

ASL Annual Report 2023



a
sound
life 



Message from ASL

It has been a fantastic and diverse year for A Sound Life. 2023 has been the first year post the pandemic whereby things have really normalised for our programs, trainings and events. We achieved the highest number of sessions delivered in a year since our inception.

The need for wellness and connection is greater than ever. The post-traumatic stress effects of the pandemic period on mental-health combined with the increased cost of living has made these times challenging for a wide cross section of our community. We are here to support and serve our community through the power of music, yoga and meditation.

Our Sound Mentoring program for youth at risk has been embraced by both the young people we serve, the high-quality mentors who signed up to volunteer, and the community centres in which we have partnered with.

In Byron Bay we launched the first of its kind social-impact-wellness festival, Om Fest. The festival was attended by over 1200 people over three and half days of music, yoga, meditation, workshops and wellbeing services. We raised \$65,000 for A Sound Life and Help A School Foundation.

Festival goers came from all over the country, and many said it was the best festival they have ever experienced. The need for community, unity and connection is so great and we hope to do it all again next year.

We are so grateful for your support, participation and partnership be it as volunteers, funders, facilities, program recipients and being part of our community. Thank you for an incredible 2023 and looking forward to 2024, our tenth year!!!

With gratitude and love
Edo & Natasha



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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.



Our Purpose

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.



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.

Music



Yoga



Music Mentoring



Meditation



The State of Our Health & Wellbeing

In Australia alone:

- 11.8 million people were hospitalised in 2021 -2022 which was a 6.3% increase in 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.



People We Serve

In 2023, our participants included vulnerable people in community service facilities, children and adults in hospitals, the elderly and patients in palliative care, and youth at risk.

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.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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



HOSPITALS

- Palliative Care
- Psychiatric
- Children's Wards



YOUTH SERVICES

- Schools
- Mental Healthcare
- Youth Centres



Benefits & Outcomes

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.

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**).

For **every dollar spent** on ASL's Yoga and Music Programs, there is a **\$9.65 benefit measured in the community**

83% of participants felt good or great after the session



100% of participants would recommend the programs to others

Participant anxiety decreased by **75%** after a session

Participant loneliness Decrease by **50%**



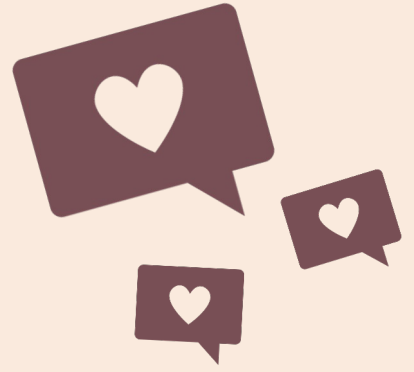
25% improvement in feelings of happiness



90 % of participants said the sessions were beneficial



Our Impact



21 Facilities Serviced

72 Dedicated Volunteers

760 Free Sessions

7,437 Positively Impacted



2023 Impact Snapshot

This year marked the highest number of sessions we've ever delivered since starting A Sound Life in 2014! Our wonderful team delivered **761** free music, yoga, meditation and mentoring sessions across NSW, QLD and VIC.

The number of participants receiving our programs increased by **35%** on last year to **7,437**. Since inception our team have delivered **4,416** free sessions impacting **46,970** vulnerable people in our community.

Thank you to all of our healthcare partners for teaming up with us to deliver much needed wellness programs.



Our Music Program

2023 was a year of in-person interactive and bedside music programs across our facilities. Online sessions continued for some, and it was great to be back in-person at hospitals. We expanded our music programs VIC and QLD and delivered a record 304 sessions.

Sharing the power of music and seeing first-hand the impact it's had on people through improved mood, reduced pain, reduction in stress has been a huge highlight!

Info Sessions: **2**

Connect Sessions: **31**

Sessions Held: **304**

New Volunteers: **36**

Training Days: **4**

Facilities Served: **15**

People Impacted: **4,040**

New partnerships

We onboarded 6 new healthcare partners including the Princess Alexandra Hospital and The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in QLD and delivered our first in-person music session to Robina Hospital's palliative care ward on the Gold Coast. Byron Aged Care were onboarded where we now have live music and yoga delivered to the participants.

We've also partnered with St George Hospital in Kogarah, Wayside Chapel in Bondi, and Berengarra in Melbourne to provide live music sessions to their patients.



Music Testimonials & Story



"The A Sound Life Volunteer music program has made a huge difference for older patients at Northern Beaches Hospital particularly those with mental health issues. The music has brought the wards to life and the volunteers were amazing at engaging with patients warmly and respectfully. The sounds of music and singing leave everyone with a song in their heart and a smile on their face after every visit."

- Pauline Sorbello, Northern Beaches Hospital

"Over the past 4-5yrs I have had the incredible opportunity to witness the impact that ASL musicians have had on our patients, staff and visitors. I'll share this lovely encounter of how one of the musicians from ASL, armed with her guitar and a passion for bringing joy through the power of music, was able to create a wonderful atmosphere for patients, staff and visitors."

- Hussen Hijazi, St Vincent's Hospital



St Vincent's Hospital, Palliative Care Ward, August 2023:

One of ASL's musicians, Gabi had previously performed a virtual session with a patient named Bob and recently they were able to meet in person. The pair sat adjacent to the nurse's station where Gabi played her tunes and both would sing songs that had brought a sense of nostalgia and joy. What happened next was heart-warming, a visitor who was on the ward to see his terminally ill brother, who also turned out to be an incredibly talented musician, took it upon himself to spread some joy and happiness through music. He borrowed Gabi's guitar and began to strum away with Gabi and Bob singing along. In that moment the hospital became a place of connection, the music permeated through the ward, reaching the ears of staff and visitors alike who soon found themselves humming along to the melodies transforming the space into a vibrant uplifting one.



Our Sound Mentoring Program



The Sound Mentoring Program provides free music mentoring sessions to young people aged 12 – 25 with the mission of empowering them to achieve their potential as artists and as people. This year, ASL welcomed 22 new mentors who participated in 152 music sessions across youth centres at Liverpool, Auburn, Marrickville, and via online. Our team conducted 4 Mentor Training Days together with a Street University counsellor and began group music sessions at The Street University Liverpool. We expanded the program to the Inner West of Sydney and onboarded Midjuburi Youth Resource Centre in Marrickville. Mentees showcased their skills, talent and confidence by performing at Winter Beats, Street Legacy 2023 Talent Quest and Auburn Youth Centre end of year concert.

Training Days: **4**

Community Centres: **4**

Mentees: **22**

Mentors: **22**

Sessions Held: **152**



Mentoring Testimonials



"I get to bring together all of my passions at once...and help them [mentee] try and foster their creativity, be there and listen to them, and also to make it more than just about music, but try and make it holistic in that it's not only music mentoring but social and emotional wellbeing mentoring as well, which is really important"

- Anthony, Mentor

"I especially found it valuable, that the exploration of music through not just an academic lens, but also through an emotional and philosophical lens, allowed me to grow holistically as a musician. Oftentimes as artists, we obsess over the fact on "how" we do our music. But in the pursuit of this obsession, we sometimes forget the fact of "why" we do our music in the first place. Ultimately, the mentoring program has enabled me to commit and believe in my art."

-Jedson,Mentee

"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 (mentor) 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, Mentee





Our Yoga Program

ASL's trauma informed, therapeutic yoga program is designed to help participants build resilience and cope with stresses they may be feeling in their lives. Our services continued to expand and grow in 2023 with new programs in the Northern Rivers and QLD, offered both in person and online. We welcomed 21 new yoga teachers to the ASL family and our dedicated team delivered over 296 sessions to people in vulnerable communities. We onboarded 6 new partners including women in refuge, mental healthcare, hospitals and aged care. It's such a joy to help people discover valuable tools and techniques for maintaining their wellbeing and we look forward to serving even more people in 2024.

Facilities Served: **15**

Connect Sessions: **7**

Training Days: **3**

Info Sessions: **2**

New Volunteers: **21**

Sessions Held: **296**

People Impacted: **2,880**



Yoga Testimonials



"We have noticed a positive difference in our clients that attend. Our beautiful clients feel calm, relaxed, it helps them with their anxiety and stretching of their muscles. Both ASL teachers are very attentive, patient, friendly, approachable, and understanding with our clients, as some clients are non-verbal and have different behaviours. Our clients look forward to their Yoga session every Thursday. It has been so heart-warming watching the team do their yoga sessions and notice a difference with our clients."

- Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Allambie Heights

"I have heard several clients really looking forward to Yoga each week and reporting that they got a lot so much out of it. There were even times when I was having some emotionally difficult sessions with clients who said that having yoga to go to afterwards would be very helpful to calm, relax and ground themselves. On behalf of Kedesh and our clients, thank you so much for all that you and the instructors have done for us in 2023!!"

-Kedesh Rehabilitation Centre, Berkeley

Carol (participant) is a very gentle soul and has been writing and now sharing "Positive Affirmations" at the beginning and end of each ASL Yoga class. Carol has grown in her interpersonal skills and confidence by sharing these positive affirmations in the ASL Yoga Class each week at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

- Dee ASL Yoga Teacher



Who we served in 2023



DETOUR
HOUSE INC
Caring for women in need



Where mental wellbeing thrives



The Sydney
children's
Hospitals Network



Cerebral Palsy
ALLIANCE



ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
SYDNEY



Down Syndrome
Australia



KEDESH
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Treatment - Training - Research



byron aged care



Queensland
Government

Princess Alexandra
Hospital
BRISBANE • AUSTRALIA



WAYSIDE
CHAPEL



Caretakers
Crisis Refuge

Metro North
Health



Queensland
Government



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District



ST VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL
MELBOURNE
A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA



Northern Beaches
Hospital
by Healthscope



Special Events 2023

Our team delivered 8 special wellness events throughout the year impacting 365 people from the organisations that we partner with.



Princess
Alexandra
Hospital National
Volunteer Week
Celebration
May 2023



Asylum Seeker Centre's
Family Fun Day June 2023

Special Events 2023



Red Nose Sibling Day event, July 2023



Whitlam Leisure Centre Open Day
October 2023



Mentee Abual performing at Auburn
Youth Centre's Annual General
Meeting, October 2023

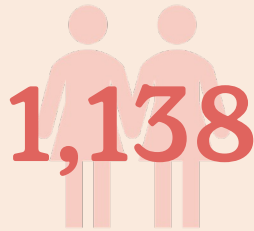
Special Events

OmFest Festival

Om Fest was a unique social impact festival with a world class program of musicians, yoga and meditation teachers held at The Green Room in Byron Bay. A curated retreat-like experience to help participants immerse in the practices of mantra, movement, breath and meditation. A journey was designed to be nurturing and nourishing for body, mind and spirit. A balance of movement, deep relaxation, meditation and sacred sound vibrations weaved throughout all the sessions and programs. A festival of kindness, love, compassion unity with a tangible social benefit through the supporting A Sound Life and Help A School Foundation.



Artists



Attendees



Revenue



Special Events OmFest Impact

How the overall experience made people feel

84%

Uplifted

81%

Joyful

70%

Connected

69%

Inspired

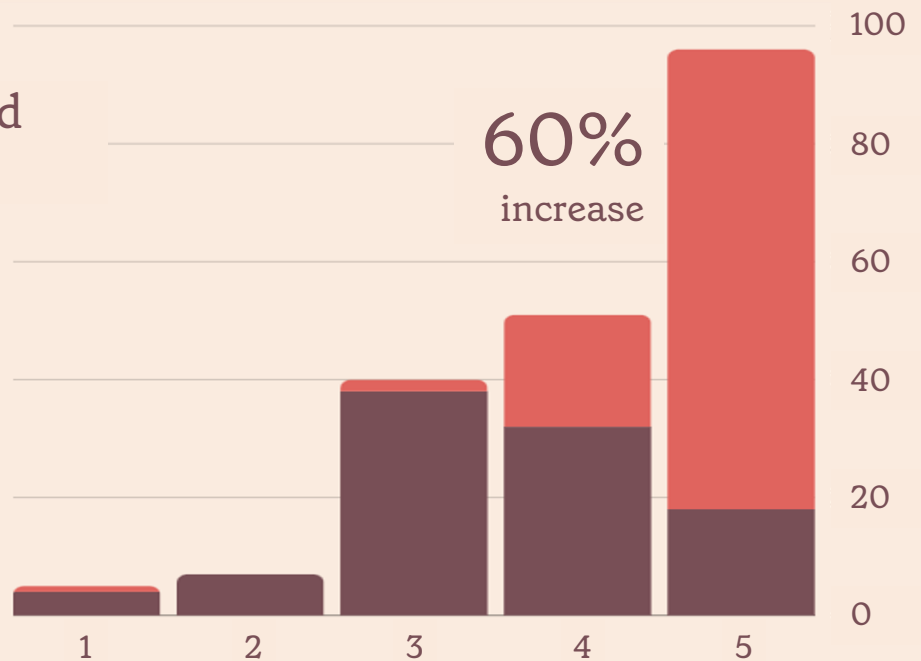
65%

Peaceful

Mood before and
after OmFest

Before

After



What was their
overall
experience at
OmFest?

Average

1%

Good

21%

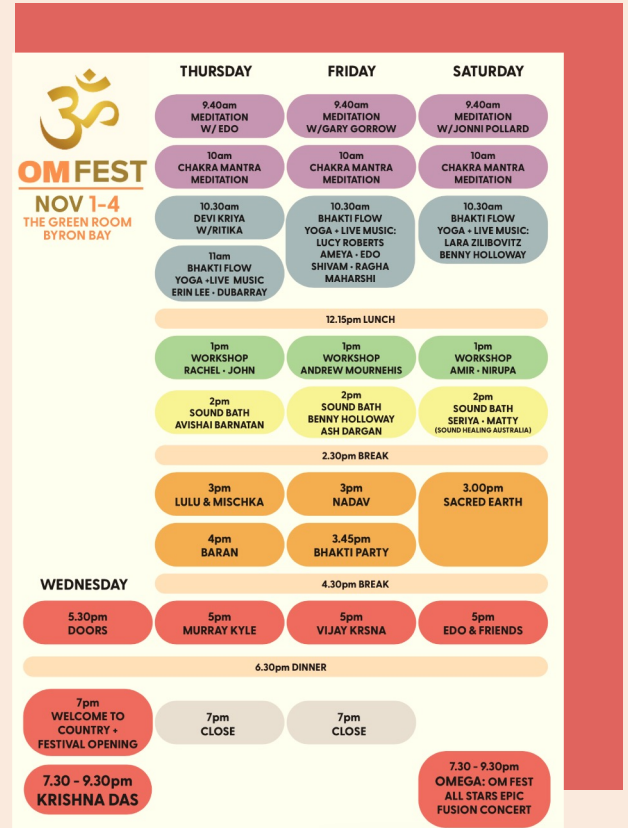
Incredible

78%

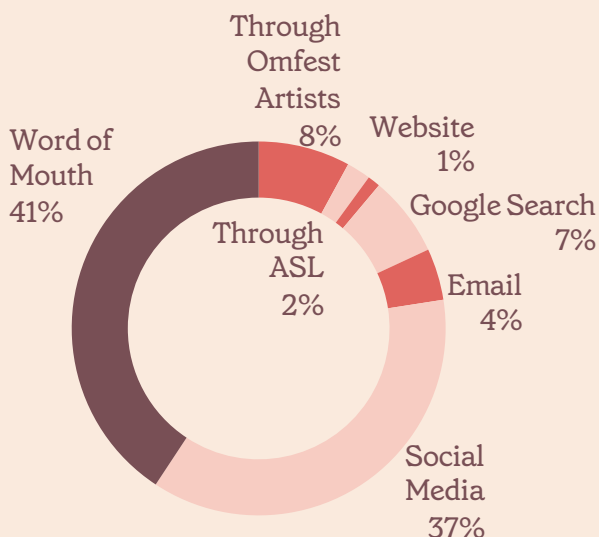


Special Events OmFest Impact

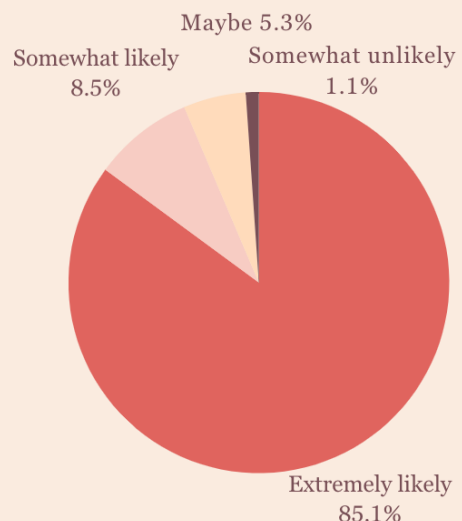
73% of
attendees had not
previously heard of ASL
– great opportunity for
brand exposure



Where did our
audience hear about
OmFest?



How likely are they to go
to another event like this?



Special Events

OmFest Feedback

"OMFest surpassed my expectations. There was a feeling of connection within the room and it was inspiring to see everyone being open, loving and free."

"It was a wonderful event, raising funds for a worthy cause, whilst raising spirits for all those who attended."

"This was my first experience of chanting in a room of close to 1000 people. At the end of the last chant with Krishna Das, we all sat in absolute silence. It felt like home being in a room with other people who also knew how to be silent, and how special that was."

"I went into the festival with a heavy heart and emerged spiritually energised and optimistic. I am able to connect again with my community after some years of relative isolation. The love, joy and connection with spirit was unforgettable."

"OMFest was incredible! The whole 4 days was very well executed. The whole event was uplifting and joyous with world class artists and professional practitioners. Grateful that OM Fest brought our yoga community together in Byron Bay and beyond, in celebration of love and life. Definitely coming to the next one! Hari Om Tat Sat!"

"Thank you! My heart was blown wide open!"

This was more than a festival. It was a three-day transformation. It was pure integrity, quality and a deeply uplifting experience. I felt like I was able to relax into it without having to filter, protect or hold myself because the quality of the space, the invocations of the chants and the intention of the festival set an incredibly safe container to simply rest in my heart. I couldn't have asked for more!"



Our giving community.

Our Volunteers.

We had 72 incredible volunteers deliver our programs this year. These big hearted, talented, kind and generous people have made a difference to thousands of people's lives. We are beyond grateful for you and thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We hope you will continue on this journey with us in 2024!

We Love You



Our family.

Our 2023 core team & board.



CEO

Natasha Curry



Co-Founder

Edo Kahn



Yoga Program Manager

Bess Wittingslow



Music Program Manager

Gabi Brown



Socials & Communications

Masha Artamonova



Marketing Manager

Siobhan Hodgson



Founder YML Group

Yoav Mark Lewis



ECP Director

Jared Pohl



Strategic Lead Apple

Jemma Parsons



Head of King's Foundation

Will Halliday



Our key funders and supporters

VITTORIA
FOOD & BEVERAGE

 **Matana**
Foundation
for young people

 **The Pohl**
Foundation

 **CommBank**
Staff Foundation

 **COOPER**
INVESTORS 

 **Davies**
Foundation

ADF | Alcohol
and Drug
Foundation


EMILY'S WISH
FOUNDATION

 **THE TONY**
FOUNDATION

OMFEST

**LOST
PARA
DISE**

 **ST VINCENT'S**
CURRAN
FOUNDATION

We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to our key partners, 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 support, encouragement and generosity. Thank you for sharing this incredible journey with us.



Thank you for an incredible year,
we look forward to making an
even bigger difference in 2024!



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