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LighthouseProject
GREATER SHEPPARTON

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project: Social Return on Investment FY2024-2026

Prepared for: Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project
Date: 30 September 2026



Acknowledgment of Country

Social Ventures Australia acknowledges and pays respect to the past and present traditional custodians and elders of this country on which we work.

‘After the Rains’ by Richard Seden for Saltwater People 2024

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Project acknowledgements

The authors of this report acknowledge and pay respects to the past and present traditional Custodians and Elders of the country on which we work.

Thank you to every individual we interviewed as a part of this project. Your time, candour, and unique perspectives were invaluable to this research.

And thank you to all the staff and volunteers involved in the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project. Your work is what makes the changes described in this report possible.

This report has been prepared by Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Consulting

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We influence systems to deliver better social outcomes for people by learning about what works in communities, helping organisations be more effective, sharing our perspectives and advocating for change.

SVA Consulting is Australia's leading not-for-profit consultancy. We focus solely on social impact and work with partners to increase their capacity to create positive change. Thanks to more than 15 years of working with not-for-profits, government and funders, we have developed a deep understanding of the sector and 'what works'.

Our team is passionate about what they do and use their diverse experience to work together to solve Australia's most pressing challenges.

This report has been authored by SVA Consulting by Simon Faivel (a level 3 Advanced Social Value & SROI Practitioner) and Catherine Kenyon.

For more information contact us: consulting@socialventures.org.au

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Executive Summary

The Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project (Lighthouse) engaged Social Ventures Australia Consulting (SVA Consulting) to evaluate the impact of the organisation's activities between July 2023 and June 2026. The Social Value and Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology was used for this evaluation.

This evaluation was conducted as part of Lighthouse's funding agreement with the Victorian Government's Department of Education (DE).

About Lighthouse

Lighthouse is a place-based, collective impact initiative that works to improve the outcomes of young people in the Greater Shepparton community from conception through to career (0-24). Established in 2014, Lighthouse partners across the community to build capability and prevent issues such as social isolation, systemic disadvantage and poor school engagement.

Focusing on best-practice, data-led ideas and community engagement and partnership, Lighthouse delivers programs and initiatives that focus on prevention and early intervention to drive and embed sustainable change in the community, while also operating as a backbone organisation in Shepparton.

Key findings

- Independent evaluations and stakeholder consultations establish the Lighthouse as the region's sole place-based collective impact backbone organisation and an indispensable community safety net.
- Lighthouse operates with unique agility outside rigid departmental silos, bridging the gap between marginalised residents and institutional services, while rapidly piloting non-traditional interventions to address community need.
- Consultations highlight that without Lighthouse's backbone co-ordination, local service delivery would lack critical co-ordination, leaving some programs unmonitored and high-needs cohorts unsupported. Furthermore, Lighthouse's pivotal role in leading emergency responses during regional crises, such as the COVID-19 lockdowns and October 2022 floods via GV Cares, proved its ability to mobilise hundreds of volunteers and deliver thousands of instances of food relief within hours, permanently embedding Lighthouse as a trusted community partner throughout the period of this evaluation.
- Across surveys and qualitative feedback, Lighthouse's direct programs deliver profound early-intervention and developmental benefits for children, youth, and parents. Soft-entry spaces like the Family Haven, OLLY, and Pit Stop cultivate a foundational sense of feeling loved, valued, and emotionally safe, which stakeholders identify as an essential precondition before disengaged youth can re-engage in education.
- Initiatives providing material basics such as over 700 refurbished laptops and phones via Laptops with Love, 296 Second Spin bicycles and scooter, and daily school meals, directly dismantle digital and economic barriers to educational participation, as well as over $440k worth of material donations provided such as clothes, nappies, car seats and food hampers. Through hands-on trade skills at Pit Stop and reading mentorship through Book Buddies, young people gain practical confidence and career aspirations, while early childhood programs at the Family Haven and Community Hubs enhance parental capability and address early developmental delays.

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- The evaluation findings demonstrate that Lighthouse has built a national reputation for embedding authentic community voice and pioneering data-driven decision-making. Cornerstone deep-listening consultations, such as the 1000 Conversations project, ensure that local strategies are designed with the community rather than imposed upon them. Similarly, in partnership with Seer Data, Communities for Children and Best Start, Lighthouse's established the State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report digital dashboard, turning static documents into a live, auto-updating database structured around the ARACY Nest Outcomes Framework. Combining population metrics with qualitative community stories enables local providers to justify funding, target service gaps, and drive national policy advocacy through organisations like PLACE and federal data access reforms.
- Lighthouse's backbone structure yields substantial financial and social leverage across the region. Building on 10 years of core Department of Education funding, Lighthouse leveraged over $2m in additional funding and attracted more than $246,000 in volunteer labour value over the three-year period. By co-ordinating a network of approximately 90 active volunteers and 274 partner organisations, Lighthouse reduces service duplication, facilitates soft-entry referral pathways, and secures major multi-agency investments such as the $2.5m Goulburn Region Open Dialogue Connect (GRODC) initiative, addressing youth mental health. Strategic roadmap evaluations conclude that securing multi-year backbone funding is essential to future-proofing the Lighthouse's social infrastructure and achieving lasting generational change in Greater Shepparton.

Recommendations and considerations

This SROI analysis has revealed six recommendations to guide the future evolution, sustainability, and impact of Lighthouse. The recommendations cut across both strategic and operational considerations.

1. **Clarify the backbone role and transition programs to co-delivery**. This is to maintain a clear boundary between Lighthouse's core function as a lean, systems-level "backbone" integrator and its direct service delivery
2. **Establish shared outcomes frameworks**. Lighthouse has a role to play to lead this across the sector
3. **Continue to build long-term financial sustainability and investment readiness**. This can be achieved by continuing to embed longer term funding agreements and towards trust-based philanthropy
4. **Deepen community ownership**. This is a strength of Lighthouse and should continue with further involvement of those with lived experience by expanding (for example) youth leadership
5. **Establish the "Lighthouse Model" as a leader for place-based systems change.** This could be achieved in partnership with a research agency to document Lighthouse's methodology and lead policy advocacy to secure long-term funding and influence broader sector reform, establishing Lighthouse as a nationally recognised benchmark and policy leader for place-based systems change
6. **Continue to strengthen nuanced value measurement and shared data systems**. This could include ongoing monitoring through the State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report dashboard (anchored to the ARACY Nest Framework) to provide auto-updating, shared population data for community-wide planning and partner grant applications.

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Snapshot of activities and impact

Over the three years from July 2023 to June 2026, Lighthouse had a broad impact and reach across its programs and the community. A snapshot of key activities and outcomes are set out below:

Social Return on Investment

Lighthouse's activities have delivered an SROI ratio of **3.8:1** based on the investment and operations in the three-year period between July 2023 and June 2026.

That is, for every **$1** of cash invested, approximately **$3.80** of social and economic value was created.

Social value creation

$20.6m
Total Social Value generated

$5.46m
Total Investment

3.8:1
SROI Ratio

$2.7m
value for young people reengaging with school and improving their education outcomes

$1.3m
through reduced justice interactions for young people

$6.3m
increased employment for both young people and families/adults

$7.7m
in reduced government costs

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Key activities

$2m+, or 40%

of funding was generated from sources outside of state government

$250,000+

of value was leveraged through pro-bono and in-kind support through partnerships

4,785

young people engaged in Lighthouse programs

678

families were supported through **Family Haven**

1,840

referrals were made to other services by the Lighthouse, including **279** early intervention and prevention referrals for children attending **Family Haven**

21,500+

material aid items were provided to families at the **Family Haven**, with a total value of **over $290,000**

$153,000

worth of donations provided through the **GIVIT program**

274

partnerships

6,700+

volunteer hours given, contributing **$247k** of value to the community

49

schools supported in the region, including primary and secondary schools, secondary flexible education settings, and specialist school

Plus, community consultations and reporting initiatives, including a digital dashboard for the State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report and the **1000** Conversations

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1. Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project

As a place-based, collective impact organisation, Lighthouse is dedicated to improving the lives of the children, young people and families of Greater Shepparton, who experience some of the lowest educational and health and wellbeing outcomes in Victoria.

Greater Shepparton

With a population of around 70,000[1], Greater Shepparton is the fifth-largest regional centre in Victoria, located approximately two hours north of Melbourne along the Goulburn River. The region is renowned for its agriculture, producing 25% of Victoria's total agricultural output, and includes the main city of Shepparton alongside key regional towns Mooroopna and Tatura.

The area is culturally diverse, with over 17% of residents born overseas, including nearly 5% of the population originating from Southern and Central Asia, and the population representing more than 30 nationalities and speaking over 50 languages.

Greater Shepparton is located on the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta people, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people making up 4% of the local population, rising to 7% in suburbs such as Mooroopna, compared to 1% across the state of Victoria.

Educational and socio-economic outcomes in the region sit behind state averages, with early childhood developmental outcomes a growing area of concern. As of 2021, 33% of people in Shepparton had completed year 12 or equivalent, almost 20% less than the Victorian average of 49%[2].

The 2024 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) revealed that 34% of children starting school in Greater Shepparton are developmentally vulnerable in at least one domain and 20% are vulnerable in two or more domains, compared to 22% and 12% statewide[3]. This is an increase from the 2021 results, where the number of children developmentally vulnerable in one domain, or two or more, were 25% and 14% respectively. These results were driven by increases in vulnerability across social competence and emotional maturity. Greater Shepparton now has the second highest rate out of 79 Local Government Areas (LGAs) for children with two or more vulnerabilities, and fifth highest for those with one or more. Similarly, the region ranks 9th of 79 LGAs for relative socio-economic disadvantage[4] and 17th most disadvantaged out of the 79 LGAs across Victoria for education and occupation (2021 SEIFA)[5].

It is within this context that Lighthouse works to improve the lives of young people in the Greater Shepparton community, address and prevent systemic disadvantage, social isolation and poor school engagement.

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Region summary: Greater Shepparton
2 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Region summary: Greater Shepparton; Census of Population and Housing, 2021 HSCP Highest Year of School Completed by STATE, TableBuilder
3 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2024: Data by Local Government Area, 2009–2024, Australian Government Department of Education. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.aedc.gov.au/
4 Australian Early Development Census. (2024): Data by Local Government Area, 2009–2024 [Data file]. Australian Government Department of Education. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.aedc.gov.au/
5 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA): Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) [Data set]. ABS Data Explorer. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.abs.gov.au/

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About Lighthouse

Lighthouse was established in 2014 as a place-based, collective impact organisation in regional Victoria. Its core mission is to act as an independent backbone organisation that drives collective action, builds capacity, and co-ordinates community resources to address complex, multi-faceted disadvantage. Lighthouse's overarching purpose is to build social infrastructure that ensures all children, young people, and families in Greater Shepparton have the support and resources needed to reach their full potential and contribute to the region's long-term prosperity.

Lighthouse works with children and young people across all life stages from conception to career (ages 0 - 24+), alongside their parents, carers, and surrounding support networks. The organisation specifically focuses on cohorts experiencing vulnerability, intergenerational disadvantage, or economic and digital exclusion.

Rather than working in isolation, Lighthouse acts as a central co-ordinator for the broader community ecosystem, mobilising a network of approximately 90 active volunteers (the "Lighthouse Crew") and collaborating with 274 partner organisations, including primary and secondary schools, local businesses, health providers, government departments, and philanthropic foundations.

Lighthouse structures its work around four primary life-stage objectives:

0 - 5 years	6 - 11 years	12 - 17 years	15 - 24+ years
Healthy and ready for school	Learning and thriving in primary school	Learning and thriving in secondary school	Transitioning successfully to work or further study

Through these focus areas, Lighthouse aims to achieve systemic, generational change, including lifting local Year 12 completion rates toward the Victorian state average, reducing early childhood developmental vulnerabilities, meeting immediate material and basic needs, and ensuring disengaged youth re-connect with learning and employment pathways.

Lighthouse operates by:

- **Listening deeply, using empathy and valuing relationships**: Lighthouse operates on the principle of doing things "with people, not to them". Through cornerstone listening projects like 1000 Conversations, Lighthouse regularly gathers lived experience from thousands of residents across diverse demographics to ensure authentic community voice directly shapes local strategy.
- **Using data and strategy to drive change:** By pairing lived experience with quantitative metrics, Lighthouse powers evidence-informed decisions. Its digital State of Greater Shepparton's Children dashboard, built with Seer Data and aligned to the ARACY Nest Framework, delivers live regional data that pinpoints service gaps, validates funding needs, and informs place-based solutions.
- **Responding to community need, collective action and being accountable**: Lighthouse delivers and facilitates soft-entry, place-based initiatives such as:
  - Family Haven: early childhood and parent support
  - Pit Stop: hands-on trade re-engagement
  - OLLY: after-school youth drop-in
  - Community Hubs: CALD family engagement
  - Laptops with Love: a digital inclusion initiative

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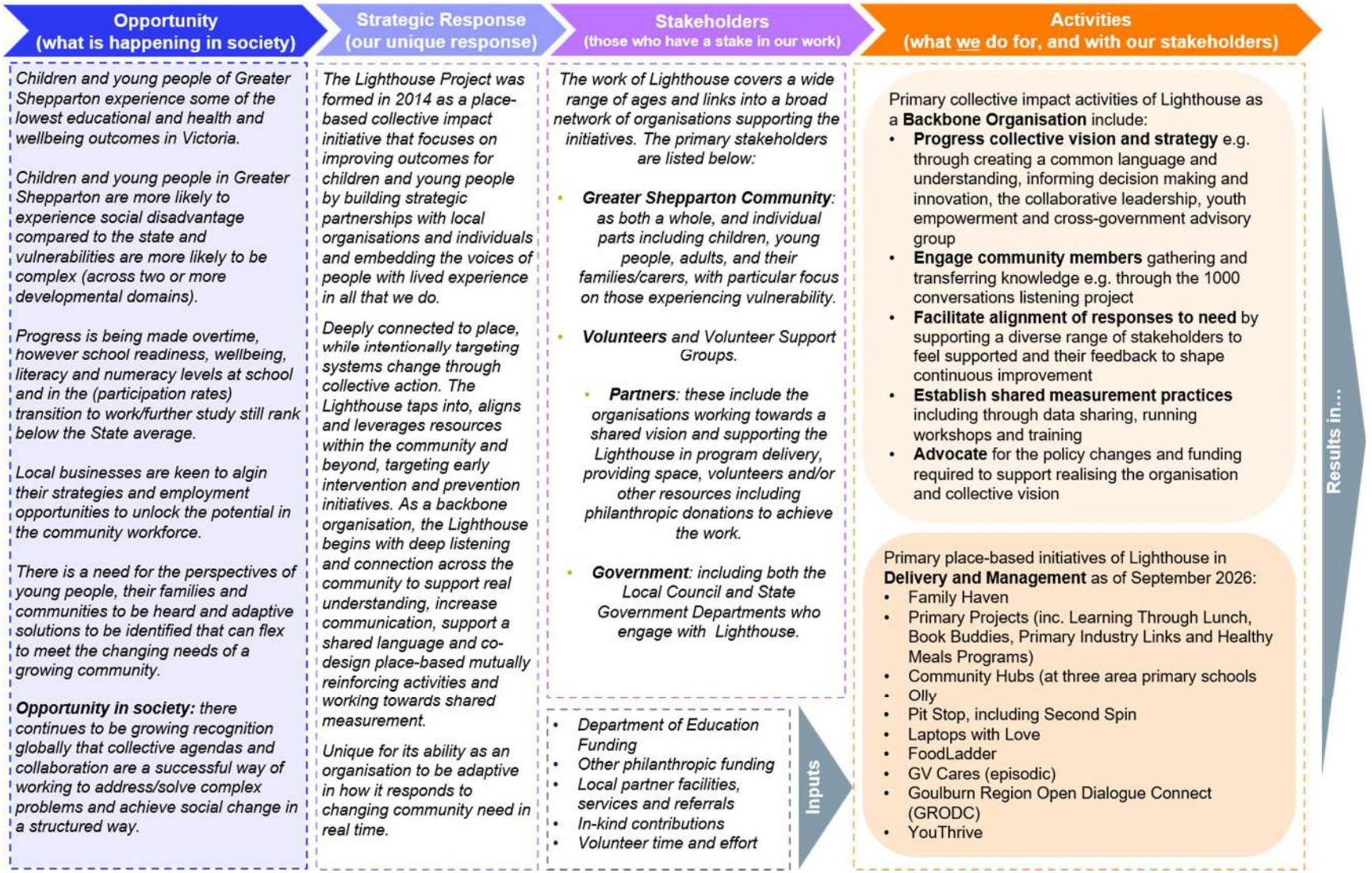
- Primary projects: focused on early career aspiration building.

Lighthouse also facilitates complex multi-agency initiatives, such as serving as the funded backbone for the GRODC youth mental health framework. At the same time, Lighthouse maintains the agility to rapidly scale up volunteer responses during regional emergencies like floods or lockdowns.

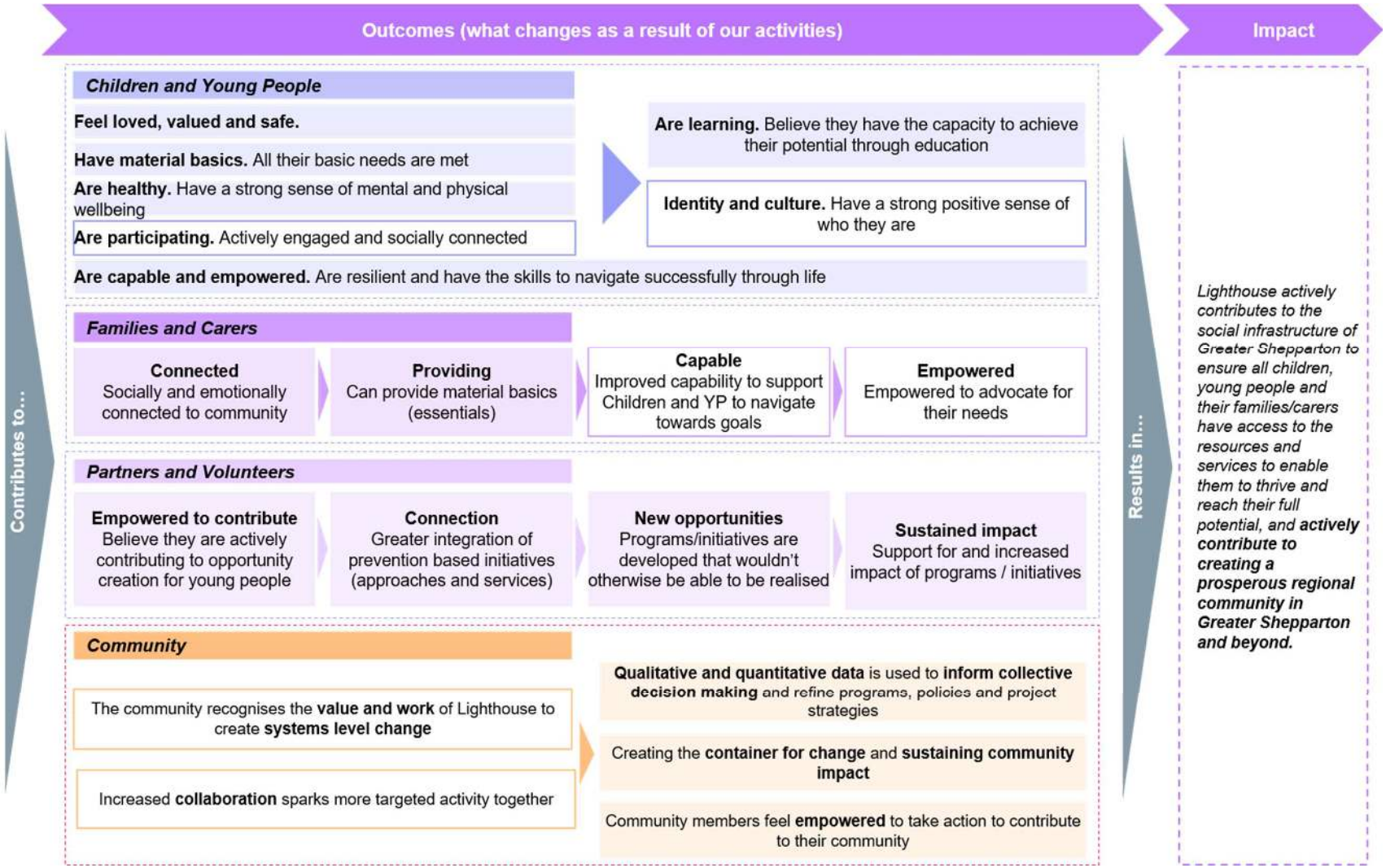
The following two pages outline the Lighthouse Theory of Change, which has been developed over many years, and has provided a foundation for the outcomes that have been measured and valued as a part of this SROI analysis.

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Lighthouse Theory of Change



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Shaded outcomes have been valued in this Social Return on Investment analysis in accordance with the principles of materiality and the chain of outcomes. Additional material outcomes were identified and valued for Families and Carers, and for Government. See Outcomes and Findings section for details.

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Program alignment with the Theory of Change

Lighthouse offers a suite of place-based programs and nested initiatives that spans all developmental stages, from conception or birth, through to young people transitioning into further work or study. An overview of Lighthouse programs and initiatives, their activities and the age groups they work with, is set out in Appendix D: Lighthouse Programs. All programs align to the Lighthouse Theory of Change.

For children and young people, the Theory of Change outcomes are aligned to the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth's (ARACY) *The Nest*[6], an evidenced based wellbeing framework which identifies six key outcomes for children and young people aged 0 to 24. The Lighthouse Theory of Change comprises the six ARACY Nest Outcomes, plus an additional outcome specific to Lighthouse: Are Empowered and Capable.

The table below illustrates the primary outcomes experienced by children and young people and how each of the initiatives support them. Alignment with the Theory of Change outcomes has been assessed in accordance with outcomes survey data completed by young people and families where possible.

Program	Feel loved	Have material basics	Are healthy	Are participa-ting	Are learning	Culture and Identity	Are capable
Family Haven 2020–current	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Hubs 2021–current	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PitStop 2021–current	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
OLLY 2017–current	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Primary Projects 2021–current	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Laptops with love 2021–current		X			X		X
Goulburn Region Open Dialogue Connect (GRODC) 2026–current			X	X			
Food Ladder 2026–Current		X	X		X		
Backbone role	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Through its backbone role, Lighthouse builds deep community connections and understanding through initiatives such as 1000 Conversations and Slice and Say, and the data collected through the State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report. Insights captured directly inform and shape Lighthouse's services, enabling the organisation to respond to the needs of the community and young people and support the outcomes set out in its Theory of Change.

This backbone work is complemented by initiatives such as Laptops with Love, which provides refurbished laptops and phones to students of all ages and supports community members, for example teaching mothers participating in English-language programs to use computers and complete forms.

6 Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. (n.d.). The Nest Wellbeing Framework. ARACY. Accessed September 14, 2026. https://www.aracy.org.au/

2. The Social Return on Investment Analysis

Purpose of this analysis

SVA Consulting was engaged by the Lighthouse in August 2026 to evaluate the impact and social return on investment generated by the organisation, its programs and initiatives in the three-year period between July 2023 and June 2026.

This evaluation was conducted as part of Lighthouse's funding agreement with the Victorian Government's Department of Education (DE) for the four years to June 2027.

It is important to note that this period follows significant changes experienced in the Greater Shepparton community, following the floods of October 2022 and the community lockdowns associated with Covid-19.

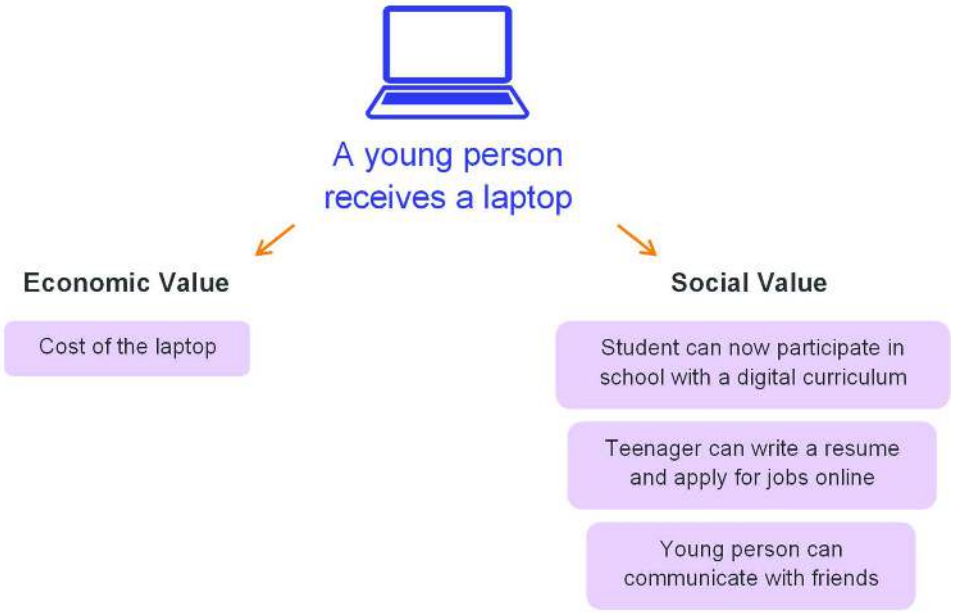
Further details about the method used are in Appendix B: Project methodology.

Alignment with Department of Education Shepparton Education Plan

The activities of Lighthouse are aligned with the outcomes identified in the Shepparton Education Plan. Across Early years, Primary years, Secondary years and Tertiary education and skills, Lighthouse contributes to helping young people get the best possible start in life. In reviewing the organisation, this evaluation demonstrates how Lighthouse has contributed towards the targeted outcomes for this period.

Understanding social value

Social value refers to the broader societal benefit of a program or organisation, beyond the economic value. It considers the changes that truly matter to the people and communities that experience them in their lives, like increased confidence or connection in the community. For example, if a young person were to receive a laptop, the benefits and changes they experience in their lives go beyond the economic cost of the device.



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These changes cannot be valued using traditional accounting or cost-benefit analyses, and so the Social Value and Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology is applied. Guided by Social Value International, this is an internationally recognised, principles-based approach that allows us to understand, measure and assign a value to the broader social, economic, and systemic impacts of an organisation's work.

The methodology asks:

- **Who** changes as a result of our activities?
- **How** do they change?
- **How do we prove** that this change happened?
- **Which changes matter most** to the people experiencing them?
- **Is it all down to us?** I.e., what other factors that might have helped create the changes

The approach is centred around the Principles of Social Value, which are a combination of accounting principles for measurement, and management principles for decision-making. Central to the principles is the explicit focus on making sure that the people who experience changes are informing how those changes are defined, measured, valued, and managed.

The Principles of Social Value



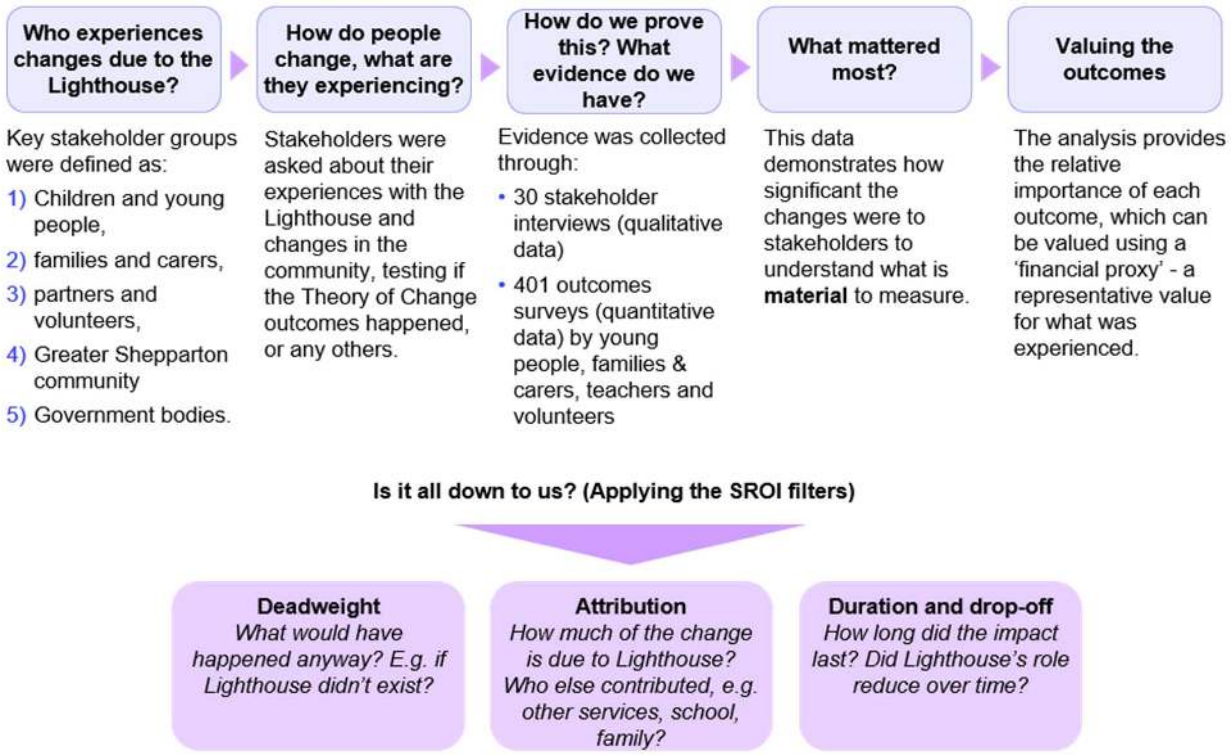
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SVA Consulting and Social Value and SROI analyses and reports

SVA is the premier provider of social value and SROI analysis in Australia. We have more than 20 years of unparalleled experience providing SROI analyses and reports for clients spanning the social, private, public and philanthropic sectors and delivering accredited training courses.

As opinion leaders in the social value and SROI space, our work over the last 20 years has raised the profile of outcomes-based measurement across the Australian and New Zealand for-purpose sector. There are hundreds of our reports available publicly. In 2023, we worked with Lighthouse to produce the 2023 Social Value report. This analysis and report builds off that foundation.

Our approach to this analysis



Valuing change

As a place-based collective impact backbone organisation, attributing change and value is complex. In keeping with the third principle of social value, 'valuing things that matter', this evaluation has considered the impact of the whole organisation (Lighthouse) rather than just individual programs or initiatives.

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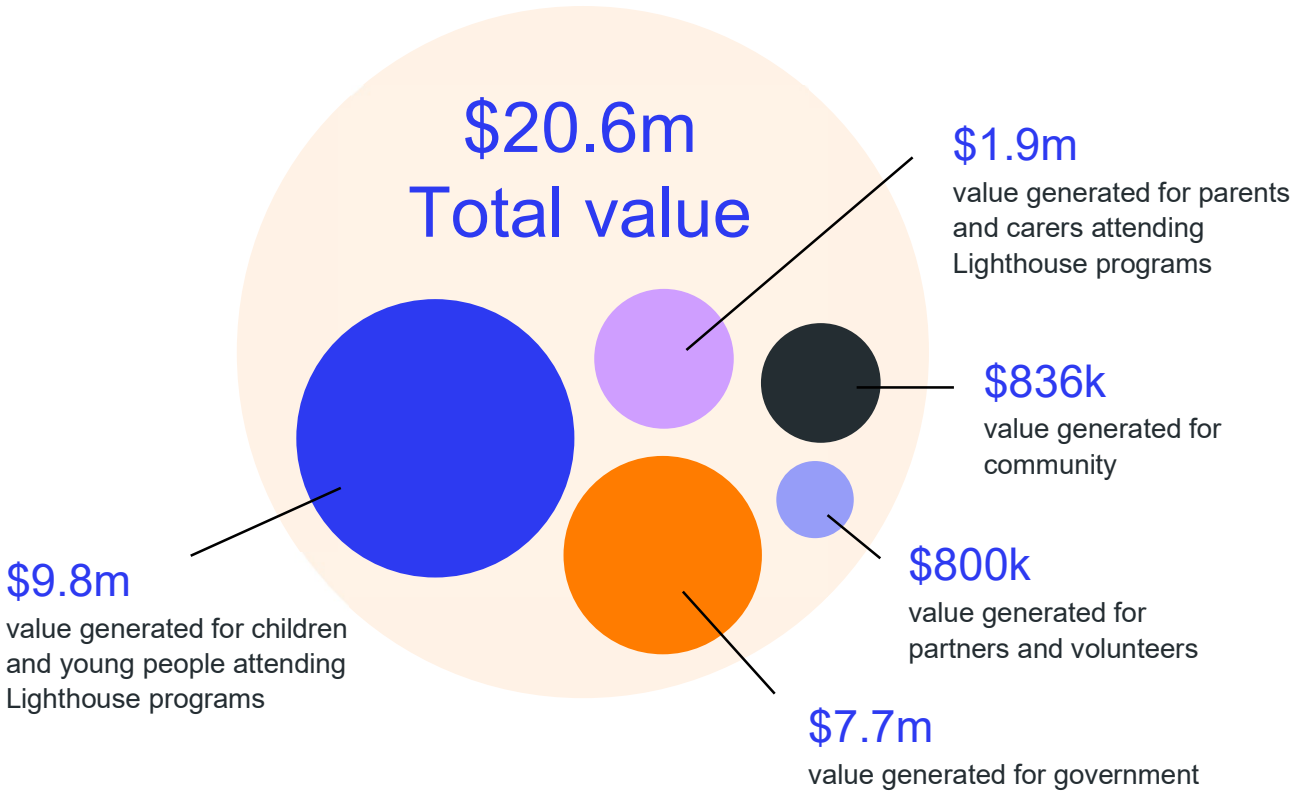
3. Lighthouse's impact: Outcomes and Findings

Overview

This evaluation demonstrates how Lighthouse's role as a place-based, collective impact backbone organisation, and their work to alleviate and prevent disadvantage, creates significant, interconnected social and economic value across the Greater Shepparton region.

The evaluation considered key changes experienced by children, families, volunteers and partners, and the broader Greater Shepparton community, in addition to the impact generated for government agencies. For more information about Lighthouse's partners, see Appendix E: Lighthouse Partners.

Over the 3 years (July 2023 to June 2026), a total of $20.6 million* in social and economic value was generated across the five stakeholder groups.



The outcomes generated for each group are set out in the following sections, together with the estimated social value generated by stakeholder and by outcome. For full details of the outcome for each stakeholder, see the Impact Map.

Please note an annual real discount rate of 7% has been applied to the total social value in keeping with best practice, resulting in a total net present value of **$20.6 million.** For further information about the judgements made to arrive at these values, please see the detail in Appendix A: Impact Map for each stakeholder.

** The sum of the stakeholder values may not equal the total value due to rounding and the discount rate being applied to the total value only. This logic applies throughout this section.*

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3.1. For children and young people

Between July 2023 and June 2026, Lighthouse generated $9.8m of social value for children and young people

$9.8m generated for children and young people attending Lighthouse programs

Key activities and outputs

- 633 laptops were provided to young people
- 640 young people engaged with the OLLY and Pitstop
- 514 children regularly attended the Family Haven
- 277 bikes and 19 scooters were provided to young people
- 279 early intervention referrals were made
- 2,687 primary students participated in Primary Projects

The outcomes experienced by children and young people are described below.

Capable and Empowered: Are resilient and have the skills to navigate successfully through life

$5.1m social value generated

Through hands-on learning, mentoring relationships and building trusted adult relationships, children and young people develop the self-confidence, skills, and enthusiasm required to navigate life's challenges. Programs including Primary Projects, Pit Stop and OLLY provide children and young people with exposure to jobs as a means of building career aspiration, as well as practical and professional skills in areas such as woodwork, welding and carpentry.

Through Primary Projects, children are engaged early, rather than waiting until secondary school to discuss careers. Primary Industry Tours introduce Grade 5 and Grade 6 students to local businesses and industries early. Through Lighthouse's partnership with GoTAFE, young people are supported to do walk-throughs and experience practical trades such as hairdressing, mechanics and hospitality, Tours act as an engagement incentive, helping students develop confidence, social skills with adults, and a tangible connection between school learning and future employment.

Across the 179 outcomes surveys completed by young people, 85% of regular Pit Stop and OLLY participants report feeling excited and ambitious about work, 84% report gaining increased skills to navigate life, and 80% report improved self-confidence in advocating for their needs.

Developing skills and capabilities – particularly in relation to practical trade capabilities such as welding, woodwork, small engine repair, and tool use through Pit Stop – was identified as the number one most significant positive change by 36% of the young people surveyed. These practical accomplishments allow disengaged youth to shift their self-perception from being feeling sidelined to recognising they possess and continuing to build the tools and support to build their own positive pathways.

Community partners spoke of the role of programs like Pit Stop play in building the confidence of young people who may not be academically focused, but who receive little exposure or encouragement to pursue trades through traditional school programs. For those young people, programs such as Pit Stop expose young people to alternative opportunities to thrive, outside of traditional academic achievement.

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"Getting the hands on experience, it's something I never thought I would do. Self confidence has grown a lot."

The programs provide an opportunity to develop practical skills and to work as apprentices, and to pursue a career that is higher paid and requires greater skills than they may otherwise have considered. Similarly, stakeholders spoke of the power of industry tours to provide young people with the opportunity to experience environments they may not have considered or felt confident to enquire about by "*demystifying the fear about going to the big institutions*".

Young people living at the Youth Foyer also volunteer to read to primary school children, demonstrating a 'full circle' of support.

Are healthy: Have a strong sense of mental and physical wellbeing

$1.1m social value generated

Lighthouse initiatives actively support children's physical and mental wellbeing by embedding healthy routines, nutritious food, and soft-entry health connections into daily programming.

Survey data amongst young people indicate that 73% of participating young people report improved health habits, directly attributing this to access to fruit, and hot, nutritious meals provided at OLLY, school meals programs, Family Haven, through Mooroopna Park Primary School and through Food Ladder.

"My fitness and eating habits. The walk from school to OLLY and the all the fruit and other healthy snacks. Along with feeling comfortable in a space to be myself."

Lighthouse staff and volunteers serve as positive role models, with 88% of young people reporting they now have a safe, trusted adult role model to talk to as a result of attending the program, helping to reduce anxiety and offer supportive relationships outside of a structured school environment. Several young people also noted improvements to their "*mental health*" was the most significant change they had experienced since participating in the program.

When specialised care is required, Lighthouse facilitates seamless, non-stigmatising referrals to allied health providers, paediatricians, NDIS plan managers, and youth mental health services through Lighthouse's key parter role in the Goulburn Region Open Dialogue Connect (GRODC) initiative.

Are learning: Believe they have the capacity to achieve their potential through education

$2.7m social value generated

Lighthouse successfully re-engages disengaged students and strengthens academic attendance by linking education to practical, real-world learning and career pathways.

Hands-on initiatives such as Pit Stop, Primary Industry Links, and Food Ladder agri-tech greenhouses serve as an attendance barter, motivating Tier 2 and Tier 3 at-risk students to attend school consistently. School leaders report noticeable drops in behavioural incidents and suspensions among participating students, alongside improved classroom concentration and enthusiasm for learning.

"I have seen students completely re-engage with learning. This develops confidence, which in turn improves self-worth and promotes hope for their future career pathway."

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Additionally, Lighthouse staff assist secondary students with TAFE and university applications, scholarship navigation, and workplace site visits, instilling a firm belief in their capacity to achieve post-secondary success.

Amongst teachers engaged with Lighthouse initiatives, 95% reported their students' engagement with Lighthouse had improved their educational engagement, and 96% that students' participation in the program had improved their aspirations for education and training.

> *"[I've] been at school more, wanting to do better for myself, made a lot more connections."*

Feel loved, valued and safe

$620k social value generated

Establishing emotional safety and unconditional relational trust is the foundational precondition for all subsequent youth development.

Program spaces provide space for young people to be themselves, with 98% of young people regularly attending programs reporting they feel welcomed and safe, 95% feel confident to be themselves and 91% have a sense of belonging. Staff and volunteers offer non-judgmental, "relentless support," creating warm, safe spaces where vulnerable youth who may not otherwise have somewhere to go feel secure and respected.

For 13% of young people, a sense of connection was the most significant experience as a result of attending Lighthouse programs, with several reporting they had made new friends by attending.

For younger children and families attending the Family Haven, it supports parents to create positive connections with their children through parenting support.

Children benefit from the safe space at Family Haven but also benefit from improved parental capability/confidence and access to the things they need.

Have material basics: All their basic needs are met

$237k social value generated

Lighthouse directly supports children and young people by providing children with the essential materials required for daily living and dignity. In the three-year period between July 2023 June 2026, OLLY provided over $32,000 of food relief through the provision of hampers, in addition to items such as hygiene packs including period products, clothing, and school uniform or shoes. The program also supported two young people to access a birth certificate, a vital tool for accessing numerous educational, employment and lifetime benefits.

Through initiatives like Laptops with Love, over 700 refurbished digital devices like laptops and phones have been gifted to students, eliminating digital exclusion and enabling students to participate in school. One community partner described the curriculum at Greater Shepparton Secondary College as heavily digitised and uses portals like Microsoft teams and school bulletins. Without access to a laptop, young people may not be able to participate.

Through Second Spin, more than 296 bicycles and scooters have been restored and gifted to supply independent transport to school and work. Combined with daily hot meals, clothing, school supplies, and hygiene items, 73% of young people attending programs regularly confirm that Lighthouse significantly improves their access to the necessities of daily life.

3.2. For families and carers

Between July 2023 and June 2026, Lighthouse generated $1.9m of social value for families and carers

$1.9m value generated for parents and carers attending Lighthouse programs

Key activities and outputs

- 678 families attended Family Haven, with 340 adults attending regularly
- Families were provided with over 18,000 items of clothing, worth ~$186,000
- Over 1,000 food hampers were provided to families
- Almost 2,000 referrals were made from Family Haven and Community Hubs
- Over 1,000 packs of nappies were provided, almost 200 car seats and 55 prams

Connected: Socially and emotionally connected to the community

$300k social value generated

Lighthouse fosters deep social and emotional inclusion for parents and caregivers, serving as a trusted community gateway, particularly for those families who may be experiencing isolation.

Through the Family Haven in Mooroopna and school-based Community Hubs, Lighthouse offer warm, welcoming spaces where families form supportive peer networks and overcome social isolation. This is particularly impactful for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families, who represent 77% of Community Hub participants and 41% of Family Haven participants.

> *"The place that changed my life for me. I always recommend people to come here for a better future. keep doing what your doing – its helping the community lots. Family Haven helps you feel heard and understood, I have everything I dreamed of having because of here."*

Families report feeling a genuine "sense of home," connecting with other caregivers, local schools, and broader neighbourhood activities. Amongst families surveyed attending Lighthouse programs, 97% of families reported attending Lighthouse had a positive contribution on their connection to the community and 98% said it had made a positive impact on their friendships.

Providing: Can provide material basics

$256k social value generated

To alleviate severe financial stress driven by regional cost-of-living pressures, Lighthouse provides families with direct, material aid. Over the three-year evaluation period, Lighthouse has distributed more than 1,000 emergency food relief hampers, alongside essential baby items, nappies, prams, highchairs, and formula. The co-located OrangeSky Laundry Pod at Family Haven has completed over 900 free loads of washing, offering practical financial relief and dignity to families experiencing housing insecurity.

Amongst families surveyed, 96% reported attending Lighthouse programs has improved access to the things their family need.

Lighthouse facilitates community and corporate philanthropy, delivering donated goods directly to vulnerable households. By leveraging partnerships with GIVIT, Our Village, local businesses, and community donors, Lighthouse sources and distributes essential items, including 45+ certified car seats, 24+ cots and bassinets, and retail food vouchers, to relieve acute household stress and ensure children are safe and able to access the necessities.

In addition to the outcomes identified in the Theory of Change, there were two additional material benefits identified for adults attending Lighthouse programs:

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Increased employment opportunities

$1.3m social value generated

Lighthouse empowers parents and carers to build vocational capabilities and transition into the workforce. Through Lighthouse's partnership with Community Hubs Australia Lighthouse provides Support Co-ordination which enables hosting conversational English classes, citizenship preparation, and digital literacy workshops at Community Hubs, mothers from diverse backgrounds and to gain the language skills and confidence necessary to seek employment.

On-site partnerships at the Family Haven with employment providers (such as CVGT Employment and Parent Pathways) assist parents with resume building, training enrolments, and career navigation in a supportive, familiar setting, as well as practical support including providing work and interview clothing, as well as transport to attend interviews and get to work. Lighthouse provided over 100 instances of support to access a job, whether through referrals to an agency, assistance to apply for a job or creating a resume, and 7 people directly gained employment.

Amongst families surveyed, several responded that the most significant impact through attending Lighthouse is now being able to work, whether through support to access a visa or support to find a job.

Health and well-being: Increased mental and physical health

$52k social value generated

Family health and wellbeing are enhanced through Lighthouse's integrated, on-site preventative and early intervention services. At Family Haven and Community Hubs, families access free primary health checks with adult family members supported by the Primary Care Connect Paramedic Clinic and young children by Maternal and Child Health nurses. These services connect developmentally vulnerable toddlers directly to paediatricians, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and hearing specialists before delays become entrenched, while equipping parents with practical tools for emotional regulation and child health management.

The Get Ready, GO! Allied Health Program, Lighthouse supports toddlers with developmental delays while on potentially long NDIS or clinical waitlists. The program delivers a 6-week playgroup led by speech and occupational therapists to address early developmental delays in children under five by ensuring children receive support as soon as possible.

It is recognised that early intervention can reduce the level of support children require later and lessen the potential long-term effects on their development[7]. This is most significant for children between ages 0-6, when neuroplasticity and the ability for the brain to rewire, relearn and strengthen important connections is greatest, meaning it is vital to intervene as soon as possible[8].

Lighthouse also breaks down barriers of support for families, with Family Haven and Community Hubs acting as soft entry points to supports needed. For example, a mother might visit Family Haven for a playgroup, and once they feel safe, may mention housing or safety concerns to staff. Staff are then able to "soft-refer" to specialist support like Beyond Housing or Family Care, without the re-traumatisation of repeatedly retelling their story. This enables people to access help and support for many who might not otherwise have been able to, and in doing so, improves their overall wellbeing.

Amongst parents and carers surveyed, 13% reported positive health and well-being outcomes as the most significant change they had experienced since attending Lighthouse. Responses included improved mental health, including reduced anxiety, feeling "healthier" through nutritious meals, and

7 NDIS What are the early intervention eligibility requirements, accessed 29 Septemeber 2026.
8 Cerebral Palsy Alliance. (2023). Early Childhood Intervention E-Book (Version 4.0). Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

supporting families to access health immunisations who may not have been able to access otherwise.

3.3. For partners and volunteers

Between July 2023 and June 2026, Lighthouse generated $800k of social value for partners and volunteers

$800k value generated for partners and volunteers

- 274 partners worked alongside Lighthouse over the three-year period
- Volunteers contributed 6,200 hours across Lighthouse programs, to a value of $247,000 across the three-year period
- 3,600 volunteer hours were given to Family Haven
- Partners contributed $250,000 of pro-bono and in-kind support, including through rent, radio advertisements, auditor services and legal support
- Partners from across the community donated a wide range of materials, including laptops, phones, bikes, books and tools

New Opportunities: Programs/initiatives are developed that wouldn't otherwise be able to be realised

$435k social value generated

Lighthouse's agile, place-based backbone structure enables partner agencies to innovate, pilot, and deliver multi-agency initiatives that could not be delivered in isolation. By acting in the role as key funded agency, Lighthouse secured $2.5 million in philanthropic funding to launch the Goulburn Region Open Dialogue Connect (GRODC) youth mental health model alongside Berry Street Yooralla, GV Health, Infant, child, youth mental health service (ICYMS), and Headspace. This example of trust-based philanthropy demonstrates the opportunities that may exist for collective future funding.

The Orange Sky Laundry Pod at Family Haven in Mooroopna shows how Lighthouse's trusted community backbone role creates opportunities. Lighthouse brought together Orange Sky Australia, Gouge Linen/Drycleaning and St Alban's Anglican Church to establish the service. Lighthouse's local credibility helped embed the service in Mooroopna. Since 2024, it has completed more than 920 washes, making it Victoria's most-used regional Orange Sky service, ahead of larger centres such as Ballarat and Bendigo.

The service operates at minimal cost, with St Alban's providing the facilities, Gouge Linen financially supporting utilities expenses, Lighthouse co-ordinating delivery, and volunteers supervising washes and connecting with families. This model embeds national infrastructure locally while enabling social connection and referrals.

Lighthouse also partnered with national non-profit Food Ladder to construct solar-powered hydroponic greenhouses at two local primary schools, to tackle food insecurity and creating new agri-tech educational opportunities. Lighthouse's community connection and network of volunteers enabled the success of the program, with Lighthouse volunteers constructing the greenhouses, maintaining and harvesting the gardens and preparing the food in school kitchens for daily breakfast and lunch clubs or cooking classes, as well as packaging surplus produce for families experiencing food insecurity. Schools have also embedded the greenhouses into daily healthy eating programs, kitchen-garden classes and STEM opportunities. Lighthouse's integrated approach, embedding the greenhouses into school life and the community life have enabled Food Ladder to evolve the program.

Other examples of Lighthouse facilitating opportunities with partners include its work with YouThrive Victoria to co-fund and expand the Branch Out Mentoring program across regional secondary schools. The program draws on Lighthouse's trusted school relationships to provide peer-led transition pathways that schools could not deliver independently. Similarly, through its partnership with Community Hubs Australia, Lighthouse also supports Community Hubs in local primary schools, where health, legal and social service agencies jointly deliver programs such as conversational English classes and early health screenings. These accessible hubs engage multicultural families who may not be reached through traditional service channels.

Sustained impact: Support for and increased impact of programs/initiatives

$256k social value generated

Lighthouse strengthens the regional service ecosystem by facilitating multi-year alignment, co-investment, and non-duplicative service integration. Over 180 active partner organisations across schools, local businesses, health providers, and government agencies benefit from Lighthouse's backbone co-ordination, which supports increased collaboration and communication between partner agencies.

Through Lighthouse's role as an entry point for families and young people who may be experiencing disadvantage, they are able to soft-refer people to specialist support that may be needed. During the three-year period of this evaluation, Lighthouse made over 2,000 referrals to key service connections across the community, including for families experiencing housing insecurity, family violence or for child development support.

Collaborative service connections and referral pathways enable organisations to deliver timely, impactful interventions to people who may not otherwise have accessed support, with Lighthouse also providing transport where needed to support people to access services they might not otherwise have been able to.

Beyond service referrals, Lighthouse actively builds capacity and increases impact across the regional service system, working with partner organisations to enhance their data literacy, co-design theories of change, and embed shared outcome measurement practices. By sharing its place-based methodologies and making community data freely accessible through tools like the digital State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report, Lighthouse equips local partners to align strategies, justify funding, and adopt data-informed ways of working.

Improved Wellbeing: Through contribution and connection

$109k social value generated

Volunteering with Lighthouse provides community members and corporate employees with a profound sense of purpose, civic pride, and personal fulfilment.

> *"My mental health always improves working with participants requiring additional assistance. It makes me feel like I am achieving something and contributing to the community."*

A network of approximately **90 volunteers are currently active,** and contributed over **6,700 hours across the three year evaluation period** across programs including:

- Book Buddies: a school reading program where volunteers read to students in local primary schools to build literacy skills and confidence
- School Healthy Meals & Breakfast programs: preparing and serving three meals per day at Mooroopna Park Primary and Gowrie Street Primary Schools
- Family Haven and Community Hubs: supporting with playgroups, school holiday activities, English classes and creating a safe and welcoming space for families

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- Food ladder: volunteers were integral to the construction of the two solar-powered hydroponic greenhouses and vegetable gardens and continue to maintain and run working bees on site, located at Mooroopna Park Primary school and Gowrie Street Primary School
- Pit Stop & Second Spin: where volunteers, e.g. tradespeople or retired mechanics, mentor young people in skills including engine repair, woodwork, welding and refurbishing bikes and scooters to provide young people with transport.

Amongst volunteers surveyed, 96% reported that volunteering had enhanced their sense of contribution, and 95% shared that volunteering had enhanced their connection amongst volunteers, partners and the community more broadly.

> *"It has enhanced my commitment to serve therefore makes me feel useful and very happy."*

Retired professionals described the feeling connected, valued, and mentally active as a result of volunteering, while corporate partners who integrate Lighthouse volunteering into staff development, reported increased employee morale and wellbeing as a result.

3.4. Across the community

Between July 2023 and June 2026, Lighthouse generated $836k for the community

$836k value generated for community

Key activities and outputs

- 274 partners worked alongside Lighthouse over the three-year period
- Volunteers contributed more than 6,700 hours across Lighthouse programs, to a value of almost $250,000 across the three-year period
- 4,100 volunteer hours were given to Family Haven
- Partners contributed $235,000 of pro-bono and in-kind support, including through rent, radio advertisements, and legal support
- Partners from across the community donated a wide range of materials, including laptops, phones, bikes, books and tools

Community members feel empowered to take action to contribute to their community

$610k social value generated

Lighthouse increases awareness of the need for social and systemic action in the community, empowering local residents to actively solve regional challenges and providing the opportunity for them to get involved.

Lighthouse network of volunteers help run school kitchens, mentor disengaged young people and lead the Book Buddies reading programs in primary schools, building local pride and a culture of giving back. Several stakeholders remarked how Lighthouse both raises awareness of local challenges to inspire community members to get involved, while also providing the means for them to contribute. This network of volunteers provides Lighthouse with a unique ability to scale up community responses instantly during emergency situations.

Lighthouse empowers and provides a platform for partner organisations to participate in addressing complex social issues. Business leaders, school principals, health executives, and non-profit managers supported with care, while across the sector Lighthouse has a structured, non-competitive platform to pool resources, co-design interventions, and advocate for policy reform. Partners report feeling backed by Lighthouse's strong brand, administrative backbone, and shared governance structures.

$113k social value generated

Qualitative and quantitative data: used to inform collective decision making and refine programs, policies and project strategies

Lighthouse collects, evaluates and transforms population data and qualitative stories into collective community power. In partnership with Seer Data and Analytics, Catholic Care Victoria - Communities for Children, and Greater Shepparton City Council's Best Start, Lighthouse established the digital State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report dashboard, creating a live, auto-updating "learning infrastructure" mapped against the ARACY Nest Framework. Shared across working groups, local schools, and service providers, this transparent data asset guides resource allocation, justifies grant applications, and has informed national policy advocacy.

The digital dashboard has drawn widespread national attention. Peak bodies like ARACY regularly feature Shepparton as leading practice, and other regional Victorian centres (such as Ballarat City Council and Ballarat Best Start) are actively seeking to replicate Shepparton's data model, with

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Lighthouse meeting with several place-based organisations to share the process, learnings and development of the platform.

Lighthouse's data sophistication has unlocked nationwide policy influence. Working alongside Seer Data and Maranguka, Lighthouse submitted recommendations for the Data Availability and Transparency Act (DAT Act) reform. The recommendations were adopted into federal law, making it easier for First Nations organisations, non-profits, and place-based initiatives to access restricted government data.

By embedding the core philosophy of doing things *"with people, not to them,"* Lighthouse's deep listening projects, such as ***1000 Conversations*** and ***Slice and Say*** provide the community with detailed insights directly informed by authentic lived experience. Lighthouse is also participating in the closed beta testing of Meteora, an internal AI tool mapping philanthropic and backbone funding directly against long-term community outcome metrics

Creating the container for change and sustaining community impact

$68k social value generated

Lighthouse serves as the central "container for change," shifting the regional culture toward systemic collaboration and long-term prevention. Across interviews, stakeholders consistently described Lighthouse as the "glue" or "connective tissue" that supports and co-ordinates local support services

Throughout the consultation process, partners consistently described Lighthouse as willing to collaborate and share insights. They noted that this not only strengthens collective impact but also helps organisations refine their own responses through better data and a deeper understanding of community needs.

This helps local organisations secure funding, develop their strategies, and pinpoint local issues like youth crime or early childhood developmental gaps.

Lighthouse successfully co-ordinates a network of approximately 90 volunteers, which has risen up to 250 during times of community need, through for example the GV Cares response to the Covid-19 pandemic and Community Floods in 2022. Volunteers include retired professionals from local Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, employees, and local business owners, with local businesses formally integrating Lighthouse volunteering into their staff expectations. Volunteers help run school kitchens, mentor disengaged young people and lead the Book Buddies reading programs in primary schools, building local pride and a culture of giving back.

Similarly, Lighthouse's funding structure means they can move quickly, with increased flexibility due to reduced reliance on government funding or need to adhere to strict government KPIs and bureaucratic hurdles. This flexibility enables them to test innovative ideas, such as youth mental health initiatives and the Food Ladder local greenhouse projects. This agility enables Lighthouse to respond to community needs faster and deliver better, more targeted solutions to local challenges.

Increased workforce abilities

$45k social value generated

Through practical initiatives like Pit Stop, hands-on learning, and secondary industry immersions, young people in the community and reengaged and equipped with technical trade capabilities and work-readiness behaviours that local employers (such as automotive and manufacturing firms) directly recruit from.

Through consultations, stakeholders recognised the importance of equipping young people with the skills they need to enter the workforce in future, and noted through programs like Pit Stop, they were able to encourage young people and secure apprenticeship for young people attending the program.

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3.5. For Government

Between July 2023 and June 2026, Lighthouse generated $7.7m of social value for government agencies.

$7.7m value generated for government

This value creation was as a result of the outcomes and value created through the backbone activities and the initiatives, and the outcomes and value created for other stakeholders. This is additional social value that is created for government agencies.

Increased tax revenue and reduced welfare costs through increased employment

$6.2m social value generated

Lighthouse generates increased employment opportunities for young people and adults across the community.

For young people, increased engagement with school, hands-on learning opportunities and exposure to trades, leads to increased likelihood of completing school, gaining valuable skills and increased employment opportunities. By successfully transitioning disengaged youth and vulnerable parents from social isolation into secondary completion, vocational training, and sustained employment, Lighthouse increased opportunities for employment and reduces the potential for long-term reliance on government income support.

The median weekly earnings for those who achieve a Certificate III or IV is $1,400 compared to $1,000 for those with no non-school qualifications,[9] resulting in increased annual earnings of $20,800 per young person or an almost 40% increase in income. Additionally, the employment rate for people with a Certificate III or IV is 19% higher than for a person without qualifications, compounding the impact increased qualifications. This generates increased lifetime tax receipts for government, as well as reduced opportunity for reliance on welfare payments.

Similarly, for adults attending Family Haven who are supported to access a job, a moderate estimate of weekly earnings $900 per week[10] based on those in the 25th percentile, resulting in annual earnings of $46,800 for the individual and increased tax receipts for the government combined with reduced welfare costs.

Estimated savings to government as a result of increased tax revenue and reduced welfare costs are approximately **$6.2m to government over five years**. While a significant proportion of the social value generated, when considered against the number of people accessing Lighthouse for support, this results in only a small benefit from each individual attendee.

Reduced justice costs

$1.3m social value generated

Lighthouse's early intervention and youth re-engagement programs such as OLLY and Pit Stop, focus on diverting at-risk youth away from criminal activity and the statutory youth justice system. As a result of Pit Stop, at-risk young people are 85% less likely to reoffend.

The average cost for one young person to be under community supervision is $600 per day, rising to over $7,300 for those in detention-based services. The average length of duration for a young people to be under supervision is 189 days, resulting in an average cost for one young person under

9 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Employee Earnings, August 2025
10 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Employee Earnings, August 2025

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supervision of **$113,500** for the length of community supervision. For detention-based supervision, the cost is $7,300 per day, or **$1.38m** per year.

To estimate the total value generated through reduced interactions with the justice system, the cost of community supervision was considered against the number of alleged offender incidents by young people in the Greater Shepparton LGA[11]. It is therefore estimated that reduced interactions with the justice system as a result of young people's increased participation in Lighthouse programs generate a benefit to government of **$1.34 million over five years**.

Early Intervention

$133k social value generated

Lighthouse provides, "soft-entry" prevention models that address developmental, health, and family vulnerabilities before they escalate into expensive, acute statutory interventions.

This early intervention reduces downstream burdens on public hospitals, child protection services, special education funding, and crisis emergency infrastructure.

From a child health perspective, early intervention for young people with developmental delays is recognised to reduce the impact and severity of challenges or impairment, and can reduce the need for future supports, thereby reducing longer-term government costs through reduced reliance and need for public funded services and supports. There are significant challenges quantifying precise savings generated through early intervention due to a lack of longitudinal data, however, even conservative assumptions regarding reduced service need, e.g. for longer-term speech pathology, occupational therapy or psychology support results in significant government savings, even without considering the longer-term implications.

Early intervention approaches deliver benefits and subsequently generate savings to government across several domains of childhood development beyond health, including child protection, family violence and youth homelessness. The Cost of Late Intervention (COLI) report highlights that delaying support costs Australian governments an estimated $22.3 billion annually as a result of the increased cost of reactive, high-cost sectors like crisis mental healthcare, specialised education aides, and adult income support, compared to early developmental therapies, with evidence demonstrating that investment in early intervention generates significant returns by promoting functional independence, integration into mainstream schooling, and higher adult employment rates.[12]

11 Offences recorded and rate per 100,000 population by police region and local government area, April 2016 to March 2026
12 O'Connell, M. 2025, The Cost of Late Intervention 2024, The Front Project, Melbourne.

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Looking beyond FY26

While this evaluation focuses on the three-year period from July 2023 to June 2026, Lighthouse's DE funding extends through to June 2027.

Significantly, the evaluation period includes the initial investment for GRODC received in 2026 as part of the landmark $2.5 million, four-year philanthropic grant from the William Buckland Foundation (managed by Equity Trustees). With the grant secured and initiated in 2026, the costs incurred relate to the initial set up, backbone co-ordination, and local workforce training expenses, with service delivery starting in FY27. As a result, program benefits will be realised from FY27 and therefore no outcomes or value has been attributed to the GRODC program outcomes for this evaluation. Anticipated benefits from FY27 include:

- Improved mental health outcomes for young people, with a focus on youth-led network meetings providing early, relational wraparound support to prevent mental health challenges from deteriorating into acute crisis
- A strengthened, co-ordinated response to youth mental health, with a shared intake system and focus on preventative care pathway established and 35-40 local practitioners already trained across key community organisations including Greater Shepparton Secondary College, headspace, Berry Street Youth Foyer, Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-Operative, GV Health (ICYMHS), and Lighthouse's own OLLY hub
- Reduced instances of youth mental health presentations at emergency departments and acute psychiatric admissions as a result of integrated, early intervention support, substantial avoided-cost savings for state health infrastructure.

Similarly, the Food Ladder initiative was only established in 2026, and therefore costs incurred include initial set-up with only six months of direct benefit as of June 2026. The solar-powered hydroponic greenhouses across local primary and secondary schools each yield 250,000 kilograms of fresh produce annually and therefore will generate significant ongoing benefit. This will directly address growing regional food insecurity, save participating schools over $10,000 each in produce costs, and build practical agri-tech STEM capabilities.

However, it must be remembered that how we have treated this in the SROI analysis is consistent with the methodology, as there are outcomes that have been measured and valued that have their foundational investment in prior years. Lighthouse is an enduring and sustainable backbone organisation, and this is the most accurate way to account for social value for a discrete period.

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4. Investment

The investment included in this SROI evaluation are the total cash inputs required to deliver Lighthouse's activities and initiatives to deliver the outcomes identified.

The total cash investment in Lighthouse's backbone and program funding was $5.46m for the three-year period. The investment from DE between July 2023 and June 2026 was $3m, with a further $1m investment for the 2026-27 financial year.[13]

In addition to DE funding, Lighthouse has been able to leverage significant funding from a range of sources, enabling Lighthouse's agility and ability to respond to community needs, as highlighted by stakeholders.

A breakdown of the investment received, sources, and apportionment between backbone and programs is set out below.

Funding source	Total	Backbone	Programs	%
Department of Education (DE) funding	$3,000,000	$1,462,000	$1,835,000	55%
Other State government Grants & funding	$267,500			5%
Federal government grants & funding	$29,500			1%
Donations	$434,500	$45,500	$389,000	8%
Fundraising	$10,500	–	$10,500	<1%
Other grant income	$1,549,000	$112,500	$1,436,500	28%
Other income	$70,000	$38,500	$31,500	1%
Fee for Service	$95,500	$10,500	$84,500	2%
Total	**$5,456,000**	**$1,669,000 (30%)**	**$3,787,000 (70%)**	**100%**

Only cash investments have been included in the table above

The Department of Education (DE) provides the Lighthouse with a flexible, place-based Common Funding Agreement of $1.0 million annually. This investment is structured into core activity areas, rather than funding specific programs:

- $450,000 for backbone operations
- $350,000 for programs supporting middle years engagement in learning and careers in the local economy
- $200,000 for operating a youth hub (e.g. OLLY and Pit Stop).

This core DE investment funds Lighthouse's essential infrastructure including the executive leadership, volunteer co-ordination, data and evaluation systems, governance, and the community listening initiatives (1000 Conversations and Slice and Say) that are central to understanding community need and uniting local stakeholders. This core operational funding enables Lighthouse to be highly agile, deliver innovative, place-based solutions and attract external co-investment from partners without bureaucratic delays.

13 Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project, Statement of Income and Expenditure, 2023-2026

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DE funding provides a stable foundation for securing additional investment

With DE funding providing the stable foundation, Lighthouse has leveraged additional funding across other government, philanthropic and community sources, making up 45% of total income. Importantly, government-funded stability has enabled Lighthouse to negotiate multi-year commitments, with between 88-94% of funding during the three-year period of this evaluation and 100% of funding in FY27 bound by multi-year agreements (typically 3 to 4 years).

Significant philanthropic investments include:

- Lighthouse as the trusted lead agency secured a landmark $2.5 million, four-year grant from the William Buckland Foundation and Equity Trustees for the Goulburn Region Open Dialogue Connect initiative, establishing a region-wide youth mental health model. Lighthouse holds and distributes these funds to partner agencies Berry Street, GV Health, and the Open Dialogue Centre
- Diversified philanthropic investments, including multi-year funding commitment from key funders the Pratt Foundation, Margaret Attwood Trust, Brian M. Davis Charitable Foundation, Ansett, and McEwen Foundation (both managed by Equity Trustees), Scanlon Foundation, and H&L Hecht Trust. These investments fund core initiatives such as Family Haven, OLLY, Pit Stop, and Community Hubs.

DE funding is supplemented by significant in-kind contributions

In addition to cash funding, Lighthouse generates a significant proportion of in-kind contributions, In the three-years between July 2023 and June 2026, Lighthouse leveraged its reputation within the community to generate significant in-kind contributions totalling $941,000 through:

- Volunteers dedicated almost **6,200 hours** across key programs such as Family Haven, OLLY, Pitstop and Primary Programs, generating **$247,000** in volunteer labour value
- Lighthouse leveraged **$251,000** through in-kind goods and services, including through radio advertisement campaigns, pro bono legal services, and foregone rent at Lighthouse program sites
- Material aid provided through Family Haven such clothes, prams, nappies and car seats, with a total value of **$290,000**, including over **$103,000** of food hampers provided to people experiencing food insecurity
- **$153,000** of essential items leveraged through GIVIT, including items such as beds, cots, furniture and other household or baby items.

Strategic implications

The impact of each dollar DE invests in backbone co-ordination supports is multiplied by the ability to attract non-government funding, corporate support and volunteer contributions into public schools and community settings at substantially lower cost than statutory services. These co-investment models also reduce the risk to government by enabling philanthropy and local businesses to trial preventative initiatives, such as Food Ladder greenhouses and Family Haven early-intervention playgroups, before they are scaled.

Backbone funding also supports stronger collaboration and connection amongst the local service system. Rather than competing for fragmented government grants, Lighthouse uses its backbone structure to attract funding in partnership, or distribute funding to partner delivery agencies, including by administering GRODC funds and co-funding school hub workers. In this way, Lighthouse acts as trusted, neutral connective tissue, bringing new investment into the regional service system instead of competing with local providers.

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5. Calculating the SROI generated by Lighthouse

The SROI ratio is calculated by considering the total social and economic value created by Lighthouse across the three-year period, against the total cash investment required for Lighthouse to deliver their programs and initiatives in the Greater Shepparton community.



Lighthouse's activities have delivered an SROI ratio of **3.8:1** based on the investment and operations in the three-year period between July 2023 and June 2026.

That is, for every **$1** of cash invested, approximately **$3.80** of social and economic value was created.

About the SROI ratio

This analysis has discussed several issues that need to be considered when interpreting the SROI ratio. Some of the key issues include:

- The SROI ratio represents the additional value created, based on the Social Value principles. This is the unique value that is created by Lighthouse activities attributable to the investment for this period
- The value of the outcomes is an estimate and provides an indication of the value generated through the activities for the three-year period. We have used financial proxies to value the outcomes, noting that these are not tradeable commodities
- SROI ratios should never be compared between organisations without having a clear understanding of each organisation's mission, strategy, program or stakeholder logic, geographic location and stage of development. A judgement about whether a return is good or bad can only be made when using comparable data.

In line with best practice requirements, an annual real discount rate of 7% has been applied to the total social return. This results in a total net present value of **$20.6 million.**

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6. Recommendations

A social value or SROI evaluation is an opportunity to deeply understand not just the value that has been created by the activities, but also how an organisation can continue to evolve. In 2023, SVA provided recommendations to Lighthouse as a result of completing the social value analysis. See Appendix C: 2023 Social Value Recommendations for more information as to how Lighthouse has progressed against those recommendations.

This SROI analysis has revealed six recommendations to guide the future evolution, sustainability, and impact of Lighthouse. The recommendations cut across both strategic and operational considerations.

1. Clarify the backbone role and transition programs to co-delivery

- **Refocus on backbone co-ordination:** maintain a clear strategic boundary between Lighthouse's core function as a lean, systems-level "backbone" integrator and its direct service delivery. The current delivery of signature programs risks anchoring the organisation in operational management
- **Staged partnership transitions:** consider staged co-investment and co-delivery models to transition signature initiatives - such as Family Haven, OLLY, and Pit Stop - to values-aligned external partner agencies. This preserves program integrity while freeing up internal capacity for whole-of-community co-ordination and innovation.

2. Establish shared outcomes frameworks with community partners

- **Embed M&E into collective infrastructure:** building on the established 'Statement of Intent' for GRODC that links Lighthouse, youth services, First Nations' services, education and Health services, embed the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework into a collective infrastructure that enables shared measurement of the identified priority indicators
- **Translate lived experience into strategic action:** build transparent planning frameworks that translate the rich qualitative community insights gathered from initiatives like *1000 Conversations and Slice and Say* directly into actionable, community-wide strategies and policy advocacy
- **Overt and direct links to policy:** demonstrate the power of community consultation by directly linking policy and advocacy initiatives to consultation data and feedback shared by young people.

3. Build long-term financial sustainability and investment readiness

- **Continue to enhance long-term sustainability:** further explore diversified funding opportunities to secure 50% of total income from sources other than state government (currently 40%)
- **Maintain financial reserves:** formalise a strategic reserve equivalent to six months of operating costs ($600k–$870k) to protect against funding volatility.

4. Deepen community ownership, lived experience, and youth leadership

- **Elevate youth leadership:** relaunch a representative Lighthouse Youth Council and establish formal Youth Advocacy Pathways to embed youth voice directly into governance and strategy

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- **Establish a community co-design lab:** create a flexible or mobile co-design Lab to serve as an engine for community-led innovation and lived-experience prototyping
- **Expand community activation:** grow the Lighthouse volunteer network and increase representation of First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members across staff, volunteers, and the Board.

5. Establish the Lighthouse Model as a leader for place-based systems change

- **Formally document the "Lighthouse Model":** establish an ongoing research partnership, e.g., with the University of Melbourne and PLACE, to document, evaluate, and formally establish Lighthouse's place-based collective impact methodology
- **National systemic positioning:** building on Lighthouse's reputation as leaders in community consultation and reporting (through the digital dashboard for the State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report, 1000 Conversations and Slice and Say), execute a targeted advocacy strategy to position Lighthouse as a recognised policy leader for place-based systems change, amplifying regional learnings at state and federal policy levels.

6. Enhance nuanced value measurement and shared data systems

- **Maintain live data infrastructure:** continue strengthening the digital State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report dashboard (anchored to the ARACY Nest Framework) to provide auto-updating, shared population data for community-wide planning and partner grant applications
- **Contribute to the national narrative:** inform better practice and data co-design pilots for collective impact place-based models by making data accessibility, information sharing and impact measurement easier for communities.

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Appendix A: Impact Map

This appendix has an extract of the “impact map” for each stakeholder group. It has the judgements for each stakeholder, the outcomes they experienced, how the outcomes were measured, the financial proxy used, how long the outcome last for, the ‘valuation filters’ (deadweight, attribution, and drop off) and the value calculations.

The detailed impact map has been shared with Lighthouse.

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Impact Map: Outcomes for Children and Young People

Impact Map: Children and young people (including children attending Family Haven with their families)

Stakeholder					Financial proxy		Timing		Deadweight		Attribution %		Drop off %	Value	
Program	Population		% experiencing outcome*	# experiencing outcome	Financial proxy	Value $	Duration (years)	Rationale	% would have happened anyway	Rationale	% contribution by other factors	Rationale	Does impact reduce with time?	Per program	Total
Outcome: Are capable and empowered															
Pit Stop	482	Young people	81%	389	Increased net earning potential, comparing Cert 3/4 vs no qualifications	16,120	5	Career choice or skills learnt contribute to longer-term employment outcomes	50%	Program focus on skills development and career aspirations	60%	Attributed across outcomes	50% (impact on increased earnings decreases each year)	$2.43m	$5.1m
Olly	210	Young people	74%	154		16,120	5		75%	Proportion of attendees speak about jobs/skills	70%	Attributed across outcomes		$362k	
Family Haven	514	Children attending regularly	93%	479	Net increased earnings (delayed 13 yrs, avg age of 3)	6,689	5		90%	Reduced given age and less specific focus on jobs/industry	90%	Younger children means increased external factors to influence employment		$62k	
Primary projects	2,687	Young people	96%	2,591	Net increased earnings (delayed 6 yrs, avg age 10)	10,741	5		75%	Younger age but higher % due to TAFE partnerships	90%			$1.35m	
Laptops with Love	728	Laptops & phones	100%	728	Net increased earning	16,120	1	Laptop supports gaining employment when received	25%	Chance of receiving laptop elsewhere	90%	Laptop alone will not improve employment	NA	$880k	
Outcome: Are healthy															
Olly	300	Young people	85%	254	Value of a healthy meal	390	1	Benefit does not continue beyond length of project	25%	Alternative services available to receive a meal or food	0%	NA – a meal	NA	$74k	$1.1m
Family Haven	926	Children	96%	890		390	1		25%		0%			$260k	
Food Ladder	250kg	Children fed 3 meals daily at MPPS & GPS	100%	2	Value of produce from 2 greenhouses at $2.80/kg for 6m	349k	1		0%	School children fed directly through GSLP programs	0%			$699k	
Pitstop	482	Young people	63%	301	Value of a gym membership	520	1		50%	Alternative means of increased activity	80%	Attributed across outcomes		$16k	
Family	279	Early intervention	50%	139	Out of pocket costs	970	3	Longer term impact of early vention	25%	Referral and its requirement through Lighthouse	50%	Engagement/ impact varies	50%	$89k	

**As recorded through outcomes survey where available*

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Stakeholder					Financial proxy		Timing		Deadweight		Attribution %		Drop off %	Value	
Program	Population		% experiencing outcome	# experiencing outcome	Financial proxy	Amount	Duration (years)	Rationale	% would have happened anyway	Rationale	% contribution by other factors	Rationale	Does impact reduce with time?	**Value**	By outcome
Outcome: Are learning															
Pitstop	482	Young people	80%	386	Cost of a tutor for a year once a week)	1,750	1	Learning whilst attending	50%	May find other ways to learn skills	60%	Attributed across outcome	NA	$135k	**$2.7m**
Olly	210	Young people	69%	146		1,750	1		50%		50%		NA	$63k	
Primary projects	2,687	Young people	93%	2,495		1,750	1		50%		50%		NA	$1.1m	
Laptops with Love	641	Laptops	100%	641		1,750	3	Lifespan of a laptop	25%	Low possibility to access elsewhere	50%	Laptop alone will not improve learning	50%	$736k	
Food Ladder	373	Children at MPPS and GPS	100%	373	Annual cost of a tutor (monthly)	500	3	Better food relationship	25%	Specific STEM learning through program	50%	Children learn about food from other sources	50%	$184k	
Family Haven (children)	514	Children visiting regularly	100%	514	Annual cost of early childcare education by Victorian State government	2,101	5	Link between early childhood education and school readiness	50%	Could find other free kinder	50%	Additional factors beyond playgroup	50%	$523k	
Outcome: Feel loved															
Pitstop	482	Young people	93%	449	Improved self-esteem/ confidence/ mental-health through counselling	970	1	Feeling derived while attending	50%	Other services may provide	75%	Attributed across outcome	NA	$54k	**$620k**
Olly	210	Young people	96%	203		970	1		50%		60%		NA	$39k	
Family Haven	514	Children	98%	504		970	1		50%		50%		NA	$122k	
Primary projects	2,687	Young people	93%	2,495		970	1		50%		67%		NA	$404k	
Outcome: Have material basics															
Pitstop	296	Bikes/ scooters	100%	296	Est. cost of items	75	3	Lifespan of item	0%	Others unlikely to provide	0%	Only outcome attributed	0%	$66k	**$237k**
Olly	262	Hampers	100%	262	Average cost of items	100	1	Benefit on receiving only	50%	Other services may provide	0%	Provided by Lighthouse	NA	$13k	
Laptops w Love	641	Laptops	100%	641	Est. average cost of budget laptop	300	3	Lifespan of a laptop	50%		50%	Attributed across outcome	0%	$144k	
Laptops w Love	87	Phones	100%	87	Est cost of budget phone	200	3	Lifespan of a phone	50%		50%	Attributed across outcome	0%	$13k	

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Impact Map: Outcomes for Families and Carers

Stakeholder	Outcome	Stakeholders				Financial proxy		Timing		Deadweight		Attribution %		Drop off %	Value	
		Population		% experiencing outcome	# experiencing outcome	Financial proxy	Value	Duration (years)	Rationale	% would have happened anyway		% contribution by other factors	Rationale	impact reduce with time?	Total	By Outcome
Families and Carers (Adults)	Increased connection	340	Adults attending regularly	98%	333	Cost of participating in a club	$1,200	1	Experience while attending	25%	Could access elsewhere	0%	Directly provided by Lighthouse	NA	$300k	**$1.9m**
	Are healthy (adults)	1,455	Instances of food relief	100%	1,455	Hampers (actual total cost)	$103,400	1	Experience on receiving	50%	Other services may provide	0%		NA	$52k	
	Increased employment opportunities	66	Adults at FH supported with employment	100%	66	25th quartile net median weekly earnings	$36,270	3	Support is to access a job, rather than long-term skills	50%	Other services may provide	50%	Job not yet secured	50%	$1m	
		7	Adults at FH gaining employment	100%	7		$36,270	3		25%	Required FH support to apply	25%	Directly supported by Lighthouse	50%	$250k	
	Have material basics	1	Materials provided	100%	1	Total value of 20,000+ items provided	$188,529	1	Experience on receiving	25%	May have got accessed elsewhere	0%	Directly provided	NA	$141k	
		1	GIVIT donation value	100%	1	Donation value	$152,588	1		25%		0%		NA	$114k	
Partners and Volunteers	New opportunities	1	GRODC	100%	-	Amount distributed to other orgs	$435,959	4	Years GRODC has been funded	50%	Lighthouse clear key funded partner	50%	Need for services, funders etc	0%	$434k	**$800k**
	Sustained impact: Capacity building	98	Number of collaborator partnerships	100%	98	Cost of an evaluation course	$1,700	3	Longer-term skills developed	50%	May have acquired knowledge elsewhere	50%	Also learning through doing	50%	$73k	
	Sustained impact	279	Early intervention referrals from Family Haven	100%	1,840	Estimate of the cost of services	$1,000	1	Support may not extend beyond 1 year	25%	Children unlikely be referred by other services	50%	Responsible for referral only	NA	$183k	
	Improved wellbeing (Connection	335	Number of volunteers and partners engaged	96%	321	Improved well-being/mental health	$905	1	Experience while attending	50%	May find other means	25%	Direct benefit of experience	NA	$109k	

Impact Map: Outcomes for Community and Government

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Stakeholder						Financial proxy		Timing		Deadweight		Attribution %		Drop off %	Value	
Stakeholder	Program	Population		% experiencing outcome	# experiencing outcome	Financial proxy	Amount	Duration (years)	Rationale	% would have happened anyway	Rationale	%contribution by other factors	Rationale	impact reduce with time?	By outcome	Total
Community	Data drives decision making	1	Community	100%	1	Seer data licence plus volunteer hours for 1000 conversations	$50,297	3	Ongoing benefit while data relevant	25%	May be other data initiatives	0%	Data directly used to inform change	0%	$113k	**$836k**
	Driving change	1	Community	100%	1	% of GS council spend on community wellbeing/early years	$103,400	3	Program impact continues	25%		50%	Change informed by other factors	50%	$68k	
	Empowered to take action	1	Volunteer hours	100%	1	Value of volunteer hours provided	$246,978	1	Proxy hours have been provided	25%	May have found other community role	0%	Motivation and action directly through Lighthouse	0%	$185k	
		189	Partners	100%	189	Estimate of goods/ services provided	$1,000	3	Longer-term partner org engagement	25%		0%		0%	$425k	
	Increased workforce	390	Pit Stop/ Laptops attendees	19%	72	Impact of labour shortage	$5,100	5	Ongoing career aspiration	75%	Other inspirations	75%	Requires further skills	50%	$45k	
Government	Increased tax revenue	73	Adults increased employment	100%	73	Tax due on employment (Adults)	$10,530	3	Ongoing impact of skills gained	50%	May have found alternative support	75%	Additional factors impact employment	50%	$168k	**$7.7m**
		753	Pit Stop/ Laptops attendees	100%	753	Taxes on employment (Secondary age)	$4,680	5		50%		50%		50%	$2.5m	
		2,591	Primary projects attendees	100%	2,591	Tax due on employment (Primary age)	$3,118	5		75%	Reduced impact by age	75%	Reduced impact due to age	50%	$978k	
	Reduced welfare costs	73	Adults increased employment	100%	24	Avoided welfare costs (adults)	$45,032	3		50%	May have found alternative support	75%	Additional factors impact employment	50%	$205k	
		753	Pit Stop/Laptops attendees	19%	140	Avoided welfare costs (young people secondary)	$28,499	5		50%		75%		50%	$1.4m	
		2,591	Primary projects attendees	19%	481	Avoided welfare costs (young people primary)	$16,586	5		75%	Reduced impact by age	75%	Reduced impact by age	50%	$965k	
	Reduced justice	482	Young people attending Pit Stop	20%	97	Youth justice interactions by % of offences in GS	$113,510	5	Longer-term trajectory established	75%	Circumstance contributes	75%	Other factors will impact	50%	$1.34m	
	Early intervention	279	Number of early intervention referrals	50%	139	Cost of additional support required (e.g. OT, Speech Path)	$970	3	Ongoing impact of early intervention	25%	Unlikely to access other services	25%	Lighthouse directly made it happen	50%	$133k	

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Appendix B: Project methodology

Project scope

Lighthouse engaged SVA in August 2026 to evaluate the impact and social return on investment generated by the organisation, its programs and initiatives between July 2023 and June 2026.

Stakeholder groups

Stakeholders	Involvement with Lighthouse
Children and Young People	Young people attending Lighthouse programs and initiatives: • Secondary school age: Pitstop, Olly, Laptops with Love • Primary age: Primary projects, Food ladder • Infants and toddlers: attending Family Haven
Families and Carers	Adult participants attending Family Haven, Community Hubs and other Lighthouse initiatives
Partners and Volunteers	274 organisations work in partnership with Lighthouse
Community	Benefited as a result of the changes to other stakeholders
Government	Key funder, and benefited as a result of the changes to other stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement and analysis: Understanding material changes

Stakeholder insights were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including:

- **One-on-one interviews (qualitative)**

  Interviews were held with 30 key stakeholders, partners and community members from the Greater Shepparton region. This included representatives from across the community as follows:

Stakeholder group	Number of interviews
Lighthouse Board Members and staff	12
Partners	8
Volunteers	2
Education	3
Government bodies	3
Supporters in the community	2

  Ahead of the interviews, stakeholders were asked to consider:

  - Lighthouse's role creating positive change in the community
  - How Lighthouse drives positive outcomes for children, young people and families
  - The ways Lighthouse has increased collaboration and created connection in the community
  - The value of the leadership, community voice, community activation, and data shared by Lighthouse.

- **Survey data (quantitative)**

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Survey data was captured directly from young people and families and carers attending Lighthouse programs, teachers engaged with Lighthouse programs and Lighthouse volunteers.

A total of 401 outcomes surveys were collected in three stages across May 2025 (117), November 2025 (108) and May/June 2026 (176).

Stakeholders	All surveys
Children and Young People	179
Families and Carers	104
Volunteers	59
Teachers	59
Total	**401**

The anonymous nature of the survey data means that individuals may have responded across multiple collection points. The minimum number of unique individuals completing the surveys is 176, as collected in May/June 2026.

- **Document review**

An analysis was undertaken of documentation related to Lighthouse programs and services over the three-year period. This stakeholder engagement and analysis identified the **material** outcomes or changes experienced that had a significant impact on stakeholders.

Valuing what matters

Guided by the Social Value Principles, the material outcomes or changes are assigned a value. For those outcomes that have no clear value or price, e.g. increased connection to the community, a financial proxy is used to estimate their value.

A financial proxy is an estimate to represent the importance of an outcome to the person experiencing it and enables the social value experienced to be communicated more clearly. Where possible, financial proxies are drawn from research, market prices or based on reasonable assumptions that estimate the value people place on a change.

Where a direct market value does not exist, the revealed preference method was used to estimate the value of outcomes. This considers the price of a service or experience that may be of comparative value or result in a similar experience for the person experiencing the outcome. For example, the value of increased confidence could be compared with the cost of a public speaking course aimed to increase confidence. This was always done from the perspective of the stakeholder experiencing the outcome and the value created.

While financial proxies are estimates rather than precise measurements, they help decision-makers understand the relative scale and significance of different outcomes, and how they relate to investment activities.

Is it all down to us: applying the valuation filters

To present an accurate view of the value created through Lighthouse's activities, the SROI methodology considers the range of interrelated factors that might impact an outcome.

This recognises that changes experienced by stakeholders did not happen in isolation. For example, someone's family, school or another service may also have contributed to an outcome, or a person may have found another way to achieve the outcome. Valuation filters are applied to the outcomes to account for these external impacts. This is in accordance with the principle of not over-claiming.

The valuation filters considered for this project are set out below. Where possible, the filters were applied based on stakeholder insights. Where there was no indication for how to apportion outcomes, the example categories set out below were applied.

1. **Deadweight** – Deadweight is an estimate of the value that would have been created if the Lighthouse activities did not happen. Deadweight categories have been applied as set out in the table below.

Category	Assigned deadweight
1. The outcome would not have occurred without the activity	0%
2. The outcome would have occurred but only to a limited extent	25%
3. The outcome would have occurred in part anyway	50%
4. The outcome would have occurred mostly anyway	75%
5. The outcome occurred anyway	100%

2. **Attribution** – Attribution reflects the fact that the investment and core program activity is not wholly responsible for all of the value created. This includes the scenario where value created through partnerships is partly or wholly attributable to other organisations. Attribution categories have been applied as set out in the table below.

Category	Attributed to others
1. The outcome is completely a result of the activity and no other organisations contributed	0%
2. Other organisations and people have some minor role to play in generating the outcome	25%
3. Other organisations and people have a role to play generating the outcome to some extent	50%
4. Other organisations and people have a significant role to play in generating the outcome	75%
5. The outcome is completely a result of other people or organisations	100%

3. **Duration and Drop-off** – Drop-off recognises that outcomes may continue to last for many years but in the future may be less, or if the same, will be influenced by other factors. The drop-off rate indicates by what percentage the value of the outcome declines each year.

Category	Assigned Drop-off
1. The outcome lasts for the whole period of time assigned to it	0%
2. The outcome drops off by 25% per year from year 2 on	25%
3. The outcome drops off by 50% per year from year 2 on	50%
4. The outcome drops off by 75% per year from year 2 on	75%
5. The outcome drops off completely by the end of the time period	100%

4. **Displacement** – Displacement is an assessment of how much of the activity displaced other outcomes. No displacement was identified as a result of Lighthouse's activities.

Appendix C: 2023 Social Value Recommendations

Lighthouse engaged SVA Consulting to evaluate the social value and impact created by the organisation, its programs, and initiatives between October 2020 and March 2023.

The evaluation focused on a three-year period of unprecedented change (COVID-19 and the Floods of October 2022) and due to the compressed evaluation project period, it was not possible at that time to fully articulate, by stakeholder, the value created by Lighthouse.

As a result of that evaluation and stakeholder consultation, SVA provided eight key recommendations in relation to both Lighthouse's role in the community and operational recommendations.

The table below sets out each of the recommendations from the 2023 review, together with a brief summary of progress against each of the recommendations.

Recommendations	Progress
Recommendations for Lighthouse to consider for their role in community	
1. Strengthen a position on advocacy. Consultations highlighted that the organisation plays an important role advocating for vulnerable communities and the region. Given the recent challenges and change of focus given the emergencies, it will be important for Lighthouse to ensure advocacy is prioritised.	• Executive Officer Amy Robinson's role as one of seven national representatives on the PLACE (Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment) National Community Council and PLACE Board, directly amplifies Shepparton's voice in national policy • Lighthouse partnered with Seer Data & Analytics and the Maranguka Community Hub to submit recommendations to the Federal Department of Finance for the Statutory Review of the Data Availability and Transparency Act (DAT Act). Their recommendations were formally adopted into federal policy, improving non-profit data access across Australia • Advocacy Strategy and Enabling Generational Change Proposal developed to position Greater Shepparton as a national demonstration site or Place-Based Innovation Zone for systems reform • Launched 1000 Conversations 3.0 and Slice and Say co-design workshops to translate lived-experience data directly into community-led solutions and policy advocacy.
2. Provide greater clarity on Lighthouse's role within the early years (ages 0-4) intervention and prevention. Lighthouse has had an impact through the Family Haven, which serves the most vulnerable, and there is a need to consider where else Lighthouse can use their strengths to support early years intervention and prevention.	• Lighthouse defined its early years role around preventative, "soft-entry" family support, early health screening, and parental capability building, rather than duplicating statutory early childhood education • Expanded the Family Haven in Mooroopna and won a Department of Education Early Years Award for Supporting Parents to Build Capacity • Secured ongoing funding (via Best Start and Communities for Children) for *Ready, Set, GO!*, a 6-week playgroup led by speech and occupational therapists that supports toddlers with developmental delays while on NDIS or clinical waitlists • Co-located Maternal & Child Health nurses, the Primary Care Connect Paramedic Clinic, Centrelink, CALD outreach workers, and an Orange Sky laundry pod directly at the Family Haven.

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Recommendations	Progress
3. Develop Lighthouse's role as a backbone collective impact organisation to leverage networks and funding. As Lighthouse continues its progress as a part of the social infrastructure of Greater Shepparton, it will be important to have clear roles and responsibilities around partnerships, funding, delivery of initiatives and sustainability of activities.	• Formulated the *Sustaining Lighthouse 10-Year Roadmap (2025–2035)*, explicitly structuring Lighthouse as a lean systems-level backbone while establishing staged co-delivery models to transition signature direct-delivery programs (OLLY, Pit Stop, Family Haven) to external partner agencies over time • Sourced over $2.1 million in non-government funding, with 100% of funding now secured via multi-year contracts (3–4 years) as of FY27 • Acted as the funded backbone lead to secure a landmark $2.5 million, 4-year grant from the William Buckland Foundation / Equity Trustees to launch the *Goulburn Region Open Dialogue Connect (GRODC)* youth mental health model alongside Berry Street, GV Health, headspace, and the Open Dialogue Centre.
4. Explore formalising an MoU with local council to clearly communicate Lighthouse's role to the community. GV Cares emerged out of the 2020 lockdown and 2022 Floods as a key initiative to support the community and as a part of critical social infrastructure. In order to play a role in emergency responses, more formal agreements may be required.	• Established formal MOUs and co-funding with Council across key programs, including Best Start (funding Ready, Set, GO!), CALD Outreach Worker co-location, and joint representation on committees (e.g. GSCC Volunteer Managers Network, Connecting Youth Expo)
Operational recommendations	
5. Focus on targeted stakeholder engagement, partnership planning and implementation. It is recommended that Lighthouse develops and shares a stakeholder engagement plan to support a strategic approach to community partnerships. Communicating this will be useful when sharing the impact of work being completed with funders and the community.	• Scaled its active partnership network to 274 active partners (from 188 as of 2023) across government, philanthropy, local businesses, schools, and health providers • Created and resourced a dedicated senior Strategic Partnerships and Innovation Manager role to lead stakeholder engagement, co-delivery transitions, and partnership management • Lighthouse leadership actively sits on over 20 regional committees and working groups (e.g., Shepparton Education Plan Advisory Board, Communities for Children, Inter-agency Settlement Network) • Directly supported 30 primary schools and 9 secondary/alternative settings through tailored visits, industry immersions, and newsletters.
6. Provide greater nuanced evidence of Lighthouse's value. It is recommended that the organisation seek to quantify the impact it is having on the community, building on this report. This will be useful to secure future funding, communications and advocacy.	• Commissioned SVA to conduct this Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluations and adapt SROI methodologies specifically to quantify the social value of a *place-based backbone team* • Built compelling economic evidence, demonstrating a projected $121m local economic boost from raising Year 12 completion rates to Victorian averages, a 2.74:1 SROI, and $673,596 in avoided government costs for every young person diverted from statutory juvenile detention • Outcomes-Focused Measurement: Published the updated *Lighthouse Outcomes Framework (Dec 2024)*, embedding regular participant survey data into formal impact reporting.

Recommendations	Progress
7. Enhance collaborative measurement and evaluation. In the first instance, Lighthouse needs to set clear goals and targets (KPIs) as a backbone organisation. In addition, there is a need to work together with partners to measure and evaluate their collective efforts, to see if they have moved the needle on deep-seated issues.	• Partnered with Seer Data & Analytics to transform static reports into a live, auto-updating digital *State of Greater Shepparton Children's Report* dashboard, anchored to the national ARACY Nest Framework. This model has drawn national attention, with other Victorian regions (Ballarat City Council, Best Start) replicating Shepparton's approach • Built internal digital dashboards and streamlined biannual survey feedback loops across participants, referrers, and volunteers for real-time program refinement. • Established shared measurement and evaluation practices with project partners as part of the GRODC initiative, including creation of a youth and lived experience leadership group and development of a shared Theory of Change, outcomes framework and indicators for measurement of success. This includes prioritising outcomes for young people and those with lived experience, providing feedback and advice to project partners and the co design of monitoring and evaluation data collection surveys and tools. This enables project partners and contributing signatories to measure impact against shared priorities and project goals.
8. Consider greater representation of multi-cultural and First Nations peoples on the board and staff of Lighthouse. It was acknowledged that Lighthouse has made, and continues to make, positive steps in this direction by employing three indigenous staff out of sixteen staff, however more could be done to ensure greater diversity within the organisation	• Created and embedded a dedicated *Youth Lived Experience Role* and appointed CALD Hub Leaders across all three Community Hubs (where 77% of families speak a language other than English) • Conducted whole-staff cultural immersions and Treaty briefings (e.g. With Jarvis Arkinson), supported First Nations youth through the *Aunties* program, and co-convened national listening events with the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence • Relaunched an inclusive Youth Council with mandatory representation of First Nations, CALD, and lived-experience youth. • Prioritised First Nations and CALD recruitment for Board vacancies, embedding diversity goals directly into the 10-Year Sustainability Roadmap.

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Appendix D: Lighthouse Programs

Timing	Program	Activities	Cohort
	Backbone	The central co-ordination, data and enabling infrastructure at Lighthouse, including the facilitation and/delivery of: • Volunteer network with 90 active members • Laptops with Love program: repurposing laptops to provide to vulnerable community members for children and families • Community Consultations, including 1000 Conversations and Slice and Say • State of Greater Shepparton Children Report, the digital dashboard delivered in partnership with Seer Data • Data and Evaluation, Funding, Scholarships (Primary and Secondary) • Art Festival • Partnerships for purpose	Adults, children, families, organisations across the community
2017–current	OLLY (Opportunity and Life Links for Youth)	An inclusive, after-school drop-in youth space and umbrella program designed for secondary school-aged teenagers that provides a safe, physical environment with trusted adult role models personal hygiene supplies, and soft service referrals: • Offers hot meals and emergency food packs • Provides material aid, including clothes, school uniforms, personal hygiene supplies • Service navigation/advocacy/referrals • Excursions and incursions • Delivers structured life-skill workshops such as music production, creative arts and job readiness to build confidence and connection	Young people (school aged cohort)
2018–current	Community Hubs	Three primary school-based "soft-entry" hubs, delivered in partnership with Community Hubs and CatholicCare that support multicultural women and young families with: • Supported playgroups • Conversational English classes • Social connection activities • Parent engagement • Referrals/Service Supports for parents, to maternal health, speech pathology, legal, and social support services. • Established at St Georges Road, Wilmot Road, and Mooroopna Park Primary Schools	Early Years - primary

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Timing	Program	Activities	Cohort
2020–current	Family Haven	Provides a safe space where young families can meet, share a meal, and connect with others and build parental capacity through referrals: • Material Aid • Orange Sky • Playgroup (umbrella model) • Ready, Set, GO! • Service navigation/advocacy/referrals • Partner service on site	Adults, children, families
2021–current	Pit Stop	A hands-on youth re-engagement program tailored for secondary-aged students who risk disengaging from school or prefer practical learning, utilizing mentors and industry professionals to teach life skills and increase aspiration for careers in local industries. • Includes Second Spin, providing young people with practical, purpose-driven learning by restoring donated bikes and scooters for community members in need.	Young people (secondary school aged cohort)
2021–current	Primary Programs	Early aspirational initiatives for upper primary students (Grades 5–6) designed to boost school attendance, social confidence, and career literacy before the transition to secondary school. • School supports • Book Buddies • Industry tours/immersions: students explore local industries and vocational options alongside community mentors • Learning Through Lunch • Material Aid • Hands on learning • Healthy Meals Programs (volunteers)	Primary students
2025–current	YouThrive	Delivers secondary school transition initiatives, including the peer-led Branch Out Mentoring program and leadership scholarships. It helps secondary students develop confidence, life skills, and clear post-school education and employment pathways. Delivered in collaboration with YouThrive Victoria.	Secondary students
2026–current	Foodladder	An agri-tech and food security initiative delivered in partnership with Food Ladder Australia with the construction of solar-powered, hydroponic greenhouses at schools. • Generates 250,000 kgs of produce annually per site	Primary and secondary students, surplus provided to community

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Timing	Program	Activities	Cohort
		• Supplies produce for school daily breakfast and lunch clubs, cooking classes, and families experiencing food insecurity • Established at Gowrie Street Primary and Mooroopna Park Primary • Uses an AI-powered EdTech curriculum to link hands-on food growing directly to STEM, horticulture, and agricultural career pathways	members experiencing food insecurity
2026–current	GRODC	A region-wide youth mental health early-intervention initiative that uses youth-led network meetings that involve family and trusted support circles early to address mental health challenges before they reach a crisis point.	Young people
2022–2025	Life Links (GSSC)	A framework and approach to assist young people's capability and resilience navigating life's challenges so they can participate and unlock their potential.	

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Appendix E: Lighthouse Partners

At the time of writing this evaluation, there are 274 active Lighthouse partners.

Categories	Number of partners
In-kind contributor	43
User group and educational setting	48
Collaborator/Organisational partnerships	98
Philanthropic supporters and grants	20
Funder Government	9
Referral partner	46
Financially contributing - Local supporters	10
Total	274

Lighthouse would like to thank all partners for their generous support and contributions over the evaluation period.

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The following references compile the footnotes listed in the body of the report.

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Social Ventures Australia
Brisbane | Darwin | Melbourne | Perth | Sydney | ABN 94 100 487 572 | AFSL 428 865
info@socialventures.org.au | socialventures.org.au