Lifeline

Lifeline Australia Case Study

Improving access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

sitback solutions

Putting people at the centre of everything we do

Project Background

Supporting a Nation In Need

2020-2021 have been the worst years in living memory for many Australians. Throughout 2020, droughts led to devastating bushfires, quickly followed by the global Coronavirus Pandemic. Even as things started to improve in early 2021, record-breaking floods caused further destruction in many parts of the country. These dramatic events have taken a huge toll on the mental health of the nation. During this time, **Lifeline Australia** (a Not-For-profit organisation providing vital suicide prevention services) **has been key.**

Since the start of the pandemic, their 4,500 crisis supporters have answered almost 90,000 calls for help - equivalent to **one call every 30 seconds**. This equates to a **25% increase** in people looking for help - the highest in Lifeline Australia's 57-year history. At the same time, the organisation was also undergoing a huge transformation; introducing new SMS and webchat communication channels, rolling out remote crisis support services and reimagining their website, a project that kicked off with Sitback in March 2020.

The Challenge

Lifeline Australia recognised that their existing website was not just lacking in innovation, but also failed to address the needs of their multiple user personas.

It was essential that the new site **improved accessibility** and **WCAG compliance**, made it easier to **find tools and information** for those seeking help, and quickly **connect people with crisis support** when they need it.

They needed a flexible platform with a modern look and feel, better Information architecture, and a solid foundation for their ongoing content strategy and future innovation, including future integration with their other business tools like Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics.

"Previously, we had an audience we didn't fully understand because we couldn't see how we were engaging with them online - we couldn't measure the right things, make the changes we wanted to"
- Dane Glerum, Head of Digital Product
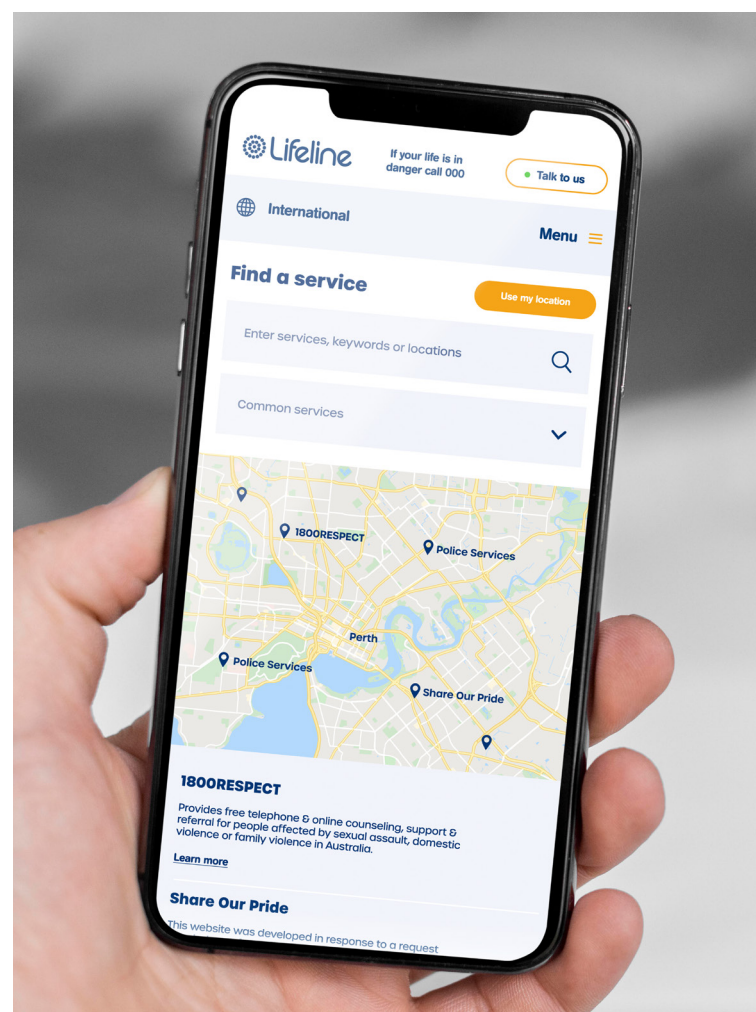
Our Solution

In order to deliver this, Sitback turned to the open-source solution, **Umbraco**.

Lifeline Australia already had a preference for a .NET tech stack and Umbraco is best-in-class, providing the right **balance between flexibility, extensibility, security and out-of-the-box functionalities.** The fact that Umbraco is free to use with no ongoing licencing costs is essential for a Not-For-Profit organisation like Lifeline Australia.


Creating a High-Performance Platform

Umbraco provides multiple features out of the box that **reduced the time to deliver**, including management workflows, content versioning and user role management.

Multilingual capabilities made it easy to address non-English speaking communities and Sitback's experience building fully responsive and highly accessible sites to WCAG 2.1 AA standards ensured that Lifeline Australia's **content is easily findable and accessible.**

Lightning-fast web pages, many of which load in under a second, make accessing Lifeline Australia's content easier, especially from rural and remote areas where Australian's are worst hit by the events of the past year, meaning that no one gets left behind.

"Compared to this time last year, overall website speed has improved by over 30%. The best part is, this is only the beginning!"
- Dane Glerum, Head of Digital Product

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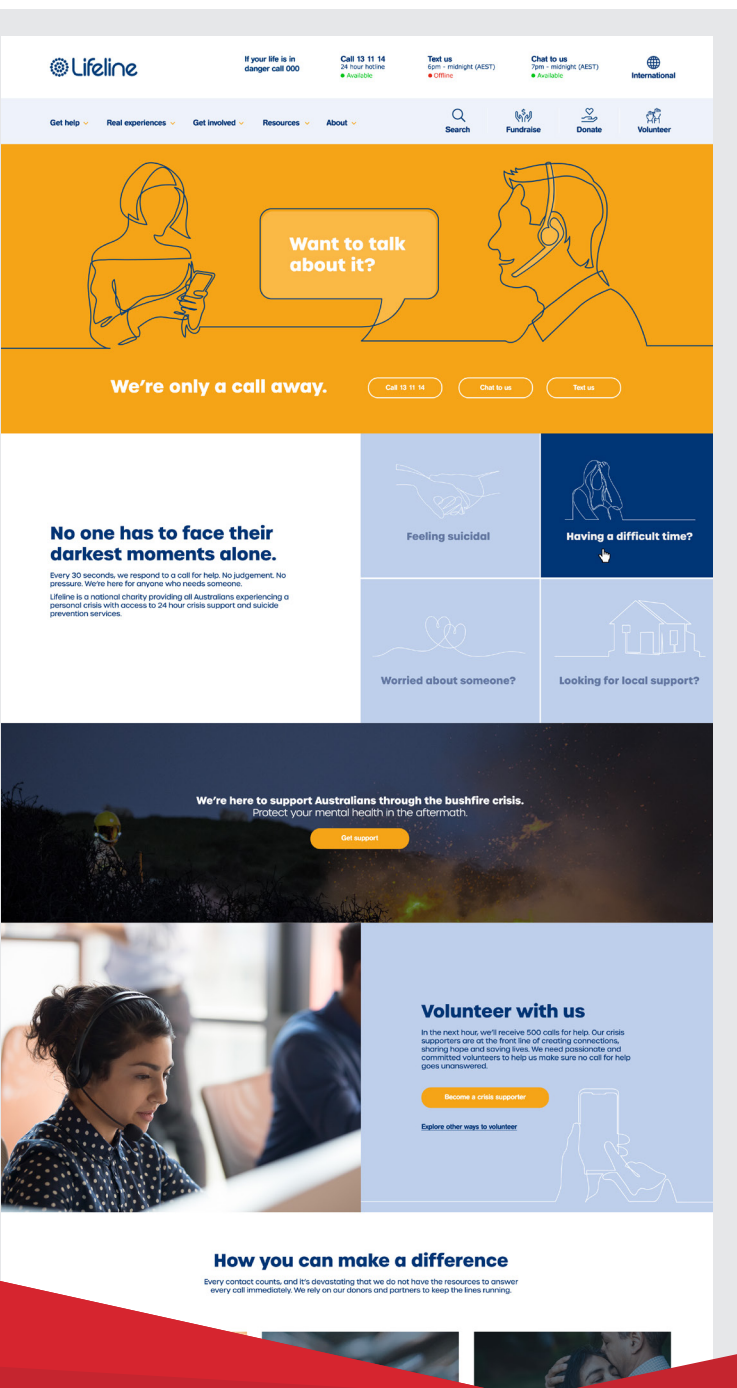
Extensive Customisation

On top of Umbraco's extensive core abilities, Sitback worked hard to extend the functionality in useful and meaningful ways for the Lifeline Australia team.

A simple, **user-friendly admin interface** makes content moderator's lives easier. And while Umbraco already has robust page layout and component management functionality, Sitback extended this to create a truly powerful Content Management system, enabling the reuse of content modules throughout the site in any combination. Boasting nearly 30 bespoke components, many are highly complex, including a dynamic "listing" component that automatically updates its content based on a chosen tag or its relation to other content on the site. This means content moderators can create new content with complete freedom and without the need to bring in developers.

Smart, on-site search has been shown to increase visitor engagement — doubling visitor time spent on a website and increasing page views by as much as 50%. Sitback leveraged the AI-powered site search capability provided by **Sajari** to continuously index and optimise web and PDF content for discovery. This smart search technology has been shown to increase visitor engagement by making it easier to find relevant content and related information.

Vital to help seekers' ability to get the support they need, we built **a custom "Help Status" widget**. This clearly shows help seekers what types of support are available to them in real-time, across live chat, SMS and telephone.
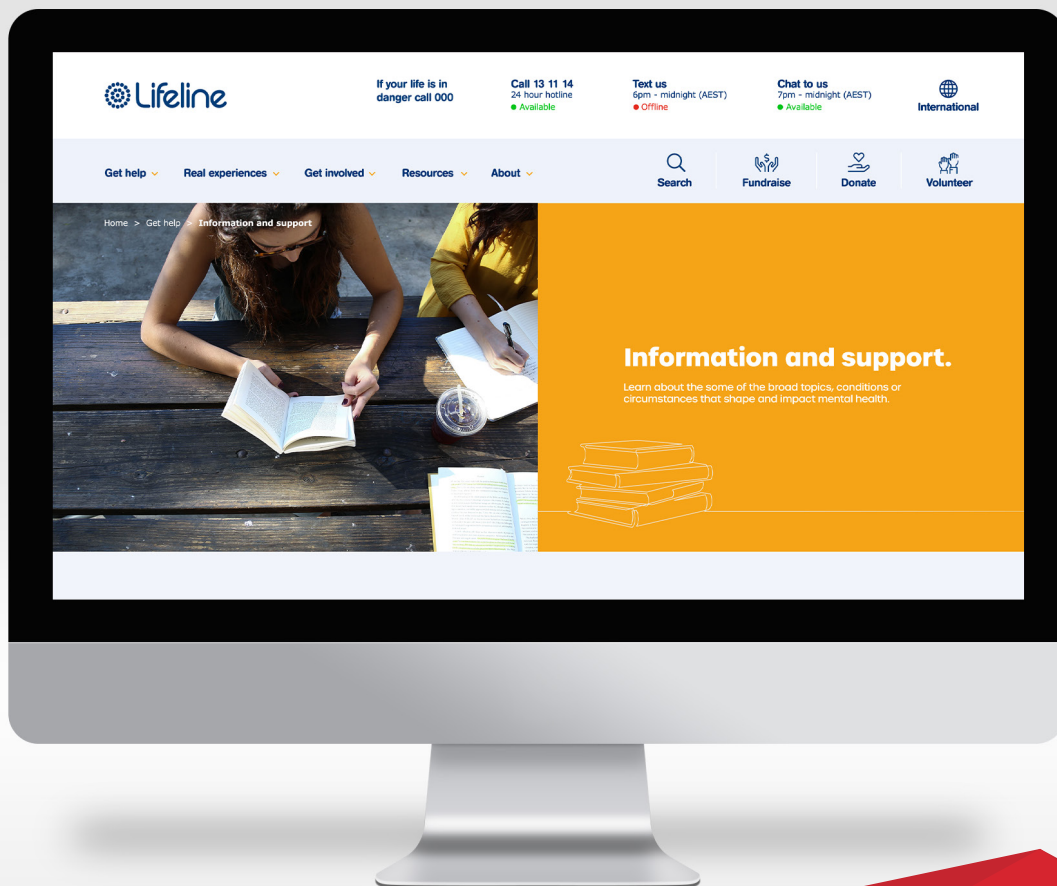
The Capacity To Scale

The Lifeline Australia website is, without doubt, a **People Critical Platform**. With up to 15% of help seekers being at immediate risk, it is vital that the website is online and capable of serving visitors.

Sitback have **maximised the availability of information to users** through a high-performance, scalable and reliable website platform leveraging Azure WebApp, Front Door, Blob Storage and Auto-Scaling to handle spikes in user volume, which occur seasonally and, increasingly, in line with public health announcements.

Utilising a decoupled architecture, the Admin server is separated from the Front-end content delivery server. This setup powers two separate Umbraco installations and means any increase in load on the admin database does not affect the front end, protecting the experience for website visitors.

Sitback brings Lifeline Australia further peace of mind with a 24/7 SLA-backed support and optimisation service providing reactive and proactive maintenance and enhancement of the website, including a full **Disaster Recovery plan**.

Content Managment System

Custom Mapping Feature

Custom "Help Status" Widgets

High Performance Web Platform

Minimum Ongoing Maitenance

Consistency In Brand Presentation

Increasing ROI Through Affiliates

As the initial development of the flagship Lifeline Australia website came to a close, Sitback set to work utilising Umbraco's multisite functionality to create multiple affiliate websites.

Here, a single Umbraco instance and database is capable of serving multiple domains and websites. Lifeline Australia can provision a new website with ease for any affiliated organisation that requires an online presence. This **reduces onboarding and setup time**, **minimises the effort of ongoing maintenance**, and **ensures consistency in brand presentation**.
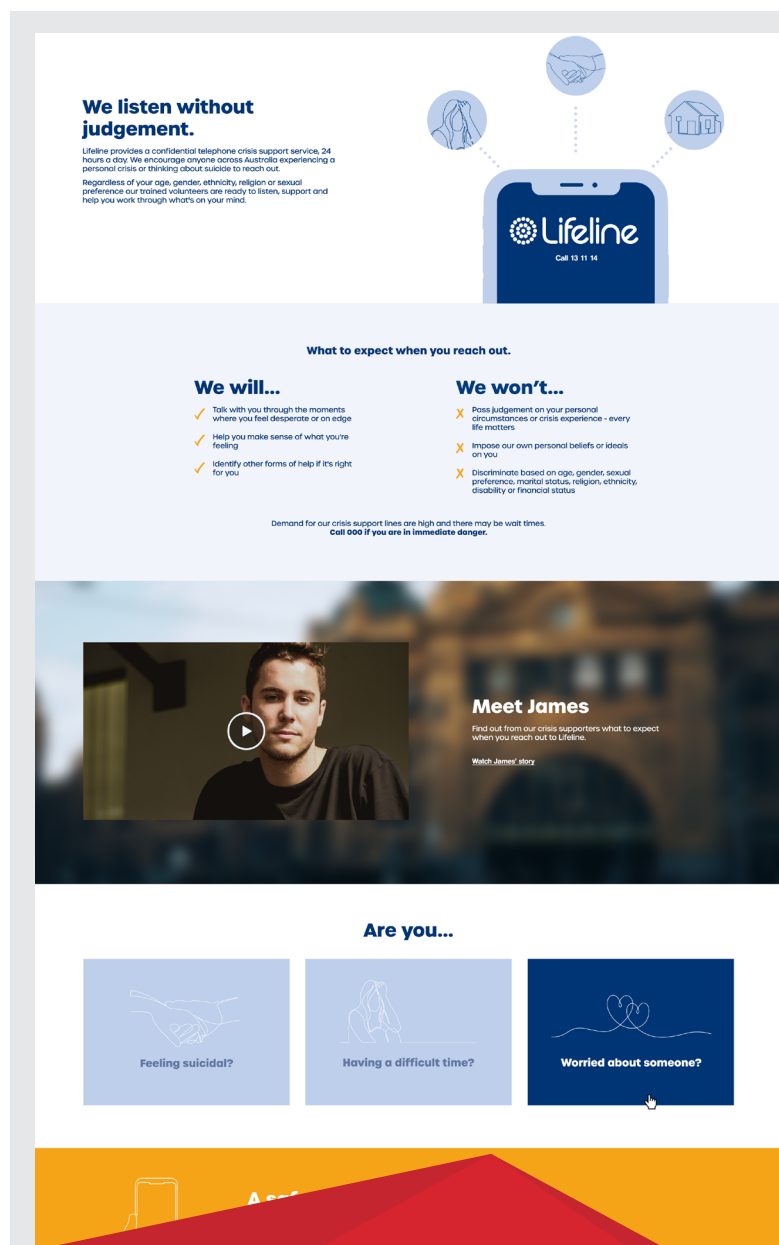
A Successful Partnership

"Half of the project is design work. Half is creating a platform we can make changes to ourselves and observe, with real insight, what people are responding to."
- Dane Glerum, Head of Digital Product

Working in partnership, Sitback and Lifeline Australia have created a fit-for-purpose platform to deliver the level of quality needed for a people critical service.

Compared with the previous year, **website engagement is up** with more page views and a **31% reduction in bounce rate**. The new hosting setup has resulted in a **53% reduction in server response times** and **front end optimisations have seen the average page load time reduce by 31%**, with many pages loading in under a second.

Ultimately, Sitback provides the knowledge and support needed to scale the organisation as Lifeline Australia move towards non-voice help channels, facilitating self-service crisis-support options and growing their remote crisis supporter workforce.

"The website is our foundation. It provides a clear, simple and stable destination for people to find help - whenever and wherever they need it."
- Dane Glerum, Head of Digital Product

Lifeline

umbraco
awards
2021

BEST HEALTHCARE SOLUTION - FINALIST

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At Sitback, we believe that everyone deserves exceptional experiences.

So, whether your customers are consumers, companies, students, citizens or staff, we exist to ensure your organisation provides the best possible experience, resulting in satisfied customers and a successful business.

As the trusted partner for companies who are dedicated to putting their customers first, we take a holistic approach to Experience Design and provide market-leading UX Consultancy from Registered Psychologists and HCI experts, alongside specialist Software Development, Support and Training services.

Putting people at the centre of everything we do