



FIVE YEAR STRATEGY 2023-27

UPDATED DECEMBER 2025

THANK YOU

This strategy was developed with pro-bono support from James Argent from Boston Consulting Group. It builds on BCG's invaluable work with us since 2016.

We are very grateful for their insights, research and strategic thinking.

Story Factory acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the many lands on which we work and tell stories. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to the future leaders we are privileged to work with.



**READING IS
ACCESS
BUT WRITING
IS AGENCY**

ABOUT STORY FACTORY

Story Factory is a not-for-profit creative writing organisation for young people. We deliver award-winning programs that empower young people from under-resourced communities to find and share their voices, imagine new worlds and write their own futures. Our programs support young people to develop the confidence and literacy to thrive at school and beyond.



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.

— Student, Open Program

OUR VISION

We want to see an Australia where all young people have a voice, and the skills and confidence to tell their stories.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to enrich the lives of young people in under-resourced communities through creative writing and storytelling.

OUR VALUES

- 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.

FOREWORD



As someone who has been part of Story Factory for many years, first as a funder, then as Deputy Chair, and now as Chair, I've seen one truth really stand out. When a young person finds their voice, something shifts. They begin to see themselves differently. They begin to see the future differently. And that shift is at the heart of everything Story Factory stands for.

As we reach the midway point of our five-year strategy, that shift in confidence is what I keep coming back to. It's what our incredible team nurtures every day, and it's what every Story Factory supporter has helped unlock. Together, we have created spaces where young people feel heard and capable, and that is truly transformative.

Since launching this strategy, we have refined how we work, deepened our impact in Western Sydney, and expanded our reach to young people across Australia through our digital programs. Just as importantly, we have listened and adapted. Plans have evolved, targets have been adjusted, and our approach has become even more focused, intentional and sustainable. These updates are reflected in this revised strategy document. That is the strength of this strategy, not rigidity but responsiveness. We remain guided by the same mission, while allowing evidence and community needs to shape the path.

The next phase of this journey asks more of us, not in scale for its own sake, but in depth and legacy. The community hub in Mount Druitt we open in 2026 will allow us to continue working side-by-side with schools, families, and community leaders extending the reach of our work and building something that endures long after any one workshop ends. And our refreshed alumni strategy recognises that the voices we nurture today become the storytellers, mentors, and leaders of tomorrow.

This is why we have launched our **Voices of Tomorrow** fundraising campaign to secure the future of this impact. It is a multi-year effort to ensure our work can deepen with every student, expand to young people who need us most and remain strong for generations.

To everyone who has supported our work, thank you. You are not just helping young people write. You are helping them step into who they might become. It is a privilege to build this future alongside you.

Ali Green
Chair, Story Factory Board



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

For Story Factory, success is an Australia where all young people have a voice.

The aim of our strategy to 2027 is to support young people in under-resourced communities in NSW to build their literacy and find their voice. Over the past couple of years, COVID has caused unprecedented disruption in the lives and learning of these young people, particularly those in Western Sydney. We want to support them to overcome these setbacks and write brighter futures.

Our focus initially is on consolidation: honing the impact of our programs, re-growing our volunteer base, and securing our financial stability. As we move towards 2027, our priority is extending and measuring impact, and amplifying the voices of all the young people in our programs. We want to align the goals of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with our strategic goals, and increase the participation of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our programs. That is a particular focus in this strategy.

This strategy builds on what we have learnt over the past few years, particularly the expertise we have developed in digital programming. Over the next five years, this will allow us to grow national reach.

“

I love being able to share my love of writing and reading with other people who understand and being able to write in a non-judgemental space with other people my age.

— Young writer, Open Program

OUR KEY STRATEGIC PILLARS ARE:

- 1** Amplifying young people's voices and growing impact, particularly in Western Sydney.
- 2** National reach through digital.
- 3** Diversity - stronger engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and ensuring more diversity in our staff, board and volunteers.
- 4** Having the right people and structures to support growth and renewal.
- 5** Ensuring we align how the organisation measures success with where we're headed.

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, OUR AIMS ARE ...

1. Amplifying young people's voices and growing impact, particularly in Western Sydney.

- Develop a community hub model, where we work deeply in selected communities in Western Sydney and/or around Redfern. The hubs will involve working across schools and community groups, in the long-term, to create lasting, meaningful change. Programs will draw on and celebrate the diverse knowledge and cultures of these communities, and may involve the creation of specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, if appropriate.
- Continue to grow our after-school programs, both in person and online. These have been an area of growth during and after the pandemic, and we will run more after-school programs – online and at our Parramatta centre – stretching students from our school programs to reach the next stage in their writing development. Through our national digital rollout, we will create pathways for young people from around the country to join these online programs, building a writing community across Australia.
- We will continue to publish writing by young people, both on paper and in digital formats, amplifying their voices in as many different ways as possible. This will support the creation of communities of writers both face-to-face and online.

2. National reach through digital programs.

- We will begin a national rollout of our live, interactive digital workshops from January 2023. The rollout will start in regional NSW and grow across the country by the end of 2024. By then, we aim to have reached nearly 7,000 additional young people in areas we couldn't visit in person.
- After the initial rollout, our digital programs will grow in reach and depth, providing a range of offerings for diverse students across the country. By the end of 2027, we aim to have reached at least 25,000 young people we otherwise wouldn't have seen.
- Digital opens up opportunities for asynchronous learning for students and teachers, and new possibilities for publishing and sharing student work. Our digital team will investigate these, identifying areas for development and growth, and implementing new initiatives as they arise.

3. Diversity - stronger engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and ensuring more diversity in our staff and volunteers.

- We reiterate our commitment to Reconciliation through our Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). The goals articulated in our RAPs are critical strategic goals for our organisation. In particular, we will establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.
- We commit to better supporting the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people we work with - both by increasing participation and deepening the impact of our programs.

- Employ a second Indigenous Storyteller to support this growth, and ensure we make efforts to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for any role at Story Factory.
- Creation of more culturally diverse content: ensuring diverse perspectives across all our programs.
- Creation of more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programming in collaboration with our Indigenous Programming Lead and Aboriginal Liaison Officer and Elder-in-Residence. Conduct a thorough review of all First Nations content to ensure it's culturally appropriate.
- Build deeper connections with community leaders and other organisations working in our communities. Alongside this, continue meaningful efforts to make our board, staff and volunteers more diverse and representative of these communities.
- Finalise our Reflect RAP in 2023 and move to an Innovate RAP by 2025.

4. Having the right people and structures to support growth and renewal.

- Maintaining a strong and supportive culture driven by our shared values.
- After a period of significant disruption, rebuilding our volunteer corps and offering a range of rewarding volunteer experiences.
- We recognise that our people are our greatest asset, and will invest in attracting and retaining the right people. We will manage key person risk by ensuring continuity and key support for critical roles across the organisation.

- Our alumni are a source of great insight and passion. When they graduate from our programs, we will continue to offer limited support to assist them to keep writing. We will also offer casual and entry-level employment opportunities including engaging them as artists and assistants in programs.
- We will also create a position on our board for an alumnus of our programs, to ensure young people are engaged in organisational decision making.
- Invest in fundraising and in our team to support long-term sustainability.

5. Ensuring we align how the organisation measures success with where we're headed.

- Research by the NSW Department of Education says now is a time of need like no other in under-resourced communities in Western Sydney. Wellbeing is more important than ever. We will build the evidence base for the wellbeing benefits of creative writing, and seek to maximise these in our programs. Alongside this, we will develop processes to more effectively measure changes in confidence, creativity and engagement.
- Our focus in coming years continues to be ensuring that young people in our programs build their literacy and find their voice, so they can recover from the disruptions of COVID and thrive. We will measure success through our improved evaluation processes, developed with Clear Horizon, and by maintaining a constant feedback loop in real time so programs are continuously refined.



BY 2027, STORY FACTORY AIMS TO...

1. *Be consistently improving the literacy and wellbeing of young people in under-resourced communities, particularly in Western Sydney, and amplifying their voices.*

- Programs consistently improve the literacy of at least 75% of participants.
- Programs consistently improve the wellbeing of at least 75% of participants.
- Programs improve the practice of at least 90% of the teachers we work with.
- We publish a wide range of writing by young people that is distributed by various channels to audiences across Australia.
- We provide pathways for young people to go on to additional writing and publishing opportunities and build communities of young writers across the country.



My son enjoyed the workshop and actually wrote a poem! The workshop was incredibly well prepared and the staff very knowledgeable, in tune with the students, with many techniques to engage and re-engage. I would highly recommend Story Factory to anyone.

— Parent of student
Workshops with Down Syndrome Australia

2. *Have national reach through our digital programs.*

- Reach an additional 25,000 young people right across Australia through our digital programs, and provide options for them to continue in Story Factory programs.
- Through our digital programs, be supporting teachers across the country to improve their practice of teaching writing.

3. *Have deep engagement and impact with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and young people who speak English as an additional language or dialect.*

- At least 20% of our students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and 50% speak English as an additional language or dialect.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded in programs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific content is delivered where appropriate.
- Culturally diverse perspectives are embedded across all programs.
- We are delivering on the commitments made in our Innovate RAP.

4. Have the right people and structures to support growth and renewal, with diversity embedded across all levels of our organisation (board, staff, volunteers).

- Be financially stable with diversified revenue streams.
- Diverse voices are engaged in decision-making across the organisation.
- Maintain a connection with our alumni so that we can continue to support them to write, and build a pipeline of potential employees in the future.
- We have a large, diverse volunteer base doing meaningful and impactful work.
- Innovative models of program delivery (eg. community hubs) maximise the impact of our work.

5. Have rigorous evaluation data demonstrating the impact of our programs on literacy and wellbeing.



2023 INNOVATE

In 2023, our focus is on continued innovation.

We will build on our expanded digital programming, while reinvigorating our core in-person programs with young people in under-resourced communities in Western Sydney.

GOALS

70%

of students improve their literacy

90%

of teachers improve their practice

15%

of students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

50%

of students speak English as an additional language or dialect

3,000

students reached through digital programs

Amplifying young voices

- » Extend after-school programming, both in-person and online

National reach through digital

- » National Digital Rollout begins: target 3,000 students by the end of 2023
- » National Programs Manager employed to oversee rollout, explore partnerships and investigate tactical opportunities to amplify digital programs

Diversity

- » Finalise Reflect RAP
- » Build engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people: target 15% of students engaged in-person from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
- » Develop and implement an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Relationship Plan to support engagement with a range of stakeholders
- » Annually reflect on activities with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and services involved in our work, and identify priority areas where additional efforts to support engagement are required
- » Explore opportunities to further support and engage alumni of our programs

Staff & structure

- » Revitalise our staff culture by connecting to our shared values, and rebuild our volunteer base after a period of significant disruption

Measuring success

- » Build the evidence base for the wellbeing benefits of our programs for young people

2024 EXTEND

In 2024, our focus is on extending our reach through digital and in-person programs, and ensuring we deepen relationships within our core communities.

GOALS

72%

of students improve their literacy

90%

of teachers improve their practice

16%

of students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

50%

of students speak English as an additional language or dialect

3,500

students reached through digital programs



Amplifying young voices

- » Innovation in engagement, as we explore community hubs

National reach through digital

- » Grow digital reach, particularly through partnerships: target 3,500 students by the end of the year
- » Invest in staff with digital expertise

Diversity

- » Increase engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: target 16% of students engaged in-person from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
- » Continue steps towards diversification of board, staff and volunteers

Staff & structure

- » Identify and enable opportunities to engage alumni in paid roles, particularly in program delivery and artistic commissions
- » Continue efforts to provide development pathways for staff within the organisation

Measuring success

- » Innovation in measurement, particularly around the wellbeing benefits of our programs

2025 AMPLIFY

In 2025, our focus will be on amplifying our students' voices, preparing to pilot our first community hub and implementing a refreshed approach to publishing.

GOALS

73%

of students improve their literacy

90%

of teachers improve their practice

18%

of students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

50%

of students speak English as an additional language or dialect

6,000

students reached through digital programs

Amplifying young voices

- » Continue our "steady state" for after-school programs in Parramatta and online
- » Strengthen our approach to publishing as part of workshops and digital programs
- » Strengthen key community relationships ahead of the opening of our Mt Druitt hub in 2026

National reach through digital

- » Expansion of our digital programs through synchronous and asynchronous offerings, enabling us to reach 6,000 students by the end of the year

Diversity

- » Finalise Innovate RAP
- » Increase engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: target 18% of students engaged in-person from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds

Staff & structure

- » Continue managing key-person risk, investing in people and actively promoting a strong, values-based culture
- » Strengthen development pathways for staff within the organisation
- » Embed restructure and meaningfully implement and monitor KPIs across all teams
- » Invest in fundraising and launch a major philanthropy campaign to secure long-term sustainability

Measuring success

- » Refine approach to measurement of literacy and wellbeing benefits, and use results to continue to refine programs and amplify impact

2026 DIVERSIFY

In 2026, our focus will be on opening our first Community Hub in Mt Druitt, exploring a new model for engaging more deeply with a community.

We will also ensure we have meaningful diversity across our organisation, including in our staff, board and volunteers.

GOALS

74%

of students improve their literacy

90%

of teachers improve their practice

19%

of students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

50%

of students speak English as an additional language or dialect

6,000+

students reached through digital programs

Amplifying young voices

- » Pilot Story Factory's first community hub in Mount Druitt and strengthen key community relationships

National reach through digital

- » Roll out our revised suite of digital programs and resources across the country

Diversity

- » Increase our engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: target 19% of students engaged in-person from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
- » Employ a second Indigenous Storyteller to assist with this
- » Deepen this engagement, particularly through the creation and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-focussed content, possibly incorporating language

Staff & structure

- » Continue to diversify our board and staff to better reflect the communities we work with

Measuring success

- » Continue to refine programs and amplify impact through close analysis of evaluation data



2027 DEEPEN

In 2027, our focus will be on further deepening our reach by refining program delivery and building our relationships with core communities in Western Sydney.

GOALS

75%

of students improve their literacy

90%

of teachers improve their practice

20%

of students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

50%

of students speak English as an additional language or dialect

6,500+

students reached through digital programs



Amplifying young voices

- » Refine our open program offerings at Parramatta and online, to best meet the needs of the young people we work with, and maximise impact
- » Further deepen engagement with communities in Mount Druitt through the work of our hub, and continue to evaluate results.
- » Continue to strengthen relationships with our alumni, and build a pipeline of future employees

National reach through digital

- » Continue to expand our digital programs: 6,500 students by the end of the year

Diversity

- » Continue to deepen engagement with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and their communities: target 20% of students engaged in-person from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds

Staff & structure

- » Continue to manage key-person risk

Measuring success

- » Consolidate evaluation processes and share widely the impact of our programs, both on the literacy and wellbeing of the young people we work with

SARAH DIZON

YEAR OF POETRY STUDENT PROFILE

“

I remember being 15 and travelling to Parramatta, alone on the train after school. Despite the two-hour commute and feeling tired and scared, I followed my ambition and ever since then, I have been viewing the world through the eyes of a writer.

Had I not wanted to join Story Factory every Thursday, I wouldn't be where I am today: a published author who gets to bravely share her written art to the world.

I remember my first poetry class. Surrounded by so many young writers, I was nervous my own writing wouldn't reach the standard. But truthfully, as you attend more classes — you come to realise there is no standard when it comes to poetry.

I was in a safe space, so I was able to be vulnerable and sensitive and courageous and comfortable, and so even the poems I thought weren't good enough, my mentors and teachers would still sit and listen to me, because they cared. Teachers like Bilal, Tony, Oliver and Nick — bad poetry doesn't scare them from listening to a girl who is learning how to tell her story.

Thank you Story Factory for your generosity over these three years, as every Thursday I was able to nurture and thrive my creativity without judgement.

And for my friends in my class and those in the Year of Novella, keep writing, keep saying your silly metaphors and similes, always keep your creativity close. Turn your anger, ache, and love into art. Write a poem, write a story — because art is what keeps the world moving, and young voices like ours deserve to be heard, always.

— Sarah Dizon, 17 years old





MILESTONES

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1. Amplifying young people's voices and growing impact					
Build the evidence base for the wellbeing benefits of our programs					
Continue to refine programs in line with evaluation data collected from students and teachers			Ongoing		
Grow after-school programming online and in person, at our Parramatta and Redfern centres			Ongoing		
Clear approach to publishing as part of online and in-person workshops					
Refine our open program offerings at Parramatta and online, to best meet needs of the young people we work with					
Identify opportunities to further develop and amplify the voices of young people in under-resourced communities					
2. National rollout of digital programs					
National rollout begins.					
Grow digital reach, particularly through partnership opportunities					
Refinement of digital programs in line with student and teacher feedback					

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
3. Diversity and strong engagement with Indigenous communities					
Finalise Reflect RAP					
Expand Indigenous programming as appropriate. Employ additional Indigenous Storyteller to assist with this.					
Annually reflect on activities with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and services involved in our work, and identify priority areas where additional efforts are required			Ongoing		
Continue to deepen engagement with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and their communities			Ongoing		
Finalise Innovate RAP					
Explore community hubs model					
Pilot community hubs model in single community					
4. Having the right people and structures to support growth and renewal					
Revitalise our staff culture, and rebuild our volunteer base, after a period of significant disruption					
Explore opportunities to further support and engage alumni of our programs					
Manage key person risk and succession planning					
Continue steps to diversify board, staff and volunteers			Ongoing		
Invest in fundraising and run a major philanthropy campaign to secure long-term sustainability					
5. Ensure we align how we measure success with where we're headed					
Refine approach to measurement of literacy and wellbeing benefits of programs, and use results to continually refine programs					
Consolidate evaluation processes and share widely the impact of our programs on literacy and wellbeing					

REDFERN

176 Redfern Street
Redfern NSW 2016
Gadigal Land
02 9699 6970

PARRAMATTA

90 George Street
Parramatta NSW 2150
Burramattagal Land
02 8859 0353

GET INVOLVED AT



[STORYFACTORY.ORG.AU](https://storyfactory.org.au)

Story Factory is a not-for-profit that runs creative writing and storytelling programs for young people aged 7 to 17 in under-resourced communities. Supported by our community of expert educators and volunteer tutors, young people are empowered to create stories of all kinds, which we share and celebrate. Young people develop the skills and confidence to find their voice and shape the future.

CONTACT

Dr Catherine Keenan AM
Co-founder and Executive Director
cath@storyfactory.org.au

Story
FACTORY