Third Link Partner Profile - batyr

> "batyr empowers young people to change their own conversations. It's about changing the language and dialogue between young people around mental health and making it positive."
>
> **Sebastian Robertson, Founder**

VISION
An Australia where young people engage in positive conversations about mental health and are empowered to seek out help when needed.

MISSION
To deliver innovative peer-to-peer programs that engage, educate and empower young people. batyr's programs focus on addressing issues that impact the mental health of young people, and promote resilience and help seeking behaviour.

HISTORY

Sebastian Robertson's decision to establish batyr, at the age of 25, was driven by a passion to help young people to confront and accept difficult social issues.

This passion came from his personal experience of dealing with depression while studying at university and holding major leadership roles. He decided that unless he spoke out about his 'success story', he was only adding to the stigma that stopped him asking for help when he needed it.

In 2015, Seb handed over the reins to CEO Sam Refshauge, who was previously AIME's National Program Operations Director and then General Manager.

Since its establishment in early 2011, batyr has:
☐ Trained over 360 young people to share their story with mental ill health issues
☐ Delivered innovative peer-to-peer programs in over 170 schools
☐ Signed long-term partnerships with 5 universities
☐ Reached over 72,000 young people.

"As someone who has been surrounded by mental illness, and having felt the judgement of people around me, I know first-hand that stigma makes it worse. Having real stories and telling them changes the stigma. This is very important" **(High school student)**

batyr   thirdlink investment managers

KEY PROGRAMS

batyr's programs focus on two main aspects: training and development of speakers, and educational sessions for students of secondary schools and universities to break down the stigma surrounding mental health and encourage young people to reach out for help when they need it. batyr does not provide direct support, but works in partnership with organisations that do.

batyr@school programs engage, educate and empower young people to start positive conversations around mental health and reach out for support when they need it. batyr speakers share their personal stories of difficult times, educating students about the benefits of reaching out, the avenues which are available to them and how best to help themselves or someone else facing similar situations.
They also educate young people about the existing support services and promote the internal school processes available to students.

batyr@uni programs currently exist at UTS, USYD (Cumberland Campus) in Sydney, ANU (Canberra), UNISA (Adelaide), and UNE (Armidale). These programs include a student-led team who plan and implement events and initiatives designed to help reduce mental health stigma and increase help-seeking. Regular Being Herd training workshops are held on-campus, and the One Sock One Goal campaign is integrated with on-campus sports clubs and teams.

Being Herd speaker training: batyr's Being Herd program was established to empower and teach young people to give a voice to their story. Participants learn to confidently share their lived experience with mental ill health.

The program focuses on highlighting the steps they took to get help, identifying what helped in their recovery or management of their issue, and developing how they can tell their story to be constructive for other young people. Throughout the program, Being Herd participants have the opportunity to undergo further training to become a batyr speaker and share their story of hope, resilience and recovery.

Parent forums: batyr hosts forums for parents, which also include a Q&A session with an expert panel at the end of the program. This allows parents an insight into what their child may be experiencing, signs to look out for and avenues where they can seek guidance and support.

Teacher Accreditation: batyr is now offering schools a follow-up professional development program. This workshop provides teachers with practical applications and strategies for creating a positive and inclusive school environment. Teachers learn the skills they need to help support students in managing their own mental health and reach out if needed.

EVIDENCE BASE

Research shows that 1 in 4 young people in Australia will suffer from a mental illness. More specifically in a typical class of 30 students, 7 will have experienced a mental health issue and only 2 will seek professional help, leaving 5 to suffer in silence. The stigma associated with mental health is a major barrier to help-seeking.

Mental health research shows that one of the most powerful ways to create behavioural change surrounding mental health stigma is through the sharing of lived experiences from peers (SANE Australia 2013, A life without stigma).

EVIDENCE BASE

Research shows that 1 in 4 young people in Australia will suffer from a mental illness. More specifically in a typical class of 30 students, 7 will have experienced a mental health issue and only 2 will seek professional help, leaving 5 to suffer in silence. The stigma associated with mental health is a major barrier to help-seeking.

Mental health research shows that one of the most powerful ways to create behavioural change surrounding mental health stigma is through the sharing of lived experiences from peers (SANE Australia 2013, A life without stigma).

HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO THRIVE, NOT JUST SURVIVE

In Australia there are numerous professional mental health services, but unfortunately many young people don't feel comfortable accessing these services. Using peer-to-peer education, young people's 'success stories' acknowledge, validate and normalise seeking help. The stories show how individuals have come through adversity and that it is possible to overcome difficult challenges and lead meaningful and valuable lives while re-engaging positively with society. Seeking help is the first step for many young people on that journey.

ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

batyr has experienced significant growth in the past three years. They expanded into Queensland, Victoria and South Australia and established 3 ongoing university partnerships while at the same time transitioning from Founder to CEO, tripling staff and introducing systems and processes into the organisation. In 2015, they became part of the inaugural The Growth Project 2015, a not-for-profit mentoring and professional development program for leaders of small, successful charities.

Their goals over the next five years are:
- 1500 Being Herd speakers trained
- 680 school partners
- University partners across the country
- 50+ staff
- A reach of over 400,000 young people
- Engagement rate of 80%
- Help seeking rate of 70%

Learn more about batyr by visiting **www.batyr.com.au**