



2025 IMPACT REPORT

A THOUSAND MEN'S VOICES

Talking about healthy masculinities and wellbeing.




THE MEN'S TABLE
Strength To Care



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Men's Table acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Because we listen to and acknowledge stories, we are particularly grateful for the guidance and input that we receive from men with a lived experience of suicide. That lived experience contributes greatly to our strength as an organisation, and allows us to respond to all men with care and compassion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONTRIBUTORS

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SCAN HERE for
the white paper



A Thousand Men's Voices White Paper provides a deeper dive into the diverse perspectives shared by men about Healthy Masculinities in the 2024 and 2025 Annual Table 'Have your Say' surveys

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DEDICATION & THANKS

This report belongs to the men that sit at Men's Tables, who generously give us their feedback every year.

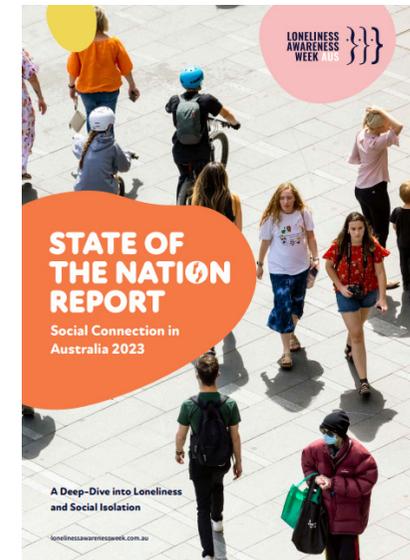
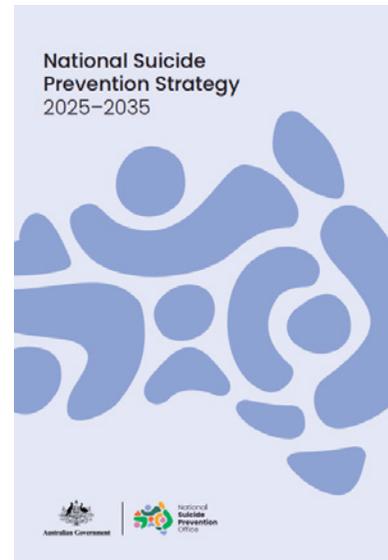
The report draws on written feedback from more than 1000 men who sit at Tables, mostly from our 2024 and 2025 Annual "Have Your Say" survey.

We're deeply indebted to the men who have contributed their thoughts on versions of masculinity, and what it means to be a man in this time and place.



OUR NEW MODEL OF CONNECTION HAS 6 YEARS OF EVIDENCE, OF ADDRESSING REAL NEED.

The Men's Table model aligns with the recommendations of Federal and State Suicide Prevention Strategies, and the way forward for Ending Loneliness Together.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As a young Not-For-Profit organisation that was officially registered on 25th day of September 2019; we have in 6 years clearly established ourselves as a safe and supportive place for men to connect and build caring relationships.

I am truly grateful to our amazing workers and Kitchen Hands (equally amazing volunteers) for the care they provide new Tables as they form, and the ongoing “health checks” for our established 260 plus Tables, and the 2,800 men sitting at Tables.

David Poynton, our Co-Founder, has shown outstanding leadership. Through his caring management and his focus on securing long-term funding, he has successfully met the growing demand for new Tables.

Over the past year we have continued our research on what our men say about masculinity, and what happens at and beyond Tables. What has become clear is there is a common thread: that men do care, and caring is a central part of what our men say are healthy masculinities.

They care through the regular rhythm of gathering — month after month — and we begin to see what care really looks like among men.

Care is in the quiet nod of understanding when a man shares something vulnerable.

Care is in the follow-up text the next day: “You doing okay, mate?”

Care is in holding space — without judgment, without trying to fix.

One man said to us, “The Table saved my marriage.”

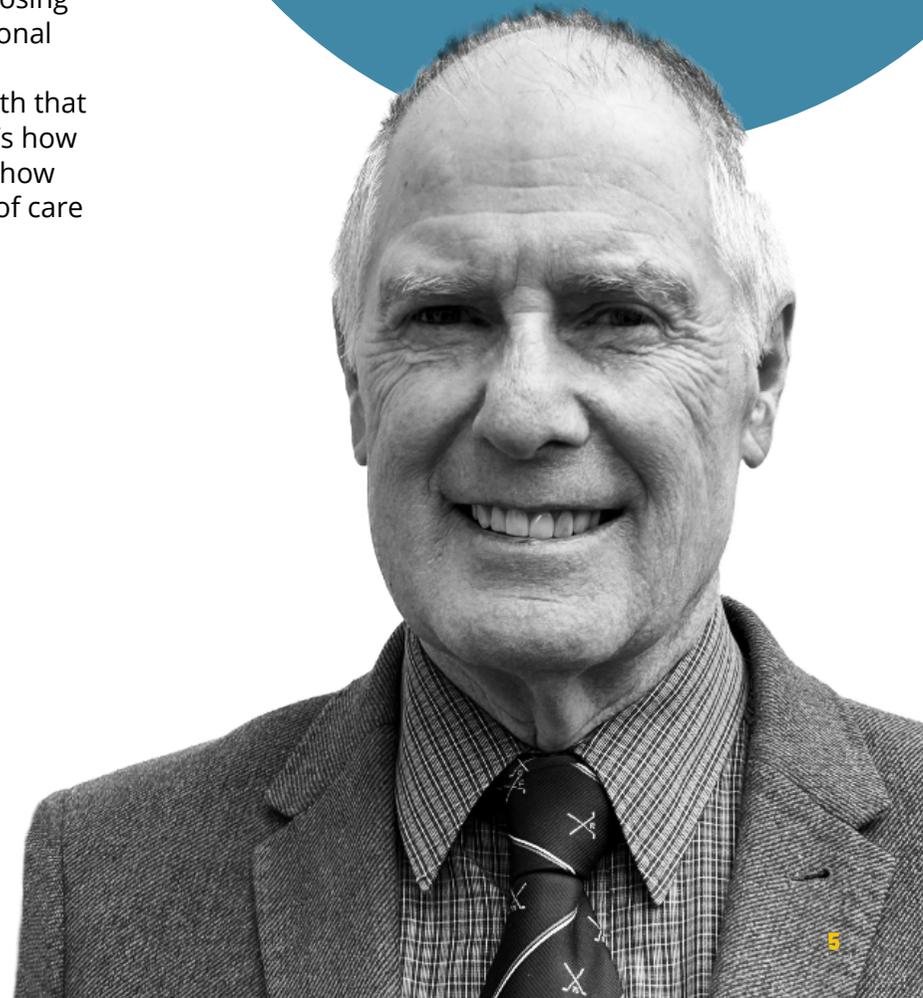
Another said, “I feel like a better father now. I actually listen.”

These aren’t small wins. They’re life-changing.

At The Men’s Table, our men care by choosing to openly share and learn to build emotional connective tissue — even when it’s hard. Men are rediscovering the kind of strength that draws them closer to who they are. That’s how men define healthy masculinities. That’s how men care. And in this world — that kind of care is needed more than ever.

Robert Poynting
Men’s Table Chair

**OUR MEN CARE BY
CHOOSING TO OPENLY
SHARE AND LEARN
TO BUILD EMOTIONAL
CONNECTIVE TISSUE**



LETTER FROM THE CEO

When Ben Hughes and I started The Men's Table organisation in 2019, a crisis that continues today was unfolding for men all around us; the mental health challenges, confronting suicide rates and family violence stemming from social isolation, family breakdown, economic hardship, unresolved trauma and other social determinants.

Fortunately, the DNA discerned from the original Table, expressed in The Men's Table Fundamentals, gives clear and simple guidance to new groups of men about how they can form and grow as healthy, enduring, trusted and safe peer groups.

Underlying the challenges facing men and their families are deeply rooted narratives and identities about what it means to be a man.

Rich text responses from over 1,000 men at Men's Tables in 2024 and 2025 have been analysed to understand their evolving perceptions of healthy masculinities and how the Men's Table is helping these positive, subtle and profound changes.

In this year's Impact Report we are excited to share 6 key themes that highlight a flourishing of men's healthy, caring and connected attitudes and behaviours.

I personally find this to be an incredibly useful and positive counter-narrative to the prevailing so-called 'toxic' narratives that currently circulate about men. At a time when boys and younger men are grappling with their roles in society, it is crucial that they see 'caring connection' and strength as vulnerability being positively role modelled by mature men.

At The Men's Table, we begin with a strengths based approach, and see the central role that good men play in healthy families and communities. This in no way diminishes the central role of women in healthy families and communities, nor does it overlook the challenges we all face in navigating changing gendered narratives.

We call for positive narratives to be widely used; about men, with men, by men.

Thanks to our funders, the Tables they helped form continue to prosper at low cost, whilst building local community capacity and preventative support. This is a leveraged investment model, with the upfront costs delivering enduring benefits as Tables endure. We are keen to forge long lasting partnerships with funders so this important work can continue.

A big thank you to the amazing and committed paid Kitchen Team. We're very grateful to the growing team of volunteer Kitchen Hands contributing to 'mens work' in our communities. And thanks to the volunteer Board and Committee members who generously provide guidance and expertise to support our continued growth and good governance.

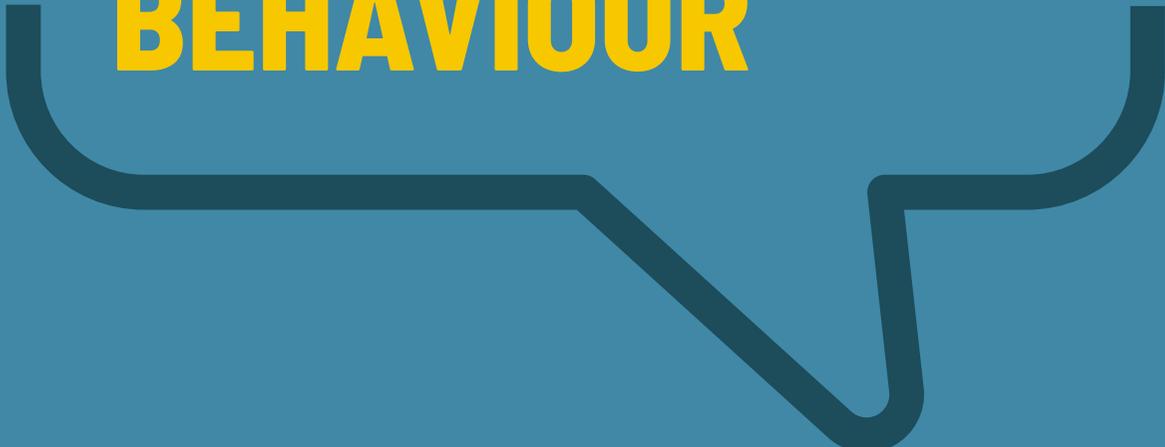
David Pointon
Men's Table Co-Founder and CEO

**WE CALL FOR
POSITIVE NARRATIVES
TO BE WIDELY USED;
ABOUT MEN, WITH
MEN, BY MEN**



OUR PURPOSE

**TO MAKE CARING
CONNECTION A
UNIVERSAL MALE
BEHAVIOUR**





WHAT WE DO

WE ACTIVATE, BUILD & CARE FOR TABLES

Tables are safe places for diverse men to have quality and intentional conversations about their lives and wellbeing.

Tables allow men to openly express their emotions and vulnerabilities without fear of judgement, leading to meaningful long-term reciprocal connections that form a community of mutual support.

AN UNFOLDING UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTHY MASCULINITIES

95%

of men agreed with the statement:

A healthy version of what it means to be a man includes; men being able to openly express care for themselves, other men, their families and their communities.*

Based on the analysis of rich text data from our 2024 Annual Table 'Have your Say'

* more than half strongly agree

I think this definition is positive instead of the widespread narrative that describes a masculinity as toxic which vilifies men, and that makes many men anxious about discussing masculinity.



The adoption of this new definition of masculinity would go a long way towards eliminating many issues men are involved with today, from loneliness and isolation to domestic violence and substance abuse.



I believe the wider community NEEDS these qualities in men for a healthier community. I like that it uses the word care as a masculine quality. I like that it puts caring of self first and extends out. That seems right.



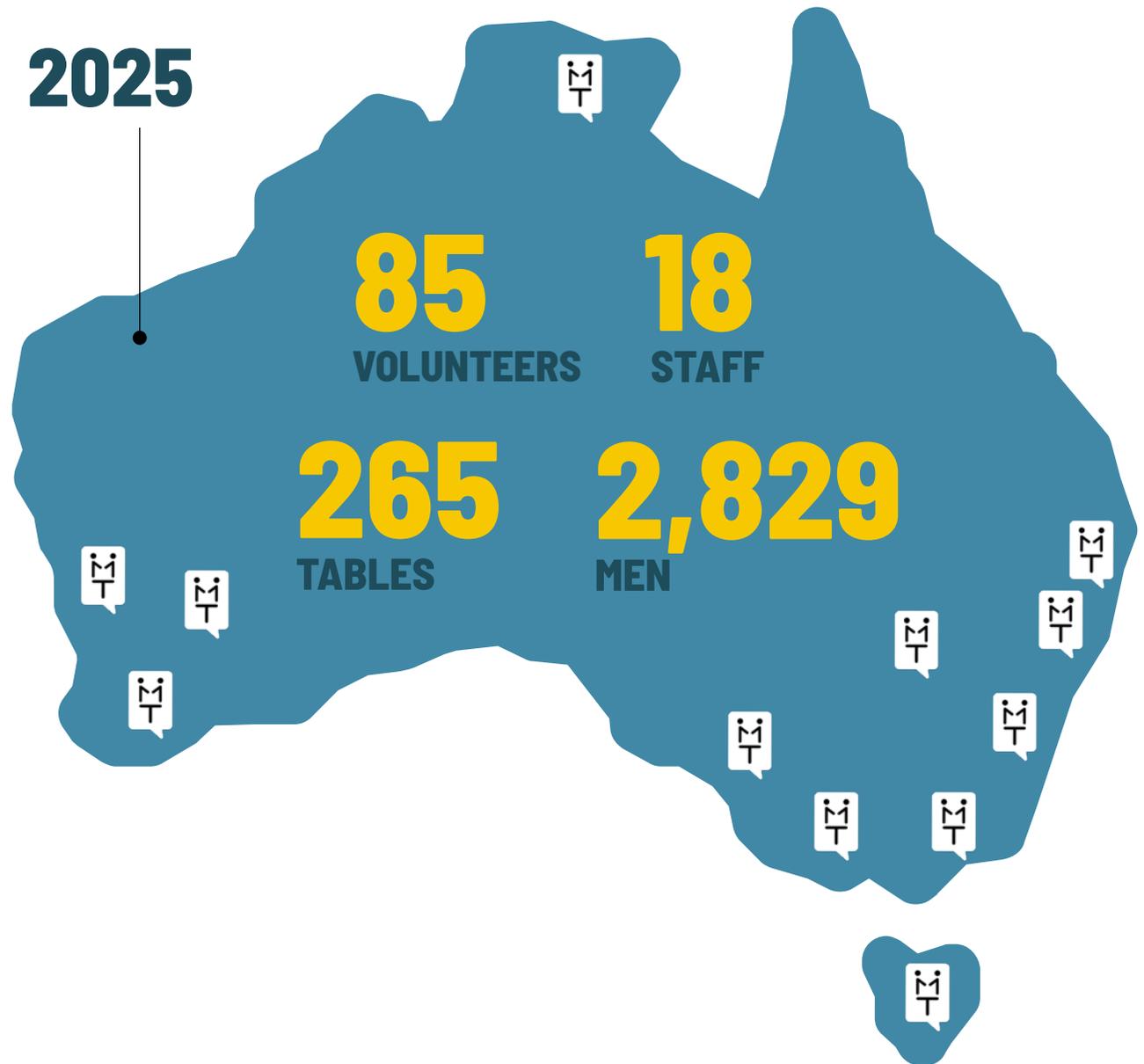
A SCALABLE SOLUTION PROGRESS TO DATE

An efficient, repeatable model
meeting a widespread need.

2019



2025



MALIK'S STORY

**REGARDLESS OF
BACKGROUND, AGE,
CULTURE, WE ALL
SHARE SIMILAR
THINGS**

I moved to Australia two years ago and also became a new dad. I have struggled to make friends since childhood, and I was feeling that my mental health was not great and I had no real help. Part of that was me not wanting to feel judged or have people wondering 'what's wrong with this guy?'

I found out about The Men's Table through Council, and I decided to take advantage of the opportunity and go along. I wanted to join a group that wasn't just about a hobby, because that doesn't allow you to share your feelings really. I had joined a men's group before coming to Australia but it was virtual, so this being in person makes it easier to build connections. I also can see how the other men deal with things and gain other perspectives from listening to them.

I've noticed that many males share similar thought patterns and thinking processes in how we deal with things in our life. Since men don't normally talk like we do at our Table, it's been helpful and makes me feel normal.

Our Table is an open place and even though we were strangers, we all get on, we share the roles and are all equals. We ask each other for help if we need it and we treat each other with respect and compassion.

I like that it's not a round table for problems, we're not just talking about negatives. We all share the good things that are happening too. I am enjoying it. It's fun, I get to communicate openly and my wife is supportive of me helping myself to improve my mental health and connect with other men.

I'm learning that I'm not the only one to have experiences in my life. Regardless of background, age, culture, we all share similar things. It makes me feel, not better, but that I can relate. It's not just me. I feel less alone.

WHAT'S IMPACTING OUR MEN

While men join Tables for a variety of reasons, the data suggests that The Men's Table serves a population seeking relief from varied, highly personal isolation, distress and life events, that can't always be fully captured by broad labels.

Having a crisis or something negative going on is not a criteria for joining a Table. Lots of men join to meet more people, make friends and get connection.

Purpose & meaning

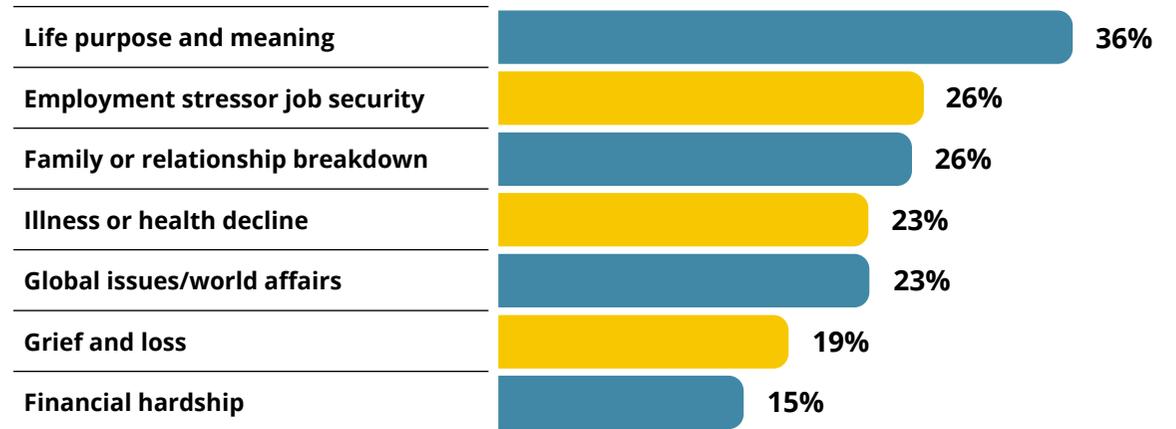


56%

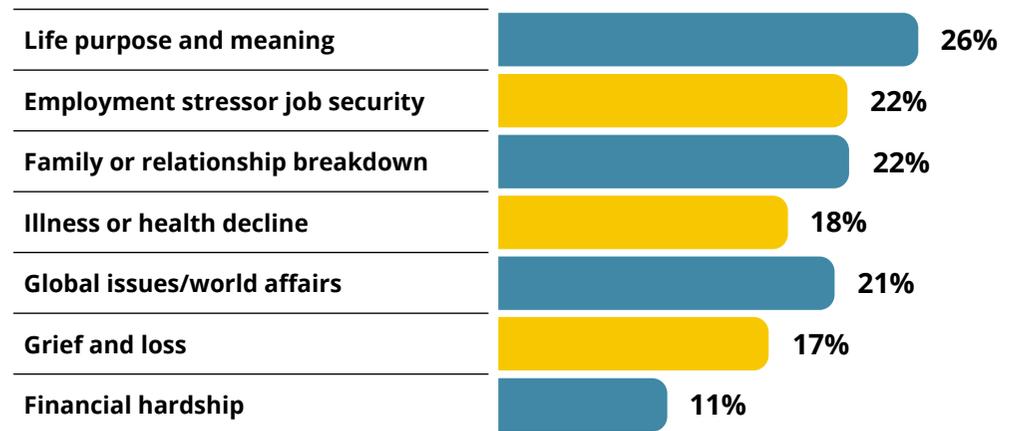
of men report an increased sense of purpose after being at a Table.

Comparing data to last year, there has been a slight fall in the percentage of men reporting being impacted by most life stressors.

2024



2025

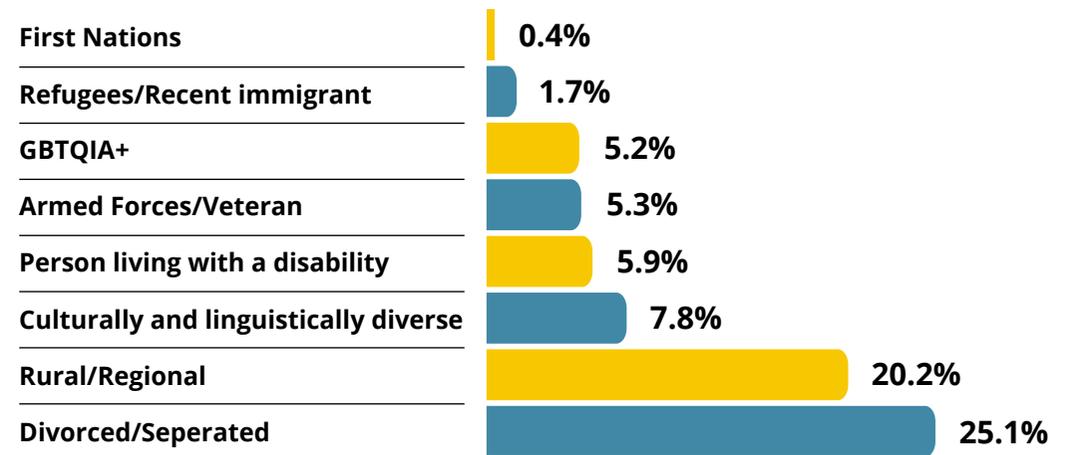


6% of men noted coming for specific reasons outside of these categories, such as post-cancer, chronic pain, widower, carer for elderly parent.

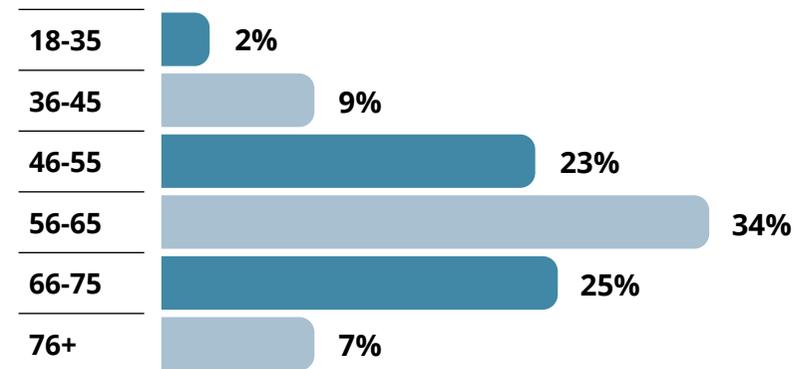
WHO SITS AT MEN'S TABLES?

Across 2024 and 2025, two categories stand out as major factors in membership, Divorced/Separated men and Regional/Rural men, suggesting that isolated or lonely living circumstances may be a powerful motivator for joining.

The bulk of the membership (82%) is in the 46–75 age range, which suggests a particular need for community during these life stages. This seems appropriate as men move on from work¹, experience loss and diminishing social circles, and look for new meaning and purpose.



Age spread 2025



1. Neville S, Adams J, et al
Loneliness in Men 60 Years and Over:
The Association With Purpose in Life. Am
J Mens Health. 2018 Jul;12(4):730-739.

STEPHEN'S STORY

I WAS IN A BAD WAY.. BUT THEY KEPT LISTENING

When I found out about The Men's Table from an ad in my local shopping centre I was in a bad way. My daughters were in relationships with dangerous men, my ex-wife had died by suicide and I had been hospitalised from a physical assault by a neighbour. I was feeling mentally overwhelmed and my sense of physical safety at home had been impacted.

With my background as a lawyer, I was used to being the fixer, not the victim and I was struggling to find the tools I needed to cope with everything that was happening around me. The idea of a group centred around food, conversation and a room full of strangers appealed.

The first thing I felt was that I wasn't alone. All of the men in the room were there for their own reasons, with their own issues. They are all kind, caring, gentle people and I am sure I dominated the conversation for a while each month but they kept listening. They showed such concern that it gave me the impetus to go and see professionals to help me with everything I was going through.

Now a few months in, I am building friendships with a couple of the men I share common interests with, and I am learning to listen better and be more empathetic, because I know how much it helped me. For anyone thinking about a Table I would say just go - find a Table near you and turn up every month. You can't understand the benefits until you've been there and it will surprise you.

Going to my Table is the highlight of my month and I always get there early so I don't miss any of it. That's how eager I am. I can't tell you it's been a miraculous cure, but it has enabled me to take steps in the right direction because of the care from the men at my Table.

IMPACT

The Men's Table provides a safe, trusted environment that puts in place protective factors against suicide, mental health issues and family violence.

OUR IMPACT AT TABLES

Men Care by Listening



93%

of men feel they are heard, seen and understood at their Table.



77%

of men are better listeners

Men Care by creating safe spaces to talk



96%

of men say their Table is a safe place to share

Men Care by being there



76%

of men say that if they were going through a rough time they could call someone from their Table.

Leading to better health outcomes

Mental health & wellbeing



85%

of men say the Table supports their mental health and wellbeing.

Coping skills



66%

are better able to cope with the highs and lows of life.

GP visit



50%

of men say that they're more likely to get a medical check up.

Therapeutic help



44%

are more likely to seek professional help for their mental health if needed.

**WHEN MEN ARE ABLE
TO EXPRESS CARE AND
VULNERABILITY, IT
LEADS TO STRONGER
RELATIONSHIPS,
BETTER MENTAL
HEALTH OUTCOMES,
AND MORE INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES.**



HOW MEN CARE BEYOND TABLES

By supporting the holistic health of Table members, who are actively staying and growing, the Men's Table is directly investing in the quality of relationships within families, workplaces, and communities, proving that its work is essential for the wellbeing of society at large.

From the women who are partners of men who sit at Tables



Taken from our "Ripple Effect" Report in 2023

Care for family



60%

of men say they are more able to care for their families

Care for community



54%

are more able to care for their communities

Better role models



68%

are better able to model healthy versions of being a man

Positive role model



82%

have increased desire to support young men to be good men

Relationships beyond Table



58%

of men say that the Men's Table has had a positive impact on their relationships with friends and colleagues outside their Table.

Community belonging



60%

of men say they feel they belong to a wider community

MASCULINITY SHOULD ENCOURAGE EMOTIONAL OPENNESS, COMPASSION, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION.



I am finding it more prevalent today that men are looking out for each other more in society as a whole. Initiatives like The Men's Table are helping this movement.



I believe that being a healthy man involves recognizing that masculinity is neither shameful nor negative. Our men's tables highlight our diversity including strengths and struggles, while modelling healthy male behaviours and providing support.



PAM'S STORY

Psychologist

**THIS IS HOW WE
BUILD HEALTHY
AND THRIVING
COMMUNITIES**

I wanted to thank The Men's Table for their presence in the community. I have received some great feedback from someone who has just joined... He was very anxious prior to attending, and on arrival, so two times he could have walked away.

He did attend and felt more comfortable as he was welcomed by others attending. He said that during his first meeting he was quiet and listened, and felt that it was safe, respectful, inclusive and "just normal really". He said it was good that men could talk together in this way, without alcohol, bravado, negativity or violence.

By the end of his first attendance he was able to share a bit about himself and join in. He said he did not feel pressured or awkward, and wished he had known about it earlier. He felt included and respected.

A huge thank you to Men's Table for creating this opportunity for men to connect with each other and support each other in such a "normal" way. This is how we build healthy and thriving communities.

MEN & MASCULINITIES

More than 2,000 rich text responses were received in 2024 and 2025 with men reflecting on their varying and evolving experiences of masculinity.

This has been thematically analysed using a Mixed Methods approach.

Detailed findings can be found in a paper titled 'Developing Healthy Masculinities at The Men's Table' via the QR code.

The following pages outline 6 key themes.

SCAN HERE for
the white paper



1 REJECTING RIGID MASCULINE NORMS

Men are evolving away from 'traditional' masculine norms, prevalent and accepted in the past.

The dominant role model for most men was characterised by emotional stoicism ... where aloofness was the norm, and men were taught to "suck it up, stop whining". It was the norm to have an emotionally distant father figure.

Positive exceptions to the rule were uncles, grandfathers, teachers, community leaders, and of course some dads too. These exceptions were characterized by kindness, honesty, stability, and integrity, providing alternative models of masculinity rooted in character rather than command.

I'M UNLEARNING THE TOXIC MASCULINITY MODELLED TO ME, LEARNING TO BE AUTHENTIC, CONGRUENT AND OPEN, PLUS GOING TO A PLACE OF VULNERABILITY. ALSO ASKING FOR SUPPORT WHEN I NEED IT AND LOVINGLY CHALLENGING MY PEERS WHEN I NOTICE ASPECTS OF TOXIC MASCULINITY



2 VULNERABILITY AS STRENGTH

Vulnerability is seen as courage and strength, not weakness. Men are improving their internal reflective skills and focusing more on emotional intelligence.

Healthy masculinity embraces emotional intelligence, encouraging men to express their feelings openly and seek support when needed. It also promotes respect for diversity, advocating for acceptance of all genders, sexual orientations, and identities.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO RE-FRAME FOR MEN THAT STRENGTH INCLUDES BEING OPEN WITH OUR EMOTIONS

By nature of being a kind, loving, caring, real, humorous man, I believe we help to dismiss the unrealistic expectations that unhealthy masculinities place on us.



3 COMPASSION NOT COMPETITION

Our men embrace non-competitive relationships over being competitive.

Healthy, respectful relationships prioritise active and empathetic listening over the “Know-it-all” tendency, eschewing unsolicited advice or “fixing”

WE WORK BETTER WHEN WE ARE SUPPORTED BY OTHERS RATHER THAN BEING A ‘LONE RANGER’



I listen with a view to hear what the guy is saying in order to support him rather than formulating an answer to his problem in order to show how clever I am.



It's about taking responsibility for one's actions and growth; it's about using strength to protect, not control; it's about uplifting others, not competing destructively.



4 AUTHENTICITY AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Men shared that healthy masculinity is being a good man, and also that it is just “being a good human”.

It is to live authentically and by one’s own truth on a path that is meaningful, becoming aware and comfortable with all parts of who one is.

This includes serving as active citizens and positive role models who prioritise integrity, inclusion, and the thoughtful protection of vulnerable people.

HOW I PRESENT, HOLD AND RESPECT MYSELF IS REFLECTED TO THOSE AROUND ME



Being able to show up just as I am, and not have to put on a brave face, or have to be someone I’m not.



You have to look past mainstream ideas and learn what is actually important to you.



5 CARE AS A DEFINING MASCULINE BEHAVIOUR

Care is a universal prerequisite for a man's healthy engagement with the world.

A healthy version of what it means to be a man includes men being able to openly express care for themselves, other men, their families and their communities.

CARE HAS TO START INSIDE SELF OTHERWISE IT IS AN OBLIGATION NOT A GIFT

If we as men can't openly express care for ourselves and other men and so forth how are our sons supposed to learn the same.



Just because we are male does not give us liberty to behave differently with regards to self care or compassion, we all deserve this. Men, Women, LBGTQIA+.



A man must look after himself so he is then able to care for his family, friends and community.



6 POSITIVE ROLE MODELLING FOR YOUNGER MEN

Our men say that it is important to be a good role model for younger men, calling out 'toxic' behaviour where they see it.

They recognise that a lack of role models can mean young men are influenced online and by social media, although our men also say that they aren't equipped to meet young men online.

SOCIETY NEEDS POSITIVE MASCULINITY, LEADING BY EXAMPLE AND HAVING OPEN AND HONEST CONVERSATIONS

These days I believe older men need to call out bad behaviour - don't allow racist slurs, sexist comments, put downs - to go unchallenged.



As a father of 3 teenage boys I can see the challenges we all face with looking after ourselves. This was never role modelled for me by my father or other male role models.



In our world today, young men are vulnerable to a whole new experience that no other group of men have ever had, Social Media. It can be extremely destructive.



WHAT'S NEXT?

DIVERSITY AT TABLES

It is a strategic goal to increase the diversity of men at Tables.

Empathy grows through diversity



89%

of men at Tables say that hearing diverse stories improves their empathy.

The Men's Table community is predominantly composed of middle-aged to older men (average age 56 years), who are generally well-educated, Caucasian (83%), and heterosexual (87.6%). The bulk of the membership (81.2%) is concentrated in the 46-75 age range.

Key diversity projects:

- An analysis of where Tables are in Australia mapped to diverse suburbs shows that we have a good spread of Tables.
- This suggests that diverse men aren't yet showing up at Tables in the same proportions as the diverse local communities.
- We're currently working with four groups of men: First Nation, Asian, GBTIQA+ and 18-35 year old men, working with them to identify where we can improve engagement and access.

Healthy masculinity embraces emotional intelligence, encouraging men to express their feelings openly and seek support when needed. It also promotes respect for diversity, advocating for acceptance of all genders, sexual orientations, and identities.

Being an open gay man it is comforting to be accepted by other males and not seen as a freak.



A PILOT FOR YOUNGER, UNIVERSITY MEN

In 2025 we worked with the University of South Australia to form and care for two Men's Tables on campus.

Of those that responded to a survey: All men agreed that because of the Table program they were more confident in asking for help from student services.

The majority of men were under 35, with about half being under 25.

About 2/3rds of the cohort was of CALD background and

100%

of students said they would recommend the Table to others.

I'VE BEEN ABLE TO BE AUTHENTICALLY MYSELF AND BEEN ABLE TO SHARE MY FEELINGS WITH OTHER MEN



I'm grateful I feel safe to share the moment with different friends, different men, and that we all support each other.



The Men's Table is a great place for me to be open and vulnerable about what's going on in my life.



WILLIAM'S STORY

**IT'S ONE PLACE
WHERE BEING
OPEN AND HONEST
IS WELCOMED AND
ENCOURAGED.**

Our Table is a diverse group of men which is great, because they are not men I would have met any other way. I look forward to catching up with them every month and we enjoy a good atmosphere when we meet. The group provides a supportive and non-judgemental environment that I don't get anywhere else. It's one place where being open and honest is welcomed and encouraged. Normally if you go to the pub to relax and ease your stress people don't want to hear what's really happening, so I value having a place for this deeper connection.

Sitting at a Table has given me the opportunity to regularly check in with myself. Knowing our meeting is coming up makes me reflect on my month and think deeply about how I actually am and what I want to share. I think that's a good thing and not something I did before.

It's also made me realise how many people there are wanting deeper connection and the opportunity to have more honest and open conversations. I think often we look around and imagine everyone is happy with mostly superficial connections, but it's not true. The men at my Table are all wanting more.

I've made some good mates, we meet for bike rides and help each other with things, so it has definitely met my needs for making friendships outside of the ones I have with my partner. The Gold Coast is a place where people often come from somewhere else, so we're all sort of in the same boat struggling to settle in, make friends and build a new network. A Table is a good place for men to be able to share their struggles and triumphs with others that have been in similar situations.

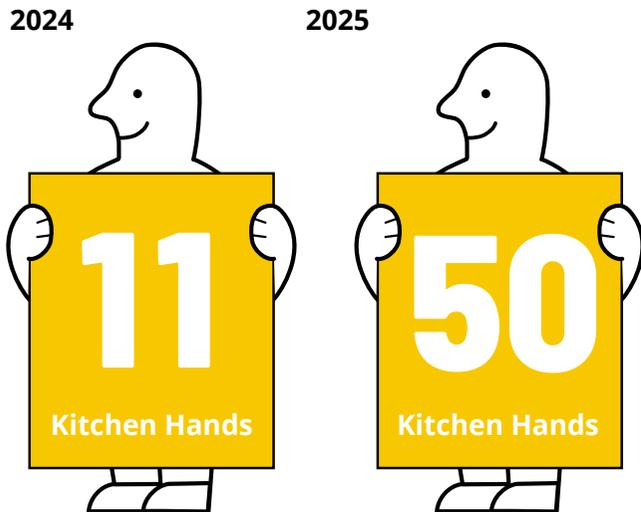
EXTENDING OUR VOLUNTEER KITCHEN HAND PROGRAM

We have a growing need for Tables across the country.

Our volunteer program (our wonderful “Kitchen Hands”) help us deliver more of our program to more men.

It also gives an opportunity for those men that want to give back to be involved in creating a future of healthy men.

We will continue to grow our Kitchen Hands as a way for men to give back, meet need, and make the model a sustainable one.



I FIND IT REWARDING THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GIVE BACK TO A CAUSE THAT HAS HELPED ME.

Kitchen Hand



I enjoy connecting with other men at other Tables, supporting them in their Table journeys, and specifically: stepping into speaking powerfully about the benefits of being at a Table for newbies

Kitchen Hand



The teamwork and camaraderie in the Kitchen have impacted me the most, teaching me valuable lessons in collaboration and resilience.

Kitchen Hand



A VALUABLE PROGRAM

In Australia, the total economic cost of suicidal behaviour (including direct, indirect and intangible costs) was estimated to be in the order of

\$30BN

in 2018

(Productivity Commission, 2020).

Every program has a different ROI, but consistently the ROI for mental health and peer to peer programs shows the ratio to be approximately

\$1:\$3

PARTNERSHIPS

EVALUATION AND ACADEMIC PARTNERS

In conjunction with the Queensland Mental Health Commission, James Cook University are conducting an external evaluation of new Tables being established across QLD from June 2024 - June 2025.

The Men's Table is partnering with Macquarie University, Monash University and the University of Copenhagen. Through our student placement programs, psychology students have the chance to apply their learning in real-world settings that support our work. These partnerships not only bring valuable skills and fresh insights to The Men's Table but also help us keep learning and evolving as an organisation.

FOUNDATIONS

Thanks to the generosity of organisations including Snow Foundation, Wilson Foundation, Hands Across Canberra, Geelong Community Foundation, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, James Frizelle Charitable Foundation, James N Kirby Foundation, and Perpetual, we have been able to serve men and their families in Canberra and Southern NSW, Geelong and region, Gippsland, Newcastle and Hunter region, and South East Queensland in 2025.

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

We are appreciative of the Government funders that have enabled us to engage with communities across the country, including many regional centres and small towns. Thanks to Commonwealth Dept of Health, Disability and Ageing, a number of Primary Health Networks, Qld. and WA Mental Health Commissions, Health departments of NSW and Tasmania, and many local councils across the country.



JAMES N. KIRBY
FOUNDATION



Australian Government
Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing



An Australian Government Initiative



Queensland
Mental Health
Commission



Mental Health
Commission



Government of South Australia
Preventive Health SA



THE MEN'S TABLE
Strength To Care