
SOUL HUB
2026

May 2026

Opening Hours
Monday – Thursday: 7am – 2pm
Friday – Sunday: 7am – 8.30am

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reception@soulhub.org.au
437 Hunter St, Newcastle, 2300

P.O. Box 686, Newcastle 2300
ABN 67 385 398 045

A Message From Our GM



Every day at Soul Hub begins with a simple but profound conviction: **everyone's welcome, because nobody is perfect, and anything is possible.** For more than two decades, this belief has shaped a community response unlike anything else in Newcastle – a place where generosity, acceptance, and hope converge for those who have fallen through society's gaps.

This year, the need has been greater than ever. Across our city, more people are facing homelessness, housing insecurity, mental unwellness, addiction, financial hardship, and deep social isolation. At Soul Hub, these challenges are not statistics; they are the lived realities of the 910 individuals we support each month. Through 4,426 hot meals, 627 grocery hampers, 66 loads of laundry, 139 hygiene packs, 239 service appointments, 96 intensive social work sessions, and countless conversations, we continue to stand as an island of hope in The Gap.

What makes Soul Hub extraordinary is not only what we do, but how we do it. With no government funding, our work is powered almost entirely by the compassion and commitment of 374 volunteers and a community that refuses to look away. From school students donating pocket money to businesses offering professional expertise, from our annual Sleepout to everyday acts of kindness, Newcastle continues to rally around its most vulnerable.

Our guests remain our greatest motivation. No two days are the same, and every guest story reminds us why Soul exists. It's a privilege to share some of those stories in the pages that follow. Amid heartbreak, we witness transformation. Amid complexity, we see courage. And in the midst of hardship, hope continues to rise.

This report offers just a glimpse into a year of doing **"whatever we can, with whatever we have, for whoever walks through our door."** Thank you for standing with us – whether this is your first year partnering with Soul or you've journeyed with us from the beginning. Together, we are ensuring that in Newcastle, no one falls through the gaps.

MATTHEW ORTIGER

GENERAL MANAGER

March 2026

SOUL HUB

12 Months at a glance



67% Male

33% Female

1,102
Social Work Appointments

86,542
Meals Provided





7,233
Pantry Hampers

2,752
Attending Service Sessions







1,607
Hygiene Packs



1,021
HOT meals per week



766
Loads of Laundry



hundreds and thousands
and hundreds and
thousands .....
Of Conversations!





374
Active Volunteers



1,207
Hours Volunteered Each Week

Our Guests are our motivation

At Soul everyone who walks through our door is a Guest. We don't have clients, customers, participants, service users or patrons. We don't have homeless people, street people, addicts, users, winos or hobos. We don't have patients, cases, schizophrenics, acquired brain injuries, alcoholics or anything else. We just have Guests.

Our community life is very simple because if we are not sure what to do with someone we just treat them like a welcome Guest. And for many vulnerable people that alone is transformative.

Many of our vulnerable Guests are experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, mental unwellness, addiction and/or social isolation. Most are experiencing more than one of those things. Many have fallen through the gaps of society and societies support services. Realistically, most of our Guests have been dwelling in that gap for 2yrs, 5yrs, 10yrs, 15yrs, ...

Our vision for Newcastle is that no one falls through the gaps! Our vision for Newcastle is that no one has to live in The Gap. Since 2003 Soul Hub has provided an island of hope deep in The Gap for Newcastle's most vulnerable people.

Everyone is welcome, because nobody's perfect and anything is possible.

Our Guests are our motivation.



“Before I found Soul Hub, I was just getting through each day. I didn’t have anyone I could talk to who understood what I was going through. But when I came to Soul, they didn’t judge me or try to fix me - they just listened. For the first time in a long time, I felt like I mattered.”

IMPACT - Wayne's Story

"Each day was about getting through."

When Wayne first connected with Soul Hub, he was doing it tough.

He had been sleeping rough in his car, dealing with a painful back injury and unsure where to turn. Each day was about getting through, managing the pain, and finding somewhere safe to rest.

But things began to shift when he came to Soul.

Through an assertive outreach referral made by the Soul Hub team, Wayne was picked up the very next morning and connected with temporary accommodation. It was a crucial first step, a chance to get out of his car and begin stabilising his situation.

From there, Wayne kept coming back!

At Soul Hub, he could get a hot meal, sit down for a chat, and access the GP clinic to begin addressing his health needs. **Before this, Wayne didn't even know services like these were available to him.**

Today, Wayne is in a very different place. He's recently moved into his own home in Mayfield, where he's enjoying something many of us take for granted: peace and quiet, and a place to call his own.



Soul Hub is like a 3 legged stool...

Soul Hub is not a soup kitchen. Soul is a 'compassionate community response to some deep community needs'. And, though we do a lot of free hot meals, we are way 'more than a meal'. Soul Hub's model for supporting vulnerable people is much like a 3 legged stool.

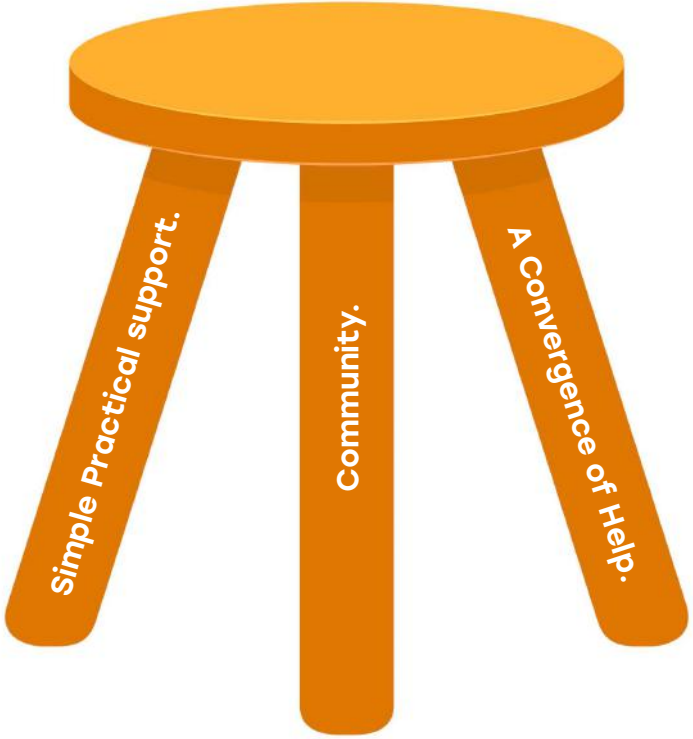
Leg 1: **Simple Practical support.**

Leg 2: **Community, our 'secret sauce' for transformation.**

Leg 3: **A Convergence of Help.**

Leg 1: Simple Practical Support

In 1998, responding to the deep needs they saw around them, Ken Gibson, Bill Elkin and their families started serving coffee to vulnerable people. A simple, practical support. Today we serve on average 192 meals a day and 145 grocery hampers a week. Guests charge their phone at our charging stations, access computers and use our clean bathrooms. On a hot day Guests enjoy our cool air conditioning and on a wet day they come to Soul to dry off because life on the streets is harder than you think.



...Soul Hub Is Like A 3 Legged Stool

Leg 2: Community

If there is a 'secret sauce' to Soul's response to the needs of vulnerable people it's Community, a sense of belonging. We will work with 'whoever walks through our door' but our focus is on those who have fallen through the cracks of society and between other support services.

And for many of those vulnerable people a conversation is transformative. For many of those vulnerable people a sense of belonging, a reconnection with community is transformative.

What two of our vulnerable guests said about Soul:

"If it wasn't for Soul, I wouldn't have anyone to talk to ... ever."

"Soul to me means family. If you are someone that's never been here before; if you are a volunteer, a donor or guest the minute you set foot through the door you've become part of a family that cares & looks out for each other without judgements. It's a family you feel has got your back not only for now but forever."



At Soul we have a Guest Support Team whose one and only role is to connect with Guests. On any given shift, Guest Support Team Volunteers move around the tables greeting guests to welcome, engage and inform.

For Guests who need a little bit more help Guest Support Coordinators refer, reconnect and review. And if required our two Social Workers advocate for our Guests. A fish tank, quiet room, newspapers, magazines, library, café, music, live plants, TV screens, board games and art supplies also contribute to the relaxed community feel of Soul Hub.

Leg 3: A Convergence of Help

At Soul Hub the meal is just the beginning. Meals and other simple practical supports (Leg 1) tend to bring Guests to Soul Hub. Friendships and a sense of belonging (Leg 2) tend to keep Guests coming to Soul. That sense of belonging and community is a valuable end in itself but it also acts as a bridge to help guests connect to other services we provide. We refer to our services and programs as our Convergence of Help (Leg 3).

Ideally in the Soul Convergence of Help we invite other services (or professionals) to provide their skills at Soul to empower our Guests.

Some of the services currently contributing to the Soul Convergence of Help include:

- Audiologist
- Chiropractor
- Podiatrist
- Doctors
- Optometrist
- Hairdresser
- VOCAL
- WHOS
- Wesley Mission Aged Care
- Castle Employment
- Centrelink
- Service NSW
- NDIS
- Gamblers Anonymous
- Pharmacist
- Community Restorative Centre
- Mental Health Clinician
- Births, Deaths & Marriages
- NOVA

When Soul cannot get another service in to provide the help, we consider doing it ourselves. The Soul team provides Smart Recovery groups, a Guest Volunteering Program and a Guest laundry service. Soul employs 6 part-time Guest Support Co-Ordinator's to help guests with information and referrals and Soul employs 2 part-time Social Workers to advocate for our Guests.

The Soul Medical Clinic, established by Dr Milton Sales, has been a much appreciated part of our Convergence of Help since 2010. In March 2025, partnering with Hunter Primary Care, the Clinic was expanded to operate part-time 4 days a week and has supported 791 different guests, of whom 32% slept rough the night before their appointment. This has been incredibly positive for our Guests and is made possible due to the generous financial support of The Department of Health & Aged Care & Dr Robyn Fried.

When Soul cannot get someone in to do it and we cannot do it ourselves, we put it on our Convergence of Help wish list. One day we might have a dentist, a counsellor, art therapy, a movie club, a day program rehab, a handyman or social enterprise. We are ambitious when it comes to our hopes and dreams for how our Convergence of Help might support our Guests.

Take a virtual tour of Soul here!


437
HUNT

IMPACT - Greg's Story

"The care I received was genuine and life giving"

When Greg first heard about Soul Hub, he was doing it tough – living in his car with no food. When the car broke down, he moved into a hotel, but the conditions there were difficult. That's when he came to Soul, knowing it was a safe place.

When Greg walked through our doors, he was physically unwell and emotionally exhausted. He was sore, battling bed bugs, and carrying the heavy weight of feeling alone. After losing family and housing, he couldn't see a future for himself.

But that wasn't the end of his story.

Through the support of our Social Workers, Guest Support Coordinators and medical clinic, Greg began rebuilding his physical and mental wellbeing. With practical assistance, access to healthcare, and help navigating housing, he started to stabilise his circumstances. He also found something just as important: connection. A place where he was welcomed, known, and treated with dignity.

Greg says Soul supported him at one of the lowest and most vulnerable points in his life. Today, he calls himself a survivor.

When asked what he would say about Soul Hub, his response is simple: nothing but good words. He speaks warmly about the staff and volunteers and says, **"the care I experienced was genuine and life-giving. The hardest thing is asking for help. But afterwards, it becomes easier. People just need patience and support."**

A Wednesday in the life of Soul

7am
Breakfast

It's cold outside but comfortable inside Soul. The dining room lights are on, the whole place is fresh and clean. Cheerful music is playing to provide atmosphere. The breakfast crew are on site serving food, cleaning tables, catching up with regulars and meeting new guests who might have just had a cold, hard, unforgiving night out on the streets.

8.30am
Reception

Staff and volunteers are answering phones, responding to emails and voice messages, accepting donations, providing hygiene packs, the Soul laundry is making sure guests' clothes are clean, dry and folded ready for guests to pick up. The reception crew are also working with our attending services (chiropractors, audiologists, doctor clinics, hairdressers, etc) to support guests by making bookings and directing guests to their door here at Soul.

9am
Changeover

Stomachs are full, the kitchen and dining room is clean again and as the breakfast team rolls out the lunch team rolls in. Soul Clinic begins seeing Guests. The courier team are out and about already and in the next few hours they will pick up from Coles Waratah, Marketown, Kotara and Mayfield. They will also make stops at The Butchery on Brunker and an array of other donors.

9:30am
Team Meeting

At 9.30am the Guest Support Team meet for training and to prepare for the day. 10am the whole Soul community (staff & volunteers) get together for morning tea and a team chat. It's the Soul equivalent of the whole family turning off the TV and having dinner together. This is a time to invest in our volunteers and community, encouraging, equipping and sharing stories. It's also a chance to thank our volunteer workforce for donating their time to serve at Soul.

11am
Lunch

It's lunch time and this is when Soul Hub is at it's busiest. Our Hospitality Team have prepared and cooked a wonderful free hot meal for guests. Wednesday is typically a roast with dessert to follow. Our volunteers serve Guests at their table because that's what you do for Guests.

Guest Support

The Guest Support team are talking with our Guests, eating with our Guests, making them feel welcome and letting them know about today's attending services. For some of our socially isolated Guests, this might be the only conversation they have today.

2pm
Almost Done

The front door closes. The crew pack away, clean and ready the building for breakfast tomorrow. Staff turn their focus to admin work while everything starts to go quiet and preparation for the next day's service begins.

Convergence of Help

Wednesdays Convergence of Help includes Wellbeing Group, Mental Health Clinician, Pharmacist, Soul Medical Clinic, Gamblers Anonymous, NDIS (Uniting) and Relationships Australia.

12pm
Open Pantry

After enjoying a lovely baked lunch and a good chat, Guests can attend our Open Pantry service to collect grocery items that will support them through the week. Fresh fruit, vegetables, pasta sauce, bread rolls and baked treats are popular.

No two days are the same at Soul Hub

And while this represents a typical Wednesday in the life of Soul, in May 2025 Soul is also putting the finishing touches on organising Sleepout for Soul 2026, preparing for the Winter Appeal, preparing to run the canteen at WESTS home games, running functions, applying for several major grants, inducting new volunteers and continuing to collaborate with the charity partners in our building at 437 Hunter.

Soul Volunteers

At Soul Hub a lot of our time goes towards treating our Guests with dignity, value and worth but our focus is firmly on our whole Soul community:

- **Guests**
- **Volunteers**
- **Donors**

Soul Hub is volunteer driven and our staff team is extremely small with only 2 full time workers. Our volunteer team is the 'heart and soul' of Soul Hub. 370 volunteers are volunteering 1780 hours each week and we could not do it without them. They selflessly give so much time and energy and hope to guests. They don't get paid, but that doesn't mean they don't get anything out of the experience.



"Do you have enough volunteers?"

At Soul we are often asked, "do you have enough volunteers?" And the answer is both 'yes' and 'no'. 'Yes' we have plenty of volunteers, 370 volunteers get a lot done each and every week. And 'no' we don't have enough volunteers because there is always someone else to talk to, something else to clean, someone else to help.

For more information on volunteering check out soulhub.org.au or scan the QR code on the right.

IMPACT - Rose's Story

"Soul Hub gives me the opportunity to give back"

Rose first came to Soul after a friend suggested she give it a go, and she has been part of the Tuesday Front of House team ever since.

For Rose, volunteering at Soul Hub is deeply personal. As a teenager, she experienced homelessness herself, and she remembers what it was like to have very little money, not much food, and no support. She also remembers the people who showed her kindness and helped her get back on her feet. "Soul Hub gives me the opportunity to give back and show that same kindness to others", she says.

Through her time at Soul, Rose says she has learnt some powerful lessons. Never judge a book by its cover and always treat others the way you would want to be treated.

One moment that has stayed with her was when a Guest she hadn't seen for weeks suddenly returned to Soul. Rose shared how relieved she was to see her and know she was okay, only to hear the honest reply, "I only come to Soul Hub when I am homeless." It was a confronting reminder of just how fragile people's circumstances can be, and that same day, Rose went home and cried.

And yet, she keeps coming back, drawn by the friendships she has formed with both volunteers and Guests. When we asked Rose if there was anything else she wanted to share, she said simply, **"Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to volunteer."**



Our Impact at Soul

Soul Hub exists to ensure that no one in Newcastle falls through the gaps. Every day, people in our city face homelessness, housing insecurity, mental unwellness, addiction, financial hardship, and profound social isolation. These are not abstract issues – they are the lived experiences of the guests who walk through our doors seeking safety, dignity, and hope. Our model of practice is simple and unwavering:

"Everyone's welcome, because nobody is perfect, and anything is possible."

Our goal is a big one and we haven't reached it yet but we do believe we are making a difference. Our impact is being felt in Newcastle by our guests.

"They helped me get the support I needed when everything felt too hard."



"If it wasn't for Soul, I don't know where I'd be."





"I walk in feeling broken and walk out feeling hopeful."

"People here actually care - they don't just hand you a meal, they talk to you."

"Soul Hub gave me a place where I finally feel safe."

"Coming here helped me come out of my shell."

"Soul Hub feels like family. I'm not alone anymore."



"They make you feel like a person again."



"They don't judge you here. They welcome you exactly as you are."

"It's more than a meal - it's a place where you can start again."

IMPACT - Darren's Story

Darren first came to Soul Hub in early 2024, just after getting out of lockup. He was homeless, sleeping on the streets, and trying to find his footing again after a relationship breakdown.

At the time, Darren needed everything. A meal. A place to go. Access to a doctor. Support. Connection.

And that's what he found at Soul.

Through Soul Hub, Darren connected with counselling, doctors and nurses, the pantry, and most importantly, people. Real relationships began to form. People who knew his name. People who cared.

"It changed my life, really," Darren says.

What started as a place to get help became a place to belong.

He found friendship, support, and a fresh start.

Today, Darren doesn't just receive help. He speaks about Soul with genuine gratitude.

Stories like Darren's are why Soul Hub exists.



"I'd recommend Soul to anyone. If there wasn't a Soul in Newcastle, it'd be a sad place."

Social Work IMPACT Story - Shoulders Held High



I met Dominic when he was attending Soul for lunch. Dominic explained that he was sleeping rough after a health issue months prior saw him lose the ability to work, and a breakdown in family relationships. Dominic identified that his main goal was to return to private rental. He shared he felt ok to continue sleeping rough if he knew he was actively looking for a private rental. I supported Dominic to apply for private rentals.

Dominic continued to attend Soul Hub for meals and connection with other guests and volunteers. It was a couple of weeks after the initial rental applications had been submitted that I broached the idea of exploring emergency housing options. Dominic agreed. A referral was made to a local emergency housing provider and a meeting arranged for the following day. At the meeting Dominic was offered temporary accommodation. **He was so shocked he thought it wasn't real.** After staying in temporary accommodation for three weeks Dominic was offered an apartment through social housing. Dominic was stoked.

The difference in the Dominic I initially met to the Dominic who had been offered permanent accommodation was night and day. Dominic's physical appearance changed, no longer holding his head in his hands to walking with his shoulders held high. Dominic expressed gratitude to the Soul Hub team, expressing that it was **the first time he had had felt seen** since his health issues arose. Dominic asked to keep attending Soul every now and then, knowing he has made friends and connections that have supported him to thrive.

The Soul Donor Community





Every contribution adds a little more Soul.

Donors are the third community within our larger Soul family. The Guests are the heartbeat of our mission. The Volunteers selfless contributions are the cornerstone of our existence. And the Donors generosity fuels our collective soul.

Without our donors and supporters Soul cannot do the things that we do for our vulnerable Guests. Soul Hub does not receive government funding and is wholly community funded. The kids, mums, dads, community groups, churches, schools and businesses of Newcastle are the ones who generously support Soul Hub and enable us to support Newcastle.



SLEEPOUT

14 May 2027
Bolton St Carpark



SOUL

soulhub.org.au

Experience a night under the stars at our annual fundraiser, with great food, live music, games, fire pits, and good times.

Making an Impact for Soul - 7,000 waves

When Josh Levey set out to catch 5,000 waves in 31 days, he knew it would be tough. Long days in the water. Early mornings. Physical exhaustion. Mental grit.

But for Josh, the challenge was never just about surfing - it was about living out a message.

Growing up in Newcastle, the ocean shaped who he is. It's where he goes to reset, to breathe, and to feel connected to something bigger. In January 2026, he turned that connection into action, taking on an ambitious fundraising challenge for Soul Hub.

What started as 5,000 waves didn't stay there. True to his purpose, Josh pushed beyond the original goal, ultimately surfing an incredible 7,000 waves in a single month.

It was uncomfortable. It was demanding. And that was the point.

For Josh, the challenge reflected a deeper belief: that love is not just something we feel – it's something we choose. It's showing up when it's hard. Love is the willingness to be inconvenienced by another.

That belief is what drew him to Soul Hub, where love is expressed daily through practical care – meals shared, support offered, and a safe place created for those doing it tough.

Through his determination and the support of his community, Josh raised an extraordinary $110,000.

His 7,000 waves have made an impact far beyond the ocean – a powerful reminder that when love is put into action, it can change lives.


"Love is the willingness
to be inconvenienced
by another."

Your Support Makes A Difference

At Soul we do all that we can with what we have for whoever comes through our doors. But to do that we need your support. Soul Hub is not government funded and we rely on the generosity of Newcastle individuals, families, businesses and community groups to carry out our work – work that offers a compassionate community response to some deep community needs. There are so many ways to make an impact:

Donate

Donate through our website **soulhub.org.au.** As we always say, every donation 'adds a little more Soul'.

Become a 'Soul Mate'

Donating regularly by becoming a 'Soul Mate' is a great way to get behind the work of Soul Hub. It's not unusual to spend $6.50 on a cup of coffee. For the price of a cup of coffee a week, if 50 people donate $6.50 a week then they would raise $16,900 to support Soul in a year. And that would cover our kitchen ingredient expenses for 3 months!

Sponsor an Event

Soul Hub runs more events and activities than most people imagine, and you might like to sponsor one of them. Friday Chill, Sleepout For Soul, A Taste of Soul, Chefs with Soul, our Guest Christmas and Volunteer Christmas parties are all events you might consider sponsoring.

Host a Fundraiser Event

Whether it's a BBQ, corporate golf day, trivia night, bake sale, movie night, motorbike runs, the skies the limit! Get creative with your friends and family and run your own unique event to help raise money for Soul.

Host a Food/Goods Drive

Most of the food and goods Soul receives has been rescued or donated by the Newcastle community. A wide range of goods are useful from coffee to deodorant to sleeping bags and you can support Soul Guests by hosting a drive.

Our community of guests is growing.

Our vision is growing.

We need growing support from our community.

Every contribution adds a little more Soul

$47	provides a guest with a week of hot meals
$99	provides laundry services & toiletry packs for a week
$131	provides a guest with a swag & sleeping bag
$890	provides hot drinks at Soul for a week
$5,000	provides 28 intensive social work connections
$20,100	provides all Soul's Guests with meals for a month
$26,000	provides Guest Support at Soul for a month

Your support makes a difference.
For more information see: soulhub.org.au/how-you-can-help/

We'd love you to come in and see Soul.

Scan the QR Code to donate online!

Direct Deposit:

BSB: 032-505

Account: 299497

Account: Lifeshapers Family Services

Reference: your name

For your tax-deductible receipt, email finance@soulhub.org.au

SOUL HUB

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