

# IMPACT

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FOUNDATION | helping  
young  
people  
in crisis

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2026



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shaped by longstanding  
values



*\*Name changed and stock image used for privacy*

# Brick by brick: Amarlia builds a new life

When Amarlia\* sat down to fill out her first rental application, the anxiety became overwhelming. “This is pointless,” she said through tears. “No one will give a property to someone like me.” But weeks later, as she signed the lease on her very first apartment, she had a huge smile on her face. “Look at me,” she said. “I’m getting [it] done!”

Amarlia’s journey to that moment began when her Alcohol and Other Drugs Counsellor suggested she attend residential rehabilitation at Triple Care Farm, Walawaani. By then, she’d been using cannabis and benzodiazepines for several years, and had been diagnosed with complex trauma and anorexia. The emotional dysregulation and anxiety made it nearly impossible to maintain stability in daily life, relationships, or work. She knew she needed something to change. She just wasn’t sure where to start.

During her 12 weeks at Walawaani, Amarlia engaged deeply with individual counselling, group therapy, and skills-based workshops. She learned strategies for emotional regulation, assertiveness, relapse prevention, and stress management. But the work went beyond therapy sessions. In her final weeks, Amarlia began working with her Aftercare Worker on the practical elements that would make independent living possible. Together, they secured her an apartment and arranged driving lessons so she could complete her learner’s permit hours. They reconnected her with a previous employer and facilitated GP appointments to address health concerns. They even created a personal workbook together, consolidating everything Amarlia had learned – a tangible toolkit for the road ahead.

Today, Amarlia has her own place - the one she once thought impossible to secure. She works as wait staff at a local club and as a housekeeper at a nearby hotel. She passed her driving test and gained her provisional licence. She’s completing her Certificate IV in Mental Health.

Her journey hasn’t been perfectly linear. There was a relationship breakup. Family challenges. A brief lapse following a funeral. But Amarlia regrouped and recommitted to her recovery. She maintains regular contact with her Aftercare Worker.

**“I witnessed Amarlia go from a defensive young woman filled with self-doubt and anxiety to a much more confident, empowered woman with goals and plans for the future,”** her Aftercare Worker shares. **“Her independence has increased since she started living on her own. She is making thoughtful and intelligent choices about her health, finances, and responsibilities.”**

The foundations are solid now. The apartment. The jobs. The licence. The ongoing education. The support network. Amarlia is building a life - one decision, one achievement, one foundation at a time.

# 35 years of building hope

In November, we gathered at Government House to celebrate 35 years of Sir David Martin Foundation. Kindly hosted by our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, the evening held deep personal significance - it was the very home where Sir David and Lady Martin lived during his tenure as the 34th Governor of NSW.

The evening was a poignant reflection on a mission that began with a simple but powerful vision: to help young people in crisis. Being in that space provided a meaningful opportunity to honour Lady Martin's decades of dedicated leadership and to reflect on three and a half decades of unwavering commitment to the young people of Australia.

## A legacy of community

The atmosphere of the evening was defined by a profound generosity of spirit, a quality that has been the hallmark of this Foundation since 1990. The room was filled with the donors, supporters, and partners who have made this work possible. It was a powerful reminder that our longevity is not just a measure of time, but a testament to a collective belief that no young person should have to face their darkest moments alone.

This milestone is a tribute to the quiet legacy of supporters who have walked beside us for decades. It is your trust and shared compassion that have built the solid foundations of evidence and expertise we stand on today.



Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales with Foundation supporters

## Looking towards the future

While the evening was a time for reflection, it was also a moment to look forward. Thirty-five years of experience has given us both a proven track record and the stability to innovate. This strong foundation now enables us to enter a new phase of growth, strengthening our ability to support young people in an increasingly complex world.

None of this would be possible without the community that surrounds us. Whether you have been part of our journey since the beginning or have joined us more recently, your commitment is the reason this work continues.

Together, we will continue to build on these foundations to create lasting change for young people when they need us most.



The Governor with Martin family members and Foundation staff

## We value your voice

You may have seen our 2026 Supporter Survey arrive by mail or email. We'd be so grateful if you could share your thoughts with us. Your feedback is vital in helping us shape the next chapter of our mission.

Have questions or need a new link to the survey? Contact us at [admin@martinfoundation.org.au](mailto:admin@martinfoundation.org.au) or call 1300 951 009.



## From the CEO

This year marks a significant milestone as we celebrate 35 years of Sir David Martin Foundation. Our success over these decades has been built on collaborative partnerships between our supporters, service delivery partners, and the young people we serve. These solid foundations of trust and expertise are what allow us to innovate and expand our impact today.

The stories in this edition highlight how this collective effort translates into real-world change. We recently gathered at Government House to honour the 35-year history of the Foundation and the incredible dedication of Lady Martin, which has paved the way for the next phase of our growth. This spirit of sustained commitment is reflected throughout this edition. Our feature on long-term supporter Edie Cavanagh-Downs shows how 25 years of giving can create lasting change. On page 2, you can read about Amarlia, whose journey shows how recovery is built “brick by brick” when a young person is supported by the right programs to build a stable future.

We are also strengthening our impact through Youth Network, funding a team of Aftercare Workers who provide the essential support needed for long-term recovery. Alongside the program outcomes detailed in this newsletter, this measurable impact is backed by an independent evaluation by ACIL Allen, which confirmed that Aftercare is helping to turn young lives around.

As we move through 2026, we remain positioned for strategic growth and exciting developments ahead, all while staying true to the core values that have guided us since the beginning. Thank you for standing with us and for providing the vital support that makes this transformation possible for young people in crisis.

*Karen*

**Karen Elliff**  
CEO, Sir David Martin Foundation

# A day of high returns

We were honoured to participate in ICAP’s annual Charity Day, a global event where the company and its brokers donate 100 percent of one day’s revenue to charitable causes around the world.

The Sydney trading floor came alive with colour and costumes, from unicorns and Disney princesses to Harry Potter wizards and punk rockers - and a few familiar Australian celebrity faces. Between the fun and flair, brokers stayed firmly at their desks, working the phones and raising vital funds.

The atmosphere was buzzing as trades were made, phones rang constantly, and every transaction meant more support for charities like ours. Throughout the day, we had the chance to meet brokers, connect with the other charities involved and witness firsthand the incredible generosity of the financial community.

For more than 30 years, ICAP has donated an entire day’s global revenue to charitable causes, an extraordinary commitment that has supported countless organisations. This year’s Charity Day raised an impressive total of **£5,700,000** for charity worldwide.

We are incredibly grateful to ICAP and the staff who chose to support Sir David Martin Foundation. It was a privilege to be part of such an energetic, joyful and generous initiative.



Foundation staff at the ICAP Sydney office

# Our impact

Late last year we released our 2025 Annual Report, celebrating how your support offered young Australians in crisis safety, hope and opportunity. With the right support at the right time, young people reduced harm, rebuilt confidence and began to regain control of their lives. If you missed it, you can read the full report on our website at <https://martinfoundation.org.au/reports/>

Your generosity continues to create meaningful change for young Australians in crisis. During the reporting period, the programs we fund at Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm achieved remarkable outcomes.

Behind every number is a young person who found safety when they needed it most, rebuilt their confidence, and took meaningful steps towards a stable future. These outcomes show what's possible when young people receive the right support at the right time—a safe place to recover, skilled staff who understand their journey, and practical help to rebuild their lives. They represent critical harm reduction alongside practical pathways forward; young people securing housing, returning to education, and engaging in employment.

Your generosity makes these outcomes possible. Thank you for standing alongside young Australians as they reduce harm, regain control and move towards brighter futures.



**100%**

Reduction in chronic substance use



**73%**

Secure and stable housing



**70%**

Reduction in suicide attempts



**69%**

Engaged in employment



**53%**

Engaged with education



# Evaluation of the Youth Network

After three years of measuring the expansion of Aftercare and the Youth Network initiative, Sir David Martin Foundation has received the final evaluation report from independent evaluators ACIL Allen. This follows the interim report released in 2024, which included feedback from program staff. The final report builds on this, incorporating interviews with young people and their support networks.

Aftercare is an evidence-based, six-month wraparound support program that helps young people safely transition back into the community after completing residential treatment for drug and alcohol addiction. Youth Network enabled Aftercare to expand nationally in 2022, funding four Aftercare Workers across Mission Australia sites in Perth, Dubbo, Batemans Bay and Triple Care Farm in Robertson, responding to growing demand and unmet need among vulnerable young people.

The evaluation found that Aftercare produces positive outcomes in reducing substance use and alleviating psychological distress. Evaluators found that the program was successful at maintaining low substance dependency following residential rehabilitation, and for some participants, notably reducing psychological distress, with improvements sustained through participation in Aftercare. Young people who fully engage for six months experience the greatest benefits.

Participants and carers consistently praised the tailored support. One young person said, “They made me feel

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**They made me feel like I mattered, and they cared.**



like I mattered, and they cared,” while a carer highlighted the youth-focused environment as safer and more supportive than adult-focused programs.

Developing meaningful relationships with young people, families, and service providers is central to Aftercare. Workers invest time to build rapport, driving clients to appointments or simply spending quality time together. One worker reflected, “Time is helpful. It is the quality of time rather than just ticking a box. What maintains people in treatment is the relationships.”

Since the expansion of Aftercare to additional sites, 328 young people aged 12 to 25 have been supported. Of these participants, 10% identified as LGBTQ+, and 21% as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, reflecting the program’s reach to priority populations often underserved by mainstream services.

Independent analysis also demonstrated that investing in Aftercare is cost-effective, generating a positive return on investment and measurable long-term benefits for both young people and the wider community through improved health outcomes, strengthened wellbeing, and supported participation in community life. These health improvements translate into reduced demand on health services.

The evaluation also identified opportunities to strengthen the program further. Recommendations include enhancing cultural competency, expanding access to specialist clinical, health, and housing supports, deepening community connections, and partnering with First Nations organisations to provide culturally appropriate care.

We look forward to sharing more details from the report with our Youth Network funding partners this year. We are deeply grateful to Mission Australia, our service partner, and to our generous donors, whose support ensures young people across Australia can access life-changing care and build safer, healthier, and brighter futures.

Aftercare Worker Linda with a young person

# Compassion shapes recovery at David Martin Place

KT Harvey has spent many years walking alongside young people at the very beginning of their recovery journey. As the Clinical Lead at David Martin Place until their retirement last year, KT saw firsthand how significant and daunting that first step can be, and how the right care can make all the difference. David Martin Place is a 10-bed withdrawal unit for young people aged 16 to 24 and is often the first stage of Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm program. It is designed specifically for residents to get well in a safe, secure and encouraging environment.

"It's the only service of its kind in New South Wales," KT says. "Young people come here from across the state, and sometimes from interstate, because there simply isn't anything else like it."

Young people typically stay between seven and fourteen days, though some require longer support. Importantly, accessing David Martin Place does not mean committing to residential rehabilitation. "People can come for detox only," KT explains. "It allows them to take one step at a time, without pressure."

Care at David Martin Place extends far beyond medical withdrawal. Each person receives a comprehensive assessment alongside strong psychosocial and emotional support. Many arrive with complex mental health challenges alongside substance use. "Psychosocial support is a big part of what we do," KT says. "It gives young people space to start thinking about what they want for their future, often for the first time in a long while."

KT has commonly noticed a clear shift during a young person's stay. "Most arrive nervous and frightened. It's an enormous step. They often come in intoxicated because it can be really hard to walk through the door,"



“**It gives young people space to start thinking about what they want for their future, often for the first time in a long while.**”

KT says. "As withdrawal clears, you see them open up. They talk more and start to feel better. Watching that gradual change is really rewarding."

For those who feel overwhelmed by the idea of detox, KT focuses on reassurance. "They're not held here," KT explains. "They can leave if they choose. They can stay in contact with family and friends, have visitors, and are supported by nursing staff around the clock. Staff understand how scary it can feel being away from family, their phones and everything they know. It's about giving them the opportunity to know there is a way out."

The impact of this specialised care is made possible by the Foundation's supporters. "Every donation matters," KT reflects. "The money is so needed and so important in changing the lives of young people. This service is unique, and what might feel small can be enormously significant."

After many years of dedicated service, KT retired from David Martin Place in December 2025. We are deeply grateful for their leadership, guidance and the profound impact they have had on the lives of countless young people seeking a safe place to get well.

# A family tradition of care: meet Edie



Generosity often begins at home, passed down through shared values and the simple ways families show care. For Edie Cavanagh-Downs, this meant following her sister's lead. Introduced to Sir David Martin Foundation by her sister Margaret 25 years ago, Edie has been a committed supporter ever since.

When Edie joined Team180, our regular giving program, in 2011, she deepened her connection to the Foundation's work. As a long-standing supporter, Edie has taken a particular interest in Triple Care Farm, visiting on more than one occasion and seeing firsthand how the program helps young people rebuild their lives. Her ongoing commitment is a powerful reminder that sustained support can create lasting change - with impact that reaches well beyond the individual.

## How did you first hear about the Foundation?

"I was introduced through my sister," Edie recalls. "Margaret was part of a fundraising committee with Lady Martin, and I wanted to support the Foundation too, to help young people facing tough times."

## What is it about the Foundation's work that resonates with you?

"I wanted to help young people who, for a variety of reasons, need support during difficult periods in their lives. Providing accommodation, education and safety can set them up for a positive, independent future."

## Why do you think it is important to support young people in crisis?

"The world can be overwhelming to a young person experiencing homelessness, drug dependency, or major life changes.

The opportunity to stay at the programs the Foundation funds, such as David Martin Place withdrawal unit or Triple Care Farm must be a wonderful fulfilling experience for a young person to recover from the difficulties they have encountered."

## What would you say to others considering supporting the Foundation?

"I would encourage anyone to support Sir David Martin Foundation in its work to help young people in crisis. A helping hand in the early years can make a real and lasting difference to a young person's life."

**Through the generosity of supporters like Edie and her family, Sir David Martin Foundation continues to stand beside young people in crisis, offering safety, stability and the chance to build a life full of promise.**

## Join Team180

If you would like to ensure more young people can receive the lifesaving support of Aftercare during the critical first 180 days after leaving rehab, please become a regular giver like Edie and join Team180 today. To find out more, contact us on 1300 951 009 or [team180@martinfoundation.org.au](mailto:team180@martinfoundation.org.au)

We couldn't do this work without you.

To make a donation scan the code or visit: [martinfoundation.org.au](http://martinfoundation.org.au)



## Contact us

Call: 1300 951 009

Email: [admin@martinfoundation.org.au](mailto:admin@martinfoundation.org.au)

## To donate by direct deposit:

Account name: The Trustee for Sir David Martin Foundation

BSB: 032005 | Account: 148799

Reference: Your full name **or** donor ID