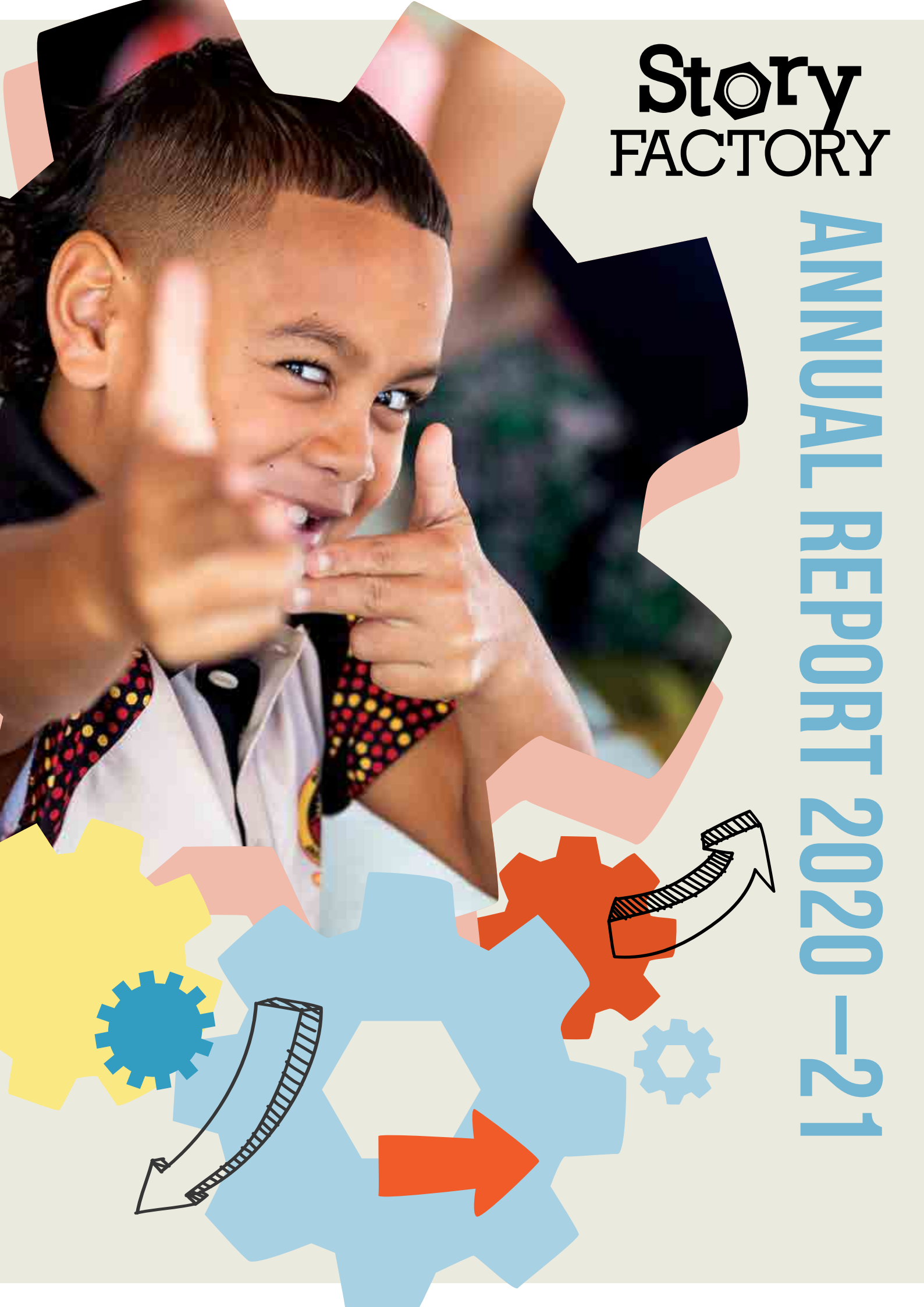


Story
FACTORY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

'It was the best day ever.'

Student feedback

'Thank you for helping me unlock my writing abilities and giving me the confidence to share my work.'

Student feedback

'These visits have turned some of our most hesitant writers into writers that are now blossoming and full of confidence.'

Elena Moutzouris, teacher,
Telopea Public School

The 2020-21 financial year was book-ended by lockdowns. When it began, we were just emerging from the first lockdown and our staff were thrilled to be heading back into classrooms across Sydney.

As the year went on, and our volunteers were allowed to join us again, demand for our programs surged. Our students, already on average three years behind their more advantaged peers, fell even further behind due to the disruptions of COVID-19. Determined to help them make up this gap, we had our busiest 12 months ever, working with 8,500 kids - a 70% increase on the year before.

This growth was fuelled by our first contract with the NSW Department of Education, which supported us to roll out our programs to an additional 20 schools in Western Sydney, the Illawarra and the South Coast. It was a huge vote of confidence, and a milestone for us as an organisation.

We also swiftly and successfully piloted our digital programs, reaching 1,700 young people we otherwise couldn't have seen.

Of course, just as the financial year ended, we were abruptly plunged into lockdown again. But this time we could quickly and easily switch to online delivery. We had learnt a lot in the previous year and knew what to do to stick with our students.

That's the most important lesson we've learnt in the last year: that our nimble and creative team can adapt to whatever comes our way. Just as our brilliant students do. Inspired by them - and thanks to our fantastic supporters - we'll continue to meet the challenges of this fast-changing world. Because stories really do change lives.

Dr Catherine Keenan AM
Co-founder & Executive Director



BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Once more, I am so inspired by the agility and creativity with which our team has responded to this emergency. Despite the unpredictable challenges of COVID-19, 2020-21 was an amazing year, as the team found new ways to help our students develop the writing skills and confidence essential for future success.

We have also positioned ourselves for growth, developing a suite of digital programs that we plan to roll out widely in the coming year, extending our reach beyond Sydney.

Through all the changes, we have never lost sight of the essentials. We've been prudent in our financial management, keeping spending low and reserves high.

We've kept our staff because they are the heart of Story Factory. In fact, in the last year our team grew to meet increasing demand. In the years ahead, our students will need their expertise and dedication more than ever.

I am particularly grateful to our wonderful community of donors, who stuck with us and gave us the freedom to adapt our programs as needed. We couldn't have done it without you.

It seems clear that the road ahead will be full of more unexpected twists and turns. But we are in a strong position to navigate them.

Thank you for being part of our amazing Story Factory community.

Michael Gonski
President, Story Factory Board of Directors

I am writing this in the midst of Sydney's longest lockdown. While 'living at work' has been tough for many, it's nothing compared to the hardships endured by most of the kids who attend Story Factory programs. The majority live in the heavily locked-down LGAs in Western Sydney, where COVID has wreaked havoc. Life is hard enough without the worry of a parent or child contracting COVID - or losing their jobs. Now more than ever it is important we find a way to support these kids and their families.

SINCE 2012

33,660+
Young Creative Writers

46%
Students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD)

18%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

60,895
volunteer hours spent supporting student writing



CASH

Cash (front) and a buddy proudly displaying their writing. Image by Jim A. Baker

Redfern Jarjum College is a school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are not flourishing in mainstream primary schools. Story Factory worked there with a Year 3 and 4 class, supporting a group of 8 – 10 year olds to write about food.

Our student Cash was always eager to share his work and verbalise his ideas, but his challenge was getting those excellent ideas onto the page and writing.

Our *Food Glorious Food* creative writing program was perfect for Cash, focussing his imagination onto writing down his ideas. Cash's enthusiasm for the workshops helped direct how the other kids responded, making it fun and cool to write.

Cash was able to lead the group in sharing ideas and modelling what enthusiastic participation looked like, coming up with the brilliant idea to create disgusting ice cream flavours, which his classmates enthusiastically endorsed!

We asked Cash what he liked best about the workshops with Story Factory. 'That you can make up imaginary stuff. I feel happy writing stuff.'

HOT CHIPS LOVE POEM

BY CASH

**If I ever had to choose between you
and a seventh helping of hot chips
barbecue sauce**

**chicken salt on top,
hot crunchy chunky french fries
on a plate**

**I think I'd choose hot chips
But I'd choose you next.**

– From our *Food, Glorious Food*
creative writing program

It's clear Anhaar is destined for great things. Fourteen years old and a student at Al Noori Muslim School, Anhaar is a passionate writer, advocate and volunteer (who also makes earrings as a hobby). In fact you may have seen her on ABC's QandA program asking incisive questions or writing op-eds for *The Guardian* about life for students in lockdown.

Anhaar heard about Story Factory through social media and word of mouth and chose to participate in our Australia-wide *A User's Guide to a Pandemic* project, run during the first wave of the pandemic. Since then Anhaar has joined us for poetry, monologue, and short story programs.

'I've had the opportunity to write and gain feedback, as well as form new friendships and have some fun! The facilitators and volunteers were always so kind and supportive and the peer environment was one where we could provide feedback and reflect on each other's work,' says Anhaar.

'I love how we experimented with poetry during Story Factory workshops! We would often unpack poems and their structure, then try following a similar one ourselves. This pattern helped me develop a passion for poetry and inspire my creativity and ability to write. What makes me proud is my development, over the course of that program, where I think my poetry writing improved significantly.'

About this extract from her writing, Anhaar says: 'This piece was interesting for me, as it was the first time I attempted writing a crime piece, which was me stepping out of my usual comfort zone.'

ANHAAR

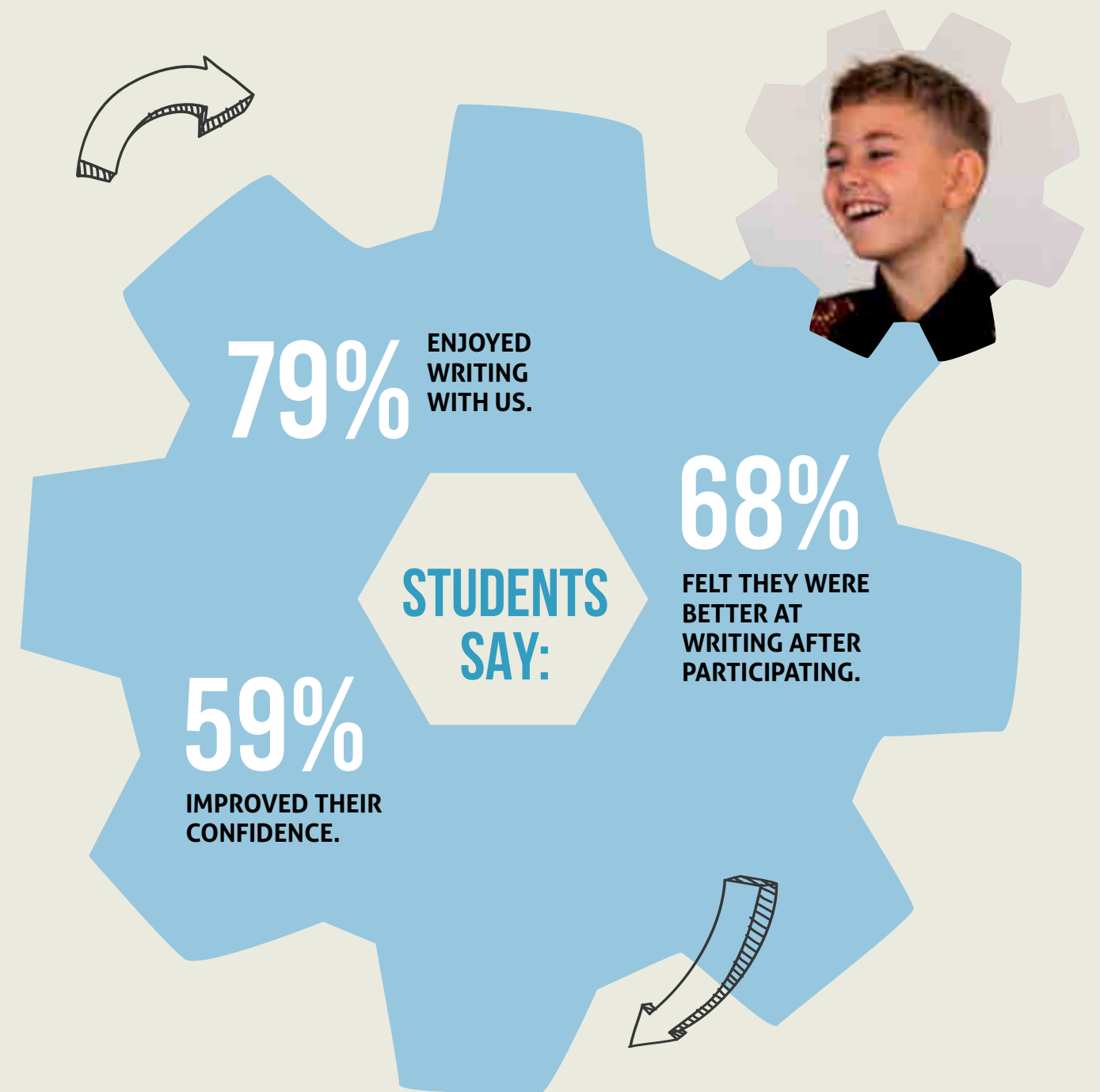
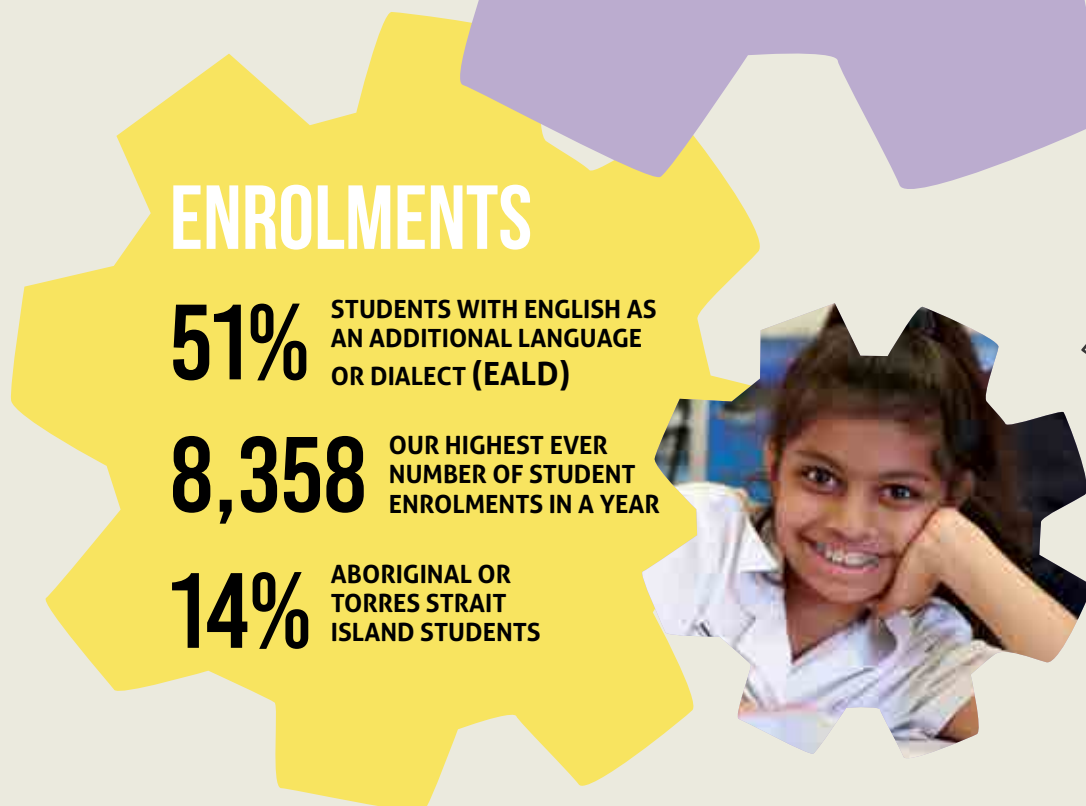
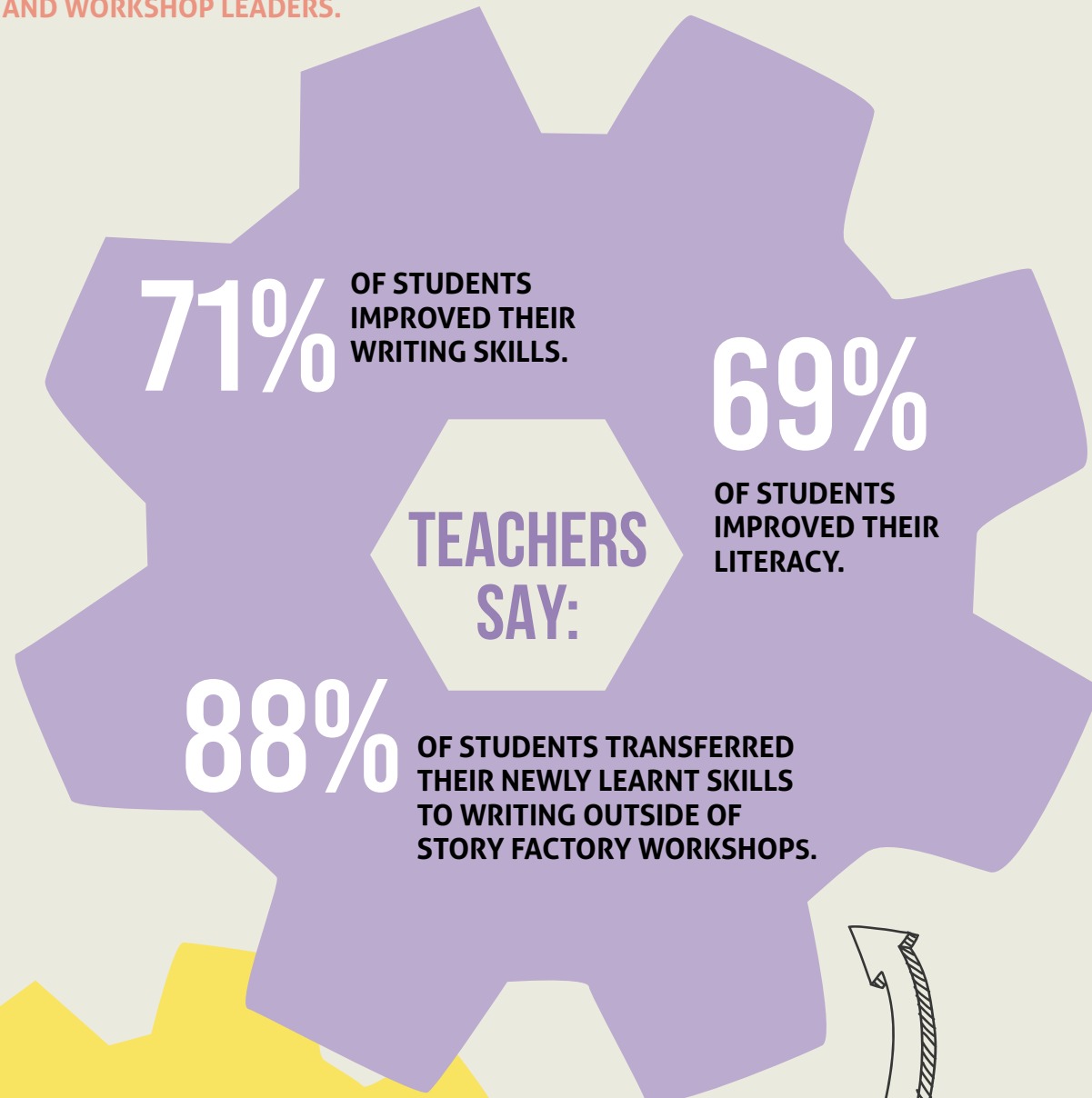
'This is the moment I've dreaded, blood pumps to my head, it's heavy. A wave of dizziness washes over me and I'm afraid I might pass out. That wouldn't be too bad, at least I wouldn't have to reply to his outrageous claim. Well, it should be outrageous that I murdered someone. The hard thing is, it's not'.

– Anhaar

IMPACT IN FY21

EVALUATION OF OUR PROGRAMS IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT AS IT HELPS US KNOW WE ARE MAKING AN IMPACT AND INFORMS PROGRAM DESIGN.

WE'VE WORKED WITH RESPECTED EVALUATION CONSULTANTS CLEAR HORIZON TO DEVELOP A ROBUST EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS. IT INCLUDES GATHERING FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS, STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND WORKSHOP LEADERS.



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

380
pre-recorded videos

11,853
page views of our free writing resources

475
kids in online classes

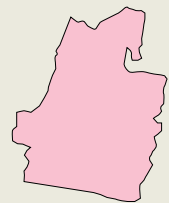
OUR REACH

IN 2020-21 WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO WORK ACROSS A FANTASTIC MIX OF SCHOOLS - FROM RESIDENCY SCHOOLS WE'VE HAD RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOR YEARS, TO NEW SCHOOLS ACROSS REGIONAL NSW. AT EVERY SCHOOL WE'VE WORKED WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO BRING OUR MIX OF FUN AND ENGAGING WRITING ACTIVITIES TO CLASSROOMS.



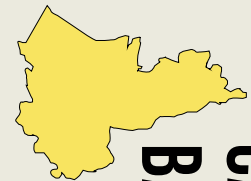
BLACKTOWN

Chifley College Bidwill Campus
Chifley College Shalvey Campus
Dawson Public
Doonside Technology High
Emerton Public
Plumpton Public
Shalvey Public
Tregear Public
Willmot Public



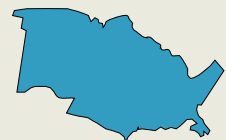
CAMPBELLTOWN

Airds High
Ajuga School
Briar Road Public
Claymore Public
Sarah Redfern High
Thomas Reddall High



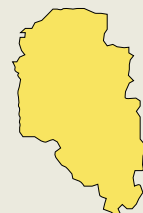
CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN

Bankstown Girls High
Bass High
Birrong Girls High
Chullora Public
Punchbowl Boys High
Punchbowl Public
Wiley Park Girls High
Wiley Park Public



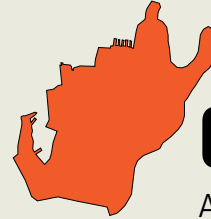
FAIRFIELD

Bonnyrigg High
Bossley Park High
Cabramatta High
Canley Vale High
Fairfield Public
Mary Immaculate Primary
Prairiewood High



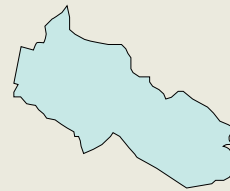
DUBBO

Wellington High



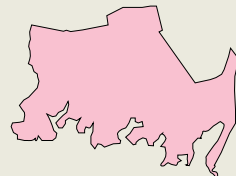
CITY OF SYDNEY

Alexandria Park Community School
Plunkett Street Public
Redfern Jarjum College
Sydney Secondary College
Blackwattle Bay



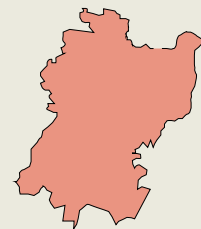
CUMBERLAND

Auburn West Public
Berala Public
Blaxcell Street Public
Granville South Public
Holroyd High
Merrylands Public



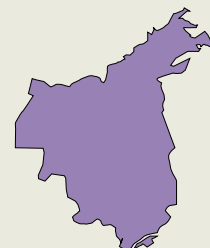
GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL

Woniora Road School



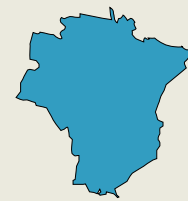
HAWKESBURY

Richmond High
Windsor High



INNER WEST

Tempe High
Waranara School



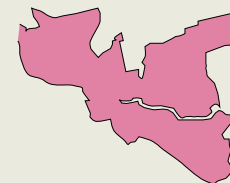
MID COAST

Wingham High



LIVERPOOL

Hoxton Park High
Liverpool Boys High
Liverpool Public
Liverpool West Public
Miller Technology High
Mount Pritchard East Public



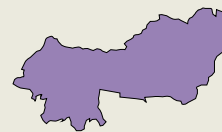
PARRAMATTA

Granville Boys High
Pendle Hill High
Telopea Public
Toongabbie East Public



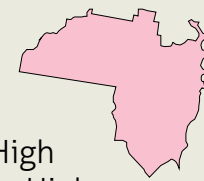
RANDWICK

Matraville Sports High



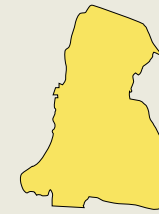
UPPER HUNTER SHIRE

Merriwa Central



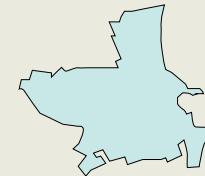
KIAMA

Kiama High
Minnamurra Public



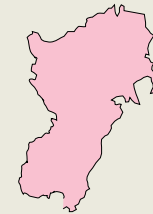
PENRITH

Bennett Road Public
Chifley College
Dunheved Campus
Colyton High
Cranebrook High
Erskine Park High
Glenmore Park High
James Erskine Public
Kingswood High
Oxley Park Public
St Clair High



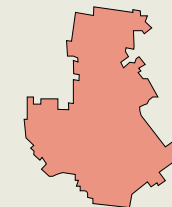
SHELLHARBOUR

Albion Park Rail Public
Balarang Public
Lake Illawarra High
Oak Flats High
Oak Flats Public



SHOALHAVEN

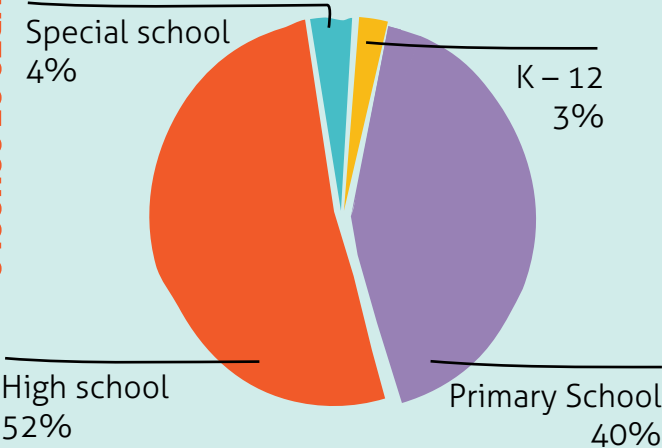
Bomaderry High
Illaroo Road Public
Vincentia High



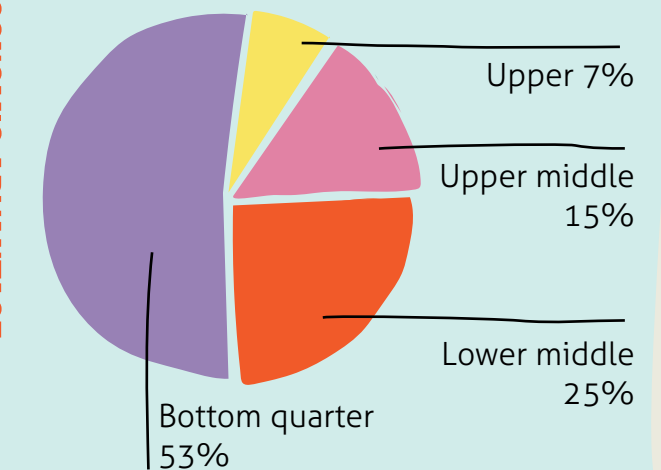
WILCANNIA

Wilcannia Central

TYPES OF SCHOOLS



ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE



SUPPORT

EACH YEAR STORY FACTORY RELIES ON A GENEROUS GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES, TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS TO SUPPORT OUR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

IN ONE OF THE HARDEST YEARS TO OPERATE, THE IMPACT AND REACH WE ACHIEVED WITH YOUNG WRITERS IN UNDER-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU, OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS.

ON BEHALF OF THE FANTASTIC YOUNG PEOPLE WHO TOOK PART IN OUR WORKSHOPS — THANK YOU.

ED FEDERMAN PARTNER PROFILE



Managing Director of the ARA Group Edward (Ed) Federman stepped up and supported Story Factory for the first time this financial year. To Ed and all of you who have just joined us, welcome and thank you for answering our call for support!

Says Ed: 'I founded the ARA Group 20 years ago with a goal of building a substantial building and infrastructure services business, including the manufacture of building products. We have become a leading services provider in Australia and New Zealand with annual turnover of \$600 million and 2,500 employees. Our services range from industrial electrical, electronic security, fire protection, mechanical, building remediation and repair, to cleaning. Our most satisfying achievement is that we are genuinely an employee-owned company with more than 250 employees owning shares.'

'As ARA has grown, it has become an inherent part of our culture to assist those who have a need of support. I have a strong belief that a business performs better if it takes its responsibility to the communities in which it operates seriously.'

'Both myself and ARA contribute to many worthy organisations, with a focus on the arts and literature. Literacy, reading and writing are so important in our world today, helping us communicate and express important ideas. After I met Cath and read some of the writing by the students participating in the Story Factory's programs, and later attended a poetry reading, I became committed to contributing to the Story Factory. **Cath and her team are doing wonderful work with children and teenagers who have extraordinary stories to tell.** The Story Factory programs give them the skills and opportunity to write and be heard.'

ART AUCTION

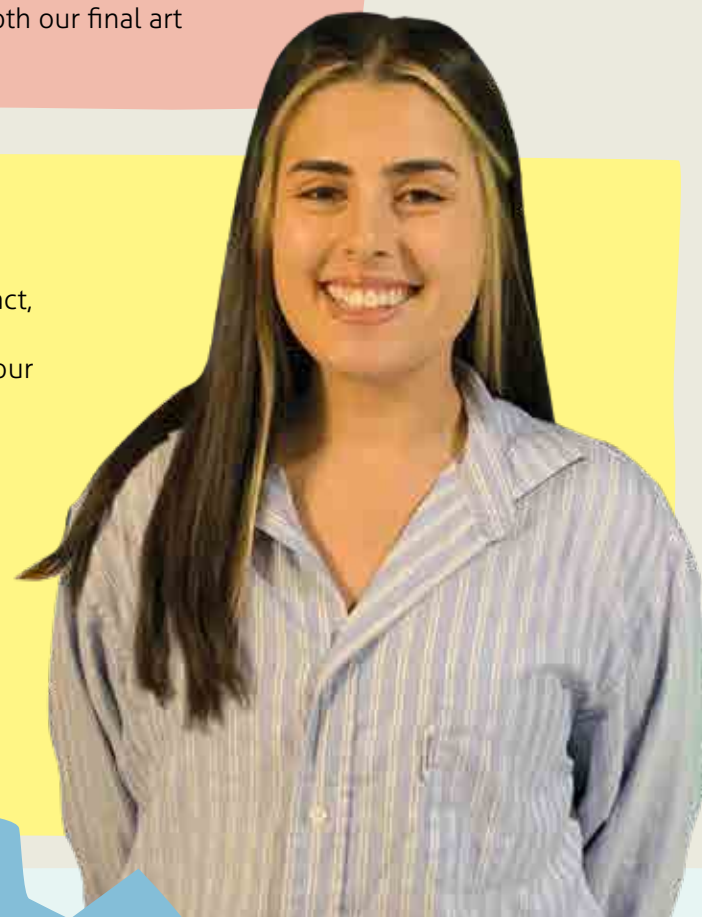
Huge thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of our art auction. Almost three years in the making, we would especially like to extend heartfelt thanks to the 40 generous artists who donated their work to support the creativity of our young writers, as well as the many generous individuals and businesses who gave both in-kind and direct support. It was both our final art auction and our most successful fundraiser to date.

STORYTELLER APPEAL

This financial year we delivered our biggest government contract, in a three-term partnership with the NSW Department of Education. When this contract finished in March 2021, we ran our first ever Storyteller Appeal so we could retain Storyteller Vanessa Andres (pictured right). We are very grateful to all the donors who made it possible to keep Vanessa on.

Vanessa says:

'I believe every young person deserves the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas in a space where they will be heard and celebrated. I'm so grateful that I get to be a part of that, thank you.'



THANK YOU STORY FACTORY SUPPORTERS

OUR SUPPORTERS SAY...

'I'm a volunteer with Story Factory and know how it makes a difference to the students.'

'I'm a former literature teacher and so I value what you are all doing to encourage young people to express their creativity.'

'I appreciate being asked for money with unpressured sincerity and being very clear about the goals and what the money is used for.'

'Storytelling and sharing stories are such fantastic ways to help boost children's literacy, imagination, and to make them feel heard.'

'I believe the work you do is critical in supporting children in need and that treating them with respect so that they know that they and their story are valuable is one of the most important things you can do.'

'Story Factory is doing such wonderful work, helping kids realise not just that their stories matter, but that they matter.'

'I have been volunteering with Story Factory since 2017 and am continually proud to be part of such a well-run organisation, filled with wonderful, kind people who are all doing so much good for so many students. I hope this donation helps keep that effort going.'

STORY FACTORY WORKS CLOSELY WITH SCHOOLS, TAILORING WRITING WORKSHOPS TO MEET THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF STUDENTS. IN A PANDEMIC YEAR WHEN STUDENTS WERE WORKING HARD TO MAKE UP GROUND LOST IN LOCKDOWN, THAT MEANT EVEN MORE FLEXIBILITY, IMAGINATION AND PASSION POURED INTO OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS.

HOLROYD HIGH SCHOOL

Holroyd High School is a small, co-educational school near Parramatta that works hard to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment which enables all students to grow. They have a particular focus on newly-arrived students and refugees for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), supporting their learning with an Intensive English Centre.

We've worked with Holroyd across a range of programs including *Magical Realism* (exploring a more magical reality), *Heroes & Villains* (retelling the villain's experience) and *EcoPoPro* (connecting with the natural world around us). Most notably we were thrilled to partner with Holroyd on our special *We're Writing to Say* big project.

Supported by the NSW Department of Communities & Justice, this project aimed to connect with some of the most vulnerable members of our community during a pandemic and support kids to write about their experiences.

'Both the teachers and the students love working with the Story Factory. You support students to engage with concepts and express ideas in ways that they would not normally have access to. It is also a great professional opportunity for teachers to expand their ideas and strategies.'

Olga van Eerde, Head Teacher Engagement, Fairfield High School Intensive English Centre



PRAIRIEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Our connection to Prairiewood High School came through an especially gifted Principal, Belinda Giudice, who we worked with previously at Canterbury Boys High School. Because of our long-standing relationship we've been able to collaborate across existing programs as well as trying new things.

Prairiewood supports engagement with literacy across the spectrum of ability — from English as an Additional Language to advanced writers. Our writing workshops are designed to do exactly this and in 2020-21 we worked with kids at Prairiewood on *Flash Fiction* (creating a piece of writing in a flash),

Craft of Writing (a special collaboration between Story Factory and University of Sydney), *Instapoetry* (writing small, positive poems designed for social media), *Locals vs Robots* (who will win?!), *Clifi Diaries* (exploring the genre of climate fiction) and *CineVerse* — a very special project.

CineVerse was a writing and film project spanning four high schools in Western Sydney, five emerging film-makers, over 80 poems and up to 20 short films. It allowed teenagers from widespread communities to use the language of film and poetry to investigate things that mattered to them.

Across day-long workshops, students wrote poetry and worked with film-makers to produce short films. At the culmination of the project the short films were screened at Event Cinemas in neighbouring Wetherill Park in a film-festival style launch event to students, friends and family, with prizes awarded by a panel of industry judges. Prairiewood students were presented with professionally designed and printed anthologies of their writing to celebrate their achievement.

LEARNING GROUND, BIDWILL BY CRAIG NEW, OPERATIONS MANAGER

'Every Friday night of Term 3 2020, our storyteller Tommie and I joined Learning Ground, a small, tight-knit community of kids in Bidwill, in Mt Druitt.

'It became immediately apparent that in this safe, supportive and respectful environment these kids who had struggled with school were not only enthusiastic about participating in writing workshops (on Friday nights no less!), but were passionate about putting everything they had into it.

'There was the Year 5 student who could only *just* spell her name, but created wonderful spoken stories about dinosaurs and friends helping friends. There was the outwardly tough Year 9 student who wrote a fantastic piece about being vulnerable at the skate park. There was the Year 7 student who wrote a touching story about her dad and what he means to her, and the Year 11 student who discovered a love of poetry she didn't realise was within her.

'These kids showed us that friendship blooms in unlikely places, and that writing can be used to have fun, explore dreams and fears, and bring people closer together.'



VOLUNTEERING

ONE THING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD IN 2020 MADE VERY CLEAR WAS JUST HOW MUCH EVERYONE MISSED VOLUNTEERS. ONE STORYTELLER SAID THE PRESENCE OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE CLASSROOM WAS A KIND OF SUPERPOWER, ONE THEY SORELY MISSED WHEN IT WAS TAKEN AWAY!

STORY FACTORY STAYED IN TOUCH WITH VOLUNTEERS THROUGHOUT THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD WITH 'TEA TIME' ZOOM CATCH UPS, BOOK CLUBS AND REGULAR POINTS OF CONNECTION — IMPORTANT WAYS FOR US TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE
DR SUSAN LEVER OAM

Dr Susan Lever OAM first heard about Story Factory when our Executive Director Cath was awarded the Australian of the Year, Local Hero award in 2016. Susan had retired from teaching English at the Australian Defence Force Academy, and was looking for somewhere to use her skills after dedicating 20+ years to teaching a love of words and stories.

'I believe literature is fun and that's what Story Factory is about too — letting people know that reading and writing is fun,' says Susan.

Susan has been volunteering as a writing tutor since then, and is a much-valued member of our team.

'There are so many charities you can give to but this one really matters. It's so obvious the divide in Sydney, the Harris Farm Hedge, the latte line, and we're not addressing it properly.'

Susan has tutored in numerous high school workshops, remembering Canterbury Boys High as a school where particularly satisfying teaching moments occurred.

'I worked with a number of boys who were Chinese speakers who had to translate everything into Chinese and back again — that makes writing so much harder for them.'

'In the PhotoFaction workshops, the kids loved getting photos from another school — thrillingly some photos were from a co-ed school which was big news in a boys school! It got the kids out of their own worlds, which I think they really liked.'

'There have been moments where the students have been surprised and delighted by what they've written, and that's the real magic of it.'

On top of her steadfast support as a volunteer, Susan also supports our programs with a monthly donation as part of our Inkwells program. At this year's fundraising art auction Susan bid on a number of works and took home a beautiful Susan O'Doherty painting which now adorns her daughter's kitchen wall.

'The key is — you've got to want to learn in order to learn. It's about handing back to the child their power to play with language, and that's what Story Factory does.'



'The structure and content of the workshops seemed modern and creative and interesting to me, and well designed to engage reluctant students.'

Volunteer feedback

'As the term progressed, the students gained confidence and engaged with the material and really thrived on the routine application of positive encouragement. And now I know the truth: you absolutely do have what it takes to be an amazing volunteer right out of the gate, because amazing volunteers are the ones who show up when they can and offer encouragement and praise for the creative brains who need it most.'

Volunteer feedback



'I worked with a boy who crumpled up his worksheet and threw it across the table, saying he didn't want to do it. Later I saw him busily drawing his character. When the students were given their published books, this same boy waved his hand vigorously to have a go. He read another student's story in a big strong voice and with great confidence. This was so exciting, and a reminder of the importance of persisting.'

Volunteer feedback

**VOLUNTEERS
AT A GLANCE
FY21**

702

volunteering opportunities

88%

of available opportunities filled by volunteers

129

Fully trained and active volunteers

22

Newly trained digital volunteers for online workshops

3,238

Volunteer hours spent supporting student writing

BIG PROJECTS

OUR BIG PROJECTS BRING TOGETHER STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS TO CREATE AN EXCITING PUBLIC OUTCOME.

OFTEN RUN IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ARTS ORGANISATIONS, THESE PROJECTS ARE A RARE OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE PART IN SOMETHING BIG. ALL PROJECTS HAVE BIG FINISHES — CULMINATING IN BOOKS, EXHIBITIONS, PUBLICATIONS, FILMS AND EVENTS.

WE LOVE THEM AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, SO DO OUR STUDENTS.



FROM MY WINDOW

Delivered in partnership with youth arts organisation Outloud, *From My Window* provided a truly unique insight into quarantine through the eyes and words of Bankstown's young people. The project culminated in a collection of performance pieces on film, and the professional publication of an anthology of student writing.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
89 young people from across Bankstown.

Proudly supported by the NSW Government.



A USER'S GUIDE TO A PANDEMIC

In 2020 we joined with 100 Story Building (Melbourne), Story Island Project (Tasmania) and StoryBoard (Byron Bay) to create and deliver a suite of online workshops in which high-school students around the country wrote pieces investigating the challenges, unexpected joys, boredom, worries and hopes of our first national lockdown. Their work was published online and in *A User's Guide to a Pandemic*, which was distributed to bookshops across Australia.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
83 young writers from high schools across Australia.

Generously supported by *the Aesop Foundation*

Proudly supported by the NSW Government.



WE'RE WRITING TO SAY

We're Writing to Say was an exciting collaboration with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice engaging young people in communities with an

increased risk of disengagement and social isolation in Sydney and Western Sydney. Students reflected upon different facets of their lives through short fictional stories, poetry and non-fiction. Their stories were published on our website and in a professional anthology.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
248 young people.
12 alternative education bodies and community organisations across Sydney and Western Sydney.

Proudly supported by the NSW Government.



ART WRITE LIGHT

Art Write Light is a three-year project (2019-2021) engaging and inspiring up to 600 young people from schools across Western Sydney through the collision of creative writing, storytelling and art. Each year, an artist creates an original work, to which students respond; then the artist responds to the students' writing. We were delighted to work with multi-award winning contemporary artist Ernest Aaron in 2020, and local Aboriginal artist (and multiple Archibald finalist) Blak Douglas in 2021.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
248 young people.
8 high schools and 2 primary schools in Western Sydney.

Generously supported by



MARVELLOUS BIRDS

In *Marvellous Birds*, students from four Western Sydney primary schools wrote fiction from the perspective of birds around the world, exploring themes such as community, migration and the challenges

of new adventures. A selection of student writing was included in our first professionally illustrated, full-colour hardback book, with images of birds inspired by students' writing.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
107 young people.
4 primary schools in Western Sydney.



FEMALE FACTORY: INSTITUTIONS PRECINCT

The Parramatta Female Factory, established in 1821, has been an orphanage,

prison, place of industry, asylum, medical facility and school. Students at local schools visited the Factory and learnt about the pre-colonial and recent history of the area.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
18 young people.
2 high schools in Western Sydney.



CINEVERSE

CineVerse provided students with an opportunity to explore storytelling through poetry and cinema. In 2021, students wrote poems exploring their thoughts, lives and experiences, then worked with Western Sydney film-makers to bring these poems vividly to life through short films. The poetry was published as an anthology, and the films were launched at an official screening at Hoyts Wetherill Park.

TOTAL PROJECT REACH:
66 young people.
4 high schools in Western Sydney.

M&GSAATCHI UnLtd.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

DESPITE THE TUMULTUOUS TIMES, IN 2020-21 STORY FACTORY WAS ABLE TO KEEP SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS AND EVEN EXTEND OUR REACH.

AT THIS CHALLENGING TIME WE ENTERED INTO OUR MOST SIGNIFICANT GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP TO DATE WITH THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, REACHING MORE STUDENTS THAN EVER BEFORE.

WE LISTENED TO STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS, AND OFFERED A TAILORED APPROACH THAT ALLOWED US TO REENTER SCHOOLS QUICKLY AFTER THE FIRST LOCKDOWN. IN A YEAR WHEN STUDENTS WERE FACED WITH SO MANY CHALLENGES, IT HAD BEEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR US TO ENCOURAGE A LOVE OF WRITING.



NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As part of our Department of Education contract we partnered with 20 additional schools in Western Sydney and in regional NSW — across the South Coast, Shoalhaven and Illawarra regions.

Our storytellers ran workshops each week across multiple year groups for participating schools, as well as providing Professional Learning workshops for teachers.

Many of these schools we continue working with extending our reach across the state and working with kids who often miss out due to geography.

Proudly supported by the NSW Government.



PLUMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOL — A DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUCCESS STORY

We were thrilled to begin working with Plumpton Public School as part of our funding from the Department of Education. Plumpton Public is in Western Sydney and has an enrolment of 530 students. Students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds including an 8% Aboriginal student cohort, and 72% of students for whom English is an Additional Language/Dialect.

We were thrilled to involve Plumpton in our marvellous Big Project, *Marvellous Birds* — one of four schools who took part.

We've continued to work with this school, leading to regular workshops and an ongoing relationship.



SCHOOL WRITING WORKSHOPS

We run a range of in-person and online school programs, and work with schools to personalise their mix. Here's a small selection of the fun and engaging programs that we ran in 2020-21.

PIXIE POWER YEARS 1 – 4

Do you know how toasters work? What about laptops? What about your school bus? Or an ocean liner?! It turns out a lot of the everyday machines we interact with don't run on electricity, or petrol, or microchips — it's pixie power! Students explore the secret, magical inner workings of machines, modes of transport, and the English language itself!

In this workshop series students practise inventive spelling and grow their capacity to decode words and sentences.

OZ ODYSSEY YEARS 5 – 6

Whoops! You're stuck on the other side of Australia and you've got to get home! Students explore geographical storytelling, character development, narrative obstacles and more as they write a classic road trip adventure story about getting back home. Just watch out for the Ngalyod — an Indigenous Dreaming character whose shape-shifting abilities might make things a little bit tricky...

HEROES & VILLAINS YEARS 7 – 8

What would it be like to be The Invisible Man on his first day of Year 7? How does Medusa order coffee without turning the barista to stone? In this workshop series students reimagine and retell the stories of villains and heroes from fairy tales, mythologies and popular culture. As they rewrite familiar stories from different perspectives, they gain experience creating such forms as dramatic monologues, letters and free verse.

THE CLI-FI DIARIES YEARS 9 – 10

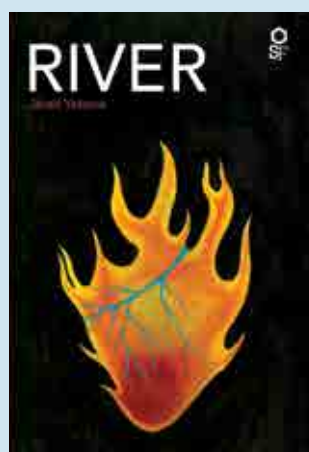
The world is rapidly changing — how will we keep track of it all? In this workshops students investigate the genre of Climate Fiction, where extreme weather leads to extraordinary circumstances. Students experiment with character development, cause and effect narratives, epistolary exchanges, and writing under pressure, all while creating a disaster already in the making.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OPEN PROGRAMS &

OUR OPEN PROGRAMS OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO JOIN US OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS, IN WRITING PROJECTS THAT INTEREST THEM. ALL WORKSHOPS ARE FACILITATED BY OUR STORY FACTORY STORYTELLERS AND ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT WRITING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS.

OUR OPEN PROGRAM WORKSHOPS SPAN EVERYTHING FROM SPECIAL ONE-OFF WORKSHOPS, TO REGULAR WEEKLY WORKSHOPS THAT RUN FOR A TERM, TO OUR SPECIAL YEAR-LONG PROGRAMS WHERE STUDENTS COMPLETE A SIGNIFICANT PIECE OF WRITING.

YEAR OF POETRY & YEAR OF THE NOVELLA



Our *Year of Poetry* and *Year of the Novella* programs provide something truly unique for our students. Across the course of a year students attend weekly writing workshops, working towards the professional publication of a poetry chapbook or a novella.

Our storytellers guide them through the creation of their work, supporting them to use their voice and realise their vision on a truly thrilling level. At the end of their year they work with professional editors, have book covers professionally designed and launch their publications at a celebration with their friends and family.

We were particularly proud to celebrate the achievement of our highest number of students in 2020 - with 18 students publishing their work. That's an enormous achievement for anyone, and all the more impressive from students who had just spent a year writing through a global pandemic.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WRITERS ON THEIR ACHIEVEMENT!

Year of Poetry is supported by

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CULTURAL FUND

Year of the Novella is supported by

McLean
FOUNDATION

NELSON MEERS FOUNDATION



KEY
Pharmaceuticals

PANTERA
PRESS

SPARKING
IMAGINATION,
CONVERSATION
& CHANGE

TAKE A PEEK INSIDE A WORKSHOP — CONTROL ALT.EDIT.

Control Alt. Edit is an Open Program created to facilitate feedback and allow students to workshop their creative projects. Taking place online and in-person, it has built a community of young writers all encouraging one another to fulfil their creative potential.

We're proud of all our students, including Eve Ballard. She workshopped a poem as part of these classes that went on to be shortlisted by the Whitlam Institute.

CONGRATULATIONS EVE!

Eve had this to say about her experience:

'Thank you for helping me unlock my writing abilities and giving me the confidence to share my work. The facilitators make writing fun and they make it very easy to start writing. I also love the feedback and the way you make the different ways of writing easy to understand. I love working with other people who love writing and storytelling as much as I do.'

FALLEN ANGEL (EXCERPT) - EVE BALLARD

I am the monster from fairy tales
the Devil from the Bible.

God and his angels are glorified
their work secondary, not primal.

I'm here to tell my story
not many people have heard.

I have three names, two mean evil
Lucifer is my third.

Let me start at the beginning
all the way back to my Mother.

She had two sons, one good, I am
the evil brother.

They say she is a liar and sorcerer
someone who fell from 'the world of light'.

There's a thin line between stretching the truth
and giving a panoramic view of her fight.

They say I turned evil of my own free will
apparently I knew what was right and what was wrong.

But did anyone ask whether the fall hurt
whether it was someone else who was singing that song?





NAIKBAKHT & FARAIBA

Faraiba (l) and Naikbakht (r) with their little sister.

Poetry runs in Naikbakht and Faraiba Wahidi's blood. The two sisters are from Badakhshan, in Afghanistan, a region famous for its poetry. 'Lots of famous poets in Persian language are from Badakhshan,' Naikbakht says, with obvious pride.

We're enormously proud that as part of our *Year of Poetry* program, both girls published poetry chapbooks in 2020. Naikbakht and Faraiba arrived in Australia a little over four years ago, as refugees, and spent a year at an Intensive English Centre before moving to Holroyd High School, where Naikbakht is in Year 11 and Faraiba in Year 9. To be writing poetry so quickly is a huge achievement.

Learning in a new language, and making up for the schooling they missed in Afghanistan and Pakistan, can make school challenging. In addition, Naikbakht had to miss more school as she underwent surgery to fix a hole in her heart.

For Naikbakht and Faraiba, writing poems has been both a refuge and an escape. They write often about the home they miss: their friends, the mountains, the rivers. Naikbakht writes both in English and Persian, but thinks her Persian poems are stronger. 'Finding words in English for me is really hard,' she says.

Faraiba, in contrast, can't write in Persian and only writes poetry in English. She says she

writes because she wants to help people wake up to reality. 'Poetry, for me, it opens up a different world. And it can open doors and doors'

Naikbakht published her first book with us in 2019, her second in 2020 and is currently working on her third. When asked why she comes she says: 'Before coming here and publishing my book, I feel like I'm nothing. I'm just writing, and that's it. I have no other dream, or goal, or talent. And then after I came here and I published my book and it went to the internet and social media, and my family saw it, and [my family and everyone thought] "Okay, you can do it!" They were like, "You're a poet!"'

Because of the war, many of the girls' friends back in Afghanistan cannot publish their poetry, or even write it. Says Naikbakht: 'They are saying: "You are so lucky that you're in that country and you publish your poems!" Oh my god, I feel so happy! It's a very good opportunity for young people and for people who can't find their talent, or can't show their talent. They find their talent.'

Faraiba was succinct and — of course — poetic about why she comes to Story Factory. 'It's like we are a bird that has fallen down, and the wings are broken, and [my fellow students and storytellers] are trying to fix it.'

I AM BRAVE

BY NAIKBAKHT WAHIDI

Through the darkest clouds I pass
The fire I lead my heart into
Between the two unknown ways
I am brave as I believe
In my heart
I go through the life that hasn't seen the future
Speak to me my errors!
Teach me like before in every challenge
I am ready to face, I am ready to assert
Doesn't matter how hard it has been
Doesn't matter what is going to start
How it strains me to pass through
I am not afraid
It comes first, second, third
I am not petrified
I am heartened
I am
I am brave

From Naikbakht's 2020 collection of poetry, published as part of *Year of Poetry*.

ELA'S STORY



Ela Pinar was the very first student in our *Year of Poetry* program, in which Western Sydney teenagers from diverse backgrounds are supported to write and professionally publish original poetry anthologies over 12 months. Ela joined our workshops in 2018 at age 16, and despite initially being the only student, continued to attend workshops each week. As new students started to join the program, she became a leader and mentor for other young people.

Ela participated in the *Year of Poetry* program in both 2018 and 2019, during which she professionally published two poetry anthologies. Ela's poetry talent has led her to compete in the Bankstown Poetry Slam, becoming a monthly finalist in March 2019 and May 2020, a finalist in the 2020 Grand Slam, third place winner in April 2021, and people's choice award winner at the Brave New Word Youth Poetry competition.

Since April 2019, Ela has also volunteered at Story Factory as a creative writing tutor, acting as a role model for over 100 younger students from Western Sydney. In recognising Ela's gift for working with young people, we were incredibly proud to hire her in 2020 to coordinate our *Factory Feedback* program, in which she facilitates young people becoming published and paid writers.

Speaking of her participation in Story Factory's *Year of Poetry* program, Ela reflected:

'Spending a year on my poetry has been life-changing. To have my poetry published has always been a dream of mine. Coming here I've learnt, I've always had a voice, Story Factory just taught me how to use it.'

FACTORY FEEDBACK

Factory Feedback was a rare opportunity to offer students a truly professional writing experience. Eligible students were invited to submit a piece of creative writing, and after responding to feedback from our storytellers and volunteer writing tutors, their work was published on our website. In exchange we offered a \$50 Woolworths voucher as an honorarium.

We're thrilled that this project was run by a past student and volunteer Ela Pinar (see page 23), whose unique perspective on the student experience made her the perfect person to manage this special project.

This project was made possible by the generous support of



TEAM GROWTH

In 2020-21 we were able to secure funding for a key administrative position — a Publishing Manager, thanks to the support of Create NSW. As our reach has grown, so too has the number of student publications we publish. We were thrilled to welcome long-time Story Factory supporter Natalie Goodes to the team to manage this important area of work.

OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR THERE WAS SO MUCH TO LOOK BACK ON AND FEEL GRATEFUL FOR. HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF OUR HIGHLIGHTS.

THERE'S LOTS

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Although Story Factory had a Reconciliation Action Plan before 2020, we were inspired to go back to the drawing board and reinvigorate this process — forming a RAP committee to ensure we stuck to our ambitions for ourselves as an organisation.

A particularly exciting aspect of this plan in action was hiring our first Aboriginal Engagement Manager — Raylene Hassall (pictured).

Raylene is a proud descendent of the Yiman Clan in Central Queensland and has experience in child protection, community development, adult education and cultural consultancy.

With her support, we look forward to deepening our work with our wonderful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A huge thank you to the Envato Foundation for their generous support of this important role.



VALUES

As we grew as an organisation we also reflected on the values that help make us who we are. As people who love writing, we wrote our values to share with all our employees — guiding principles to shape our interactions with students, teachers and each other.

OUR VALUES AS AN ORGANISATION:

- **YOUNG PEOPLE COME FIRST**
- **WRITING IS AGENCY**
- **CREATIVITY UNLEASHES POTENTIAL**
- **DIVERSITY MAKES US BETTER**
- **WE HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF OURSELVES AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE WORK WITH**
- **WE HAVE HEART. PASSION MATTERS.**

THIS MEANS THAT, IN OUR INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES, WE ARE:

POSITIVE. We see strengths.

INCLUSIVE. We build connection through shared experience.

HELPFUL. We support students to reach their writing goals.

RESPECTFUL. We value young people's ideas and experience.

GENEROUS. We choose the more edifying interpretation.

FUN. Because writing should be joyful. At least some of the time.

TO CELEBRATE!

PUBLICATIONS

We were so proud to publish more student writing than ever before and to publish our first ever 'Best Of' anthology — *The Best of Story Factory Volume 1*. Featuring a thrilling selection of writing across all our writing workshops, this anthology represents the efforts of some brilliant students and the teachers, volunteers, storytellers, parents and fans who have cheered them on.

Check the back cover of this Annual Report for excerpts of the brilliant work included.

MENTAL HEALTH

There's nothing like a global pandemic to give you a whole new appreciation of the critical importance of good mental health. In order to promote this within our team we formed a Mental Health Committee dedicated to ensuring our policies, interactions and procedures support our colleagues and promote positivity.



OUR PARTNERS

STORY FACTORY HAS FOUND PARTNERS IN A GROUP OF TRULY GENEROUS CORPORATES, BUSINESSES, PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. WE — AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE WORK WITH — REALLY CAN'T THANK THEM ENOUGH.

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



Anonymous

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



NSW Department of Communities and Justice

NSW Department of Education

Create NSW

KEY PARTNERS



Ward Family Foundation



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Neil Burns

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Mark & Briony Scott

Greg Dean

Fiona Robertson

Dominic Rolfe

Gillian Savage

IN-KIND PARTNERS





INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

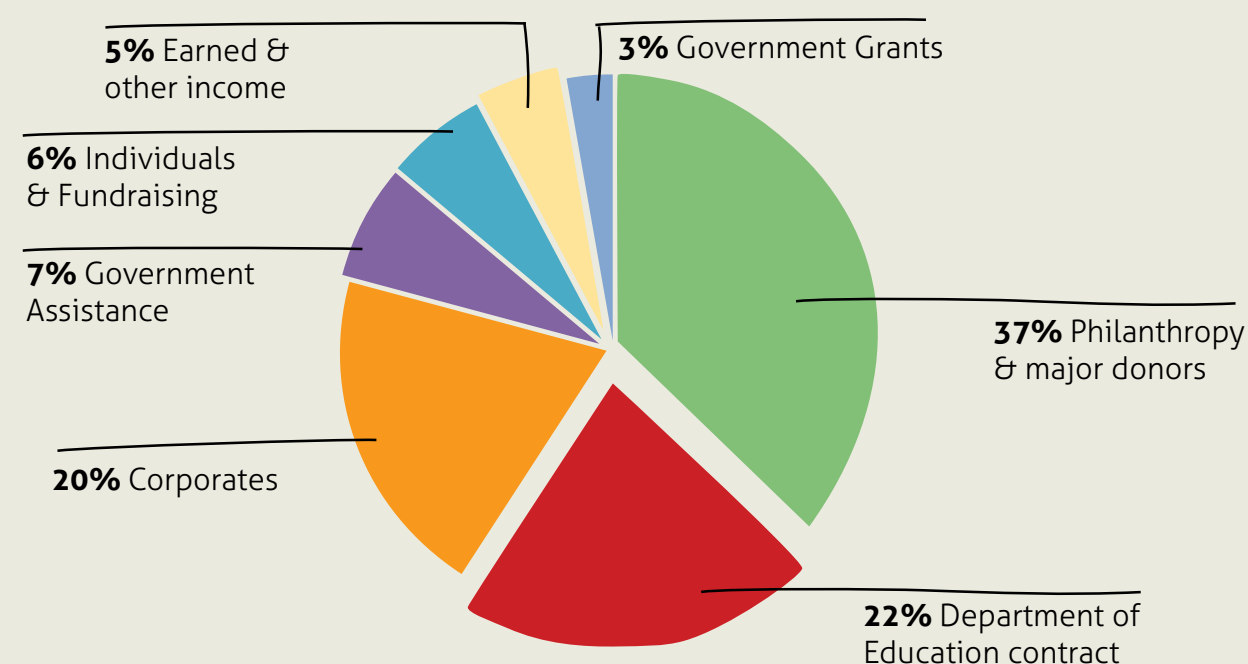
	2021(\$)	2020(\$)
REVENUE		
Donations and Contributions	1,801,287	1,834,003
Government Grants	77,842	147,547
Art Auction Proceeds	91,450	0
Shop Sales	12,621	20,314
Workshop income	820,038	66,833
Venue Hire	1,462	4,779
Membership Income	364	409
Government assistance	241,449	119,500
Interest Income	1,728	5,293
Total Revenue	3,048,241	2,198,678
EXPENSES		
Employee expenses	2,181,198	1,643,454
Property expenses	32,353	51,951
Audit fee expense	8,266	8,592
Promotion and fundraising	28,027	15,675
Workshop expense	43,545	40,023
Insurance	9,945	9,079
Associated administration	136,786	96,225
Depreciation expense	115,712	102,771
Depreciation - Right of use asset	134,359	190,015
Evaluation expense	6,500	8,000
Finance costs	8,107	19,649
Program costs	107,463	91,991
Other expenses	367	116
Total Expenses	2,812,628	2,277,541
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	235,613	(78,863)
Surplus / (Deficit) before income tax	235,613	(78,863)
Income tax expense	—	—
Surplus / (Deficit) from continuing operations	235,613	(78,863)
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	—	—
Total comprehensive income for the year	235,613	(78,863)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE (SUMMARY)

	2021(\$)	2020(\$)
ASSETS		
Total Current Assests	2,427,666	2,807,374
Total Non-Current Assests	589,653	748,538
Total Assests	3,017,319	3,555,912
LIABILITIES		
Total Current Liabilities	1,000,095	1,680,825
Total Non-Current Liabilities	68,174	161,650
Total Liabilities	1,068,269	1,842,475
Net Assests	1,949,050	1,713,437
EQUITY		
Accumulated surplus	1,949,050	1,713,437
Total Equity	1,949,050	1,713,437

The full audited Annual Financial Report 2020-21 for Story Factory Inc is available on request.

WHERE OUR INCOME CAME FROM IN 2020-2021



OUR BOARD

STORY FACTORY IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED IN NEW SOUTH WALES.
WE ARE GOVERNED BY A PASSIONATE AND EXPERIENCED BOARD.



MICHAEL GONSKI
BOARD PRESIDENT

Partner at Herbert Smith
Freehills; Philanthropy
Australia's 2014
inaugural Emerging
Philanthropy Leader.



DR CATH KEENAN AM
**CO-FOUNDER &
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Former journalist, 2016
Australian of the Year
Local Hero; Westpac
Community Leader Award
2014 (board member of
the year).



TIM DICK
**CO-FOUNDER &
SECRETARY**

Lawyer, former *Sydney
Morning Herald*
journalist & columnist.



GRANT LOVETT
TREASURER

Head of Government
Relations, ASX Limited.
Former Chief of Staff
to Hon Joe Hockey
(Shadow Treasurer
and Commonwealth
Treasurer).



GAIL HAMBLY

Director of Domain,
former General Counsel,
Fairfax Media.



JONATHAN BAROUC

CEO and founder of
technology start-up,
Local Measure



BENJAMIN LAW

Writer, columnist,
social commentator,
screenwriter & author.



MURAT DIZDAR

Deputy Secretary,
School Operations &
Performance, NSW
Department of Education



GEMMA SALTERI

Executive Director,
CAGES Foundation
& philanthropist.
Philanthropy Australia's
2016 Emerging
Philanthropist Award.



GARIGARRA MUNDINE

A proud Wiradjuri and
Bundjalung woman.
Consultant, Department of
Foreign Affairs & Trade.



AMY THUNIG

Department of Educational
Studies academic,
Macquarie University,
proud Gomeroi/Gamilaroi/
Kamilaroi woman.



NICK CARNEY

Partner at Herbert Smith
Freehills specialising
in infrastructure and
government services.



JAMES ARGENT

Consultant at the Boston
Consulting Group.

THE ROAD AHEAD

We are in uncharted territory.
The lockdown from July 2021 was the
longest school closure in the history of
NSW. We don't yet know what impact this
will have on young people, but we do
know it will disproportionately affect the
students we work with in under-resourced
communities. They were most impacted
by COVID-19, by stringent lockdowns, and
by the digital divide that prevented many
from fully participating in online schooling
and our programs.

We have never had more work to do.
As I write, our staff are preparing our most
engaging programs ever, both online and
face-to-face. We will do our very best to
support these young people to re-engage
with writing and learning, and make up
the ground they have lost.

We are thrilled that in FY22 we will
be expanding the reach of our digital
programs to regional NSW and beyond.
These programs were piloted and refined
during lockdown. Now we'll use everything
we learnt to engage and excite hundreds
more students we otherwise couldn't see.

The year ahead will require us to be even
more creative and responsive than usual.
But we are excited by the possibilities, and
inspired, as always, by the resilience of the
young people we work with.

We can't do it without our fantastic
community of supporters. Our volunteers
and donors are the lifeblood of what we
do, and we cannot thank you enough for
helping us get this far.

We hope you stick with us at this critical
time. With your help, we can support these
young people to write a better future.

Dr Cath Keenan AM
Executive Director and Co-founder



AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE'RE ALL ABOUT THE WRITING OF BRILLIANT, WISE, FUNNY, SURPRISING AND INSIGHTFUL YOUNG PEOPLE. IT WAS A JOY TO COMPILE THE 'BEST' OF OUR STUDENTS' WRITING ACROSS THE COURSE OF A YEAR INTO A BEAUTIFUL ANTHOLOGY, WHICH IS AVAILABLE IN OUR ONLINE BOOKSTORE. WRITING LIKE THESE EXCERPTS BELOW.

GEMINI (YEAR OF THE NOVELLA)

TINOOSH

FAIRVALE HIGH

The detective walked into the crowded office; it was bustling with noise. People were running around, papers were scattered all over the floor, and he could hear yells through the thick atmosphere of the room. It was an absolute mess. The detective could tell that there was a new case in town, and every detective on that block was practically bursting into flames to get it. The office was now a battlefield for him to get through



TO MY THOUGHTS

(EXCERPT)

B

When my brain is packed to the brim with thoughts

a simple flick of my pen may

blow the mind of others, give them something to focus on,

MORE than the real thunder of a world surrounding them.

To when I ponder,

writing a story may bring me joy

however when a spark is triggered

I have this mystery I know nothing about how

to write this ending.

G.I.R.L. AFTER TYLER WALTER (EXCERPT)

BEA

a girl can help you find the child you lost long before you knew what a girl was.

a girl can be purple or green or blue

or red in the face when you ask about her first

dream job. a girl can be a basic girl,

can be a horse girl, a barbie girl, a damaged girl.

a girl can be a god.

NHI NGUYEN

PRAIRIEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Trembling. She fumbled with the cassette, the apples of her cheeks flushed a pink tint feeling an immense amount of unease travelling from the bottom of her spine all the way to her nape. As she let out an unsteady exhale, she pressed her lips together, forming a straight line.

The Best of Story Factory Volume 1 is available to purchase on the Story Factory website.

STORY FACTORY ACKNOWLEDGES THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LANDS ON WHICH WE WORK.

Story
FACTORY

REDFERN

176 Redfern St
Redfern NSW 2016
02 9699 6970

PARRAMATTA

90 George Street
Parramatta NSW 2150
02 8859 0353

GET INVOLVED AT

storyfactory.org.au



All photos by Story Factory except where stated, and: Cover by Jim A. Baker, pg. 17 Art Write Light by Daniel Boud, CineVerse and Female Factory by Jacquie Manning, pg. 18 by Maja Baska and Jacquie Manning, pg. 19 by Jim A. Baker, pg. 21 and 22 by Jacquie Manning, pg. 24 (top) by Jacquie Manning, pg. 31 by Daniel Boud.

Story Factory is fully compliant with all requirements of The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, the national regulator of charities. We are a registered charity with DGR1 status - all donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

ABN 71 645 321 582