



Communities of Hope

2025 Impact Report



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THE MOMENT WE ARE IN

This morning, as I prepared to write this introduction, I was reflecting on the moments in my life where I feel I have seen God's love move most deeply and impactfully through me in interactions with other people. I kept coming back to a particular kind of encounter. These were moments and interactions where I feel like I had particular, marked, simplicity and openness of heart towards another person, a moment where there was no thought of getting something in return or protecting myself in the encounter, really just a genuine love towards the person in front of me and a desire that they experience life in the best way they possibly could.

In those moments, I then felt I had a surprising clarity about how to connect and communicate with a wholehearted gentleness, kindness, encouragement and love. Every time, only relatively few actual words were needed, yet there was a sense that those words were inspired as the exact words for that person and moment, words that blessed, soothed, strengthened and empowered.

I know I have also been profoundly shaped and impacted by moments like this myself. Across my life, I have received healing, encouragement and life-changing hope through people who have chosen to see me, care for me and speak with that tremendous grace and insight.

This should be no surprise as across the gospels we see the example of Jesus again and again connecting with people and impacting their lives in this way – the woman at the well, the man by the pool of Siloam, the little children, the woman with the bleeding, and on and on...

As we reflect on what unfolded across 2025, I do believe this practice of connection and communication is where we are at our best as local churches and faith-based organisations seeking to be vehicles for healing and empowerment in the lives of people doing it tough.

In a world and local communities that are marked by growing pressure, isolation and uncertainty, this report outlines the way we are seeing COACH Network support a partnership approach across Australia, Aotearoa/NZ, the UK and Hong Kong with the shared vision to express and grow this connection in individual lives through the power of community. I want to encourage you that we really are seeing communities of hope grow and extend their reach, grassroots expressions of healing and empowerment where people can rediscover belonging, strength and purpose.

Through mentoring relationships, financial mentoring and safe spaces of connection created around the Empowered Faith Communities model, people who have felt stuck, overlooked or disconnected are being supported to recognise their own strengths and take renewed steps forward. These communities offer something much more than support alone.

They are glimpses of a different way of living together, being the family of God's beloved children we were always created to be. They reflect what some have called a prophetic imagination, a vision of community where people are seen, encouraged and invited to participate in the renewal of their own lives and the life of the communities they call home.



Sam Hearn

National Director
COACH Network

COACH NETWORK

Impact Snapshot

1840

**Participants supported
by our Mentoring and
EFC Network**



286
Partners



69
First-time commitments



1158
Mentors and
Spiritual Parents



48%
Average increase in "satisfaction
with life as a whole"



211
Mentoring participants
completed a major goal



76%
Average financial capability
score



THE POWER OF WALKING TOGETHER

In 2025, we have continued to see new partners joining COACH Community Mentoring, reflecting local churches stepping more intentionally into their communities to walk alongside people who are doing life tough. This is not driven by programs alone, but by everyday people recognising that meaningful change happens through relationship.

Across diverse contexts, churches are choosing to be present, to listen, and to invest in the lives of others in ways that are consistent and grounded in hope.

At its heart, this reflects something deeper. We see in this movement a picture of God's ongoing work of renewal, restoring lives and communities through relationships that bring healing, dignity and connection.

As mentors and participants meet week after week, often in simple and ordinary ways, we continue to witness people rediscovering their strengths, confidence and capacity to move forward.

This year, 903 mentors were equipped to support 656 participants through COACH Mentoring. Behind these numbers are hundreds of stories of encouragement, growth and perseverance.

Our Personal Wellbeing Index data continues to point to meaningful outcomes, with participants reporting a 48% increase in satisfaction with life, reflecting a renewed sense of possibility for the future.

At the same time, our partners are operating in increasingly complex environments. Waiting lists continue to grow, and many participants present with more layered needs. Yet the strength of the COACH model remains clear.

Mentors are not expected to have all the answers, but to walk alongside, to listen, and to support people as they take their next steps.

The power of COACH Mentoring lies in a simple truth: when people walk together, change becomes possible. Across communities, individuals who once felt isolated are reconnecting, growing in confidence and taking meaningful steps forward.



Tim Johnson

National Mentoring Program
Manager

- 203** IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS
- 903** EQUIPPED MENTORS
- 656** SUPPORTED PARTICIPANTS
- 211** PARTICIPANTS ACHIEVED A MAJOR GOAL
- 48%** INCREASE IN 'LIFE SATISFACTION'

COACH COMMUNITY MENTORING

MEET NESA

After losing her father while her family were asylum seekers in Iran, Nesa arrived in Australia carrying grief, responsibility and fear. As the only English speaker in her family, she quickly became responsible for navigating schools, services, employment, housing and healthcare on their behalf.

Nesa was referred to COACH Mentoring and matched with her mentor, May.

Early on, Nesa faced pressure from peers to take risky shortcuts, such as driving without a licence.

Recognising the risk, May and the COACH team stepped in with practical support, including access to driving lesson vouchers.

While working part-time and carrying significant family responsibility, Nesa continued to pursue her education with determination. With May's encouragement, she secured a humanitarian scholarship and is now completing a Diploma of Information Technology at RMIT.

The young woman who once feared simple tasks now confidently manages life in her new home.

"I love being a friend to Nesa," May reflects. "Watching her grow has grown my own heart too."



"Watching her grow has grown my own heart too."

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND CAPABILITY

Financial COACH equips local churches to support people facing financial pressure, helping participants grow in confidence, agency and decision-making through relational mentoring. In 2025, we saw continued growth through new partnerships, including Crosslife Southport (QLD), with purpose-built facilities such as a food pantry and op shop, and Northside Baptist Crows Nest (NSW), where new pathways were created to support domestic violence survivors through established community partnerships. These sites reflect a more integrated and holistic response to financial hardship within local communities.

This year's outcomes reflect meaningful change in people's lives. Participants reported a 31% increase in personal wellbeing, moving into the normal range, and a 48% increase in overall life satisfaction. Financial capability also improved significantly, with impact measures increasing from 45% to 76%, and 80% of participants achieving their financial goals.



These outcomes are grounded in trusted mentoring relationships. As one participant shared, "I no longer run out of money unexpectedly... I feel more in control," while another reflected, "I've learned to be kinder to myself and understand my financial decisions."

We also saw continued development in how the program is delivered. This included piloting financial workshops within churches, engaging broader ministry contexts, and delivering a national webinar exploring hope and emotional relationships with money. Internally, capability was strengthened through a new Program Manual, a hybrid training model and practical video-based resources.

Looking ahead, there is a growing opportunity to deepen this work through new partnerships and strategic collaboration with churches. There is also potential to further develop tools that support financial hope and mindset, enabling even greater impact as communities continue to walk alongside people in this space.



Rob Cummings

National Financial COACH
Coordinator

FINANCIAL COACH MENTORING

6	IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS
76%	AVERAGE FINANCIAL CAPABILITY SCORE
80%	ACHIEVED THEIR FINANCIAL GOALS
96%	PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

MEET JOY



"I was badly in need of skills to manage my finances, and I finally found help through the Financial COACH program. I was living on the pension and often found myself running out of money. I knew I needed practical support to manage things better.

I attend Crossway and heard about LifeCare and the COACH program there. Through mentoring, I began to track my spending and learned how to use my banking app more effectively.

I've become much more aware of where my money goes, and I've started making decisions based on needs rather than wants.

I was able to set up a savings account and now regularly transfer money into it. I've changed some of my habits too. I used to spend a lot at op shops, but I've been able to reduce that.

I no longer run out of money unexpectedly. I feel more in control of my finances, and I can now save for specific needs and emergencies. LifeCare has given me more awareness, confidence and control over my money. I am very grateful."

"I no longer run out of money unexpectedly. I feel more in control of my finances... I am very grateful."

REDISCOVERING BELONGING IN COMMUNITY

In 2025, we have continued to see the growth of Empowered Faith Communities as local churches and leaders create spaces where people on the margins can experience genuine belonging. Often formed around simple gatherings such as shared meals or creative activities, these communities provide places where people who may feel disconnected from mainstream church environments can find connection, acceptance and a sense of home.

At the heart of Empowered Faith Communities is a belief that every person carries strengths and has the capacity to contribute. Using an asset-based approach, these communities create opportunities for people to flourish by recognising and nurturing what is already present. As relationships form, confidence grows, and individuals begin to see themselves not just as recipients of support, but as contributors within a community.

A key development in 2025 has been the continued growth of couch-church discipling spaces. These smaller, relational environments create opportunities for people to explore faith more personally through practices such as sharing stories, reading the Bible together and praying. Increasingly, we are seeing people move from initial connection points into these deeper spaces of discipleship, with over half of participants now taking this step.

Within these spaces, something significant is taking place. People are not only engaging with faith for themselves, but beginning to share it with others, reading the Bible with friends, identifying people of peace and stepping into leadership. This reflects a shift from community as a place of support to community as a place of participation and growth.

These communities reflect a movement toward restoring dignity, belonging and purpose. People discover they have something to offer, becoming part of a community that supports one another and grows together in faith.

This year has been marked by encouraging growth. We now see 65 active Empowered Faith Communities engaging an average of 1,338 participants each week. It is particularly encouraging to see the increasing adoption of discipling spaces across the network, with the number of communities facilitating couch-church environments growing significantly year on year.

Behind these numbers are communities where people are rediscovering belonging, growing in confidence and participating in the life of their community. In a time where many experience isolation and disconnection, Empowered Faith Communities continue to offer a different picture, one of shared life, mutual support and the possibility of transformation through relationship.



Mark Matthews

Empowered Faith Communities
National Manager

EMPOWERED FAITH COMMUNITIES

65	ACTIVE EMPOWERED FAITH COMMUNITIES
1338	PEOPLE ENGAGED IN WEEKLY GATHERINGS
692	PEOPLE ATTENDING WEEKLY DISCIPLESHIP SPACES
50	FIRST-TIME COMMITMENTS
324	LEADERS & VOLUNTEERS TRAINED

CITYHEART COMMUNITY SYDNEY

'Cityheart' run by Wesley Mission in Sydney is an Empowered Faith Community made up of people from many different backgrounds, many navigating ongoing challenges. Rob had been part of the community for several years but tended to stay on the edges. During gatherings, Pastor Andrew noticed Rob quietly bringing his guitar and playing along from the back.



After one gathering, Andrew approached Rob and invited him to jam together. Over time, their friendship grew, along with trust. At a Cityheart celebration focused on 'bringing what we have, rather than being perfect, Rob began to consider stepping forward.

With encouragement and mentoring from Andrew, Rob worked on his guitar and vocals. When the Christmas celebration came, he stood up to perform. Nervous at first, he took a moment to steady himself before singing with honesty and conviction. It wasn't perfect, but it was real and deeply moving. At the end, the room responded with a standing ovation.

Since then, Rob has become a regular part of the worship band. His confidence has grown, his relationship with Jesus has deepened, and he is experiencing greater freedom from anxiety and depression. He now meets regularly with Andrew, not just to develop his music, but to grow as a leader and a person of peace.

Rob is currently partway through his Empowered Faith Communities training, serves within the community, and has even started his own guitar teaching business.

COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

Across the COACH Network, we are seeing local churches and community organisations stepping into their neighbourhoods to walk alongside people who are doing life tough. In 2025, this has grown to 286 partners, reflecting a continued willingness to respond relationally to local need. This work now extends beyond Australia into the UK, Aotearoa/NZ, and Hong Kong, across nine denominations. What continues to stand out is the local nature of this work, communities embedded in their context, offering presence, relationship and hope.

Alongside this, we are investing in building the capacity of church leaders through training, workshops and ongoing support. This work is equipping communities in best practice community development, helping them move toward relational, strengths-based approaches that foster long-term change. Together, this reflects a connected network of communities of hope, where people are supported to rediscover their strengths and participate in the life of their community.

COACH IN HONG KONG

In 2025, we saw the beginning of a new chapter for the COACH Network, with the establishment of our first partner in Hong Kong.

Christian and Missionary Alliance Tung Chung Church became the first church to partner with COACH in this context, as the vision for relational, strengths-based community engagement begins to take shape in a new cultural setting.

During the year, Alex travelled to Hong Kong to deliver the first Chinese COACH training and connect with local church leaders. This created space to share the vision, build relationships and explore how mentoring and community engagement can be expressed in ways that are culturally relevant.

There is a strong sense of openness and anticipation as local leaders consider how they can walk alongside people in their communities.

We are encouraged by what is beginning in Hong Kong and look forward to continuing to invest in this space and seeing communities of hope take shape.



LOOKING AHEAD

Across the COACH Network, we continue to see local churches and everyday people stepping into their communities to walk alongside those doing life tough. While the need is increasing, so too is the opportunity for communities to respond with relationship, hope and care.

Our focus remains on strengthening this work, equipping mentors, supporting partners and creating pathways for people to grow in confidence, agency and belonging.

We are deeply grateful to every mentor, coordinator, partner and supporter who is part of this journey.

Your commitment and willingness to walk alongside others is what makes this work possible. Together, we are continuing to cultivate communities of hope.



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