

Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm

Baseline Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis

About Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm

Triple Care Farm (TCF) is a Mission Australia residential Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) rehabilitation and treatment program for young people aged between 16 and 24 years. Located on 110 acres in the NSW Southern Highlands, TCF is a national service receiving referrals Australia-wide.

TCF specialises in treating young people with co-occurring mental illness and drug and alcohol problems. These young people are commonly considered one of the most difficult cohorts to treat in the community services sector. In addition to a history of chronic and poly-drug use and mental health issues the majority present with a range of other complex challenges including, homelessness, criminal history, and unemployment.

Through its holistic model of treatment, Triple Care Farm supports young people to experience long-term changes across multiple life domains, empowering them to live fulfilling and self-sufficient lives.

About this project

With the support and vision of Bill and Heather Webster, Mission Australia and the Sir David Martin Foundation commissioned Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Consulting to understand measure and value the social and economic changes generated by Triple Care Farm.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an internationally recognised methodology used to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or organisation. It places a monetary value on the impact (the benefit) of an activity, and compares this with the cost incurred in creating that benefit.

The SROI methodology was used to assess the outcomes created between the 2009 and 2013 financial years, and the investment made to generate those outcomes during this period. The analysis involved 57 consultations with stakeholders of Triple Care Farm including 32 past students, as well as a review of the program's historical data and evaluations.

Key Findings

- Triple Care Farm has had a significant positive social and economic impact on its stakeholders including young people, their families /carers, Government and the wider AOD sector
- Between 2009-13 TCF provided treatment and care to 370 young people. In total the Farm's activities generated approximately \$39.5M in value for its stakeholders across a range of outcomes
- An investment of ~\$13.5M (91% cash and 9% in-kind) was required during this period to fund the program. This equates to approximately \$34k for each young person who participated
- The largest portion of value created by TCF accrues to the young people who participate (\$24.7M). More than a third of this is attributable to improvements in their Health & Wellbeing, reflecting the large number of young people who have been able to achieve a maintained reduction of harmful AOD use
- The majority of the remaining value, \$12.4M, accrues to Government. This is largely due to the potential resource allocation within the justice system. Specifically, by diverting 67 young people from detention TCF generated ~\$9.2m in economic value
- When the total investment in TCF between FY09 and FY13 is compared to the total social and economic value created, the SROI ratio is 2.9:1. This means that for every \$1 invested into TCF, approximately \$3 of value was created
- Notably, due to the extent of change that occurs for young people, the value of the program for them alone is nearly twice the investment cost

"...Going to the farm was the best thing I have ever done in my life. It taught me how to live again..."

2013 student

"...Without TCF, my client probably would have reoffended and gone to jail..."

NSW Probation & Parole officer

"...it was all the staff, not just formal parts of the program which made it great. All of the staff were always there and available to talk to you - you didn't have to make an appointment if you wanted to talk. It helped me to open up..."

2010 student

Figure A below outlines the relationship between the investment and value created.

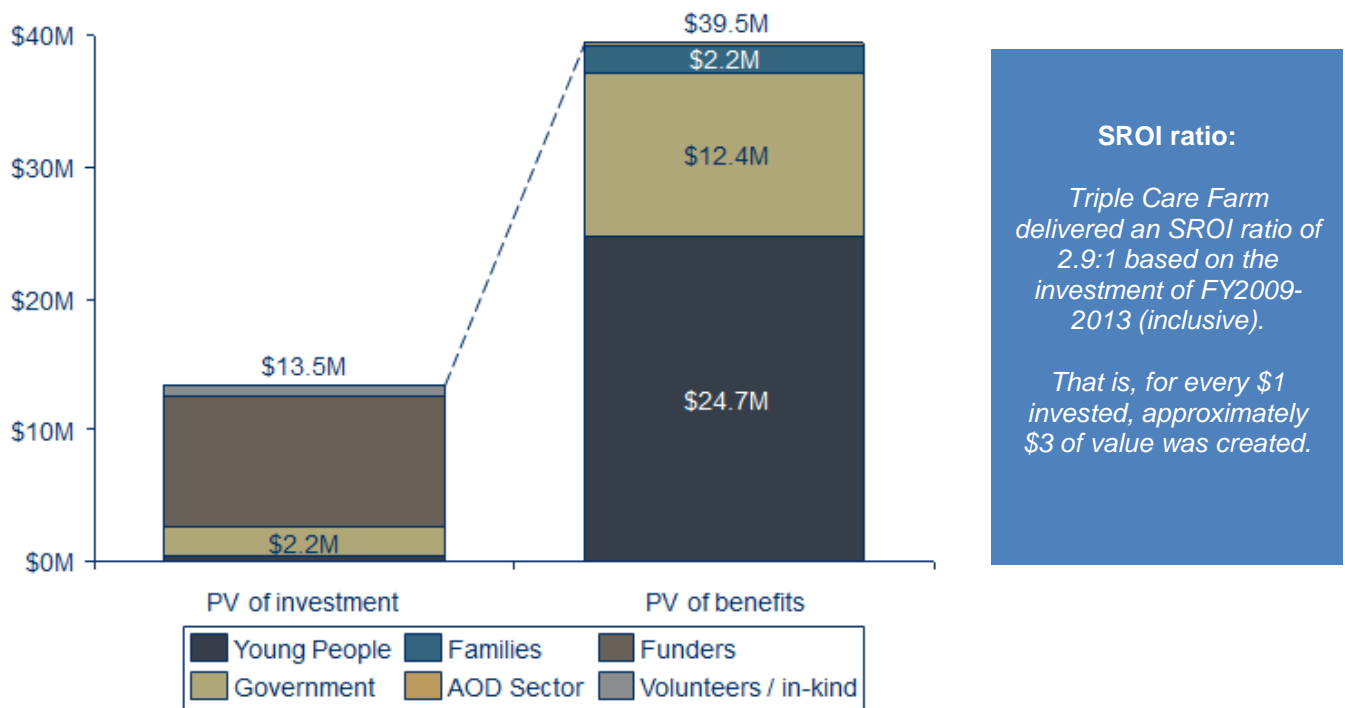


Figure A – Investment by and value created for each stakeholder group, FY09 - FY13

Insights

Triple Care Farm’s vision is to provide young people experiencing mental health and AOD issues with “a safe place for change” so that they can create “a life worth living”.

The evidence provided by this analysis attests that the program is achieving this goal and has helped to change, if not save the lives of hundreds of young Australians. By consulting with those who have participated over the last five years this analysis has demonstrated the significant long-term impact of the program.

Triple Care Farm’s success has been built upon the strategic and evidence based design of its program. Five critical elements of this design are:

- **A holistic model of care** – TCF recognises that to overcome AOD abuse and co-occurring mental illness, young people require care that can address the range of issues they face. By providing treatment that includes counselling, medical care, case management, educational / vocational training and living skills young people experience changes across a spectrum of life domains
- **An individualised approach** – Within this holistic treatment model TCF delivers a highly individualised program. Staff work with each young person to understand their specific needs and to help them progress towards achieving their own life goals. This approach empowers young people to take responsibility for their own lives, but gives them the support and tools they need to do so
- **On-going support** – TCF’s aftercare program provides essential on-going support to young people as they transition into their new lives. Going home can be a daunting time for young people who often find familiar circumstances and influences despite their new outlook and goals. Aftercare helps young people and their families navigate these challenges and realise long-term improvements in their lives
- **A commitment to continuous improvement** – TCF has demonstrated a willingness to critically review its activities and regularly assess itself against best-practice. As a result the program continues to evolve to create better outcomes for young people. TCF’s commitment to sharing this experience is contributing towards increasing both the number and effectiveness of youth based AOD services
- **Experienced and dedicated staff** – TCF’s success is a strong reflection of the quality of its management and staff. Young people and their families consistently highlighted the dedication and professionalism of the program’s staff as one of its core strengths. By investing in professional development, TCF has built a team that is highly experienced and possesses significant expertise of youth related AOD issues