



# Impact Report

**Organisation name**

The Bridge (trading name of Preston Neighbourhood House)

**Your name and position**

Chris Lombardo, Executive Officer

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

"Jenny" (not her real name), was a student from the second round of the TTT program. Jenny came into the program at 22, having never worked and coming from third generation unemployment in her family. Jenny had social and anxiety issues and an attitude that need to do a complete 360 if she was ever going to work cooperatively with others. During the first three weeks of the program, she had clashed with every other student and tested the boundaries with the trainer and Ed Support Worker repeatedly. Jenny was facing being asked to leave the program and we chose to give her one more chance. We withdrew her temporarily from the class and placed her for one week, one-on-one with the Ed Support Worker (whose salary is funded by the Pitch funds). She was given an opportunity to learn about social cues, what behaviour is inside and outside acceptable boundaries and what behaviour needed to be modelled to not only stay in the class but to achieve employment. The tactic worked and it entirely changed her life from that point. For the first time ever she had been called on this behaviour and then had the consequences explained to her in real terms. She said that throughout her schooling and at home she had been just told to shut-up or worse and this just made her behave worse. On that week she made a promise to herself and to us that genuinely wanted to change because her goal was to be the first person employed in her family. Jenny went on to be one of the stars of the program, continued to volunteer with us in the cafe and our community lunches whilst we assisted her with job search. Last Thursday she started her first full-time job as a call-centre operator for Centrelink. She is in training now and loving it. She has communicated to us all how grateful she is that we gave her a second-chance and in her words a "real chance at life". This is testament to why we knew that a support worker in this program was the real point of difference between the TTT and many other like-programs.

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

So far 28 young people have directly benefited from the opportunity to receive support from our Ed Support Worker both in the TTT and our Job Club. 71% have gained employment, 19% are still studying with us or have gone on to further education, 3% started in business for themselves and the others we remain in contact with to provide job-search support.

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

All of the TFN funds have been funded to cover the salary of an Education Support Worker to provide additional support to individual students as required. The salary covers two full rounds of TTT which is a year's worth of training. In such a challenging program, it is not possible for the trainer to manage all of this themselves. Without the additional help we would not be able to retain all the students for the 20 weeks of the program. This ESW also provides assistance in the cafe once the students commence their practical placement. Anxiety levels often peak once they commence in the cafe and the ESW role is pivotal to providing the reassurance required to ensure success.

**Describe any ways the funding was used that differs from that described your original pitch**

There has been no change.

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

The direct beneficiaries are the 28 students. To count in-direct beneficiaries is not possible. They are far-reaching. All the staff, volunteers and students of the Bridge have become very invested in the TTT program because it is a new and innovative direction for the Bridge. We have all grown by watching and being a part of the successful journey of the TTT students. In particular the Moon Rabbit staff say that they have all been changed for the better by knowing they are directly facilitating positive change for these vulnerable people. The families of the students have been brought to tears as they have watched positive transformations that they did not think possible. Cafe customers, love being a part of it and encourage the trainees all the time. Local businesses have benefited by being part of the skill development program and local Council have been behind us all the way. For all of these reasons, I cannot give you an exact number but it would conservatively be in excess of 500 people.

**What measures did you use to assess the impact?**

This is an interesting question. Everyone like to measure impact in percentages of jobs and further education. We measure success by being able to track the positive and lasting change in the students. When a person has gone from being paralyzed by anxiety and not getting out of pajamas for weeks at a time, to not only sticking out a 20 week training program but gaining enough skills to volunteer at Lentil as Anything four days a week. That is a huge impact on their life. However, it's not a job and it's not further education. It has however turned that persons life around and they now have a reason to get out of bed in the morning. We measure impact by knowing our students very well and seeing the personal growth, no matter how small. We would love to be able to get experts to assist us with actually being able to quantify this impact.

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

We have matured as an organisation because the journey with the Pitch taught us that other people can see our value and like sharing in the successes of others.

We have learnt that we have a real story to tell, that people not only want to hear but that are interested in funding also.

We have gained respect and recognition within the Darebin community because we used the confidence that we gained and turned it into good news stories and spread the word.

We told our story in a different way and were donated a \$40K cafe makeover by local developers.

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

No

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

Other

**What did you receive and from whom?**

I didn't meet them at TFN but the next day as a result of the confidence gained the night before, I approached local developers and told them our story. This precipitated the \$40K makeover of the cafe. I would never have had the confidence to do that had it not been for the Pitch.

**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?**

McGrath Real Estate \$10,000, Northway Honda \$5000

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

The networking, professional development, self-confidence and validation both as a person and an organisation is invaluable. The TFN involvement has been the most positive, life-changing experience for me personally in my 18 years working in community.

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

The experience is fabulous. The only difficulty post-pitch is being able to take up offers of some of the pro-bono business support. We are a notoriously time-poor sector as we often take on too much with too little staff. Unfortunately this can be counterproductive to being able to receive assistance as time will not permit it. I don't know the answer to this, it is just an issue. I was offered follow up mentoring after the pitch and was asked to forward a resume. I haven't has one in years and had just did not get around to doing one so I didn't pursue it. Sounds silly but its a reality. My only other comment is THANKYOU. Keep up the great work, TFN is unique and priceless.

