

Turning the tide: How Alex reclaimed his life



Alex* found himself at a crossroads. His life on the South Coast of NSW, once filled with the simple joys of surfing and fishing, had become overshadowed by a relentless alcohol addiction by the age of 23. Consuming up to 30 standard drinks daily, Alex knew he was on a dangerous path that threatened not just his future, but his life.

Alex's decision to seek help at Triple Care Farm was born out of a desperate need for change. **"I want to get rid of my alcohol addiction, live a better life, be a better person, and return to work,"** he declared upon self-referral. The gravity of his situation was underscored by looming medical concerns that, if left unchecked, could have severe implications for his wellbeing.

Living with his mother and two younger

brothers, Alex's addiction had strained his relationships and led to troubling behaviour. Despite not considering himself an angry person, he admitted to becoming "explosive" and even abusive, when under the influence of alcohol. His struggles extended beyond his personal life, impacting his job prospects and leading to serious brushes with the law.

When he arrived at the Farm, Alex embraced the program with quiet determination. Initially reserved, he gradually built friendships and became a role model for his peers in recovery. His dedication did not go unnoticed, earning him recognition awards for his strong engagement in all areas of the program.

The highly skilled staff at the Farm provided Alex with comprehensive support. Counselling sessions helped

him confront the root causes of his addiction, while case management assisted in setting and achieving goals. Youth workers offered guidance and encouragement, and Aftercare planning ensured continued support post-program.

Alex's journey took an unexpected turn when he expressed interest in underground mining training. The staff at the Farm, recognising his commitment to recovery, took an extraordinary step. They developed a tailored plan allowing Alex to attend training off-site while continuing his rehabilitation.

This unique arrangement was a testament to Alex's progress and the trust he had built with the team at the Farm. Despite the challenges, Alex excelled, completing the course as the top student in a class that included experienced mining contractors.

Today, Alex stands at the threshold of a new chapter. With the support of his Aftercare Worker, he continues to work towards his goals, armed with strategies to maintain his recovery and pursue meaningful employment.

Alex's transformation is a powerful reminder of the impact of compassionate, individualised care. From the depths of addiction, he has emerged with renewed purpose, ready to build the life he once thought impossible. As he continues his journey, Alex carries with him not just the skills he's learned, but the unwavering support of the community that believed in him when he needed it most.

**Name changed to protect privacy. Stock image used.*

Our 2025 Youth Advisory Group

Our Youth Advisory Group ensures a strong youth voice guides and influences our efforts. Meet our 2025 members as they share their motivations and what matters to them.



**Harry Waterworth,
Chair**

“I have experience working in crisis mental health intervention and suicide intervention, and with these sorts of things it’s rarely a single-faceted issue; substance use often comes up. There is a big culture of substance use in Australia, and I think it’s important that we get this right, and I feel like I can help.”



Taeg Twist

“If things had turned out slightly different for me, if support systems weren’t as tight as they were, I could have easily fallen through the gaps. For me, it’s important that I go on to acknowledge that and create some change within that field.”



Maddy Forde

“I nominated myself for the Youth Advisory Group because I am a young person with an invisible disability and chronic illness. Understanding the daily challenges of living with invisible conditions drew me to the Foundation’s work.”



Kacie Fahey

“As someone with lived experience of intergenerational addiction and a youth advocate, I was drawn to the Foundation’s impactful work. Ensuring young people have a genuine voice aligns with my cultural values, making this role deeply meaningful.”



Lucy Stronach

“I’m a big believer of collective responsibility, and so I jumped at the opportunity to contribute to such an impactful organisation. To elevate the voice of young people is a huge privilege, and working with like-minded young people makes the experience even better.”



William Krajancic

“I joined the Youth Advisory Group because I saw this as an opportunity to help make a difference with young people, and more specifically youth in crisis, inform future program development and propose new ideas fit for a changing world.”



Ellie Hennessy

“I was inspired when I attended a fundraising event last year. The experiences I heard about and the benefits Sir David Martin Foundation is bringing these young people motivated me to join the Youth Advisory Group.”



Jonathan O'Brien

“I’m passionate about addressing the housing crisis and its connection to homelessness, which intersects with substance abuse and mental health issues that then lead into the work which the Foundation does.”



Joshua Patrick

“Many people can start relying on substances as a result of other struggles that they face. I’d really just like to shine a light on all the demographics that make up people who use substances.”



Mijica Lus

“The family foundation aspect and the opportunity to work with others passionate about youth wellbeing in our community sparked my interest in joining.”



From the Chair

As we begin 2025, I'm filled with optimism about Sir David Martin Foundation's future. This January, we welcomed our new CEO, Karen Elliff, whose extensive background in mental health and youth services aligns perfectly with our mission.

The past year saw remarkable resilience in our programs and the young people we serve. Triple Care Farm continued to transform lives, as evidenced by inspiring stories like Alex's. His journey from struggling with alcohol addiction to becoming a top student in his mining course exemplifies the life-changing impact of our programs. It's a powerful reminder of what's possible when we provide young people with the right support and opportunities.

Our Youth Advisory Group brought fresh perspectives, while initiatives like Connected Conversations demonstrated the power of collective action. Community support grew

stronger, highlighted by successful events such as the RMYC and RAN fundraiser and the HMAS Supply working bee at Triple Care Farm.

Under Karen's leadership, we're poised to make our biggest impact yet, in 2025. We'll expand our reach, strengthen our programs, and forge new partnerships to help more young people access vital support.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we'll make 2025 a year of unprecedented positive change for young people in crisis.

Will Martin

Chair, Sir David Martin Foundation

Connected Conversations

In November, we held our first **Connected Conversations: Breakfast for Youth** — a morning dedicated to fostering meaningful dialogue and raising critical support for young Australians. Hosted by our friends at Shaw and Partners, the event brought together thought leaders, supporters, and some new faces, to explore how we can create safety, hope, and opportunity for young people facing the challenges of substance misuse.

The morning featured two compelling speakers who shared valuable insights. Dr Krista Monkhouse FRACP, DipCH, MBBS, BSc (Hons), a member of our Clinical Advisory

Group, emphasised the crucial role of parents and the wider community in supporting young people. She advocated for open, non-judgmental conversations about drug and alcohol intake, stressing that **“creating connection is just so important, and finding the right time and place to have these conversations is essential”**. Jessica Pereira, outgoing Chair of our Youth Advisory Group, brought valuable perspective from her work with young people in the legal system, highlighting the importance of learning from those with lived experience.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, all funds raised from the



L-R Annalie Davies, Dr Krista Monkhouse, Anna Beaumont, Jessica Pereira

event will directly support our highly effective Aftercare program. This program delivers wrap-around care to young people as they transition back into the community after completing residential rehabilitation, ensuring they have the tools and support needed to sustain their recovery.

We are grateful to Shaw and Partners for generously hosting this impactful event, to our speakers for their valuable contributions, and to all attendees whose support makes our work possible. **For those interested in attending future Connected Conversations: Breakfast for Youth events, please contact Ruth Markham at r.markham@martinfoundation.org.au**



Navy crew lends a hand at Triple Care Farm

On September 20, Triple Care Farm welcomed the hardworking personnel of HMAS Supply for a working bee. Their mission: to refresh the outdoor patio area and transform the once grey and weathered space into a bright, welcoming retreat.

Armed with ladders, paintbrushes, and a sea of white paint, the crew got straight to work. What made the day particularly special was the collaboration with young people from the Farm, who are currently navigating their recovery journey – they rolled up their sleeves and joined the effort. Together, they worked side by side, transforming the patio into a space that is now vibrant and light.

For the Navy personnel, this project went beyond mere maintenance work. It provided a meaningful opportunity to connect with the local community and create lasting change. The young people at the Farm also benefited, engaging in a positive project while forming valuable connections with the crew.

The dedication and enthusiasm of HMAS Supply's crew have turned this tired outdoor space into a bright and welcoming haven – a place for reflection, relaxation, and recovery. It's safe to say they've left the patio shipshape and ready for smooth sailing ahead.



Your gift today could be the turning point in a young person's life, helping them break free from the grip of addiction.

To donate scan the code or visit



martinfoundation.org.au

Christmas at Government House

Lady Martin and her daughter Anna Beaumont represented the Foundation at the Government House Christmas Reception in December, continuing a meaningful connection that spans generations. Our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, has demonstrated unwavering support for the Foundation's mission to help young people in crisis.

The Foundation's relationship with Government House holds profound historical significance, dating back to Sir David Martin's tenure as Governor of New South Wales. During his time in office, Sir David's vision for supporting vulnerable young people took shape, making the annual Christmas Reception a poignant reminder of his enduring legacy.



Lady Martin and Anna Beaumont at the Government House Christmas Reception

Building brighter futures through Aftercare support

Ebony Millard is the newest Mission Australia Aftercare Worker in our Youth Network. As an Aftercare Worker, her role is to help young people transition back into their communities, following their treatment at Walawaani residential rehabilitation in Batemans Bay. It's important to her to start building those relationships with young people before they leave Walawaani.

“Having those impromptu conversations while they're here... it's a great environment to create those really easy relationships with people because you see them regularly.”

“The most critical part is having a multi-pronged approach,” Ebony explains. “Just finding them a house is not enough. Just finding them support work is not enough. Just finding them financial stability is not enough. They have to have all of them.”

This comprehensive approach is perfectly illustrated in one of Ebony's recent success stories. A young man,

having had multiple previous experiences of rehabilitation, worked closely with Ebony to build a stable foundation for his new life, to give him the best chance of success. Together, before he left Walawaani, they secured share house accommodation in Canberra, connected him with local drug and alcohol services, and established regular mental health support for his ongoing medication needs.

“He attends three or four NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings a week because they're really important to him. They're really holding him steady at this stage,” Ebony shares. Beyond recovery support, they found him a nearby gym and connected him with a local chess club to build social connections outside the recovery community.

Three months into his transition, the young man has flourished. He's now volunteering at 'Vinnies' and actively participating in his chess group, demonstrating how comprehensive support can lead to sustainable recovery.



Ebony's approach emphasises empowerment rather than dependency. “I don't do everything for them. I do everything **with** them so that they learn the process of how to apply for things and how to make phone calls and how to research, that kind of stuff.”

She adapts her communication style to each individual - some clients even send her regular video updates of their daily life or work when they don't feel comfortable with phone calls.

While challenges remain, particularly in housing and accessing face-to-face support services in rural areas, the Aftercare program continues to demonstrate that with proper support, young people can build lasting foundations for recovery. As Ebony notes, “the thing about Aftercare is that you're pre-empting the drama. So hopefully you're preventing a lot of the things that could potentially go wrong when they leave residential care.”

With the support of dedicated Aftercare Workers like Ebony, young people are writing their own success stories, one step at a time.



Walawaani, Batemans Bay

MISSION AUSTRALIA

Sir David Martin Foundation acknowledges that Mission Australia, our service partner, owns and runs programs at Triple Care Farm and delivers Aftercare programs for Youth Network.

Maritime community unites to support youth in crisis

The Royal Motor Yacht Club (RMYC) and Royal Australian Navy joined forces aboard HMAS Hobart on October 10 for an extraordinary gala fundraiser supporting young people in crisis.

The night was filled with generosity and excitement as RMYC members boarded the HMAS Hobart to socialise, take guided tours of the vessel, and listen to powerful stories of the impact of the programs we fund. Harry Waterworth, a member of our Youth Advisory Group, spoke passionately to attendees about his experiences meeting the young people at Triple Care Farm and the importance of the support provided to them at some of the most vulnerable times of their lives.

The crew also organised a spirited auction and raffle which contributed to

an impressive fundraising total exceeding \$50,000. These funds will help provide more young people with a safe space to get well and prepare for new opportunities.

We are overwhelmed with the success of such a special night and the generosity of everyone who attended. We would like to thank RMYC and the Royal Australian Navy for all the hard work and organisation that made this



event possible. A huge thanks to the HMAS Hobart crew members who welcomed guests and took time out of their own schedules to ensure the night ran smoothly. The continued commitment of RMYC in supporting young people in crisis is truly inspiring.



L-R: Will Martin, Anna Beaumont, Lady Martin, Sandy Di Pietro



L-R: Molly Hutchinson, Ruth Markham, Jenny Leahy, Harry Waterworth

Christmas kindness makes a critical difference for young people

Your generous response to our Christmas Appeal will make a critical difference in the lives of young people experiencing addiction. Through your donations, we can continue providing essential programs that help vulnerable youth take their first steps toward recovery.

These vital programs offer more than treatment - they provide safety, hope and opportunity, empowering young people to rebuild their lives and create brighter futures. Your support is more than just a gift; it's a lifeline. It ensures young people have access to the care and encouragement they need to overcome the challenges of addiction.

From everyone at Sir David Martin Foundation and the young lives you've touched - thank you for being part of their journey to recovery.



Join Team180!

By joining our regular giving program – Team180 – you'll be part of a powerful team changing young lives. Your regular gifts will help fund Aftercare Workers, providing

vital support to young Australians during the critical 180 days after rehab.

Help vulnerable youth turn their lives around by joining Team180 at martinfoundation.org.au/team180