

# STEP OUT

OPERATION FLINDERS





## OPERATION FLINDERS' MISSION

Creating opportunities for young people facing challenges through adventure therapy programs that provide demanding experiences, personal development and pathways to wellbeing and life success.

Through our programs, Operation Flinders' aims to improve young peoples' sense of resilience, sense of purpose and connection with others.

## CORE PROGRAM

The core program at Operation Flinders involves a trek over eight days in the northern Flinders Ranges where some teams can walk up to 100km. This is a challenging week, both physically and mentally, and places young people out of their comfort zones. Participants take part in activities such as abseiling, navigation, bush cooking, bushcraft and many more. Young people typically access the core program by having their school or agency engaged and refer a team of 10. However, in many circumstances, young people do not attend schools, may not be engaged in an agency or may have several more challenges. So that's where the Step Out program can assist.

## STEP OUT

Step Out allows individuals to access Operation Flinders' core program. The program is designed for a wide array of young people ranging from those presenting challenging behaviours from complex backgrounds to those who may need some extra guidance and support.

As the young people in a Step Out team do not know each other, the program is extended from eight days to eight weeks. The team engages in outdoor adventure activities during the first weeks of program, building a team and working towards the eight-day experience in the northern Flinders Ranges.

Throughout the program, participants are supported by experienced youth workers and adventure therapists, who facilitate a positive and safe space within the Step Out teams.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

The program is designed for young people aged 13-18 who are both physically prepared to undertake a challenging eight-day hike expedition and who are voluntarily committed to participation in the full length of the program.

Operation Flinders' programs are made for young people who face difficult challenges in life. Some examples may include:

- Social and / or economic disadvantage
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn and isolated from life
- Family dysfunction
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Childhood trauma
- Association with anti-social peers
- Disengaged from school, training, or employment
- Anti-social behaviour (including community offending)

However, the programs may not be suitable for those who are experiencing one or more of the following:

- Active psychosis or severe mental health diagnoses requiring frequent hospitalisations and medication
- Those who require continuous supervision or more than one carer at all times
- Those seeking individual or 1-1 based programs\*
- Are substance dependent and require a medically supervised 'detox'
- Are suicidal or actively self-harming
- Are being forced to attend under Court or Supervision Orders
- Require temporary housing / accommodation options
- Do not have a fixed address and the support of a carer / parent / guardian
- Do not live within the Greater Adelaide Region\*\*

If you believe one or more of these factors will affect your participation in the program, please reach out as we may still be able to help.

*\*If the participant is involved with the Department of Child Protection, please contact Operation Flinders about other mentoring opportunities.*

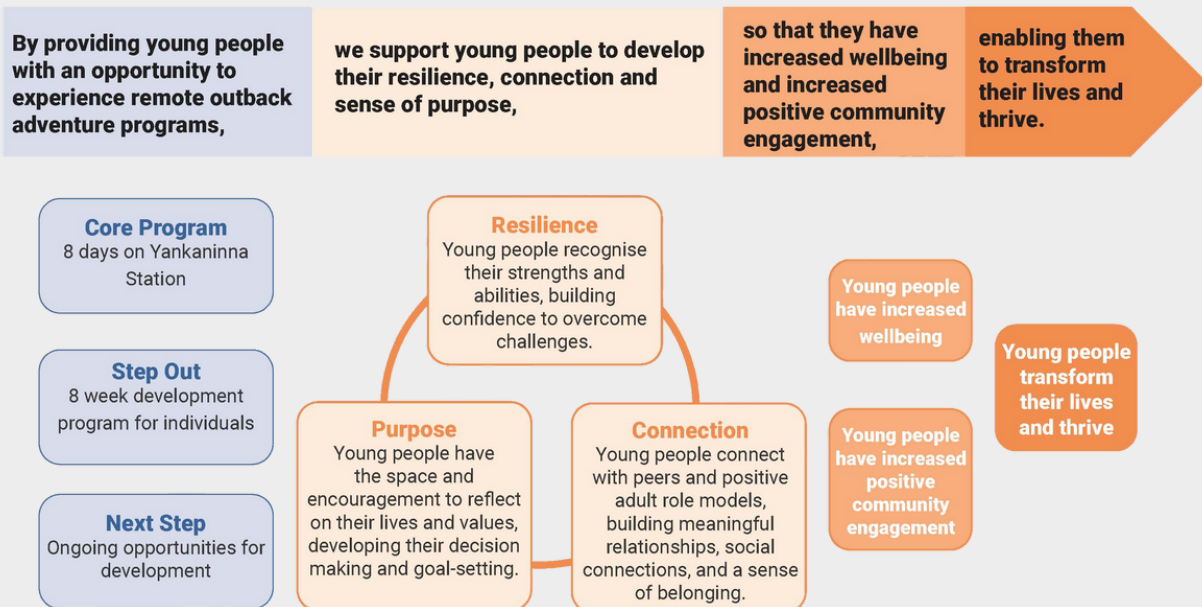
*\*\*Living outside the Greater Adelaide Region will not preclude a young person from Operation Flinders' programs, However the Step Out Program is predominantly delivered in the Greater Adelaide Region, and thus the participant needs to be supported in travel to and from the activity locations.*

# OPERATION FLINDERS' THEORY OF CHANGE



## The problem we aim to address

Many young people are experiencing disconnection – from themselves, their communities and the natural world. Because of this, young people facing challenges in their lives may lack the confidence and support they need to manage their situation.



## The context we work in

- Many people are disconnected from the natural world. This is associated with negative impacts on physical, mental and social well-being.
- Schools can be under-resourced and ill-equipped to provide alternative pathways to young people who struggle in an academic context.
- Service providers and organisations don't always engage young people in ways that resonate with them.
- The community has negative perceptions of disengaged young people which can perpetuate stigma.
- Many young people have experiences of trauma which can impact their self-worth, relationships, physical and mental health and executive functioning.
- Some disengaged young people are at risk of inter-generational cycles of poor education, unemployment, substance misuse and/or antisocial behaviour.
- Disengaged young people may behave in ways that negatively impact both their own well-being and the community.



# PROGRAM OUTCOMES



The outcomes from participating in the Step Out Program will differ from person to person. Some of the goals and outcomes the program will address are as follows:

- Improved self esteem
- Improved emotional regulation
- Improved stress management skills
- Improved connection with community and peers
- Discover new strengths
- Develop a new sense of gratitude
- Feel more confident to make positive, meaningful change in life
- More confident to overcome challenges
- Improved relationships and communication
- Improved social skills

Our main focus in programs is developing young peoples' sense of resilience, sense of purpose, and connection in their communities. There are many opportunities within Operation Flinders' programs to develop these things, and long-term engagement will improve outcomes.

Young people will also have opportunity to develop the following:

- Leadership skills
- Bush craft skills
- Problem solving skills
- Outdoor skills such as navigation, bush craft and first aid

Tangible outcomes include:

- Start building outdoor gear collection (take home a sleeping bag, t-shirt, hat, hiking socks, sock protectors and head torch)
- 20 Stage-1 SACE Credits (full year-11 subject)
- Free Duke of Ed. Enrolment
- Access to Next Step Program and the opportunities within

- o Peer Group Mentor Program
- o Barista Training Courses
- o First Aid Training Courses
- o Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation



# 2023 STATISTICS

**28** Step Out participants completed **388** activity days

**21** Step Out participants have nominated to be part of the Next Step Program

**11** Step Out participants have begun their Duke of Ed Award with Operation Flinders

## RESULTS FROM OUR YOUNG PEOPLE



All participants said they have a greater appreciation for the environment now

All participants said they built strong connections with their peers and adult leaders

All participants said they developed a new sense of gratitude

All participants said they discovered new strengths within themselves

All participants said they gained a new perspective of themselves and what is important in their life



# TESTIMONIALS

Below are some testimonials from participant parents and caregivers who completed the program in 2023:

*"It has been life changing. The fights at home have stopped. He has finally found his place and his eyes light up when he hears about the Next Step Program." (participant parent, 2023)*

*"I want to continue with Operation Flinders to help others out, and I want to improve myself some more." (participant in 2023)*

*"Harry\* has come home a different child. He is smiling and energetic." (participant grandparent in 2023) \*name changed for privacy*

*"My confidence has grown so much from doing the program. I can't wait to come back and support other kids to do the walk." (participant in 2023)*



# FEE STRUCTURE

Operation Flinders Foundation is a not-for-profit charity, who works with vulnerable young people. Our programs are largely funded through donations and grants.

When school or community teams access our programs, they fundraise money to contribute towards their teams' full fee and sponsors assist to provide funding.

Step Out teams are made up of young people who have been referred separately to the program, and as such the fee obligation sits with the young person's caregivers and financial supporters.

Below we have collated the cost to the organisation for running the eight-week Step Out Program, for 10 participants:

<b>INCLUSIONS (EX. EXERCISE WHICH IS ADDED BELOW)</b>
Food and consumables
Transport, vehicle costs and alternative transport allowance
Gear and equipment use and maintenance
Paid activities and event spaces
Staff and volunteers over one program
<p><b>Exercise (team of 10 young people, 4-5 adult leadership team)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and water 8 full days, 7 nights</li> <li>• Remote Medical and Emergency support</li> <li>• Radio and communication systems</li> <li>• Professional adventure therapists and outdoor activity leaders</li> <li>• Equipment and gear supply and maintenance</li> <li>• Vehicle support</li> <li>• Venue cost and insurance</li> <li>• Land lease and land use agreement</li> </ul>
<p>Also Included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duke of Edinburgh Award Enrolment (\$500ea)</li> <li>• Violence Prevention Workshop</li> <li>• Upon successful completion of Exercise, free enrolment in Next Step Program with ongoing camps and activities up until the end of the year the young person turns 19</li> <li>• Take home gear</li> <li>• Hiking boots</li> <li>• T-shirt and hat</li> <li>• Sleeping Bag</li> <li>• Hiking socks</li> <li>• Sock protectors</li> <li>• Head torch</li> </ul>
<b>STEP OUT SUBSIDISED FEE INCLUDING \$750 NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OF PARTICIPANT \$7,500</b>



## SCHOLARSHIPS

All participants can apply for a scholarship position in Step Out. Participants who wish to apply will complete the scholarship application form, which will then be deidentified and presented to a scholarship committee for approval. The scholarship committee comprises members of Operation Flinders' Clinical Advisory Committee and members of our board. All scholarship applications are confidential and deidentified. Scholarships are funded through Operation Flinders' fundraising and external sponsorships. Some participants may have the opportunity to meet those who are funding their scholarship in the program.

Applicants will be asked to provide evidence for financial need, for example a School Card or Centrelink statement. There is also opportunity to provide further evidence for the need for scholarship.

Each Step Out program has a limited amount of funds available to support scholarship placements, and scholarships are awarded throughout a team based on need and availability.

When you have submitted your scholarship application, you will receive an outcome shortly after. We will indicate the scholarship amount awarded and discuss an appropriate payment plan.

We ask a non-refundable deposit of \$750 from all participants, which can be paid in instalments with a payment plan.

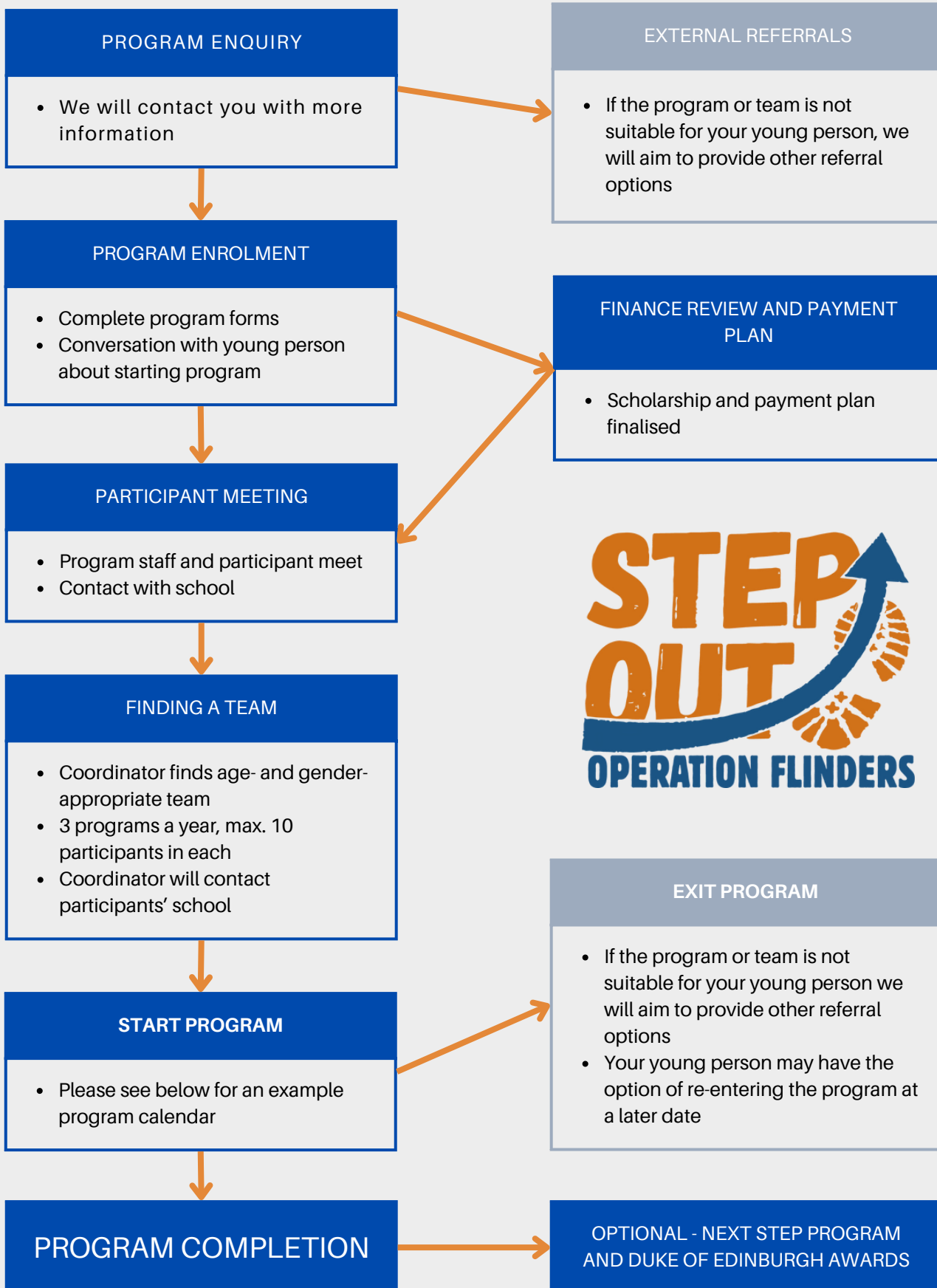
## OTHER FUNDING PATHWAYS

If a young person is financially supported by the Department of Child Protection, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, or another external funding stream, we will support the referrer to access these funding pathways. Participants should indicate in the scholarship application process which financial supports are available.

If you are concerned about the fees and scholarships, please persist with your application until all options are exhausted, before deciding to disengage with the service.



# ENQUIRY TO COMPLETION PROCESS



# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

During the Step Out Program, participants will be engaged in team adventure sessions leading up to the eight-day hike in the Flinders Ranges. The lead-up weeks include an orientation session, and different weekly activities that might include bushwalking, mountain bike riding, kayaking, and team building activities.

We are currently running three Step Out programs each year, between the months April - November. We do not run programs over summer as it is too hot to walk in the Flinders Ranges. The program is run throughout school terms and is mostly held on weekdays; however, some weekends are required as well.

The following is an example calendar for a full Step Out Program schedule. The dates for the program will differ depending on when in the year the program starts. This is an example of the time commitment. Each week participants are asked to be dropped at Operation Flinders Headquarters at 12 Angus Ave, Edwardstown and picked up from the same location (9:30am - 3:30pm most weeks).

April						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		W1	W1	W1		
		Orientation Activities				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
				W2		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
				W3		
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
				W4		
				Overnight Activity		

May						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
				W5		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
				Ex1		
				8-day Exercise		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		Ex1				
		8-day Exercise				
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
				Grad		

July						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
					Catch Up	

Participants will need to attend one of these sessions

This is the 8-day hike in the Flinders Ranges.

Friends and family are invited to a graduation ceremony

“

*I'm trying really hard and I'm going to keep trying. The support from Operation Flinders means a lot, thank you for not giving up on me*

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Access our [enquiry form](#) to express an interest or contact our Step Out Program Coordinator Lauren Butler - [lbutler@operationflinders.org](mailto:lbutler@operationflinders.org) | 0459 358 911

Considerations for suitability will be dependent on individual risk factors and participant willingness.

