

Future Generation Global: Why Impact Matters Webinar  
Tuesday 13 August 2024 at 10:00am (Sydney time)

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Hello and welcome to a special webinar from Future Generation Global on why Impact Matters. Thanks so much for joining us. My name is Caroline Gurney and I am the CEO of Future Generation. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of this land where I'm sitting and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities. I pay my respects to elders past and present. I am thrilled today to be joined by Jennifer Westacott, the Chair of Future Generation Global as we launch our groundbreaking impact report. Welcome, Jennifer.

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO**

Thanks very much. Good to be with you.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Also, joining us a little later on will be Future Generation Social Impact Director Emily Fuller and two of our amazing, incredible not-for-Profit Partners I Can Network and Youth Opportunities who are going to tell their story and talk about the impact they've made. So ever since Future Generation was founded 10 years ago, we've been at the forefront of helping young Australians with our unique model of financial and social returns. And the impact report we are launching today really keeps us at that cutting edge of philanthropy in Australia. It measured the combined impact of the great work that our not-for-profit partners are doing to prevent mental ill health and promote wellbeing in young Australians. As some of you may know, measuring impact is incredibly difficult, but it's become increasingly important and we believe this is the first time that Australian philanthropic group, and its not-for-profit partners have worked together to try to measure impact at this kind of portfolio level. Jennifer, if I may go to you first. You've described Future Generation as a unique double dividend and I love that term, but what do you mean by that and why? Let's go to the title. Why does Social Impact matter?

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO:**

Thanks. What I mean by that is that you get a double dividend, you get the dividend of investing in a great fund that's well managed, that gives great returns to our shareholders above as we reported in our AGM above the average. And so people are investing in a kind of really sound balanced portfolio and getting dividends accordingly, but more importantly that 1% of our funds is going to this youth mental health prevention. And so we're getting that double dividend of investing your money, getting a return, but also being part of doing something really important from a social point of view and making a real impact. If I go to Impact, I think there's two fundamental reasons why impact matters. The first is as our funders, our shareholders want to actually see what we are achieving and they want us to be transparent. We are very grateful for the generosity of our shareholders, but they do expect to see, and in my view are entitled to see well are we making a difference?

And so this impact tool allows us, I think to both set the impact now, but hopefully we can measure this longitudinally and start to see over time whether we're really making even bigger inroads. The second is that we have decided to fund youth mental health prevention and we believe this is really important, but it's a chronically underfunded area in the mental health system. So what we are hoping through this impact report is that we can encourage others to invest in this space, that we can provide the evidence about what works and we can particularly build up the evidence base for government to invest. And right off the bat here, I want to thank our NFP partners for the incredible work they're doing. We're going to hear from them today, but I don't think we should underestimate the important job they perform every single day on behalf of some of the most vulnerable people in Australia.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

I couldn't agree more. I mean all of our social impact partners, your not-for-profits, they've really risen to the challenge of full accountability for their impact. And that's been a journey and it's been hard to do as well because you are asking them, some of them to step out of their comfort zone and measure in a different way. So we are thrilled to be joined by two of those partners today. We have Chris Varney from I CAN Network and we have Taicea Agnew from Youth Opportunities, both of you. Thank you very much for being with us today. So Taicea, I'm going to start with you and I was with you in Adelaide at a wonderful event that you hosted to actually raise the profile of what's needed for young people to help them and what's

going to get them through. So we are going to go to the report's headline numbers, but I think when you are discussing impact, it's really important not to lose sight of the human stories behind the lives that you are changing. So can you tell us a little bit about what you do as an organisation and give us an example of a young Australian that you've supported, please?

## TAICEA AGNEW:

Yes, absolutely. Caroline. Hello everyone. Happy Tuesday. So Youth Opportunities has been actually running as a not-for-profit for 26 years now. And so we've actually helped over 16,000 graduates from our programs. And the programs we do are really personal leadership because we really believe in the power of personal leadership, which involves social emotional learning competencies, positive mental health strategies, tools, and enterprise skills. So that really the young person's taking responsibility for their own choices and outcomes. And this mindset we've seen leads to academic and career success improve psychological health, enhance motivation and perseverance. So we do quite a robust amount of outcome and evidence-based programs we measured before and after, especially particularly around EPOCH scores, which really measures engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness and happiness. And on average there's a 35 to 43% reduction in psychological mental disorder health disorder. So it's really preventative to help young people have the tools to know how to approach life, what toolkits they can use to help them think about their career goals.

So for example, we've had, I actually taught the program earlier on the year because I kind of felt that I couldn't sit here in front of anybody and not really with integrity talk about the program unless I actually knew what the magic was. I can't tell you actually what the magic is because it is quite unique in the psychological underpinnings and the research informed practices. But there was a girl who came onto the program and she just sat in a corner, didn't want to know anybody, put her headphones on, a hoodie on, really was completely segregated. And by week three she was coming into the class. It was one day a week for 10 weeks absolutely transformed. It was just phenomenal to even view it because I went up to her, I said, oh, well what's changed? How come you look so much in a better space?

I'm so proud of you, so happy for you, but what's changed for you? She said, I realize in this group of 20 students I've made friendships I never thought I'd make. I understand that other people feel the same way I feel and that I'm not alone and that I actually can take control of my

own life and make some decisions because it's all about what they can control and what to do about those feelings. And we've seen other evidence around the ripple effect for students and their families as well. There was another graduation I went to where the mother got up just recently, absolutely in floods of tears in front of everyone, said Really, really appreciate, really love my daughter. But this was our last chance to living. We've moved to three schools, daughter's not doing well, breaking the family down, and we thought we'd lost her for good. She's done this program, she's now turning up, they want to turn up to school, they realize they have something to aim for, that they want to be in the career. They start having better relationships at home. And she said the ripple effect of the school, what the school felt and also what the young person felt and the family at home, it completely saved them. So it's phenomenal the preventative measures that you can take to really enable young people to be their best versions.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

Excellent. That's an amazing, and I loved hearing from the four students the other night and talk about what an impact the actual course and what you do had made. So thank you so much for that. So Chris, what about you? I mean you have a very interesting story. Well, but I'd love to hear more about I CAN and how it really helps young autistic people and their mental health.

## CHRIS VARNEY:

Thanks so much Caroline. Thanks so much to Future Generation Global for having me here today and for your tremendous support. I really enjoyed listening to you Taicea. So I CAN Network, we're an autism mentoring program. We work across schools and we work across online. So our model is we employ autistic and neurodivergent Australian adults to run group mentoring sessions for autistic neurodivergent teenagers and kids in schools and online. So it's a special model because a lot of the young people that we mentor turn into our staff. It's an extensive program. So we work across 135 Victorian government schools and then a good 24 non-government schools. And then there's about 1000 young people in our online program. The mental ill health experience by our young people is really concerning. There is quite an overlap between the autism and mental ill health discussions and communities in Australia. So 80% of the young people we work with experience anxiety and 13% of the young people we work with experience suicidal thoughts.

And the evidence base after successive independent evaluations that we've had is that it's

very powerful for a young person when they meet an adult who's walked in their shoes who can tell them that it gets better and that there's nothing wrong with you. The way you think, the way you work, the way you process the world is all natural that makes you you and you are great the way you are. And those powerful messages do a lot for confidence, optimism, belonging and self-acceptance. To share one story similar to Taicea, at the beginning of 2018, we were piloting our online mentoring program and I was running a group that had a young person named Henry in it. I'll call him Henry, I've given him an alias. Henry was, he was a character, was prone to interrupting, struggled to understand the group talking order that we had in our online mentoring sessions.

And I'll admit I would get to the end of an online group session with him and I was pretty tired. It was a lot of structuring and prompting to support wonderful Henry, and he had fantastic ideas and input. He would just get so stimulated and excited with the content that his energy knew no bounds and structure, he needed constant structure. His parents were on the phone to me regularly and we were working out little solutions for him. And today in 2024, he's now one of my staff, he's now running online mentoring programs. That's a testament to all his family, all the many people. I'm not saying I can as a credit for all of that. I'm just saying that it's fantastic to run an organisation that does create space for Henry and helps him develop the confidence, belonging and now the self-efficacy to enjoy employment.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

I love that. Chris, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing. And I think it's really important as both of you have done, to bring really the stories alive of the young people you've helped because there are millions of young people out there and our not-for-profits obviously have supported many, many of them. And I love hearing about what you do because I think you are the reason why we're here and why Future Generation was set up in the first place. I'd now like to welcome Emily Fuller, who's our Social Impact Director, and Emily has been instrumental in measuring our impact. And Emily, are you there?

## EMILY FULLER:

I'm here. Hi Caroline.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

Excellent. So Emily, this report is really part of this groundbreaking initiative to measure

collective impact of our entire portfolio of not-profit partners who work within the wellbeing and prevention space. This is something the board was really keen on that we measure up fund managers, they track their performance and as Jennifer will talk to as well, the investment side is incredibly important, but the social impact is really important. So it's actually very rare in Australia to measure impact at this level that we've done. So perhaps if you could give us an overview of what we've done in our report would be wonderful. Thank you.

**EMILY FULLER:**

Absolutely. Thank you. And I think everyone can get a glimpse of the diversity and the complexity of the work that our partners do just from hearing from Chris and Taicea really briefly. So you can imagine how complex it is to bring that together. So bring the impact of 14 different organisations that are complimentary in the fact that they're all working towards that overarching goal of prevention, but they're getting there in very different ways with different strategies in different contexts and with different young people. So that's why it's rare to do, but if we are not trying to measure all our partners work in their entirety, we're not going to have the information we need to understand the progress we are making towards prevention. And we need that data, as Jennifer said, to be able to encourage others to join us and funding more in the prevention space.

So we were determined to do impact measurement at the portfolio level. And the way we do it is we collect data from our partners in three broad buckets. So the first one is organisational goals and aims, and we'll talk about that a bit later. The second one is the reach and demographic information about the young participants who are in their programs. And thirdly, what are the outcomes for those young people as a result of their participation? And that's really the work of impact measurement. We're trying to understand the positive change in the lives of the young people who've participated. And to do that we use a framework that's very common in human services and impact work and it's called a theory of change. And it basically acts as a roadmap to say if we provide these inputs such as funding and expertise of our nonprofit partners and that enables these activities to take place with these young people, these will be the short, medium and long-term outcomes.

And all the outcomes in our theory of change are based on evidence that already exists about how to safeguard wellbeing and how to prevent poor mental health. So each of our partners has their own path through that roadmap where they select the activities that they're doing

with young people and they select the outcomes that are most relevant to their work and they provide us data on those outcomes through a tech platform. And we bring that together and you can see the result of that in our report. I think we might have a slide somewhere with some of the highlights, but we can see from that demographic participant data that we gather, we know that our partners together had over 5.3 million young people participating in their programs and services in 2023, which is a remarkable reach. And in terms of the outcomes data, we have 12 different short-term outcomes and together our partners provided us with 73 different data points that show progress on those outcomes. And Taicea and Chris have brought to life those kind of outcomes, but they include things like increased understanding of mental health or how to seek help, improved confidence and even building of skills and coping strategies.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

I think we do have some slides which we're going to put up, but maybe I think from my point of view, I think the real work of impact measurement, as Emily said, is really not are we reaching them, but exactly what positive change we are having on their lives. And with this sort of the way we are measuring that impact, we can do that. So that number that Emily just said, that 5.3 million plus, I find that truly remarkable that that's across every state and territory in the programs and services. And I think the board is incredibly proud. I mean I can go to Jennifer for that to actually say that we've measured this and that number is I think I would say pretty much, much more bigger than we thought it would be from when we originally putting this portfolio together. But really Emily, I want to congratulate you and I want to congratulate all of our partners because we were awarded the 2024 Philanthropy Australia Collaboration Award for this work.

And that also goes to our 14, not-for-profit partners as well as social outcomes, which actually developed our impact measurement framework and see a data and analytics which operationalized it on their platform. And if anybody would like to go through our platform, we can definitely do that with you because we want to encourage others to actually measure their impact because I think it just tells a much, much bigger story. So I am seeing quite a lot of questions come in at the moment. So please do start if you haven't sent a question and we'll get to those shortly. But please use the chat box. I'm going to go back to you, Jennifer, because you mentioned earlier that we are keen to use the Impact Measurement Initiative to build the case for greater investment in mental ill health prevention. And obviously you've

worked in the mental health prevention field before. Perhaps you could expand on that for us.

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO:**

Yeah, look, I think we've got a portfolio that demonstrates in a practical level the impact you can have and particularly in the area of prevention and being able to measure that in this tool. And that's allowed us now to call on the federal government to match our funding over the next three years. And that's really important because this plus the case for change is really compelling. I don't think there's any other group or any other set of conditions like mental health that have such a broad terrible impact on people's lives, particularly young people, whether it's being able to finish their education, whether it's their relationships, whether it's being able to get a job, if you take a macro figure, you've got a 70 billion impact on the economy. But there's a couple of really important proof points that I think we've got to keep two sides of the argument going.

There's a massive case for change and we can prove that what we are doing has an effect. We've got years of increasing funding to mental health, but we are not actually halting the surge of conditions amongst young people. Just a bit of data. Some 38% of 16 to 24 year olds experience a mental health condition in 2022. And I suspect that's an underreporting because of Covid suicide accounted for 30% of deaths in Australians age between 15 and 17 and 32% of deaths in those aged 18 to 24. And that's just a really terrible figure if you sort of do the maths on that somebody over the next couple of days is going to take their life because our system is not working for them. And despite prevention being on the federal government's agenda, only around 1% of the 10 billion spent on mental health goes to prevention.

So we are recognised as a leader in the treatment of youth mental health conditions, but we are not directing our policy focus to prevention. And if we don't do that, we're just going to have this massive cost that I've gone through. But it's the cost on people that I really think we've got to keep talking about. And there's lots of evidence in areas like stroke in cancer and heart disease where putting that focus on prevention has made a super, super big difference. And I think about the words of the late wonderful Desmond Tutu who said, there comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in. And that's what we're all about. Why are people falling through the cracks? How can we prevent this from happening and how can we measure in a practical way what works

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Well said, well said. So as well as building the case prevention, we are also hoping that the impact measurement initiative we done will build the case of funding, not-for-profits in a particular way at Future Generation. We provide our partners with Untied multi-year funding. So Chris, I'd like to bring you in again. What does this style of funding mean to the I CAN network?

**CHRIS VARNEY:**

Thanks, Caroline. It's made an amazing difference. So you can track the difference through the setup of our customer relationship management system. So we used Salesforce as our CRM platform and we've been able to take I CAN from where we were to where we need to be through that. It's very hard to get a grant funding for a project like that because CRMs are expensive. Their project timelines seem to always go over time. It requires an organisation who understands CRM understands the power of data, and FGG has just been that for us. So now that we've got all our systems running through Salesforce, we can continue being a remote team. So I employ 83 autistic neurodivergent adults, and there's people with all sorts of reasons why working from home is far easier for them. So having a CRM that's comprehensive where our systems are all online, means that staff can work from the privacy of their home and meet all their sensory needs.

And it means that we continue to leverage the great lived experience that's so important in our program design and delivery. So it's meant that we've been able to scale up much more effectively because I can show various partners, various governments than the schools and young people that we're bringing in. I can provide demographic data in a sensitive way, I can track the satisfaction ratings across the program attendance, and I can also see where things aren't working. And that's really important. It's important that you can get quick evidence of how your staff training and your tools are fairing and A CRM if you've set it up well, will show you that pretty quickly. And when you're running a program that's now benefiting 3000 families, it's hard to, you can't rely on Excel spreadsheets anymore. You have to have a system that's really going to be robust and point out to your team where the little errors are. So that's been an absolute blessing and that's entirely thanks to FGG.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Chris, I am really impressed in terms of you using the CRM system because so many organisations have Salesforce and CRM systems, but you have really made it work for your organisation as you can see by the impact numbers. So that's fantastic. Taicea, how about you obviously in terms of how has Untied funding helped you?

**TAICEA AGNEW:**

It is been so amazing and so impactful for us, Caroline. I mean, I've been here a year now and at Youth Opportunities, the ability to have the funds and know that you have a multi-year funding agreement so that you have that diversification of revenue. You're not just focused in one pot because as any operating organisation being a not-for-profit or any other business, you have to try and have that diversification of revenue and have that understanding that the funds will be coming back. Then we can have agreements with the schools to say, Hey, we have this amazing amount of funding, it's untied. We can help you provide the things that you need because the schools are also doing it tough. So it means that we have a more sustainable and solid reach to reach more students, more young people, and also helps us ensure that the value adds that they're looking for.

So with the money, we've been able to do things like increased family webinars to help family understand how best to get the best version of their young people out and what they're learning, educators, caregivers, teachers. We do also graduate engagement for wraparound for two years as well. So that funding, because it's not tied to a specific thing, we can then utilize across a multiple of things. And you think of it now, the young person will do a 10 week program or an eight week program by the school staff or by us in South Australia and school staff in interstate. They can then have a graduate engagement of at least five workshops throughout the year to really solidify their learning and touch base that they've got those healthy habits and they're tracking well, they have scholarships and all sorts of other things. So it's phenomenal for us to be able to really plan ahead to say, what do we need to do and how can we really, really be student focused and student centered with the schools to provide that support.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Excellent, thank you. Thank you for sharing that, Jennifer. Emily, I mean, our drive to give this

type of funding is very much best philanthropic practice. I mean, I was at the Philanthropy Australia conference the other day and they were all talking about untied funding and what a difference it makes. I mean, Jennifer, what are your thoughts on this?

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO:**

Well, if you read the Good Giving Guide, it talks about flexible untied funding. I think it's about getting comfortable with your partners and it does involve a trust relationship because they're working on the ground. We're not, they're seeing things day to day, we're not. And so giving them the flexibility to respond to things as they come up and valuing and trusting their expertise. I mean, one of the arguments against this is, well, how do you know where the money's going? I think what we're interested in is what's the effect and what's the impact? And again, having this tool allows us to show that because I've been around these sectors for a long time and what I've noticed in the mental health sector and in the non-for-profit sector more generally is that people are consumed with almost an exhausting array of reporting back to their funders, which is still not really answering the question, am I making a difference?

And when I used to chair Mental Health Australia, I'd meet organisations where they had people who should have been serving their communities who were filling in forms for the Commonwealth or state government. That's just an exhausting task. What we want to do is give that flexibility and more sit down with our partners and say, what are their aims? How do they know what's working? How are we going to measure the targets? And then of course, pulling it all together in this impact report and tracking that on an annual basis. That's got to be a much, much better way of delivering this important service than asking people to fill out reams of forms.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

I think they would all agree with you, Emily. So across our partners, we are tracking 109 measurable goals and we are looking at every one of them. Tell us more about the feedback we are getting and whether this funding is leading to greater effectiveness.

**EMILY FULLER:**

Sure. Well, I think Chris and Taicea's comments are really reflective of what we're seeing across the board with our partners. And while it is early days across those 109 organisational goals, we're already seeing that 70% of them are either on track to be achieved within a three

year period. They're three year goals or they've already been achieved ahead of time. I think the argument that you can't track the progress of funding that's untied is probably not imaginative enough. I think you can track it 109 goals are a lot for 14 organisations and they're really varied, as varied as the organisations and their stages of development, but they include really practical things like increasing their reach to young people, so reaching more, expanding the number of locations that they work in or growing their capacity or infrastructure in key functions that will underpin their future success.

And we've heard an example from Chris today. So a CRM system, it's really hard for nonprofits to find funding for those sort of backend functionalities that can really underpin strong growth, accelerate impact. So we're really happy to listen to our partners and hear what their priorities are, work out a measurable goal for that and do that over time. So watch this space, but we are really hoping that with the data that we are gathering on this, we'll be able to contribute to that evidence base for this style of funding that, as Jennifer mentioned, is really well accepted as best practice. But because there aren't really many examples of it, there's not a lot of hard data. So if we can do that and share that with others, that'll make a really good contribution to the sector as well.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

So we've gone through some of the key areas, but let's look at one of the reasons that is often given for not investing in prevention and that it's actually too hard to measure. Personally, I think we've proved that completely wrong, but Jennifer, what do you say to that? Because I think prevention is incredibly important in investing in what are your thoughts?

## JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO:

Look, I think our report today shows you can measure impact. It also shows that you've got to try to measure impact because we've got to actually start to understand what works and then what works in promoting and acting on that prevention and early intervention to manage the risk factors for youth mental health. And many of those are known and understood. What people don't do I think is join the dots and say, well, we know those risk factors. We sort of know best practice now we need to bring them together in a practical tool like we've developed to say, well, this is what works and we can measure that. And of course it goes back to the work that you've led, Caroline, of really carefully selecting our partners from a wide range of applicants 14 out of a pool of 175, a very comprehensive EOJ process on behalf of our

shareholders to go of course straight away to organisations with a proven track record that allows us, I think to say, well, we are measuring against the best in class in terms of impact.

And I think that will allow us to establish a baseline, but it will also allow us, I think from an advocacy point of view to say, here's in really compelling set of assets, here's what the economic and social evidence is, and here's the case for doing more, for making a greater impact because of the work that we've launching around impact. And of course, we should never forget that the case studies that our colleagues have gone through this morning also matter, because ultimately these things come down to people. I mean the data is crucial, but the case studies of proving that you can turn all around one life, two lives, I think really matters because if you've got my philosophy that every life on the planet deserves a dignified and fulfilling existence, then being able to tell those anecdotes really matters.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Thank you. Chris, would you like to add anything to that? The idea that it's harder to invest in prevention because you can't measure it? Has that been your experience?

**TAICEA AGNEW:**

I'm happy to go, Caroline.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Go for it.

**TAICEA AGNEW:**

I was just reflecting on Jennifer's comments and totally agree. I don't think it's actually harder. I think we have a series of outcomes pre and post programs and then following the graduate engagement session to really measure the impact. If you think about what Caroline was talking about the event last week where we had five young people look at them, one's working at KPMG around workforce for health planning. One's on her final year of paramedics. One's wants to study psychology. Another one's got her own art business and amazing skills. So the programs or anything that all the not-for-profits do together really promote that agency advocacy. So then what happens, we had two months ago, we had over 10 of our graduates feed into the Department of Human Services strategy around co-design for what young people are worried about how to solve it and what their opinion is so that they can actually use

the agency and the advocacy that they've learned in order to shape the future strategy.

What you're actually doing is, one, you've got all this data and as an accountant, I love data. So that's one thing I've got to put my hand up. But also the fact that you then get the anecdotal or the information to where are they now, what are they doing, they're impacting in the future. They're looking at strategies to help because they do have concerns, they have high anxieties, they're concerned about the climate change or housing and those, they had real views of what they think that they can help solve towards to make the world a better place. How's that not an impact in itself as well along with the data? I think it has to be a combination of the data, support it and informs us, but then the other information and the proof really shows in where these young people are and how they're really actively engaged in the future of the world. It's great.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

I think those young people on that stage when I was talking to 'em, they definitely would've agreed with you without a doubt. So Chris, in your experience,

## CHRIS VARNEY:

Yeah, I mean I completely agree with Taicea. What I would add is that it is, I guess for the people listening to give this a really practical shape. You can measure it through, I guess pre and post surveys of young people around how their social connections have increased and how their sense of belonging to community has increased. Because all our evidence based on youth mental health, youth mental ill health prevention says that when young people are connected to community, they're more likely to experience positive mental health. So tools that you adapt for in a sensitive way for the relevant youth cohort that measure connection and belonging really do cut through. The challenge for not-for-profits is that you need to also have longitudinal data on how you are sustaining that impact with the young people you are working with. And that's something I can be wrestling with.

We've achieved it in one of our services and the next mission is to achieve it in our bigger school service. Because what can happen when you run a program is if it's a short program, there can be a washout effect after it. So alongside measuring impact, you need to look at, well, what's the longitudinal data on what that impact looks like one, two years on? And I think what the amazing thing about FGG is is that Emily, when she met with all of us, had that in her

mind. And so that's been good to have FGG really keeping the beat on the drum with that focus needing to be in the mix as well.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

I have no doubt, Chris, that you will achieve the next objective pretty quickly. So the final area that I actually just want to go through in terms of what the impact report really highlights, and then we'll go to some questions. So please do send them in. We've got some really interesting ones for Chris and Taicea and Jennifer already, but please do send in some more. So I really want to highlight the collaboration between our portfolio of not-for-profit partners. We have really tried to deepen our impact through collaboration. We bring all of our partners together, both in person and online to share expertise and information to engage in joint problem solving, to provide mutual support and to build collaborative muscle towards creating better outcomes for young people in the mental system. And I feel that has been really successful. We've put together a report for government, which obviously Jennifer is very much in control of in terms of lobbying them to do more in this space. But Chris Taicea, what has this meant in practical terms for your organisation? Maybe Chris, you go first.

**CHRIS VARNEY:**

The impact report. You're talking about the impact report. Caroline, can I confirm?

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Yes, just in terms of the whole collaboration in terms of working with others.

**CHRIS VARNEY:**

Yeah, amazing. It can be very lonely and isolating when you're leading a not-for-profit because there is big reporting burdens and obligations and that's part of the mix. And running a diverse team can be complex, joyous, beautiful, draining, rewarding, all of those things. So to have a community who walk the path that you do just gives you that extra spring in your step, it's energizing, it normalises your experiences and it gives you a sense of community with others. So it's invaluable.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

We love that. Thank you. Taicea for you.

**TAICEA AGNEW:**

Yeah, I would completely agree with Chris. It's that communities of practice aspect that you're working together and you're feeling each other's pain and you're saying, are you finding this? How have you dealt with this? How can we work together to make sure we don't repeat the mistakes if there are mistakes or the challenges that we're finding what we can find from the solutions. But the other side of it is also the additional collaborations that you do with the group as well. For example, one of the not-for-profits in the group is, and it's an indigenous foundation and we've worked with them a couple of times now. We've put in a couple of grants to really help them go into indigenous communities and provide a version of the personal leadership program to give those students tools in their toolkit to be able to have the best solution outcome for themselves in the future as well.

So it is community that practice knowing and it is quite lonely in the not-for-profit as well. I mean my past history is 17 years in the higher ed sector, so it's completely different to come to a, not-for-profit, but it's also really grounding to know that they're all equally finding these kinds of situations and how we can work together to make sure that we support each other in that process is absolutely important. And then the collaborations of how we can have a greater impact, again, because the ripple effect of the other things that you then do together that also should really be part of the impact reporting I think because it's fantastic.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Excellent, thank you. So I'm going to go, this is a question for Jennifer. This is from Trevor Rowe AO in terms of ensuring our political class focuses on the issues that broadly resonate with the body political, how does one create that impact for you, Jennifer?

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO:**

Well great to hear from you Trevor, and thanks for everything you do. I think it's about what does the political dialogue really want to hear? I think everybody is impacted by mental health and so I think appealing to people and the fact that they are aware of somebody in their family or in their friendship network that's struggling and suffering or not getting ahead in the way they should be. So I think it's always important to tell those stories to get to the data and to make sure that the communities putting pressure on governments to focus their resources in the right places and getting the conversation as you say on to what matters. And I do think that

something like youth mental health does touch pretty much everybody in some way. So I think there's an area where we can really tap into community sentiment. And then I think it's that constant advocacy of what works and these reports like the impact report, which give you the data.

And I think part of our job too, Trevor, is I think what we are doing is doing some of the heavy lifting. I think governments switch off a little bit when organisations just say everything's got to be done by government. We're proving that with a unique funding model that we're doing a lot of the heavy lifting here. We're also just not, we're giving money away, if you will, in a really structured way with a very clear focus and we are doing the work on measurement and now we can take that to government and say, we're doing the heavy lifting, we know what works, we've got these incredible partners, now join with us. But I do think you are right, we've got to get a bit of a groundswell of the community really expecting government to do better because frankly we're all paying tax and we want to see that people are looked after in society and we want to see that governments are spending the resources in the places that are actually going to make a big impact.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

Thank you Jennifer. Great question. Trevor, we'll be coming back to you. Trevor, there's a question from Dave, one of our shareholders, and I'm going to give this to Emily and Chris and Taicea as well. Do these interventions impact juvenile crime? It does seem to be a better way forward than putting young people in prison. Is this then a triple dividend? Maybe if I can go to Emily first.

## EMILY FULLER:

Sure, thanks Dave. I think that's a great idea, actually a triple dividend. But to answer your question, yes, in some cases that would have an impact for kids who are involved with the justice system. Our portfolio of partners includes organisations that work with all young people and it also includes that work with young people at particular risk of developing poor mental health and certainly kids who are falling through the cracks and ending up in interactions with the law and justice are in those categories at high risk. And I'm thinking of one of our partners, backtrack, who works with those young people falling through the cracks in regional areas and they're headquartered in Armadale and they've got pretty strong data about being able to curb the trajectory of juvenile crime in Armadale while in neighboring towns with similar

demographics. The curve was going the other way. So they're really effective at engaging those young people. And I suppose the other point I would add is if you are investing in something like prevention, it has so many impacts across other fields than mental health because risk and protective factors are crosscutting. So we're having that impact in mental health, but that can also mean we're preventing kids going into the justice system.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Taicea, you've seen a lot of this as well. Would you like to add to that?

**TAICEA AGNEW:**

Yeah, I would. Thank you. And I would totally agree with Emily and it was a really good question, Dave. I mean we actually had some federal grant funding specifically for that point last year. So we developed a version of our program and we continue to do it through this funding as well where it looked at the time in early intervention pilot projects, it was called Safer Communities. And you aim to support marginalized youth age 12 to 24 at high risk to develop life skills through educational vocational skills, prevent 'em from becoming entrenched in the community justice system and promoting inclusion and build community resilience. So I think it was such a success that we even saw there a 30% reduction in students at high risk of developing mental health disorders. 97% had improved communication, 92% had specific goals to aim for and 87% had improved relationships with teachers. We had to do it differently. We had to make the program over a longer period, but a shorter day. And we really looked at referral assessment, engagement intervention, tailored one-to-one support and transition support because it was really that wraparound of working together to see how we could actually help youth that are really at risk to enter the criminal justice system and to try and see that connectedness like Chris talked about earlier as well, and to put them on the right path to give them communication skills so they don't have to take that path.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Chris, do you have anything to add to that?

**CHRIS VARNEY:**

Yeah, just to give it shape in, I guess the community I work with, a lot of autistic young men we work with can fall into the wrong crowd. When you are seeking acceptance and you're feeling

very isolated and lonely, you are more vulnerable to seeking out a crowd that gives you this feeling of acceptance but aren't really a safe community for you. So I've seen this throughout my 10 and a half years with I CAN. So what we do in our program is talk about friendliness and talk about what a good friend is, what does a good friendship look like? Really to model what a safe peer network is. And that's why we're called I CAN network and network that helps you say I can and believes in you. And I would argue that does make a tremendous difference because the consequence of when particularly an autistic young person gets in with the wrong crowd, they can misinterpret things, misinterpret laws. I have written to magistrates trying to help them understand the processing differences in autistic young people. So it's so important that we talk about what safe peer networks look like for young people.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

Thank you very much. Chris. I actually have a question here from Marion for you as well. I think it's a really important question. Can you explain what is meant by neurodivergent? What types of conditions does it encompass? Because it's something that we talk about a lot now in terms of young people that are neurodivergent, but the number is huge. So perhaps you could talk us through that please.

## CHRIS VARNEY:

Yeah, pleasure. Thanks Marion for the question. It's a big academic question you've asked. The simple answer for the benefit of everyone here is that we're talking about autistic ADHD and dyslexic young people. There are other neurodevelopmental conditions that are included, but for a quick answer here, we'll keep it at those three. We are talking about a huge community. So one in 88 Australians are autistic. If you add ADHD and dyslexia and other neuro conditions in the mix, you get one in 25. So it's a massive community.

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

It is a very big community, isn't it? And I don't think it's really, it's only recently that people are aware of that community. So I'm going to go to the next question. So this is also for Taicea and Chris, having suicide as the cause of 30% plus deaths in the 15 to 24 year olds is really alarming. Is it the case that where young people seek help, then the help is there, but what can we do better to reach those who don't actively seek help before they make catastrophic decisions? If so, how could we do this better? Maybe if I go to you, Chris, and then onto

Taicea.

**CHRIS VARNEY:**

Oh, this is a big question. Yeah. 8% of young people in our program have attempted self-harm. That is a very depressing statistic to be aware of. Overwhelmingly, you do hear that their parents', carers are aware of what's happening and it's just so important that they're connected to a range of services. The big issue we have in Australia is the wait lists in our services are far too long. A lot of our services that are onto how to support these families aren't necessarily sensitive enough to the profile of the young people that are in them. There is inadequate training, there's staff shortages, there's a myriad of issues here. It needs a proper national look at investment. We've really got to look at the people we're bringing into these services, how adequately funded they are, and we need to measure the wait lists around them because I certainly hear so many anecdotes of the time it takes, but this is a big conversation. I'll hand back to you for Taicea's input.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Taicea to you.

**TAICEA AGNEW:**

Oh my goodness. Well, I would agree with Chris. It is a very big question and I think it's complex to perhaps answer completely, but I would say the waiting lists are far too long. I worked across two universities in South Australia and particularly in the allied health division. The placements to get the students in to be the next health professionals is hard to come by because everyone's under resource shortage to help those students become their next workforce and then go on from there. The waiting list are anywhere between 18 months to above. So I think that anything that we do in terms of I can, the programs that we do, the other not-for-profits that we're working together around prevention and youth, we are building connectedness. We are letting them, they then their best versions, they reach out and connect with other people, they help each other along and they lift each other up.

They advocate for each other, they fight for what they believe in. If you look at a lot of the students that go through all of these mentoring and resilience and they learn the things that actually help each other along. So yes, we have to solve the situation from an allied health perspective and the waiting list and stuff, but also at the same time we can help with the

preventative measures to bring those graduates and the students along to help provide the services that we can to then lift each other up and to have that ripple effect across at the same time because doing nothing won't work but doing something, one student reaches out to another student that can have an absolutely life-changing moment that that student believes that they have someone that they can rely on and talk to and they then won't hopefully go down that suicide path. It's complex. There's different reasons why people do these things and a lot of it is that moment in time. If that moment in time can be, they help each other along at the same time whilst we try and sort the other wicked problems that we have, I think would be a benefit. Anyway,

## CAROLINE GURNEY:

Thanks very much. Thank you Angus for that question. We have a question from Paul, which I'm actually to ask Emily to answer. What's your view on social ventures? On Social ventures Australia pay what it takes to report and does their approach fit in with FG's model of Untied funding? Let's be very careful here, Emily. We love Social Ventures Australia.

## EMILY FULLER:

Thank you Paul. And yes, definitely the pay what it takes movement is in the same family I guess is what we would describe as untied funding. So pay what it takes is really about acknowledging that apart from the costs of running programs, organisations like I CAN and Youth Opportunities also have indirect costs of running their organisations. Like all of our organisations, there's funding that you need to keep the lights on funding that you need to run your IT systems to pay your staff because that's what creates the impact with your participants is the staff and the quality of the connection that they make with those young people. So pay what it takes is all about saying we acknowledge that there are all those underlying costs and when we make a grant, we will also add an additional amount to cover those. And I think Paul Ramsey Foundation, for example, has made a commitment to adding a 30% of any program funding, adding 30% for those underlying costs. And I guess how that fits with our model Untied funding, I guess it's more of an organic approach to that where we say we have this amount of funding for you, how can you best use it? What are your aims? And they can be program related or they can be as Chris's example is organisation focused, focused. So it's all very much in the same vein and we would strongly advocate for pay what it takes as well.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Thank you. And also, I mean Michael Traill who obviously set up SVA, we gave him a copy of our report and he actually commented on it as well, which was great for us. There's a question now from Sandy who is the CEO of Newsboys Foundation? Hi Sandy. I think I might go to Jennifer for this question because it's what are the opportunities for philanthropic foundations to collaborate with FGG and the not-for-profit partners to increase the impact, obviously something we would love to encourage.

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT AO:**

Yeah, I think at the most simple level it's buying shares to be honest. I think we've got a model that I think is working and the impact report demonstrates that it is I think some major partnerships in terms of investment with large philanthropic organisations or even smaller ones, but staying, I guess Caroline within the parameters of the model. But then I think where the other opportunity is to partner on our collective research and advocacy. So I think there's obviously, we'd love to see some of that investment which will allow us to do more, but at the same time, it would also be good to collaborate on research and collaborate on this kind of analysis. And I think we all need to collaborate on the advocacy because I think governments, I genuinely think governments want to do the right thing by the money they spend on behalf of the taxpayer.

What I used to get from ministers all the time is they often heard multiple different voices saying different things. If we could get a more unified voice on some of these issues between philanthropy and the not-for-profit sector, I think we'll have more of an impact. But I think we've all got to be seen as working towards the same goal here, prevention and really staying the course over the long period of time because this is a lifetime problem. Even if we were to be massively successful in prevention and we aim for that, there are always going to be things that you can't control for in someone's life, and it's important that we have the services there ready to catch them.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

I think that's really important, Jennifer. I mean obviously I think Jennifer, the board, me, our team, we are very much with the government in terms of doubling philanthropy by 2030. So we have put together a report, which we would really hope that all philanthropic organisations

and not-for-profits will come together to actually help the government and look at other options to make sure that we actually do get there. I think it's definitely something they want and it's something we want as well. So thank you so much for all the questions. We've got a few more, but we will come back to you because we are now at 10:59am. But maybe if I can just reiterate what Jennifer said and the back page of the report, which is now available. It's all about do well, do good and please join us and buy shares so we can all make a difference. Thank you. Thank you, Chris. Thank you Taicea. Thanks very much everyone.

**CHRIS VARNEY:**

Thanks so much, Caroline. Thanks Taicea. Thanks everyone. Well done team. Thank you.

**CAROLINE GURNEY:**

Thank you so much.