

THREADS

PROPOSAL



Prepared for
Department of Health (Suicide Prevention)



THEIRS
Talk, Hear & Help, Educate, Inform,
Refer and Support

WHAT IS THREADS?

Threads is a trauma-informed, co-designed program for disengaged students and young people impacted by complex trauma, mental health challenges and social disconnection. The name reflects the idea that every young person carries threads of their story, which can be understood, strengthened and reconnected.

The program builds emotional literacy, storytelling skills, teamwork, confidence, leadership, and community connection, evolving into a youth-led community event. It also gives young people the fundamental skills needed when transitioning into adulthood. Threads is inclusive, and non-stigmatising, making it suitable for school environments and supportive of student safety.



THREADS is co-delivered by THEIRS and Upturned Tasmania (Life After School). Through lived experience and the drive to support young people, these two organisations have come together to deliver a program around mental health, social disconnection and life education to build skills for their future.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THREADS is a trauma-informed, youth-led, early intervention program designed to re-engage young people who are at risk of disengagement due to trauma, mental health challenges, suicidal distress, neurodivergence or experiences of domestic and family violence.

THREADS is delivered across schools, youth services, youth centres and community-based settings, depending on cohort needs, access points and local implementation contexts. This cross-sector delivery model ensures the program is not limited to a single system but is responsive to where young people are already connected or accessing support.

Delivered in partnership between THEIRS and Upturned Tasmania, THREADS provides a structured yet flexible engagement model where young people co-design aspects of their learning while building emotional regulation skills, practical life skills, creative capability and meaningful connection to community.

The program is grounded in trauma-informed practice and lived experience leadership, prioritising psychological safety, relational engagement, consistency and youth voice as core operational principles.

THREADS is currently progressing through accreditation pathways supported by an existing grant secured for this purpose. Accreditation will strengthen curriculum alignment, credibility and long-term scalability across Tasmania.

WHY THREADS?

THREADS is built on the belief that even when young people feel disconnected, overwhelmed, or uncertain, there is still something meaningful to be worked with; a starting point, a strength, or a moment of connection that can be gently built upon. Like individual threads, each young person carries their own story, experiences and potential. When those threads are supported, held and woven together through safe relationships and consistent engagement, something stronger and more beautiful can emerge.

Rather than focusing on deficits or “fixing” young people, THREADS starts with connection, trust and creativity. It recognises that small moments of safety, expression, and belonging can become turning points, and that when young people are given space to co-create, contribute, and be seen, real change becomes possible.

THREADS exists because even the most fragile thread still has strength, and when it is met with care, consistency, and community, it can become part of something far greater than it was alone.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY NEED

Across Tasmania, increasing numbers of young people are experiencing disengagement from learning and support systems alongside rising mental health challenges, trauma exposure and social disconnection.

These experiences occur across multiple environments, including schools, youth services, youth centres, alternative education settings and community-based supports.

Young people engaging with THREADS commonly experience:

- Emotional distress, anxiety and depression
- Trauma, grief and unstable home environments
- Domestic and family violence impacts
- Neurodivergence with unmet support needs
- Chronic absenteeism or disengagement from structured education
- Suicidal ideation and heightened vulnerability

While systems are working to respond, traditional service structures are often not designed to meet the complexity and intersectionality of these needs.

In regional and rural Tasmania, these challenges are compounded by:

- Limited access to specialist services
- Workforce shortages
- Geographic isolation
- Higher exposure to trauma and suicide
- Housing and financial stressors
- Reduced preventative and early intervention options

THREADS responds directly to this gap through a relational, flexible, cross-sector engagement model embedded within the environments young people already access.



PROGRAM THEORY AND RATIONALE

THREADS is underpinned by a trauma-informed, relational, co-design-based theory of change. It recognises that disengagement is rarely caused by a single factor, but instead results from layered social, emotional, environmental and systemic pressures.

The program is built on four core principles:

Connection before correction

Young people must experience safety and connection before meaningful engagement can occur.

Regulation before expectation

Emotional regulation is a prerequisite for participation and learning.

Voice as intervention

Youth voice and agency are protective factors in re-engagement and wellbeing.

Real-world relevance

Learning must be applied, meaningful and connected to identity and lived experience.

THREADS uses structured relational engagement and creative learning as mechanisms to rebuild trust, participation and future orientation.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT JOURNEY

THREADS supports young people through a staged engagement process:

Stage 1: Safety and Connection

Building trust, predictability and emotional safety.

Stage 2: Participation

Low-risk engagement and structured involvement.

Stage 3: Expression and Identity

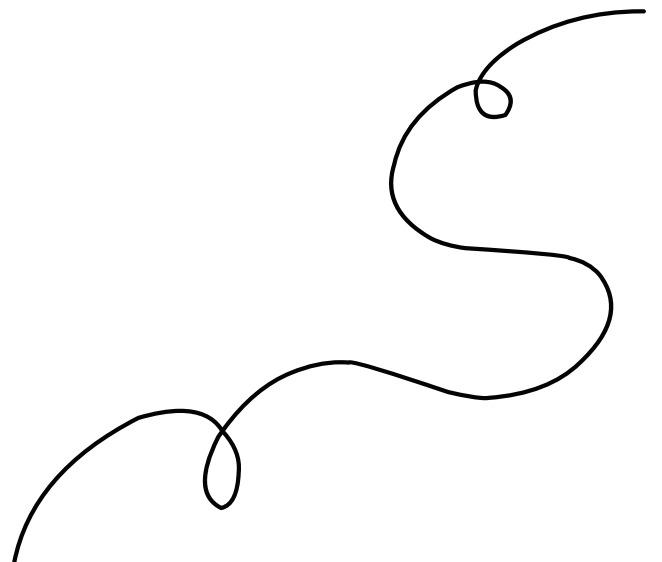
Creative storytelling, reflection and identity exploration.

Stage 4: Skill Development

Applied learning and real-world capability building.

Stage 5: Leadership and Contribution

Student-led projects and community engagement.



STUDENT-LED PROJECTS AND APPLIED LEARNING

THREADS includes structured applied learning pathways designed to translate engagement into real-world outcomes.

A key delivery partner within this framework is Upturned Tasmania (Life After School Program), led by Alyssia Kennedy. Upturned Tasmania specialises in youth engagement, life skills development, early intervention programming and youth-led education models that respond to the practical and social challenges young people face during transition periods.

Upturned's approach is grounded in relational practice, co-design and strengths-based engagement, supporting young people to build confidence, independence, communication capability, emotional regulation and practical readiness for adulthood. Program delivery incorporates applied learning experiences focused on real-world skill development, community connection, leadership, decision-making and personal capacity building.

Within THREADS, Upturned Tasmania provides structured facilitation and tailored engagement support that assists young people to develop transferable skills, strengthen social and emotional capability and increase confidence in navigating education, employment, and everyday life pathways, while maintaining a strong focus on psychological safety, inclusion and individual support needs.

WALK A MILE

A storytelling and lived experience project where young people create short films, photography, writing and multimedia works exploring identity, resilience and lived experience.

The project develops:

- Narrative construction skills
- Media production capability
- Collaboration and communication
- Reflection and emotional expression

The project culminates in a public showcase involving schools, families, and community stakeholders.

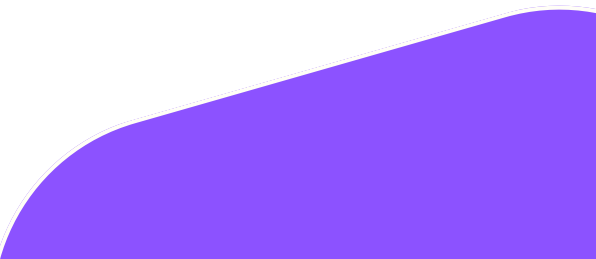
KICKBOXING AND CREATIVE MOVEMENT PROJECT

A structured wellbeing and creative expression project combining physical activity, emotional regulation and storytelling.

Students engage in:

- Kickboxing-based movement and discipline
- Choreography and performance development
- Creative interpretation of lived experience

The project is documented and presented through a community showcase.

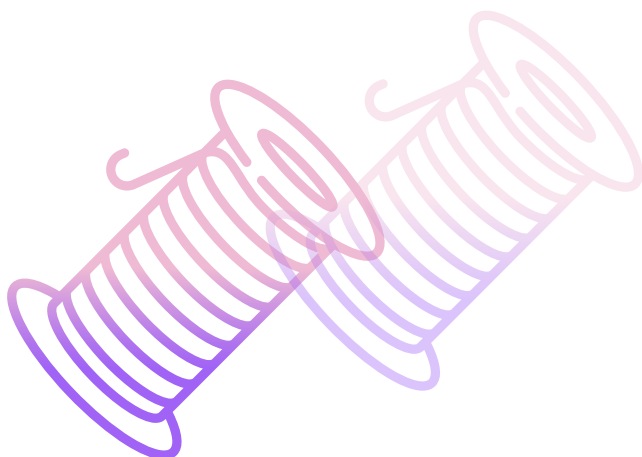


OPTIONAL COMMUNITY APPLICATION PATHWAY (MESS FEST)

Depending on cohort interest, readiness and school or partner approval, students may optionally contribute to broader THEIRS-led initiatives such as Mess Fest.

This involvement is:

- Optional and cohort-dependent
- Focused on applied learning and real-world participation
- Not a core program deliverable
- Designed to extend skill application where appropriate



CORE LEARNING DOMAINS

THREADS embeds a structured but flexible learning framework across all delivery. Emotional literacy and regulation are developed through consistent relational engagement, reflection practices and guided facilitation that supports students to recognise, understand and respond to emotional states. Identity, self-worth and resilience are explored through storytelling, lived experience reflection and creative expression, supporting young people to rebuild positive self-narrative and future orientation.

Communication and relational skills are developed through group participation, structured dialogue and collaborative learning environments that prioritise trust, expression and listening. Respectful relationships, consent and boundaries are embedded in developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed ways that support safety, autonomy and interpersonal understanding.

Teamwork, collaboration and leadership are developed through structured project-based learning requiring shared responsibility, decision-making and collective problem-solving. Creative expression and storytelling function as both engagement and processing tools, enabling communication through non-traditional learning pathways. Practical life and employability skills are embedded throughout, including resume writing, interview preparation, workplace expectations, financial literacy and independent living skills.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

THREADS operates through a coordinated cross-sector delivery framework that integrates education, youth services, community organisations and broader wellbeing and support systems to provide holistic and responsive engagement pathways for young people.

At the local level, THREADS is delivered in partnership with schools, youth services, youth centres, local government and community organisations. These partnerships form part of the core delivery infrastructure, enabling place-based implementation that is responsive to local needs, service contexts and existing community connections.

At the statewide level, THEIRS maintains established relationships across youth mental health services, family support services, community sector organisations and regional networks. These relationships support integrated referral pathways, coordinated service responses and continuity of care for participating young people.

At a broader systems level, THREADS aligns with contemporary national priorities relating to youth mental health, trauma-informed practice, education disengagement, early intervention and preventative service delivery. This alignment supports the program's relevance, adaptability and potential application beyond Tasmania.

The combination of localised delivery partnerships and broader systems alignment positions THREADS as both a place-based initiative and a scalable cross-sector model capable of supporting long-term outcomes for young people across diverse settings.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY MODEL

THREADS is delivered through weekly 90-minute structured sessions.

These sessions can be delivered across schools, youth services, youth centres and community-based venues, depending on cohort needs and accessibility.

Each session includes:

- Emotional check-in using non-verbal scaling tools
- Grounding and relational activities
- Guest speakers or lived experience storytelling
- Core learning focus (emotional literacy, identity, communication)
- Creative or applied learning activity
- Optional reflection and sharing
- Guided consolidation activity

Delivery is:

- Trauma-informed
- Strengths-based
- Relational and non-clinical
- Adaptable to setting and cohort
- Responsive to youth voice

Facilitators work alongside schools, youth services, and community partners to ensure wrap-around support and continuity of engagement.

WORKFORCE MODEL

THREADS is delivered through a structured and scalable workforce model designed to support sustainable program growth, workforce capability development and long-term continuity of delivery across diverse settings. Current program delivery is led by THEIRS in partnership with Upturned Tasmania, supported by facilitators, lived experience contributors and school- and community-based youth support staff. This collaborative delivery approach enables multidisciplinary engagement while maintaining strong relational and trauma-informed practice foundations.

The workforce framework has been intentionally developed to support future expansion through a distributed delivery model incorporating regional facilitators, co-facilitation partnerships and embedded school or community support roles. This approach strengthens local delivery capability while increasing accessibility across regional and rural communities. Facilitators are engaged based on demonstrated relational capability, alignment with trauma-informed practice principles and capacity to effectively engage young people within strengths-based, non-clinical environments. Workforce development prioritises consistency, psychological safety, youth participation and culturally responsive engagement practices.

As THREADS expands, workforce capacity will continue to be developed across regions and sectors to support scalable implementation, maintain program fidelity and reduce reliance on individual leadership or single-site delivery structures.



EVALUATION AND EVIDENCE FRAMEWORK

THREADS incorporates a comprehensive evaluation and evidence framework embedded from program commencement to support accountability, continuous improvement and long-term evidence development.

A dedicated researcher has been identified to lead the evaluation process upon confirmation of funding, ensuring that data collection, monitoring and evaluation activities are integrated into program implementation from the outset rather than applied retrospectively.

The evaluation methodology adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative outcome measures with qualitative lived experience insights to capture both measurable impacts and participant experiences. This approach supports a holistic understanding of program effectiveness across individual, relational and system-level domains.

Short-term evaluation measures focus on participant engagement, emotional literacy, self-confidence, help-seeking awareness and program participation. Medium-term evaluation examines indicators including school or service connection, relational engagement, communication capability and behavioural change. Long-term evaluation considers broader educational engagement, wellbeing outcomes, retention and reduced disengagement from education, community or support systems.

The framework also incorporates process evaluation measures assessing program fidelity, including adherence to trauma-informed practice principles, quality and consistency of facilitation and the effectiveness of youth participation and co-design mechanisms.

Evaluation findings will inform ongoing program refinement, strengthen evidence-informed practice and contribute to the broader evidence base relating to youth-led, trauma-informed early intervention models operating across education, community and cross-sector service environments.

SUSTAINABILITY AND EXPANSION PATHWAY

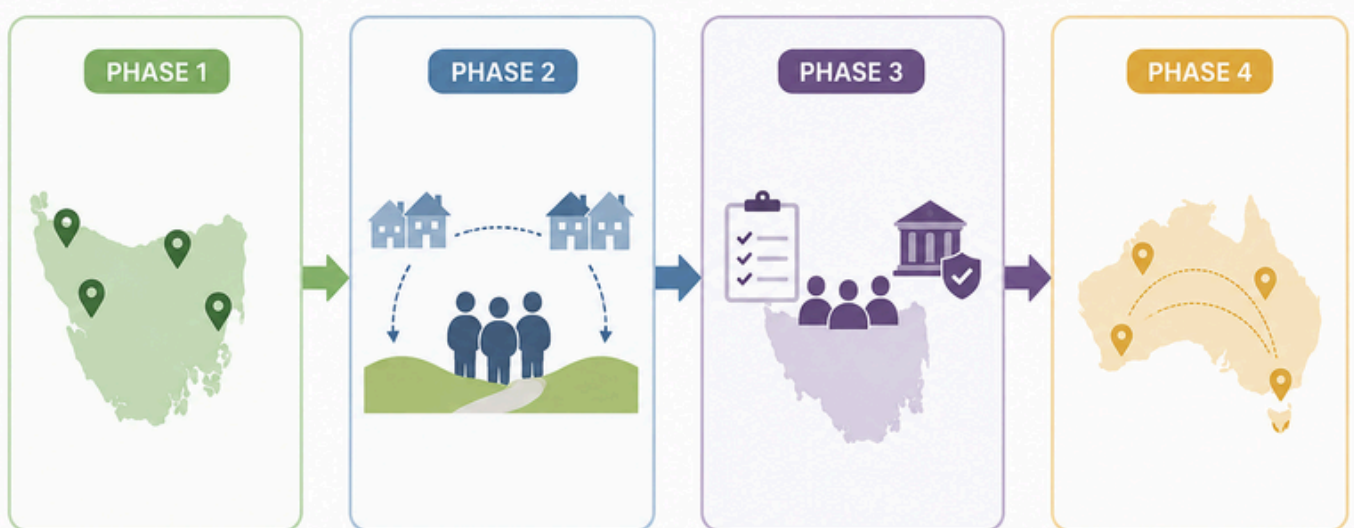
THREADS has been designed as a scalable early intervention model with the capacity for staged implementation across Tasmania and potential adaptation in broader national contexts. The expansion pathway is structured to support sustainable growth while maintaining program integrity, quality assurance and responsiveness to local community needs.

Phase 1 focuses on pilot delivery across four sites within North-West and Northern Tasmania, providing implementation across diverse regional contexts and enabling embedded evaluation processes to inform program refinement and operational development.

Phase 2 supports expansion into additional regional communities through increased workforce capacity, strengthened operational systems and the establishment of broader cross-sector delivery partnerships.

Phase 3 enables broader statewide implementation through the development of structured delivery tools, workforce training and development processes, formalised program frameworks and strengthened governance and quality assurance mechanisms.

Phase 4 provides a pathway for national adaptation and broader cross-jurisdictional application, supported by program fidelity frameworks, transferable delivery models and alignment with contemporary priorities in youth wellbeing, trauma-informed practice and early intervention service delivery.



LONG TERM VISION

THREADS has been designed as a long-term preventative investment aimed at strengthening youth engagement, educational participation and early intervention capacity across Tasmania. The program seeks to address disengagement through sustained, relationship-based support delivered within community, education and youth service settings.

The program is supported by demonstrated sector interest and emerging system readiness, including strong demand from schools and community partners, evidenced through letters of support and an existing pipeline of interested delivery sites. This demand reflects identified service gaps relating to trauma-informed engagement and preventative support for young people experiencing complex barriers to participation.

Existing funding secured for accreditation pathways supports the development of formal recognition and curriculum alignment processes, strengthening program credibility, consistency and long-term integration within education and community service systems.

Over time, THREADS will transition from an initial pilot-led delivery model to a distributed workforce structure with expanded regional capacity, supporting scalable implementation while reducing reliance on founding leadership and strengthening long-term sector capability.

The sustainability model incorporates diversified funding pathways, including government investment, strategic partnerships, philanthropic support and fee-for-service delivery where appropriate. This approach is intended to support long-term operational sustainability while maintaining accessibility for high-need and priority cohorts.

The long-term vision for THREADS is to operate as a cross-sector, evidence-informed, youth-led engagement model embedded across education, youth service, and community systems. Through this approach, the program aims to strengthen early intervention infrastructure, improve engagement outcomes for young people and reduce reliance on crisis-driven responses across the broader service system.



TERM ONE EXAMPLE

Term 1	Title	Description
Lesson 1	Introduction and what is positive psychology & wellbeing	Warm introduction, class rules, what to expect/gain, what it is.
Lesson 2	Team building and life skills	Working with Alyssia from Up-Turned.
Lesson 3	Service providers	Guest service provider explains their role and services. Students design a short session for one of their programs.
Lesson 4	What makes a good event	Brainstorming activity on event components; includes public speaking and stage presence game.
Lesson 5	Skill building pt.1	Students learn to operate a camera, run sessions, and create a musical piece.
Lesson 6	What is lived experience & speaker	Guest shares their story; students explore lived experience through an activity.
Lesson 7	Break	Typically a scheduled week break within the term.
Lesson 8	How to tell your story pt.1	Guest author teaches storytelling; students begin writing their own story and complete it as homework.
Lesson 9	Skill building pt.2	Continuation of previous skill-building session.
Lesson 10	Service providers (combined with an activity)	Activities such as Amazing Race or Bingo based on available local services.
Lesson 11	Event production and design	Apply learning to event planning; identify strengths, roles, and artists.
Lesson 12	Reflection	Reflect, bond, and finalise work; optional mid-break session planning.

BREAKDOWN OF SESSION

Time	Activity	Details / Notes
0–10 mins	Welcome, Check-In & Icebreaker	Create a warm, safe space. Acknowledge Country and set a judgement-free, pressure-free tone. Use a number scale check-in (1 = feeling flat, 10 = feeling awesome) using fingers, sticky notes, or privately. Icebreaker: “If you could have dinner with any 3 people (real, fictional, alive or not), who would they be?” Invite sharing.
10–15 mins	Session Overview	Explain the session focus: storytelling as a powerful tool through writing, speaking, and connection. Introduce that a guest will share their story and students will reflect on their own experiences.
15–20 mins	Introduce the Guest Author	Share the guest’s name, achievements, and purpose for being there. Highlight how they’ve used lived experience in creative expression.
20–35 mins	Guest Author Story & Journey	Guest shares age-appropriate parts of their journey, writing beginnings, challenges, and growth. May read a short excerpt focused on resilience, identity, or personal growth.
35–45 mins	What Makes a Good Story? (Author-led)	Key storytelling elements: keeping it real, clear structure (beginning, middle, end), conflict/challenges, importance of voice, and impact on the audience.
45–60 mins	Guided Story Reflection (Writing Activity)	Students use worksheets or journals. Prompts include: a moment that changed them, support received, a challenge overcome, or a proud/brave moment. Emphasise writing only what feels safe.
60–70 mins	Voluntary Share-Back	Invite students to share their writing. Celebrate participation. If no one shares, respectfully move on.
70–80 mins	Q&A with the Author	Open Q&A. Prompt questions if needed (e.g., handling writer’s block, deciding what to share, staying motivated).
80–90 mins	Reflection & Homework Task	Reflection circle: one takeaway from the session. Homework: create a piece (story, poem, journal, artwork) reflecting part of their story. Encourage sharing next term or contributing to a showcase/event.

2 YEAR BUDGET



Budget Category	Year 1 (Pilot / Trial)	Year 2 (Scale-Up)
STAFFING		
Co-Director (Full-Time) – SCHADS Level 8 Equivalent, 1.0 FTE	\$118,000	\$121,540
Co-Director (Full-Time) – SCHADS Level 8 Equivalent, 1.0 FTE	\$118,000	\$121,540
Superannuation (12%)	\$28,320	\$29,170
Facilitators (2) – SCHADS Level 4–5 Equivalent Roster Model	\$70,000	\$150,000
Administration & Program Support Officer – SCHADS Level 4, 0.8–1.0 FTE Equivalent	\$55,000	\$60,000
Founder & Executive Oversight – SCHADS Level 8 Equivalent, 0.2 FTE (1 day/week)	\$40,000	\$41,200
Total Staffing	\$429,320	\$523,450

2 YEAR BUDGET - CONTINUED

Budget Category	Year 1	Year 2
Administration Systems	\$25,000	\$25,000
Insurance	\$22,000	\$23,000
Statewide Delivery Expansion	\$45,000	\$85,000
Program Resources	\$25,000	\$30,000
Training and Accreditation Development	\$15,000	\$18,000
Conference and Sector Engagement	\$8,000	\$12,000
Technology and Digital Infrastructure	\$20,000	\$30,000
Evaluation and Research	\$55,000	\$75,000
Total Operations	\$215,000	\$298,000

CONTINGENCY (5%)

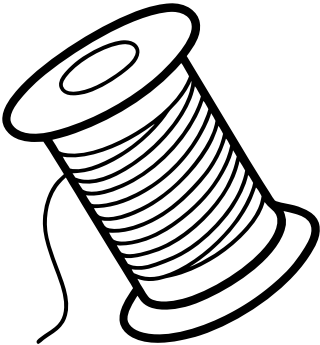
Year 1 \$32,000
Year 2 \$41,500

TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET

Year 1 \$676,320
Year 2 \$862,950

2 YEAR TOTAL PROGRAM INVESTMENT

\$1,530,270



BUDGET SUMMARY STATEMENT

This budget reflects a staged and realistic implementation model for THREADS, designed to ensure strong program integrity during a pilot phase while enabling structured statewide scale-up over the two-year funding period.

Year 1 represents a controlled trial phase, delivered across 5–7 schools and youth centres, primarily led by the two Co-Directors with limited facilitator support. This phase prioritises relationship-building, program refinement, accreditation alignment, and the establishment of a robust evaluation framework. As a result, Year 1 carries a higher per-participant investment, reflecting foundational setup costs and the intentional focus on quality, safety, and evidence development over scale.

Year 2 transitions into an expanded delivery model, with a structured facilitator roster system progressively activated to support increased program demand. This enables THREADS to scale delivery capacity across multiple regions, with the ability to deliver up to two sessions per day on a rotational cycle across participating sites. As workforce capacity increases, cost efficiency improves significantly, reflected in the reduced per-student delivery cost in Year 2.

Importantly, the model is designed with flexibility. If the Year 1 pilot demonstrates strong engagement, positive outcomes, and operational readiness, capacity expansion will begin earlier than initially planned. This may include increasing the number of participating schools and youth centres, extending cohort numbers, and accelerating facilitator onboarding to meet demonstrated demand. This ensures THREADS can respond dynamically to community need rather than being constrained by a fixed rollout schedule.

The budget includes appropriate provision for staffing, administration, insurance, statewide delivery expansion, resources, technology infrastructure, evaluation, and contingency. Evaluation is embedded from commencement and supported by an independent researcher to ensure rigorous outcome measurement, continuous improvement, and long-term evidence generation.

Overall, THREADS represents a scalable, preventative youth engagement initiative with strong potential to improve re-engagement, wellbeing, and connection outcomes across schools and youth centres, while building a sustainable statewide delivery model over time.

THANK YOU!

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