

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Whitelion acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which it is situated and we pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the sorrow of the Stolen Generations and the ongoing impacts of colonisation and dispossession on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We recognise the strengths and resilience of Australia's First Peoples and champion a reconciled, just and equitable Australia. We believe in the sovereignty and right of Australia's First Peoples to determine their own future.

We are proud to launch our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan alongside Strategy 2023.



STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

We are passionate about creating a workplace that promotes and values diversity. We are therefore committed to providing a safe environment for all people, regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.





Welcome to Whitelion's Strategy 2023

- a new beginning

On our 20 year anniversary, we have reflected deeply on the impact and difference we want to make for the years ahead. This strategy sets out both the roadmap and vehicle for achieving our vision. Our vision for is 'A world where no young person is left behind. Where all young people have the right to equitable opportunities to reach their potential'.

In addition to clear strategic priorities for the next three years, we have a unique Service Blueprint designed to respond flexibly to a young person's journey to achieving positive connections and pathways to work.

positive connections and pathways to work.

We are recommitting the organisation to focus on highly vulnerable, high risk young people – those we are here to serve – our reason for being. We will gear our organisation to reduce disengagement and unemployment by building positive connections and pathways to work.

We will partner with young people, supporters, donors, government, non-government organisations and the positively impact young people's lives.

community to find solutions for complex issues.

We know that only genuine collaboration and shared purpose will lead to improved and sustained outcomes for young people at risk.

We are enormously grateful for the dedication, passion and commitment of Whitelion supporters past

and present. We would like to acknowledge Glenn Manton and Mark Watt as Co-founders. We want to thank Mark as the founding CEO for his enormous contribution to young people spanning 20 years. We wish him every success for the future and know that he will continue to be a close friend, collaborator and champion for Whitelion.

Finally, we thank all young people, staff, volunteers, supporters and partners for your generosity and support. We look forward to walking alongside you in the next phase of Whitelion's journey with hope, optimism and determination to positively impact young people's lives.

December 2019

Pauline Spencer

Chair

walking alongside you in

the next phase of Whitelion's

journey with hope, optimism

and determination to

Hang Vo

CEO



OUR JOURNEY

Whitelion began in 1999 with the vision to 'stop the revolving door' for young people leaving the justice system. In their work with young offenders, Co-founders Mark Watt and Glenn Manton believed that by linking a young person with a mentor upon release, their ability to re-integrate into the community would be improved. For the next 10 years, Whitelion's focus on youth justice became a core strength recognised by governments, the youth sector, corporates and the general community as making a real difference to young people's lives. Over the following years, Whitelion expanded its scope to respond to the multiple and complex needs of young people through mergers with like-minded organisations including Open Family Australia (2011), Stride (2014), Balga Detached Youth Services (2015), and Youth Connect (2016). The continued expansion however, began to put strain on the organisation's focus, capacity and sustainability.

In 2018, the board and Co-founder Mark Watt embarked on a journey of renewal and transformation by appointing Hang Vo as CEO replacing Mark after 19 years at the helm. Throughout 2019, we undertook a review and analysis of our operations as well as considered the external environment and the future for young people. We determined that for Whitelion to be effective and sustainable in the years ahead, we had to refocus by doing less, better. We analysed where we could have the most impact, what it is that we do best, how can we become financially sustainable and importantly, what do we need to stop doing? Our focus is to go back to what we are good at.

We are reaffirming our commitment to highly vulnerable, high risk young people and the importance of reducing disengagement and increasing pathways to work.

In the latter half of 2019, we undertook a major organisational change program and acted decisively to position Whitelion for the future. We reduced the organisation by 20% to ensure we are more focussed on what we do. Regrettably, after 17 years of services to Tasmania we closed off our operations. We transferred Stride school prevention program to In2Life; and divested Melbourne social enterprises Fruit2Work and Wheelly Good Coffee to new providers. Strategy 2023 is a new beginning built on the foundations of Whitelion's early days of having clear focus and purpose.

THE FUTURE

In developing our new strategic plan and repurposing the organisation, we are informed by key trends that affect young people and our ability to serve them in the decade ahead.

Customer choice likely to expand across social services

• Customer choice and control will become the norm, thus necessitating a completely different business model - from the traditional 'block grant funding' to consumer directed funding. Young people may potentially be able to purchase their own services in the future such as we have seen in disability and aged care packages.

Competition and donor expectations make fundraising increasingly harder

- There is currently 56,000 charities registered in Australia with 4% annual increase⁶. There is also a rise of social enterprises, B-corps and commercial entities moving into the charities space as evidenced in the disability and aged care sectors.
- A downward giving trend can be attributed to rising cost of living and concerns that charities apportion too much of the dollar in administration costs. Concurrently, the cost of running an organisation is increasing more than the revenue available to the sector.

Poverty and disadvantage gap deepens

- 1 in 8 adults and more than 1 in 6 children are living in poverty in Australia⁴.
- Over 50% of young people incarcerated are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and are 24 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous young people⁵.

Younger workforce transforms work cultures and talent

- We are entering the first period where 3 or 4 generations can be found in the same workplace.
- 50% of the workforce will be millennial generation by 2025. With the ageing population transitioning out, the majority of the future workforce will belong to the younger generation, transforming the way organisations attract and retain talent⁷.

New funding models require wholesale changes

- Outcome-based funding and social impact investing will continue to replace traditional block grants.
- This requires wholesale changes to our current operating model - from service provision to financial modelling and evidence reporting.

Social isolation upward trend

- 1 in 3 young people between 15-24 years old experience social isolation¹.
- Australia's suicide rate is at a 13 year high.
- Suicide accounted for over one-third of deaths among young people between 15-24 years of age².

Future of work requires new skills and capabilities

 Technology and automation has resulted to increase in non-routine jobs where skills such as digital literacy, growth mindset, creativity, problem solving, adaptability and resilience are key success factors³.

¹ Young Australians Loneliness Survey, Vic Health (2019)

² Suicide facts and statistics, Life in Mind (2019)

³ The new work reality report series, Foundation for Young Australians (2019)

⁴ Poverty in Australia 2018, Australian Council of Social Service (2018)

⁵ Youth detention population in Australia, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017)

⁶ Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (2019)

⁷ Technology and the intergenerational workforce: transforming business with Holly Ransom Part 2, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2017)





What & how

What makes us different

Service Blueprint

- Invites young people, staff, volunteers and supporters to create positive movement forward and impel each individual towards positive connections and pathways to work
- Four outcome areas help to achieve this: safe & stable; learning & supportive networks; skills & growth; connection & independence
- Success depends on the voice and lived experience of highly vulnerable, high risk young people; systems around them; and the Whitelion community

How we think and act

Values and behaviours

- We work together
- We turn up and do our best
- We deliver on commitments
- We want everyone to belong

What we will focus on over the next 3 years

Strategic priorities

- People
- Programs
- Supporters
- Sustainability

STRATEGY IN FULL

PURPOSE

To build positive connections and pathways to work for young people at risk.

VISION

A world where no young person is left behind. Where all young people have the right to equitable opportunities to reach their potential.

We purposefully use the word 'equitable' rather than equal because we know that not all young people start from the same or equal basis. We focus on creating opportunities for equitable outcomes which can mean different things for different young people – they are not the same. We are a rights-based organisation that believes all young people have the right to equitable opportunities.

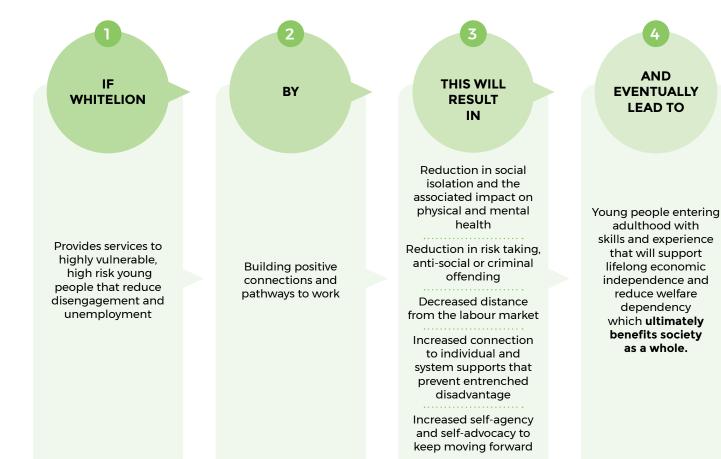
At risk for Whitelion means we prioritise highly vulnerable, high risk young people who often have contact with the justice system; been in and out of 'out of home care'; experience unstable housing; have chronic and complex needs and/or experience intergenerational disadvantage.

Connection refers to positive and healthy connection to self, peers, family, community and organisations.

Pathways to work are the skills, knowledge and experience that improves a young person's chance of earning an income and becoming economically independent. This can range from school completion or vocational education, developing a positive mindset, problem solving and communication skills to interviewing and resume writing and a broad range of jobs.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Theory of Change describes how and why we believe our services and practice approach will create long term change for highly vulnerable, high risk young people. It is the causal effect of our actions to achieve an outcome that ultimately not only benefits a young person but society as a whole.



VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Our values and behaviours define Whitelion's culture and are the standard we hold ourselves to in our interactions with each other, young people and partners. It expresses how we think and act.

The values were first developed through a co-design process with Whitelion staff. In keeping with Whitelion's commitment to bringing the voice of young people into all aspects of the organisation, consultation with young people informed the way that we measure and demonstrate our behaviours.

We work together collaborative

- We base our engagement on mutual respect and finding strengths in each other.
- · We ask for help and offer help to others.
- We seek and offer feedback to encourage learning and growth.
- We find ways to support and promote others to succeed.

We turn up and do our best

- We keep young people and our purpose at the centre of our decisions and actions.
- We strive for exceptional performance in everything we do.
- We adopt a growth mindset and see potential in our self and others.
- · We find ways to overcome challenges.

We deliver on commitments

- We build trust by honouring our commitments.
- We communicate regularly and consistently so everyone knows what to expect.
- We assume self-responsibility rather than blame others.
- We don't shy away from hard conversations which helps to achieve better outcomes.

We want everyone to belong

- We use inclusive language to encourage participation.
- We encourage everyone to bring their whole self to work and value the many dimensions of who we are
- We listen and never assume we know what is best for others.
- We take responsibility and speak up when things are not right.

SERVICE BLUEPRINT

Our Service Blueprint gives Whitelion staff, partners and young people clarity about what we are working towards and how we partner with other services.

Consistency of practice is achieved when all Whitelion staff and volunteers work towards the outcomes of the Service Blueprint. The Service Blueprint also reflects Whitelion's understanding that a static model designed

by adults without the inclusion of young people's voice and lived experience has no chance of success. We have committed to a dynamic practice approach befitting a learning organisation that is informed by data. Young people's voice and organisational performance against an outcome framework will result in continuous improvement to the Service Blueprint.



FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES THAT GOVERN OUR BLUEPRINT:

1 YOUNG PERSON AT THE CENTRE

Our work is underpinned by a commitment to deeply understanding the young people we serve. Highly vulnerable and high risk cohorts are defined by the following experiences:

- Left home/homelessness
- Disengaged from family
- Significant alcohol or drug use
- Not working or enrolled in education
- Mental health
- Family violence
- Sexual abuse
- Multiple and chronic problems (e.g. substance dependence and mental health)
- Criminal Court orders
- Out of home care
- Combination of the above

2 EVIDENCE INFORMED

Evidence informed practice is a way of working that is informed by research evidence, alongside other influences including client values and preferences, practitioner experience, and organisational or community context. This approach allows us to improve the quality and effectiveness of our practice, while being sensitive to the realities of each unique practice setting and individual.

3 DYNAMIC AND ADAPTIVE

The service model acknowledges that we work with individuals who bring their own unique experience, circumstances and goals to their engagement with Whitelion. A 'one size fits all' approach would not be effective as it ignores the non-linear nature of change and the vast variance that exists in young people's individual interests, skills and abilities.

4 SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

The service model is designed to represent the change we want to create for young people. Whitelion may not necessarily offer services in each of the four outcome areas instead, we will partner with other organisations to help the young person achieve their goal. In all our work we will seek to collaborate with other services to help a young person receive tailored, timely and relevant support for all their needs.

5 MEASURABLE

Understanding the impact of the model is a key driver of the design. Each outcome area has clear measurements to understand where Whitelion has the deepest impact. This allows us to focus on continuous improvement of the model by adjusting our intake process, partners and practice as levers for increasing our impact.

¹Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018

²The Costs of Youth Homelessness in Australia project is an ARC Linkage research project of Swinburne University's Institute for Social Research; the University of Western Australia and Charles Sturt University, in partnership with The Salvation Army, Mission Australia and Anglicare NSW South. NSW West & ACT.

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017-18

OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICE BLUEPRINT

Whitelion's Service Blueprint invites young people, workers, volunteers and supporters to create positive movement forward and impel each individual towards two outcomes we know can change a life - connection and work.

Design of the Service Blueprint started with the long term goal in mind: highly vulnerable, high risk young people entering adulthood with skills, experience and confidence to seek connection and economic independence throughout their lifetime. Taking this as our starting point and drawing on 20 years of service experience, we designed four outcome areas. The result is a blueprint for practice that demonstrates how, by working across all four outcome areas, highly vulnerable,

high risk young people can significantly improve their chance of reaching their potential.

Surrounding the four outcome areas are the three key contextual influences that will interact with our practice to challenge and improve Whitelion and young people's ability to achieve outcomes. These influences are:

- Young people's voice and lived experience
- Systems, including family, peers, policy frameworks, and other service providers
- Whitelion's community of support, including mentors, volunteers, referral partners, delivery partners, employers, donors, sponsors and grantors.

Outcome area 1

WHAT Stabilise risk factors through service interventions, support and specialist referrals

HOW Support young people to access help for stable housing, substance dependence, personal or family safety, mental health or other risk factors.

WHAT Encourage and facilitate opportunities for young people to develop positive, future-oriented goals

HOW Support young people to access or achieve learning outcomes such as completing traditional or alternative high school, accessing further education or vocational training.

Create opportunities and teach healthy ways for young people to form positive relationships with themselves, peers, and their community through group work, peer-facilitated experiences and mentoring.

HOW

Outcome area 2

LEARNING &
SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS

Outcome area 3 skills & growth

WHAT Transfer community knowledge and opportunities to young people so they can acquire the skills, confidence and competencies to participate in the community or economy.

Support young people to acquire work readiness tools, job search and interview experience, confidence to volunteer, and build personal attributes such as resilience and problem solving.

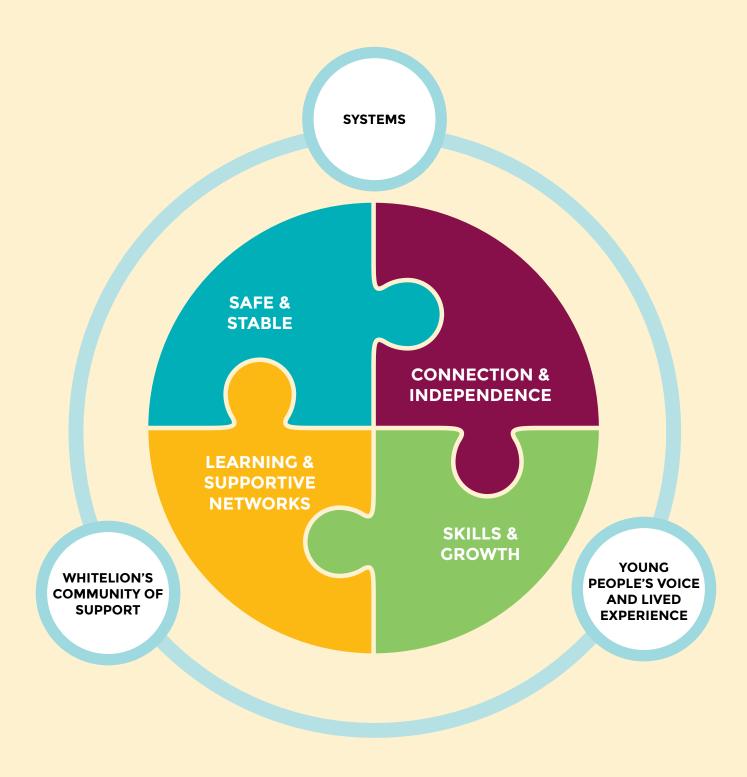
WHAT Facilitate opportunities for young people to access and maintain work, and to achieve self-agency that will help them navigate future life challenges.

HOW Partner with corporates, industry and the community to give young people practical support to maintain work, or a pathway to work.

Helping young people to understand their right to claim opportunities equitable with their peers by ensuring they have self-advocacy skills for ongoing change and growth.

Outcome area 4 connection & independence

SERVICE BLUEPKINT



PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

PRIORITY 1 | PEOPLE

Outcome 1

Our staff and volunteers are engaged and enabled to be their best in an inclusive and high performing environment.

We prioritise staff and volunteers because a great workforce experience leads to great customer experience. We believe that an engaged and enabled workforce are prerequisites to effective services for young people.

FOCUS AREA

ACTIONS



- Embed values and behaviours into individual and team performance plans.
- Embed growth mindset in everything we do.
- Create safe space where staff and volunteers can be themselves- to feel they belong not just fit in.
- Facilitate, recognise and reward team work and collaboration.
- Create mechanisms to achieve exceptional employee experience and engagement.



- Ensure that the right people are in the right roles.
- Implement Whitelion Capability Framework reflective of future organisational needs.
- Develop recruitment and retention strategy.
- Recruit workforce reflective of the community prioritising intergenerational and cultural diversity.
- Develop talent pipeline and succession planning for board and leadership roles.



- Embed reflection and feedback in team meetings.
- Create opportunities to learn by safely failing, pushing boundaries and doing things differently.
- Develop formal and informal knowledge and information sharing mechanisms.
- Facilitate and enable a culture of inquiry, learning and sharing.



- Create coaching and mentoring initiatives.
- Implement change communication and leadership capabilities.
- Develop leading self and leading others initiatives.
- Create distributive leadership opportunities.



- Clearly define governance and management accountabilities and duties.
- Measure performance against strategy and risk appetite.
- Implement planning and performance framework.
- Create consequence and reinforcement culture.

PRIORITY 2 | PROGRAMS

Outcome 2

Highly vulnerable young people experience improved connections and pathways to work.

The real measure of Whitelion's success is young people's experience of us. We know that co-design while desirable, is not always possible. Our approach is realistic - working in partnership to find solutions; enabling self-directed solutions; leading and consulting where appropriate; and creating space for peer-led solutions.

FOCUS AREA

ACTIONS



- Embed mechanisms that give voice to highly vulnerable, high risk young people's needs and aspirations.
- Ensure that Whitelion's Service Blueprint is continually adapted and improved to reflect young people's voice and lived experience.
- Create safe and inclusive space and platforms where young people can express their diversity.
- Develop customer journeys that inform all aspects of the organisation's operations prioritising access, intake and communications.

SERVICE BLUEPRINT

- Roll out Whitelion's Service Blueprint across the organisation.
- Engage in longitudinal action research/ evaluation to ascertain the impact of the model.
- Develop and rollout consistent practice principles across the organisation.
- Test and improve the Service Blueprint by partnering with others.



& DATA

- Improve staff capacity and capability in data capture and use to inform decision making.
- Refresh and replace technology to enable better service design, planning and delivery.
- Implement Results Based Accountability to improve our ability to measure impact.
- Ensure resources are allocated to understand current and emerging practice and policy as it relates to at risk young people.



- Embed Whitelion's Quality Framework by developing good governance, tools and frameworks for implementation.
- Enterprise risk strategy and annual internal audit plan is regularly monitored by the board.
- Ensure Whitelion continues to be a Child Safe organisation.
- Ensure appropriate accreditation and standards are met.



- Develop systems thinking capabilities in 'how' we work to ensure that we address systemic and structural inequities.
- Apply systems thinking to elicit deeper understanding of social problems that can lead to more holistic solutions.
- Advocate and influence community attitude and government policy.
- Apply systems thinking internally to achieve greater inter-relatedness between programs and corporate support.

PRIORITY 3 | SUPPORTERS

Outcome 3

Our supporters and partners are integral to solutions for achieving impact and sustainability.

Whitelion has an amazing community of supporters and partners across many sectors. We want to deepen our engagement to achieve mutually beneficial relationships where shared purpose and vision drives everything we do together.

FOCUS AREA

ACTIONS



SECTOR

- Identify and develop long term partnerships with youth service organisations to achieve shared purpose and outcomes.
- Collaborate with youth services sector to achieve more holistic and joined up approach to service delivery and policy influence.
- Identify and develop strategic alliances that strengthens collective efficiency and impact.
- Develop initiatives in line with Whitelion's Service Blueprint that address emerging issues with organisations that have complementary skills and experience.



- Develop supporter engagement strategy where mutual benefit and long term engagement underpins all partnerships.
- Review and refresh all events to achieve a more contemporary and sustainable approach to engagement and revenue.
- Identify long term project initiatives for corporate volunteers that build Whitelion's capabilities, prioritising back of house activities.
- Develop three year strategy for engaging long term supporters.



- Develop strategic alliances with non-profit partners that create opportunities for funders to invest in greater efficiencies and impact.
- Identify shared value opportunities where purpose alignment forms the basis for long term funding.
- Review and reshape donor engagement to better achieve strategic and purpose alignment.
- Review and refresh customer relationship management system.
- Develop a more tailored approach to donor relationship management.



- Contribute to government policy and practice through clear policy positions based on practice experience and evidence.
- Identify opportunities to engage in government policy forums such as taskforces and reference groups.
- Develop government relations at regional, state and federal levels.



- Develop communication strategy that articulates Whitelion's 'story' of change and renewal.
- Modernise our communication systems and approach to better reflect strategy and purpose.
- Proactively develop policy positions in consultation with young people to advocate on issues that directly impact them and bring community awareness to their strengths and the impact of Whitelion's community of support.

PRIORITY 4 | SUSTAINABILITY

Outcome 4

Financial sustainability is based on healthy reserves which can be used to reinvest in workforce capabilities, program innovation and systems improvement.

We want to challenge ourselves and our supporters to think differently about long term sustainability of community service organisations like Whitelion. Like all businesses, the cost of administration is increasing while the donor dollar is harder to access. We believe that by intentionally building healthy reserves we are able to innovate, scale for deeper impact, growth and sustainability.

FOCUS AREA

ACTIONS



- Identify and discontinue variable costs that do not add value to organisational purpose.
- Fix or stop loss making programs and activities.
- Identify opportunities for shared services and/or outsourcing of non-core supports where it is more cost-effective.
- Develop costing models for flagship programs to ensure funding sustainability.



REVENUE

- Develop a revenue strategy that clearly identifies steps to revenue raising strategies across all streams.
- Invest in income generating and fund raising capabilities.
- Explore opportunities for long term investment strategies such as a Whitelion Endowment Fund.



- Support and enable managers to develop and strengthen financial capabilities and business acumen.
- Ensure board oversight of financial performance is informed by transparent and accurate data.
- Engage external auditor to periodically review internal controls and systems integrity.



- Develop a marketing strategy with products and services that respond to different customer segments.
- Collect and apply customer behavioural data to inform marketing priorities and pitches.
- Develop and train board, staff and volunteers in communicating Whitelion's purpose.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS

- Ensure assets are regularly reviewed and replaced to meet business needs.
- Regularly review supplier contracts to achieve best value for money/ market competitiveness.
- Define results and expectations at on-boarding and induction then reinforce regularly and consistently.
- Implement initiatives that drive process efficiencies such as workflow improvements and digitisation.
- Identify opportunities and innovations for achieving economies of scale including partnering with other non-profit organisations.







Feedback and questions

We welcome your feedback and any questions you may have. Please contact us on: