

**CELEBRATING
15 YEARS
IN 2020**



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



THE AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY NETWORK IS THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST GROUP OF BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS WORKING TOGETHER TO EMPOWER YOUNG AUSTRALIANS TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL IN THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK.

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ABCN Annual Report
1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020

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ABOUT ABCN

GROW CONNECT INSPIRE

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a purpose-led, not-for-profit organisation that brings businesses and schools together to address educational disadvantage.

Our vision is for all young Australians to reach their potential in the future world of work, regardless of socio-economic background.

We connect volunteers from our member companies with students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds to provide fun, workplace-based or online mentoring programs that develop students' confidence, skills and aspirations vital for thriving in the workplace of the future.

Established in 2005, ABCN is a network of 43 company partners from corporate Australia and more than 200 partner schools that, together, deliver mentoring programs to students. More than 200,000 students and 50,000 corporate volunteers have participated in our mentoring and other initiatives since inception. Of these, 50,000 students were mentored directly by almost 40,000 volunteer mentors.

The ABCN Foundation was established in 2013 to award mentoring and financial scholarships to high-potential students whose disadvantage impacts their ability to complete school and pursue tertiary pathways. Almost 200 students have benefited from this initiative since inception.

The schools and students we work with

The schools we work with are located in low SES communities. They typically sit significantly below the national Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) average of 1000 and have high levels of educational disadvantage.

Students from these schools experience a range of difficulties. Many have parents who have not completed their own schooling and/or gained tertiary qualifications and have little or no access to professional role models. They may also have overcome language and cultural barriers or suffered trauma and loss as newly arrived immigrants or refugees. They may have significant carer responsibilities and/or need to contribute to family finances due to limited household income. They may be experiencing significant poverty, overcrowding in the home, limited access to educational resources or even homelessness in the most extreme cases.

The challenge

Research consistently shows the impact of social background as a key predictor of educational and future success. In Australia, the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged schools is unusually wide, existing across all domains and skills both at school and into adulthood.¹

By the age of 15, students from low SES areas in Australia are on average three years behind their counterparts from more advantaged areas in mathematics and science.² Adding to this is the economic and social fallout of COVID-19, which has disproportionately impacted disadvantaged communities. Research indicates that it

will take women, minorities, and low-income workers up to two years longer than their peers to recover from the effects of the crisis.³

32% do not complete school

Almost one third of students from the lowest SES backgrounds do not complete Year 12 or its equivalent by age 19, compared with less than 10% from the highest SES backgrounds.¹

Less likely to be employed

Only 51% of 24-year-olds from the lowest SES backgrounds are fully engaged in employment, education or training, compared with 82% of their most advantaged counterparts.¹

‘Few people realise how little control these kids have on how their life pans out. It is cyclical. ABCN helps us show these students that there is another way.’

Teacher, Western Australia, 2020

¹ Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out (Lamb et al. 2020)

² Program for International School Assessment (2016, 2019)

³ McKinsey & Company, in partnership with Oxford Economics (2020)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

We will all remember 2020. Everyone will have their own story of change, learning and perhaps loss.

At ABCN we are very proud of our network – how we came together to support students and each other during the most uncertain of years, how we fundamentally transformed our programs to keep mentors and students connected during periods of social isolation, and how – by the end of 2020 – we were better placed than ever to support students in the future. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our member companies and businesses, mentors, schools and educators throughout this time.

Without that support, we would not be able to pursue our purpose of levelling the playing field by empowering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to become more than what they thought was possible. This mission has become even more critical since the economic and social fallout of COVID-19 disproportionately impacted low SES communities, placing young people from poorer families, those living in regional areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at even more risk of being left behind.

Early in 2020, when it became apparent that education was going to be completely disrupted, we asked our schools how we could help. The immediate concern of our principals was the digital divide; in some of our partner schools up to 50% of the students didn't have adequate data or devices to engage in remote learning. We had no idea at the start how powerfully our network would swing into action to combat this: our member companies donated almost 1,700 devices and, through Optus, more than 1,000 data plans, to support our highest-need students.

At the same time, we knew that ABCN's core programs had to radically transform. It was clear that fostering connections between mentors and students was more important than ever, but these exchanges would have to go digital. We were better prepared than most, having piloted a number of digital mentoring programs in 2019. However, going from four digital programs in 2019 to almost 180 in 2020 was more than we could have ever imagined. It was often a difficult transformation but, when it all worked, it was nothing short of exhilarating. Our mentors, teachers and students eagerly threw themselves in, waited patiently through inevitable tech hitches, and connected – figuratively and literally.

As we reflect on 2020, our key take away is that it has never been more important to do the work we do. With the pace of technological change and the decline of low-skilled jobs, never has it been more crucial to support disadvantaged students to fulfil their potential by helping them prepare for the future. Never has it been more important for mentors to develop their own mentoring skills, to share stories, create meaning and build understanding across age and circumstance.

And that is why as we look to 2021, we are excited that our digital transformation means we can support even more young people. We continue to be ambitious in the impact we want to create. Our program development means that we can now offer a wide range of support to regional, rural and remote students, and we are widening our program offering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These are key priorities for ABCN for 2021, as well as deepening program strength in financial capability and continuing to build our STEM offering.



Allegra Spender,
Chief Executive Officer



Tony Macvean,
Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

We know the enormous potential of the young people we work with in our partner schools. Research has demonstrated that business engagement with education can make a significant difference to young people, particularly those from low SES backgrounds.¹ Australian educators want to increase their engagement with business, to help support young people to make better choices, and effectively transition from school to the world of work.²

We are grateful to all our loyal and generous partners who stood with us during a very difficult 2020. We are also enormously grateful to the ABCN team. Everyone had their personal challenges last year, and continued to be incredibly dedicated and resilient. We all achieved more than we thought possible.



Allegra Spender, CEO



Tony Macvean, Chair

‘It’s an inspiring experience that makes you reflect on your journey and how you can translate that to the students.’

Victorian *Focus@Home* mentor

‘Absolutely amazing! Definitely what I have needed for so long, especially now during these hard times with the COVID-19 pandemic. I praise all efforts put in by every individual who has made this program possible. I cannot thank you all enough.❤️’

Victorian *Focus@Home* student



¹ It's who you meet: why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults (Mann 2012)

² What do schools want from engagement with business? (Rothman 2019)

ABCN IMPACT 2020

OUR REACH



2,715

STUDENTS MENTORED*



1,623

MENTORS

2,770

STUDENTS SUPPORTED

through Donate Your Data and Laptops4Learning

A total of

2,040

VOLUNTEERS
involved in
all initiatives

A total of

14,402

STUDENTS
involved in
all initiatives

*Mentoring figures were significantly impacted during school closures, which led to the cancellation of almost all face-to-face programs

OUR IMPACT: STUDENTS

90%

OF GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS STUDENTS
completed Year 12

(compared with an 82% national average and 68% for disadvantaged students¹)

62%

OF GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS STUDENTS
have received university offers

(compared with 60% national average and 46% for disadvantaged students²)

100%

OF SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS
graduating from Accelerate are employed or studying

(compared with 51% of 24-year-olds from the most disadvantaged backgrounds³)

87%

OF FOCUS STUDENTS

say they have confidence in their leadership potential (compared with 33% beforehand)

¹ Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out (Lamb et al. 2020)

² The demand driven university system: a mixed report card (Productivity Commission 2019)

³ Educational opportunity in Australia 2020

OUR IMPACT: MENTORS



92%

said their mentoring/coaching skills improved after the program

93%

GREW THEIR UNDERSTANDING

of other generations and cultures



98%

FELT INSPIRED

to help others more often as a result of the program



100%

FELT PROUD
that their company is part of ABCN

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

The arrival of COVID-19 immediately exposed Australia's educational digital divide. Our network's emergency response focused on helping to bridge it by providing high-needs students with donated data and laptops, while we worked to reimagine our face-to-face programs as digital versions.



APRIL:

Donate Your Data initiative launched nationwide. More than a thousand students are given free internet access via donated Optus SIM cards.

Laptops4Learning initiative launched nationwide. 1,692 devices are donated to 46 ABCN schools by 14 member companies.



JUNE:

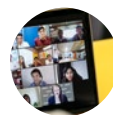
First digital program pilot of 2020 with GOALS. This is followed by digital pilots of *Focus*, *Future Thinkers*, *Aspirations* and a new program, *Empower*.



JULY:

ABCN Connects launched. More than 100 inspirational mentor video stories are shared with thousands of students unable to meet with mentors face-to-face.

First **My Career Rules** program for 2020 launched. This online panel Q&A session connects students with mentors to explore career pathways.

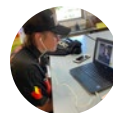


SEPTEMBER:

Regional programs launched in Yeppoon, Queensland, followed by Benalla, Victoria and Wee Waa, NSW.

Inaugural **Focus@Home** program launched for female Victorian students forced into remote learning during lockdown.

A **record number of students** — 35 — win a three-year financial and mentoring scholarship from the ABCN Foundation, following a doubling of applications.



NOVEMBER:

Launched inaugural programs in regional NSW to support **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students** in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education.



DECEMBER:

Almost **180 digital programs completed** in schools across five states. Thanks to our network's support, we are poised to scale our digital programs to reach more students than ever.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

DONATE YOUR DATA

‘The generosity from Optus is overwhelming. We needed so much help in our time of need. The community spirit behind this gift was so special.’

Queensland student



85%

**OF STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED
AN OPTUS SIM CARD**

said they feel better able to
keep up with their school work
because of the phone plan

LAPTOPS4LEARNING

‘Thank you for the laptop – it is greatly appreciated 😊. This gift is going to help me continue with my education and learning for years to come.’

Victorian student



90%

**OF STUDENTS WHO
RECEIVED LAPTOPS**

said they feel better able to keep up
with their school work because of
the donated device

ABCN CONNECTS

‘We are using your clips as a way of reinvigorating the students, who felt very connected to the presenters having heard such heartfelt narratives about their own journeys.’

Head Teacher Wellbeing, Colo High School NSW



More than

100

**MENTOR VIDEO
STORIES**

provided to schools

15 YEARS OF ABCN: 2005.....2020

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS of business empowering young Australians to reach their potential in the future world of work

FOUNDED WITH A VISION to inspire, challenge and engage business to have a greater positive impact in the community

OUR MISSION is to connect mentors with students to help them achieve more than they thought was possible

FROM THEN TO NOW:



EXPANDED
from NSW to all states and territories



INTRODUCED 10
additional core programs



2013
ABCN Foundation established to award scholarships to exceptional students



2019
Launched digital mentoring programs

‘For some kids, all it takes is that one conversation and it just changes their whole entire lives.’

Ali Mehanna, former ABCN student

2005 2020

we started in Sydney with:

12
member companies

2
partner schools

38
students mentored

56
corporate volunteers

And a handful of pilot programs
GOALS (Year 9)
Partners in Learning (CEOs/
Principals)
Spark (Years 1-2)

now national with:

43
member companies

203
partner schools

Since inception:

50,357
students mentored

39,310
corporate volunteers

200,000+
students reached through
all initiatives

430,000+
volunteer hours

OUR LONG-TERM IMPACT

STORIES OF THE POWERFUL AND LONG-LASTING CHANGE OUR WORK CREATES.



recalls Andrew. 'FAIL for him stood for First Attempt In Learning. This worked wonders for me. I found this advice to be quite amazing.'

Andrew formed a close bond with his mentor, Richard Castellari. 'It was through this connection that I based my decision to study business at university,' Andrew says. Now employed at Western Sydney University as a program officer, he has gone on to mentor many students himself since completing his GOALS program in 2008.

'Having a mentor is valuable beyond measure and it brings me great joy to see ABCN supported by so many industry champions,' he says.

Andrew Phong, GOALS alumnus

The reassurance and advice a young Andrew Phong received from his mentor gave him 'insane levels of empowerment and motivation,' the 27-year-old says now. 'Back in Year 9, I was timid and lacking in self-confidence,' recalls the former Cabramatta High School student. 'Having come from a single-parent family, the GOALS program ultimately empowered me to uncover my professional interests and passions.

'A piece of advice that my mentor and the program provided me with, which has resonated with me up until this day, is to never be afraid to fail,'

94%
OF FORMER
GOALS STUDENTS
are working or studying
10 years on



teachers, succeeding in academics wasn't celebrated by other students. Aspirations to study beyond school – or even finish school – were low.

'Most of my Indigenous peers and cousins left school before Year 12. It would have been acceptable, and an easy option, for me to do the same. GOALS confirmed my dream to be more. It showed me that being a professional woman was something normal.'

Lauren, a Gamilaraay woman, is now an English teacher at Sefton High School. Happily married and currently on maternity leave, she says she's grateful that her commitment to her own education will benefit her young daughter. She still remembers her mentor, Margaret Fearn, who worked at Network 10, one of ABCN's founding member companies. 'She took time out of her busy schedule to invest in a young stranger and she normalised something for me that at the time was a dream,' Lauren says. 'I'll always be thankful for that.'

Lauren Castino, GOALS alumna

From an early age, Lauren Castino knew the decisions she made at school would matter more than most. Her mum didn't complete school and no one in her immediate family had attended university. 'I was an Indigenous student, growing up in a low SES area. I knew education would be my way out of struggle,' she says.

Participation in a GOALS program 15 years ago made a difference.

'The school I went to was very disadvantaged,' Lauren says of Lurnea High School in NSW, from which she graduated in 2008. 'Despite encouragement from my parents and

50,357
ALUMNI

of all ABCN programs
since 2005

OUR LONG-TERM IMPACT



Kingswood High School, *Future Thinkers*

When Kingswood High School students flexed their design thinking skills in a *Future Thinkers* program in 2019, they had no idea their school improvement suggestions would eventually become reality. With the help of their American Express Australia mentors, the students in Years 9-10 brainstormed additional seating, rubbish bins, grassed areas and a more inviting library. By the end of 2020, Kingswood had implemented several of the students' suggestions, with more to come.

Simon Szymkow, Kingswood's Deputy Principal, said the initiative was empowering for students and eye-opening for the school. 'We came back from the program and thought: our top students are saying they would like to see these changes. Traditionally we lose

our high performers to other schools, so we have to fight to cater to students at that top end.'

Using the students' ideas, the high school was transformed with cleaner outdoor spaces and more seating. The library was completely refurbished, with study booths and modular furniture to foster student collaboration.

'We spent over \$100,000 on the library alone, all because of what the students had said at *Future Thinkers*. That makes the students feel valued ... The programs have a tremendous impact on the kids, and there is a greater impact on the school, that ripple effect.'

94%
**OF ABCN FUTURE
THINKERS STUDENTS**
said they were able to develop
creative solutions to problems



Kate Temby & Kerrie Dowsley, *Partners in Learning*

Finance executive Kate Temby (left) and Principal Kerrie Dowsley (right) have been in ABCN's co-mentoring *Partners in Learning* program for almost 10 years. They met when Kate was Managing Director at Goldman Sachs, a founding member of ABCN, and Kerrie was leading ABCN partner school St Albans Secondary College. In 2020, COVID-19 disrupted their regular breakfast catch-ups, but not their strong bond.

'My first impression of Kerrie was that she had such a huge role,' says Kate. 'I was to mentor her however there was so much to admire about her. Our relationship has been built on many years of listening and openly sharing our personal and professional experiences. Kerrie has given me insight into the breadth of my own skills, validating the way I approach people management.

My *Partners in Learning* program with Kerrie has been a career highlight.'

Partners in Learning, launched the same year ABCN was established, is a peer co-learning program linking a principal with a C-suite executive to explore leadership challenges.

'Kate was relatable,' Kerrie says of their first meeting. 'She was instantly invested in such a genuine way, and this has been unwavering since that first meeting, even across significant changes for her professionally. She's given me a different lens through which to look at our work. Kate showed us how important stakeholder management is to the success of our work and to bringing about sustained improvement and change.'

7
**PARTNERS IN
LEARNING**
programs conducted
in 2020

OUR LONG-TERM IMPACT

Frank O'Connor, mentor

'ABCN, you have changed my life in so many ways,' says Optus mentor Frank O'Connor, who has participated in many of our programs since 2012. 'I have transformed myself from a shy person to now being confident to present as a speaker in international public speaking competitions.'

It is very common for ABCN students to report a boost in confidence after practicing public speaking during their programs. In Frank's case, he wasn't just a mentor, he was a co-learner. 'I continued mentoring because it was not only the students who gained a lot from the experience, I gained a lot personally.'


Seeing students develop right alongside him has been the most rewarding aspect, he says. 'It's phenomenal when you see a very shy individual start to open up and ultimately blossom into a career and self-confidence. It's a wonderful thing to witness and it led me into more and more public speaking at work.'

In 2020, Frank participated in a digital GOALS pilot. 'It was a time when it was even more important than ever to reach out and give students the confidence to push through adversity one small goal at a time ... It's been an incredible journey for all the students, teachers, mentors and facilitators.'



94%
OF MENTORS SAID
they developed personally
from participating in a
program in 2020



A photograph of a classroom where several students are working on laptops. In the foreground, a young woman with long dark hair and a young man with glasses and a white shirt are smiling and looking at a laptop screen. They are both wearing white earbuds. In the background, other students are also working on laptops, and a teacher or mentor is standing and observing. The scene is brightly lit with large windows in the background.

‘Watching the students come in on their first day, wide-eyed and not knowing what to expect, and leaving the program with a sense of purpose and determination is so empowering. Thank you for the amazing work that you do!’

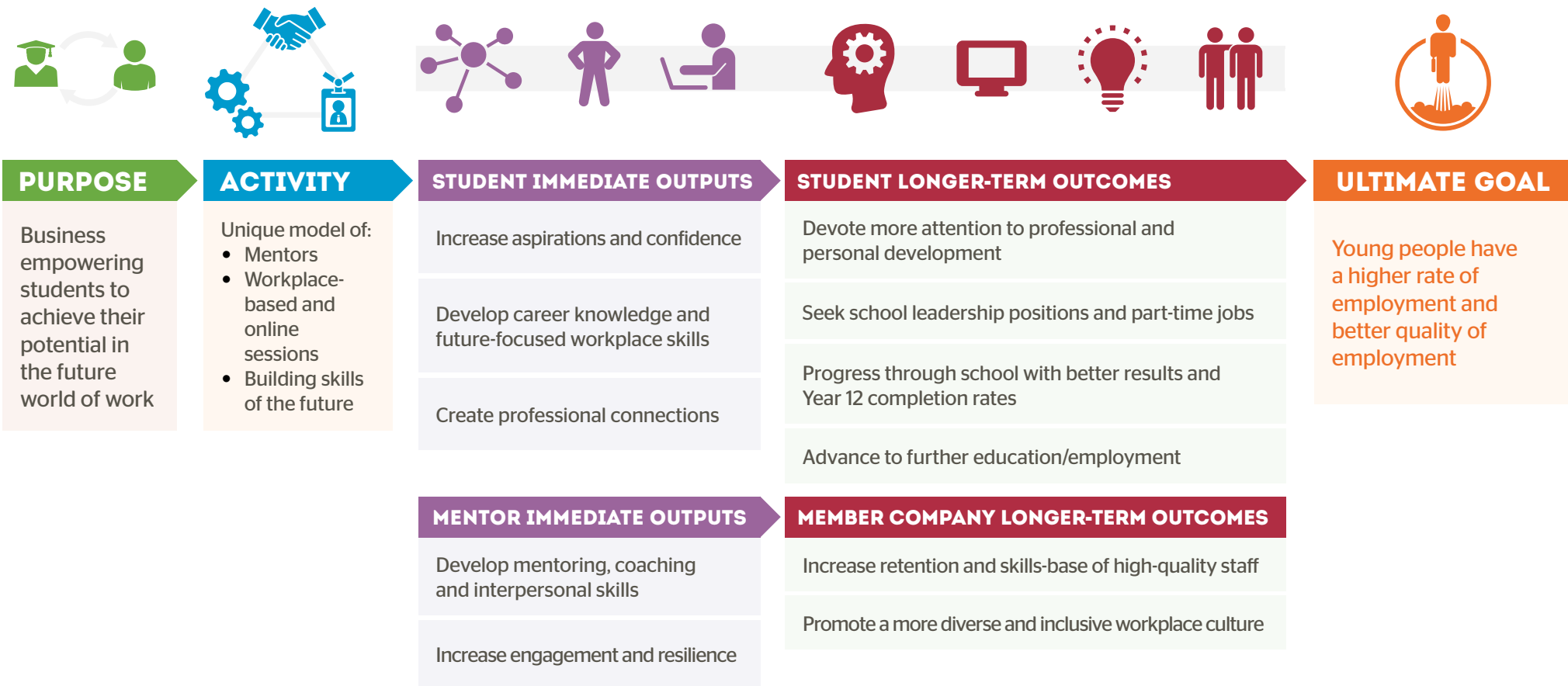
Kerryn, EY mentor

OUR PROGRAMS



THEORY OF CHANGE

ABCN creates a future-fit workforce through our shared value proposition: meaningful interactions that improve student employability while increasing mentors' workplace success.





2020 PROGRAM DELIVERY

ABCN delivered **378** programs in 2020, of which 179 were digital mentoring programs.

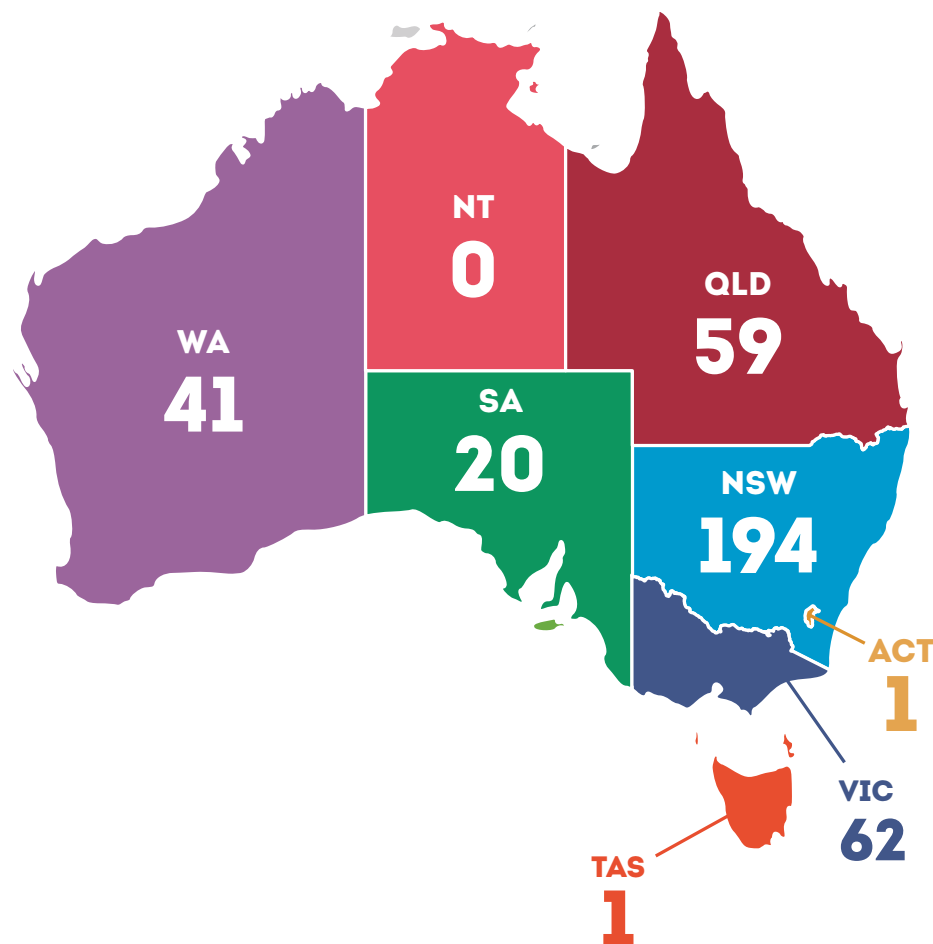
The total amount is about half that of the previous year because almost all face-to-face programs were cancelled after school closures due to COVID-19.

'I would recommend the workshop because they have really good tips to help you out. It's just like having an online friend to talk to and they don't judge.'

Empower student, VIC

'So many times in life you are faced with opportunities that you might believe are useless, that don't serve a purpose. For me, the ABCN program was one opportunity that changed my life.'

Suhani, GOALS mentor, KPMG



CORE MENTORING PROGRAMS

Our award-winning core programs are designed to raise students' aspirations, develop their key skills and help them build connections with a contemporary workplace and a corporate mentor. Mentors also benefit through honing their coaching skills, stimulating their creativity and deepening their understanding of different generations and cultures.

The common elements of our mentoring programs are communication, teamwork, personal growth and confidence. High school programs typically take place at the offices of one of our member companies; during COVID-19 we used a safe mix of digital and face-to-face formats to keep students and mentors connected.

ABCN runs two programs for primary school students: *1:2:1*, which builds basic mathematical skills, and *Spark*, which builds basic reading and comprehension skills.

We also run a *Partners in Learning* program, where school principals and business leaders mentor each other.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Years 7-8	Year 9	Years 9-10	Years 8-12	Years 9-12	Years 10-11	Years 10-11	Years 10-11	Years 11, 12, 13
<i>Innovate</i>	GOALS (digital and F2F)	<i>Future Thinkers</i> (digital and F2F)	<i>My Career Rules</i> (digital only)	<i>Empower</i> (digital only)	<i>Interview 2 Impress</i>	<i>Focus/Focus 2</i> (digital and F2F)	<i>Aspirations</i> (digital and F2F)	<i>Accelerate</i> (digital and F2F)
<p>Encourages the uptake of STEM subjects</p> <p>57 students in 2020</p> <p>93% said they were interested in STEM subjects (57% beforehand)</p>	<p>Develops self-management, encouraging completion of Year 12 and further study</p> <p>289 students in 2020</p> <p>91% said they knew how their strengths related to the business world (40% beforehand)</p>	<p>Builds creative and innovative problem-solving skills through design thinking</p> <p>714 students in 2020</p> <p>96% said they understood the principles of design thinking (24% beforehand)</p>	<p>Online panel Q&A where students can learn about careers and specific industries</p> <p>582 students in 2020</p> <p>85% said they know it's OK to fail or change their minds about career paths (after the program)</p>	<p>Builds confidence, skills and mindsets required for the changing world of work</p> <p>516 students in 2020</p> <p>94% said they understood strategies to help build resilience and mental wellbeing (55% beforehand)</p>	<p>Interactive interview skills workshop to build confidence and interpersonal skills</p> <p>154 students in 2020</p> <p>93% said they understood how to prepare for a job interview (32% beforehand)</p>	<p>Develops leadership skills and encourages take-up of leadership roles by female students</p> <p>685 students in 2020</p> <p>89% of Focus students said they see themselves as a leader (40% beforehand)</p>	<p>Broadens awareness of post-school career pathways through problem-solving and future orientation</p> <p>119 students in 2020</p> <p>97% said they felt prepared for the world of work (31% beforehand)</p>	<p>Three-year mentoring and financial scholarship for exceptional but highly disadvantaged students</p> <p>86 students in 2020</p> <p>95% said they knew how to set, review and achieve short- and long-term goals (51% beforehand)</p>

DIGITAL PROGRAMS

‘Thank you so much for converting the program online and allowing us to participate in this amazing experience despite the current circumstances with COVID-19. I have taken a lot out of this program and feel very grateful to my wonderful mentor, and all the staff who made this possible.’

Digital GOALS student, Victoria

‘This is teaching us how we may need to communicate in the workforce when we leave school.’

Digital *Future Thinkers* student, NSW

COVID-19 spurred us to fast-track the work we had already commenced in 2019 to transform our face-to-face mentoring programs into digital versions. Our strategic aim had always been to expand our reach to regional areas via digital programs. In 2020 we were able to rapidly transform to also offer programs to metropolitan students who were unable to travel to our member companies’ workplaces, connecting them with mentors who were working remotely.



Using our digital GOALS pilot developed with Accenture in 2019 as a blueprint, we redeveloped the following core programs for online delivery:

Focus: leadership skills for girls.

Future Thinkers: innovative problem-solving through design thinking.

Aspirations: awareness of post-school career pathways.

And launched these new programs:

Empower: a new, fully digital program which builds students’ confidence, skills and mindsets such as resilience and adaptability to equip them to adapt to a rapidly changing workplace and world.

My Career Rules: previously a pilot, these interactive video conference sessions where a panel of

professionals tell their career stories to high school students became a core ABCN program.

Our approach to delivering all programs in 2020 was to be flexible — using a safe mix of digital and face-to-face formats depending on the needs of our schools and member companies.

We delivered 179 digital programs in 2020, versus four in 2019.

88% of students said they felt confident using video-conferencing for conversations with professionals, compared with 46% before their programs.

In 2021 we intend to pilot digital versions of *Innovate* (encouraging the uptake of STEM) and *Interview 2 Impress* (equips students for successful job interviews).

INNOVATING FOR THE FUTURE

Our Development Hub is a centre for innovation, design and collaboration. It enables us to work beyond our core programs, in partnerships with our member companies and schools to pilot new programs and concepts. In this way, our program curriculum is responding to the greatest needs of the changing world of work to maximise impact.

Thanks to grants from our business partners, we collaborated on the following initiatives in 2020:



Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is a key ABCN priority. In 2020 we launched a partnership with the NSW Department of Education to deliver tailored digital GOALS programs to First Nations Year 9 students at Mount Austin High School and Northlakes High School. ABCN is working closely with Aboriginal Learning and Engagement Centres in schools throughout NSW to pilot programs that will support engagement, attendance, retention and HSC attainment.

Support from Ecstra Foundation allowed us to research and **pilot financial capability** content within our digital GOALS program, aimed at boosting the financial literacy of Year 9 students. Based on the strong results from this program, we will be incorporating financial capability content across a number of our core programs in 2021 and beyond.



SolveIT, a partnership with EY that aims to create authentic learning experiences linked to the Year 9 mathematics curriculum.

Full STEAM Ahead, a collaboration with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to engage students in Years 7-8 with STEAM-based activities.

My Career Rules, an initiative supported by Accenture to connect Years 10-11 students with a panel of professionals sharing their career stories and expertise in an interactive video conference environment.

AI for Good is an initiative run with Microsoft aimed at teaching students in Years 7-12 the basic concepts of artificial intelligence, followed by a design thinking hackathon using AI to make a positive difference.

Skills to Succeed is an Accenture online program aimed at students in Years 9-12 which focuses on building confidence and identifying strengths in preparation for employment.




‘It’s an eye-opener to the amount of career options in the workforce. It gives you a better understanding of what to expect after high school and how to get to your future career or job.’

My Career Rules student

‘Definitely take the time out to make an impact and also be open to learning from the mentees. You don’t need to change the world, but you can change someone’s world.’

Kevin, GOALS mentor, EY

A photograph of two women sitting on the grass in front of a wall covered in Indigenous Australian art. The woman on the left is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, with her hands clasped. The woman on the right is wearing a patterned sweater and grey pants, holding a framed certificate. The mural behind them features large yellow circles, a black and white snake-like figure, and a central circular motif with red and yellow dots. Several purple circles are overlaid on the right side of the image.

'I don't think I would have been able to achieve what I have this year without this program. COVID-19 made it a hard year for us all but the funds, support and resources made it easy to thrive and grow.'

Candina, *Accelerate* scholar

ABCN FOUNDATION

ABCN FOUNDATION

The ABCN Foundation aims to level the playing field and empower high-potential young people from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds to achieve their potential.

Our three-year *Accelerate* scholarship program spans Years 11, 12 and the first year of further education/ training to provide:

- a targeted focus on the successful transition from school to tertiary education
- one-on-one corporate mentoring and a professional role model to help develop workplace skills, growth mindsets, aspirations and connections
- financial relief (alleviating a burden which can become a reason to leave school)
- workplace access and exposure to the corporate environment.

This invaluable program is unique and benefits immensely from its access to ABCN's network of schools and corporate members. This ensures we can connect students with corporate mentors, workplace exposure and opportunities that they would otherwise not have access to.

'The experiences you gain are valuable and once in a lifetime. The exposure to other people and places will challenge you and help you grow.'

Julina, Foundation scholar, graduated with the top HSC state rank in economics and an ATAR of 99.95

WHY OUR WORK IS NEEDED

By the age of 19, only 68% of students from the lowest SES backgrounds complete Year 12 or its equivalent, compared to 91% of their counterparts from the highest SES areas.¹

By the age of 24, only 18% of these students have attained, or enrolled, in a university degree, compared to 67% of their more advantaged counterparts.²

This is something we can change. Many of our scholars will be first-in-family to complete Year 12 and/or attend university. Our goal is to open doors, provide opportunities and create possibilities that will assist them in achieving their potential.

Providing mentoring and financial support at high school enables this opportunity.

A snapshot of our 2020 applicants:

- 69% were female
- 53% had at least one parent unemployed
- 31% had both parents with an education level below Year 12
- 48% came from non-English speaking backgrounds
- 23% had suffered traumatic past experiences
- 18% were from regional areas
- 15% lived in precarious housing
- 13% were refugees
- 12.5% lived in supported or public housing
- 9% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 4% identified as LGBTQIA+
- 4% had a disability.



100% of applications demonstrated extraordinary levels of disadvantage that have been heightened further by the impact of COVID-19.

The interruption to education, lack of access to technology to support learning, financial strain on low-income households in precarious or casual employment, and social isolation meant that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, already struggling before the crisis, suffered even more.

Not surprisingly, we received a **record number of applications for our scholarship program in 2020** — up 88% from the previous year. This huge surge shows that now more than ever, receiving the support of positive role models, getting fair access to technology and accessing financial relief is critical.

¹ Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out (Lamb et al. 2020)

² Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out (Lamb et al. 2020)

ABCN FOUNDATION

FOUNDATION IMPACT SINCE 2013

183

scholarships awarded

\$992,000

distributed in financial
award monies

In 2020:

94%

**OF ACCELERATE
STUDENTS
COMPLETED YEAR 12
OR TRAINING**

compared with 82% national
average and 68% for disadvantaged
students¹

100%

**OF ACCELERATE
YEAR 3 GRADUATES
ARE ENGAGED
IN EMPLOYMENT,
TERTIARY EDUCATION
OR TRAINING**

95%

**KNOW HOW TO SET,
REVIEW AND ACHIEVE
THEIR SHORT- AND
LONG-TERM GOALS**

compared with only 51%
before the program

90%

**NOW HAVE A WIDE
RANGE OF CAREER
OPTIONS AND
FUTURE PATHWAYS**

compared with only 57%
before the program

95%

**NOW UNDERSTAND
THEIR STRENGTHS,
SKILLS, AND ABILITIES
IN RELATION TO
STUDY, WORK AND
PERSONAL LIFE**

compared with only 42%
before the program

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

Our mentors had a critical role to play in supporting our scholars during a tumultuous 2020. We worked hard to transition quickly to online delivery of our facilitated sessions. We also provided wellbeing, stress management and remote communication content paired with complimentary monthly data plans for students to be able to keep up with the increased demand on web learning.

New measures were also implemented to address program growth and increased demand. We boosted the number of scholarship awards by 12%, welcoming 35 outstanding new scholars into the program. So difficult was the decision this year, that for the first time we created a Highly Commended category, awarding 21 laptops to the most deserving young people outside the final selection list, to help combat the digital divide in low SES communities.

We also reorganised our operational structure to enable us to continue to scale our work. We appointed a new Program Delivery Manager to ensure continued quality of the program and maximum support for the growing number of mentors and scholars.

¹ Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out (Lamb et al. 2020)



'ABCN has given me a lot of opportunities by giving me a laptop. I'm grateful. I will use this laptop as a support to achieve my goals, to finish high school and to go further [to university].'

Diyana, Highly Commended category winner, 2020

ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

We were pleased to be able to deliver a successful virtual Leadership Summit to our Year 1 students and mentors. Seen as a peak experience of our program, keynote speaker Craig Griffin (Executive Director and Head of Marketing and Growth at Macquarie) delighted with his engaging interactive online content. A special scholar support hamper was received very well by students feeling isolated and distanced from their community.

Summit feedback:

‘Fast paced and interactive.’

‘Really helped me learn about life skills and helped me realise I can do anything.’

‘Thank you for the immense generosity of learning and sharing of life golden nuggets.’

‘Amazing opportunity to strengthen and embed relationship with scholar.’

‘This program will help me to become a better version of myself, one who will walk away with life skills to succeed, and with many plans and more goals for the future.’

Rebecca, 2020 scholar and aspiring CEO

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2021, we will implement a blended program of online and face-to-face workshops plus one-on-one meetings. As workplace access is a cornerstone of the *Accelerate* program, our goal is to support our scholars’ access to corporate offices.

Strategic priorities for the Foundation are to:

- scale the scope and breadth of the program
- continue digital augmentation of programs to deepen impact, support a broader range of students and increase efficiency
- grow revenue to underpin program scale
- increase targeting of regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and explore further needs from refugee students
- increase support of our students with future pathways.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

We know from our ongoing feedback from the principals, students and mentors we work with that our *Accelerate* program delivers a ripple effect – benefitting not just the student, but their family, school and community:

- scholars benefit from their own corporate mentor and financial support
- scholars’ families benefit through financial relief
- scholars become mentors and aspirational role models to siblings and peers.

Together we can level the playing field so that every young Australian has the opportunity to succeed.



‘ABCN provides the light at the end of the tunnel – the hope that if their children work hard at their education, they can be recognised like any other student in the country.’

Principal, Northern Bay College

IN 2020 WE WELCOMED 35 NEW SCHOLARS TO THE PROGRAM:

NSW Zakaria Alhalaby, Rasha Alzahri, Sydney Bui, Lina Hwang, Evana Jibraeel, Rebecca Lo, Ayah Maikel, Haileigh Milov, Hayden O'Rourke, Riley Steele-Cusack, Michele Tran

QLD Mahnaz Abdul Hadi, Lisa Pham, Truc Tang, Jak Tut

VIC ZamZam Ahmed, Hassan Ali Rezai, Jowil Andraws, Rachael Angeline, Tabasom Azimi, Aimee Bugeja, Allen Davies, Stephanie Grant, Shar K'pru Htoo, Chantelle Mifsud, Aziza Minani, Mahdi Mousavi, Farid Rahimi, Rae-nee Roberts, Katie Scott, Jordan Zammit

WA Alayah Hill, Nakia Newbery, Arezo Rahimi, Karima Rezaei

ORGANISATIONS THAT PROVIDED MENTORS

Accenture, Bain & Company, Bankwest, Citi Australia, EY, Fuji Xerox Australia, Hall & Wilcox, J.P. Morgan, KPMG, Lendlease, LinkedIn, Macquarie Group, Mastercard, Microsoft Australia, MinterEllison, Navitas, Optus, PwC, Stockland, TAL, Tassal, Touchstone Asset Management, UBS, Ventia (formerly Visionstream), 4D Infrastructure.

'It has taken the financial pressure off my family. My mentor is another person I can go to for help and advice, so my family doesn't have to manage the full burden of that themselves.'

Morgan, 2018 Queensland scholar



The Age reported that applications for our 2020 scholarship round almost doubled, with a quarter of applicants from Victoria and a marked increase from regional students. [Read the story here.](#)



TAL has been a cornerstone supporter of the ABCN Foundation, and has raised over \$600,000 for the Foundation through its Risk Academy. This unprecedented support prompted Accelerate students to show their gratitude 2020-style, online. [Watch their video here.](#)

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

The ABCN Foundation relies wholly on funding from the corporate sector, philanthropic foundations and generous individuals. We are extremely grateful to our ABCN community – both individuals and corporate entities – whose loyal and ongoing support enabled us to raise \$604,657 in FY 2019-20.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the significant support we received from:

Corporate:

Bank of Melbourne Foundation, Citi Australia and the Pride Network, Investec, Macquarie Group, Microsoft Australia, Optus, Stockland, TAL.

Philanthropic foundations:

Bennelong Foundation, Fogarty Foundation, James N. Kirby Foundation, Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (Eldon & Anne Foote Trust), Miss M K A Bell Memorial Fund, Oliver-Affleck Fund, Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, William Buckland Foundation.

Individuals (including Board and Foundation Council members):

David Clarke and the JIBB Family Foundation, Michael J Hawker AM, Tony Macvean, Paul O'Sullivan, Rob Priestly, Matthew Quinn, Mary Reemst, Stephen Roberts, Rob Sindel, Guy Templeton, Carla Zampatti AC, Helen Zimmerman.

We would like to thank the ongoing support of the organisations which have donated perpetual scholarships (one scholarship every three years) since the Foundation's inception, including Fuji Xerox Australia, KPMG, Microsoft, Navitas and Optus.

Thank you to the members of the Scholarship Foundation Council who led the Foundation in 2020: Michael J Hawker AM (Chair), Kerry Jukes, Paul O'Sullivan, Matthew Quinn, Rob Sindel, Guy Templeton, John Weber (resigned May 2020) and Helen Zimmerman.

HOW THE ABCN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CHANGES LIVES



LUCAS AND JACQUI

Lucas started his final year of *Accelerate* in 2020 with gusto. High school was behind him and he was following his dream to study art at the National Art School in Sydney, opening up a whole new community of friends. After years of stress and isolation during his transition from female to male, he finally felt like he belonged.

Then the pandemic hit. Both work and university stopped and the once bright future suddenly seemed dark. Thankfully his mentor, Jacqui Jones from PwC, was there for weekly chats.

‘Before the scholarship I didn’t have a support person that I could talk to,’ Lucas says. ‘Jacqui isn’t an authority figure. She’s someone I can share my thoughts with

when I don’t have friends. She listens. And I know I can talk to her about anything without any judgement ... I don’t know where I’d be today if it wasn’t for my ABCN scholarship.’

As for Jacqui, she was delighted to provide support at the time Lucas needed it most.

‘The continuity of our three-year relationship was important,’ says Jacqui. ‘It’s very hard for a fiercely independent LGBTQI student to return to the suburbs of south-western Sydney, to live with parents, away from community and peers. I was glad I could help, not by being a counsellor, but as a trusted person that Lucas could speak to.’

AZADA AND AKRITI

Azada was 11 when she and her family fled Afghanistan for a better life in Australia. Despite the trauma and events that led to their arrival here, she is grateful for the many opportunities that have opened up as a result. This includes the ABCN scholarship she was awarded in 2018, and the relationship with her mentor, Akriti Grover from KPMG.

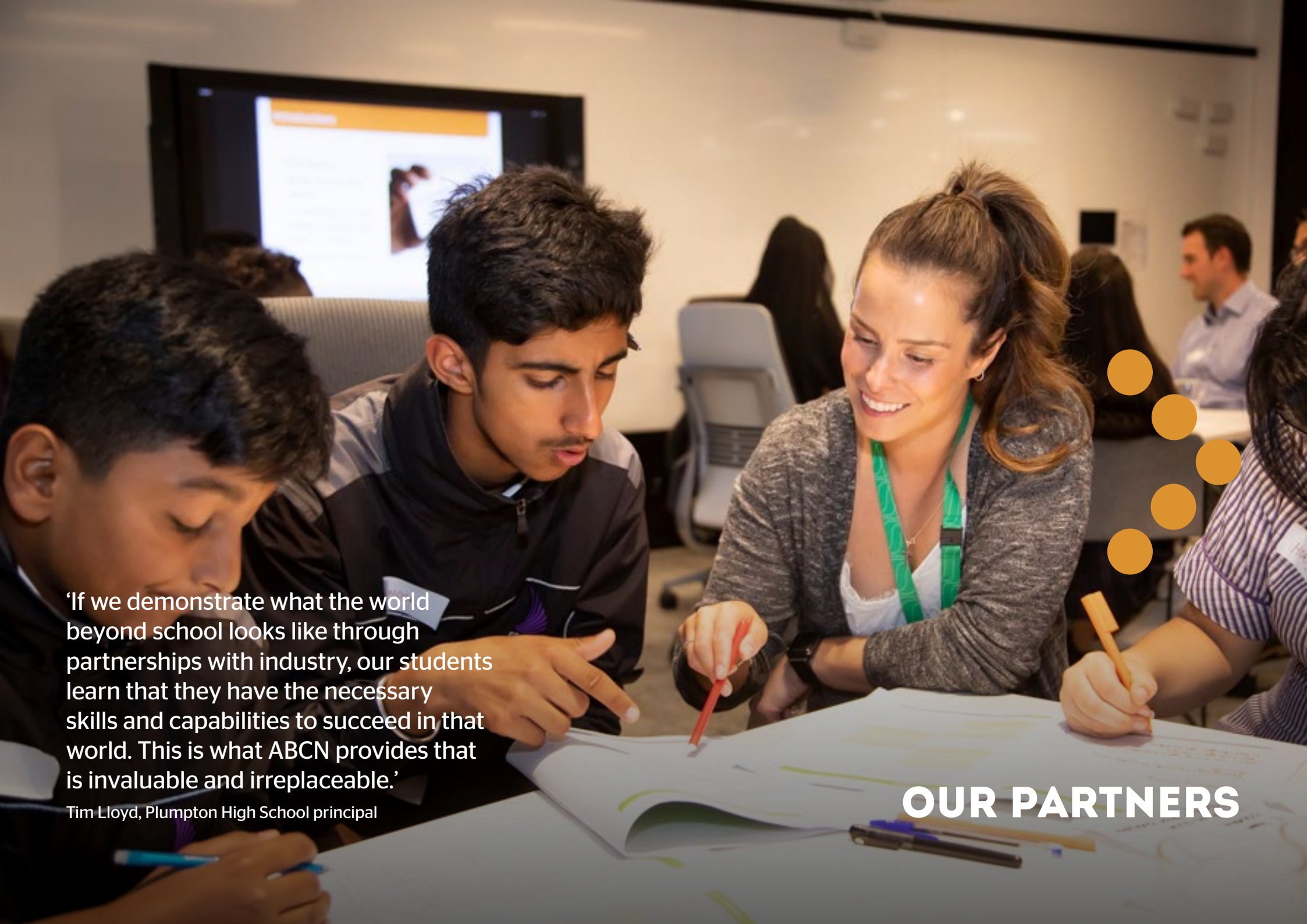
‘Arriving in Australia in September 2014 was the first milestone in my life,’ Azada says. ‘Getting accepted into ABCN scholarship was my second milestone. With my mentor, I felt as if I had been offered a professional friend, to listen to me and guide me. Over the years, she has become a companion for me, and I always feel like I have someone beside me in my academic life, which is very assuring and satisfying. Without this program, I think I would still be lost and anxious at high school without direction.’

Now doing her VCE in Year 13 at Northern Bay College in Victoria, Azada’s goal is to study biomedicine at university in 2022. Meanwhile, Akriti, a senior audit accountant at KPMG, says she has also benefited from the experience.

‘I recall us both being nervous, but any shyness and reservations quickly disappeared an hour into our first meeting,’ she says. ‘I was relieved when Azada announced to her principal, “Yep, I like her”!’

‘I was lucky enough to have a mentor myself when I went to university, and that was a very impactful experience for me,’ Akriti recalls. ‘I came into the program thinking it would be me providing guidance to someone else. The fact that I’m also reflecting on my own skills and goals and gaining confidence in mentoring and coaching at the same time is an added bonus!’





‘If we demonstrate what the world beyond school looks like through partnerships with industry, our students learn that they have the necessary skills and capabilities to succeed in that world. This is what ABCN provides that is invaluable and irreplaceable.’

Tim Lloyd, Plumpton High School principal

OUR PARTNERS

MEMBER COMPANIES AND BUSINESS PARTNERS

In 2020, we worked with the following organisations, connecting them with schools in low socio-economic communities throughout New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. To see a list of the approximately 200 schools we work with each year, go to www.abcn.com.au/students-schools

accenture

ALLEN & OVERY



ashurst

BAIN & COMPANY



ecstra



FUJI XEROX

Hall & Wilcox
smarter law

iag

Investec

J.P.Morgan

KKR

KORN FERRY

MEMBER COMPANIES AND BUSINESS PARTNERS



MinterEllison



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okta

OPTUS



TAL



TATA
CONSULTANCY
SERVICES



ventia

WATERSURE



westpac GROUP



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board is comprised of business leaders from our member companies, and leaders in education. It is supported by the ABCN Council of business leaders from across our member companies, and the Principal Reference Council of selected principals from our member schools. In the financial year ending 30 June 2020, the following leaders sat on our board:

TONY MACVEAN

Chair, ABCN

Tony is the Managing Partner of Hall & Wilcox, a large independent national law firm. As part of his leadership role, Tony champions the firm's substantial pro bono and community program. Tony is passionate about ABCN and the difference the organisation can make to people's lives.

ALLEGRA SPENDER

CEO, ABCN

Allegra has been ABCN's CEO since 2017. Her career began at McKinsey & Company and prior to ABCN, she was Managing Director of the Australian fashion company Carla Zampatti. She brings diverse leadership experience from within the corporate, not-for-profit and public sectors and was the Chair of Sydney Renewable Power Company.

BRETT CLARK

Brett is the Group CEO and Managing Director of TAL. A qualified actuary, Brett has broad industry experience that spans strategy, finance, sales, product, marketing and operations in both the Australian and international insurance markets. He brings a considered and commercial approach to leadership across TAL's diversified life insurance business.

SHARON FORD

(resigned 11/11/19)

Sharon has retired after almost 40 years' experience with the NSW Department of Education, most recently as the A/ Executive Director, Leadership and High Performance. Her many leadership roles within the education sector included vocational education and training programs to support youth at risk, rural and distance education in all NSW government schools and Australia's first virtual school.

ELIZABETH GODWIN

(appointed 11/11/19)

Elizabeth (Beth) Godwin has been the Principal of Cabramatta High School since 2002. Located in Sydney's south-west, Cabramatta High School has more than 1,500 students, 96% of whom have a language background other than English. Both Beth and Cabramatta High School have been involved with ABCN since 2006, through core programs and the *Partners in Learning* program.

RICHARD KELLEWAY

Richard is the Group Executive - Infrastructure Services at Ventia. He has more than 35 years' experience working in global senior management roles across the UK, Middle East, Southeast Asia and Australia. In 2010/11, he was recognised by Engineers Australia as one of Australia's top 100 influential engineers.

ALISON LANSLEY

(resigned 11/11/19)

Alison is an experienced business leader, corporate lawyer and company director and has served on the boards of various for-profit, not-for-profit and government entities in different industries. She was formerly a partner at Mallesons Stephen Jaques (now King & Wood Mallesons) and was a founding director of Schools Connect Australia.

CRAIG PERRETT

Craig, an independent director, is a co-founder and senior advisor of the personal strategic planning consultancy act3 and an Executive Director of Perrett PSP and CEED (Chief Executive Education). He is also a board of management member of the advocacy group Humanities 21 and is a former director of Schools Connect Australia.

KATE RATTIGAN

(appointed 11/11/19)

Kate is the Deputy Secretary of the People and Executive Services group at the Victorian Department of Education and Training, providing direct support to more than 1,500 Victorian government schools and the Department's central and regional offices. This includes HR, safety, legal services, operational policy, and principal health and wellbeing. She has 20 years' experience working with the Department and school leaders.

ROB SINDEL


(resigned 11/11/19)

Rob was CEO of CSR from 2011 to 2019 and has broad executive management and leadership experience, gained from his 30-year career in the construction industry in Australia and the United Kingdom. He is an ABCN Foundation Council member and also a member of the Yalari NSW advisory committee, an organisation that works with students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

LUKE SAYERS AM

(resigned 20/6/20)

Luke is the founder and Executive Chairman of Sayers Group and a former CEO of PwC Australia. The Sayers Group is a private equity-backed organisation focused on growing 'scaleup' businesses which use technology to innovate traditional advisory and service business models. Luke is on the board of the Carlton Football Club and chairs the not-for-profit e.motion21.



'I wouldn't be in the process of completing my degree today if it wasn't for meeting such strong and inspiring corporate women through the ABCN programs.'

Lena, *Focus* student

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR
YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2020**

ABCN FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2020

ABCN prepares a financial report in accordance with the Corporations Act and relevant accounting standards. It is approved by the Board of Directors and audited by Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd. The statutory financial report is lodged with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and is available for download at www.acnc.gov.au.

NOTE: ABCN reports on a financial year basis (1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020), however program activity is reported on a calendar year basis (1 January 2020 - 31 December 2020) to align with the school curriculum.

The 2019-20 financial year started as a strong one, but like so many organisations, we were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We consolidated our position in the last few months of the year, through cutting expenses and receiving some government support. These actions allowed us to deliver a \$315,062 surplus, which will support us through continued uncertainty and disruption.

The small growth in expenses again reflects the two different periods in FY19-20. Until March 2020, expenses were tracking significantly higher than the previous financial year due to the more than 20% growth in students reached in 2019. However, as the different states entered lockdowns and schools moved to remote learning, ABCN quickly moved to reduce expenses wherever possible, taking out around \$420,000 of expected expenses.

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
INCOME			
Membership fees	1,940,715	1,832,500	1,780,000
Grants, business class and other income	1,035,792	861,355	730,498
TOTAL INCOME	2,976,507	2,693,855	2,510,498
EXPENSES			
	(2,661,445)	(2,625,853)	(2,292,149)
SURPLUS			
	315,062	68,002	218,349
TOTAL EQUITY	2,959,882	2,644,820	2,576,818



ABCN FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2020

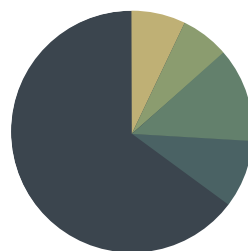
Income

ABCN's main source of income is membership fees. Other income in 2020 included \$596,379 in combined grants, including from the following organisations:

- Accenture
- American Express Australia
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Ecstra Foundation
- EY
- J.P. Morgan
- LinkedIn
- Microsoft Australia
- nbn
- Optus
- Stockland
- UBS

Expenditure

Total expenses for 2020: **\$2,661,445**



- Direct programs 65%
- Grant program non-salary expenditure 8.5%
- Indirect programs 12.4%
- Administration 6.9%
- Strategic investment 7.2%

Direct programs: costs associated with all aspects of program delivery such as development, delivery, materials, transport, coordination, evaluation and reporting, plus the costs of delivering grant programs excluding disbursements.

Grant program non-salary expenditure: costs related to funds supporting specific grants.

Indirect programs: costs of facilities, insurance and professional fees.

Strategic investment: costs to deliver ABCN's five-year strategy, focusing on building digital capabilities and scaling the network.

ABCN FOUNDATION

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2020

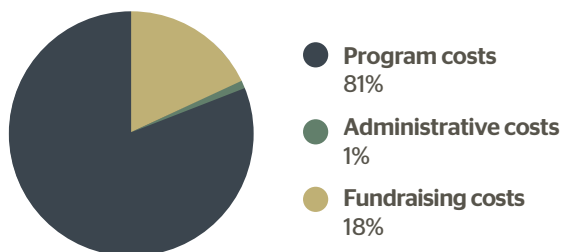
The ABCN Foundation performed strongly in 2020 with an overall gross income increase of 66% from the previous year leading to a sound budget surplus. This strong performance came from our continued focus on growing our philanthropic relationships across trusts and foundations, major donors and individuals, as well as a significant corporate donation from TAL Risk Academy. Expenses tracked slightly below budget, but steady against year-on-year.

As we continue into uncertain economic times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this budget surplus is critical to ensuring our program's stability in FY20-21. The impact of COVID-19 was reflected in an unprecedented demand for our program, for which we received the highest number of scholarship applications in the Foundation's history, including a fivefold increase in applications from rural and regional areas. In response to this, we increased the number of scholarship awards by 12%.

We acknowledge the generous philanthropic support we receive from ABCN corporate members, philanthropic trusts and foundations as well as individuals, including our ABCN Foundation Council. The Foundation does not receive government funding.

Expenditure

Total expenses for 2020: **\$382,700**



ABCN FOUNDATION

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2020

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)	2018 (\$)
INCOME			
Bank interest	22,552	26,202	30,428
Donations	582,105	374,203	366,295
TOTAL INCOME	604,657	400,405	396,723
EXPENSES			
Direct financial scholarship awards to students	(190,000)	(170,000)	(132,000)
Program delivery	(119,536)	(112,573)	(126,007)
Fundraising costs	(68,442)	(86,080)	(26,961)
Administration and auditor remuneration	(4,722)	(4,641)	(3,905)
TOTAL EXPENSES	(382,700)	(373,294)	(288,873)
SURPLUS	221,957	27,111	107,850
TOTAL EQUITY	1,659,138	1,437,181	1,410,070

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a company limited by guarantee. It is a not-for-profit, business-funded organisation that partners schools with business through the development and delivery of mentoring programs for disadvantaged students from high-needs schools.

COUNCIL

The organisation's council is comprised of the chief executives or senior business leaders of the member organisations. The role of the council members is to facilitate and enable the achievement of ABCN's mission and objectives by leveraging their professional networks, profile, reputation, energy, experience and influence to:

- Serve as a source of independent advice to the Board with regards to ABCN strategy and external relations
- Ensure that ABCN remains focused on high-impact engagement
- Participate personally with ABCN and encourage and inspire other business leaders to commit to joining as ABCN members, thereby expanding the resources and influence of ABCN in the wider, general community
- Raise ABCN's profile and build its brand and reputation, and
- Engage with schools and the broader community.

BOARD MEMBERS

As at 30 June 2020, there were seven directors on the Board, including the Chief Executive Officer. Other than the CEO, Board members are non-executive directors and receive no remuneration for their services. The non-executive directors are drawn from the senior executive

management of ABCN's member organisations. The company's constitution specifies:

- The maximum term for the Chair as a director is six years
- The maximum term for other directors is three years
- There will be a majority of non-executive directors, and the Board will review its size, composition and performance, including each director's performance, annually.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Board fulfils its primary role of meeting ABCN's objectives and complying with the relevant Corporations Act requirements through:

- Governing, rather than managing, ABCN by ensuring that there is a proper governance framework in place to promote and protect ABCN's interests for the benefit of its members
- Setting goals and policies and, specifically, approving ABCN's strategies and strategic plan
- Monitoring the performance and contribution of Board members
- Selecting and regularly evaluating the performance of, and if necessary, replacing the CEO
- Setting standards for proper governance practices (including appropriate standards of ethical behaviour, corporate governance, and social and environmental responsibility) and monitoring the processes to ensure adherence to these standards
- Selecting, appointing and monitoring the performance of the external auditor
- Monitoring financial performance and reporting

- Approval of ABCN's annual budget
- Approval of ABCN's annual financial report
- Monitoring key risk areas by ensuring the implementation of a suitable risk management and internal controls framework
- Reviewing the adequacy of systems to comply with all laws and regulations, which apply to ABCN and its programs
- Approval of ABCN's insurance arrangements, and
- Ensuring that all legal and commercial requirements are met in terms of proper reporting and disclosure.

In discharging its role, the Board considers the guidance and advice of the Council but will not be bound by such guidance and advice.

BOARD OVERSIGHT

The Board oversees and monitors management's performance by:

- Meeting at least three times per annum
- Receiving detailed financial and other reports from management at these meetings
- Requesting and receiving additional information and input from management when necessary, and ensuring regular communication between the Chair and the CEO.

CONTACT US

Australian Business and Community Network
Sydney | Melbourne | Brisbane | Perth | Adelaide

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 @ABCNoz

 @ABCNoz

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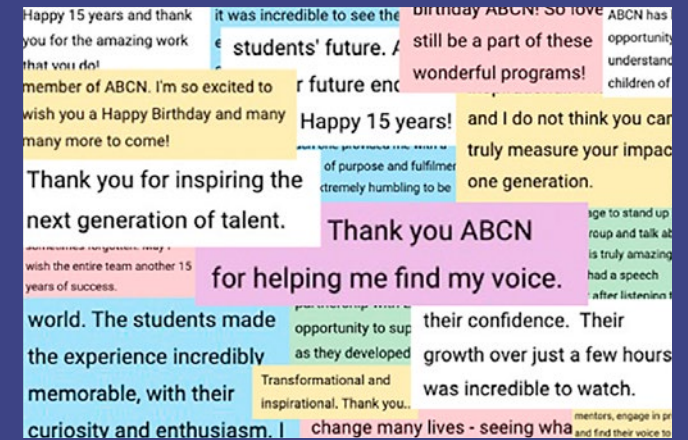
‘Being part of the program in 2008 was one of the best moments of high school. It was truly empowering and helped me grow and build the key leadership skills that I use today. I’ve now become an ABCN mentor myself, closing the circle from mentee to mentor.’

Fairuz, GOALS alumna and KPMG mentor

‘The program most certainly made us think and care for ourselves and each other, so I can’t imagine the impact you have had over the past 15 years combined. Thank you so much for the opportunity.’

Kristy, *Focus* student

Help us celebrate 15 years of ABCN!
Share your favourite ABCN memory:
padlet.com/abcn/ABCN15Years



CELEBRATING
15 YEARS
IN 2020

PARTNER WITH US
INFO@ABCN.COM.AU

ABCN 
Business Partnering with Education

Annual report design supported by

**space
lab
design**
spacelabdesign.com