Project Status Update

Reporting cycle:	1 October 16 – 30 June 2017 (End of Year 1)	**Date:**	13 July 2017

Designated Charity: ReachOut Australia

Funded initiative: As a youth mental health organisation, ReachOut Australia is leading the evidence for digital self-help for young people. This project will investigate the barriers and challenges that young people living in regional and rural areas face, turning these learnings into recommendations for service improvements and innovations so that we better meet the needs and improve mental health outcomes of young people living in these areas.

This project will:
- Work with health professionals and other community-based service providers and young people in regional and rural areas to ensure we understand the challenges that young people and their communities face, and ascertain what is needed from digital support services
- Increase awareness of help-seeking options for these young people – especially when in-community options may be limited or do not exist
- Define pathways for young Australians in regional and rural areas on and through ReachOut.com, so that the service is cognisant and accommodating of any unique challenges young people living in these areas may face
- Reach young people at key times during adolescence so that they better understand what is normal and what may be an issue, and are better equipped to respond to mental health and life-stage based challenges
- Ensure that local health and community services and networks understand the role that technology can play in supporting young people through difficulties
- Disseminate research findings to key audiences including other service providers (youth, health, community and education sectors), policymakers and funders, the research community, and local and national media outlets
- Better integrate digital self-help into the broader mental health system.

Snapshot overview: The Year 1 activities have focused on exploring any challenges that young people living in rural and regional Australia face, the way that they interact with mental health services in their communities and their general attitude to help-seeking.

Key activity for Year 1 has been implemented according to the project plan, and the project is on track for completion on schedule at the end of September 2017. The primary and secondary research components have been executed, and we are now entering an intensive analysis, triangulation, and dissemination phase.

Several factors have influenced the delivery of the project to date. The first of these was that we encountered challenges recruiting to the qualitative research phases via traditional methods. This necessitated adapting our recruitment protocols and channels, which pushed out the time frame for data collection slightly. However, a significant enabler to the project was that once we were able to attract rural and regional young people to the research, they were highly engaged. We have had very low attrition rates and high rates of participation in follow-up tasks across the locations, and their responses to the activities presented to them have been thoughtful and considered. Many young people have reflected that they have found being involved in the research to be a rewarding experience.

Another challenge related to recruitment was the legacy of helicopter researchers, or 'fly-in, fly-out' researchers, in which community are not consulted in all stages of the research, and do not have an opportunity to benefit from the knowledge assets that are extracted from their community. As a consequence, these communities, and particularly Indigenous communities, have become wary of research. This often occurs because there is inadequate time to dedicate to building these relationships and sustaining them over time. We suspect that posed a barrier to recruiting service providers to the research, particularly where these services are stretched. While a key challenge for us over the life of this project will be to keep communication flowing with in-community stakeholders, an opportunity to engage with Aboriginal young people living in rural and regional Australia has presented and will take place in Year 2 of the funding. The funding from FGG, will support us in our efforts to build and nurture these ongoing relationships, and to give back to the communities who have generously supported and engaged with this research.

Another challenge was that in reviewing the extant evidence, we identified that the literature to inform the study pertaining to our cohort of interest, young people aged 14 – 25 years, and living in regional, rural or remote Australia - was for the most part limited or outdated. This meant that we have needed to go broad with our research questions in an attempt to fill some of these gaps in the evidence base. However, this also gives rise to a significant enabler of this project, being that there is considerable interest in the research outputs amongst the community, the youth and mental health sectors, policymakers, and academia. Over the next 6-12 months, we will focus on disseminating the evidence gathered through this program of research to key audiences, to ensure it has the most benefit to the most number possible.

Key achievements: FGG's funding of $236,880 for year one has allowed us to undertake an extensive investigation into the issues faced by young people living in rural and regional areas across Australia, their barriers to help-seeking, and their needs from (digital) mental health services. The research insights will help to transform the mental health landscape, initiating evidence-informed service reform, and will be used to improve digital self-help that is offered on ReachOut.com so that the service offering better meets the needs of this target group. Particular achievements against the change levers are summarised below.

Building the **evidence** base: In consolidating the internal and external research evidence, we identified a number of gaps that the funded research activities have helped to address with a view to understanding the mental health and wellbeing status of young Australians living in rural and regional areas, their help-seeking preferences and barriers to care. To provide insight into these questions, we conducted in-depth interviews with 17 service providers; delivered 6 co-design workshops with 60 young people in Wagga Wagga and Griffith in NSW, Merredin and Geraldton in WA, and Bundaberg and Gympie in QLD; ran an online diary study of 16 young people; and conducted a national online survey of 400 young people, to establish a benchmark to evaluate effectiveness of this work. Over the next 6-12 months, we will focus on disseminating the evidence gathered through this program of research, to ensure it has the most benefit to the most number possible.

Increasing individual **agency**: Key insights have been developed based on the various research activities undertaken to support the refinement of existing online resources, and the development of new resources that respond to the needs of young people in regional and rural areas, and activate them towards self-help for mental health and wellbeing.

Improving **access** to support: A baseline in terms of current awareness and reach into regional and rural communities has been established, which will allow for meaningful growth targets to be set for the life of the project, that are aligned to the activity plan and projected expenditure for the remaining years of the grant.

Strengthening **early intervention**: The project has surfaced young people living in regional and rural communities' preferences and attitudes towards early intervention support for a variety of issues they face. In the coming 12 months, we will develop content that responds to these attitudes, with a view to increasing the propensity of young people at high risk of developing a mental health to access appropriate services.

To watch a short overview of the work completed to date and some early insights please click on this link: www.reachout.click/FGGyearone

| **No. people supported:** | Based on the Year 1 data to date, we are well placed to meet the targets set at the outset of this project. We will revisit these targets early in Year 2 after we complete the analysis of the research, have established service benchmarks, and are able to make some clearer projections around the nature and intensity of service delivery and outreach activity. |

Support provided to date:

People supported through the project: [1]	Directly Supported	Indirectly Supported	Total
	No. +	Estimated =	Total
Children & young people	87, 744	461	88,205
Those who are close to & care for them	15,141	-	15,141
Professional service providers	8,926	-	8,926

The figure of 87, 744 for **children and young people directly supported** reflects the number of young people that Google Analytics recorded as living outside the capital cities who accessed our service during the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. Because Google Analytics does not provide information on the age of visitors below 18 years, we make an informed assumption that 65% of visitors to ReachOut.com are within our target age range of 14-25 years – this is based on the typical breakdown of service users that we see in routine monitoring and evaluation data. The 461 **indirectly supported** refers to young people who have been engaged in the research activities undertaken in Year 1, including research participants and a research intern. As part of this project, we are exploring ways to make the data capture around visits from regional and rural areas more specific and reliable, to enable us to accurately track progress over the life of the project.

The figure of 15,141 for **those who are close to & care for children and young people directly supported** reflects the number of people that Google Analytics recorded as living outside the capital cities who accessed our ReachOut Parents service during the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

The figure of 8,926 **professional service providers directly supported** represents the proportion of visits to ReachOut.com that Google Analytics recorded as originating from outside the capital cities during the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, which we apportion to service providers. This is based on the assumption that 6-7% of visitors are visiting for professional purposes – which is based on the breakdown of service users that we see in routine monitoring and evaluation data. In addition, this figure includes the service providers we engaged with through the research activities in Year 1.

| **Key observations & learnings to date:** | In consulting with young people and service providers who work with them across diverse regional and rural areas, we have gained insight into their lives and the prevalent issues that affect them, as well as their needs and preferences for help-seeking for mental health issues. We've learned that while they experience many of the same issues as young people living in metropolitan areas, their experience of these issues may be qualitatively different, and there are unique stressors particular to living in these areas that put them at risk for experiencing mental health challenges, and prevent them from receiving appropriate care. We've also learned that digital service offerings, such as that offered by ReachOut, are seen as a critical part of the solution, by both young people and service providers. However, we know that many more young people living in these communities could benefit from our service, than currently are. |

The research undertaken has provided rich, nuanced, and reliable insights that will be of interest and value to the wider mental health and youth sectors, and contribute to building the evidence base for digital self-help. Most importantly, these insights will allow us execute improvements in the service offering and outreach strategies in subsequent years of funding, to make ReachOut.com more responsive to the needs and help-seeking preferences of young people living in rural and

---

[1] Directly Supported = people who are able to be specifically identified as having participated in project activity or having accessed services or supports provided through it. Indirectly Supported = based on demographic or other project estimates rather than being able to be specifically identified as having participated in project activity or having accessed services or supports provided through it.

regional areas, and to increase our reach into these communities. While the young people involved in the research were for the most part very positive about the ReachOut.com content, user experience and marketing approach, the research has also highlighted some key topics, messages and design principles that will be executed against in the coming year to ensure the service is relevant to, and resonates with young people living in regional and rural communities. The research has also allowed us to benchmark our current reach into these communities, which will allow us to track the impact of the investment in service delivery and outreach activity over the coming years.

Benefits derived from FGG funding:

ReachOut has leveraged additional funds through introductions made by FGG. This additional funding is supporting work outside of our focus on rural and regional areas. Further, the inclusion of ReachOut in FGG communication materials, roadshows and presentations is helping increase our reach and the awareness of our service, a strategic priority for the organisation as we look to help an extra 1 million people by 2020.

The project has also presented an opportunity to develop a partnership with an academic centre of excellence in this research space, which will enable us to pursue additional research projects that can support the mental health and wellbeing of young Australians living in regional, rural and remote areas. We are hoping to be able to offer a PhD scholarship to a student from a regional, rural or remote community, to undertake a project that is aligned to the objectives of this program of activity.

Next steps:

Funding for year two will be used to translate research insights into actionable self-help content, and to build awareness of ReachOut.com in targeted communities to help support and improve the mental health outcomes of an additional 87,744 rural and regional Australians.

Key activity will include:
- Disseminating and publicising the research findings from Year 1
- Auditing existing content and developing new multimedia content that addresses relevant life experiences and stressors
- Improving access and pathways to informal and formal self-help options
- Consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to better understand their needs
- Raising awareness of ReachOut by delivering digital marketing campaigns to improve problem recognition, use of effective self-help strategies and attitude to seeking help.

For every dollar spent on media, we will leverage $3 in in-kind value enabling us to reach more people and scale more effectively.

Project Outcomes Framework: [take framework from Project Overview, report on delivery against Year 1 Targets and specify Year 2 Targets]

Change Lever	Objective	Metrics	Target – Full Project	Target – Year 1	Actual Delivery – Year 1	Target – Year 2
Evidence	• Consult with young people across diverse regional and rural areas in Australia to establish their needs and help-seeking preferences • Gain insight into the lived experience of young people in select regional and rural communities • Translate key insights from the funded research activities into improvements in the service offering and outreach strategies, making ReachOut.com more responsive to the needs and help-seeking preferences of young Australians living in rural and regional areas. • Disseminate research findings to key audiences including other service providers (youth, health, community and education sectors), policymakers and funders, the research community, and local and national media outlets	• # young people involved in qualitative and quantitative research activities • # research translation activities conducted internally (e.g., workshops with stakeholders, annual planning processes). • # publically available reports or executive summaries • # peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations • Coverage in local and national media outlets • # briefings/meetings with policymakers	• Focal communities for in-depth consultation identified • 20 service provider interviews completed and analysed • Baseline and follow-up survey of young Australians in regional and rural areas conducted and data analysis completed • 8 focus groups across 4 communities completed and analysed • Online diary study of 16 young people completed and analysed • Peer researchers trained and involved in the collection and interpretation of evaluation data for the project • 2 public reports released • 10 research papers published • Key recommendations in service roadmap are actioned and evident in service offering and approach to communications and marketing • Future service roadmap informed by the 4 years	• Focal communities for in-depth consultation identified • 20 service provider interviews completed and analysed • Baseline survey of young Australians in regional and rural areas (n= TBD) completed, and preliminary data analysis completed • 8 focus groups across 4 communities completed and analysed • Online diary study of 16 young people completed and analysed • Peer researcher candidates to be involved in the evaluation of the project identified • Environment scan and consolidation of internal (e.g., analytics, surveys) and external research evidence completed • 1 public report summarising the key insights prepared • 2 research papers submitted • Recommendations prepared for service roadmap and communications and marketing messaging • Dedicated media coverage about the public	• Focal communities for in-depth consultation identified • 17 service provider interviews completed and analysed • Baseline survey of 400 young Australians in regional and rural areas in market • 6 co-design workshops (including pre-and post-workshop activities) across 6 communities completed and analysed, involving a total of 60 young people • Online diary study of 16 young people designed • Baseline survey of young Australians in regional and rural areas completed • Environment scan and consolidation of internal (e.g., analytics, surveys) and external research evidence completed, with support from a young person completing a research internship • Preliminary insights from research completed to date prepared to inform Year 2 planning • 2 abstracts submitted for presentation of research findings at a relevant conference	• Additional analyses of Baseline survey of young Australians in regional and rural areas completed. • 2 research papers published. • 2 presentations at national conferences. • Key recommendations from Year 1 of the service roadmap, informed by the research insights, are actioned and evident in service offering and approach to communications and marketing. • Content strategy based on research insights developed and implementation commenced. • Brief to inform marketing and communications strategy developed. • Dedicated media coverage about project. activity/outputs in 2 major metropolitan or national media outlets. • Dedicated media coverage about the project in 2 major regional news networks. • 3 briefings and/or policy submissions (local/national). • Undertake sub-analyses within routine research, monitoring and evaluation projects to understand the

Change Lever	Objective	Metrics	Target – Full Project	Target – Year 1	Actual Delivery – Year 1	Target – Year 2
	• Grow the capacity of selected young people living in regional and rural areas to conduct research and evaluation • Build the evidence base for digital self-help		program of research delivered • Content strategy based on research insights developed and implemented • Brief to inform marketing and communications strategy developed and implemented • Dedicated media coverage about project activity/outputs in (TBD) major metropolitan or national media outlets • Dedicated media coverage about the report in the (TBD) major regional news networks • 35 briefings and/or policy submissions (local/national)	report in five major metropolitan or national media outlets • Dedicated media coverage about the report in the two major regional news networks • 5 briefings and/or policy submissions (local/national)	• 2 briefings held with National Rural Health Alliance and the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health **Planned for delivery; July 17-Sept 17** • Preliminary data analysis of the baseline survey of young Australians in regional and rural areas completed. • Online diary study of 16 young people completed and analysed • Recommendations prepared for service roadmap and communications and marketing messaging. • 1 public report summarising the key insights prepared. • 2 research papers submitted. • Dedicated media coverage about the public report in five major metropolitan or national media outlets. • Dedicated media coverage about the report in the two major regional news networks. • 3 briefings and/or policy submissions. (local/national)	experience and impact of these young people with our service offering.

Change Lever	Objective	Metrics	Target – Full Project	Target – Year 1	Actual Delivery – Year 1	Target – Year 2
Capability	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Agency	• Increase awareness and adoption of adaptive self-help strategies and encourage changes in behaviour to foster individual agency and access to support
	• Increase the mental health literacy of service users from rural and regional communities
	• Reduce stigma (self- and perceived) within regional and rural communities
		• Existing online resources are refined and/or new resources developed and launched to reflect the research on needs of young people in regional and rural areas
		• National survey conducted to assess baseline position and post-project outcomes
		  o % respondents reporting use of self-help strategies
		  o % respondents reporting awareness of available digital and face-to-face support services
		  o % respondents reporting confidence or comfort in helping themselves or seeking help for mental health problems
		  o % respondents reporting less stigmatising attitude towards mental health
		  o % respondents favourable subjective
			• Youth advisory board established and engaged in project implementation
			• National survey conducted to assess baseline position and post-project outcomes
			• Audit of existing content and assets against the research findings completed to identify service gaps
			• Existing online resources are refined and/or new resources developed and launched to reflect the research on needs of young people in regional and rural areas
			• % young people reporting improved mental health literacy evident from baseline to follow-up survey (e.g. ability to recognise signs and symptoms of common mental health problems, and knowledge of different help-options available to them including digital (targets TBC post-baseline)
				• Youth advisory board established and engaged in project implementation
				• Establish baseline in relation to:
				  o Awareness of and attitudes towards ReachOut and other digital support services
				  o Help-seeking preferences (self-help, informal and formal help-seeking)
				  o Needs and issues of concern
				  o Mental health literacy
				  o Media use and behaviours
				  o Technology access
				• Audit of existing content and assets against the research findings completed to identify service gaps
					• Audit of existing content and assets against the preliminary research findings commenced to identify service gaps and opportunities.
					• 2 new pieces of content commissioned based on research findings to test in online diary study.
					
					Planned for delivery; July – Sept 17
					• Youth advisory board recruited and engaged in reviewing new content that responds to research insights.
					• Survey analysis completed to establish baseline in relation to:
					  o Awareness of and attitudes towards ReachOut and other digital support services
					  o Help-seeking preferences (self-help, informal and formal help-seeking)
					  o Needs and issues of concern
					  o Media use and behaviours
						• Audit the current site content and imagery against the research insights to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities.
						• Develop 20 pieces of new content + photographs that respond to the research insights from Year 1 :
						  o Develop a production plan which outlines key topics to be addressed , how the content aligns to the theory of change and nominate the relevant format (multimedia, written, graphics, imagery)
						  o Conduct any further topic-specific research
						  o Develop briefs for content - covering objectives and key points for content to cover
						  o Clinical Advisory / Subject Matter Expert review of scripts as required
						  o Production
						  o Confirm internal/external

Change Lever	Objective	Metrics	Target – Full Project	Target – Year 1	Actual Delivery – Year 1	Target – Year 2
		evaluation of ReachOut.com			○ Technology access. • Audit of existing content and assets against the research findings completed to identify service gaps.	stakeholders and agencies to be involved ○ Updated by internal duty of care working committee as required ○ Recruit and brief young people to participate in content production ○ Travel to regional/rural/remote locations for shoots ○ Final review by internal duty of care working committee and external Clinical Advisory Group ○ Final review with young people (e.g. review scripts, review offline edits).
Access	• ReachOut.com content, user experience and marketing assets and approaches are reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of young people living in regional and rural communities • Increase awareness of ReachOut.com within regional and rural communities to facilitate access to appropriate digital and face-to-face support services	• Face-to-face user experience research and campaign testing in rural and regional communities results • Implementation of marketing campaign reflecting the research on needs of young people in regional and rural areas developed and launched in selected communities • % unprompted and prompted awareness of ReachOut amongst regional and rural respondents in the	• Establish and nurture relationships with in-community service providers • Establish project Steering Committee comprising service providers, industry and academic partners • Implement marketing campaign in line with specified reach and frequency targets • % unprompted and prompted awareness of ReachOut amongst regional and rural respondents in the Annual ReachOut Brand	• Establish relationships with in-community service providers • Establish project Steering Committee comprising service providers, industry and academic partners • Audit existing content and assets against the research findings to identify service gaps • Establish baseline in relation to the numbers of young Australians living in regional and rural areas that are aware of and access ReachOut.com	• Establish relationships with in-community service providers. • Commenced audit existing content and assets against the research findings to identify service gaps. • Survey to establish baseline in relation to the numbers of young Australians living in regional and rural areas that are aware of and access ReachOut.com is live. **Planned for delivery; July - Sept 17**	• Launch digital advertising program to drive 20,000 visits from young people living in priority regional and rural communities and reach approximately 4,000,000. • Test and learn messages, channels and formats that reach our target audience and drive engaged visits, to inform Year 3 awareness campaign. • Nurture relationships with in-community service providers via regular communications

Change Lever	Objective	Metrics	Target – Full Project	Target – Year 1	Actual Delivery – Year 1	Target – Year 2
	• Increase the engagement and participation of young people who reside in regional and rural Australia with the ReachOut service offering • Reduce the impact of barriers to young people residing in regional and rural areas accessing appropriate services in a timely manner, by improving uptake of appropriate digital and face-to-face support services	Annual ReachOut Brand Study • % young people recalling specific ReachOut campaign(s) • Visitation (# unique visitors) from young people living in regional and rural communities • Engagement of young people in rural and regional areas (e.g., unique page views, pages per session, return visitation, social media activity, time on site) • % user survey respondents (overall and in regional and rural areas) reporting favourable attitudes towards/intentions to access digital and face-to-face support services	Study (targets TBC as part of campaign design) • % young people recalling specific ReachOut campaign(s) (targets TBC as part of campaign design) • # unique visitors from regional and rural areas visit ReachOut.com (target TBC once baseline established and project delivery plan for years 2-5 defined) • #% visitors from regional and rural areas completing pre-defined on-site engagement goals (e.g., number and depth of page views, app downloads, progression through content pathways (target TBC once baseline established and project delivery plan for years 2-5 defined) • #% user survey respondents (overall and in regional and rural areas) reporting favourable attitudes towards/intentions to access digital and face-to-face support services (target TBC once baseline established and project delivery plan for years 2-5 defined)		• Establish formal advisory relationship with academic partner • Survey analysis completed to establish baseline in relation to the numbers of young Australians living in regional and rural areas that are aware of and access ReachOut.com • Complete audit of existing content and assets against the research findings to identify service gaps.	and responses to support requests. • Explore local touchpoints and opportunities to connect with regional, rural and remote young people within their communities. • % (TBC upon confirming budget) prompted awareness of ReachOut amongst regional and rural respondents in the Annual ReachOut Brand Study. • # unique visitors from regional and rural areas visit ReachOut.com (target TBC once baseline established and budget and project delivery plan for year 2 confirmed). • #% user survey respondents (overall and in regional and rural areas) reporting favourable attitudes towards/intentions to access digital and face-to-face support services (target TBC once baseline established and budget and project delivery plan for year 2 confirmed).
Early Intervention	• Increase the propensity of young people at high risk of developing, or experiencing early signs or symptoms of, a	• Click-throughs to external services and supports (Tier 1, 2 and 3) • Progression through the stepped process on	• Click-throughs to external services and supports (Tier 1, 2 and 3) • % progression through the stepped process on	• Establish a baseline of help-seeking knowledge, intentions and behaviours amongst young people living in regional and rural	• Survey to establish baseline is live. **Planned for delivery; July Sept 17**	• Click-throughs to external services and supports (Tier 1, 2 and 3). • % progression through the stepped process on

Change Lever	Objective	Metrics	Target – Full Project	Target – Year 1	Actual Delivery – Year 1	Target – Year 2
	mental health difficulty to seek help / access services	NextStep (from symptom selection through to service recommendations) • % of young people (overall and in regional and rural areas) reporting positive help-seeking attitudes, knowledge and behaviours (as informed by the national survey, Annual User Surveys, qualitative research etc.)	NextStep (from symptom selection through to service recommendations) (target TBC once baseline established and project delivery plan for years 2-5 defined) • % of young people (overall and in regional and rural areas) reporting positive help-seeking attitudes, knowledge and behaviours (as informed by the national survey, Annual User Surveys, qualitative research etc.) (target TBC once baseline established and project delivery plan for years 2-5 defined)	areas, for a diversity of available help sources (e.g., formal, face-to-face supports, digital supports, self-help, informal supports) • Establish a baseline around current behaviours onsite related to facilitating additional help-seeking (most notably NextStep and referrals through the emergency help function)	• Survey analysis completed to establish a baseline of help-seeking knowledge, intentions and behaviours amongst young people living in regional and rural areas, for a diversity of available help sources (e.g., formal, face-to-face supports, digital supports, self-help, informal supports). • Survey analysis completed to establish a baseline around current behaviours onsite related to facilitating additional help-seeking (most notably NextStep and referrals through the emergency help function).	NextStep (from symptom selection through to service recommendations; target TBC once baseline established and budget and project delivery plan for year 2 confirmed).
Participation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notes:

In Year 1, ReachOut Australia undertook a comprehensive, nationwide mixed-methods program of research to understand the needs of young people living in regional, rural and remote communities. Delivery against the project plan has been largely as expected, with the exception of the following:

- Data saturation in the service provider interviews was reached prior to conducting 20 interviews, hence only 17 service providers were involved in this component of the research. We are confident that the themes derived from this component of the research are trustworthy.
- Rather than complete 8 brief focus groups across 4 communities, we decided to run more lengthy (5 hour) and in-depth co-design workshops with young people. We ran 6 of these workshops across 6 communities, which involved a total of 60 young people. These workshops, and the online activities participants completed before and after the workshops, have given us rich insights into the lives and needs of these young people, which will inform the service delivery and awareness-raising activities undertaken in subsequent years of this grant.
- Initially we envisaged that we would recruit the peer researcher candidates from the pool of workshop participants, who would be involved in the evaluation of the project. However we have identified that it is too early to involve young people at this stage of the project; instead, we will seek to recruit and train up youth peer researchers in Year 4 of the project.
- Initially, we envisaged that we would establish a project Steering Committee comprising service providers, industry and academic partners. However over the course of conducting this research we have identified that the administration of such a committee may be problematic, as the individuals who might sit on such a committee have considerable workloads, high rates of turnover, and competing priorities. In lieu of this Steering Committee, we are hoping to establish a formal partnership with an academic

partner working in this space, who can provide advice over the life of the project, and with whom we can pursue related opportunities to leverage the funding provided by FGG. We have also developed a community engagement strategy, and will continue to strengthen the relationships built with service providers in Year 1 over subsequent years of this research grant, and to identify opportunities to support them in their work. We will also draw on an existing network of academics, the Australian Rural Health Education Network, as needed.

Notes about Change Levers

Capability: While we have no set targets for this, meeting our targets for **Evidence** will influence the sector to work in a more evidence-based and youth centred way. The papers and research insights that we publish and share and the sector relationships that we foster during this project, will contribute to better mental health outcomes in the long term for young people living in rural and regional areas.

Participation: Mental illness typically begins in adolescence/early adulthood - a time when individuals are completing their education and pursuing employment options. The impact of youth mental illness on schooling through factors such as increased absenteeism, dropout rates and difficulty learning can compound the potential negative impacts on employment outcomes. While we do not have targets for this meeting our targets for **Agency**, **Access** and **Early Intervention** will result in improved help-seeking, improved access to help and improved wellbeing in the long term.

Overall Performance assessment:

Change Lever	Assessment	Comments
Evidence	At target	• ReachOut are on track to complete the comprehensive, mixed methods program of research with Regional, Rural and Remote young Australians that has been supported by the Year 1 funding. We are in the process of developing recommendations to inform the execution of the Year 2 activity plan. Analysis and dissemination will be a focus in the latter months of Year1 workplan, and in the beginning of Year 2.
Capability	Below | At | Exceeding target	• N/A
Agency	At target	• Our service is designed to empower and enable young people to undertake digital self-help. The Year 1 research has enabled us to identify opportunities to more effectively activate young Australians living in regional, rural and remote areas towards self-help, and we are already proactively responding to their feedback to make the service more relevant to their needs and preferences for digital self-help.
Access	At target	• Our service is designed to be accessible for all young people, however this project will enable the refinement of our service model to ensure the service is inclusive of, and responds to the unique needs of young people living in regional, rural and remote Australia. The research program undertaken this year provides a benchmark in terms of awareness of and access to our service. Once the data analysis is completed, and the delivery plan for Year 2 confirmed, we will be able to set appropriate targets for growing reach and uptake of our service within regional, rural and remote Australia.
Early Intervention	At target	• Our service is designed to facilitate early intervention however the research insights from Year 1 of this project will enable the refinement of our service model to ensure the service is responsive to the needs of young people living in regional, rural and remote Australia, and includes appropriate referral pathways where these are indicated.
Participation	Below | At | Exceeding target	• N/A

Status against plan for implementation: | On track |

Status against targeted project outcomes: | At target |