



Impact Report

Organisation name

Lower Lachlan Community Services Inc.

Your name and position

Lana Masterson

Please tell us a short story about someone who has benefited from this funding.

Our Down The Track Program in Lake Cargelligo has had some amazing results working with the disengaged youth in our community. A story that stands out for our team is working with one young person to support them in their education journey which has resulted in them gaining entry to study at University. Now for some this isn't a big deal, but for us this was a moment of change for future generations. This young person had completely dropped out of school when she was referred to the Down the Track Program. The TFN funding allowed us to work with this young person by mentoring her back into school, supporting her studies and assisting with scholarship applications, along with connecting her to support networks while she attended university. She is the first person in her family to finish school and to gain entry into university, she is currently studying Environmental Science and will continue into her 2nd year of study.

Without the TFN funding the Down The Track Program would have had no option but to end and this young person would have been left to fend for herself. She would not have had the mentoring, support or opportunities that our program was able to offer to her to ensure that she could work through the tough times to gain entry and continue into further education.

Please describe the impact that the specific TFN funding has had.

The TFN funding has impacted on many lives within our community, stretching from young people, families and the boarder community itself. We have seen barriers being broken down and opportunities for our young people being opened up. The funding has allowed Down The Track to start a social enterprise that is assisting our long term plan to becoming self sustainable, as well as providing real life experience for young people in a supported environment. It has also allowed us to increase our staff hours to full time, put one staff member through a traineeship, a young person through an internship and place 12 young people in employment in our local community.

The funding has also enabled our team to source further funding to purchase a much needed vehicle to transport our young people to training, activities, work experience and at times to essential appointments that families are unable to attend due to our isolation. This vehicle has enabled our team to now assist with these critical appointments that is essential in the young persons development.

The TFN funding has also allowed us to expand our networks and participant in youth research projects such as the YARRN Research project with the University of NSW. Having access to these networks and having the opportunity to participate in the project allows us to grow and learn from other disengaged youth services stretching across Australia, with over 20 years of experience and researches. Our program will come out of this 3 year research project with our own framework that will enable further funding and embed researcher skills locally.

Please provide a quantitative breakdown of how TFN funds have been used

INCOME:

Funding Network	\$91,801.00
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EXPENSES:

Wages and On-costs	\$70,068.00
Social Enterprise Costs - Tools/Equipment/Misc	\$ 8,550.00
Network/Research and Development	\$ 1,000.00
Remote Travel and Accommodation	\$ 2,800.00
Shearing School	\$ 2,600.00
Activity Costs	\$ 2,976.00
Employment Readiness	\$ 800.00
Training	\$ 1,200.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$89,994.00

UNDERSPEND	\$ 1,807.00
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Describe any ways the funding was used that differs from that described your original pitch

In our original application we initially wanted to purchase a fencing trailer with the pledges received from the pitch. Although when we walked away from the night we saw this as an opportunity to build on our existing program and to really take stock on the delivery of our program and tend to our ever expanding waiting list.

Our focus changed with regard to our social enterprise and we took stock and realised that we needed a vehicle to pull the trailer before purchasing it. Down The Track has worked tirelessly to secure funding for a vehicle for the program and as mentioned in a past question we successfully secured funds for a vehicle and now we will work towards finding a trailer that suits our needs. We also took this opportunity to test and try different ways to engage our community, agricultural businesses and also environmental avenues for our social enterprise. To date this has successful and broken down many barriers within our community.

We walked away with the decision to expended our intake to 22 active participants due to the increase in full time hours for our team and have been able to meet the needs of more young people and work continue to intensively work with them, along with coordinate case meetings and ensure our young people's changing needs are consistently being meet and clearer communication between family and service providers has been established and continues with our support.

How many people have been affected by programs or activities that were supported with TFN funding?

The TFN funding has affected around 80 young people, opening up opportunities and breaking down barriers that our community has never collectively seen before. With our social enterprise taking hold we have been able to work with over 300 community members and some examples of this has been:

Catering for over 100 farmers at a mental health night
Catering for over 150 people at our local Agricultural Show for afternoon tea
Working with our Local Land Care Group and Local Lands Services in activities and workshops
Carrying out work experience with Shearing contractors, local farmers and our young people volunteering at community events.

What measures did you use to assess the impact?

DTT has been fortunate to work with The Australian Centre for Social Innovation and through that collaboration we have worked with their team and the Growing Lachlan Project based locally to develop a measuring tool that allows us to have a number of review points and the chance to make changes to our delivery rather than at the end. The measurement tool looks like this:

LEARNING	TRANSFER/APPLY	IMPACT
Changes the learner's Improved outcomes Knowledge	Skills and/or attitude	Learnings that are applied because of the learner's work

Our program uses this measurement tool to continually review our delivery of our program and to ensure our young person's changing needs are met constantly, this also enables us to gauge community interactions and try new ways of engagement when one avenue isn't working. We also ensure our case notes are relevant and up to date on each participant. On entry to our program the young person completes an entry Survey at the start, a review point at a set date (date set based on individual participant) and an exit survey. These methods, case notes and surveys work in partnership with the research being undertaken through the YARRN Research project and gives our program good solid avenues in measurement of impact, along with hard evidence that showcases our program to other funding partners.

Describe three ways that your organisation has changed in the last 12 months since the event

1)The Down the Track program has had many opportunities opened up to us through participating in the Funding Network. Not only has this developed the confidence our team members, but it has also allowed skills development in pitching that has enabled our organising to secure further funding and networks to ensure Down The Track continues to deliver.

2)Our team being able to deliver more intensively for the disengaged youth in our community due to this funding enabling full time work to both our Coordinator and Youth Worker.

3) Enabling our program to test and try our social enterprise has secured not only current work but also work into the future and has also broadened our organisations scope in the social enterprise area.

Over the last 12 months, did you receive any additional financial support from anyone you met through TFN?

Yes

How much and from whom?

\$10,000 from UnLtd \$10,000 from Lake Cargelligo and Gerringong Rotary, also \$57,000 Vehicle grant from Prime Minister & Cabinet

Over the last 12 months, did you receive any goods in-kind and/or pro-bono services from anyone you met through TFN?

Yes, pro-bono services

What did you receive and from whom?

Baker and Mackenzie

How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives this year?

We wouldn't have been able to achieve our objectives without TFN funding

Has the TFN pitch coaching and mentoring helped you successfully secure funding from other sources you did not meet through TFN?

Yes

How much and from whom?

\$10,000 Rotary Grant and UnLtd \$10,000 \$57,000 Prime Minister and Cabinet (Discretionary Fund)

What were some of the other benefits of participating in TFN?

The pitch coaching has been extremely resourceful even after delivering the pitch on the night. It has given our Coordinator confidence to speak in front of large crowds, completely enhanced her story telling ability which has been helpful when speaking with potential funders and "painting a picture" (with words) about our work.

The experience completely pushed her outside her comfort zone and forced professional growth while promoting the Down The Track programs exposure to broader networks and communities.

It also showed us the benefits and power of telling a story, stories that happen around us in our community all the time, but some of us in our community aren't exposed to. That is until the story is told, some grow up with these youth and barriers are created although through raising awareness and telling a story it has broken down these barriers and it's has become evident that we have been brought together and this has been shown through local support and has enabled opportunity for our young people through individual offers of work experience and the support received from our community for our social enterprise.

Our team has leveraged off the skills learnt and the pitch has been shown broadly and is now a link shared across our newly built and continual networks. We have also leverage off this to take opportunity to build on our social enterprise by pitching why we are here and what we are trying to provide to our young people.

Do you have any other comments or feedback on the TFN experience or funding process?

'The TFN experience is something I will never forget. I remember feeling extremely nervous but once I met the TFN team and completed the pitch coaching i was instantly relaxed. It was an nurturing experience and has propelled the DTT Program to new levels'. Lana Masterson DTT Coordinator