

# Impact Report

## 2023-2024



Mental health  
Physical health  
Social inclusion



reclink  
australia

## Message from Chair, Founder, and CEO

Sport and recreation have the unique ability to bring people together, promote inclusion and uplift those facing challenges in their lives.

After a period of growth, this year we reflect on the positive impact our work has to strengthen and create positive change within communities.

Reclink now operates in every state and territory of Australia. Whilst the locations and people within communities may differ, the model of how we develop our programs remains the same. We work in partnership with funders, sponsors and key community leaders to develop and deliver programs that communities need and want.

It's through this collaboration that we empower people of all ages and backgrounds to be more active, lead healthier lives and connect with others in their community.

Our aim is always to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels supported to improve their physical and mental health and foster connections with others.

Our work is made possible because of our generous supporters including Government partners, member agencies, philanthropic supporters, community partners, and corporate supporters. It's because of these meaningful partnerships that we continue to deliver engaging sport and recreation programs across the country, with more than 100,000 participations this year.



This year marks a change to the leadership of our Board as Michael Brown concludes his six years at the helm. We thank and acknowledge Michael for his dedication to leading Reclink. During his time at the helm, Reclink faced one of its toughest operational challenges, the pandemic. It's a testament to Michael's leadership and support to emerge from lockdowns a stronger organisation. Michael has been a key driver to our growth and has introduced us to many current partners.

It is a team effort to deliver the scale and breadth of programs that we offer.

We acknowledge our Board for their guidance and support, our network of volunteers who generously give up their time, and our senior leadership team and staff for their dedication and passion to deliver quality and engaging programs every day.

Most importantly, thank you to our incredible Reclink participants. It's your stories that inspire and motivate us to deliver quality sport and recreation programs.

We look forward to continuing our work within the Sport and Community Services sectors and inspiring positive change for many years to come.

Thank you once again for your support, and we look forward to 2024.

**Michael Brown**  
Chair

*P. Cullen A.M.*

**Peter Cullen AM**  
Founder/Director

**Dave Wells**  
CEO





# East Gippsland's road to recovery through sport and recreation

“ Reclink has come gently into our traumatised community and provided fun events for all ages. I love the fact that you asked us what we want and provided it - art classes, yoga, exercises, sport, games for kids. Reclink has reminded us that through being physical and creative and interacting with each other, we remember to have fun, to laugh, to be active and to support one another in this amazing little community we all call home. For that I am eternally grateful.” ”

Reclink has played a significant role in Far East Gippsland's recovery from the devastating 2019/2020 bushfires across four years, with support from State and Federal funding as well as non-government sources. The Bushfire Recovery Programs have strengthened affected communities, guided by the dedication of local Reclink sports and arts coordinators who have walked alongside their community through the recovery process. Reclink staff are trained in trauma-informed care and have ensured that recreational activities are offered in safe, nurturing spaces where people can heal and regain a sense of stability.

Reclink implemented a social prescribing model, collaborating with the local medical team, whereby

individuals are referred into Reclink programs by GPs, psychologists, allied health professionals, or support workers. This approach helps to capture and encourage those individuals suffering from loneliness and poor physical or mental health to try a new activity for their health and wellbeing, as well as rediscover a sense of purpose and belonging in the community. New friends, new skills, new hobbies all contribute to decreases in loneliness and vulnerability.

Activities to get people connected and moving have included basketball, music, photography, learn-to-surf programs, yoga, meditation, stand-up paddle-boarding, ocean confidence, judo, puppet-making, weaving, and sculpting. These activities encourage individuals to build their skills, find joy, and reconnect with others. A local music group, formed through the bushfire recovery program, has since performed in community spaces, showcasing how participants have moved through loneliness and isolation to playing as a group in public. Participants sum it up: “This gives me a reason to get up and out of bed every week” and “This is the most fun I have had since I moved here”.

Reclink remains committed to supporting everyone's recovery journey and walking alongside the community as we build long-term resilience together.



**89%** indicated that they saw moderate or great improvements to their overall mental health and wellbeing, their physical health and fitness, the extent to which they were motivated to participate in more physical activity, and the development of skills relating to the activity.



**76%** agreed to a moderate or great extent that the program had helped their coping skills



**77%** agreed to a moderate or great extent that the program had improved their confidence in using other services or programs intended to improve other aspects of their wellbeing.



The majority of survey respondents indicated that participating in the Bushfire Recovery Program had increased their connections with both others in the community (**79%**) and those who they attended the activity with (**85%**).

Research and information compiled by Phoenix Australia

Phoenix Australia is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to building the capability of individuals, organisations and communities to understand, prevent, and recover from the adverse mental health effects of trauma. We specialise in working with organisations with staff in high-risk roles for exposure to trauma, including vicarious trauma. Phoenix Australia is affiliated with The University of Melbourne.

# Reclink's National Impact and Reach

**196,161**  
Participations

**16,347**  
Avg participations  
per month

**10,466**  
Sessions

**872**  
Avg sessions  
per month

**29.5%**  
Female

**33.4%**  
Male

**0.2%**  
Gender diverse

**36.9%**  
Choose not to disclose

## Most popular activities:



**1.**  
Multi Sport



**2.**  
Fitness,  
Gym and  
Swim



**3.**  
Basketball



**4.**  
Soccer



**5.**  
Football  
(Aussie Rules)

**30%**  
Culturally and  
linguistically  
diverse  
participants

**3%**  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait  
Islander  
participants

**77**  
Local  
Government  
Areas with  
Reclink programs

**15%**  
Participants  
with disability

**43%**  
Under 25s



# Helping children access inclusive sport and recreation in WA

Thanks to generous funding from the Channel 7 Telethon Trust, Reclink has been able to bring joy, hope, and opportunity to children facing significant challenges.

The sound of laughter fills the air as children at a circus skills workshop try their hand at juggling. Their smiles say it all – Reclink’s sports, recreation, and arts programs are making a profound difference in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people across Western Australia.

For children with disabilities, poor mental health, or those from marginalised communities, Reclink offers a chance to participate in inclusive activities that were once out of reach. Whether it’s a cricket game or a creative arts session, these programs focus on improving physical, mental, and social well-being.

“Reducing barriers to sports and arts is changing children’s lives,” says Kieran O’Connor, Reclink’s WA sport and recreation manager. “Our goal is to make sure no young person is left behind. Every child deserves the chance to experience activities that help them develop lifelong skills and interests.”

Reclink’s strength lies in its deep connection to local communities, schools, sporting associations and social service organisations. By listening to the needs of children and their families, Reclink has adapted its programs to ensure accessibility and inclusion. The focus on co-design, where children’s voices help shape the activities, means that the programs are genuinely responsive to their needs.

## Most popular activities:



Fitness,  
Gym and  
Swim



Cricket



10 Pin  
Bowling



Soccer



Multi  
Sport

One teacher from a participating school described the transformation she’s seen in her students. “Many of our kids have never been able to join a sports team before, but through Reclink, they’ve found confidence and belonging. It’s wonderful to see them so happy and engaged.”

Through activities like cricket workshops, weekly soccer sessions, boxing sessions, circus skills training, and art classes, Reclink is creating spaces where children can thrive.

The joy of learning a new skill, playing with friends, and the boost to self-esteem are just some of the outcomes Reclink’s programs deliver. For children who may have otherwise felt left out, Reclink provides an outlet for fun and a link to social connection – crucial to a young person’s life.

Thanks to the support of the Channel 7 Telethon Trust, Reclink will continue to break down barriers and build up the children who need it most.



### WA Impact and Reach

Programs in **12**  
Local Government  
Areas

**23,761**  
Total  
Participations

**526**  
Total Program  
sessions held

# Returning to the Red Centre

## This year marked an exciting year for Reclink in re-establishing its footprint in Alice Springs (Mparntwe) in the Northern Territory.

In February 2024, Reclink returned to the Red Centre, with the appointment of a Sport and Recreation Manager. Using a culturally sensitive approach to re-engage in the area, Reclink formed a partnership with the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, which undertook a feasibility study to identify community-driven and culturally appropriate physical activity, sports and recreational activities that enhance community development, health, and well-being for Aboriginal youth and adults.

The feasibility study, funded through generous support from the Phillips Foundation, lists a range of recommendations for Reclink that are designed with integrated local community member and stakeholder perspectives.

Reclink’s goal is now focused on increasing equity in sporting activities, particularly for Aboriginal identified, lower SES and remote participants through increased place-based opportunities, support in player systems, whole community activities and holistic sports hubs, along with supporting the coordination of partner sports and recreational organisations.

Chief Medical Officer for Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Dr John Boffa says sport is a key means of targeting young people who are facing a myriad of challenges.

Dr Boffa says establishing cultural safety and consultation with Aboriginal people is important for Reclink’s project to succeed.

“Sport is a major mechanism to engage young people, and to give them an experience of control, of doing something well, mastering something and then from there, making the next step to get back into school and seeking employment,” he said.

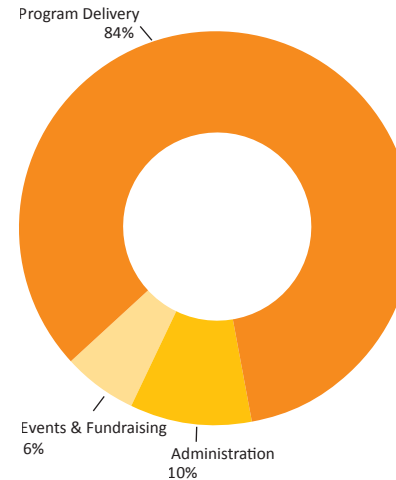
The suite of activities that Reclink has started includes weekly inclusive programs that address the community’s diverse needs, such as football, dance, pickleball, youth fitness programs – as well as supporting community events.

Reclink Australia Founder Peter Cullen AM made a special visit to Alice Springs (Mparntwe) in June alongside a team of committed volunteers and supporters, with activities including a street outreach to residents of donated sporting goods through the Reclink Sports Share program, as well as a special Community Clinic co-hosted by the Melbourne Football Club.

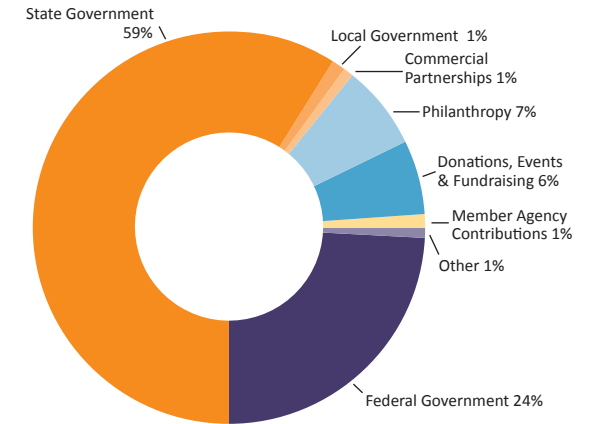
# Our finances

Reclink Australia engage Accru Melbourne to audit our financial reports. The full Financial Statements are available at [reclink.org](http://reclink.org)

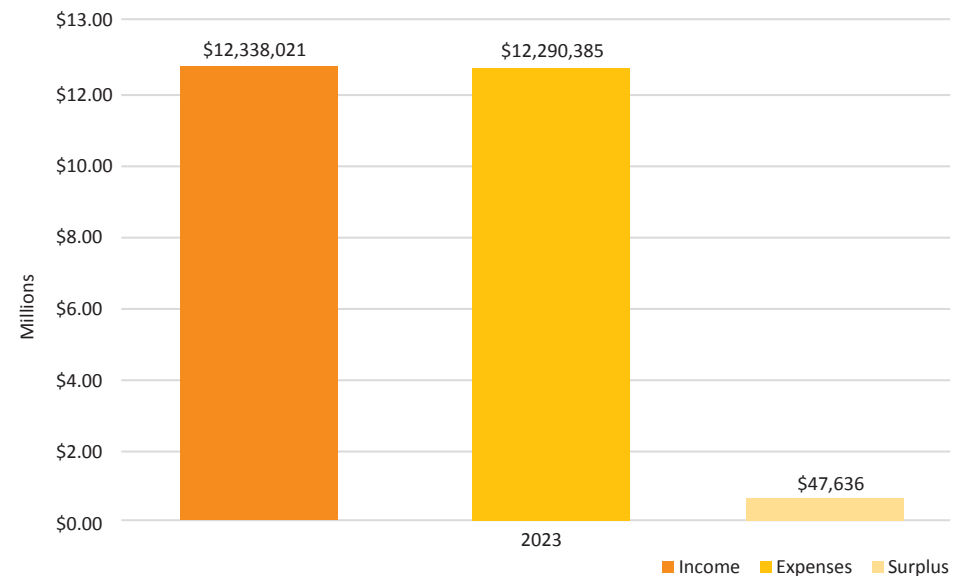
## Use of funds



## Source of funds



## Financial performance



Thank you to:

**HOWDEN**

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY  
**telethon** 7



 **reclink  
australia**

**Reclink Australia** ABN 53 046 843 443 ACN 131 719 027

**Head Office**  
115B Ferrars Street  
Southbank  
VIC 3006

**Post**  
PO Box 201  
South Melbourne  
VIC 3205

**Phone**  
03 9419 6672

**reclink.org**

