



Onwards & Upwards NQ

Annual Report

Culture ~ Fellowship ~ Outreach.

1. Annual Program Report

Title: Annual Program Summary – 2024-2025

Please note that record-keeping commenced in November 2024; therefore, while this is an annual report, it covers only an eight-month period.

Sections:

- **Introduction:** Onwards & Upwards NQ is a peer-led community dedicated to supporting individuals and families impacted by incarceration, child safety, and healthcare systems. We create safe, non-judgmental spaces to share lived experiences, build resilience, and promote healing through peer support, education, and practical aid. Our mission is to uplift, empower, and walk alongside those rebuilding their lives—because no one should have to walk this journey alone.

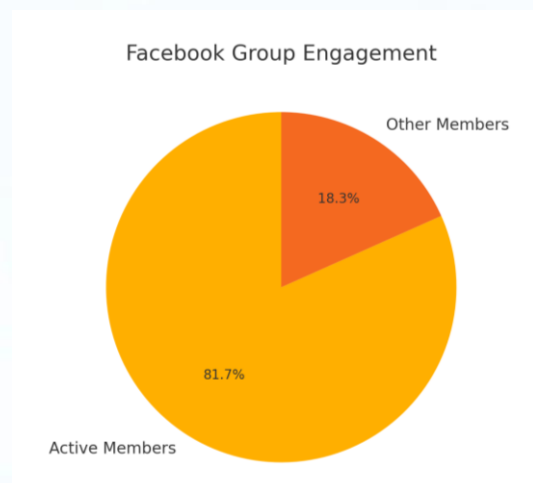
- Programs/Events:

Throughout the year, Onwards & Upwards NQ has initiated and supported a range of programs to foster connection, resilience, and practical aid for our community:

- **The Helping Hands Shelves** – A grassroots resource station providing free access to food, clothing, toiletries, and essential items.
- **Townsville Correctional Centre – Families & Friends of Inmates (Facebook Group)** – A dedicated online community offering peer support, shared experiences, and system navigation tips for those connected to TCC facilities.
- **Onwards & Upwards NQ Facebook Page** – A hub for updates, resource offers, group news, and public outreach.
- **Informal Group Meetings** – In-person gatherings where members can share, connect, and support one another in a safe and welcoming environment.
- **One-on-One Support Sessions** – Personalised assistance for individuals needing help with forms, letters, referrals, or information on where to start.
- **Educational Publications** – Development and distribution of resources aimed at bridging gaps in understanding about incarceration, reintegration, and available services.
- **Starter Packs** – Distribution of essential clothing, shoes, and toiletries to people transitioning from incarceration or difficult life circumstances.
- **Launch of the Onwards & Upwards Website** – A major step forward in accessibility and outreach, centralising resources, contact information, and group values.

- Attendance Stats:

The Helping Hands Shelves Since recordkeeping began in November, the Helping Hands Shelves have supported 457 visits, offering vital clothing, toiletries, and essentials to those in need.



Townsville Correctional Centre – Families & Friends of Inmates (Facebook Group) Since November 1st, the group has grown significantly, with membership doubling to a total of 262 members. Of those, 214 have been actively engaged, contributing to a supportive and vibrant online space. The group has hosted 356 new posts, offering advice, encouragement, updates, and shared experiences. This engagement reflects the deep need for community among families navigating the challenges of incarceration.

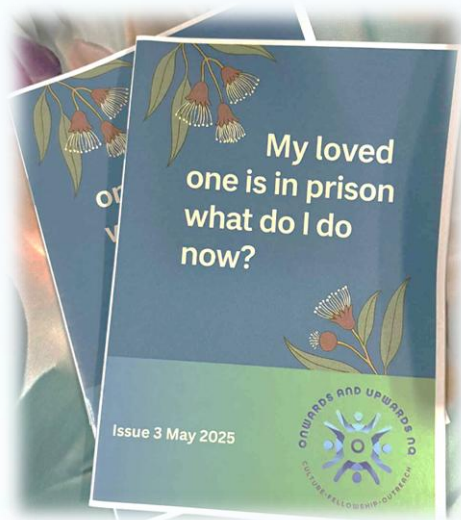


Onwards & Upwards NQ Facebook Page Since its launch in January, the "Onwards & Upwards NQ" Facebook page has garnered a total of 19 likes and 41 followers. According to Facebook Insights, the page attracts an average of 276 views per week. Additionally, approximately 60% of these views result in some form of engagement or interaction on the platform, demonstrating active community interest and participation.

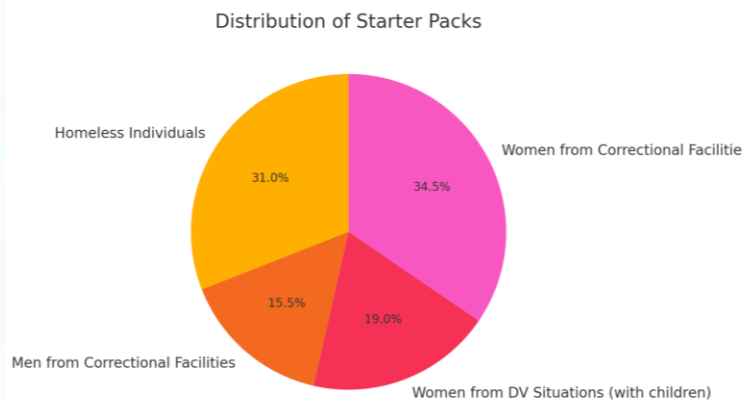
Informal Group Meetings The informal group meetings have experienced variable attendance, ranging from 15 participants to as few as 1. Engagement levels appear to fluctuate based on the social circumstances and sensitivities of the members at any given time. Specifically, individuals with careers that may be impacted by their participation are less likely to attend due to concerns about confidentiality and reputation, whereas those who are more openly associated with the group's focus tend to participate more consistently.

One-on-One Support Sessions The one-on-one informal meetings have been highly sought after, with a total of 114 individuals benefiting from 90 sessions. This indicates a strong demand for personalized support within the community.

Educational Publications Since November, over 2,000 copies of the "How-To" guide have been distributed, demonstrating significant reach within the community. Additionally, the corresponding videos on YouTube and TikTok have achieved a combined viewership of 385, further extending the guide's impact and accessibility.



Starter Packs Since February, a total of 84 starter packs have been assembled and distributed. Of these, 26 were provided to homeless individuals, 13 to men transitioning out of correctional facilities, 16 to women leaving domestic violence situations—including 5 that included packs for children—and 29 to women leaving correctional facilities.



Launch of the Onwards & Upwards Website In approximately six weeks since its launch, the website has received over 300 views, indicating strong initial engagement and interest from the community

- **Key Highlights:** Key highlights include the celebration of the launch of informal meetings and ongoing community engagement, which have fostered positive discussions around First Nations peoples both in custody and in the community. This achievement was made possible through the support and collaboration of the Elders for Change, emphasizing strong partnerships and memorable moments in the initiative


- **Reflections:** What worked well include the thriving online engagements, which are expected to continue with ongoing maintenance. To improve, the informal meetings would benefit from more consistent attendance to enhance their effectiveness. Additionally, printed resources could have a greater impact if they were made available on-site at prison and parole offices, if permission to place them there can be obtained.

2. Resource Distribution Report

Title: Resource Support & Distribution – 2024-2025

- Overview of Services Provided

The services provided by the initiative include the operation of the Helping Hands Shelves, which, since November, have supported 457 visits by distributing vital



clothing, toiletries, and essential items to those in need. Additionally, since February, a total of 84 starter packs have been assembled and distributed to various vulnerable populations. These packs have been given to 26 homeless individuals, 13 men transitioning out of correctional facilities, 16 women leaving domestic violence situations (including 5 packs for children), and 29 women leaving correctional facilities. These services aim to meet immediate needs and facilitate the transition and well-being of individuals facing significant social challenges.

- Unmet Needs or Requests

These include court transportation to ensure individuals can attend their court appearances, provision of phone credit to facilitate communication, and support for special dietary requirements, medicines, and additional sanitary items. Addressing these needs is essential to improve access to services, maintain health and well-being, and ensure individuals can effectively participate in their legal and personal affairs.

3. Community Feedback & Impact Report

Title: Community Feedback & Outcomes – 2024-2025

Sections:

- Participant Voices

1. **Unspecified Supporter:** "You're a God send to us all who have loved ones inside and live far away keep up the great work we all appreciate everything you do".
 2. **Unspecified Supporter:** "Thank you kindly. Am glad to see this group to keep updated with our Correctional matters, as keeping family connected in times of crisis is extremely important and to raise issues of concerns. We all need to support each other; we are all struggling.".
 3. **Kandice Williams:** "amazing support and very helpful".
 4. **Colleen Mains:** "what a good organisation and the person running it is absolute delight and very helpful".
 5. **Unspecified Supporter:** "I like being in this group I joined because my older son has been in and out since he was 18 he got out about 3 months ago I joined because I felt he may go back in and all the advise is great you do feel alone in this until it's time for visits.".
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6. **Unspecified Supporter:** "Thank you so much I really appreciate you taking time to respond."
 7. **Unspecified Supporter:** "What an amazing insight into proper rehabilitation for them selves and their families and future!!!".
 8. **Unspecified Supporter :**"I really liked the way that you spoke about DV in your YouTube video. This is something that is often confusing for kids."
 9. **Unspecified Supporter:** "You are doing a fantastic job. I wouldn't know anything if it wasn't for your website."
 10. **User expressing personal challenges:** "My older son was picked up 3 nights ago and has been sent back to prison again I have no idea why my younger son is following his footsteps and may end up in there soon... I feel better this time around being in this group thank you so much."

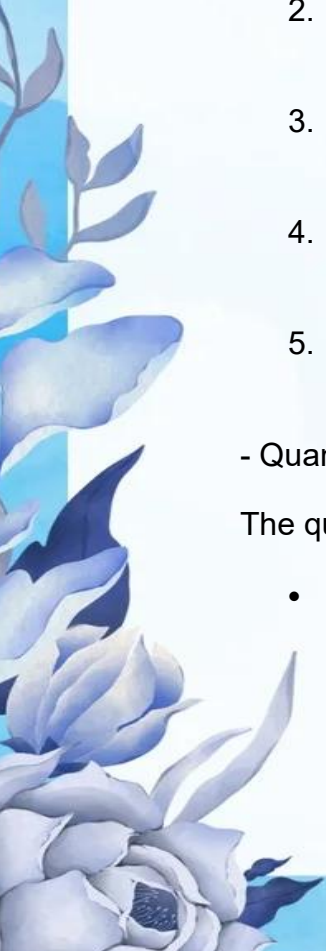
- Themes from Feedback

The feedback highlights several key themes:

1. **Support and Appreciation:** Respondents value the organisation's work, expressing gratitude for its helpfulness and dedication 5, 3.
2. **Staying Informed and Connected:** Many emphasize the importance of updates and maintaining family connections during crises 4, 1.
3. **Need for Education and Rehabilitation:** There's a call for better rehabilitation efforts and more focus on education for prisoners 2.
4. **Emotional Support:** The group provides community, reassurance, and relief from stress and loneliness 4, 1.
5. **Personal Impact:** The organisation's support offers hope and guidance through difficult situations 5, 2.

- Quantitative Outcomes

The quantitative outcomes from the feedback include:

- **High Satisfaction and Recommendations:** Five reviews recommend the organisation, indicating strong positive feedback and trust in its services 3.
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- **Positive Support Ratings:** Multiple comments highlight the organisation's support as "amazing," "helpful," and "delightful," reflecting high satisfaction levels 5, 3.
- **Engagement Metrics:** The posts and comments demonstrate active participation, with comments received over a span of days and multiple responses, indicating ongoing engagement and community involvement

4. Operations & Capacity Report

Title: Group Operations Report – 2024-2025

- Functional Members

Name	Member contributions	Lived experience voice
Garrett Brooks	Founder and main organizer	✓
Chantelle Dorward	Support organizer Online group moderation	✓
Colleen Mains	Contributions & group setups, Online group moderation	✓
Sami Hall	Literary support.	✓
Karrissa Crossman	Online group moderation	✓
Kris Scott	Startup contributions, input, and planning	✓
Kelly Guppy	Startup contributions, input, and planning	✓
Rachel Montgomery	Elders for change rep supporting to facilitation of groups.	

The challenges identified include:

1. **Need for legal advice:** To ensure that the organisation's structure and operations comply with legal requirements, facilitating proper organization and governance.
2. **Funding and stable facility access:** Securing consistent funding and reliable premises to host groups and distribute care packs, which are essential for ongoing support and service delivery.
3. **Volunteer onboarding:** Developing systems and processes to effectively recruit, train, and onboard community members as volunteers, enhancing community engagement and capacity.

The support sought includes:

1. **Partnerships with corrections:** To collaborate with correctional facilities and obtain consent to provide literature and resources within prisons for inmates and their families, facilitating communication and support.
2. **Partnerships with other community organisations:** To develop a coordinated team effort that addresses various aspects of the issues faced by families and inmates, leveraging collective resources and expertise.
3. **Access to funding and donations:** To secure financial resources necessary for sustaining programs, expanding services, and ensuring ongoing support for the community.

5. Financial Summary Report

N/A at this stage

6. Future Planning Report

Title: Strategic Outlook – 2024-2025

- The goals for the coming year include:

1. **Providing a Zoom-based support group:** Organizing online support meetings held fortnightly to facilitate ongoing connection and assistance for families and inmates.
2. **Developing a peer network of ex-inmates:** Creating a community where former inmates come together to support each other and promote success in reintegration.
3. **Accessing legal advice:** Securing legal expertise to better assist families and inmates with legal matters.
4. **Refining organizational structure:** Fine-tuning the organisational setup to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
5. **Seeking funding options:** Exploring various funding opportunities and grants to sustain and expand programs and initiatives.

- Potential partnerships to support these goals include:

1. **Legal Services Providers:** Collaborate with legal aid organizations or pro bono legal professionals to provide ongoing legal advice and assistance 2.

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2. **Community and Support Organizations:** Partner with local community groups, mental health services, and rehabilitation organizations to strengthen peer support networks and provide holistic support.
 3. **Correctional Facilities and NGOs:** Engage with correctional institutions and nonprofits working on prison reform and inmate reintegration to align efforts and expand outreach.
 4. **Funding Bodies and Grant Agencies:** Seek partnerships with government departments, philanthropic foundations, and corporate sponsors to secure funding for programs and organizational development.

- Growth Plan

1. **Service Expansion:** Increase the range of support services offered, such as adding short courses, programs and referrals.
 2. **Community Outreach and Engagement:** Expand outreach efforts by leveraging social media, local community centers, and partnerships with correctional facilities to raise awareness and recruit new members and volunteers 5,3.
 3. **Partnership Development:** Establish collaborations with legal, mental health, and correctional organizations to enhance service delivery, share resources, and increase credibility 2.
 4. **Funding and Resource Acquisition:** Seek grants, sponsorships, and donations from government agencies, foundations, and corporate partners to fund growth initiatives and sustain operations 3.
 5. **Volunteer and Staff Growth:** Recruit and train additional volunteers and staff members to support increased service demand and ensure quality care 4, 3.
 6. **Digital Platform Enhancement:** Improve online presence, including website and social media, for better visibility and accessibility. Utilize digital tools for virtual meetings, resource sharing, and communication 5, 4.
 7. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement metrics to assess the effectiveness of new initiatives, member satisfaction, and overall organizational impact, facilitating continuous improvement.
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