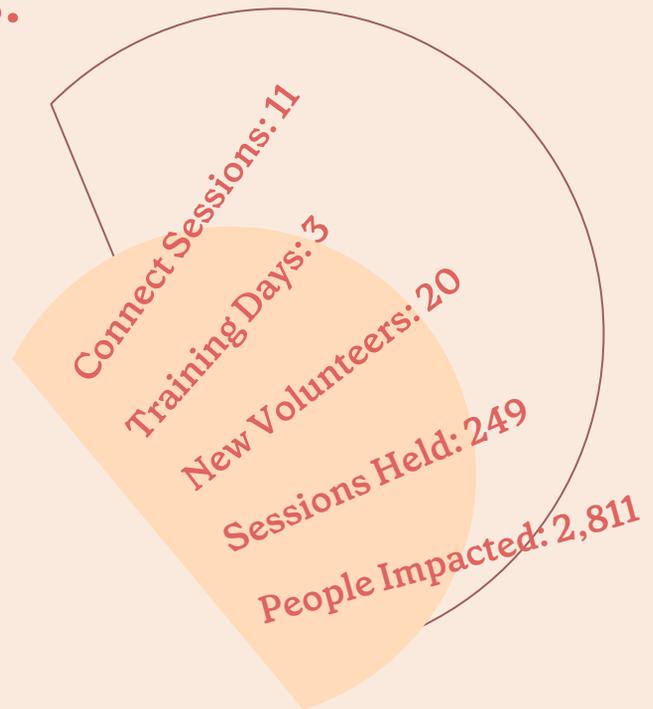
We have had a wonderful year with our music programs, with exciting new developments in many areas. Music continues to bring people joy and much needed respite. Our team of musicians have delivered uplifting and soul enriching music to our participants and their families in hospitals, disabilities, aged care and palliative care.

Programs:

The team was delighted to be able to go back to delivering in person music and sound mentoring sessions. The virtual programs continue to have an impact.

New facilities:

After two years of online music sessions, we onboarded three new amazing in-person facilities in Sydney: Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest, Asylum Seekers Centre in Newtown, and Tweed Heads Hospital. We have also continued to expand our programs in QLD and onboarded Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane.



Next Steps:

We are looking forward to starting in-person music sessions at the Prince Alexandra Hospital in early 2023 and hope that many facilities continue to allow live music sessions. We are in discussion with new facilities and are excited about expanding our programs even further to help many more people in need. We will be onboarding musicians in QLD for the first time, and holding many more wonderful meetups and creative, engaging events for our musicians across NSW, VIC and QLD.

"It was wonderful to have A Sound Life playing in one of our wards today for the first time. One of the patients is usually very agitated and when the music was playing he was very calm and relaxed. We can't wait for you to come back!"

- Julie Social Worker, Tweed Hospital



Our Yoga programs.

Social connection is an integral part of people's wellbeing, particularly those facing adversity and challenges in their lives.

Overview:

ASL's yoga programs have continued to expand throughout 2022. The trauma informed practices helped participants connect to their body, relax their mind and be part of a caring community class. In addition, we upgraded our Yoga training material offering more specialised modules for our yoga teachers in Trauma informed yoga, Yoga for cancer, Yoga for addiction and relapse prevention, Yoga for disabilities, Yoga for mental health and Yoga for elderly.

New Programs:

This year saw us onboard Taldumande; a youth crisis accommodation centre in Sydney. Most of the participants of this facility are teenagers who have experienced significant trauma, abuse or homelessness. We've expanded our reach within organisations already familiar with our work such as Flourish Australia; a valuable support system for adults living with mental health conditions. The success of these sessions has resulted in us running programs at their Australian Capital offices in Canberra and Queanbeyan.



Next Steps:

ASL is in planning stages for a specialist wheelchair yoga program with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Kinghorn Cancer Centre under St Vincent's Hospital to deliver a yoga for cancer program. We look forward to sharing our specialised training with many more yoga teacher volunteers in 2023.

“Every Wednesday our young people get a private session to calm their minds and relax their bodies. Meditation exercises have an immediate benefit for mood regulation, anxiety relief, and relaxation and the yoga sessions challenge young people to be present in the moment without phones, intrapersonal conflict or life distractions, even if for just an hour.

“– Caretaker’s Cottage, Bondi Beach



Our Sound Mentoring program.

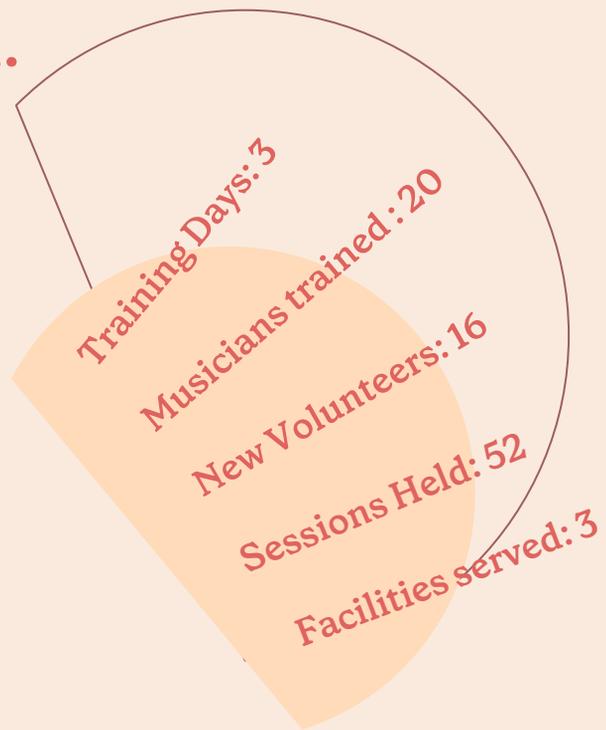
Our Sound Mentoring program is focused on helping participants to reconnect with their entire selves, including their connection to their own artistic ability and each other.

Overview:

ASL's Sound Mentoring Program is a unique personal development mentoring opportunity that connects professional musicians with participants in diverse communities and schools, mentoring them to achieve their artistic and human potential.

Programs:

Our program partners included Auburn Youth Centre, Collarenebri Central High School located in a regional NSW with 60% Aboriginal population and Coonabarabran High School. This years training also included a Cultural Awareness Workshop for the mentors. A highlight for the year was seeing our 2021 mentees performed at Auburn Youth Centre's AGM, and the 2022 mentees had the opportunity to talk about their music live on a local radio station and meet other mentees in the program.



Next Steps:

Our vision is to expand the Sound Mentoring Program to the City of Sydney area, including inner-city Redfern and Waterloo. Young people in these areas are facing racial and socio-economic discrimination and are therefore at a higher risk of drug and alcohol harm.

“Think of it like a painting. If I were doing it, it'd just be throwing paint at a wall...a jumbled mess. Where instead, you saw all my colours of the palette and you were the illustrator. You put it all onto a canvas and painted out what it was.” – Gem, speaking on his creative process with his mentor, Kingsley



Our Volunteers.

Our Volunteers are the heart and soul of A Sound Life. Day after day, they show up and selflessly give their love, spend their time and share their skills to help others. Words cannot describe how grateful we are for their contribution.



Overview:

Our dedicated team of beautiful, big-hearted volunteers helped to deliver our programs and initiatives this year.

Thanks to their tireless efforts and dedication we are able to continue to expand our current programs, develop new ones and dream big about how we can grow in the future.



Trainings:

We were fortunate enough to be able to deliver seven training days in total this year, some of them in person! We successfully onboarded 48 new yoga teachers, musicians and mentors, and many of our long-standing volunteers continued to share their love with people who need it most. We are beyond proud of our generous team..

2023 kicks off with a Volunteer Info Session, Yoga and Music Trainings all in Q1!



2022 program participants.



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District



Coonabarabran High School



Special events



Down Syndrome NSW annual Step UP! event.

The ASL team were invited to attend this year's Down Syndrome NSW annual Step UP! event. Our wonderful team of musicians shared their love and support through the power of music and sound. Down Syndrome have been one of our partners for the past two years where we deliver regular music and yoga sessions. It was wonderful to celebrate our participants, their families and friends at this special event.

"We had a wonderful time at Down Syndrome NSW's annual Step Up! event on Sunday 25th September. Special shoutout to Bec, Alex, Saul and Cecile, our wonderful Yoga and Music volunteers, who led a super fun stretch session and music jam in a circle, singing songs like "Roar" by Katy Perry and "Here Comes The Sun" by The Beatles.



We were so glad to finally meet so many people we've interacted with in our Up! Club sessions over Zoom for the past 2 years and in-person! We look forward to the next one and to continuing our sessions with Down Syndrome NSW." – Music Program Manager, Gabi



Miroma 550th Session.

This year saw a massive milestone with our 550th session at Miroma Disability Centre (Inala). ASL has been providing regular music and yoga programs at Miroma since March 2015 at both their Vaucluse and Bellevue Hill locations. Participants have embraced the sessions, and reported improvements in mobility, reduction of stress, greater connection, positivity and joy. Together, our team and the lovely participants have developed beautiful relationships and shared in many magical moments.



“The ASL Yoga sessions are fantastic. We have worked with ASL for over seven years and the yoga really help clients with their personal development, stress management, coping mechanisms and ability to be able to relax. We are so grateful for the time and effort that the volunteers and ASL put into

providing these sessions for us.”

- Victor Delos Santos at Miroma.



ASL Music Fundraiser.

ASL's Music Program Manager, Gabi Brown, together with Santino Salvadore, one of our wonderful music volunteers, and local musician, Machine On The Break, held an ASL fundraiser concert. It was a wonderful, warm and uplifting night. The songs ranged from slow, beautiful explorations of mental health, to upbeat, vivacious jams about loving life.

The team raised funds for A Sound Life, opened up conversations about what it means to come together and support each other as a community, and everyone had a great night joined together in music and song!



Auburn Youth Centre – Mentee performances.

When Auburn Youth Centre held their Annual General Meeting, they invited two ASL mentees from our Sound Mentoring Program to perform. Mentees David and Loewe had a wonderful time performing to their biggest audience so far. They performed two original hip-hop tracks, “Lately” and “Save My Soul”, and Loewe played an array of wonderful R&B/soul-tinged originals and covers, including his song that he completed for the Sound Mentoring Program with his mentor Charlie, “Benjamins”. The performances were held using wonderful music equipment from our music studio at Auburn Youth Centre generously donated by Store DJ.



Community giving



Northern Rivers flood relief.

The recent floods in the Northern Rivers region damaged and destroyed more than 5,000 homes and businesses. ASL has built lasting relationships with many of these communities over a number of years. We were determined to do what we could to help the community recover after enduring the worst floods in recent memory.



Funds raised \$171,250

We offered our assistance where and how we could. Our fundraising efforts raised over \$171k to help support the local communities affected by the Northern Rivers floods. We are grateful to have been able to play our part so that affected people could receive the help they need to start to rebuild their lives.



Supporting the Living School

The floods caused devastation across many communities including schools. Many school children and their families were displaced during this time. To provide those affected with a place to learn safely, ASL offered The Sound Life Dome to the Living School Byron as a space for primary school students to meet with their classmates, have assembly, enjoy breakout activities and team camps. They continue to use this space as a creative outlet to bring greater connection and hope at a time that has been very challenging.



Our family



Our 2022 core team and board.



CEO & Board Member

Natasha Curry



Co-founder & Board Member

Edo Kahn



Yoga Program Manager

Catriona Byrne



Head Of Marketing

Siobhan Hodgson



Music Program Manager

Gabi Brown



Social Media Manager

Malinda Hayward



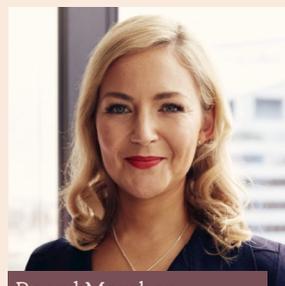
Board Member

Yoav Mark Lewis



Board Member

Jared Pohl



Board Member

Jemma Parsons



Board Member

Will Halliday



Our key funders and supporters.

We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to our industry and corporate partners, our family foundations, other funders and friends who contributed to the delivery of our programs and projects this year. We couldn't achieve any of this without you and so we thank you for your generosity and for being on this incredible journey with us.



THE SAUNDERS FAMILY



CommBank
Staff Foundation

Thank you for an incredible year, we look forward to making a bigger difference in 2023!



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