

Ronald McDonald House Charities Western Australia

IMPACT REPORT 2024

April 2025



**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
Western Australia

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SVA Consulting is Australia's leading not-for-profit consultancy. We focus solely on social impact and work with partners to increase their capacity to create positive change. Thanks to more than 10 years of working with not-for-profits, government, and funders, we have developed a deep understanding of the sector and what works.

Our team is passionate about what they do and use their diverse expertise to work together to solve Australia's most pressing issues.

Acknowledgement

SVA acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander community.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

Term	Description
Aboriginal	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
FLOs	Family Liaison Officers
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
PCH	Perth Children's Hospital
RMHC	Ronald McDonald House Charities (Australia)
RMHC WA	Ronald McDonald House Charities Western Australia
SVA	Social Ventures Australia
WA	Western Australia

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Executive Summary

The mission of Ronald McDonald Charities (RMHC) globally is to create, find, and support programs that directly improve the health and wellbeing of children and their families. The RMHC system comprises of independent Chapters around the world providing essential services to families far from home, jobs, schools and loved ones.

Established in 1990, Ronald McDonald House Charities Western Australia (RMHC WA) today supports an average of 2,000 new and returning patients and families from every region in Western Australia through supported family accommodation, continued education for young patients and siblings, in-hospital support, child and family experiences and, family respite retreats in Mandurah, Bunbury, Busselton.

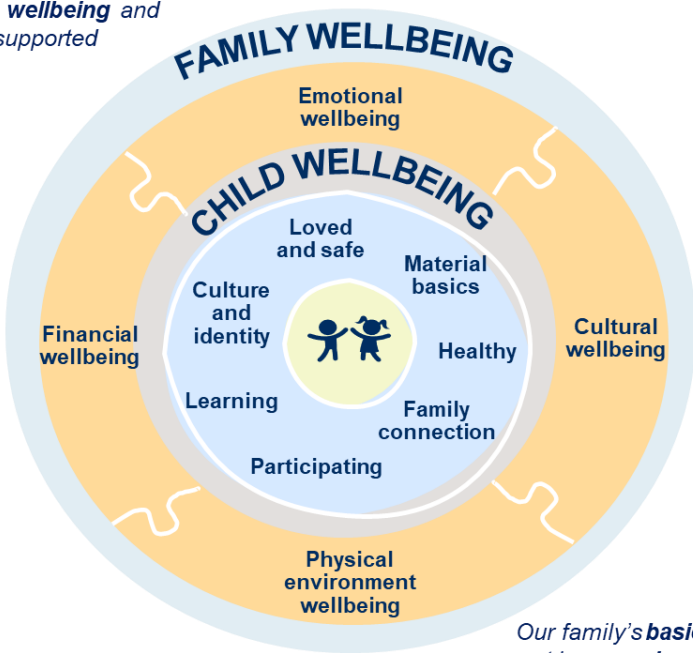
RMHC WA engaged Social Ventures Australia (SVA) in 2021, 2022 and 2023 to undertake yearly evaluations of its accommodation and support services to better understand and report on RMHC WA’s impact on families (parents, caregivers and siblings) and children receiving treatment, and in turn, identify opportunities for improvement.

This 2024 Impact Report follows on from the 2021, 2022 and 2023 reports, and provides the key findings and recommendations from the data collected between January and December 2024.

The RMHC WA Wellbeing Framework is centred on the concept that enhanced family wellbeing results in greater child wellbeing. The Outcomes Framework is built around RMHC

*Our family’s **emotional wellbeing** and mental health is supported*

*Our family feels **financially stable** because our costs of living away from home are supported*



*Our family feels **culturally safe** because our culture and identity and respected, and we feel able and supported to continue to practice our culture*

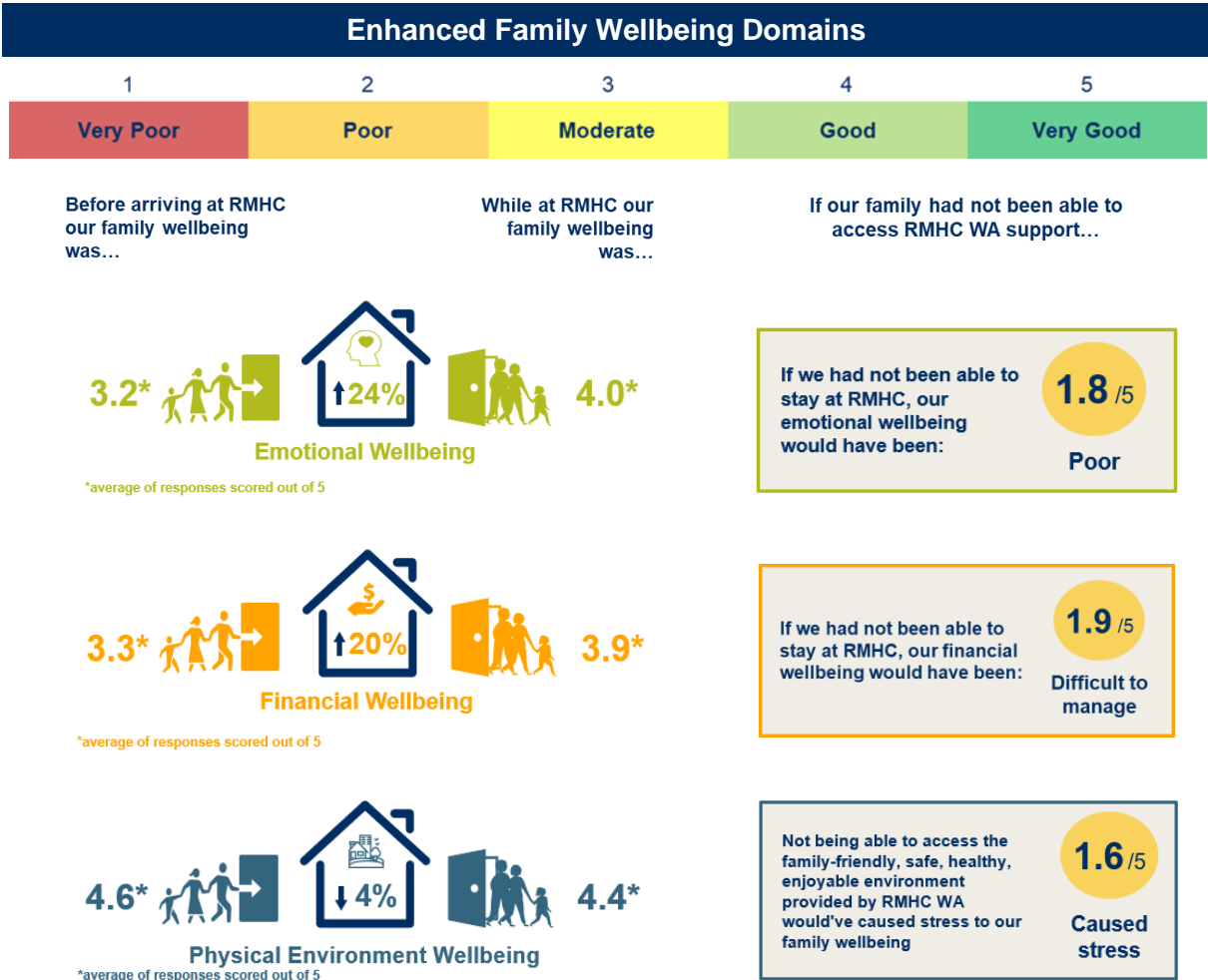
*Our family’s **basic needs** are met in an **environment** that is safe and healthy*

WA's Wellbeing Framework, which focuses on the emotional, financial, cultural, and physical environment wellbeing of families.

2024 Impact Snapshot

In 2024, RMHC WA had a high impact on the emotional and financial wellbeing of families staying at the house. Families experienced a 24% increase in the average emotional wellbeing and 20% increase in financial wellbeing ratings from when they entered the house. Notably, 78% of families reported that without RMHC WA, their emotional wellbeing would have been poor or very poor (compared to 75% in 2023), and 69% would have found their financial wellbeing difficult to manage or stressful. Ninety percent of families found RMHC WA to be a 'home away from home', providing a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment for their family.

On average across all wellbeing domains, family wellbeing in 2024 was 1% higher than in 2023, and 5% higher than in 2022. By supporting families, RMHC WA can support the child receiving treatment.





*average of responses scored out of 5

If we had not been able to stay at RMHC, our cultural wellbeing would have been:

3.2 /5

Moderate

Outcome domains for residential families and siblings

 1. Reduction in stress	 2. Enhanced family support	 3. Siblings supported	 4. Stronger in the longer term
Impact Rating 4.4 Very High	<p><i>"Knowing that we're not just a number, we're cared for and so are all the families"</i></p>	Impact Rating 4.4 Very High	Impact Rating 4.4 Very High

Outcome domains for residential children receiving treatment

 5. Positive experiences	 6. Happier	 7. Education maintained	 8. Longer term identity and resilience
<p><i>"[RMHC] has made hospitals less daunting and scary. Even in Geraldton, it is fun. Before, there was dread and anxiety."</i></p>	Impact Rating 4.4 Very High	<p><i>"[They] loved it and wanted to go as much as [they] could"</i></p>	<p><i>"They've given my kids a lot of compassion towards others those that aren't the same as themselves"</i></p>

In 2024, RMHC WA expanded with the opening of RMH on Park. At the same time, remediation work was undertaken at RMH at QEII to address

some building issues. The wellbeing of families were maintained, with slight improvements during this period of change and growth.

Recommendations

- 1** Continue to work towards increasing the Aboriginal workforce
- 2** Continue to prioritise wellbeing activities for families
- 3** Collaborate or build partnerships with peer organisations to support family wellbeing beyond the services provided by RMHC WA
- 4** Provide extra support for families with accessibility needs
- 5** Advocate the accommodation and support needs for families living on the edge of regional and metro areas who fall outside the Patient Assisted Accommodation Subsidy distance criteria.
- 6** Provide FLOs and volunteers with context specific cultural awareness training

About this report

Overview of RMHC WA

Ronald McDonald House Charities Western Australia (RMHC WA) has been helping Western Australian families with seriously ill children stay together and supported since 1990. When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, it can have a devastating effect on families. On top of the uncertainty and fear, there's added stress for families who don't live close to the medical care their child needs.

Programs

RMHC WA has a wide range of programs which help families to stay together so they have the support of loved ones when they need it most. These programs include Ronald McDonald House, the Learning Program, Family Retreats and Family Rooms. This impact report focuses on the impact of the Ronald McDonald House on family wellbeing.



Ronald McDonald House

RMH at QEII, RMH in Perth's Children Hospital and RMH on Park

The Houses provide essential accommodation, care and support for families 24/7, 365 days a year in close proximity to Perth Children's Hospital (PCH). RMH at QEII has 47 bedrooms and is located steps away from PCH. Within PCH, RMHC WA has 14 bedrooms and provides accommodation for parents and carers of children in intensive care. RMH on Park was fully operationalised in 2024 and has 50 rooms. Families at the on Park House enjoy studio apartment style accommodation which includes a kitchenette. All houses provide key essential services such as meals and domestic and recreational facilities. Additional programs including the Learning Program, playgroups, sports sessions and wellbeing support sessions are provided at RMH at QEII. Families are supported by RMHC WA's Family Liaison Officers (FLOs), along with 440 registered volunteers.

In addition to the provision of accommodation through Ronald McDonald House, the following programs are also provided for families to access. While these are not the primary focus of this yearly impact report, many families who participated in the evaluation have also accessed the following programs along with staying at Ronald McDonald House.



Ronald McDonald Learning Program

The Learning Program helps primary and secondary students continue their education after extended absences from school due to medical issues. It offers up to 40 hours of one-on-one tutoring with qualified educators, delivered both in person and online across the state. To further support each student's learning, the program also provides access to psychometric assessment, occupational therapy and speech pathology.



Ronald McDonald Family Retreat

RMHC WA family retreats in Mandurah, Bunbury and Busselton give families with a seriously ill child, or those suffering from the death of a child, the necessary opportunity to take a break and spend time together in a relaxing environment. Ronald McDonald Family Retreats offer families important time for respite, recovery, healing and reconnecting with each other.



Ronald McDonald Family Room

The Family Room, Kulunga Moort Mia, and Fun on Four Precinct in Perth Children's Hospital, along with the Family Room at Peel Health Campus, are all designed to support the physical, emotional and practical needs of families during their child's hospital stay. The rooms provide a relaxing haven within the hospital to give families a break from the stress of many hours spent by their child's bedside. All family members, including the child that is undergoing treatment, as well as friends can access the Family Room.

RMHC WA's Impact Journey

RMHC WA engaged Social Ventures Australia (SVA) in 2021 to undertake an evaluation of its accommodation and support services to better understand and report on RMHC WA's impact on families (parents, caregivers and siblings) and children receiving treatment, and in turn, identify opportunities for improvement.

As a first step, SVA worked with RMHC WA to develop an Outcomes Framework and Evaluation Plan to guide the evaluation process. This included developing a Theory of Change and identifying key outcomes RMHC WA sought to achieve for families and children receiving treatment, as well as relevant indicators and output measures. The 2021 Impact Report was produced, providing key findings alongside recommendations for RMHC WA to generate even greater impact for families in the future.

Following the 2021 Impact Report, the Outcomes Framework and data collection processes were simplified to enable the evaluation to sustainably occur each year without excessive burden on RMHC WA staff and volunteers.

This 2024 Impact Report provides the key findings and recommendations from the data collected from January through until December 2024.

RMHC WA's Cost Benefit Analysis

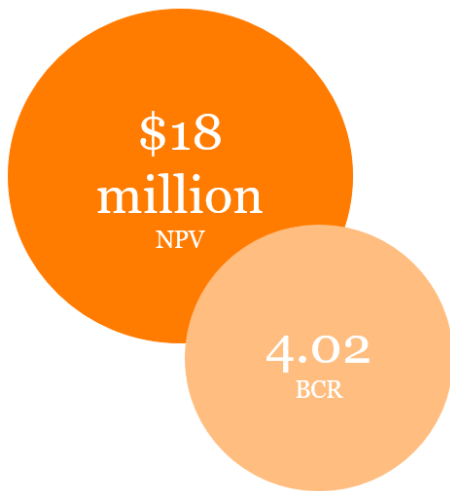
In 2024, SVA was engaged to undertake a cost benefit analysis to explore and articulate the benefits Ronald McDonald House Charities Western Australia (RMHC WA) brings to families (parents, caregivers and siblings), children receiving treatment, the WA Government and the broader health sector.

When a child or young person is ill and undergoing treatment, it is an incredibly challenging time for their families, often causing high levels of stress for parents. Additionally, most families that stay at RMHC WA are far away from home, which adds an emotional and financial burden to these families.

The cost benefit analysis estimated that RMHC WA has a net present cost of approximately \$6 million and an estimated net present benefit of \$25 million, which represents a net present value (NPV) of approximately \$18 million



The analysis returns a benefit cost ratio of approximately 4.02, which indicates that for every \$1 of cost, a benefit of \$4.02 is returned



The analysis of the cost benefit analysis, which produced an output of \$18 million net present value (NPV) and 4.02 benefit cost ratio (BCR), reflects and economically validates the personal stories and narrative heard through consultation with families, WA government and the health sector. This supports and demonstrates the significant value RMHC WA provides to WA families, government and the health sector.

Benefits to families



The CBA identified that RMHC WA generates benefits worth approximately \$25 million in present value terms

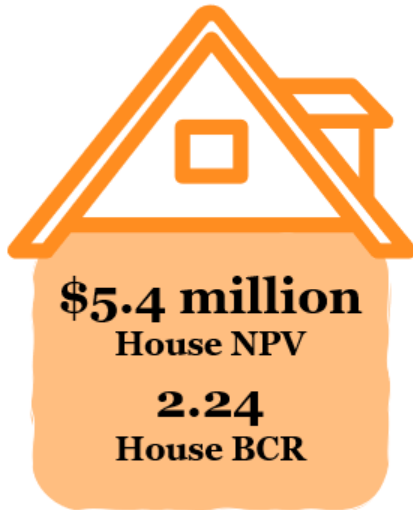
RMHC WA supported accommodation provides families a 'home away from home' that is close to medical facilities, with access to food, transportation, and accommodation. This alleviates significant financial burden for families, which allows parents to stay close to their child during a challenging time in their life. RMHC WA provides an environment that fosters a sense of community and connectedness, which supports families (parents, carers and siblings) and children receiving treatment with their wellbeing.

Further support is provided through RMHC WA's continued education, play and learning programs supporting young patients and siblings to maintain their education while absent from school. Ronald McDonald Learning Program offers free, 40 hours in-person or online tutoring and therapeutic support available throughout the state. Qualified educators provide tailored support that meets evolving and complex educational needs.

The Retreats provide families with an opportunity to get away from the day to day and enjoy time away together. The RMHC WA Retreat program provides families with one week's free accommodation, along with vouchers for food and holiday activities which are typically provided through donations.

Benefits to WA Government

Beyond the benefits to families, RMHC WA also creates a ripple effect that extends to the broader WA Government and health care sector. RMHC WA alleviates burden on WA hospitals, in particular Perth Children’s Hospital (PCH) and King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH). By providing accommodation to families who need to travel to Perth for treatment, RMHC WA supports patients to make their appointments and reduces missed appointments. Patients that are required to remain within a certain distance of the hospital for a certain period of time are also able to be discharged, rather than remain in hospital occupying a bed.



Benefits generated by RMH at QEII

The QEII House generates approximately \$9.8 million in benefits and incurred approximately \$4.4 million in costs during calendar year 2023, which represents a net present value (NPV) of approximately \$5.4 million.

This returns a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of approximately 2.24, which indicates that for every \$1 of cost, a benefit of \$2.24 is returned.

2024 Western Australia Snapshot

Understanding the context of services provided by RMHC WA is important for understanding the impact they have had for families in 2024. Families in WA felt the effect of significant increase in cost of living, housing pressure and inflation.

Higher interest rates are driving many families into mortgage stress, while rents are increasing dramatically amid record low vacancies. The effect of the referendum held on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice (Voice referendum) is still being felt by many Aboriginal Australians, with their wellbeing being impacted and feeling a sense of uncertainty and division within Australian communities. In 2024, the National Agreement on Closing data revealed soaring rates of Indigenous imprisonment and ongoing failures to reduce rates of suicides and children in out-of-home care¹.

Western Australia 2024 Context Snapshot²

¹ ABC News, [Productivity Commission calls for accountability with only four Closing the Gap targets on track](#)

² Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, Profile of Children and Young People in WA – 2024, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, 2024

Graham Hansen and Emily Hull, Cost of Living 2024, Western Australian Council of Social Service, 2024

J O'Donnell, Mapping Social Cohesion Report, Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, 2024

Australian government, [Elective Surgery](#), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2024, accessed 7 April 2025



644,000 children and young people live in WA



17% of children and young people are living below the poverty line in WA



155,000 children and young people in WA live in regional and remote areas



50,000 Aboriginal children and young people under 18 years live in WA



419,711 households with one or more children are in WA



-\$94.12 is the average deficit a single parent family faces each week in 2024 in meeting basic living costs



6% increase in elective surgery in WA hospitals in 2024 compared to 2023



74% of Australians are very or quite concerned about the prospect of a severe downturn in the global economy

In 2024, RMHC WA continued to advance its strategy to increase House capacity towards meeting current and future growth in demand. As previously outlined, RMHC WA officially opened RMH on Park, with 50 rooms becoming available. This increased from 26 rooms in 2023, which was an imperative to meet immediate demand then.

With RMH on Park fully operationalising, all patients and families were supported by dedicated RMH on Park Family Liaison Officers, Family Support Coordinators, volunteers, and Wellbeing Coordinator. Patients and families continued to have access to all RMHC WA facilities at RMH at QEII and spaces in PCH.

In 2023, SVA recommended RMHC WA to continue increasing accommodation for families. This recommendation was also provided in the 2021, 2022 and 2023 Impact Reports and is an ongoing priority for RMHC WA. Since the 2023 Impact Report, RMHC WA has:

- Officially opened up RMH on Park, which has established 50 additional rooms for families to access. In 2023, RMHC WA leased 26 rooms at RMH on Park.
- Gained funding from the State Government to support the expansion of the House. This funding supported the preparation of a business case and development plan to consider expansion options of 50, 75 or 100 additional rooms.
- Received Cook Government election commitment to contribute \$50 million to the expansion of RMH at QEII.

RMHC WA is proactively participating in discussions with Government for a potential new House supporting regional at risk maternity patients at the future Women's and Babies Hospital, Murdoch.

RMH at QEII



766 new and returning families



1173 stays



7,884 nights of accommodation provided



6.7 nights average length of stay



RMH in PCH



585 new and returning families



646 stays



4,112 nights of accommodation provided



6.4 nights average length of stay



RMH on Park



712 new and returning families



877 stays



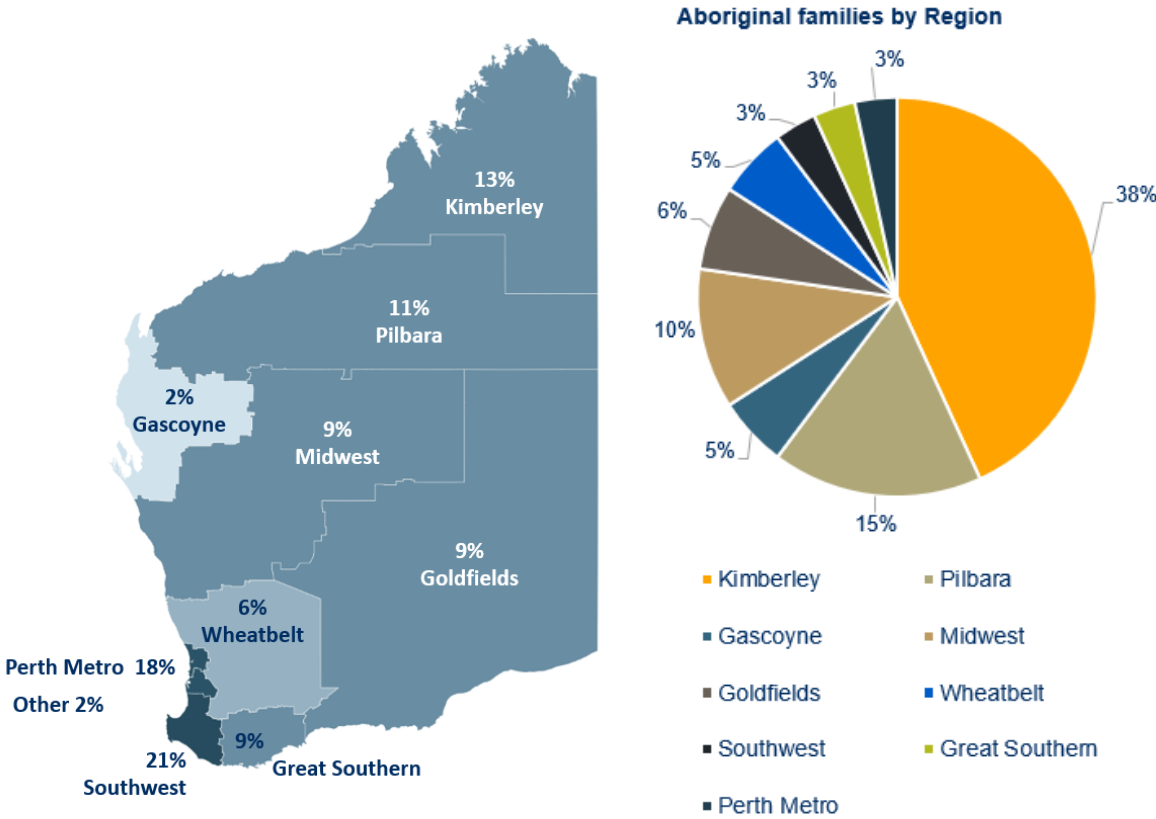
7,544 nights of accommodation provided



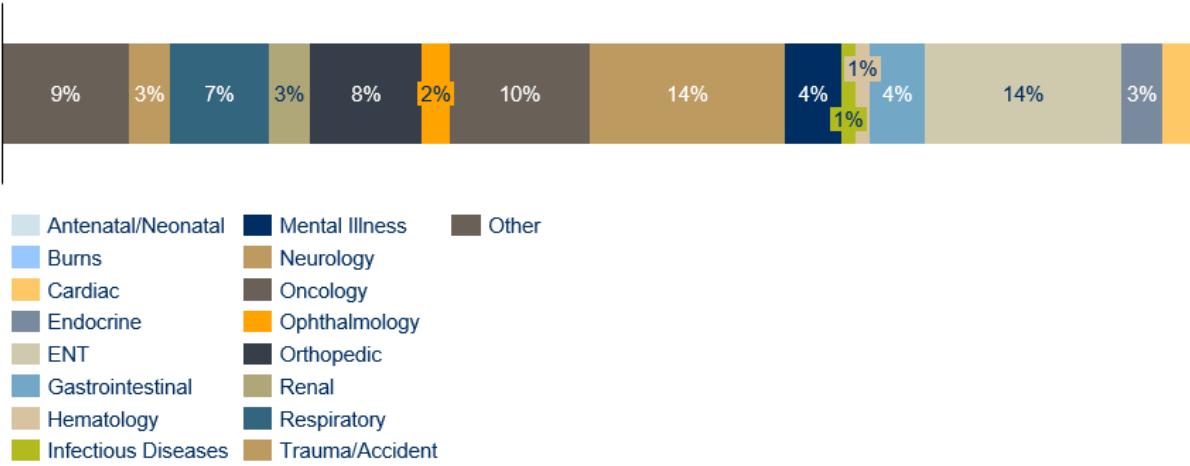
8.6 nights average length of stay



Families came from all over Western Australia. The majority of families as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander came from the Kimberley, followed by the Pilbara.



Children staying at RMHC WA have a vast range of medical conditions, with the majority requiring treatment for neurological and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) conditions, followed by oncology and a range of other treatments.

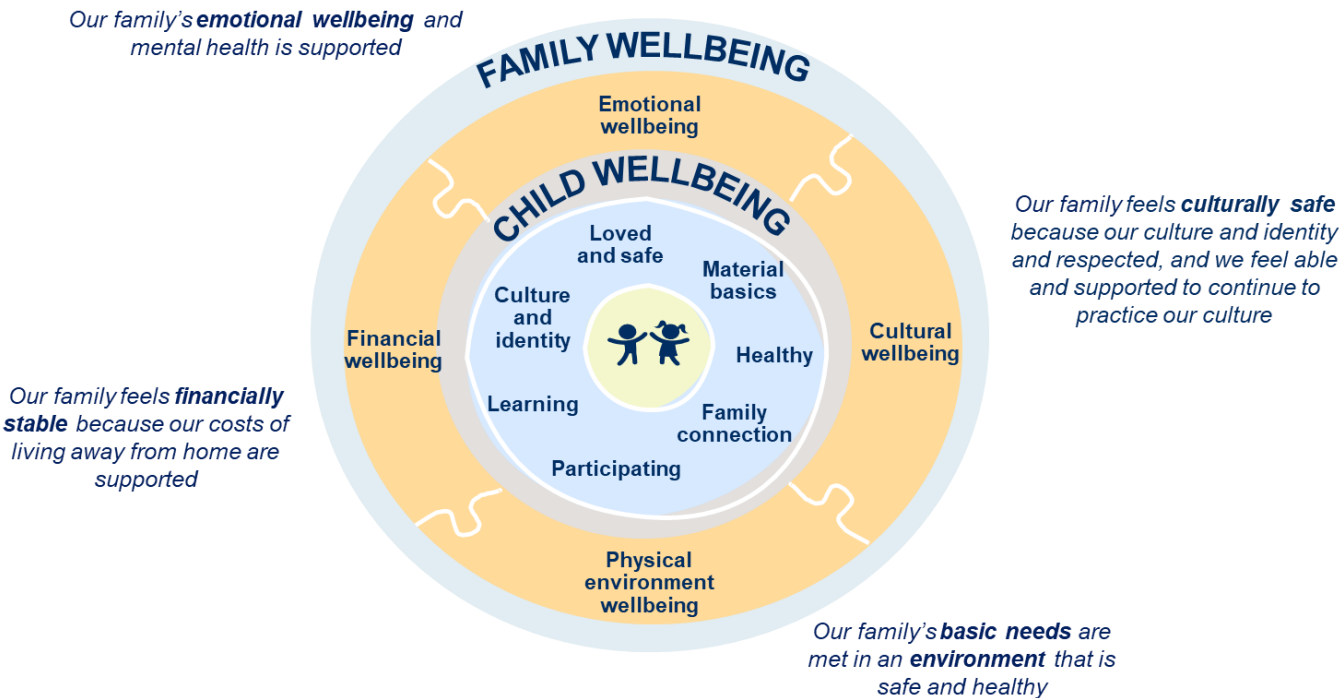


Wellbeing Framework

In 2021, SVA worked with RMHC WA to develop an Outcomes Framework, which comprises RMHC WA’s Wellbeing Framework and Logic Model. In 2024, further research on measuring wellbeing was undertaken by SVA. The research outlined that it aligns against other wellbeing frameworks across both Western Australia and Australia, validating the relevance and longevity of the Wellbeing Framework. Guided by the Outcomes Framework, an Evaluation Plan was developed which includes data collection methods, frequency and roles and responsibilities. These are available in the 2021 Impact Report. Following the 2021 Impact Report, the Outcomes Framework and Evaluation Plan were revised to reduce the administrative and reporting burden on RMHC WA staff and volunteers, and to ensure RMHC WA’s focus on enhanced family wellbeing is central to the outcomes framework.

RMHC WA’s Wellbeing Framework

RMHC WA Wellbeing Framework is centred on the concept that enhanced family wellbeing results in greater child wellbeing. RMHC WA’s purpose is to ‘*play a unique role in enabling, facilitating and supporting family-centred care within the Western Australian maternity, child and adolescent health systems*’. The Outcomes Framework is built around RMHC WA’s Wellbeing Framework, which focuses on the emotional, financial, cultural, and environmental wellbeing of families. By focusing on the wellbeing of the family, the wellbeing of the child is improved.

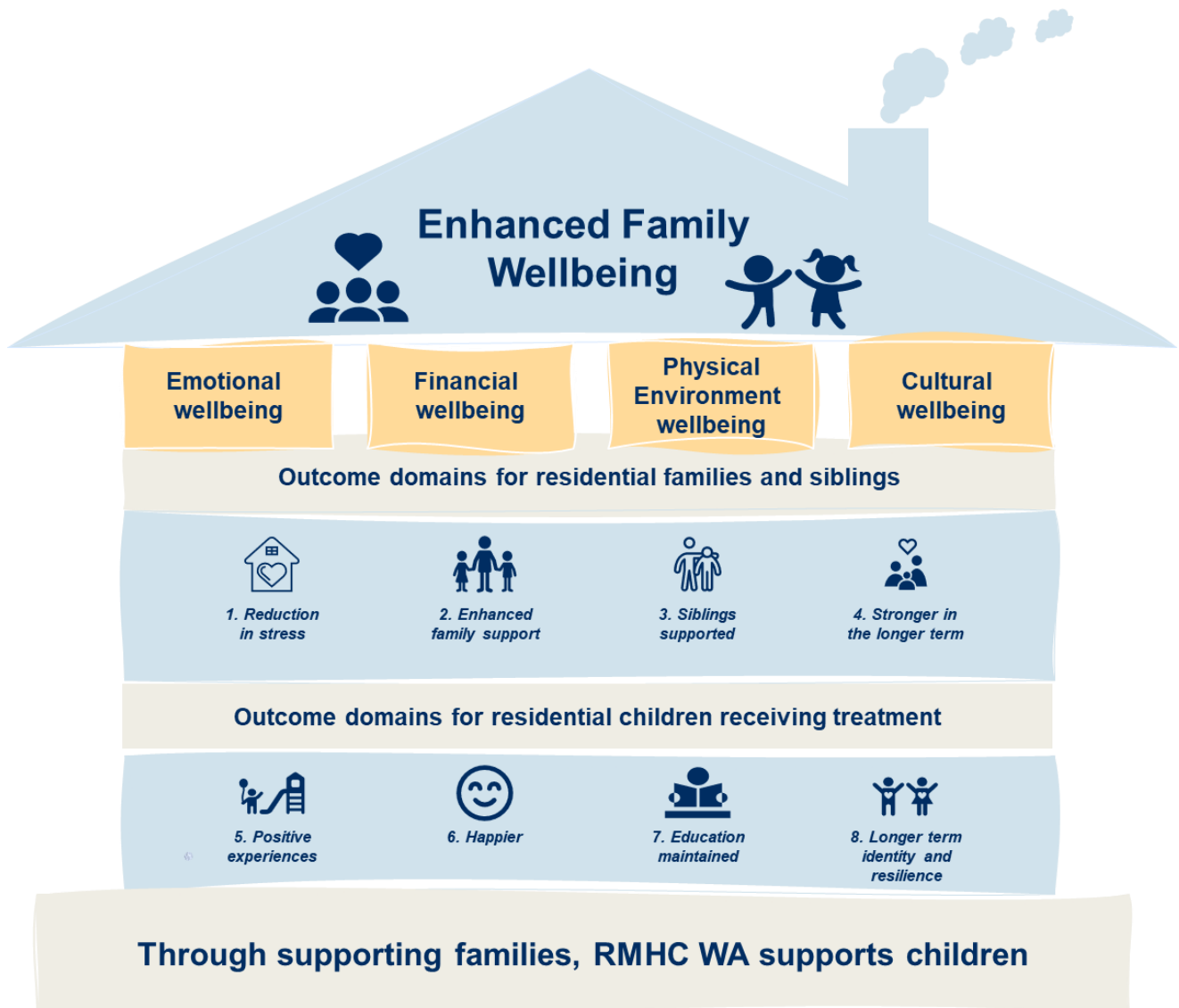


Outcomes Framework

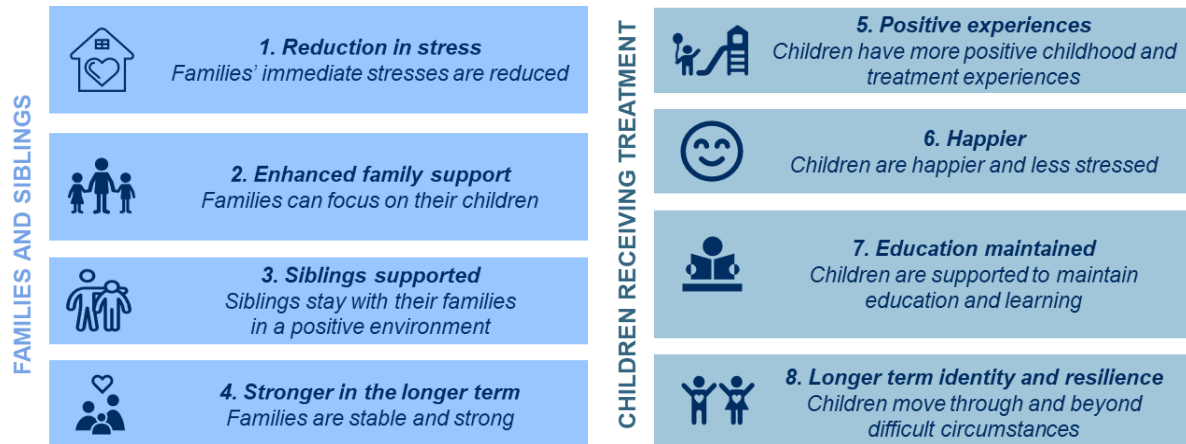
The Outcomes Framework outlines the key outcomes RMHC WA seeks to achieve for families and children’s wellbeing. For each outcome domain, a set of priority outcomes and indicators were developed.

Acknowledging the holistic nature of outcomes, the Outcomes Framework includes:

1. Overarching family wellbeing domains (emotional, financial, environmental, and cultural)
2. Outcome domains for families (parents/carers and siblings)
3. Outcome domains for children receiving treatment.



Descriptions of outcome domains for families and children



Data collection tools and analysis

A variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools were used to acquire a deeper understanding of RMHC WA's impact. These draw upon different perspectives from parents and caregivers, alumni (adults who stayed at RMHC WA as children), as well as Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) who work closely with families and children receiving treatment and Perth Children's Hospital representatives.

Tool 1: Exit survey for parents and caregivers















The survey included 22 questions (with several sub-questions) to assess the changes in family wellbeing, and outcomes for families, siblings and children receiving treatment as a result of staying at the RMH at QEII, RMH in PCH and RMH on Park.

Surveys were provided to RMHC WA families in hard copy format for completion, or via an email link. Where possible, FLOs assisted with the data collection at the Houses. Survey responses were collected from January to December 2024.

Tool 2: Interviews with parents/caregivers

SVA interviewed parents and carers who stayed at the RMH at QEII, PCH House and RMH on Park during 2024 to understand what had changed for their family as a result of

Total of 128 x survey responses

-  30 x First Nations
-  39 x Nedlands House
-  16 x Perth Children's Hospital
-  63 x RMH on Park
-  81 x short term stays (<14 days)
-  20 x medium term (14 days – 1 month)
-  21 x long term (1 month +)
-  4 x metro (less than 100 km)
-  37 x regional (100 – 300 km)
-  50 x rural (300 – 900 km)
-  36 x remote (900 km +)
-  96 x two parent households
-  18 x one parent households
-  9 x extended family households

staying at the Houses. A total of 23 interviews with parents/carers were conducted, with a mix of cohorts represented.

Two interviews were also undertaken with a representative from Perth Children’s Hospital to help provide context and additional insights from the perspective of the hospitals RMHC WA is partnered with.

Tool 3: RMHC WA staff focus group

SVA led a focus group with RMHC WA’s FLOs and House Coordinators. The purpose of this focus group was to present and test the survey results with staff to develop further insights, and garner broader feedback on the RMHC WA house environments, programs and family experiences. Six FLOs attended the 2024 focus group, held in February 2025.

Data analysis

Wellbeing ratings

All survey questions requested a response along a five-point Likert scale, enabling question averages to be calculated as a score out of 5. These averages are called ‘wellbeing ratings’ throughout this impact report.



Cohort insights

In addition to overarching trends and insights, survey data was analysed by the following cohorts. Where this analysis revealed cohort specific insights, they are discussed by outcome domains throughout the report. Where responses were consistent across cohorts, no cohort insights are provided.

Cohorts							
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families	Families with siblings	Short, medium and long stay families	Short, medium and long distance families	Age of child receiving treatment	RMH at QEII, RMH in PCH and RMH on Park	Two parent, one-parent, and extended family households

Limitations

The number of survey participants (128) represents a sample size of approximately 6.8% of the total number of families (1,879). This is lower than an ideal sample size of 10%, however has increased from 2023 (110), 2022 (77), and 2021 (29).

Enhanced Family Wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing

Financial wellbeing

Physical environment wellbeing

Cultural wellbeing

“

It has made hospitals less daunting and scary for all of us. Even back home in Geraldton, our feelings towards the hospital have changed because we associate it with RMHC WA there.”

- Parent / Carer



Emotional Wellbeing

When asked about emotional wellbeing, families referenced the personal support provided by the FLOs and volunteers, physical services provided, and the supportive friendly environment of RMHC WA as reducing stress and positively influencing their emotional wellbeing. The social connection developed with other families in the house was also highlighted as a key emotional support for families.

In 2024, RMHC WA has been renovating RMH at QEII, affecting capacity, support services and amenities like the Learning Centre and playground. Additionally, RMHC WA expanded by fully operationalising RMH on Park. It was consistently highlighted that despite changes and growth in the organisation, emotional wellbeing outcomes were maintained.

In 2024, RMHC WA also engaged a Wellbeing Coordinator who provided dedicated support sessions for parents/carers and staff. 34 one-on-one parent/carer sessions, 8 sessions with staff and 2 sessions with volunteers were provided.

In 2024, RMHC WA had a very high impact on the emotional wellbeing of families staying at the house, with families at the house experiencing a 24% increase in the average emotional wellbeing from when they entered the house.

Before arriving at RMHC WA, our emotional wellbeing was:

3.2



While staying at RMHC WA, our emotional wellbeing was:

4.0

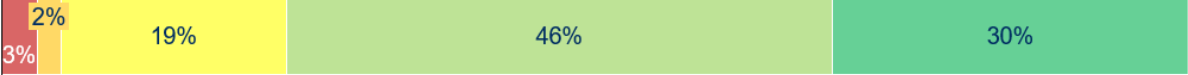


*wellbeing ratings are an average of responses, scored out of 5

Just before arriving at RMHC WA my family's emotional wellbeing was...



At RMHC WA my family's emotional wellbeing was...



Very Poor Poor Moderate Good Very Good

The number of families who stated their wellbeing was good or very good increased from 37% of all respondents on entry, to 73% of all respondents on exit. In particular, 75% of families stated that if they had not been able to stay at RMHC WA, their emotional wellbeing would have been poor or very poor.

“Knowing that we're not just a number, we're cared for and so are all the families.”

- Parent / Carer

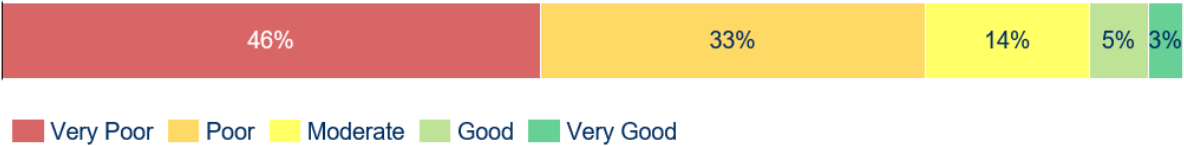
“We're from the country so we have no support here in Perth. The support from FLOs, volunteers and other families have been the most valuable things. That human interaction is so incredibly important.”

- Parent / Carer

If we had not been able to stay at RMHC WA, our emotional wellbeing would have been:

1.8
Poor

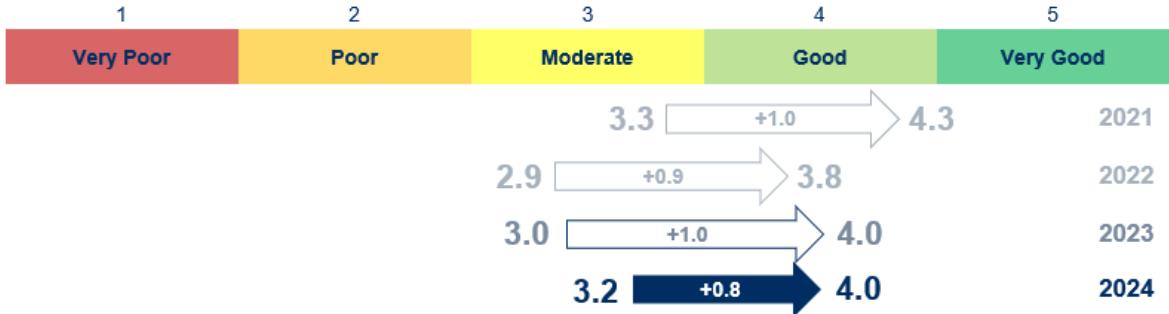
If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s emotional wellbeing would have been...



RMHC WA had a slightly less positive impact on emotional wellbeing in 2024 compared to 2023, however overall wellbeing ratings were similar to 2023

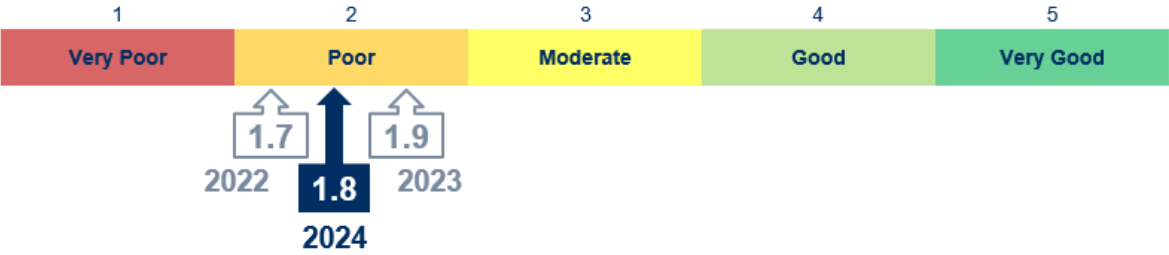
In 2024, the average impact RMHC WA had from entry to exit for families was very similar to 2023 and 2022, with an increase of 0.8 in 2024 compared to an increase of 1.0 in 2023. The overall average emotional wellbeing of families in 2024 was the same as 2023, with families reporting a higher average emotional wellbeing at entry, an increase of 0.2 compared to 2023.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family’s emotional wellbeing was...



The reported emotional wellbeing of families if they couldn’t access RMHC WA was also very similar to 2023 and 2022. Three years of similar figures suggest that the average emotional wellbeing of a family entering RMHC WA may be in a tightly bound range within ‘Poor’.

If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s emotional wellbeing would have been...



“

Without the house, it would be very stressful, not being able to meet needs because I would be focussed on logistics.”

- Parent / Carer

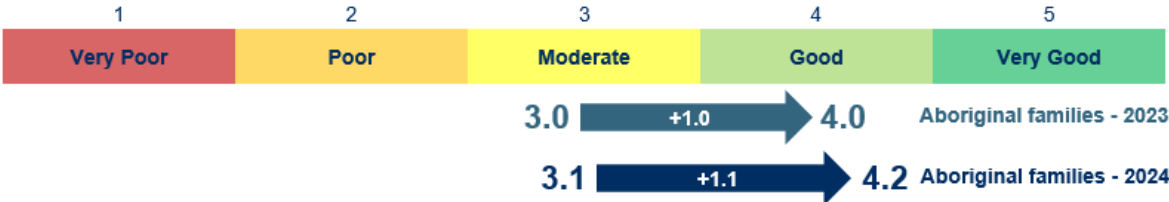


Families who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in 2024 had similar emotional wellbeing when entering the house compared to 2023

In 2024, Aboriginal families reported slightly higher emotional wellbeing when entering compared to 2023, but the impact RMHC WA had on non-Aboriginal families remained consistent throughout both years (increase of 1.0 and 0.9).

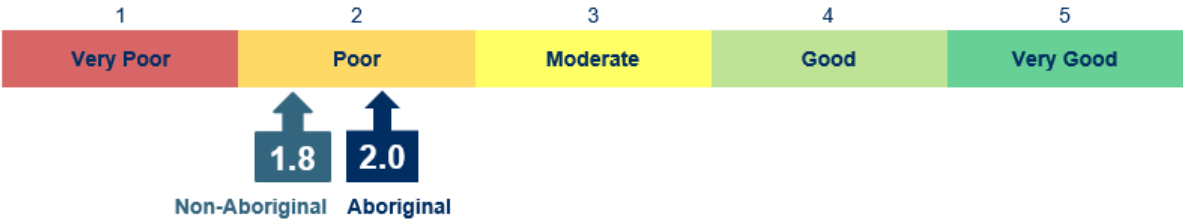
RMHC WA had similar impact on the emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal families in 2024 (average increase of 1.1), compared to in 2023 (average increase of 1.0). While in 2022 Aboriginal families reported similar levels of emotional wellbeing when arriving at RMHC WA (3.5) compared to non-Aboriginal families (2.7), in 2023 Aboriginal families reported higher levels of emotional wellbeing when entering (3.5).

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family’s emotional wellbeing was...



Aboriginal families believed that they would have had higher emotional wellbeing if not able to access RMHC WA in 2023 (2.0) compared to non-Aboriginal families (1.8). This 2024 rating was 0.5 points lower than Aboriginal families expressed in 2023 (2.5).

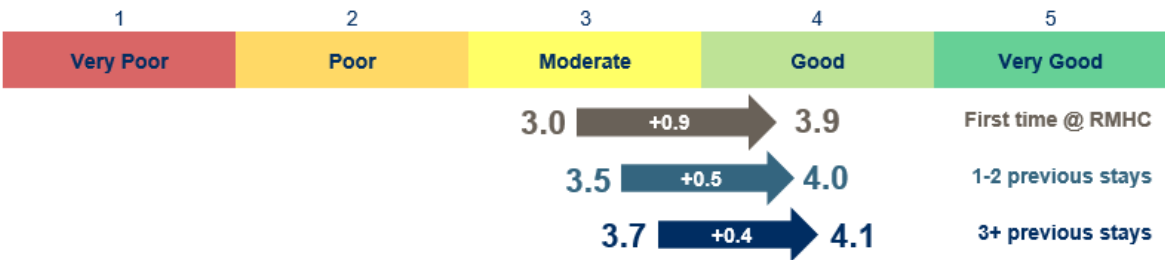
If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family's emotional wellbeing would have been...



RMHC WA had a greater positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of families who are first time visitors

RMHC WA received approximately 648 repeat families in 2024 (31%), with repeat families making up a slightly higher proportion of the survey participants (35%). The survey results revealed a similar level of emotional wellbeing while staying at RMHC WA, with families who are visiting for the first time entering the house with lower emotional wellbeing and benefiting more from RMHC WA support. This contrasts with 2023, where families who visited regularly (three or more times) experienced the greatest positive impact on emotional wellbeing.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family's emotional wellbeing was...



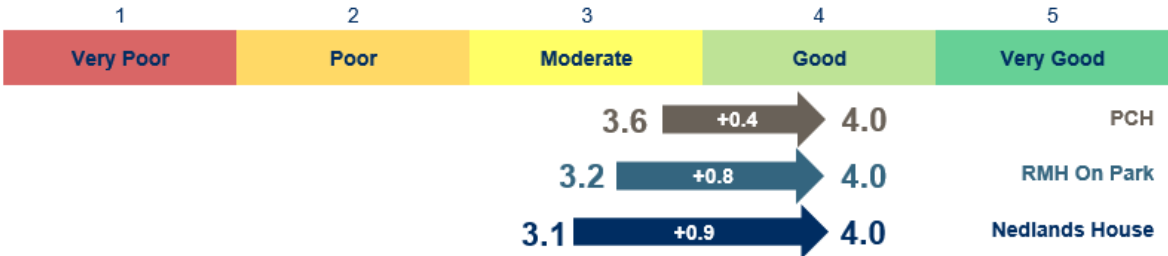
“We are not as worried about everything anymore, we know we have a place in Perth now that we have to go back and forth.”

- Parent / Carer

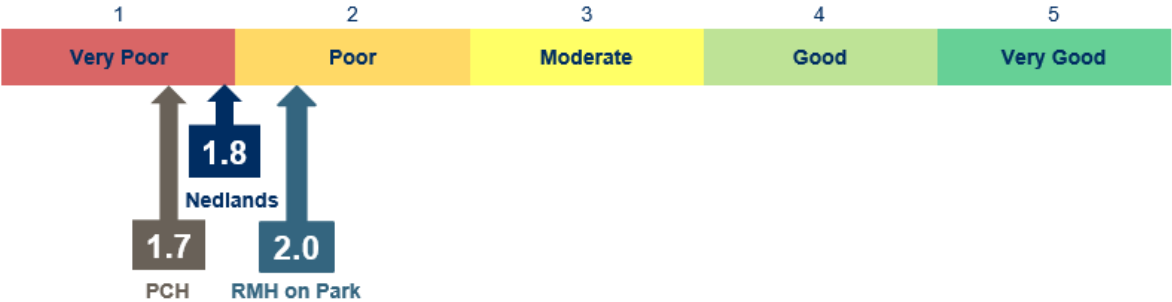
RMHC WA had a greater impact on the emotional wellbeing of families staying at RMH at QEII and RMH on Park, compared to PCH

RMH on Park and QEII House both had a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of families (increases of 0.8 and 0.9 respectively), while PCH had a moderate impact (increase of 0.4). As PCH provides accommodation for parents whose child is in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and hence likely suffering from an immediately life-threatening condition, it is not surprising that families at PCH reported a lower positive change in emotional wellbeing from entry to exit compared to RMH on Park and QEII House. Families across all three would have experienced lower emotional wellbeing if they did not have access to RMHC WA.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family’s emotional wellbeing was...



If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s emotional wellbeing would have been...



The social and communal nature of RMHC is likely a contributing factor to the higher emotional wellbeing of families who stayed with RMCH. Consistent with interviews undertaken in 2023, a common theme throughout 2024 interviews was the importance of the social connections made by families while at RMHC WA. Being surrounded by others in similar situations helped improve the emotional wellbeing of families.

“ You’re with other families as well, I met a few mums with their children, built a relationship with some of them.

“ There are community vibes, which help. There are some bad days where the other people are shattered, and

Having people in a similar situation is kind of nice, makes you feel a lot better.”

- Parent / Carer

you can support them because of your experience.”

- Parent / Carer

This social aspect was a key part of the support provided at RMH at QEII, however many families who stayed at RMH on Park also appreciated the independence from the social nature of RMH at QEII. This was further enhanced by the kitchenette available in each room at RMH On Park, which enabled families to cook their own food in their own space. For those families or parents/carers who are less social or who have a larger family unit, having an alternative accommodation option was well received.

“

There were times where you really felt like you were in a fishbowl, so you really did treat your room as a space for relaxation and to let tantrums fly for the kids and to be themselves, because outside you had to behave a little better.”

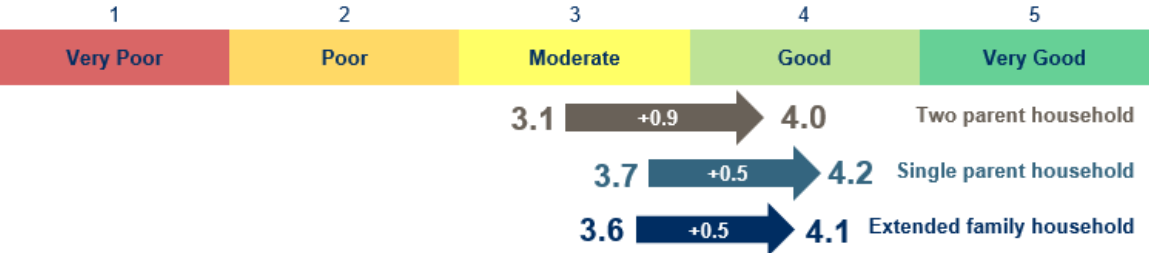
- Parent / Carer



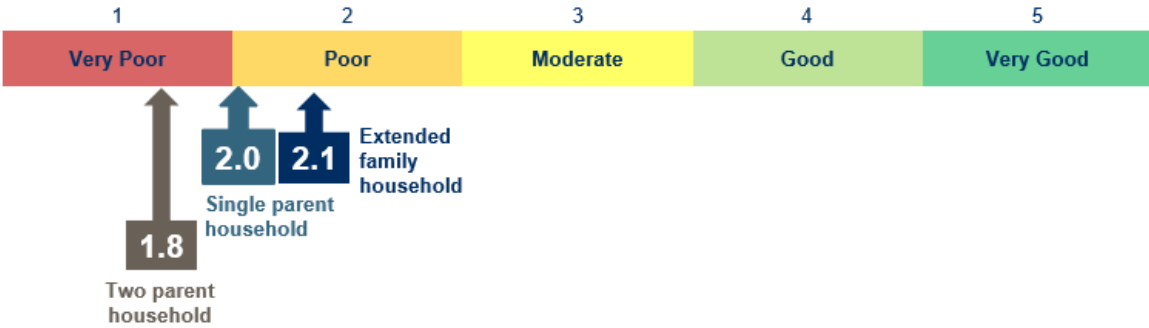
RMHC WA had a greater impact on the emotional wellbeing of two parent households, compared to one parent households and multi-generational or extended family households

RMHC WA had a greater impact on the emotional wellbeing of two parent households, recording an increase of 0.9 compared to 0.5 for single parent households and extended family households. Despite the larger increase in emotional wellbeing, single parent households and extended family households reported higher emotional wellbeing on both entry and exit compared to two parent households. Given two parent households represent the vast majority (75%) of survey responses, the difference in emotional wellbeing scores is most likely to reflect individual-level negative experiences rather than any aspect attributable to household structure.

Just before arriving ➔ While staying at RMHC WA my family’s emotional wellbeing was...



If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s emotional wellbeing would have been...



Financial Wellbeing



If we didn't have the RMHC we'd probably be situated much further away, there would be a big disconnect with my wife, we wouldn't have support, family would be split in two, would probably be renting for an obscene amount and wouldn't be close enough. It would not allow for the impromptu family catch ups, the family would be split apart and a huge financial burden."

- Parent / Carer

In 2024, RMHC WA had a high positive impact on the financial wellbeing of families, with a 20% increase in the average financial wellbeing rating from entry to while families were at the house. The number of families who stated their wellbeing was good or very good increased from 50% of all respondents on entry, to 77% of all respondents while at RMHC WA. In particular, 69% of families stated that if they had not been able to stay at RMHC WA, their finances would have been stressful or difficult to manage.

Before arriving at RMHC WA, our financial wellbeing was:

3.3



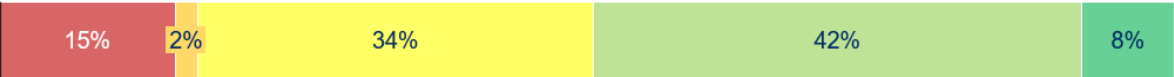
While staying at RMHC WA, our financial wellbeing was:

3.9

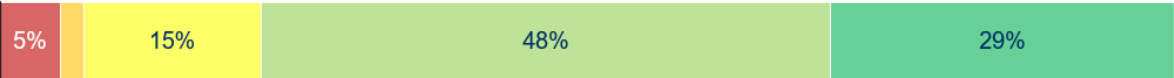


*wellbeing ratings are an average of responses, scored out of 5

Just before arriving at RMHC WA my family's financial wellbeing was...



While staying at RMHC WA my family's financial wellbeing was...



Stressful Difficult to manage Just manageable Manageable Easy to manage

If we had not been able to stay at RMHC WA, our financial wellbeing would have been:

1.9 /5
Difficult to manage

If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family's financial wellbeing would have been...



Stressful Difficult to manage Just manageable Manageable Easy to manage

“

The financial part, moving around, looking for apartments was mentally and financially draining. RMHC lifted the financial burden because to do any of this is a cost. Being looked after and having the finances not be a burden is a massive part of it.”

- Parent / Carer

“

“I don’t know what we would have done without [RMHC WA] to be honest, we didn’t know how long we would have been down there, paying for accommodation, we would have been in big trouble. I don’t know what people did before the House, we couldn’t even find accommodation because it was during holidays, there were no options close by.”

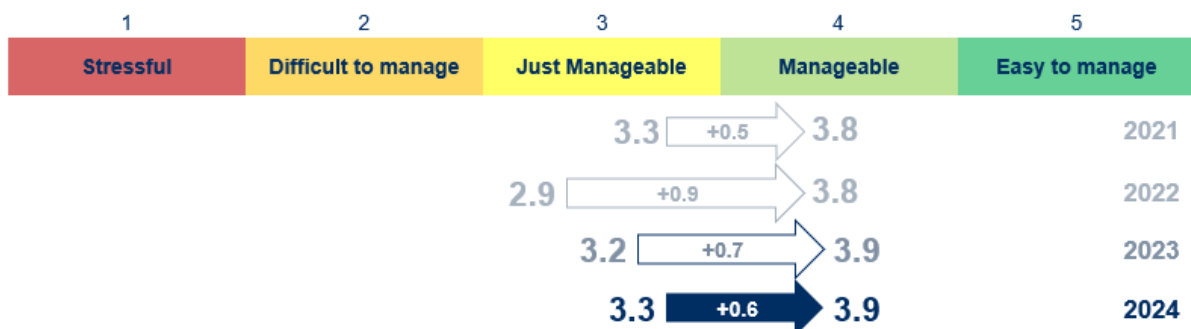
- Parent / Carer

2024
2023
2022
2021

RMHC WA had a similarly moderate impact on financial wellbeing in 2024 compared to 2023, with families experiencing similar financial wellbeing before arriving and while at the house

2024 reflected a similar impact on the financial wellbeing of families compared to 2023, with families arriving at the house with similar financial wellbeing and similarly higher financial wellbeing while at the House. This means that RMHC WA had a similarly moderately significant positive impact on financial wellbeing in 2024 compared to 2023.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family’s financial wellbeing was...



Parents/carers consistently expressed gratitude at the financial support RMHC WA has provided, particularly in the current cost of living crisis. Some families indicated they would not be able to afford to stay elsewhere in Perth if not for RMHC WA. This was particularly attributed to the increasing shortage of accommodation in Perth and the rising costs of other housing options.

“

It took a major load off, the stress and anxiety of where we will stay

“

PATS only covers a portion of accommodation. We’d be looking to be

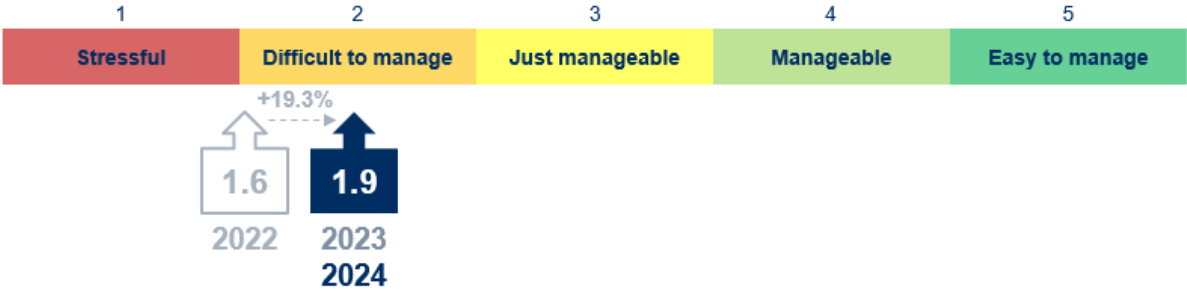
was taken off us. It would have been virtually impossible to quickly find somewhere to stay”

- Parent / Carer

thousands of dollars out of pocket. Not everyone has \$2000 for flights and \$2000 for accommodations at the click of the finger. Getting in at RMHC WA also saved a significant amount of stress to cover food.”

- Parent / Carer

If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s financial wellbeing would have been...



In 2024 and previous reports, the food provided by RMHC WA has been regularly mentioned as a key cost saver for families, as well as the cost saving of not having to pay for parking every day at the hospital due to the proximity of RMHC WA. This further highlights the additional ways RMHC WA supports families who are facing ongoing financial pressure from increases in the cost of living.



Everything was less stressful. We didn’t have to worry about food at all, specially financially – having to buy food as we wouldn’t have time to cook would have cost us a lot.”

- Parent / Carer



Probably the financial aspect was noticeable, because we were told last minute to fly down to Perth and the onus was on us to get accommodation. So having to deal with a child who is not well and organise all of that was very stressful, and the accommodation in close proximately to the hospital and at the end of the day if I wasn’t able to get into On Park, would have been a decent taxi fare away from hospital.”

- Parent / Carer

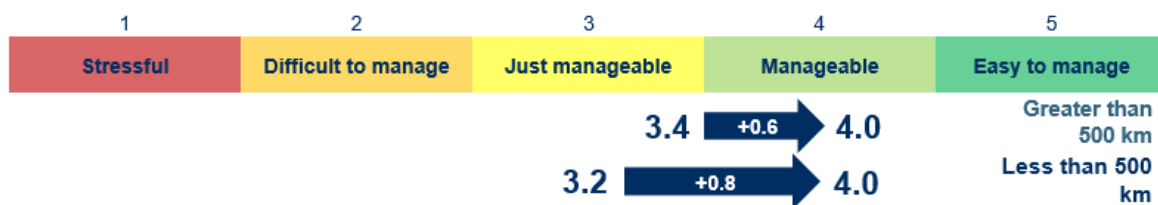


Families within 500 km of Perth had lower average financial wellbeing

Families who live within 500 km of Perth entered RMHC with lower financial wellbeing compared to families who live greater than 500 km from Perth - this is similar to 2023 results.

While the financial wellbeing reported by families within 500 km of Perth increased from 2023 to 2024, this 'swap' is largely due to an increase in the reported financial wellbeing of families over 500 km from Perth. Survey data from 2024 showed a small decrease from 3.5 to 3.4 of average financial wellbeing before arriving for families who live more than 500km of Perth, whilst there was a small average increase from 3.0 to 3.2 for families who lived less than 500km from Perth.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family's financial wellbeing was...

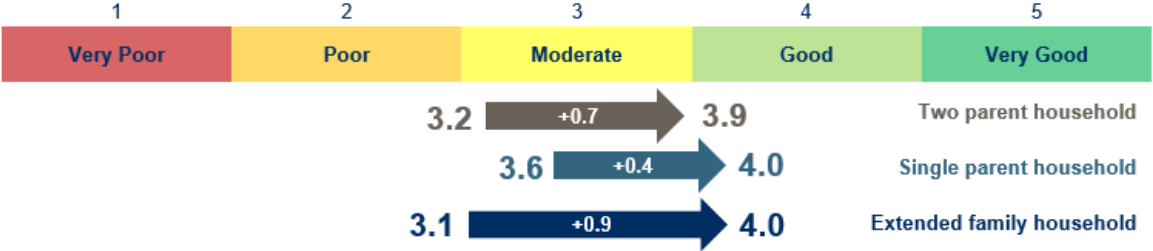


RMHC WA had a greater impact on the financial wellbeing of multi-generational or extended family households, compared to two parent and one parent households

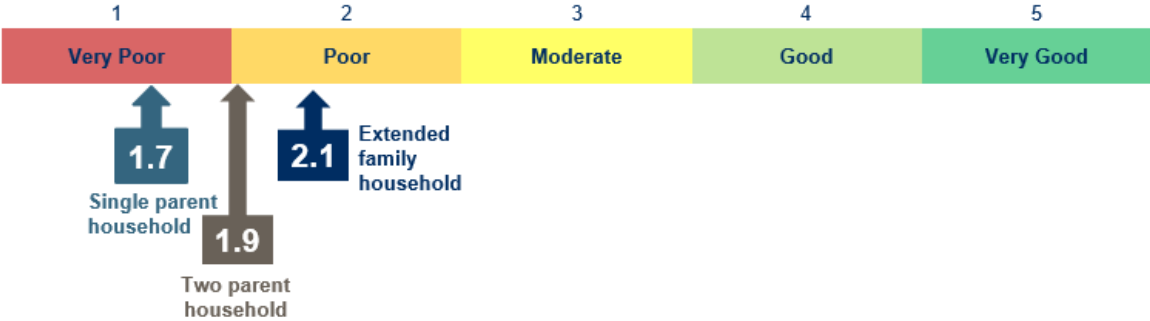
RMHC WA had a greater impact on the financial wellbeing of multi-generational or extended family households, recording an increase of 0.9 compared to 0.7 for two parent households and 0.4 for one parent households.

The reported financial wellbeing at exit was consistent across all household structures, with data implying that multi-generational or extended family households have lower financial wellbeing at entry. It is difficult to draw conclusions from small sample sizes for one parent households and multi-generational or extended family households – whilst one parent households reported the highest entry financial wellbeing scores, they also reported the lowest average expected financial wellbeing if they were not able to stay at RMHC WA. In seeking to improve access for families with lower financial wellbeing, RMHC WA could consider avenues to increase access for financially vulnerable families, perhaps by conducting a gap analysis on existing inbound processes to identify how financially vulnerable families might be missed.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family's financial wellbeing was...



If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family's financial wellbeing would have been...





Cultural Wellbeing



RMHC is so inclusive, you just feel at ease. There is no judgement from anyone.”

- Parent / Carer

In 2024, RMHC WA had minimal observable impact on the cultural wellbeing of families staying at the house, with families staying at RMHC WA effectively maintaining their average cultural wellbeing rating while at the house (increase from 4.3 to 4.4). The average cultural wellbeing scores were higher than 2023, with the number of families who stated their cultural wellbeing was good or very good increased from 83% of all respondents on entry (compared to 77% in 2023), to 89% of all respondents while staying at RMHC WA (compared to 85% in 2023). Whilst cultural wellbeing responses were high before and after, 30% of families believed that if they had not been able to stay at RMHC WA, their cultural wellbeing would have been low or very low.

Of the 128 survey respondents, 23% stated that members of their family identified as being Aboriginal, 20% identified their religion as Christian or Catholic, and 7% identified as another culture or religion. The remainder stated that their culture or religion was not applicable or stated that they would prefer not to say. Of the Aboriginal survey respondents, it is anecdotally believed that Noongar families are overrepresented and so RMHC WA is working on increasing representation from across Western Australia.

Before arriving at RMHC WA, our cultural wellbeing was:

4.3



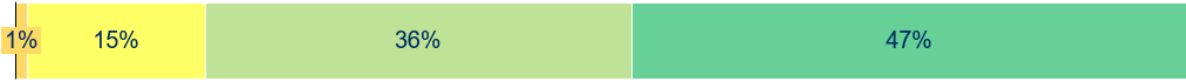
While staying at RMHC WA, our cultural wellbeing was:

4.4



*wellbeing ratings are an average of responses, scored out of 5

Just before arriving at RMHC WA my family’s cultural wellbeing was...



At RMHC WA my family’s cultural wellbeing was...



Very Low Low Moderate Good Very Good

If we had not been able to stay at RMHC WA, our cultural wellbeing would have been:

3.2 /5
Moderate

If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s cultural wellbeing would have been...



Very Low Low Moderate Good Very Good

While no survey or interview participants specifically discussed the cultural safety of RMHC WA in relation to different religions or cultures, many talked about the welcoming and inclusive culture of the house. This sentiment was especially expressed by parents of children with disabilities.

“The staff is very intuitive. They are very inclusive but not intrusive.”
- Parent / Carer

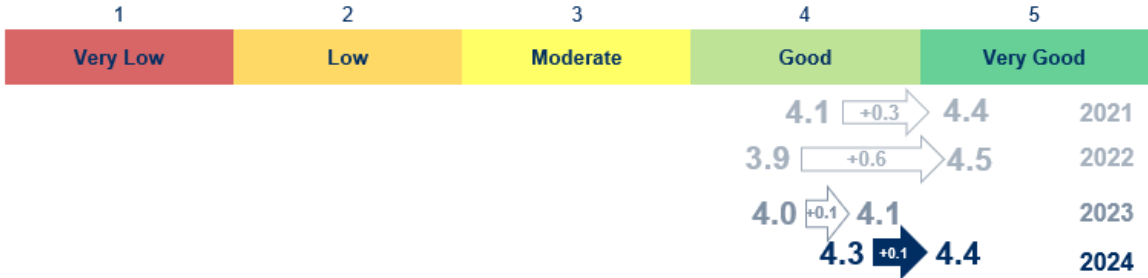
“Our boy needs to wear headphones if he is in busy and loud spaces. There is no judgement from anyone when he does so at the house.”
- Parent / Carer

RMHC WA had no observable impact on cultural wellbeing in 2024 and 2023 compared to 2022 and 2021, where there was a higher increase

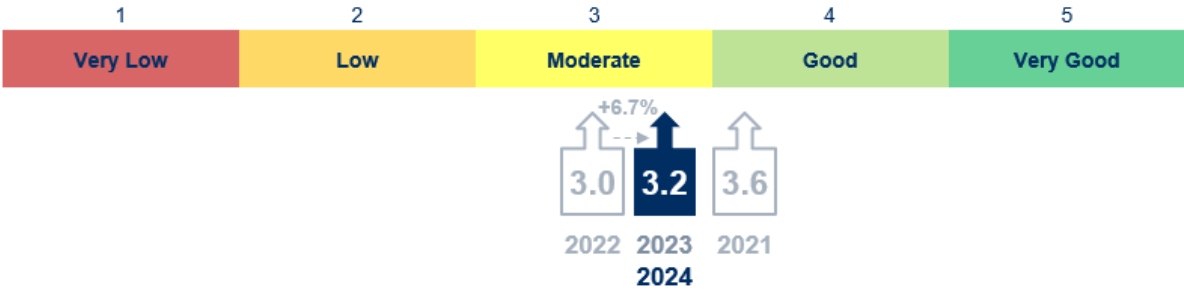
In 2024 RMHC WA had no observable impact on family cultural wellbeing. This is similar to 2023 (0.1 increase), but 2021 and 2021 experienced increases of 0.6 and 0.3 respectively.

In 2023, if families had not been able to stay at the house, they would have experienced slightly higher cultural wellbeing than in 2022, remaining lower than 2021.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family’s cultural wellbeing was...



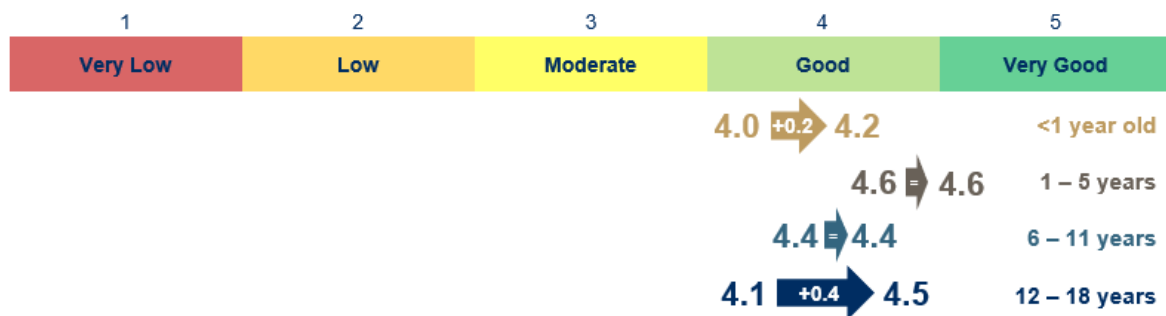
If we had not been able to stay at Ronald McDonald House our family’s cultural wellbeing would have been...



 **RMHC WA had a higher positive impact on the cultural wellbeing of families whose child receiving treatment was 12 – 18 years, while other families experience no observable or small impact on cultural wellbeing**

RMHC WA had a higher positive impact on the cultural wellbeing of families whose child receiving treatment was between 12 –18 years of age. Families whose child receiving treatment were under 12 years of age experienced no observable change in cultural wellbeing.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family's cultural wellbeing was...



Whilst in previous years, parents/carers have commented on how without RMHC WA support they would have had to move to Perth to help manage their child's treatment, this was not something specifically raised in interviews this year. However, the themes of stability and maintaining a semblance of 'normal life' have come through strongly, as well as RMHC 'feeling like home', which implies that families can maintain their cultural wellbeing within their community similar to previous years. This was particularly highlighted for families who were able to have their whole family together, which was flagged as an improvement from previous years.



Because we had the big room, her siblings would come up during the weekend and school holidays. Having everyone together made it feel like home."

- Parent / Carer



It's been improved from the past, RMHC WA is more accommodating to having the whole family together, which makes such a big difference."

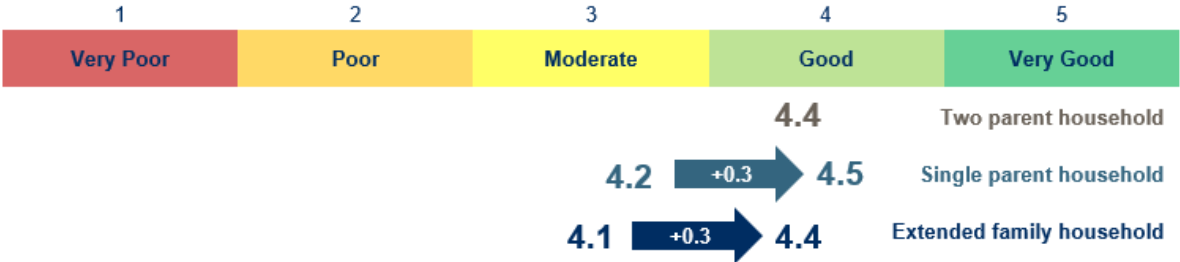
- Parent / Carer



RMHC WA had a greater impact on the cultural wellbeing of single parent households and multi-generational or extended family households, compared to two parent households

RMHC WA had a greater impact on the cultural wellbeing of single parent households and multi-generational or extended family households, recording an increase of 0.3 compared to no change for two parent households. Given the small sample sizes of these cohorts, this finding will be something to validate in future reports.

Just before arriving ➡ While staying at RMHC WA my family's cultural wellbeing was...





Physical Environment Wellbeing

“

Home is home and RMHC is home when supporting a child.”

- Parent / Carer

In 2024 families found RMHC WA to be a ‘home away from home’, providing a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment for their family – 91% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that not being able to access the RMHC WA house environment would have caused stress to their family wellbeing. Many families mentioned the RMHC WA environment during interviews as being a major factor in improving wellbeing. In particular, while the physical environments of RMH at QEII, RMH in PCH and RMH on Park are all quite different, results were consistent across the three accommodation options.

My family home is a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment.

4.6



RMHC WA feels like a home-away-from-home that is safe, healthy and enjoyable for our family.

4.4



*wellbeing ratings are an average of responses, scored out of 5

My family home is a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment.



RMHC WA feels like a home-away-from-home that is safe, healthy and enjoyable for our family.

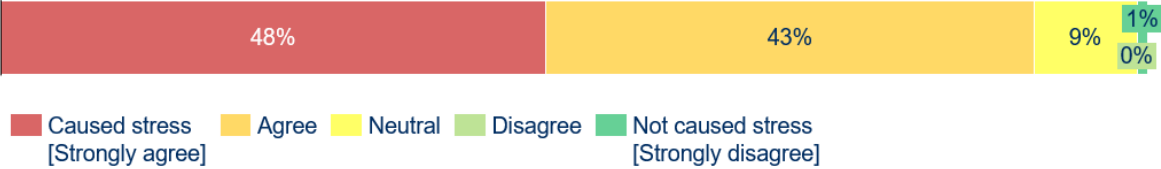


Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Not being able to access the family-friendly, safe, healthy, enjoyable environment provided by RMHC WA would've caused stress to our family wellbeing.

1.6
Caused stress

Not being able to access the family-friendly, safe, healthy, enjoyable environment provided by RMHC WA would've caused stress to our family wellbeing.



“RMHC WA provides me with a safe and clean place to rest. This is significant as the previous accommodation I stayed in through [redacted] hospital, there had been incidents, with strangers being able to access the building. This is safe and I can properly rest.”

- Parent / Carer

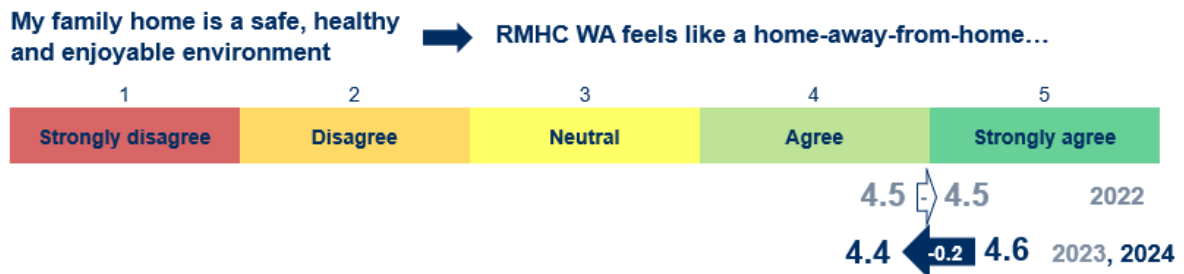
“All the FLOs are so nice. They will sit with us and interact with us but also our boy. This has turned what was a bit of a hotel environment to a very friendly environment. We also appreciate being able to go outside in a safe place and have a bit of a break. A big thing from us is that we are from the country/regional areas, so we are used to being outside a bit more.”

- Parent / Carer

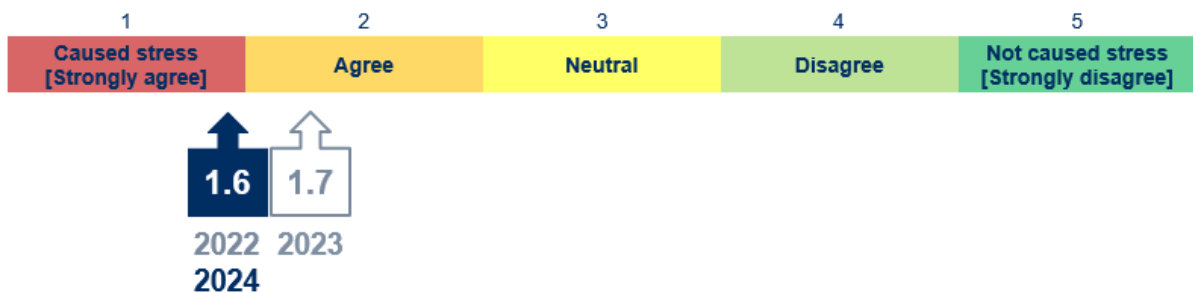
Survey results for environmental wellbeing in 2024 was consistent with 2023 and 2022

Due to the environmental wellbeing survey questions changing between 2021 and 2022, no comparison is provided with 2021 survey results. Between 2022 and 2023, families expressed similar sentiments regarding the RMHC WA environment, stating the house felt like a 'home away from home', and not being able to access it would have caused stress to their family wellbeing. It is to be noted that in 2024, RMH at QEII underwent renovations which impacted some families' experience, albeit not significantly. This was mostly attributed

to spaces such as the Learning Centre and playgrounds being closed, which reduced options for parents to engage with their child.



Not being able to access the family-friendly, safe, healthy, enjoyable environment provided by RMHC WA would've caused stress to our family wellbeing.



Families appreciated the different environments provided by RMH at QEII, PCH and RMH on Park depending on their needs. Some families preferred as more social environment whilst others preferred to have their personal space. RMHC WA is able to accommodate to both.

While there was a mix of accommodation used by survey participants, environmental wellbeing ratings did not change significantly between the three houses, with all families agreeing that each house felt like a 'home away from home'.

While RMH on Park does not have the same in-house facilities as RMH at QEII, all patients and families at RMH on Park have access to all RMHC WA facilities at RMH on QEII and were supported by RMHC WA's Family Liaison Officers, Family Support Coordinators, volunteers and Wellbeing Coordinator. However, with the full operationalisation of RMH On Park, families were able to receive most wrap-around support, services and experiences.

During interviews, families did acknowledge the differences between the Houses, particularly the more social nature of RMH at QEII and support services provided, which often is facilitated through the social spaces such as the dining room. Whilst RMH on Park also has the dining space, facilities such as kitchenette being present in rooms foster a stronger sense of independence for families. Some families mentioned the removal of fridges from their

room in RMH at QEII and only having access to the common fridge. This was flagged as an inconvenience, particularly if a fridge is needed to store medication.

While many of the families who stayed at RMH on Park enjoyed and greatly appreciated the accommodation, they did consistently mention the lack of parking as a key challenge.

“

We can never find any parking, which can be a bit frustrating – especially at night and then you have to walk a lot.”

- Parent / Carer

“

We used to have the mini fridge in the QEII house. This got taken out and it is a bit of a pain to always come down, because we need to take the medication every 4 hours so it is burdensome at night to come down.”

- Parent / Carer

As previously noted, the renovations at Nedland House have had an impact on families. Some parents and carers reported difficulties in finding activities for their young children, especially for siblings who have to wait during lengthy appointments. However, it was noted that this resulted in families accessing the facilities at the hospital more, which includes the Family Room and Fun on 4. Interviews with families highlighted the importance of these services and amenities.

“

With the Learning Centre closed, you can't just leave the kids back at the House. This is a bit of a pain, especially if they are teenagers.”

- Parent / Carer

“

It is a bit annoying that the playground is closed, the kids kept wanting to go out. But we did go to Fun on 4 a lot, which they really enjoyed.”


- Parent / Carer

Outcomes for families and siblings

Outcome domains for residential families and siblings

 1. Reduction in stress	 2. Enhance family support	 3. Siblings supported	 4. Stronger in the longer term
--	---	---	--

“*RMHC has made the hospitals way less daunting for all of us. All the kids get excited now because of the house.*”
- Parent / Carer


 **Reduction in stress**
Families' immediate stresses are reduced

Impact Rating

4.4




Very High

“*Whole experience with RMHC is taking stress out of everything.*”
- Parent / Carer

 **Families' basic needs are met at no cost**

In 2024 RMHC WA provided 19,540 nights of accommodation and associated meals for families across RMH at QEII, PCH and RMH on Park. In 2023, RMHC WA continued to advance its strategy to increase House capacity to meet current and future growth in demand, investing in additional room capacity at RMH on Park by acquiring additional rooms to increase capacity from 15 to 26 rooms. In 2024, RMH On Park opened 50 rooms. All


patients and families at RMH on Park have access to the meals and services provided at QEII (Nedlands) House.

RMH at QEII		7,752 nights of accommodation provided
RMH in PCH		4,193 nights of accommodation provided
RMH on Park		5,930 nights of accommodation provided

The provision of basic needs had a very significant impact for parents and carers, removing key stressors from the day to day and enabling them to focus on their children.

“
Having stability, having meals cooked for us, we were able to focus on our kid and their schooling, We’re in Perth without family support so having this support means so much.”
- Parent / Carer

“
Felt like she could ask for anything whenever she needed.”
- Parent / Carer



Families’ immediate emotional needs are met

Most families (86%) agreed or strongly agreed that RMHC WA helped reduce their general levels of stress and anxiety. These findings were consistent across all cohorts and are similar to 2023, 2022 and 2021 data (where 91%, 88% and 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement respectively). The proximity of RMHC WA to the hospital was a key alleviator of stress for parents and carers, and the emotional support provided by other families was a key factor in meeting the emotional needs of families. This was particularly highlighted by parents who had their babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) but were not staying in the PCH rooms, being across the road relieved a lot of stress and anxiety.

Helped reduce my general levels of stress and anxiety



“

Shuttle bus relieved a lot of issues around parking, fines, car issues, etc. To have somewhere to leave the car to be safe and shuttle and not worry about parking limits from the outside world, my only job is to be with the child.”

- Parent / Carer



Enhanced family support

Families can focus on their children

“

I could come and go and get shopping and my husband didn't have to leave our daughter.”

- Parent / Carer



Families can focus on caring for their children

While not asked in the survey, many parents and carers interviewed expressed how the support provided by RMHC WA helped them focus on their children. Daily concerns were removed, which gave carers the emotional and physical space to focus both on their child receiving treatment, and on other siblings staying with them in the house and their experience. Some families expressed that whilst the support received from FLOs and volunteers are incredibly valuable, often due to the nature of their jobs, they can be quite busy. Families noted that if there were specific counselling services that they could access in-house, it would make a significant difference.

“

Sometimes it's nice to speak to someone who doesn't know you that well [referring to FLOs]. It can be easier to talk to them and express my feelings.”

- Parent / Carer

“

Having a shoulder from staff, volunteers, and parents going through the same thing.”

- Parent / Carer



Families feel supported in the hospital environment

While RMHC WA does not provide any care or support related to the child's treatment, they provide other supports for families within the hospital environment that help provide a foundation for the family. In particular, the PCH accommodation for parents and carers of children in ICU provides significant support, enabling parents to have a break while remaining close to their children. In addition, as parents have a place to access support and rest, this relieves pressure on the hospital staff who are providing care to the child. Some families also noted that upon arrival to RMHC WA, it is already a stressful situation and digesting all the information, both about the hospital and the house can be stressful and overwhelming. It was emphasised that RMHC WA staff are always available to guide them through it.



When we got to the house, it was so overwhelming. The FLO took us on a big walk and talked us through everything, even the hospital stuff."

- Parent/carer



Nothing but professional to work with the staff, [they] feel bad for PCH staff if they don't have rooms left – nothing but friendliness."

- Hospital representative



Siblings supported

Siblings stay with their families in a positive environment

Impact Rating

4.4

Very High



Allowed us to be able to stay closer together and stay connected as a family instead of being split apart."

- Parent / Carer



Siblings remain close to their families

Of survey respondents with siblings, 91% agreed or strongly agreed that RMHC WA helped their other children feel less stressed or anxious. Many parents and carers interviewed stated that this was due to the family unit staying together and children being able to be close to their sibling receiving treatment. Having siblings nearby also helped the child receiving treatment, as siblings could encourage the child receiving treatment and help them feel less alone. The contrary was also expressed, some families expressed that the sibling felt stressed being away from the family. Evaluators also noted the personalised support received by siblings from FLOs during a site visit. This included the sibling’s birthday being celebrated by the FLOs. During interviews, it was also noted that siblings remaining close to families and receiving support from RMHC WA helped them adapt to a ‘new normal’.

Helped our other child/children feel less stressed or anxious



They were able to let us bring our teenage son to be together with the whole family. He was feeling emotional and upset, being separated from us.”

- Parent / Carer



RMHC WA has helped our older son interact with other kids, he had access to toys – it’s all been very fun for him. He doesn’t pick up on the emotions us adults are feeling as much, it’s really helped him deal with the new normal.”

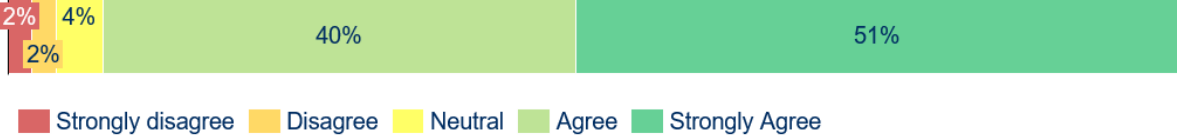
- Parent / Carer



Siblings can access play and learning environments together with their sibling receiving treatment and other children

The positive environment of RMHC WA and spaces provided had a significant impact on family wellbeing, with 91% of families with siblings surveyed agreeing or strongly agreeing that RMHC WA helped their other children to feel included and happy. This is very consistent with 2023 and 2022 survey results, where 94% and 96% of families agreed or strongly agreed that RMHC WA helped their other child/children to feel included and happy. In 2024 the playground, playgroup, learning centre and presence of other children around were all mentioned by parents and carers as contributing to their children’s wellbeing, noting that most of these spaces were closed for a period due to renovations. Whilst it did have an impact on children, the importance of these spaces was highlighted. RMHC WA were still able to provide the options of Fun on 4 and the Family Rooms to children.

Helped our other child/children to feel included and happy



“ Older daughter loved the house, the playground was her favourite part of the house. Always felt comfortable there. Good to have other kids around to play with.”

- Parent / Carer

“ A place we can all spend time together.”

- Parent / Carer



Stronger in the longer term

Families are stable and strong



“ Stability provided [is] like coming back to a home

- Parent / Carer



Disruption caused by child’s illness has a reduced long term impact on family


91% of families surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that staying at RMHC WA helped their family maintain a sense of their normal life and feel closer to each other. These results are consistent with 2023 and 2022 survey data, where 89% and 93% of respondents agreed that staying at RMHC WA enabled them to maintain a sense of their normal life and feel closer to each other.

Helped my family maintain a sense of our normal life and feel closer to each other



“
 Father was able to come to be with Mum, stuck together to support family.”
 - Family of Patient

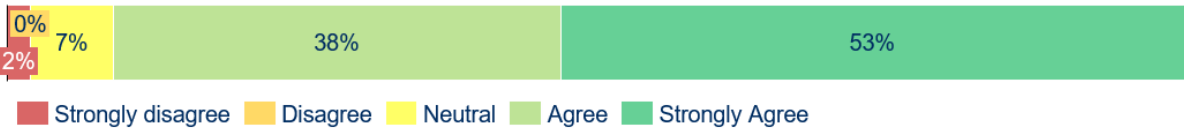
“
 Was able to bring my teenage son to be together with the whole family. He was getting emotional and upset being separate – RMHC was accommodating.”
 - Parent / Carer



Families are stronger

91% of families surveyed felt that staying at RMHC WA helped their family feel stronger and more resilient to cope with their difficult circumstances. This remained consistent across families with and without siblings, with 91% strongly agreeing or agreeing across both cohorts.

Helped my family feel stronger and more resilient to cope with our difficult circumstances



“
 It was great to have the whole family together...being able to be together has made a big difference.”
 - Parent / Carer

Outcomes for children receiving treatment

Outcome domains for residential children receiving treatment



5. Positive experiences



6. Happier



7. Education maintained



8. Longer term identity and resilience

“

It's been good for him, given him time to heal. He sleeps really well there. No change in that from home, routine from home is maintained.”

- Parent / Carer



Positive experiences

Children have more positive childhood and treatment experiences

“

The kids never used to want to come to the hospital but now because of RMHC WA they are actually excited to come. They know they can play with other kids and just overall, it's fun.”

- Parent / Carer



Children have positive childhood experiences

Although no survey questions were asked, parents shared in interviews that staying at RMHC WA positively impacted their child's treatment experience. This is especially true for children who frequently visit Perth for ongoing treatments and can stay at RMHC WA instead of the hospital. The RMHC WA environment provided a more positive experience for the child receiving treatment compared to staying in the hospital. The social connections and friendships formed at RMHC WA were called out as incredibly beneficial for the kids, providing them with enjoyable experiences and lasting bonds, even extending to online interactions beyond their local community.

“

Kids have really enjoyed it. They enjoy playing with other kids. That social connection has been so important”

- Parent / Carer

“

The kids have created friendships that aren't in the Goldfields, so they play online games together.”

- Parent / Carer

The additional activities and events run by RMHC WA often helped take children's minds off their treatment and enabled them to focus on positive experiences instead. Many parents and carers said they were particularly grateful for their children's smiles when RMHC WA is mentioned, despite the difficult and often painful circumstances surrounding the stay. Parents and carers appreciated RMHC WA staff's proactive communication about local activities and events, finding it helpful for staying informed.

“

The kids really loved Elf on the Shelf. Every morning, they would wake up and look forward to that. It was a really nice way to start the day.”

- Parent / Carer



Happier

Children are happier and less stressed



All the services RMHC WA provides, she [daughter] really loves. She really loves the playground, the learning centre. She also really loves the pancake machine. All these things have made her really happy.”

- Parent / Carer



Children feel safe and supported

91% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staying at RMHC WA helped their child receiving treatment to feel calm, safe and supported.

Helped my child receiving treatment to feel calm, safe and supported



Staying at RMHC WA actually helps him mentally prepare for the hospital.

- Parent / Carer

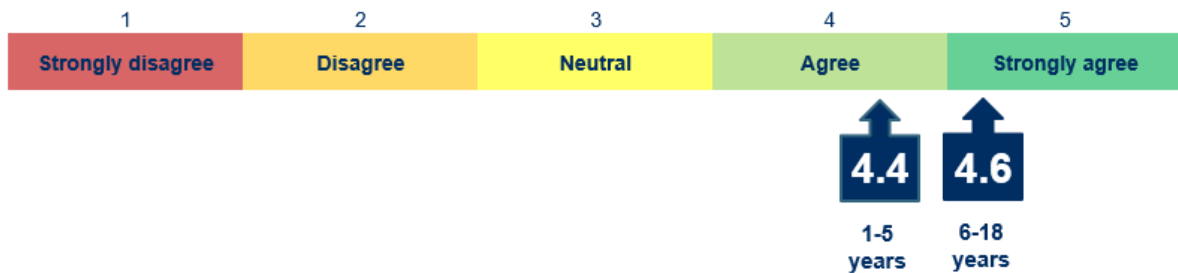


Our son didn't trust grown ups in general up until the age of 3 but we've been coming here since he was a baby. He had a lot of trauma. But he never had this issue when we visited RMHC WA. He never felt like he couldn't be around grown ups here.”

- Parent / Carer

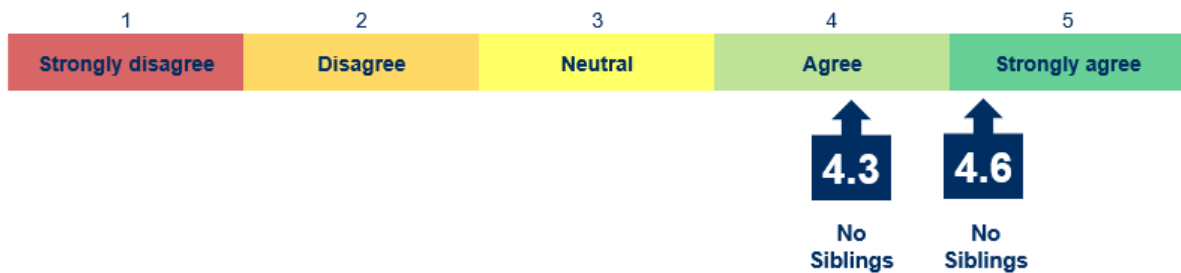
Parents whose child receiving treatment was aged between 6 - 18 years most strongly agreed that their child felt calm, safe and supported by staying at RMHC WA during treatment.

Helped my child receiving treatment to feel calm, safe and supported



On average, families with no siblings also felt that their child was more calm, safe and supported compared to families with siblings. This is a reversal from 2023, where families with siblings felt more supported.

Helped my child receiving treatment to feel calm, safe and supported



Children feel less anxious and more confident

The friendly environment and proximity of RMHC WA to the hospital were key factors in helping children to feel less anxious and more confident while at RMHC WA. Gus the dog was also mentioned by many parents and carers, highlighting his role in helping kids feel less anxious during their stay. The familiarity of RMHC WA was also a key factor for repeat families in reducing anxiety for children as they were coming to a place they were already familiar with. This included the familiar faces of FLOs and volunteers.



If we ever needed anything. RMHC WA always provides us with resources to help us. Also having Gus was so great when feeling blue."

- Parent / Carer



He [patient] has anxiety with his treatment, but the house really helps settle him. This in turns helps us feel less anxious too."

- Parent / Carer



Education maintained

Children are supported to maintain education and learning

“

The learning program has been very positive. The tutor is very competent, understands kids, sick kids, kids with learning disabilities and has been able to adapt content as needed. Tutor is kind and has built rapport with [child]. Tutor makes learning fun which encourages [child] to stay engaged.”

- Parent / Carer



Children supported to maintain education and learning during treatment

RMHC WA offers multiple learning opportunities through their Learning Program and learning centre programs. Play-based learning and private tuition are some of the different activities patients and siblings can take part in. Not all children want to attend, or feel comfortable attending sessions, however the opportunity is provided for those who want to take it up.

As previously outlined, the learning centre was closed for a period of time in 2024 due to renovations. Parents consistently indicated they wished they could access the centre, articulating the value of the space and how it benefited their young person, and often the siblings.

“

We accessed the learning centre when we stayed there. Our daughter really loves school, so this was such a positive experience for her. She was able to focus on that instead of the pain. We also really enjoyed the sense of community from the learning centre.”

- Parent / Carer

“

We wish we could have accessed the learning centre, not sure why it was closed. We have in the past, its been really good. It also gives us parents a break.”

- Parent / Carer



Children are ready and more confident to return to school

In 2024, 3,903 hours of tuition were provided, with the student caseload increasing from 310 participants in 2023 to 331 in 2024. With regard to tutoring format, 87% percent of tutoring is provided face to face, with 12% provided online once the child has returned home. There were also 21 EDMed seminars held for a total of 427 educators and tertiary education students. Parents and carers with school age children who participated in RMHC WA tutoring attributed the support with helping their child maintain their education and feel more confident to return to school.

“

While we were there for the year, [RMHC tutoring] was the only schooling she had access to.”

- Parent / Carer

“

Schooling work helped calm her because she wants to return to school full time, so it was good and allowed her to know we can still keep this going and ticking.”

- Parent / Carer



Longer term identity and resilience

Children move through and beyond difficult circumstances



Children are empathetic and resilient adults who develop an identity beyond their illness

Parents and carers interviewed highlighted the importance of social connections their children make while staying at RMHC WA as a key factor in ongoing resilience and happiness. Being around diverse families and illnesses and experiencing the generosity of the FLOs and volunteers in the house has a long-term influence for children staying in the house. RMHC WA enables children to tap into lived experience support organically.



They've also given my kids a lot of compassion towards others those that aren't the same as themselves, they realise there is more to life than what they just want, seeing kids that have suffered with hard things in their lives and being aware of others and their difficulties."

- Parent / Carer



From [child's name redacted], seeing all of the other children coming through with their different diagnoses and processes, it helped her cope with her own process and situation. If she had been at home having big problems she would have felt more like the weird kid, but because everyone at the Jouse has some issues, it helped her cope more with the trauma."

- Parent / Carer

Recommendations

1. Continue to work towards increasing the Aboriginal workforce

RMHC WA provides excellent service and support for Aboriginal families, which is reflected in survey responses. There remains opportunity to improve.

A workshop with RMHC WA FLOs highlighted the challenges with engaging remote Aboriginal families due to different living arrangements and highlighted the need for new processes and procedures that embed culturally appropriate approaches (such as understanding food practices) that consider cultural differences.

Positive feedback has been received about the Aboriginal Liaison Officer. It was indicated that the Aboriginal Liaison Officer provided a bridge between a western and Aboriginal ways of living, particularly for remote Aboriginal families. A larger Aboriginal workforce would greatly assist with the cultural competency of the support provided by RMHC WA.

“

It's been really great since RMHC WA has had the Aboriginal Liaison Officer. Often Aboriginal families are not used to being in the city, which means it can be challenging for them to do what we consider as 'normal'. The Aboriginal Liaison Officer has made their experience significantly better."

- Hospital representative

2. Continue to prioritise wellbeing activities for families

Additional wellbeing activities such as yoga, meditation, arts and crafts, cooking programs, exercise classes or activity packs would be beneficial for parent and carer wellbeing. These could be organised through RMHC WA, or through partnerships with local fitness or yoga studios. It was indicated that wellbeing activities were delivered in 2024, but it could be increased. FLOs additionally highlighted that promoting free city events and transportation could assist.

RMHC WA is also encouraged to continue increasing the number of outdoor spaces for families to gather and for children to play in, particularly for Aboriginal families and other families who prefer not to be inside all day and who don't have the flexibility to visit outdoor spaces in Perth. Communal vegetable gardens and other opportunities for families to work in the garden and spend productive time outdoors would also be beneficial for emotional and environmental wellbeing.

“

I suppose the big thing from us is that we are from the country/regional areas are used to being outside a bit more. The outside facilities even though the courtyard is nice, it'd be nice to have a garden or a backyard or a garden that they could play in - to feel more like the country.”

- Parent / Carer

A similar recommendation around outdoor spaces was also provided in the 2023, 2022 and 2021 Impact Reports. This recommendation should be considered in the context of the service quality features highlighted as important by FLOs. FLOs highlighted that 'little things and gestures' make people feel at home, and the importance of building rapport during 'table time', providing resource kits and supportiveness. Whilst additional activities would support wellbeing, these critical success factors are arguably crucial.

3. Continue to collaborate or build partnerships with peer organisations to support family wellbeing beyond the services provided by RMHC WA

RMHC WA provides such an excellent service and support for families that when families go home, they can often struggle from the sudden lack of support, particularly if they stayed at RMHC WA for an extended length of time. Financial and emotional counselling were two key services that were identified to be beneficial for families. It was articulated that this would support parents, which in turn would enable them to better support their child. This is in alignment with the model of RMCH WA.

A similar recommendation was provided in the 2023 Impact report.

RMHC WA is encouraged to continue to collaborate or build partnerships with peer organisations to support family wellbeing beyond the services provided by RMHC WA. This may include organisations that provide financial and emotional counselling services.

“

It would be really great if we could access counselling. Sometimes us parents need that extra support, and it would be really useful if we could access that when we are at the [RMHC WA] house.”

- Parent / Carer

4. Provide extra support for families with accessibility needs

Through interviews, people with disability raised that they faced challenges with the forms, systems and processes at RMHC WA. Additionally, comments were made on the distance of RMH On Park from the hospital for people with accessibility needs.

RMHC WA is encouraged to explore additional ways they could make their forms, systems and processes more accessible for families. With an upcoming opportunity to expand, RMHC WA could also consider inclusion of spaces such as sensory rooms to better support parents and children with accessibility needs.

“

They do need to consider that it's not just children that have disabilities, but parents also have disabilities sometimes, so check-in should take that into account (with the forms, process, systems, etc.).”

- Parent / Carer

5. Advocate the accommodation and support needs for families living on the edge of regional and metro areas who fall outside the Patient Assisted Accommodation Subsidy distance criteria

During interviews with hospital interviews, it was indicated that there is a cohort of families that seem to fall through the gap. These are families who live in metro areas, but who would still have a long commute to the hospital. These families often sit on the cusp of qualifying for regional benefits such as the PATS payments, which creates barriers in accessing accommodation close to the hospital. The lack of PATS payments result in RMHC WA unable to accommodate these families.

RMHC WA is encouraged to explore how it can use its platform and relationships to better advocate for these families who are falling through the gap as the mission of the organisation is *servicing families through essential services that remove barriers, strengthen families and promote healing*. It is not limited to regional families.

“

Families who live just under 100 km from Perth don't qualify for PATS, which puts them at a disadvantage in accessing accommodation in Perth. There is a high demand for accommodation for these families and often they are not considered.”

- Hospital representative

6. Provide FLOs and volunteers with context specific cultural awareness training

To assist RMHC WA FLOs and volunteers to continue providing a safe space for families of different backgrounds and cultures, RMHC WA is encouraged to provide dedicated, place based cultural awareness training specific to the WA and RMHC context. RMHC WA is encouraged to work with a recognised provider to provide bespoke training that fits the needs of the RMHC WA context and the situations FLOs and volunteers are faced with on a day-by-day basis.

It was identified that specific cultural awareness training that would enable staff to deliver care in a healthcare setting would be extremely beneficial. This was particularly articulated for staff who are frontline with the families. Whilst this would improve and advance care skills in a culturally appropriate way for frontline staff at RMHC WA, administrative staff can also be included.

This was also recommended in the 2023 Impact Report. It was reported that RMHC WA organised cultural awareness sessions as part of NAIDOC and Reconciliation week activities in 2024. All staff and volunteers were invited to attend but attendance was voluntary. These sessions were themed on the NAIDOC week and Reconciliation week topic of truth telling and deep listening. Survey data revealed that cultural wellbeing was maintained before and during stays at RMHC WA. However, only 1.6% of Aboriginal families who stayed at RMHC WA provided responses, suggesting that the small sample size may not accurately represent the broader population.

