Ecstra Foundation 2025 Impact report

Building financial capability and wellbeing across Australia

Contents

Ecstra acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.

Images included throughout this report are courtesy of our partners and stock photos are used where appropriate.

Introduction

Money matters — now more than ever.

In a year shaped by cost-of-living pressures, economic uncertainty and increasing financial complexity, Ecstra and our partners have continued to strengthen financial capability and wellbeing across Australia. This includes supporting people to make more informed decisions, navigate financial systems and build greater financial confidence.

Financial wellbeing intersects with mental, physical and social wellbeing, all influencing health, participation in work and community life and long term economic security. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated action across education, community services, consumer advocacy, policy and government.

Over the past year, Ecstra has worked with partners across the country to deliver practical outcomes at both individual and system levels. Together, we have expanded access to financial education in schools and communities, with Talk Money reaching over 500,000 students, building foundational money skills. Across our partnerships, evaluation shows increased confidence, knowledge and help seeking, demonstrating meaningful improvements in financial capability.

In 2025, Ecstra also strengthened our convening role, hosting the inaugural National Financial Wellbeing Summit, bringing together leaders from across sectors to strengthen collaboration, contribute to policy discussions, share evidence and build momentum for coordinated national action.

Alongside this, Ecstra and our partners have contributed to policy and systems change, including submissions, research and engagement with government and regulators, addressing structural barriers in areas such as economic abuse, superannuation and financial system design. This work reflects the importance of combining individual capability with fair and effective systems.

Guided by our Strategy 2024–2028, this report reflects our work through three interconnected pillars of Equip, Connect and Influence, and the contribution Ecstra makes in supporting a more coordinated and effective financial capability system.

We thank our partners, stakeholders and collaborators for their leadership and commitment. Together, we are contributing to a more confident, informed and financially resilient Australia.

Ecstra supports the organisations, people and systems working to build financial capability and wellbeing.

We deliver education, invest in partnerships, connect sectors and contribute to policy and systems change.

Our impact*

198
grants awarded

Supporting financial capability and wellbeing across Australia

136
partner organisations

Working to strengthen outcomes across communities and systems

$39m
grants committed

Supporting partner organisations

2m
people directly supported

To improve their financial lives

Impact highlights

Equip

Building financial capability through education

Largest schools based financial education program with 635 schools in 2025

89% of program participants across 21 Ecstra partners believe that the information and training provided met their needs#

Connect

Strengthening the financial wellbeing ecosystem

94% of frontline staff from Ecstra partner organisations report feeling confident to support individuals with financial capability

Influence

Shaping systems, policy and practice

Over 50 organisations attended the Inaugural National Financial Wellbeing Summit

Addressing barriers to financial inclusion and economic security

System impact

Strengthening Australia's financial capability ecosystem

Delivered through partnerships across education, community, consumer advocacy and research, contributing to improved financial wellbeing, inclusion and economic participation.

* Data for the period 2020-2025 | # Data for 2022-2025

Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation

Learning about money is a lifelong journey that prepares students for the future.

Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation is Australia's largest schools based, face to face financial education program designed to equip young people with essential money skills for life.

Talk Money supports students in Years 5 to 10 to build financial knowledge, confidence, and decision making skills through interactive, curriculum aligned workshops and resources.

By providing the program at no cost to schools, Talk Money ensures that more students can access financial education at key life stages.

2025 school year insights

Students **139,923**

Schools **635**

Workshops **3,231**

Returning schools **60%**

Low ICSEA schools **33%**

Regional areas **25%**

Student impact

97% Have learnt something they can use right away or in the future

80% Have confidence to manage money

77% Have intent to achieve financial goals

Teacher impact

99% Believe the workshops are relevant to their students right away or in the future

93% Agree the workshops were appropriately pitched for students

87% Believe the workshop topics would not be taught if not for Talk Money

Talk Money life of program snapshot

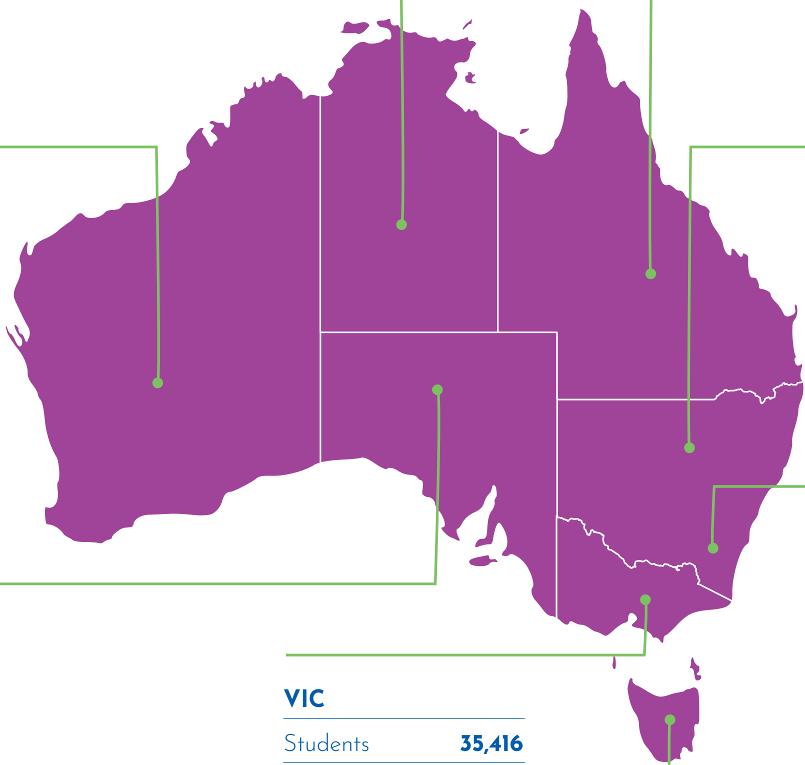
Students **530,873**

Schools **1,622**

Workshops **13,323**

Students, schools and workshops by state

The program delivered workshops across all Australian states and territories in 2025. New South Wales recorded the highest number of student participants, overtaking Victoria, with both states continuing to lead national student engagement overall. Western Australia also demonstrated strong growth, achieving an 18% year-on-year increase in student participants. In-person workshop delivery remained the preferred delivery method, accounting for 94% of all workshops.



NT

Students	**950**
Schools	**9**
Workshops	**19**

QLD

Students	**14,074**
Schools	**69**
Workshops	**299**

WA

Students	**30,470**
Schools	**122**
Workshops	**725**

NSW

Students	**42,170**
Schools	**181**
Workshops	**811**

SA

Students	**13,405**
Schools	**60**
Workshops	**329**

ACT

Students	**2,370**
Schools	**15**
Workshops	**41**

VIC

Students	**35,416**
Schools	**171**
Workshops	**973**

TAS

Students	**1,068**
Schools	**8**
Workshops	**34**

Roadshows

Regional and remote roadshows continue to be in strong demand, and the facilitation team are welcomed by new and returning schools across Australia.

Extending Talk Money's reach outside metropolitan areas reflects Ecstra's consistent commitment to providing more Australian students with better access to financial education.

In 2025, the team delivered 327 roadshow workshops to 14,001 students across 108 schools.. This accounted for 17% of all schools participating in Talk Money and 10% of the total workshops delivered for the year.

First time roadshow visits included Lake Grace and Narrogin in WA, and the West Coast of Tasmania.

2. Students will be counted twice if they participate in both workshop A and B.

Student feedback on Talk Money

talk money with Ecstra Foundation

"This workshop was a great and understandable way on how to save my money, this will most likely help me with my future."

Year 7 student
Darwin, NT

"I will think more carefully about the small financial choices that I make, knowing that, when added up, it can make a big impact in the future."

Year 7 student
Wattle Range, SA

"I think that I was able to learn more about money. And the instructor was very entertaining and while being entertained I was still learning the value of money."

Year 5 student
Cairns, QLD

"The workshop helped me stay motivated on achieving my goal of saving."

Year 5 student
Tamworth, NSW

Impact Pillar 1: Equip

Ecstra invests in financial education that helps people build the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to make informed money decisions throughout their lives. By supporting partners providing accessible and evidence informed learning opportunities in schools and communities, Ecstra is helping more Australians develop the financial capability needed to navigate an increasingly complex financial world.

Case studies

"Going into the program I didn't know much regarding rights at work or money managing however, coming out I find myself to be more educated on the matter and confident in my financial decisions."

ABCN student, Dandenong High School, Victoria

Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) Money Mastery

Building financial confidence for young people at key transition points.

Australian Business and Community Network's (ABCN) five year partnership with Ecstra embeds financial capability into mentoring programs for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Through this collaboration, mentors support young people to build the financial skills, resilience, and confidence to have informed conversations about money as they transition through secondary school years to work and study.

In 2025, ABCN piloted Money Mastery, a co-designed financial capability program delivered across 11 workshops to 203 students and 89 mentors.

The multi year partnership enables financial education to be delivered and sustained through trusted relationships and existing education pathways, increasing reach and strengthening the long-term financial wellbeing outcomes for young people.

Participating students report increased confidence in financial knowledge and confidence discussing money. This includes:

94% **Understanding of workplace rights** increased from 39% to 94%

92% **Comfort having conversations about money** increased from 45% pre-program to 92% post-program

92% **Confidence understanding investment red flags** rose from 35% to 92%

92% **Understanding how to create a budget** improved from 47% to 92%

> I learnt how to manage money, set a budget and understand how profit works.

Ahlia, Peace Lutheran College

> I learnt how much of a process we should go through to develop a business idea properly.

Gemma,Yarram Secondary College

Young Change Agents – $20 Boss

Building financial capability through enterprise learning

In 2025, Ecstra's long-term partnership with Young Change Agents (YCA) continued to expand the reach and impact of the $20 Boss program. Now in its eighth year, the program is active in schools across Australia, equipping young people with practical financial skills, confidence and hands on business experience.

Evaluation shows clear improvements in students' financial capability. Understanding of how businesses balance income and costs increased from 63.9% to 73.4%, while confidence in developing a business idea rose from 62.5% to 81.4%.

In 2025, the program reached 272 schools, with 318 educators delivering $20 Boss to more than 16,000 students. Through creating and running their own enterprises, students applied budgeting, customer testing and financial decision-making in real-world contexts.

Ongoing improvements to program delivery, including new resources, updated financial literacy modules and improved teacher onboarding, are supporting continued national growth. This ensures more young Australians can build the financial skills, confidence and entrepreneurial mindset they need to shape their financial futures.

73% — **Understanding of how businesses balance income and costs** increased from 63.9% to 73%

81% — **Confidence in developing a business idea** rose from 62.5% to 81%

Market day and money lessons

The Lakes College, QLD has integrated the $20 Boss Program into its Year 8 Business and Economics curriculum over several years. The school has progressed to running two to three market days to allow students to reflect and improve their products and services.

They experience high engagement levels with the students enjoying putting theory into practice. Students especially enjoy preparing for Market day and the day itself, selling to and interacting with customers. The school is so engaged with the program, they hosted an in person professional development workshop for local educators, facilitated by Young Change Agents, and Corlea Saayman, the Head of Business Faculty, was invited to share their story at the Entrepreneurial Educators Exchange (E3) in August, 2025.

Impact Pillar 2: Connect

Strengthening connections across the financial wellbeing ecosystem

Improving financial wellbeing requires coordinated action across sectors, communities and systems. Through the Connect pillar, Ecstra works with partners to build a stronger, more connected ecosystem, linking people to the resources, expertise and support needed to build financial knowledge, confidence and capability.

Ecstra continues to invest in partnerships, programs and shared learning that strengthens the capacity of organisations delivering financial capability initiatives. This includes supporting collaboration across community services, education and consumer advocacy, and enabling more accessible, scalable approaches to reach people where they are.

By connecting organisations and integrating financial capability into programs and services, Ecstra is helping to reduce fragmentation and improve how support is delivered. This contributes to better community financial wellbeing outcomes – ensuring partners have the capability, resources and networks they need to support people at key life stages.

Case studies

White Box Enterprises' ongoing partnership with Ecstra integrates financial wellbeing education into social enterprise employment models.

White Box Enterprises

Embedding financial capability within employment pathways

For many people, financial learning and capability is shaped by the systems they engage with, including through paid employment.

White Box Enterprises' ongoing partnership with Ecstra integrates financial wellbeing education into social enterprise employment models. This approach builds employees' confidence and capability alongside job readiness and participation.

Evaluation by the Centre for Social Impact at Swinburne University of Technology (CSI) found the flexible co-design process makes it highly adaptable to the diverse workplace contexts of social enterprises, whilst also strengthening organisational capability.

These outcomes highlight the importance of delivering practical and responsive support that meets people at critical life points, such as entering paid employment, that builds financial knowledge and confidence.

Across all three years of delivery, employees reported immediate shifts in awareness, confidence and ability to take informed financial actions:

91% said the program provided them with new learnings

86% said their confidence to manage their money had improved

95% had an improved sense of how to get financial help

Hikmat's financial capability journey with White Box

Originally from Afghanistan, Hikmat arrived in Australia three years ago after living in Turkey, where he had worked as a general manager for a law firm in Istanbul.

Now based in Melbourne, he's working as a security guard while applying for roles in business and sales. Despite having a strong grasp of English and a background in business management, like many newly arrived migrants, Hikmat found Australia's systems unfamiliar and complex.

While searching for work, he connected with Sherry Esfandiari from Civik People. She supported him with job applications, helped tailor his résumé, and introduced him to the White Box Financial Wellbeing Program.

"It was perfect," Hikmat says. "We learned how to manage money, how to pay tax, about home loans, Afterpay, what superannuation is. We learnt everything.

"I didn't know the benefits of being paid officially rather than in cash, or what happens when you retire. How you should save money to protect your retirement. Now I do. So from a young age, we can plan for requirement."

Beyond his own learning, Hikmat has also taken on an informal role as an educator in his community, sharing what he's learned with friends and peers.

He says this is especially important because so many newly arrived migrants rely on each other for information, without always knowing if it is accurate.

"Lots of people share personal experiences with newcomers. Do this, don't do that. But they don't know the standards or the laws," he explains. "Sometimes it's false information. Sometimes it's good. Sometimes it's useless.

"That's why we need programs like this, so we can educate people properly. Not just for us, but for the new generation too."

This issue is something Sherry sees regularly in her work.

"I'm always worried about the wrong information that comes without education," she says. "People don't have trusted reference points. They ask each other, but the person they're asking may not have the full picture either. That's how misinformation spreads."

But she has been encouraged by the ripple effect of the Financial Wellbeing Program.

"I was talking to a client who had been unable to attend the workshop," she recalls. "He said he was sorry that he missed it, but he had learned about home loans from someone else who attended. He went to the bank and found he is eligible for a home loan, he just needs more savings.

"That moment was a real wow for me. I knew my clients talked about these topics with their families, but I hadn't realised how connected they were to each other or how actively they were sharing that information. It was amazing."

Sherry says examples like this, and Hikmat's story, show how formal financial education can break the cycle of misinformation and create real community impact.

For Hikmat, it's about building a future, and helping others do the same.

"When I see new friends, I share what I've learned," Hikmat says.

"I wish we had more programs like this White Box financial wellbeing program. We want to know about the law, regulations, tax, settlement, everything. Then we can educate the new generation."

> "I didn't know the benefits of being paid officially rather than in cash, or what happens when you retire. How you should save money to protect your retirement. Now I do. So from a young age, we can plan for requirement."
>
> **Hikmat**

> "That moment was a real wow for me. I knew my clients talked about these topics with their families, but I hadn't realised how connected they were to each other."
>
> **Sherry, Civik People**

WestJustice – Restoring financial safety

Improving financial safety and driving system change for women experiencing economic abuse

Restoring Financial Safety is an integrated legal and financial support model for women experiencing economic abuse, delivered in partnership with community and family violence services including McAuley Community services and the Orange Door, Western Melbourne.

With multi-year support from partners including Ecstra, the program combines direct, practical assistance with advocacy, recognising that addressing economic abuse is key to improving long term safety outcomes for their clients as well as better system design and government responses.

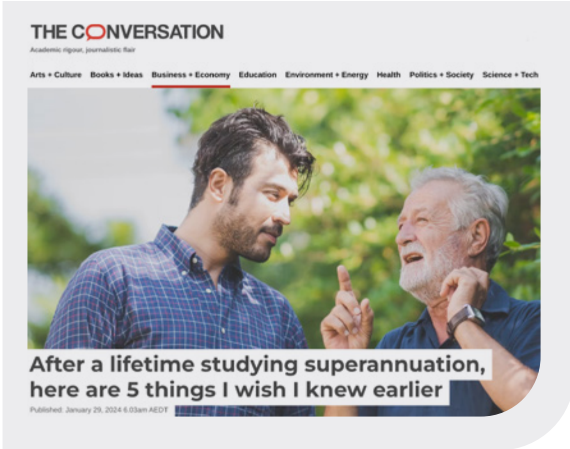
In 2025, 185 women were supported through the program, achieving 120 positive legal outcomes across debt, tenancy, fines and family law matters. More than $918,000 in debts and fines were waived, with additional compensation secured, helping women stabilise their financial situations and rebuild independence.

Importantly, outcomes extended beyond immediate financial relief. All surveyed clients reported increased confidence in managing future financial challenges, highlighting gains in capability, confidence and help-seeking.

The program is also strengthening system responses. Insights from frontline casework are informing advocacy, and Westjustice is coordinating the Victorian Economic Abuse Reference Group focused on hardship practices, financial product design and justice system processes.

This work has already contributed to changes in industry and service responses, demonstrating how combining direct support with evidence and advocacy can improve financial safety and address the structural drivers of economic abuse.


Photo by Towfiqu Barbhuiya on Unsplash.com



The Conversation

Expanding access to trusted, independent financial information

The Conversation is expanding access to clear, evidence-based financial information, helping more Australians understand money, economic change and the policies shaping their financial lives.

By translating academic research into accessible, jargon free journalism, The Conversation connects expert knowledge with consumers. In 2025, more than 250 articles were produced covering topics such as budgeting, economic trends, housing, superannuation, tax reform and the Federal Budget, supporting readers to better navigate real world financial choices.

This content reached more than 6 million readers, with widespread republication across major national and regional media. Through this reach, trusted, independent information is being made available to diverse communities across Australia.

The partnership also strengthens the visibility and influence of expert voices. More than 220 academics contributed, with many engaging further through media, policy discussions and public debate, helping bridge the gap between research, public understanding and policy.

The Conversation has expanded its multi platform digital format, including storytelling through video and social media, extending their reach to younger audiences. This ensures financial information meets people where they are, and supports a more informed public dialogue on the financial and economic issues that matter to consumers.

Impact Pillar 3: Influence

Shaping systems, policy & practice

Ecstra's policy and advocacy work focuses on the systems and structures that shape financial wellbeing. Working alongside partners, we address structural and regulatory barriers that limit financial inclusion and economic security, and highlight the connections between financial, mental and social wellbeing.

In 2025, this work continued to evolve, informing the priorities set out in our Call to Action, including the need for a coordinated national approach to financial capability and wellbeing, stronger financial education, and policy settings that better support financial inclusion and security.

Ecstra contributes through research, submissions and convening, working across sectors to inform policy and system reform. This includes advocacy for financial education, sustainable funding and resourcing of services, and greater international engagement, as well as reform in areas such as economic abuse, superannuation, tax and scams, where fairer, more responsive systems can improve long term financial wellbeing outcomes.

Case studies

Super Consumers Australia

Improving fairness and outcomes in the superannuation system

Superannuation is a critical determinant of long-term financial wellbeing, yet system complexity and inequities can limit outcomes for many Australians.

Ecstra's multi year partnership supports Super Consumers Australia's independent research and advocacy focused on improving transparency, accountability and consumer outcomes within the super system.

This work has contributed to increased scrutiny of industry practices and strengthened the consumer voice in policy and regulatory discussions.

By supporting independent advocacy, Ecstra helps ensure that superannuation policy and industry practices better reflect the needs of consumers – particularly those at risk of poorer retirement outcomes.

Ecstra's multi year partnership supports Super Consumers Australia's independent research and advocacy focused on improving transparency, accountability and consumer outcomes within the super system.

This work has contributed to increased recognition of tax-related financial abuse and informed submissions, inquiries and policy discussions at a national level.

UNSW Tax & Business Advisory Clinic

Addressing economic abuse in the tax system and driving policy reform

People experiencing financial distress, including victim survivors of economic abuse, are often disproportionately impacted by gaps in the tax system.

The UNSW Tax Clinic combines direct assistance with research and advocacy, using real client experiences to identify systemic issues in tax policy and administration.

This work has contributed to increased recognition of tax-related financial abuse and informed submissions, inquiries and policy discussions at a national level.

With multi year support from Ecstra, the Clinic has expanded and focused on connecting lived experience with evidence and advocacy, helping to drive awareness, more equitable policy responses and reducing systemic financial harm.

This partnership highlights the importance of linking frontline service delivery with system-level reform to genuinely and sustainably improve financial wellbeing outcomes.

UNSW Tax Clinic Prof Ann Kayis-Kumar

"My once high level of confidence to find work has sunk to zero… I, like thousands of others, don't feel that I have a life. I barely survive on JobSeeker."

Amelia

Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)

Elevating lived experience to inform structural reform

Income support settings play a critical role in financial wellbeing, yet many Australians remain locked in long term financial insecurity.

Ecstra supports ACOSS to generate evidence and amplify lived experience through research including the Faces of Unemployment series. This work highlights the realities of people experiencing prolonged financial stress and the limitations of current income support systems.

The findings have contributed to ACOSS ongoing national policy conversations on economic security, reinforcing the need for structural reform to reduce financial hardship and improve participation in work and community life.

Ecstra's support of research and advocacy through partnerships aims to contribute to a stronger evidence base for policy change that addresses the root causes of financial vulnerability and ongoing economic insecurity.

FINANCIAL WELLBEING SUMMIT 2025

The National Financial Wellbeing Summit 2025

Building an integrated approach to Financial Wellbeing

In November 2025, Ecstra Foundation brought together community organisations, financial counsellors, educators, government, regulators and industry leaders for the inaugural National Financial Wellbeing Summit. Participants shared a common purpose: to strengthen financial wellbeing for all Australians.

The Summit created the opportunity to connect, share expertise and find common ground on the challenges Australians are facing today.

The Summit created the opportunity to connect, share expertise and find common ground on the challenges Australians are facing today. It reinforced both the urgency of these issues and the need for more coordinated, system wide action. It also highlighted the depth of insight, experience and commitment across sectors, and the importance of genuine collaboration in delivering meaningful, lasting outcomes.

The discussions and insights from the Summit have helped inform a clear set of priorities for national action. These focus on strengthening coordination, improving access to effective financial education and support, and building the evidence and partnerships needed to drive impact at scale.

Together, these priorities provide a practical pathway forward, and an invitation to join a shared call to action for governments, educators, community organisations and industry to work collectively to improve financial wellbeing across Australia.

Learn more

Our grant partners

Ecstra works with organisations across Australia that share a common goal – helping people build the confidence, capability and support needed to navigate financial systems and improve their financial wellbeing.

Australian Council of Social Service

Consumers Federation of Australia

Financial Counselling Australia

Super Consumers

University of New South Wales

Wellbeing Research

Australian Business and Community Network

Variety Queensland Inc

Young Change Agents

Australian Communities Foundation

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Centre for Women's Economic Safety Ltd

Christians Against Poverty

Encompass Legal and Community Services Inc.

Fighting Chance Australia Limited

First Nations Foundation

Karrkad Kanjdji Trust

Redfern Legal Centre Limited

Tender Funerals Australia

The Conversation Media Group Limited

The Social Outfit Incorporated

Two Good Foundation

Welfare Rights Centre

Western Community Legal Centre Limited

White Box Enterprises

Women's Health in the North

Ecstra Foundation

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