



Pathfinder Survey 2024



LIFE. CHANGING. SUPPORT.



ABOUT PATHWAYS MELBOURNE

In 2014, the need for a community entity like Pathways Melbourne was identified and the organisation gradually formed. Pathways Melbourne Pty Ltd was incorporated in March 2017 and it achieved DGR and PBI status in June 2017.

Pathways is the only organisation in Australia that supports and empowers people from Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities who are exploring beyond their lifestyle, practices and beliefs — no matter where they are on their journey.

Pathways offers discrete and confidential support options for members of religious Jewish communities in need.

Client growth (Pathfinders)

Date	Number of Pathfinders (Age 18+)
June 2020	38
Sept 2021	65
Jan 2022	67
March 2022	69
Sept 2022	74
Jan 2023	82
June 2023	85
April 2024	91

2024 Survey Summary

Pathways Melbourne has provided a range of beneficial programs and services tailored to meet the diverse needs of the Pathfinder community it supports. Through offerings such as social events, discussion groups, Jewish cultural experiences, referrals to external professional services, and the PATH 4 LIFE | Mentor Program, individuals have found a supportive community where they can openly discuss their personal journeys, receive non-judgmental support, and improve their mental wellbeing.

In addition, Pathfinders have gained valuable skills, discovered new experiences, and received helpful advice, contributing to personal growth and development. The quality of Pathways' personnel and the inclusivity of its programs were particularly noted, fostering a sense of belonging and connection among its members.

The trust, privacy and safety provided by Pathways Melbourne was also highly regarded by survey respondents. Overall, Pathways Melbourne has played a significant role in enhancing the lives of the Pathfinders surveyed, providing valuable support and resources for personal and communal development.

“I’ve never felt as strongly Jewish as I have since joining Pathways. I can be the Jew I want to be.”

Pathfinder (anon)



TERMINOLOGY

Pathways Melbourne

Pathways Melbourne supports and empowers people who are exploring beyond their Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox Jewish lifestyle, practices and beliefs... no matter where they are on their journey.

Pathfinder

A Pathfinder is any person who:

- is exploring beyond their religious Jewish community or wishes to significantly change their relationship with their religious faith, practice or identity
- is, or once was, part of an Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox Jewish community.

We use the word "Pathfinder" to reflect our commitment to supporting autonomy, and our belief that each person has the right to choose their own path in life.

Pathways does not aim to sway anyone away from orthodoxy or religious affiliation, but rather to support individuals in their efforts to choose their own direction.

“I am most impressed with the quality of the personnel Pathways has engaged to run its ancillary programs, in either a paid or voluntary capacity or a combination. They are all highly capable and skilled in what they do, and additionally, they have insight into and are very attuned and sensitive to the special needs and feelings of people whose backgrounds brought them into Pathways.”

Pathfinder (anon)

Evaluation aims & approach

The primary aim of the survey was to detail the Pathfinder demographic and identify the short-term and intermediate outcomes of Pathways Melbourne's programs and services.

It was also expected that the evaluation would provide insights into the impact of current programs and services and how they could be further tailored and improved. Data was collected via a structured online survey shared with Pathfinders through a variety of communication channels.

A range of qualitative and quantitative measures were used in order to address the key evaluation questions.

Organisational performance

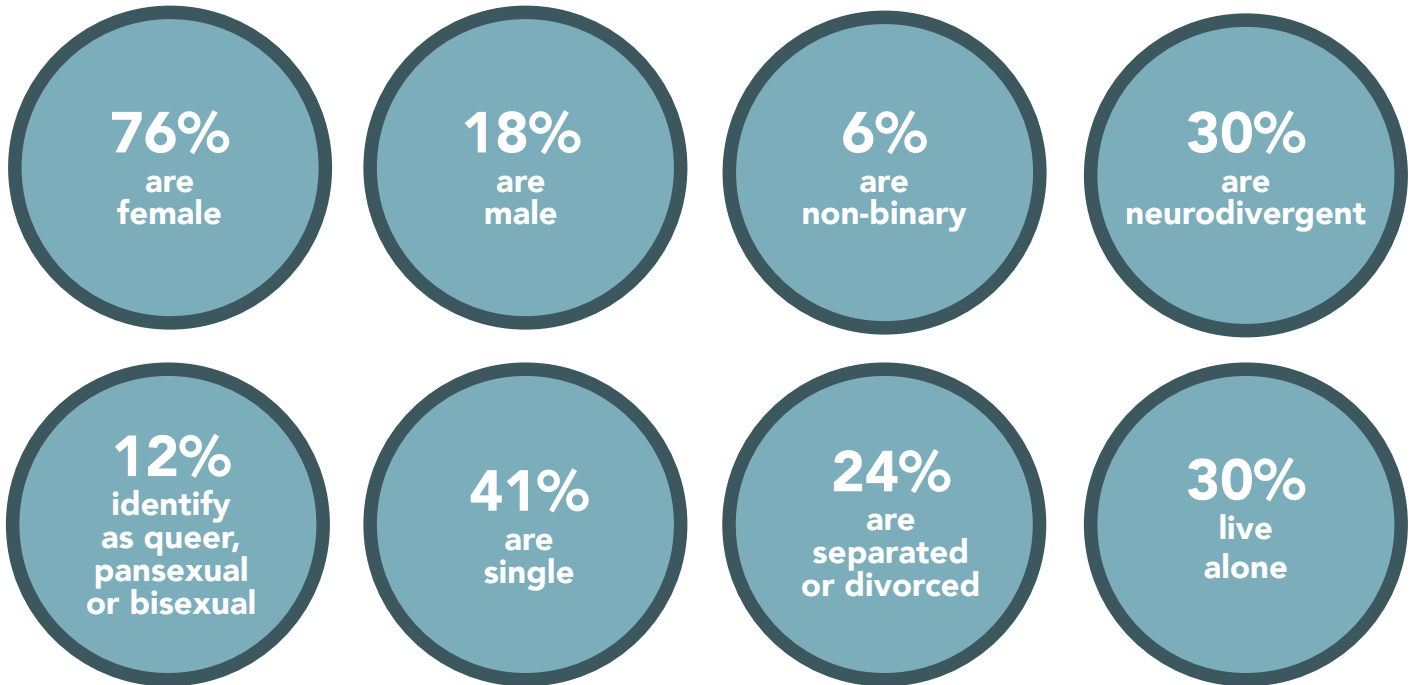
The majority of those who received support from Pathways indicated satisfaction, mentioning **positive experiences** with the support received, including **professionalism**, relevance to their needs, and a **non-judgemental** approach.

“The support I received at Pathways was what I expressed a need for. There was never unsolicited advice given, and the follow through in the plan was at a high professional standard.”

Pathfinder (anon)



ABOUT OUR PATHFINDERS



22%

reported **struggling financially**, with reasons including managing jobs and expenditures, living on a disability pension due to health conditions, and continued financial stress resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

61%

of Pathfinders indicated they had **experienced some form of abuse** including financial and emotional abuse and domestic/family violence. 39% of those surveyed chose 'Not applicable/I prefer not to answer' for this response.

“There has been a good deal of indirect support through my involvement in ancillary programs run by Pathways, e.g. book club, creative writing workshops, picnics, outings, and group meals celebrating Jewish dates, and other Meet Ups of members for conversation on various themes.”

Pathfinder (anon)

JEWISH IDENTITY & AFFILIATION

Pathfinders identified as currently belonging to (or previously belonging to) a broad range of Jewish religious affiliations including; Lubavitch/Chabad, Modern Orthodox, Adass and Secular communities, among others.

Some respondents have been affiliated with multiple communities simultaneously, or have transitioned between different affiliations over time.

When asked about their current level of connection to their Jewish identity, responses varied widely. Some reported strong affiliations while others expressed uncertainty and a lower level of connection. This indicates a complex and evolving personal experience for each individual surveyed.

“Pathways has been a really nice outreach, a place to explore myself and my place in Judaism. Especially when you’re unsure what the fall out is about to look like when you’re leaving a marriage and a community all at once.”

Pathfinder (anon)

“It has been a vehicle for me to find my own terms on which to identify with religious Judaism and, aside from that, it has also provided a sense of community among others with shared experiences and shared views, plus opportunities to meet with them and share current experiences.”

Pathfinder (anon)



JEWISH COMMUNITY CONNECTION

The majority of Pathfinders surveyed affirmed that Pathways Melbourne has helped improve their level of social and community connection. They mentioned specific events, support, and resources that provided opportunities for self-exploration and connection with Jewish identity.

71%

of those surveyed valued the unique opportunity to connect with someone who has been on a similar life journey.

One respondent mentioned that Pathways Melbourne provided a platform to explore and define their **connection to religious Judaism on their own terms**, fostering a **sense of community** among individuals with shared experiences and perspectives.

Others emphasised the importance of Pathways Melbourne in **preventing complete disconnection from the Jewish community** and **facilitating connections** with people who share similar perspectives and backgrounds.

SAFETY AND PRIVACY

All respondents emphasised the importance of confidentiality and privacy at Pathways events. They mentioned that personal safety is a priority and highlighted the measures taken to ensure safety, such as having a list of shared values and honouring them at meetings/events.

100% of ALL respondents expressed trust in Pathways Melbourne to uphold their privacy, mentioning confidentiality in conversations and appreciation for professionalism and follow-up.

“My experience at Pathways gave me the opportunity to connect with my Jewish identity in a safe and supportive environment, independent of my religious observance or conformity to religious ideologies.”

Pathfinder (anon)



SELF-CONFIDENCE & WELLBEING

The majority of Pathfinders surveyed indicated that involvement with Pathways Melbourne has helped improve their **self-confidence levels** through opportunities for **personal growth, validation of choices**, and supportive environments for **self-expression**.

FOOD INSECURITY

45%

of Pathfinders surveyed have experienced food insecurity.

65%

reported experiencing extra food pressure around the Jewish Festivals.

“The food parcels and gift vouchers made a massive difference – the cost of living/medications/petrol/bills is suffocating.”

Pathfinder (anon)

“ I have received food boxes and gift cards, taxi money and a referral to a psychologist who bulk billed”

Pathfinder (anon)

“Meet Ups have been great socially and I would go so far as to describe those opportunities as being the mainstay of my mental wellbeing”

Pathfinder (anon)

“Pathways was a significant factor in helping me get through these personal challenges and maintain community connection.”

Pathfinder (anon)



GOING FORWARD

Strategy

The 2024 survey data and findings will be used to inform Pathways' strategic direction over the next 2 years and will be disseminated to key stakeholders including our Board, Pathfinder Advisory Committee, and volunteer Mentors.

Growth

We will use the evaluation findings to identify areas that require program strengthening and areas of potential expansion. This will include securing core funding to maintain existing programs and support the professional development of staff, as well as identifying avenues for additional funding.

“I’m just glad to know
Pathways is there.”

“I feel more hopeful and
supported about my
future endeavours.”

Pathfinder (anon)

“ I am so relieved Pathways exists.
Straddling two worlds is
so exhausting for me.”

Pathfinder (anon)



Pathways Melbourne currently provides services to people over the age of 18

LIFE. CHANGING. SUPPORT.

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Privacy always respected

pathwaysmelbourne.org/donate