



OUR TOWN
— BERRI —
ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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The Our Town Berri Story

Vision

An inclusive town, Berri that thrives through community connections. A community that understands and activates its strengths and assets (people, organisations, spaces and things) to create strong identity and town pride where all generations feel welcomed and supported to embed and nurture a culture of positive wellbeing.



Insights

All of the work, initiatives and partnerships Our Town Berri is involved in reflects the needs of their community. In the early days of Our Town Berri's development, the Core Team engaged with their community to identify the needs voiced by locals. Here are their findings:

The light on the hill went out | Historically, Berri has had some major setbacks. We want to proudly reclaim & build our identity.

It's hard to see the river for the reeds | Services should connect & network to support the wellbeing of a community. Many are falling through the cracks.

The river connects us | When generations & groups come together, impacts are felt across a community.

Navigating uncharted waters | Life events & transitions have connections to wellbeing. Strong communities support these transitions.

Principles

Modelling Mentally Healthy Practices

Being comfortable to step-in and step-out as we need to - both community and team. We work with principles such as self-care, maintaining connections with others, practising kindness with ourselves and others, and active listening.

Community Led and Owned

Being led by experiences and perspectives from diverse voices in our community and ensuring decisions about the community are made by the community.

Learning Our Way Through Change

Assuming nothing, testing everything, watching what happens and revisiting our assumptions as things change. We encourage being brave, taking risks and trying new things while being kind to ourselves when things don't work.

Seeing and Acting on the Bigger Picture

Working in our own ways towards a shared purpose. We consider the ripple effect of our decisions on the bigger picture and related issues.



Acknowledgement of Country



Our Town Berri acknowledges that Berri is built upon the traditional land of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee. Our Town Berri recognises the Erawirung People as the traditional custodians of Berri. We also pay respect to the seven Riverland Aboriginal groups Ngaiawang, Ngawait, Nganguruku, Erawirung, Ngintait, Ngaralte & Ngarkat people.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



Our home on the river is the place we connect, learn, listen, engage, create and play.



Chair Report

Donna Safralidis

This year has been one of growth, learning, and deepened community connection. Our focus has been on building the capabilities of people and exploring new partnerships, and I am pleased to report that these efforts are bearing fruit.

We have settled into our Wilson Street space, which has become a welcoming hub for diverse community groups. Increasingly, organisations and individuals are leaning in to learn with us and to draw upon our knowledge of the community and how to engage and lead change. Council, universities, and government departments are now actively seeking our input—an encouraging indicator of confidence in our brand and our people.

The federal funding secured for River Families First has enabled us to strengthen relationships with local families and respond meaningfully to their needs and interests. A highlight was hosting the first-ever Family Expo, attended by over 200 people. To further capture our impact, Clear Horizon spent a week with us and is developing case studies that reflect the stories and outcomes of our work.

The Friends of Berri initiative has successfully highlighted key community challenges while also fostering valuable connections and growth opportunities. We have also begun trialling participatory grants, working directly alongside community members to shape their ideas through an innovation cycle.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our Core Team members, who generously volunteer their time to governance and to amplifying the community's voice. A special thanks to Kiralee who is completing her term with us. Equally, I acknowledge our diverse staff team for their dedication to the complex and pioneering work of Our Town—nudging systems, fostering innovation, and ensuring community remains at the centre. We continue to be very grateful to our multiple funders who trust us and support, our community led, place-based work.

With five more years of funding secured, the future is bright. Together, we are building momentum for change, growth, and community-led impact.

Our People

Meet the people behind Our Town Berri for 2025



DONNA
CORE TEAM CHAIR



SARA
CORE TEAM MEMBER



KIRALEE
CORE TEAM MEMBER



CHRIS
CORE TEAM MEMBER



JULIE
COMMUNITY STEWARD



BRITNEY
RIVER FAMILIES
FIRST LEAD



KIRSTE
COMMUNICATION &
EVALUATION



EMMA
COMMUNITY
CONNECTOR

Our Town Berri is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Initiative Snapshot

Our Town Berri has had a busy year! Here's a few of the initiatives Core Team members and partners have been working on.

**ART
WELLBEING
AT BERRI
PRIMARY**

**RIVER
FAMILIES
FIRST**

**NUNGA
DRIVING**

**CULTURAL
GARDEN**

**FRIENDS OF
BERRI**

**CHILD
AND
FAMILY EXPO**

**HEARTS FOR
HOPE**

**MENTAL HEALTH
WORKSHOPS**

**P.O.T LUCK:
YOU ARE
ENOUGH**

**RAISE
MENTORING**

**RIVER FAMILIES
FIRST WEBSITE**

**NATIVE
FOODS AND
CULTURE
PROGRAM**

**PARTICIPATORY
GRANTS**

**SOCIAL
INNOVATION
SPACE**

**COMMUNITY
CONNECTOR**

**BABY AND CHILD
FIRST AID
TRAINING**



Initiatives

Interested in the topics above, learn a little more about them here!

Friends of Berri

Friends of Berri is a community group built and led by community. Friends of Berri is a gathering place of community members to bring ideas, discuss dreams, innovate and connect with one another. With monthly gatherings, we've seen significant connections between community, evidence of weaving and collaboration, and steps to change.

River Families First Website

As River Families First took off, the community was calling out for a reliable parenting resource. A place to inform themselves, a single accessible hub of information, a one-stop-shop. Britney collected insights from families to understand what was to be included – an events calendar, interactive playground map, recipes and where to find budget-friendly cooking inspiration, information about schools and learning spaces, and a directory of other helpful supports.

Participatory Granting

We've been developing an accessible granting system for the community to develop their ideas – with the support of Our Town Berri – and bring them to life. Idea brewing has begun in the community, seeds are sprouting, locals are bringing their ideas to us and growing them.

Raise Mentoring

In its third year, Raise Mentoring has been bringing students and community members together through uplifting and genuine connection. Mentors and mentees spend two terms meeting up once a week to talk about their experiences and empowering our community's young people.

Community Connector

Our Town Berri, Berri Regional Secondary College and Berri Primary School have partnered together to support the Community Connector role. The role bridges the gap between schools and community to build wellbeing through connection and a sense of belonging, and support students to develop new ideas and take charge of their learning.



Initiatives

Interested in the topics above, learn a little more about them here!

Art Club Program

The Art Club program has expanded this year, seeing students from Berri Primary and Berri Regional accessing gentle art activities to be creative without pressure and to build connection and trust with one another.

Nunga Driving

This initiative has taken a pause this year due to capacity changes and hoping to see it charging ahead soon! Berri Regional Secondary College and Our Town Berri have built a program model that supports young Indigenous people by providing driving lessons for \$10, instead of \$80.

Cultural Garden

A beautiful open space at Berri Regional Secondary College to celebrate the rich traditions of the First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee, reflecting Aboriginal culture from the past, present and future. Filled with native plants, Aboriginal artwork and a representation of the River Murray form part of the garden's design, the garden creates an environment where students and community can learn about and celebrate the cultural significance of the land and waterways.

Baby and Child First Aid Training

Local parents and families called for support and resources to build their confidence in keeping their children safe. River Families First sourced and paid for Kat from Safe Sprouts to pay a visit to the Riverland and deliver a course to inform families covering; car and water safety, DRSABCD and AEDs, choking, seizures, fevers, and head injuries, allergy, anaphylaxis, and solid introduction, and respiratory distress and croup.

Child and Family Expo

Following the theme of informing and resource-sharing, River Families First developed the very first Child and Family Expo in the Riverland. The expo brought together local services, professionals and resources tailored to the needs of local families. The event helped break down barriers to services and prompted early connection with supports.



Initiatives

Interested in the topics above, learn a little more about them here!

Creative Writing Workshop

As part of P.O.T.LUCK: You Are Enough Edition, producer Alysha Herrmann hosted a creative writing workshop. A time to hold space and try different writing formats (love notes, storytelling through lists, and recipes) to share at the open mic event.

P.O.T LUCK: You Are Enough Edition

A wonderful and warming evening event for Mental Health Month, Our Town Berri supported this Part of Things event at the Monash Hall. A night of sharing, connection! of the brave community who got up to the microphone to share are so proud of themselves!

Workbench for the Mind

KAIZEN Business Support's Workbench for the Mind provides a safe, supportive space where people can change for the better to uncover their own inner resources that can be used to improve their wellbeing.

Discover Your Success NLP Workshop

A series of positive wellbeing workshops from Changing Mindsets Coaching, working to empower, helping participants take control of their thoughts, emotions, and actions so they can unlock your true potential.

Hearts for Hope

Participants come together to weave a "Heart Of Hope" – a small heart-shaped wire structure with wool to wrap and weave. This event encouraged discussions around hope as participants left messages for community to read.

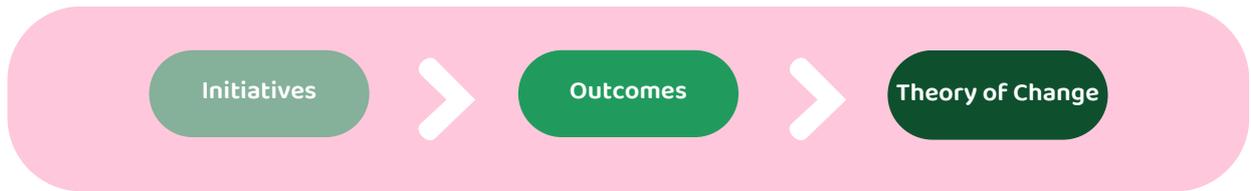
Umbrella

The Our Town Berri **Umbrella** captures all of our initiatives and categorises them. As we're at our mid-way point through the initial project timeline, we thought we'd capture the whole picture!



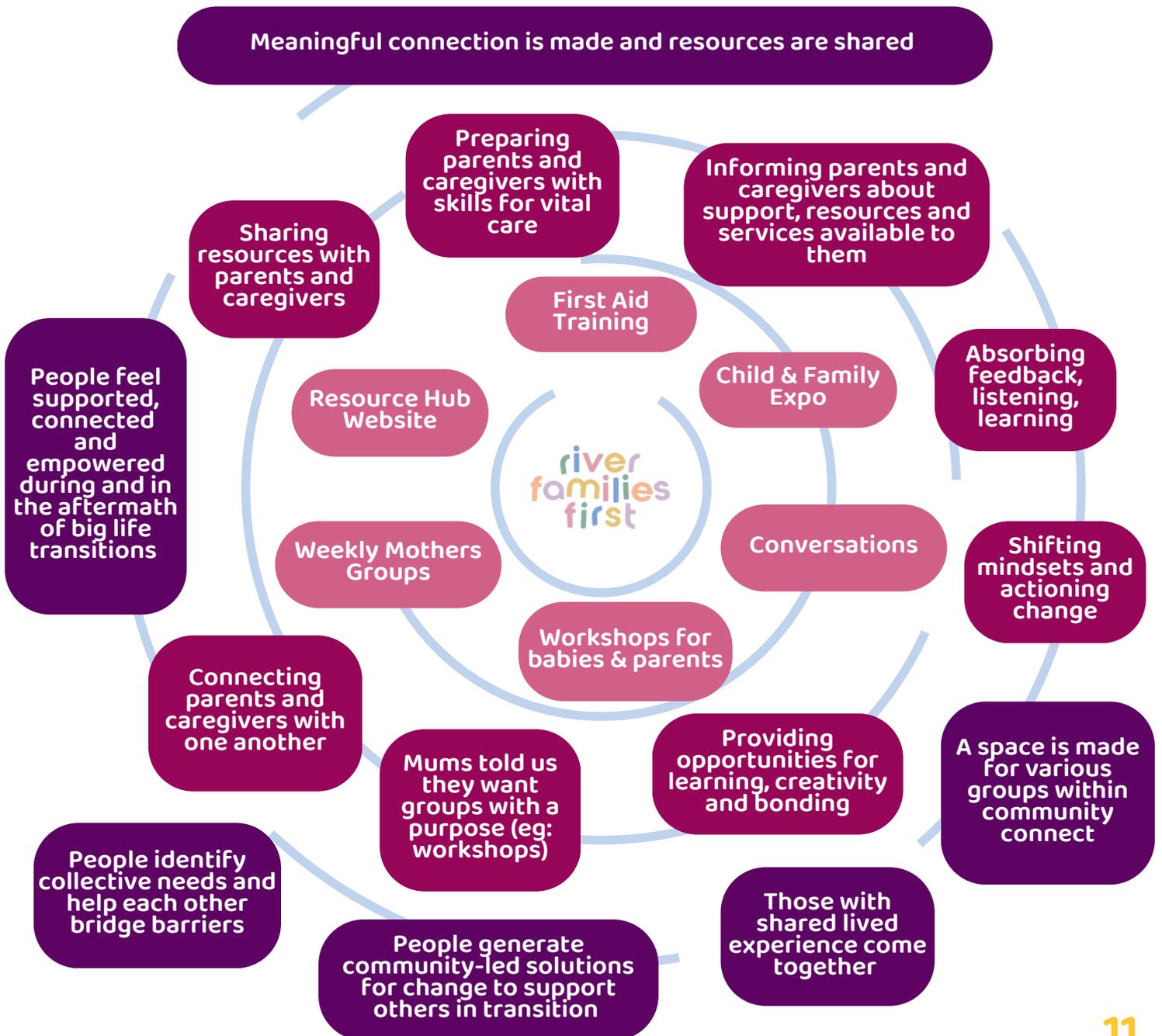
Ripples

The **Berri Community** initiatives and how they ripple out into to our 10-year goals in our Theory of Change



Ripples

The **River Families First** initiatives and how they ripple out into to our 10-year goals in our Theory of Change



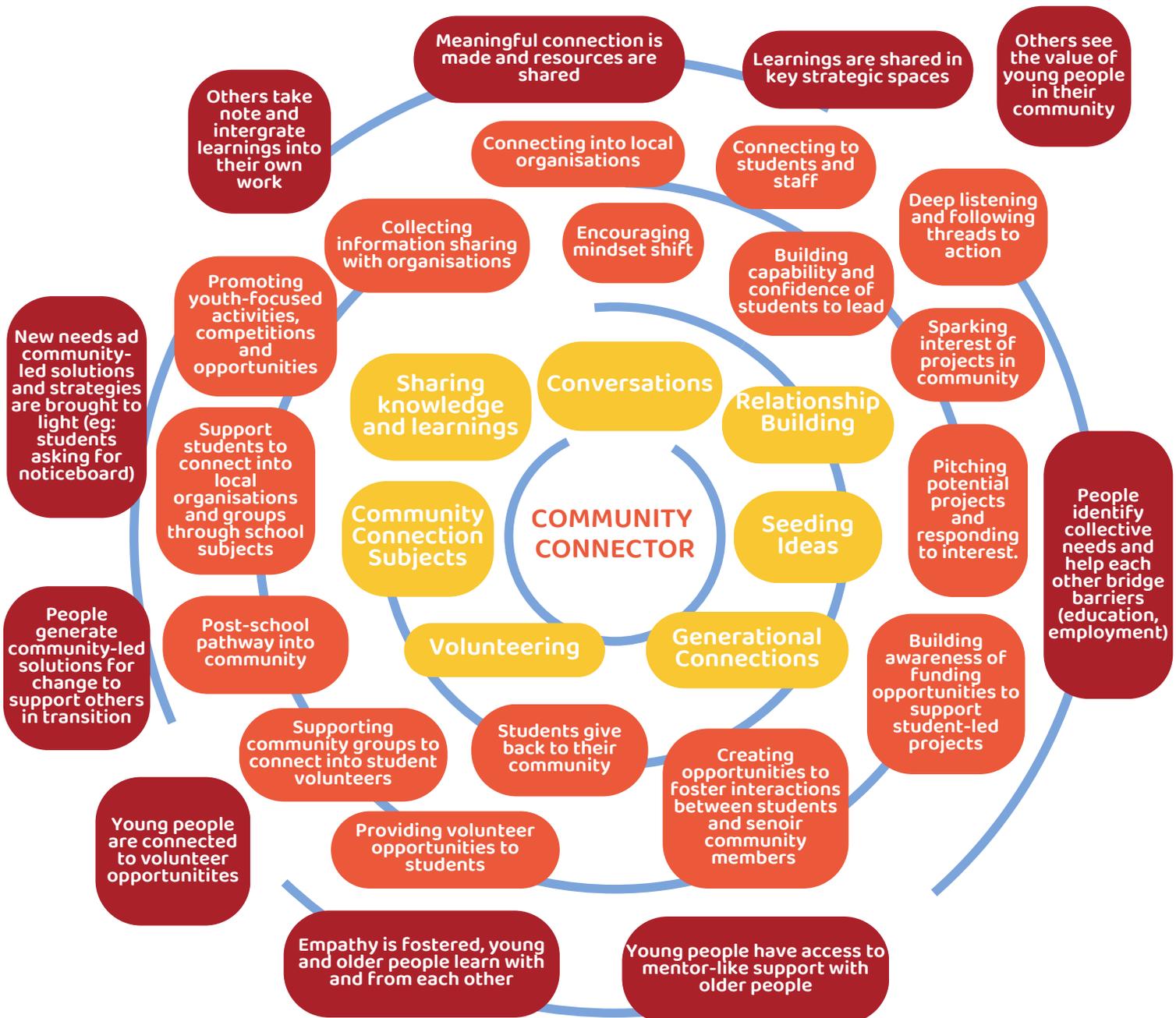
Ripples

The **Berri Regional Secondary College** and **Berri Primary School** initiatives and how they ripple out into to our 10-year goals in our Theory of Change



Ripples

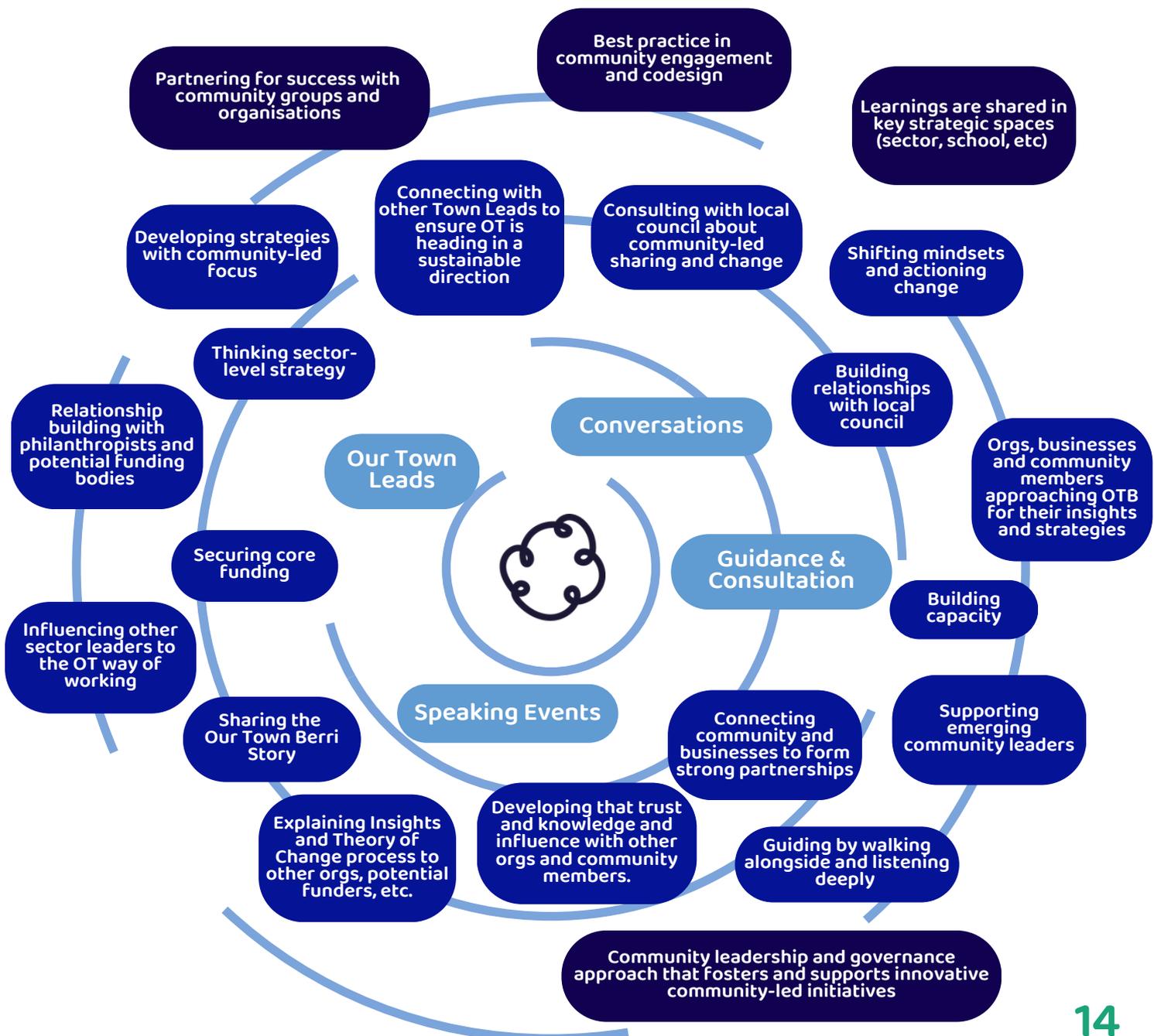
The **Community Connector** initiatives and how they ripple out into to our 10-year goals in our Theory of Change



Ripples

The **Our Town Leads** initiatives and how they ripple out into to our 10-year goals in our Theory of Change.

Please note: The TOC does not properly acknowledge the work of the leads. Their work at sector level and speaking to the OT movement is deeply influential.



Impact Stories

Nunga Driving

A student from Berri Regional Secondary College's Learning Centre has undergone the Nunga Driving program. This student faces barriers around communication and struggled to organise the transition to getting their Ps. They have now developed their confidence and social skills with the help of their driving instructor. With their Ps, they'll be able to travel independently to their shifts at their part time job!

"I love the routine and helpful strategies Mark has provided me to build my confidence in Driving." - Student



Art Club Program

Some words from various students about the impact of Art Club!

"I loved this year of art club. It was amazing and I just wanted to say thank you Karl for teaching me how to express my imagination." - Student

"Art Club made me feel more comfy and confident talking to others. I like how we can just be ourselves in Art Club. I hope this becomes a thing at BRSC!" - Student

Friends of Berri

Some words from a regular Friends of Berri participant about her experience with the group over its lifetime:

"Being a member of Friends of Berri gives everyday citizens a voice. We have opportunities to connect with a variety of people and visitors from different Community groups, council and organisations. Listening to different perspectives from our community about different topics presented. We have opportunities to raise what concerns we may have in our community and seek feedback from others. It's a positive, safe place to discuss matters and consult others. It's accepting of everyone from all ages." - Di Sully



Data Metrics

**ATTENDANCE
NUMBERS**

1384

PARTNERSHIPS

87

**INNOVATION SPACE
ACTIVATED BY
COMMUNITY**

60

**COMMUNITY
ACTIVITIES**

101

**SPEAKER
EVENTS**

**so many we lost
track!**



To the Future

Our Town Berri is dedicated to continuing trekking and developing our already-formed pathways. Our team's passions moving forward still reflect strongly in what we've worked on and achieved in 2024.

We will continue thinking upwards and outwards, and watch the ripples grow.

Influence

We're seeing a shift in our community in understanding the What, How and Why of Our Town Berri. Our way of working is starting to influence businesses, local groups, individuals, and local council. Our Town Berri is influencing how organisations, community groups and Government go about their work and engage with the community. Funder practices have shifted as a result of Our Town Berri's advocacy. Community led and informed processes, partnerships, and learning our way through change underpin the work of Our Town Berri and are something others want to know more about.

Our Stories

Berri has such a thriving artistic community with emerging and established artists of all disciplines and ages. Our Town Berri wants to utilise the skills and passion of those artists. Relationships with organisations like Riverland Youth Theatre and Part of Things mean we can continue to build this relationship with the arts – and, in turn, Berri's relationship with its identity once more.

Young People

To continue our work with young people, we want to see those relationships develop and thread into Our Town Berri. We would like to see and hear our young people in spaces where they can make a difference. Our Town Berri has created pathways for various groups in the community to connect with young people through volunteering. Strengthening community identity, pride, and culture for young people has positive ripples for how connected they feel to their community and how the broader community perceives them.

Community Engagement

The Our Town Berri Core Team is working at full capacity, but we know there are keen community members that are keen to jump in and begin developing their own initiatives and we want to make sure those passions are supported. Microgranting is one of many ways we're thinking about threading the community into the Our Town Berri way of thinking and working.

Building Capabilities

Members of the Our Town Berri team are developing capabilities and contributing to building and developing their community members. Building capability and knowledge will further improve contribution and engagement in Berri. By building the capabilities of our community members, we'll see a more connected and happier Berri.



Say Cheese



Connections and Partners

Thank you to everyone who's been part of the Our Town Berri journey so far!

