



Department of  
Primary Industries

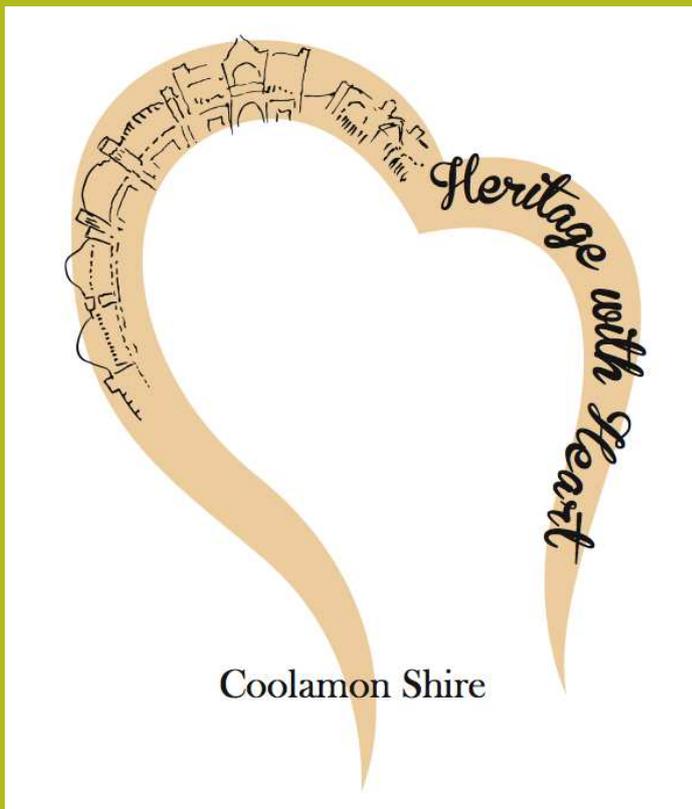


consulting

# Rural Women's Gathering

## Social Return on Investment Baseline Analysis

FULL REPORT



Launched July 2015

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Social Ventures Australia (SVA) works with innovative partners to invest in social change. We help to create better education and employment outcomes for disadvantaged Australians by bringing the best of business to the for purpose sector, and by working with partners to strategically invest capital and expertise. SVA Consulting shares evidence and knowledge to build for purpose sector capacity. SVA Impact Investing introduces new capital and innovative financial models to help solve entrenched problems. SVA Consulting partners with non-profits, philanthropists, corporations and governments to strengthen their capabilities and capacity to address pressing social problems.

SVA Consulting is a specialist consulting practice that partners with social purpose organisations to strengthen their ability to address social issues and achieve results. We support leaders to make hard decisions, galvanise teams to sustain success and share insights with the social sector. Since 2007, we have developed unique, on-the-ground experience supporting over 300 clients through 550 engagements. We work on society's most challenging issues including health, disability, housing, employment, education and Indigenous disadvantage.

We measure our success by the results our clients achieve. Our people are passionate about the work they do and the opportunity to create a better Australia.

## Acknowledgement

This analysis has been funded by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries. We wish to acknowledge the contribution made by the team from the Department to the project.

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# Executive Summary

## Key findings

- The Rural Women's Gathering (the Gathering) held in Coolamon on 12-14 September 2014 had a positive impact on the lives of women who attended as well as members of the Committee that organised the Gathering, the local community that hosted the Gathering and the New South Wales Government
- A total of approximately \$110k of cash and in-kind support was invested in the Gathering including registration payments made by participants (\$33k), NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) sponsorship (\$30k), volunteer time of Committee members (\$24k), and sponsorship and fundraising from the local community (\$16k). The total investment in the Gathering amounts to approximately \$609 per participant who attended the Gathering
- Based on this level of investment, the social and economic value created by the Gathering is approximately \$237k
- Over 66% of this value (\$161k) was experienced by women who attended the Gathering, followed by the local community which experienced 28% of the value created by the Gathering (\$68k). The remaining value was experienced by Committee members (4%, or approximately \$9k) and the NSW Government (3%, or approximately \$8k)
- When the \$237k in social and economic value generated by the Gathering is compared with the \$110k investment in the event, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio is 2.2:1. This means for every \$1 that was invested in the Gathering, approximately \$2.2 of social and economic value was created.

## About the Rural Women's Gathering

The Rural Women's Gathering is an annual event that takes place in a different NSW rural location each year. The Rural Women's Gathering has been running since 1993 and seeks to provide rural women with support, information and skills to enable them to address the myriad of challenges they face as a result of living in a rural location in Australia. The Rural Women's Gathering also aims to recognise the importance of women in agriculture and provide a focus on social and community issues within DPI.

The Rural Women's Gathering is organised by local committees with support from the NSW DPI Rural Women's Network (RWN) and in collaboration with their local community. The weekend includes a range of activities including workshops, talks from guest speakers, a gala dinner, market stalls, tours of the local area and opportunities to network. Each Rural Women's Gathering reflects the unique culture, history, industry, tourism and environment of the local community. In this way the strengths, similarities and differences of rural communities in NSW are celebrated.

The focus of this SROI analysis is the Gathering that took place in Coolamon, a town in the Riverina region of South-West New South Wales, on 12-14 September 2014. The theme of the Gathering was 'Heritage with Heart' and approximately 180 rural women attended.

## Impact of the Rural Women's Gathering

*"Rural women struggle with so many things and I am absolutely passionate about making sure that these women have access to information and networking. To me the Rural Women's Gathering is the single most important thing that our government can do for rural women and rural families in the country. There is nothing like it."*

- Gathering participant

The Gathering is designed to address the lack of support for women living in rural NSW which means their health, wellbeing, and personal and professional development are neglected. By participating in the Gathering rural women feel more connected, inspired, empowered, supported, resilient and able to have a voice about issues that matter to them. As a result, they are able to look after themselves and their families better, support each other and engage within and between rural communities more effectively.

The Gathering also has a positive impact on Committee members, the local community that hosts the Gathering and the NSW Government.

A summary of the impact created by the Gathering is presented in the following table.

Stakeholder group	Material outcomes	Value by outcome	Value by stakeholder
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>	1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends	\$11,944	<b>\$161,113 (66%)</b>
	1.2 Reduce social isolation	\$60,000	
	1.3 Increase self-confidence	\$75,075	
	1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect	\$3,000	
	1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies	\$2,494	
	1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life	\$8,600	
<b>2. Committee members</b>	2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community	\$3,978	<b>\$8,528 (4%)</b>
	2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members	-\$786	
	2.3 Develop or re-visit skills	\$1,046	
	2.4 Increase self-confidence	\$4,290	
<b>3. Local community</b>	3.1 Increase income for local businesses	\$28,108	<b>\$68,108 (28%)</b>
	3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering	\$40,000	
<b>4. NSW Government</b>	4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	\$7,500	<b>\$7,500 (3%)</b>
<b>Total value created<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>\$245,249</b>	
<b>Present value (discount rate applied)<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>\$236,934</b>	
<b>Investment</b>		<b>\$109,629</b>	
<b>SROI ratio</b>		<b>2.2:1</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Before discounting. Discounting is discussed in section 8 of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Discount rate of 2.5% applied, based on the average RBA target inflation rate. Discounting is discussed in section 8 of this report.

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As with any financial modelling, it is expected that any changes in the variables would result in changes to the SROI ratio. In nine scenarios tested the SROI ratio remained at 1.5:1 or above, indicating that in each of the scenarios tested the Gathering creates a net positive social and economic value.

## Insights

The Gathering had a number of critical elements that supported the women who attended, and also created outcomes for other stakeholders:

***Gathering participants were supported to connect, share, learn new skills and hobbies, and relax***

- Gathering participants face significant work, farm and family pressures which means their health, wellbeing, and personal and professional development are neglected
- The Gathering provided participants with an opportunity to meet up with old friends, make new friends, increase self-confidence and develop their skills and hobbies
- The Gathering also gave participants a chance to relax, reflect and re-energise

***Committee members were able to connect with their communities and learn new skills and hobbies***

- For Committee members, the Gathering greatly expanded their networks in the local community (the six towns and villages in the Coolamon Shire) in a relatively quick and easy way
- It also allowed Committee members to learn different skills and re-visit old skills, which led them to make positive changes in their lives and increase self-confidence

***The Local community was transformed through the involvement of local businesses and distribution of profits to local community organisations***

- Local businesses were involved in almost all aspects of the Gathering including catering, bus hire, entertainment and accommodation, which led to increased income
- Local community organisations contributed to making the Gathering a success through hosting events such as morning and afternoon teas. As the Gathering made a profit, approximately 16 local community organisations will receive a portion of the profits

***NSW Government was able to engage with rural communities in a relaxed, open and trusting environment***

- The Gathering provides the NSW Government, particularly DPI, with a valuable and rare opportunity to engage deeply with rural communities and develop a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face
- In the future, this could enable the NSW Government to establish stronger links with rural communities, meet rural communities' needs more effectively and have more effectively early intervention and crisis response programs in place

## Recommendations

The SROI analysis indicates that there are opportunities to increase the value created by the Rural Women's Gathering in the future. SVA Consulting recommends the following actions by DPI:

### **1. Increase the number and diversity of women attending the Gathering**

DPI should increase the number of participants at the Gathering and aim to attract a more diverse range of women. Women who would potentially benefit from participation in the Gathering include: women in need (i.e. geographically isolated; facing financial hardship; suffering from poor physical and/or mental health; otherwise vulnerable), younger women, women on the rural fringe, women who are studying at university and considering a rural placement in their careers or are the partner of someone who is considering a rural placement, Indigenous women and those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

As part of this process, DPI should consider how best to reach these women and how to make attending the Gathering as easy and useful as possible for them.

DPI currently provides some free registrations to women in need. DPI should consider expanding this initiative or seek out additional sponsorship from other sources (corporate sponsors, donations made by other Gathering participants) for these women.

### **2. Increase assistance with organisational aspects of the Gathering and create a Committee alumni group**

In consultation with past Committee members, DPI should develop a toolkit (including a set of templates, tips and other relevant information) for the Gathering as well as an indicative timetable to assist Committees with planning.

DPI should also create a Committee alumni group and encourage past Committee members to join. This will enable guidance about organising the Gathering to be more easily shared.

### **3. Support Committees to hold pre-Gathering and post-Gathering activities**

DPI should support Committees to hold pre-Gathering activities in their community approximately 12 months prior to the Gathering to educate people in the local community about what the Gathering is and ensure increased participation.

DPI should also consider whether post-Gathering activities are needed to harness the energy created by the Gathering and potentially support the local community to implement change based on issues that emerged from the Gathering.

### **4. Support Committees to provide information and services that address key policy issues for the NSW Government**

DPI should support Gatherings to provide information and services that benefit the women who attend and align with policy outcomes of the NSW Government. Based on previous Gatherings, this may include the service of counsellors, a breast cancer screening van and sessions addressing gaps in financial skills of rural women and families.

## Project approach

In 2012, the RWN developed a basic monitoring and evaluation plan to capture information about what was being achieved through the Gathering and to provide benchmarks for the future. Building on this, the RWN decided to understand and measure the value created by the 2014 Gathering in Coolamon using Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology. SROI is an internationally recognised methodology used to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or



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organisation. It is a form of cost-benefit analysis that examines the social, economic and environmental outcomes created and the costs of creating them.

This is the first SROI analysis undertaken for the Rural Women's Gathering. It is a baseline analysis which assesses the value DPI believes the Gathering has created in the past, validated by the views of stakeholders. This baseline analysis looks at the investment made and the stakeholder outcomes experienced as a result of the Gathering for the period of up to three years after the Gathering has taken place.

In conducting this SROI analysis on behalf of the RWN, SVA Consulting conducted interviews with members of key stakeholder groups including women who attended the Gathering, members of the Committee that organised the 2014 Gathering, members of the local community who were involved with or affected by the 2014 Gathering and DPI staff. SVA Consulting also conducted surveys of Gathering participants and Committee members, examined data collected by RWN and the Committee, and conducted secondary research.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About the Rural Women's Network and Rural Women's Gathering

The Rural Women's Network (RWN) is a state-wide government program within the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), part of NSW Trade & Investment. The RWN works in innovative ways to share information and promote action on rural women's issues, often in partnership with individuals, groups and non-government and government agencies.

In May 1991 a Rural Women's Conference was held in Parkes. Participants identified the need for rural women to have more opportunities to network, share ideas, access information and have a voice in decision-making. As a result, the RWN was set up in 1992.

In 1993 in Orange, the RWN along with Farm Safe Central West and a committee of volunteers instigated the first Gathering in NSW as a way of bringing women together. Four hundred women from across NSW and other states attended the event. Since then, the Rural Women's Gathering has been held at a different rural location each year.

The Rural Women's Gathering seeks to provide rural women with support, information and skills to enable them to address the myriad of challenges they face as a result of living in a rural location in Australia. It also aims to recognise the importance of women in agriculture and provide a focus on social and community issues within DPI. The Rural Women's Gathering is organised by local committees with support from the NSW DPI Rural Women's Network (RWN) and in collaboration with their local community. The weekend includes a range of activities including workshops, talks from guest speakers, a gala dinner, market stalls, tours of the local area and opportunities to network. Each Rural Women's Gathering reflects the unique culture, history, industry, tourism and environment of the local community. In this way the strengths, similarities and differences of rural communities in NSW are celebrated.

The focus of this SROI analysis is the Gathering that took place in Coolamon, a town in the Riverina region of South-West New South Wales, on 12-14 September 2014. The theme of the Gathering was 'Heritage with Heart' and approximately 180 rural women attended.

## 1.2 Context within which the Rural Women's Gathering operates

Households in rural and regional Australia experience generally lower incomes than other Australians; reduced access to services such as health, education and transport; declining employment opportunities; inadequate local infrastructure; vulnerability to drought and other natural hazards; and distance and isolation.<sup>3</sup> Compared with those living in major cities, a higher proportion of people in rural and remote areas rate their health as only fair or poor.<sup>4</sup> The cumulative impact of these multiple challenges can wear communities down and make individuals less resilient and more vulnerable to poor physical and mental health and wellbeing.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> National Rural Health Alliance Inc. and ACOSS, 'A snapshot of poverty in rural and regional Australia', October 2013, page 3, available at: [http://ruralhealth.org.au/documents/publicseminars/2013\\_Sep/Joint-report.pdf](http://ruralhealth.org.au/documents/publicseminars/2013_Sep/Joint-report.pdf). Accessed 15 December 2014.

<sup>4</sup> National Rural Health Alliance Inc. and ACOSS, 'A snapshot of poverty in rural and regional Australia', October 2013, page 8, available at: [http://ruralhealth.org.au/documents/publicseminars/2013\\_Sep/Joint-report.pdf](http://ruralhealth.org.au/documents/publicseminars/2013_Sep/Joint-report.pdf). Accessed 15 December 2014.

<sup>5</sup> See McShane et al, The Role of Farming Families in Future Economic and Community Sustainability, International Journal of Social Sustainability in Economic, Social and Cultural Context, available at: [http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/24965/1/24965\\_McShane\\_et\\_al\\_IN\\_PRESS.pdf](http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/24965/1/24965_McShane_et_al_IN_PRESS.pdf), accessed: 9 December 2014.

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The role of women in rural communities is well recognised. Of those living on the land, women account for a sizeable minority of Australia's farming workforce (28%, or 44,700 in 2011).<sup>6</sup> However, the contribution that women make to Australia's farm sector is not only measured by those who report farming as their main job. In 2011, 35,100 Australian women had a job outside the farm, helping supplement farm income while also supporting the operation of the farm through unpaid domestic work, with more than half (57%) doing 15 or more hours per week. Equally, there were around 16,000 women not employed in paid work but most (79%) spent 15 or more hours per week doing unpaid domestic work.

Women in rural and regional areas who are involved with running agricultural enterprises have been described as the "glue" holding the family farm together through taking a major role in family maintenance, hands-on farming, business planning and innovation.<sup>7</sup> However, their own wellbeing is often neglected and there is a lack of attention to women's health including areas such as domestic violence and mental health.<sup>8</sup>

In this context, the Gathering is designed to address the lack of support for women living in rural NSW which means their health, wellbeing, and personal and professional development are neglected. By participating in the Gathering rural women feel more connected, inspired, empowered, supported, resilient and able to have a voice about issues that matter to them. As a result, they are able to look after themselves and their families better, support each other and engage within and between rural communities more effectively.

### 1.3 Project objective

In 2012, the RWN developed a basic monitoring and evaluation plan to capture information about what was being achieved through the Rural Women's Gathering and to provide benchmarks for the future. Building on this, the RWN sought to deepen its understanding of the Gathering's value, to understand how the impact created by the Gathering can be increased in the future and to inform improvements to the Gathering. The methodology selected to complete this task was Social Return on Investment (SROI), performed by SVA Consulting. SROI is an internationally recognised methodology used to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or activity. It is a form of cost-benefit analysis that examines the social, economic and environmental outcomes created and the costs of creating them.

This is the first SROI analysis undertaken for the Rural Women's Gathering. It is a baseline analysis which assesses the value DPI believes the Gathering has created in the past, validated by the views of stakeholders. A baseline analysis provides a useful snapshot of the impact a program or activity has created which can be used as a benchmark for future measurement and evaluation. This baseline analysis looks at the investment made and the stakeholder outcomes experienced as a result of the Gathering for the period of up to three years after the Gathering has taken place.

In conducting this SROI analysis on behalf of the RWN, SVA Consulting conducted interviews with members of key stakeholder groups including women who attended the Gathering, members of the Committee that organised the 2014 Gathering, members of the local community who were involved with or affected by the 2014 Gathering and DPI staff. SVA Consulting also conducted surveys of Gathering participants and Committee members, examined data collected by RWN and the Committee, and conducted secondary research.

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<sup>6</sup> ABS 4102.0, 'Australian Social Trends: Australian farming and farmers', December 2012, available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features10Dec+2012#MEN>. Accessed 17 December 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy, 'Missed Opportunities: Harnessing the Potential of Women in Australian Agriculture', 1998.

<sup>8</sup> See Alston M et al, 'Brutal neglect: Australian rural women's access to health services', *Rural and Remote Health* 6:475, 2006, available at: [http://www.rrh.org.au/publishedarticles/article\\_print\\_475.pdf](http://www.rrh.org.au/publishedarticles/article_print_475.pdf). Accessed 17 December 2014.

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## 1.4 Report structure

The structure of the report is set out below.

- Section 2 includes an overview of the project approach
- Section 3 describes the investment (inputs) in the Gathering and activities (outputs) considered in the analysis
- Section 4 presents the logic underpinning the Gathering
- Section 5 includes an overview of the different stakeholder outcomes
- Section 6 describes the measurement approach adopted in this analysis
- Section 7 describes the valuation approach adopted in this analysis
- Section 8 describes the approach to the SROI calculations
- Section 9 synthesises the insights gained from this analysis and presents SVA Consulting's recommendations



# 2 Project Approach

## 2.1 Social Return on Investment

SROI is an internationally recognised methodology used to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or activity. It is a form of cost-benefit analysis that examines the social, economic and environmental outcomes created and the costs of creating them. The analysis required by an SROI is deeper than cost-benefit analysis as it is stakeholder-informed and requires broader engagement with those who experience change.

There are seven principles developed through the UK SROI Network that guide SROI analyses, which are included in Table 2.1 below.

Principle		Description
1	Involve stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stakeholders should inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued.</li></ul>
2	Understand what changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended and unintended.</li></ul>
3	Value the things that matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use financial proxies in order that the value of the outcomes can be recognised.</li></ul>
4	Only include what is material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact.</li></ul>
5	Do not over claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organisations should only claim the value that they are responsible for creating.</li></ul>
6	Be transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders.</li></ul>
7	Verify the results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure appropriate independent verification of the analysis.</li></ul>

Table 2.1 – SROI Principles<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See the SROI Guide, released in May 2009 and updated in January 2012, available at: [http://www.thesroinetwork.org/publications/doc\\_details/241-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012](http://www.thesroinetwork.org/publications/doc_details/241-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012)

## 2.2 Project methodology

The analysis has been completed across the six stages presented in Table 2.2 below.

Stage	Description
<b>Stage 1</b> Scope project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the project scope including boundaries, timing for analysis and stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2</b> Understand change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with stakeholders to understand the outcomes generated through the program. This includes testing the relationship between objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes</li> <li>Develop program logic and stakeholder logics</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b> Measure change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and measure the outcomes experienced by stakeholders through the program</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4</b> Value change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify relevant indicators and financial proxies to value the outcomes</li> <li>Define the investment for the program</li> <li>Determine those aspects of change that would have happened anyway or are a result of other factors</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 5</b> Calculate the SROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculate the outcomes and compare to the investment of the program</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 6</b> Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesise and present key findings</li> </ul>

*Table 2.2 – Project methodology*

Stages 2, 3 and 4 (i.e. understand, measure and value stakeholder outcomes) are the key stages of the analysis. As part of each stage, a number of questions need to be considered. These are outlined in Table 2.3 below and are presented to highlight the types of issues being addressed.

Understand the change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the program logic?</li> <li>What is the stakeholder logic?</li> <li>What are the changes that matter most to the stakeholders?</li> <li>What are the links between the activities and different changes experienced by stakeholders?</li> <li>Are the changes consistent across regions and between stakeholder groups?</li> </ul>
Measure the change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we know if changes have happened?</li> <li>How do we measure changes for stakeholders when there is limited data and evidence available?</li> </ul>
Value the change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the value of the changes experienced by different stakeholders?</li> <li>Using financial proxies, how valuable is a particular change?</li> <li>How long does the change last for (drop off)?</li> <li>Would this value have been created anyway (deadweight)?</li> <li>Who else contributed to the value being created (attribution)?</li> <li>Did this value creation displace other value being created (displacement)?</li> <li>What does it cost to create this value?</li> </ul>

*Table 2.3 – Questions to consider when conducting an SROI analysis*



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## 2.3 Project scope

There are two forms of SROI analyses described in the SROI Guide: a forecast and an evaluative SROI analysis.<sup>10</sup>

A forecast SROI analysis estimates the social value an organisation will create in the future. There is unlikely to be substantive evidence to support the value an organisation will create (because it has not happened yet).

An evaluative SROI analysis estimates the social value an organisation has created in the past. In contrast to a forecast SROI analysis, an evaluative SROI should be based on evidence that has been collected over time.

A baseline SROI analysis represents an alternative approach that assesses the value the organisation believes it created in the past, validated by the views of stakeholders, and provides a useful snapshot of the impact an organisation has created. This can be used as a benchmark for future measurement and evaluation.

This report details a **baseline SROI analysis** of the Rural Women's Gathering for 2014.

## 2.4 Defining stakeholder groups

SROI is a stakeholder informed methodology that involves engaging closely with stakeholders to identify and understand the changes created through a program or activity.

Based on the initial scoping of the project and stakeholder consultation, stakeholders were included in this analysis if they experienced a unique and material change as a result of the Gathering's activities during 2014.

### Stakeholder groups included in the analysis

Stakeholders included in this SROI analysis are listed in Table 2.4 below.

Stakeholder group	Rationale for inclusion in the SROI analysis
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This stakeholder group was the major beneficiary of the Gathering, and includes all women who attended some or all of the Gathering held on 12-14 September 2014</li><li>• Gathering participants were significantly impacted as they received direct support to improve the wellbeing of themselves as well as their families, each other and their local communities</li></ul>
<b>2. Committee members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Committee members experienced change due to their role in organising the Gathering, which lasted for approximately 12 months prior to the Gathering, and in attending the Gathering</li><li>• During this time, Committee members were able to experience significant change</li></ul>

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<sup>10</sup> The SROI Guide, released in May 2009 and updated in January 2012, available at: [http://www.thesroinetwork.org/publications/doc\\_details/241-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012](http://www.thesroinetwork.org/publications/doc_details/241-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012)

Stakeholder group	Rationale for inclusion in the SROI analysis
<b>3. Local community including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Workshop facilitators</b></li> <li>• <b>Local businesses</b></li> <li>• <b>Community organisations</b></li> <li>• <b>Service clubs</b></li> <li>• <b>Schools</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This stakeholder group includes all towns and villages in the Coolamon Shire (i.e. Coolamon, Ganmain, Ardlethan, Marrar, Matong and Beckom) as the Gathering involved a range of local businesses and community organisations from across the Shire</li> <li>• Local businesses contributed cash investments in the Gathering through sponsorship and some local fundraising, and experienced change due to increased business over the weekend</li> <li>• Local community organisations contributed in-kind investments in the Gathering through hosting morning and afternoon teas, and experienced change due to profits from the Gathering distributed to them</li> </ul>
<b>4. NSW Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Government, including DPI, experienced change as a result of deeper engagement with rural communities and deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face</li> <li>• This came about through contributing a cash investment to the Gathering as well as DPI representatives interacting with Gathering participants</li> </ul>

Table 2.4 – Stakeholder groups included for the SROI analysis

### Stakeholders excluded from the analysis

Stakeholders were excluded from the analysis if their input or changes were not directly associated with the Gathering’s activities or were not deemed to be material. The decision to exclude a stakeholder group was determined through the scoping phase of the project and throughout the stakeholder consultations. The rationale for excluding stakeholder groups is outlined in Table 2.5 below.

Stakeholder group	Rationale for exclusion in the SROI analysis
<b>Local Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with members of the Local Council in Coolamon, as well as Committee members and Gathering participants, indicated that the Local Council was not a material stakeholder</li> <li>• Local Council assisted with preparing the application to host the Gathering and some printing leading up to the Gathering, but otherwise had minimal involvement</li> <li>• On the basis, any changes experienced by Local Council were not deemed to be material</li> </ul>
<b>Gathering participants’ families (including family members who attended the Gathering and stayed at home)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group includes partners and children who travelled to Coolamon with a Gathering participant and families who stayed at home</li> <li>• Approximately 4 men participated in the Partners Program (Saturday 9am - 4pm) and no children were placed in the free crèche service offered at the Gathering</li> <li>• On the basis of this minimal involvement, as well as consultation with Gathering participants, any changes experienced by this stakeholder group were not directly associated with the Gathering’s activities</li> </ul>
<b>Guest speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given the small amount of participation in Gathering activities by guest speakers overall, and therefore the small numbers of this</li> </ul>



Stakeholder group	Rationale for exclusion in the SROI analysis
	stakeholder group who could have directly experienced change, any changes experienced by guest speakers were not deemed to be material

Table 2.5 – Stakeholder groups excluded from the SROI analysis

## 2.5 Stakeholder engagement

An SROI analysis requires that the material changes are described, measured and valued. The purpose of stakeholder engagement is to understand the relative importance of changes (or outcomes), how stakeholders would prove and measure the outcomes, how they would place value on the outcomes, the duration of outcomes and what proportion of the outcomes are attributable to others or would have taken place anyway.<sup>11</sup>

Over the course of the project, SVA Consulting undertook:

- A program logic session with past Committee members and DPI representatives at the beginning of the project
- A program logic session testing and refining the logic with current Committee members
- Interviews with 19 stakeholders including Gathering participants, Committee members and members of the local community
- Surveys of Gathering participants and current Committee members.

Throughout the project SVA Consulting consulted with representatives from DPI to share and test interim and final key messages from the SROI analysis. The Chair of the current Committee was also involved with testing the analysis including investments (inputs) and outcomes experienced by Committee members and the local community.

Table 2.6 below is a summary of the stakeholder groups engaged for this analysis, the size of the group and the number of stakeholders engaged in each group.

Stakeholder group	Size of group	Stakeholder engagement
1. Gathering participants	180 women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 78 survey responses</li> <li>• 5 interviews</li> </ul>
2. Committee members	10 women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 survey responses</li> <li>• 4 interviews</li> <li>• Program logic workshop with 7 women</li> </ul>
3. Local community including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop facilitators</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Community organisations</li> <li>• Service clubs</li> </ul>	Approx. 200 people <i>(including 30 workshop facilitators; 25 local businesses with approx. 2 employees each; 6 community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 interviews</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1 for the interview guide for Gathering participants.

Stakeholder group	Size of group	Stakeholder engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools</li> </ul>	<i>organisations and service clubs with 20 active members each)</i>	
4. NSW Government	N/A <sup>12</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program logic workshop with 5 DPI representatives</li> <li>Up to 3 representatives from DPI engaged through testing of interim and final key messages from SROI analysis</li> <li>Interview with Minister for Primary Industries attempted</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>83 survey responses</b></li> <li><b>19 interviews</b></li> <li><b>Two program logic sessions</b></li> </ul>

Table 2.6 – Summary of stakeholder engagement

Based on previous experience with similar projects and initial consultations with DPI, it was determined that interviews (between 20 - 45 minutes) either in person or on the phone would be the most appropriate method for engaging with the stakeholder groups. Interviews were conducted in Coolamon on 13–14 October 2014 to understand the changes experienced by Gathering participants, Committee members and members of the local community. Consultation with members of Local Council also took place, although this stakeholder group was eventually excluded from this analysis. Consultation with DPI took place over the course of the analysis including through a program logic workshop with 5 DPI representatives and testing of interim and final key messages from the SROI analysis either in person or on the phone. An online survey was used to test the changes experienced by a wider group of Gathering participants and Committee members than could be interviewed individually.

All stakeholder groups considered to experience material changes have been consulted (see Table 2.4). SVA Consulting conducted all of the interviews and recorded interview notes by hand or on a computer which was then transferred into a spreadsheet containing the interview notes for each stakeholder group. These were referred to throughout the analysis.

<sup>12</sup> Note: For a government stakeholder, we do not measure how many people within government experience change but rather how the efficiency and effectiveness of government as a whole has changed as a result of the program or activity.

# 3 Investment (inputs) and activities (outputs)

## 3.1 Investment rationale

As part of an SROI analysis, the investment required for the program or activity needs to be identified in order to appropriately understand and value the outcomes experienced by stakeholders. The investment considered in this analysis is what stakeholders contribute in order to make the activity possible and what is used up in the course of the activity, such as cash or time.

## 3.2 Investment summary

A total of approximately \$110k of cash and in-kind support was invested in the Gathering in 2014 across the four stakeholder groups. This equates to approximately \$609 per participant who attended the Gathering. This investment was provided by:

- Gathering participants (through registration payments)
- Committee members (through volunteer time)
- Local community (through fundraising, sponsorship by local businesses and volunteer time towards workshops / organisational aspects of the Gathering)
- NSW Government (through DPI sponsorship and time contributed by RWN's program co-ordinator).

The largest investment in the Gathering for the period was provided by Gathering participants themselves (\$33k), closely followed by DPI which contributed sponsorship (\$30k) plus time contributed by RWN's program co-ordinator (\$4k). Other investments included volunteer time of Committee members (\$24k), sponsorship and fundraising from the local community (\$16k) and time contributed by the local community (\$3k).

The complete list of investments in the Gathering in terms of cash and in-kind investment is outlined in Tables 3.1 below.

Investment type	Amount	Source	Rationale
<b>Cash</b>	\$32,575	Gathering participants	Total amount of registration payments by Gathering participants (taken from Gathering budget).
	\$16,366	Local community	Includes sponsorship amounts from Commins Hendricks (\$2500) and North East Riverina Rural Counselling Service (\$2500) plus 75% of fundraising done by Committee (\$11,366).
	\$30,000	NSW Government	Sponsorship by the Department of Primary Industries.
<b>In-kind</b>	\$23,573	Committee members	Each committee member contributed approximately 96 hours of their time towards the Gathering, and an additional 48 hours (2 hours a week for 6 months) towards fundraising. This amounts to a total of 144 hours per Committee member, calculated at the minimum wage (\$16.37/hour).



	\$2,947	Local community	Thirty workshop facilitators, who were all local, each contributed approximately 4 hours of their time, calculated at the minimum wage (\$16.37/hour). In addition, approximately 10 local volunteers each contributed approximately 6 hours of their time, calculated at the minimum wage.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$109,629</b>		
	<b>Including:</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>\$83,110 in cash</b></li> <li>• <b>\$26,519 worth of in-kind support</b></li> </ul>		

Table 3.1 – Cash investment in Rural Women’s Gathering in 2014, before discounting

### 3.3 Activities and outputs

The investment, or inputs, of the program are pooled together to deliver the activities of the program. All of the activities were undertaken in the 12 months leading up to the Gathering and during the weekend of the Gathering on 12–14 September 2014.

The core activities undertaken prior to the Gathering were undertaken by Committee members and included:

- Forming a committee and delegating responsibilities
- Liaising with DPI
- Linking up with past committees to learn from their experiences
- Creating a theme
- Preparing a budget
- Seeking out sponsors and fundraising to raise additional funds
- Finding guest speakers and workshop facilitators from among local community
- Identifying participants and their needs
- Setting up registration process
- Co-ordinating logistical arrangements including accommodation options, transport, key venues, facilities and food
- Galvanising local community support and interest in the Gathering from community organisations / service clubs, local media and local businesses
- Marketing the event locally and across NSW through traditional and social media

The core activities undertaken during the Gathering were undertaken by Committee members and included:

- Welcoming, assisting and caring for participants
- Showcasing the local community
- Creating a fun and exciting atmosphere
- Facilitating networking
- Liaising with guest speakers, workshops facilitators, venues and caterers.



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# 4 Program Logic

## 4.1 About the program logic

The program logic tells the story of change that takes place as a result of the program or activity. The program logic for the Gathering includes information on:

- The issue that the Gathering is seeking to address
- The key participants in the Gathering
- The activities involved in the Gathering
- The outcomes of activities that occur through the Gathering for various stakeholders
- The overall impact of these outcomes.

The program logic is included in Figure 4.1. The outcomes described in the program logic are directly related to the outcomes experienced by different stakeholders in the SROI analysis, which are described in Section 5.

The flow of outcomes described provides a framework for understanding the relationship between outcomes. The outcomes that happen earlier in the flow are the easiest to generate, however, they are generally less valued by stakeholders. The ability of the program or activity to support stakeholders to experience the more long-term outcomes shows how effective it is in achieving its objectives and increasing its overall impact.

All of the immediate and short-term outcomes and most of the long-term outcomes have been observed through the analysis. The focus of the analysis is the outcomes that have been observed and measured to date rather than the changes that are projected to occur. However, based on the information available currently, we can infer through the logic that the long-term outcomes for stakeholders will occur in the future.

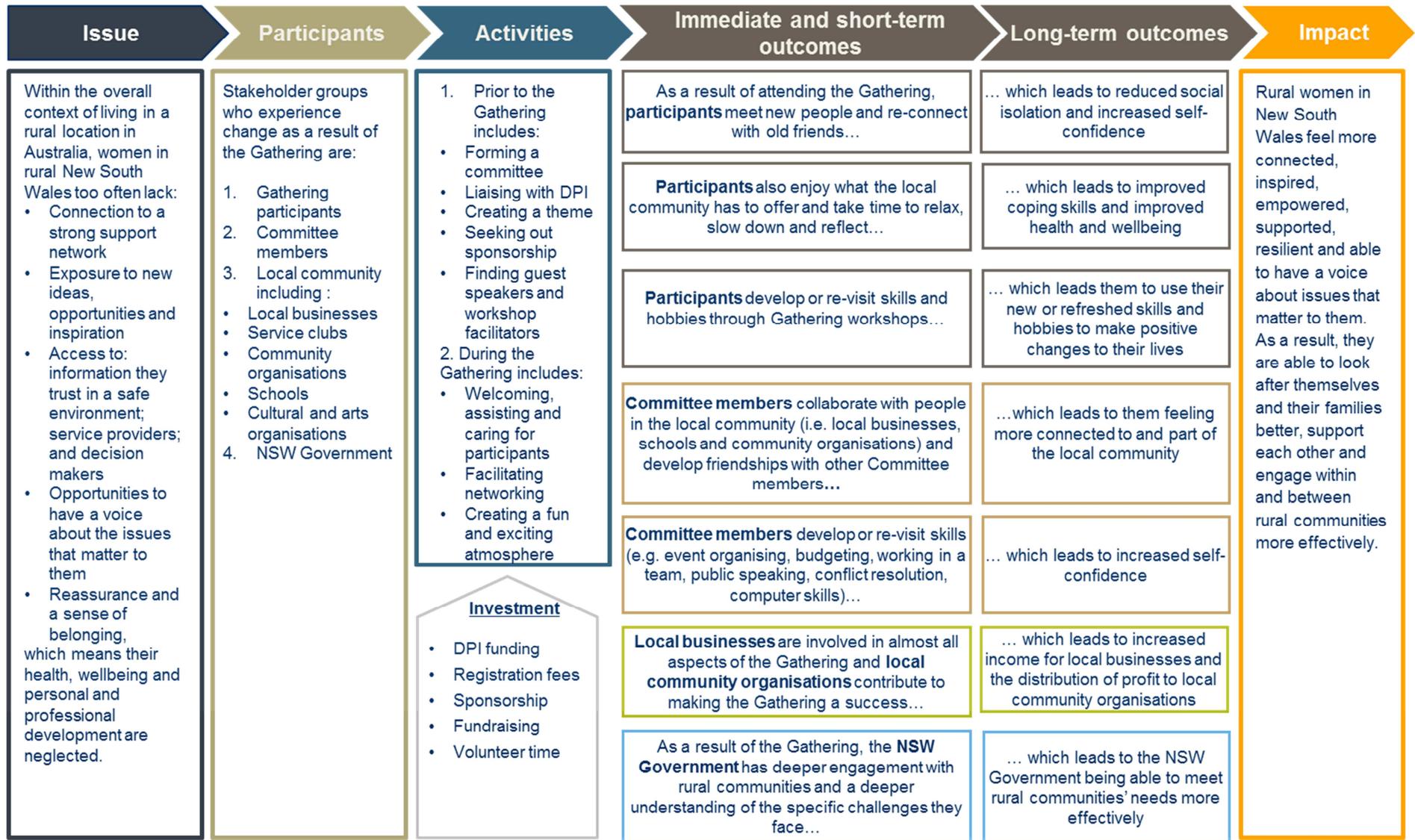


Figure 4.1 – Rural Women’s Gathering program logic

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# 5 Stakeholder Outcomes

## 5.1 Overview

The stakeholder outcomes are judgements based on the data collected through the stakeholder consultation process, DPI records, secondary research and SVA Consulting analysis.<sup>13</sup>

This section outlines the stakeholder outcomes for the following stakeholders:

- Gathering participants
- Committee members
- Local community
- NSW Government.

The outcomes included in the SROI analysis are considered 'material', that is, they are the significant and relevant changes that stakeholders experienced due to the Gathering's activities. Materiality is a concept that is borrowed from accounting. In accounting terms, information is material if it has the potential to affect the readers' or stakeholders' decision. According to the SROI Guide<sup>14</sup>, a piece of information is material if leaving it out of the SROI would misrepresent the organisation's activities.

Defining the material outcomes for stakeholder groups is complex. When defining the material outcomes for each stakeholder group, an SROI practitioner must ensure that each outcome is unique or it would be considered double counting. This is difficult as the outcomes for each stakeholder group are necessarily related because they describe all of the changes experienced by the stakeholder. For example, people do not compartmentalise the different changes they experience. Outcomes also happen at different times throughout the period being analysed with different levels of intensity. There are also complex relationships between outcomes for different stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder logic maps were developed for each stakeholder group (see Figures 5.1 to 5.4). These logic maps show how immediate, short term and long term outcomes are linked to each other for each stakeholder group. Stakeholder outcomes were determined by applying the materiality test to the range of outcomes identified through the program logic. The material outcomes are numbered and dark blue (positive outcomes) or dark green (negative outcomes). The non-material outcomes are either light blue (positive outcomes) or green (negative outcomes).

The following sections outline the outcomes experienced by each stakeholder group and the impact of these changes, including the illustrative representations in the form of stakeholder logic maps.

## 5.2 Gathering participants

Participants at the 2014 Gathering were all women, although men are able to attend. The word 'rural' in the name of the event is meant to be interpreted broadly and the Gathering welcomes women from rural, regional and even urban areas. Of the women who attended the 2014 Gathering, over 40% came from farms, 25% from rural towns, 13% from large regional centres and approximately 13% from cities. The remainder came from small villages and coastal regions.

The majority of Gathering participants (approximately 60%) were aged 45 to 64 years. Another quarter of the participants (approximately 26%) were 65 years old and over. Only a relatively small

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<sup>13</sup> During stakeholder consultations quotes were captured. They are used throughout this section of the report to demonstrate the key findings from the analysis.

<sup>14</sup> The SROI Network, *A Guide to Social Return on Investment*, 2012.

number (approximately 14%) were between 25 and 44 years old.

Women who attend the Gathering tend to become part of the ‘Gathering community’ and many attend for multiple years. More than half of the women who participated in the 2014 Gathering (approximately 54%) had attended the previous year in Scone and just less than half (approximately 47%) had attended the Parkes Gathering in 2012. In addition, five women who attended this year’s Gathering had attended the first Gathering in Orange in 1993 and the second Gathering in Gunnedah in 1994.

The Gathering participants paid a registration payment to attend except for a small number of women whose registration was paid for by DPI. The average registration payment paid was \$200 to cover the costs of the entire weekend.

Table 5.1 shows the inputs, outputs and material outcomes of Gathering participants.

Inputs	Outputs	Material outcomes
\$32,575	180 rural women attended the Gathering. Gathering participants were involved in a range of activities including attending workshops, talks from guest speakers and a gala dinner; shopping at market stalls and local shops; taking tours of the local area and networking.	1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends
		1.2 Reduce social isolation
		1.3 Increase self-confidence
		1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect
		1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies
		1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life

Table 5.1 – Gathering participants inputs, outputs and material outcomes

The following is a description of the outcomes experienced by Gathering participants due to their involvement with the Gathering:

### **1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends**

The primary purpose of the Gathering for many rural women is to meet new people and catch up with old friends. The Gathering was often described during stakeholder consultation as an annual pilgrimage that rural women make with friends and other women from their local community primarily to spend time together and have fun.

In the online survey, Gathering participants indicated that one of the key aspects of attending the Gathering was “keeping up with country friends”, “have a girls catch up”, “have a girls weekend away” and “have a good few days away with friends”.

*“Meeting up with other women was very rewarding. It was great to share ideas and experiences.”*

- Gathering participant

Many of these women indicated that what they most enjoyed about spending time together was hearing each other’s stories, which were often as inspirational as the guest speakers who spoke as part of the event.

*“What I most enjoyed was chatting to other women and hearing their stories.”*

- Gathering participant



For other women, perhaps those newer to the Gathering, they experienced a unique chance to meet new people and network amongst rural women, often from other regions that they wouldn't normally come into contact with. Responses from the online survey included that, as a result of attending the Gathering, the women "spoke with people from different regions" and "improved my networking and socialising skills".

*"The Gathering has given me the opportunity to network with rural women and come to an appreciation of how wonderful, resilient and inclusive they are."*

- Gathering participant

## **1.2 Reduce social isolation**

Building on outcome 1.1, in the long term attending the Gathering has the effect of reducing social isolation for participants. People from rural communities are often very isolated and do not have the same opportunities to socialise as people from urban areas.<sup>15</sup> The Gathering provides them with a chance to establish social connections which, when nurtured, can last for many years. One woman described how she felt leaving the Gathering knowing that she had a group of "like-minded" women across the state that she felt connected to.

*"I met some women that would be 20 years older than me but if I was back down in their area, I would without fail call them. There was an intergenerational connection based on mutual geographies."*

- Gathering participant

The result is that women feel less isolated and less like they are the only person who is facing the challenges and pressures with work, family, relationships, finances and health and wellbeing that they face.

*"What was most powerful for me was that you are just with people that care and understand... the Gathering made me realise that I wasn't the only one and there were options and it was all about taking one step."*

- Gathering participant

## **1.3 Increase self-confidence**

Another outcome that came through strongly in the online survey was increased self-confidence for participants as a result of attending the Gathering. Participants indicated that they became more confident as a result of approaching and chatting to other women, sharing their stories and feeling comforted by people's responses to their stories.

One of the main reasons that the Gathering enables women to experience increased self-confidence is that much of the weekend is an informal get-together, rather than a conference which means that there are many opportunities to chat to other people. This requires women to make more of an effort to meet each other than if networking was more facilitated. One woman described the highlight of the Gathering for her as "when I stepped out of my comfort zone, approached other women and communicated". Another woman said that the Gathering helped increase her confidence with complete strangers.

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<sup>15</sup> See National Rural Health Alliance Inc. and ACOSS, 'A snapshot of poverty in rural and regional Australia', October 2013, available at: [http://ruralhealth.org.au/documents/publicseminars/2013\\_Sep/Joint-report.pdf](http://ruralhealth.org.au/documents/publicseminars/2013_Sep/Joint-report.pdf). Accessed 15 December 2014.

*“The positive vibes at the Gathering mean that you feel comfortable, and when you feel comfortable I think you develop self-confidence”*

- Gathering participant

#### **1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect**

Participants indicated that they enjoyed experiencing the local area – through walking tours and workshops. They enjoyed being shown a new area by locals and having free time to explore and shop.

In addition, many rural women expressed that they have very few chances to take a holiday, “get off the farm” and escape the stresses of work and family life. Caring for immediate family, sick relatives and others often takes precedence over caring for themselves. For these women, the Gathering provides them with a vitally important way to take some time for themselves in a relaxed environment.

*“I was inspired to look at things differently – life in general, where I’m at, and what I’m doing, and also how I relate to people.”*

- Gathering participant

Following the Gathering, many resolved to look after themselves more and take more time out to relax, reflect, be creative, sing, smile, self-care, have “me time”, keep learning and for self-development.

*“The most useful thing I learnt at the Gathering was to spend a period of time each day on myself.”*

- Gathering participant

#### **1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies**

The Gathering was also a time for participants to pick up or re-visit skills and hobbies, primarily through workshops they attended. The range of skills and hobbies that participants acquired included:

- Making your own jewellery
- Cooking in a camp oven
- Making pretzels
- Using watercolour painting techniques
- Reflexology
- Meditation
- How to be more creative
- Technology / computer skills
- Home / interior improvements
- Putting your goals into action
- Financial planning / mapping where your money goes.

For these women, workshops were the chance to have fun as well as learn something new. Some people chose workshops with lighter content, such as making pendants out of old spoons or learning the chakra dance and others opted for more serious workshops including financial planning.

*“The Gathering re-instilled the passion I have for hobbies that are outside of my work and responsibilities as a wife and parent such as old interests and old crafts that you really enjoy spending time doing.”*  
- Gathering participant

### **1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life**

Participants saw the workshops not only as a chance to have fun and learn something, but also as a way of reinvigorating their drive to improve their home lives, personal lives, creativity and goals. As a result, the long term outcome that results directly from outcome 1.5 is that participants start to use the skills and hobbies they have acquired to make positive changes to their lives. Some of these changes are relatively minor (such as learning how to make home-made gifts for friends or family) while others (such as learning some basic financial planning skills) have a more significant impact.

*“I’m going to learn more about social media and how it can help me run a small business.”*

- Gathering participant

*“I now understand the importance of having a long term financial plan and also know how to find out the information I need to make better financial decisions for myself and my family. I’m going to take a good look at my finances and figure out ways I can plan ahead.”*

- Gathering participant

Figure 5.1 shows the stakeholder logic map for Gathering participants.

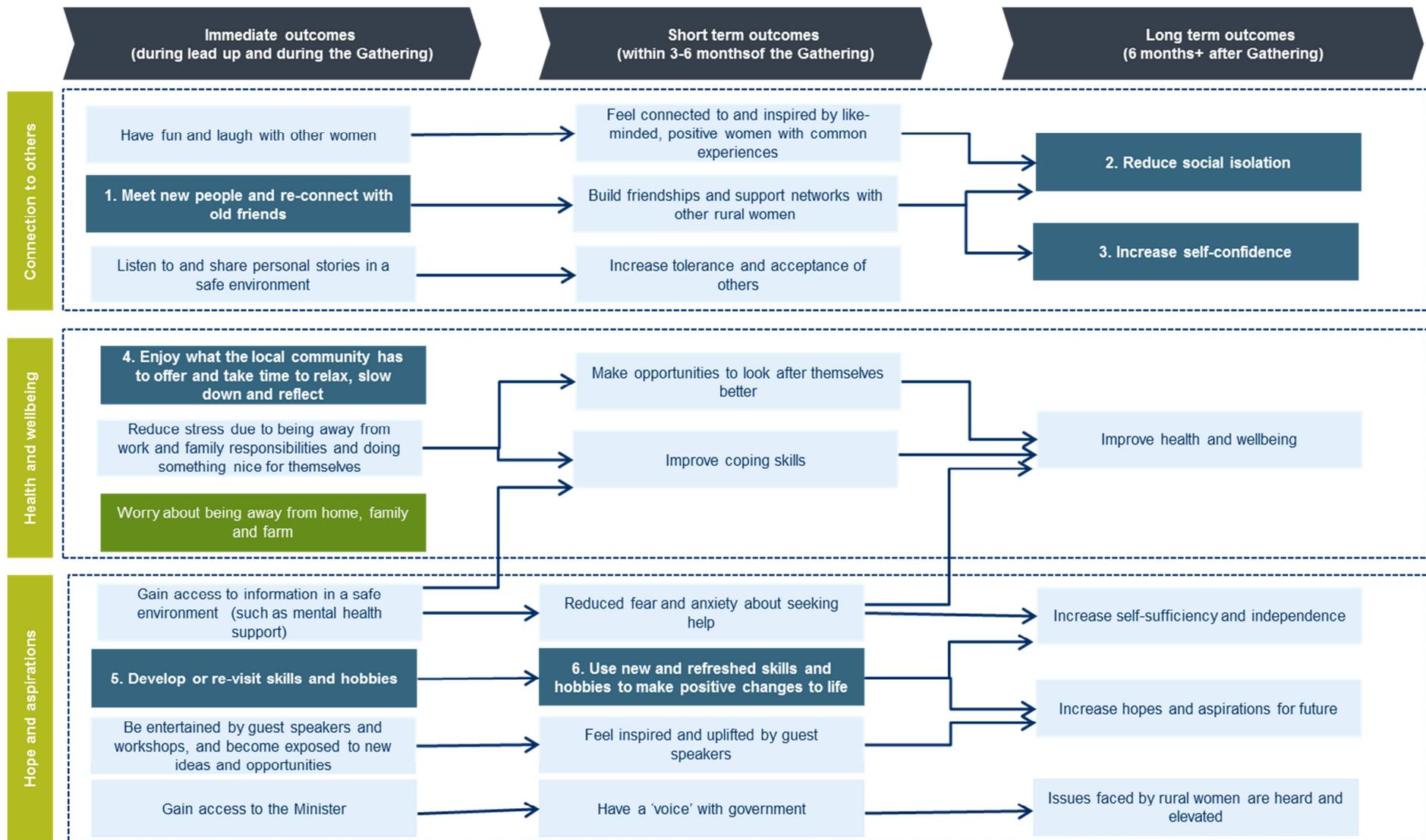


Figure 5.1 – Gathering participants stakeholder logic

## 5.3 Committee members

There were 10 Committee members who organised the 2014 Gathering, including a Chair. Their role included undertaking activities prior to as well as during the Gathering.

Table 5.2 shows the inputs, outputs and material outcomes for Committee members:

Inputs	Outputs	Material outcomes
\$23,573	10 Committee members organised and attended the Gathering. Activities carried out prior to the Gathering included forming a committee, liaising with DPI, creating a theme, seeking out sponsorship and finding guest speakers and workshop facilitators. Activities carried out during the Gathering included welcoming, assisting and caring for participants, facilitating networking and creating a fun and exciting atmosphere.	2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community
		2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members
		2.3 Develop or re-visit skills
		2.4 Increase self-confidence

Table 5.2 – Committee members' inputs, outputs and material outcomes

The following is a description of the outcomes experienced by Committee members due to their involvement with the Gathering.

### **2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community**

One of the most significant outcomes of the Gathering for Committee members is that the role gave them a chance to interact with a range of people and organisations in the local community (and elsewhere) which made them feel more connected to and part of that community.

*"I have gotten to know a number of women in my community I would never have met any other way."*

- Committee member

In a workshop with past Committee members from Gatherings held prior to the 2014 Gathering, many women expressed how difficult it can be to make new friends in small, close-knit communities and how it takes a long time to feel a part of community. For these women, organising the Gathering was a relatively quick and easy way for them to meet people, feel welcomed by others and contribute to the local community. Many of these women went on to contribute to the local community in other ways.

*"The best thing was making closer friendships and connections... I think we proved that personal contact with people in a small community setting works best and has the most positive outcomes."*

- Committee member

Similarly, many Committee members for the 2014 Gathering did not have strong relationships with people in the other five towns in the Coolamon Shire even though they were well connected in their

own towns. Through the Gathering, they were able to meet a wide range of community members that they wouldn't normally come into contact with.

*"Our Committee was a motley lot. Four of us belonged to CWA but the rest were from other towns in the Shire... so through this process we really got to know girls from the other towns."*

- Committee member

## **2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members**

Organising the Gathering is time-consuming for Committee members and can be stressful. The Committee members for the 2014 Gathering also experienced some tension as a result of conflicting views and opinions about approaches to tasks including marketing the Gathering. One Committee member observed that there were a few contentious moments, but acknowledged that this often happens when you get a group of different people working together.

*"The most challenging experience was learning to deal with different personalities on the Committee... there were one or two dominant personalities which made things a bit more difficult than they needed to be."*

- Committee member

Most of the Committee members reflected that this was a short term outcome, experienced in the lead up to and during the Gathering but not afterwards.

## **2.3 Develop or re-visit skills**

Committee members found that organising the Gathering enabled them to develop or re-visit skills such as computer skills, budgeting, event planning, working in a team and public speaking.

*"I had to brush up on my Excel skills and learn internet banking as well."*

- Committee member

Although Committee members were often involved with other community organisations and had organised events in the past, for many this role involved acquiring new skills. For example, much of the communication between Committee members, and with DPI and participants, was via email so some Committee members had to improve their computer skills.

Others who already had the requisite skills found that they were re-using skills that they had not used in some time.

*"I re-learnt how to organise an event which I hadn't done for a few years since my involvement with Girl Guides."*

- Committee member

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## **2.4 Increase self-confidence**

Some members of the Committee also experienced increased self-confidence through organising the Gathering, as a direct result of outcome 2.3 as well as using their skills to make positive changes to their lives. This was more common with some of the younger women.

*“It was public speaking that I gained confidence in. I had chosen not to do much public speaking before but as a result of having to attend community meetings and speak at the Gathering itself, my public speaking skills grew and developed.”*

*- Committee member*

Figure 5.2 shows the stakeholder logic map for Committee members.



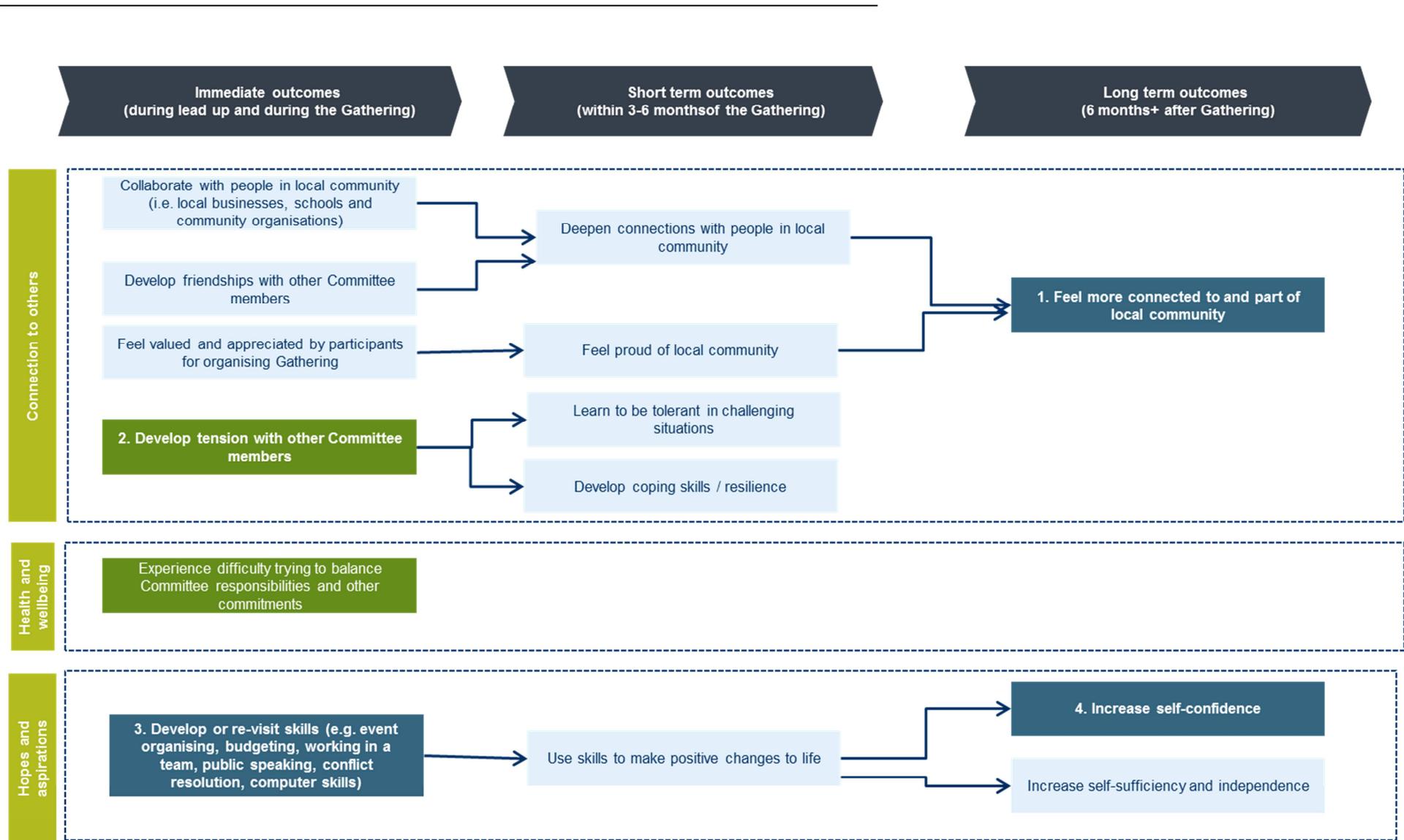


Figure 5.2 – Committee members' stakeholder logic

## 5.4 Local community

The local community includes:

- Workshop facilitators
- Local businesses such as caterers, the bus hire company, entertainment providers, accommodation providers and shop owners. This also includes local businesses that contributed sponsorship and some local fundraising
- Local community organisations, service clubs and schools that were involved with or benefited from the Gathering. This includes local community organisations that hosted morning and afternoon teas at the Gathering for fundraising purposes and those that benefit from the distribution of profits from the Gathering.

Table 5.3 shows the inputs, outputs and material outcomes for the local community.

Inputs	Outputs	Material outcomes
\$19,313  <i>(including \$16,366 in cash and \$2,947 in in-kind investment)</i>	Approximately 200 people in local community were involved with the Gathering. Activities carried out by the local community include local businesses hosting Gathering participants in their shops, accommodation and venues; and local community organisations, service clubs and schools hosting morning and afternoon teas during the Gathering.	3.1 Increase income for local businesses
		3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering

Table 5.3 – Inputs, outputs and material outcomes for Local community.

The following is a description of the outcomes experienced by members of the local community due to their involvement with the Gathering.

### 3.1 Increase income for local businesses

Local businesses were involved in almost all aspects of the Gathering as the Committee was committed to sourcing goods and services locally as much as possible. As a result, local businesses including Coolamon shop owners, caterers, the bus hire company, printers, cleaners, entertainment and accommodation providers were all local. This meant that a large portion of the revenue generated by the Gathering stayed in the community.

Local shop owners experienced increased patronage of their stores mainly on the Sunday of the Gathering. Local artisan jewellery and craft makers were also able to sell their goods at market stalls held at the beginning of the weekend. Shopping mainly occurred in free time when women were not in workshops, listening to guest speakers or at meals.

*“Our little shop did well on the Sunday... we were really busy at one stage, we probably had about 50 or 60 different people through the door...we need more functions like that in our little town.”*

*- Local shop owner*

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Accommodation providers in Coolamon were full that weekend, which provided a boost to these businesses.

*"We were full that weekend... so was the pub and the B&B in town."*

- Motel owner

Workshop facilitators and some guest speakers who also owned local businesses benefited from increased business from participants. One of the owners of a licorice and chocolate shop in Junee spoke to participants at the Gathering about her experiences with organic farming and the challenges and opportunities of running her business. Afterwards, participants visited her store to make purchases.

*"Some of the women who came to my talk certainly came and visited later and bought things... For the people who travelled and weren't aware of us, now they are."*

- Local tourism office

### **3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering**

Often Gathering Committees have a small amount of money left over at the end of a Gathering which is then either passed onto the next year's Committee or used to transport that Committee to the Gathering the following year. The 2014 Gathering generated a significant profit, which was unusual compared with past Gatherings. This occurred for a number of reasons including fundraising and raffles undertaken by the Committee (approximately \$8k) as well as donations collected (approximately \$6k). The Committee also made a conscious effort to limit its expenditure where possible.

The total profit made from the Gathering was approximately \$40k, which is being used to support approximately 16 local community organisations in the Coolamon Shire such as the Coolamon Hospital, the Coolamon Men's Shed, the Ganmain Historical Society and Allawah Lodge Aged Persons Hostel. The organisations who benefit will receive between \$2000 and \$4000 each.

*"I was very proud when I realised how much surplus we had made... The ability to give something back to the local women who contributed and to the Shire is very important to me... We have identified a range of community organisations and progress associations that we will be supporting... as well as a Men's Shed."*

- Committee member

Figure 5.3 shows the stakeholder logic map for the Local community.

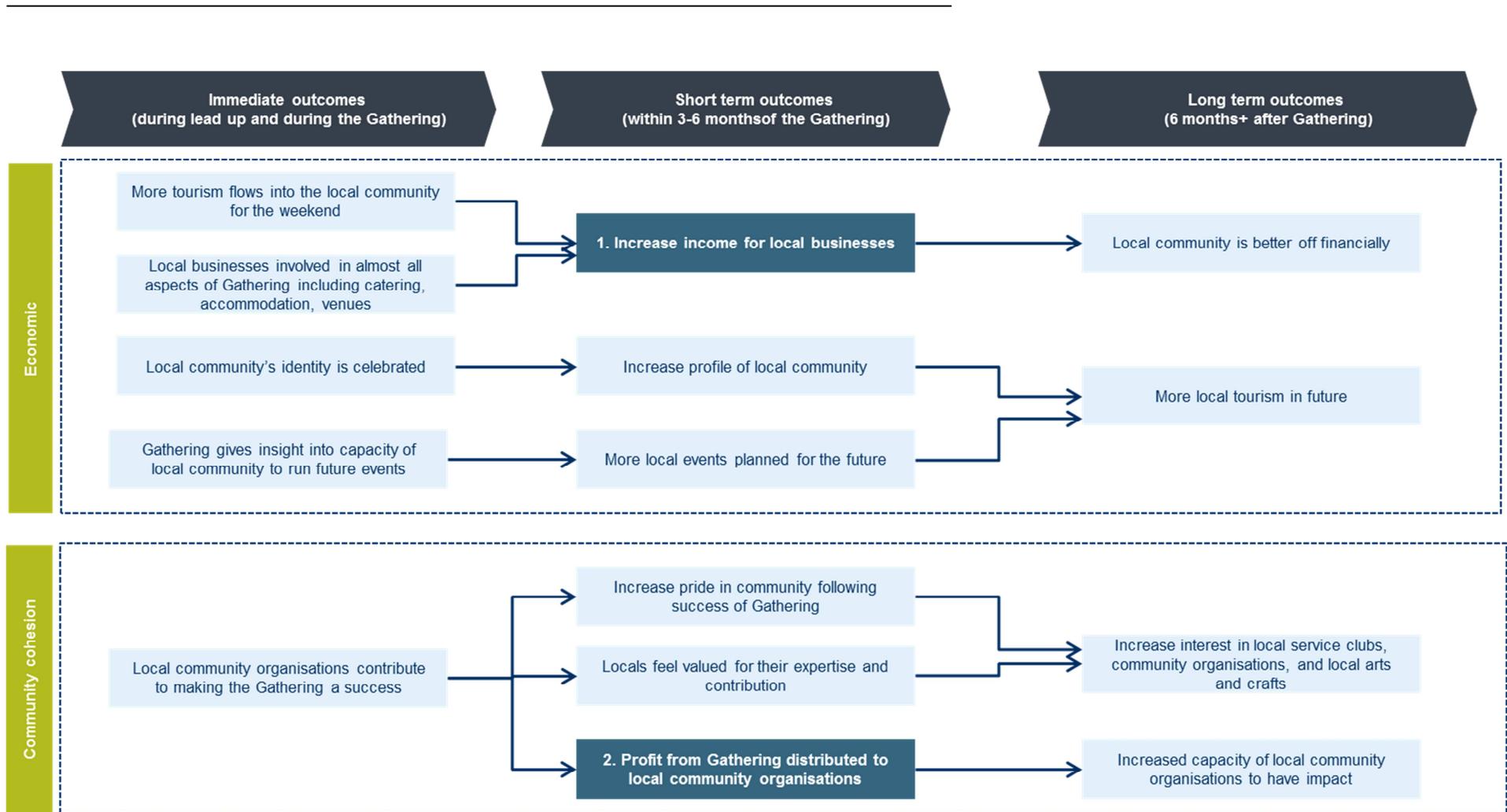


Figure 5.3 – Local community stakeholder map

## 5.5 NSW Government

The Gathering is organised by the Committee but DPI provides support in the form of funding as well as with organisational aspects of the Gathering. DPI representatives also attend the Gathering and in 2014 the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, attended part of the Gathering.

The NSW Government primarily experiences change as a result of being able to engage with a large group of rural women in a relaxed, open and trusting environment where information, ideas and opinions are readily shared.

As the stakeholder logic map in Figure 5.4 indicates, a number of outcomes for NSW Government were identified but not considered to be material in the context of the investment period and therefore not measured as part of this analysis. However, our recommendations in section 9 indicate that some, if not all, of the outcomes identified in the stakeholder logic map are achievable by the NSW Government in the future.

Table 5.4 shows the inputs, outputs and material outcome for NSW Government.

Inputs	Outputs	Material outcome
\$34,169	The NSW Government provided funding towards the Gathering as well as administrative and organisational support.	4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face

Table 5.4 – NSW Government inputs, outputs and material outcome

The following is a description of the outcome experienced by the NSW Government due to its involvement with the Gathering.

### **4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face**

The Gathering brings rural women and the NSW Government together, mainly through informal interactions over the course of the Gathering. As a result, the NSW Government is able to experience deeper engagement with rural women and a deeper understanding of the issues they, their families and communities face than would otherwise be possible through its other activities. Stakeholder consultation emphasised how important the Gathering was to enable the NSW Government to interact with rural women and keep abreast of their needs and the challenges they face.

*“The Gathering is not a conference that has motions that need to be progressed. However, it is a really important chance for us to get together with rural women and hear from them.”*

- NSW Government representative

From the participants’ perspectives, stakeholder consultation indicated that DPI supporting the Gathering each year provides them with a strong signal that the NSW Government is listening to them and supports them.

Figure 5.4 shows the stakeholder logic map for NSW Government.



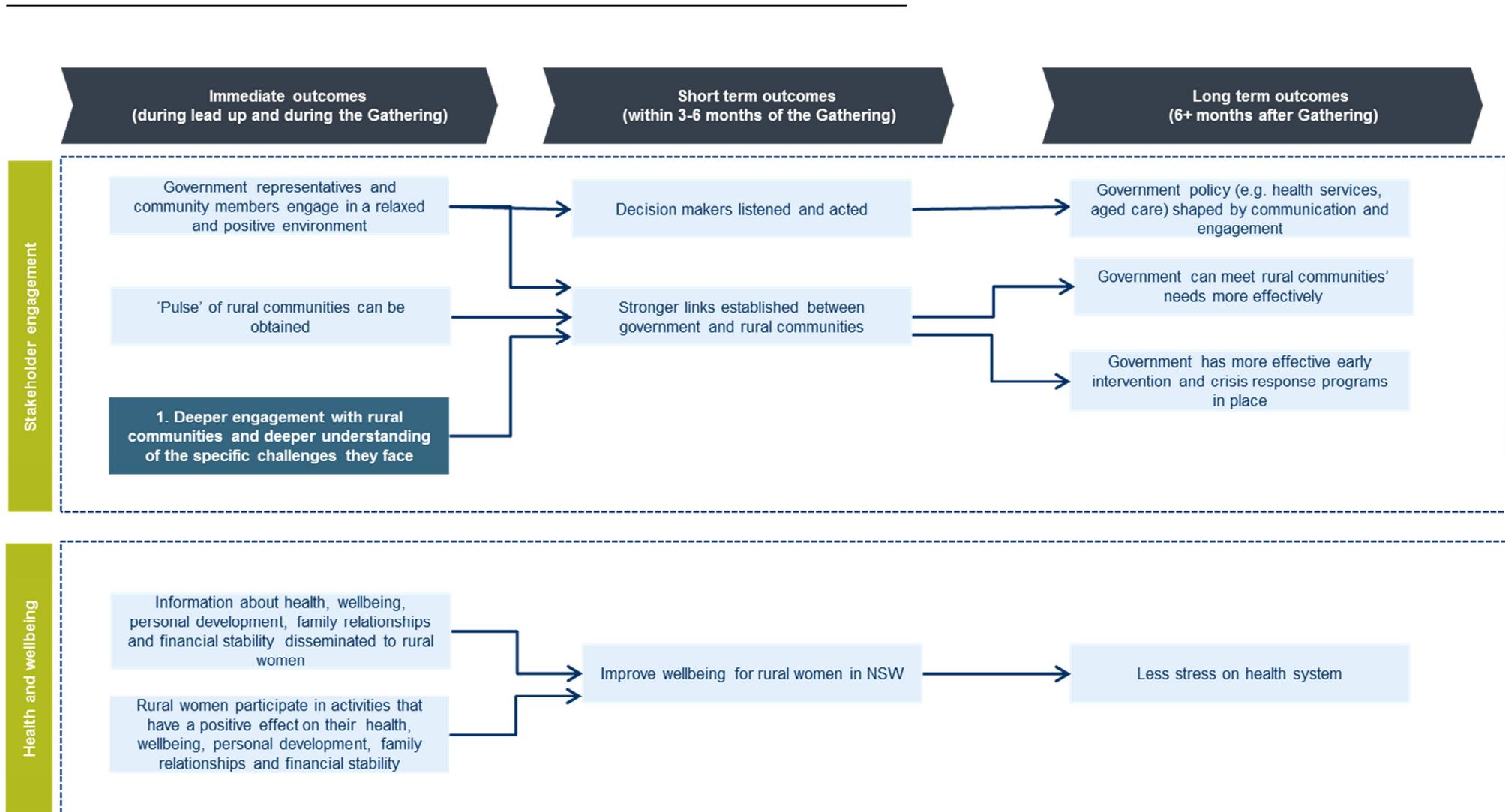


Figure 5.4 – NSW Government stakeholder logic

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# 6 Measurement

## 6.1 Overview

The measurement approach used for this project identified indicators to demonstrate the outcomes experienced by each stakeholder group, as well as a process to measure the relevant indicators.

The following summary describes the three different data sources used to measure the extent that the outcomes were achieved.

### A. Data provided by DPI

DPI provided SVA Consulting with data from previous Gatherings, including their profit and loss (P&L) statements, and background information about the Gathering in Coolamon including media reports, a letter from the Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP who attended part of the Gathering and email feedback from women who attended the Gathering.

### B. Data provided by the Committee

The Committee provided information to SVA Consulting about the Gathering including their P&L statement, and a summary of local community organisations that will receive profits from the Gathering and the approximate amount of cash that each organisation will receive.

### C. Secondary research

Secondary research was used for contextual information in this report and as part of the valuation to inform the use of financial proxies. Sources included National Rural Health Alliance Inc., Australian Council of Social Service, Australian Securities and Investments Commission, Fair Work Ombudsman, University of Sydney and Medicare.

## 6.2 Measurement approach

Table 6.1 summarises the measurement approach adopted for each of the stakeholder groups and material outcomes.

Material outcome	Indicator	Quantity	Source
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>			
1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends	# of Gathering participants who report meeting new people and re-connecting with old friends	163	Participant survey and participant interviews
1.2 Reduce social isolation	# of Gathering participants who report reduced social isolation	67	
1.3 Increase self-confidence	# of Gathering participants who report increased self-confidence	47	
1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect	# of Gathering participants who report enjoying what the local community has to offer and taking time to relax, slow down and reflect	40	
1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies	# of Gathering participants who report developing or revisiting skills and hobbies	63	
1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life	# of Gathering participants who report using skills and hobbies to make positive changes to their lives	40	
<b>2. Committee members</b>			
2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community	# of Committee members who report feeling more connected to and part of their local community	6	Committee survey and Committee interviews
2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members	# of Committee members who report developing tension with other Committee members	5	
2.3 Develop or re-visit skills	# of Committee members who report developing or re-visiting skills	10	
2.4 Increase self-confidence	# of Committee members who report increased self-confidence	4	



<b>3. Local community</b>			
3.1 Increase income for local businesses	# local businesses that experienced increased income as a result of the Gathering	24	Local community and Committee interviews; Gathering P&L
3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering	# local community organisations that received portion of profits from Gathering	16	Committee members
<b>4.NSW Government</b>			
4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	# NSW Government reports deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	1	DPI interviews and program logic sessions

*Table 6.1 – Measures used to indicate outcomes produced*



# 7 Value Creation

## 7.1 Overview

Financial proxies are used to value an outcome where there is no market value. The use of proxies in this SROI forms a critical component of the valuation exercise as most of the outcomes identified have no market values. There are a number of techniques used to identify financial proxies and value outcomes. Importantly, within an SROI, the proxy reflects the value that the stakeholder experiencing the change places on the outcome. This could be obtained directly through stakeholder consultation, or indirectly through research. Techniques for valuing outcomes are included in Table 7.1 below.

Technique	Description and examples
Cash transaction	An actual cash saving or cash spent by the stakeholder group. For example, a reduction in welfare payments is a direct cash benefit to the Government.
Value of resource reallocation	A program or service results in outcomes that allow resources to be used in different ways. For example, a reduction in crime may not result in less cost to the justice system because there is not a change in the overall costs of managing the justice system (so it is not a “cash transaction”). However, a value can be placed on the amount of resources that can be reallocated for other purposes.
Revealed preferences	<p>This is when a financial proxy is inferred from the value of related market prices. This can be achieved in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there something in a stakeholder’s group behavior that will reveal the value of an outcome? For example, we may observe that stakeholders with less depression are now socialising more and going out for dinner with friends. The financial proxy is therefore the value of the dinners</li> <li>Through stakeholder consultation, is there a similar service or program that would achieve the same amount of change? This is often referred to as a “replacement valuation”.</li> </ul>
Stated preferences	<p>This is when stakeholders are explicitly asked how much they value an outcome. This can be done in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders are asked their “willingness-to-pay” or willingness-to-avoid” to achieve the outcome</li> </ul> <p>These are hypothetical cash transactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders are asked to make a choice based on a series of options presented to them through “participatory impact” exercises. This can also be referred to as “choice modeling”.</li> </ul>

Table 7.1 – Valuation techniques

## 7.2 Financial proxies used for this analysis

Financial proxies in this SROI analysis have been identified using a combination of:

- The cash transaction technique
- The revealed preferences technique
- The stated preference technique.

The selection of proxies was informed by stakeholder consultation, primarily through questions in interviews and survey results. The list of the financial proxies used for this analysis is included in Table 7.2 below.

Material outcome	Financial proxy	Value*	Rationale	Source
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>				
1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends	65% of average Gathering registration payment (\$200)	\$130	Women come to the Gathering primarily to network and catch up with old friends (65%) and to a lesser extent for workshop content (35%).	Gathering participant survey and interviews
1.2 Reduce social isolation	Cost of a monthly social activity (including travel costs)	\$1200	Another way to reduce social isolation is to do something together as a family or meet up with friends on a regular basis (i.e. monthly). Calculated as \$100 per social activity (including travel costs) over the course of a year.	SVA analysis
1.3 Increase self-confidence	Cost of seeing a clinical psychologist	\$1430	Change from attending a Gathering has a similar impact on self-confidence as attending psychologist sessions. Calculated as cost of 20 sessions with a clinical psychologist (\$125 per session), less allowable benefits (\$107 per session) for the first 10 sessions.	Medicare Benefits Schedule 2013
1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect	Average spend on Gathering other than registration (i.e. gifts, accommodation)	\$100	Spend on the Gathering other than registration indicates how much Gathering participants value enjoying the local community and taking time for themselves.	Gathering participant survey and interviews
1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies	35% of average Gathering registration payment (\$200)	\$70	Women come to the Gathering primarily to network and catch up with old friends (65%) and to a lesser extent for workshop content (35%).	Gathering participant survey and interviews

1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life	Weighted average of cost savings associated with using skills and hobbies	\$287	Using skills and hobbies can have a range of cost saving benefits including making home made products (\$100) to the cost of an interior designer/landscape gardener (\$1000) to no longer servicing household debt (\$4200).	Gathering participant survey; Australian Securities and Investments Commission; SVA analysis
<b>2. Committee members</b>				
2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community	Value of volunteer hours contributed to other community projects in future	\$1768	Another way to feel connected is to volunteer in other community projects. Calculated as a quarter of the total time contributed to the Gathering by Committee members (36 hours), at the minimum wage, over 3 projects.	Fair Work Ombudsmen ; SVA analysis
2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members	Value of lost efficiency by Committee	-\$157	Tension with other Committee members led to longer meetings and lost time. Calculated as 10% of Committee volunteer time (10 hours per Committee member) multiplied by the minimum wage.	Fair Work Ombudsmen
2.3 Develop or re-visit skills	Cost of a short Excel course offered to the public	\$279	Most Committee members reported increased computer / internet banking skills. Another way to obtain these skills is to do a short course open to the public at a community college or university.	University of Sydney
2.4 Increase self-confidence	Cost of seeing a clinical psychologist	\$1430	Change from being a Committee member has a similar impact on self-confidence as attending psychologist sessions. Calculated as cost of 20 sessions with a clinical psychologist (\$125 per session), less allowable benefits (\$107 per session) for the first 10 sessions.	Medicare Benefits Schedule 2013
<b>3. Local community</b>				
3.1 Increase income for local businesses	Average amount of increased income for local businesses	\$1562	Calculation of average amount of increased income for local businesses as a result of the Gathering (including bus hire, catering, venue, cleaning, entertainment, gifts, Committee t-shirts, printing and local advertising) multiplied by the amount of local businesses that experienced increased income (the indicator) provides an approximate value of total increased income.	Gathering budget; SVA analysis



3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering	Average amount of profits from Gathering received by local community organisations	\$2500	Calculation of average amount of profits from the Gathering that local community organisations received multiplied by the amount of local community organisations that received profits (the indicator) provides an approximate value of total profits received.	Committee interviews; SVA analysis
<b>4.NSW Government</b>				
4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	Cost of extensive stakeholder consultation with rural communities (i.e. forum, round table discussion)	\$10000	Extensive stakeholder consultation would be required to get same outcomes.	DPI analysis; SVA analysis

*Table 7.2 – Financial proxies used in the SROI analysis*



To present an accurate view of the value created through the Gathering, valuation filters (SROI filters) are applied to the financial proxies. There are four SROI filters:

- Deadweight - to understand whether the outcome would have happened anyway
- Attribution – to understand who else contributed to the change
- Displacement – to understand whether the outcome displaced other activities or outcomes
- Duration and drop-off – to understand how long the outcome lasts for and by what percentage the value of the outcome declines each year

The SROI filters are applied in accordance with the SROI principle of not over-claiming. The specific SROI filters applied to each outcome in this analysis are included in Table 7.3. No displacement was found for any of the outcomes. A more detailed description of the SROI filters adopted for this analysis is discussed in Appendix 2.

Outcomes	Deadweight	Attribution	Duration & Drop-off				
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>							
1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends	25%	Without the Gathering, participants would be able to meet new people and re-connect with old friends through their normal day to day lives but only to a limited extent.	25%	Other organisations, such as the Country Women’s Association, have a minor role to play in generating this outcome. However, participant interviews and survey responses emphasised the lack of similar events to network and socialise.	1 year	0%	This outcome lasts until the next Gathering, as many participants return each year. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
1.2 Reduce social isolation	25%	There are few opportunities for rural women to reduce their social isolation due to a range of factors including family pressures, work and farm pressures and financial pressures. Therefore, without the Gathering this outcome would only occur to a limited extent.	50%	Stakeholder consultation indicates other people, such as family and friends, and to a lesser extent other organisations, contribute to reducing social isolation to some extent.	3 years	33%	Stakeholder consultation indicates the friends and connections made at the Gathering are long lasting. There is, however, drop-off each year as the outcome becomes influenced by other factors.
1.3 Increase self-confidence	25%	Participant interviews and survey responses indicated that there are few other programs, support networks and initiatives to assist rural women to attain increased self-confidence that are as effective as the Gathering.	25%	Stakeholder consultation indicates other people, such as family and friends, have a minor role in increasing self-confidence in participants.	3 years	33%	Stakeholder consultation indicates that increased self-confidence is long lasting. There is, however, drop-off each year as the outcome becomes influenced by other factors.
1.4 Enjoy what the	25%	Without the Gathering, participants are	0%	Some other factors, such as spending	1	0%	This outcome lasts until the



Outcomes	Deadweight		Attribution		Duration & Drop-off		
local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect		unlikely to experience the local community but may take time some to relax and reflect. However, as with outcome 1.2, their personal circumstances often prevent this from happening.		time with friends and family allow participants to relax and reflect. However, much of this outcome is internally-focused and relates to the personal and professional development of the participant. Therefore family and friends only play a minor role in generating this outcome.	<i>year</i>		next Gathering, as many participants return each year. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies	25%	Without the Gathering, participants may learn some of the skills and hobbies they learnt through the Gathering out of necessity or by taking initiative. However, stakeholder engagement indicated that the Gathering played a very significant role in generating this outcome through participation in workshops.	25%	Other sources of information, guidance and support contribute in a minor way to achievement of this outcome. For example, those participants that developed some financial knowledge and skills indicated that what they learnt at the Gathering was a step towards achieving financial sustainability which would require information and support from other sources.	<i>1 year</i>	0%	This outcome lasts until the next Gathering, as many participants return each year. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life	25%	As with outcome 1.5, without the Gathering participant may use some of the skills and hobbies they learnt through the Gathering out of necessity or by taking initiative. However, stakeholder engagement indicated that the Gathering would play a very significant role in generating this outcome over the next three years for participants.	50%	Over the three years that this outcome is expected to last, other people and possibly organisations play a role in generating this outcome for participants. This is primarily because making positive changes to life is difficult and there are a range of other factors other than the Gathering that contribute.	<i>3 years</i>	33%	Stakeholder consultation indicates that the positive changes that result from using hobbies and skills acquired at the Gathering are long lasting. There is, however, drop-off each year as the outcome becomes influenced by other factors.



2. Committee members							
2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community	25%	Committee members indicated that there can be significant barriers to making deep connections within small communities such as the towns and villages in the Coolamon Shire. Reasons for this include a lack of opportunities to connect with people and existing relationships amongst locals that means they don't seek out new relationships. Because of this, this outcome would only occur to a limited extent without the Gathering because of the difficulties involved in achieving it.	50%	Stakeholder consultation indicated that other people and organisations have a role to play in generating this outcome as most Committee members were on other committees and were active members of their community who contributed in a variety of ways. As a result, they felt connected to and part of the local community through other means.	1 year	0%	One year was chosen as the duration of this outcome to ensure we do not overclaim. This outcome is experienced intensely immediately following the buzz of the Gathering as the Gathering brought so many members of the local community together. However, beyond this the intensity with which the outcome is experienced slowly declines and additional input would be needed to maintain it. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members	0%	As the tension between Committee members arose as a result of organising the Committee, if the Gathering did not exist it is unlikely Committee members would experience tension.	0%	This outcome is completely the result of the Gathering, rather than other people and organisations.	1 year	0%	Stakeholder consultation strongly indicated that the tensions between Committee members was short lived and would soften with time. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
2.3 Develop or re-visit skills	50%	The skills that were developed and re-visited, such as internet banking, would have occurred in part anyway out of necessity or by Committee members taking initiative.	25%	As many Committee members are on other committees and were active members of their community in other ways, other people and organisations have a role to play in achieving this outcome. However, it is only a minor role as the Gathering required a significant level of time and commitment compared with other community activities so the skills acquired are strongly attributable to the Gathering.	1 year	0%	One year was chosen as the duration of this outcome to ensure we do not overclaim. This outcome is experienced intensely while organisation of the Gathering and during the Gathering. However, beyond this the intensity with which the outcome is experienced slowly declines and additional input would be needed to maintain it. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.



2.4 Increase self-confidence	25%	This deadweight was chosen to ensure we do not overclaim. This outcome is a direct result of using skills that were developed or re-visited through organising the Gathering. Therefore, Committee members may have experienced increased self-confidence in other ways but only to a limited extent.	50%	Over the three year period that this outcome is expected to last, family and friends of Committee members and possibly other organisations (if additional investment in personal development is undertaken by Committee members) will have a role to play in generating this outcome to some extent.	3 years	33%	Stakeholder consultation indicates that increased self-confidence is long lasting. There is, however, drop-off each year as the outcome becomes influenced by other factors.
<b>3. Local community</b>							
3.1 Increase income for local businesses	25%	Local businesses such as caterers, bus companies and accommodation providers indicated that, if the Gathering had not taken place in Coolamon from 12-14 September 2014, some of the business they experienced would have occurred anyway but only to a limited extent. These assessments were made in light of the ordinary flow of business at that time of year and other inquiries that were made around the same time.	0%	The increased income attributable to the Gathering is completely the result of the event and no other programs or organisations contributed.	1 year	0%	This outcome lasts for a short time only, as it is directly related to goods and services provided during the Gathering. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering	0%	If the Gathering did not exist, local community organisations would not have received its profits.	0%	This outcome is completely the result of the Gathering and no other programs or organisations contributed.	1 year	0%	This outcome lasts for a short time only, as it is directly relates to profits provided soon after the Gathering. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.
<b>4.NSW Government</b>							
4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	0%	Stakeholder engagement indicated that, without the Gathering, the deep level of engagement with rural women would not otherwise occur. This is partly due to the significant size of the Gathering and the way in which the Committee shapes the content of the Gathering around the needs and challenges faced by rural communities.	25%	Other people, such as the NSW Minister for Primary Industries, and organisations, such as the Country Women's Association, contribute to the level of engagement achieved by the NSW Government through the Gathering. However, stakeholder engagement indicated they played a minor role compared with the contribution made by the Gathering.	1 year	0%	This outcome lasts until the next Gathering, when the NSW Government has another opportunity to engage with rural communities. There is no drop-off because the outcome lasts for one year only.

Table 7.3 – Application of SROI filters in this analysis



### 7.3 Adjusted value of outcomes

The application of the SROI filters calculates an adjusted annual value for each financial proxy in the analysis. This adjusted value represents the value of the outcome that can be solely attributed to the investment described in this analysis.

A worked example of the adjusted value for the outcome 1.1 'Meet new people and re-connect with old friends', a change experienced by Gathering participants, is included in Figure 7.1 below.

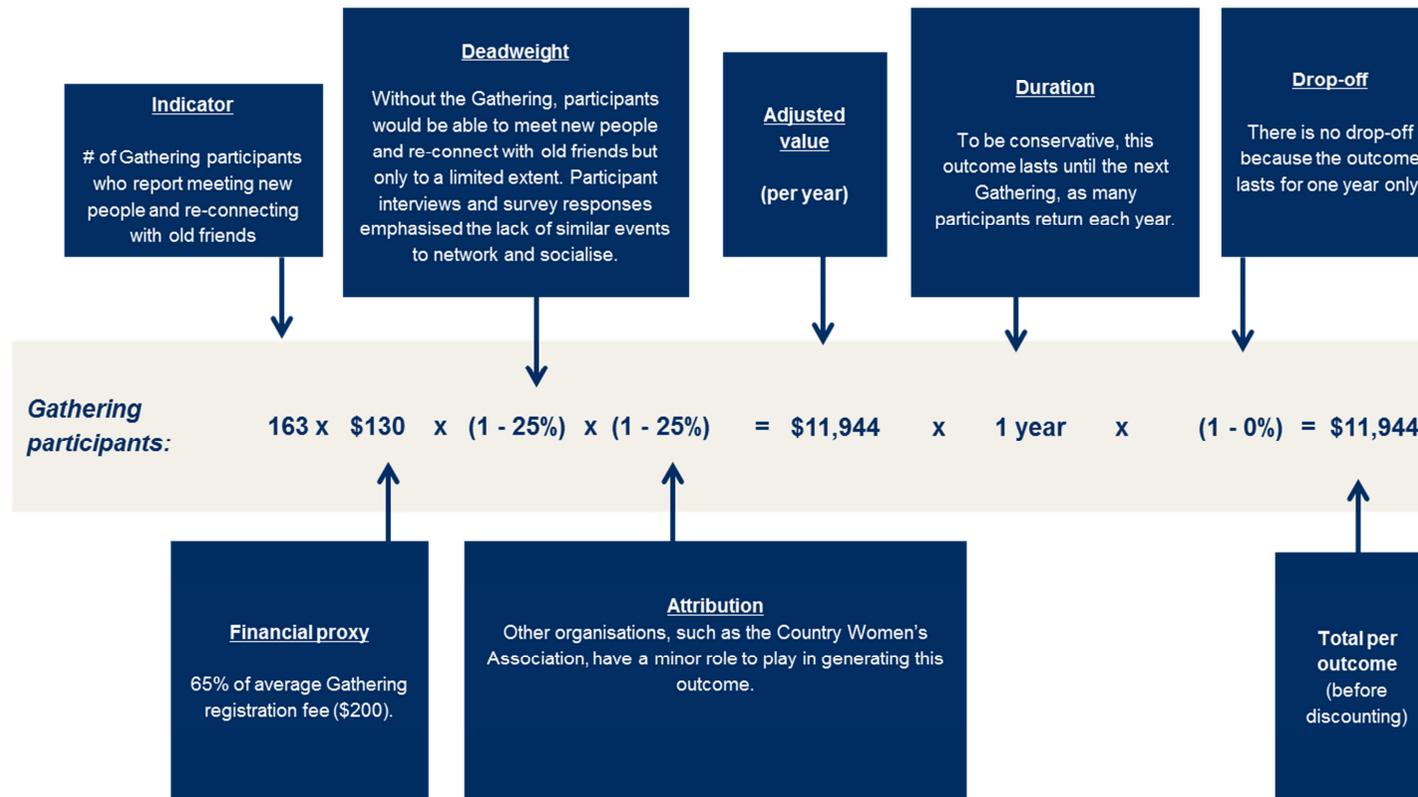


Figure 7.1 – Worked example for adjusted value of the outcome

## 7.4 Summary of value created

The adjusted value is the value calculated for each outcome, which takes into account the following components:

- Quantity: the number of stakeholders experiencing an outcome
- Financial proxy: the value of the outcome that the stakeholder experiencing an outcome places on that outcome
- SROI filters: deadweight, attribution, displacement, duration and drop off.

The following table is a summary of the adjusted value created for all of the outcomes experienced by each stakeholder group.

Outcomes	Indicator	Proxy value	Adjusted value*
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>			
1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends	# of Gathering participants who report meeting new people and re-connecting with old friends	\$130	\$11,944
1.2 Reduce social isolation	# of Gathering participants who report reduced social isolation	\$1,200	\$60,000
1.3 Increase self-confidence	# of Gathering participants who report increased self-confidence	\$1,430	\$75,075
1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect	# of Gathering participants who report enjoying what the local community has to offer and taking time to relax, slow down and reflect	\$100	\$3,000
1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies	# of Gathering participants who report developing or re-visiting skills and hobbies	\$70	\$2,494
1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life	# of Gathering participants who report using skills and hobbies to make positive changes to their lives	\$287	\$8,600
<b>2. Committee members</b>			
2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community	# of Committee members who report feeling more connected to and part of their local community	\$1,768	\$3,978
2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members	# of Committee members who report developing tension with other Committee members	-\$157	-\$786
2.3 Develop or re-visit skills	# of Committee members who report developing or re-visiting skills	\$279	\$1,046
2.4 Increase self-confidence	# of Committee members who report increased self-confidence	\$1,430	\$4,290
<b>3. Local community</b>			
3.1 Increase income for local businesses	# local businesses that experienced increased income as a result of the Gathering	\$1,562	\$28,108
3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering	# local community organisations that received portion of the profits from Gathering	\$2,500	\$40,000

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#### 4. NSW Government

4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	# NSW Government reports deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	\$10,000	\$7,500
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$245,249<sup>16</sup></b>

Table 7.4 – Adjusted value of outcomes (before discounting)

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<sup>16</sup> Calculation of value created before discounting is applied. Discounting is discussed in section 8 of this report.

# 8 SROI Ratio Calculation

## 8.1 SROI ratio

The SROI ratio compares the returns from the Gathering relative to the investment required to deliver it using a comparable unit, the Australian dollar. Consistent with the approach adopted to calculate the total value of stakeholder outcomes, a real discount rate of 2.5% was used to calculate the present value of the realised benefits and investment for 2014, based on the average Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) target inflation rate.

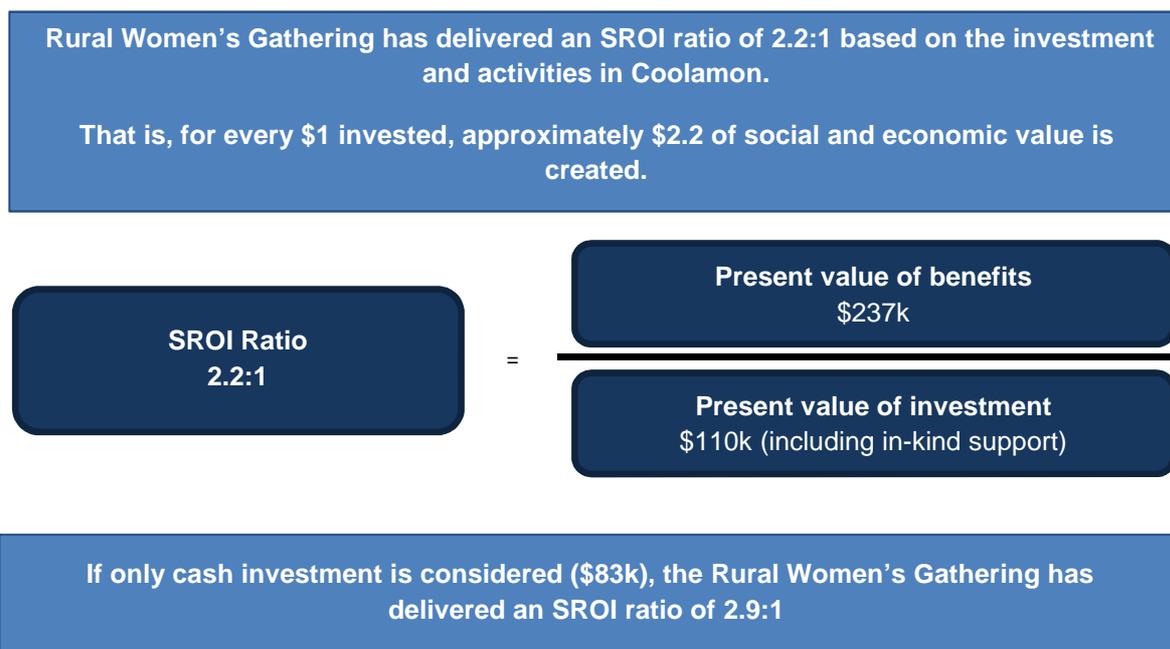


Figure 8.1 – Rural Women's Gathering SROI ratio

The analysis indicates that the Gathering delivered an estimated \$237k of social and economic value in 2014. Based on a total investment of \$110k (\$83k of cash investment and \$27k of in-kind support), this equates to an SROI ratio of 2.2:1. With 180 women attending the Gathering in 2014, the average investment was approximately \$609 per participant. If only cash investment in the Gathering is considered, the SROI ratio is 2.9:1.

### About the SROI ratio

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

- The values for the projected benefits are estimates and provide an indication of the value generated through the Gathering only
- The SROI ratio represents the additional value created, based on the SROI principles. This is the unique value that is created by the Gathering attributable to the investment for this specific period

- SROI ratios should not be compared between programs, activities or 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 investment decisions can only be made when using comparable data.

## 8.2 Sensitivity Analysis

It is important that the SROI calculations are tested by understanding how the judgements made throughout the analysis affect the final result.

In this section, SVA Consulting identified the judgements that are most likely to influence the SROI ratio, and considered how sensitive the ratio is to changes in these judgements. To decide which judgements to test, two key questions were considered:

- How much evidence is there to justify our judgement? The less evidence available, the more important it is to test
- How much does it affect the final result? The greater the impact, the more important it is to test.

The assumptions that were tested in the sensitivity analysis for this report are included in Table 8.1 below, ordered from the most sensitive to the least sensitive.

Variable	Baseline judgement / SROI ratio	Lower threshold / New SROI ratio	Upper threshold / New SROI ratio
Duration – Testing the assumptions for the duration of which each outcome is expected to last for	As per Table 7.3 SROI ratio = 2.2	1 year for each outcome SROI ratio = 1.5	Base case + 1 year SROI ratio = 3.3
Attribution – Testing the assumptions for the extent to which other people / organisations contributed to each of the outcomes	As per Table 7.3 SROI ratio = 2.2	+25% for each outcome SROI ratio = 1.9	- 25% for each outcome SROI ratio = 2.4
Deadweight – Testing the assumptions for the extent to which each outcome would have occurred without the Gathering	As per Table 7.3 SROI ratio = 2.2	Base case + 25% for each outcome SROI ratio = 2.0	Base case - 25% for each outcome SROI ratio = 2.3

*Table 8.1 - Sensitivity analysis on selected variables*

In addition, SVA Consulting tested the inclusion of two additional material outcomes for NSW Government, “Less stress on the health system” and “Government has more effective early intervention and crisis response programs in place”. These outcomes are not currently being experienced as a result of the Gathering and so were not measured as part of this analysis. However, these outcomes have the potential to be material in the future.

The results of testing the inclusion of two additional material outcomes are included in Table 8.2 below, ordered from the most sensitive to the least sensitive.



Variable	Baseline judgement / SROI ratio	New SROI ratio
Inclusion of new outcome 4.2 “Less stress on the health system” and 4.3 “Government has more effective early intervention and crisis response programs in place”	As per Table 7.3 SROI ratio: 2.2	New outcomes 4.2 and 4.3 SROI ratio: 3.9
Inclusion of new outcome 4.2 “Less stress on the health system”	As per Table 7.3 SROI ratio: 2.2	New outcome 4.2 SROI ratio: 3.6
Inclusion of new outcome 4.3 “Government has more effective early intervention and crisis response programs in place”	As per Table 7.3 SROI ratio: 2.2	New outcome 4.3 SROI ratio: 2.4

Table 8.2 - Sensitivity analysis on selected variables

For the outcome “Less stress on the health system”, the following information was used:

- Financial proxy of NSW Government real recurrent health expenditure per person in 2010-11<sup>17</sup>: \$3795
- Quantity of participants who experienced outcome 1.4 (in the health and wellbeing group of outcomes): 40 participants
- SROI filters: 5 year duration, 25% deadweight, 0% displacement, 50% attribution, 20% drop-off

For the outcome “Government has more effective early intervention and crisis response programs in place”, the following information was used:

- Financial proxy of average spend by state governments on welfare services per Australian resident in 2010-11<sup>18</sup>: \$654
- Quantity of participants who experienced outcome 1.4 (in the health and wellbeing group of outcomes): 40 participants
- SROI filters: 5 year duration, 25% deadweight, 0% displacement, 50% attribution, 20% drop-off

These results indicate that if these outcomes were experienced as a result of the Gathering, the economic and social value of the Gathering would be increased. If both outcomes were experienced, the economic and social value of the Gathering compared to the investment is 3.9:1.

The sensitivity analysis of the nine scenarios tested shows that when the most critical assumptions are tested, the SROI ratio ranges from 1.5:1 to 3.9:1. In each of the nine scenarios, the Gathering creates a net positive value.

<sup>17</sup> Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, ‘Report on Government Services 2013’, Volume 2, page E.6, Figure E.2.

<sup>18</sup> See Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), ‘Welfare Expenditure’, Chapter 10, 2013, available at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129544564>. Accessed 12 December 2014; SVA analysis.

# 9 Conclusions and Recommendations

## 9.1 Summary of value created

This project analysed the costs and benefits generated by the Gathering in 2014. Stakeholder consultation was a key component of the analysis in order to identify and understand the changes created through the Gathering. The SROI analysis then measured and valued the outcomes experienced by stakeholders.

The Gathering had a substantial impact on the lives of the rural women who participated, who as a result of attending the Gathering are able to look after themselves and their families better, support each other and engage within and between rural communities more effectively. The Gathering also has a positive impact on Committee members, the local community that hosts the Gathering and the NSW Government.

A summary of the value created by the Gathering is presented in the following table.

Stakeholder group	Material outcomes	Value by outcome	Value by stakeholder
<b>1. Gathering participants</b>	1.1 Meet new people and re-connect with old friends	\$11,944	<b>\$161,113 (66%)</b>
	1.2 Reduce social isolation	\$60,000	
	1.3 Increase self-confidence	\$75,075	
	1.4 Enjoy what the local community has to offer and take time to relax, slow down and reflect	\$3,000	
	1.5 Develop or re-visit skills and hobbies	\$2,494	
	1.6 Use skills and hobbies to make positive changes to life	\$8,600	
<b>2. Committee members</b>	2.1 Feel more connected to and part of local community	\$3,978	<b>\$8,528 (4%)</b>
	2.2 Develop tension with other Committee members	-\$786	
	2.3 Develop or re-visit skills	\$1,046	
	2.4 Increase self-confidence	\$4,290	
<b>3. Local community</b>	3.1 Increase income for local businesses	\$28,108	<b>\$68,108 (28%)</b>
	3.2 Local community organisations receive profit from Gathering	\$40,000	
<b>4. NSW Government</b>	4.1 Deeper engagement with rural communities and a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face	\$7,500	<b>\$7,500 (3%)</b>
<b>Total value created<sup>****</sup></b>		<b>\$245,249</b>	

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Before discounting. Discounting is discussed in section 8 of this report.

Stakeholder group	Material outcomes	Value by outcome	Value by stakeholder
Present value (discount rate applied) <sup>§§§§§</sup>		\$236,934	
Investment		\$109,629	
SROI ratio		2.2:1	

Table 9.1 – Value created by the Gathering by stakeholder group

The analysis indicates that the Gathering delivered an estimated \$237k (after discount rate of 2.5% is applied) of social and economic value. Based on a total investment of \$110k (\$83k of cash investment and \$27k of in-kind support), this equates to an SROI ratio of 2.2:1. That is, approximately \$2.2 of value was created for every \$1 invested in the Gathering.

## 9.2 Insights

The Gathering had a number of critical elements that supported the women who attended, and also created outcomes for other stakeholders:

### ***Gathering participants were supported to connect, share, learn new skills and hobbies, and relax***

- Gathering participants face significant work, farm and family pressures which means their health, wellbeing, and personal and professional development are neglected
- The Gathering provided participants with an opportunity to meet up with old friends, make new friends, increase self-confidence and develop their skills and hobbies
- The Gathering also gave participants a chance to relax, reflect and re-energise

### ***Committee members were able to connect with their communities and learn new skills and hobbies***

- For Committee members, the Gathering greatly expanded their networks in the local community (the six towns and villages in the Coolamon Shire) in a relatively quick and easy way
- It also allowed Committee members to learn different skills and re-visit old skills, which led them to make positive changes in their lives and increase self-confidence

### ***The Local community was transformed through the involvement of local businesses and distribution of profits to local community organisations***

- Local businesses were involved in almost all aspects of the Gathering including catering, bus hire, entertainment and accommodation, which led to increased income
- Local community organisations contributed to making the Gathering a success through hosting events such as morning and afternoon teas. As the Gathering made a profit, approximately 16 local community organisations will receive a portion of the profits

<sup>§§§§§</sup> Discount rate of 2.5% applied, based on the average RBA target inflation rate. Discounting is discussed in section 8 of this report.

***NSW Government was able to engage with rural communities in a relaxed, open and trusting environment***

- The Gathering provides the NSW Government, particularly DPI, with a valuable and rare opportunity to engage deeply with rural communities and develop a deeper understanding of the specific challenges they face
- In the future, this could enable the NSW Government to establish stronger links with rural communities, meet rural communities' needs more effectively and have more effectively early intervention and crisis response programs in place.

## **Recommendations**

The SROI analysis indicates that there are opportunities to increase the value created by the Rural Women's Gathering in the future. SVA Consulting recommends the following actions by DPI:

### **1. Increase the number and diversity of women attending the Gathering**

Given certain fixed costs and step changes in costs, the amount of value created by the Gathering could be increased if the number and diversity of women attending the Gathering increased. It is suggested that between 300-600 women would be the optimal amount to attend the Gathering so that more lives can be touched by the Gathering but it still retains its character and allows people to easily connect with women they have met at past Gatherings. Having more women attend the Gathering should also increase the profile of the local community as more women visit the town and return home with knowledge about what that town has to offer.

Based on SVA Consulting's discussions with DPI, it is understood that women who would potentially benefit from participation in the Gathering include:

- Women in need (i.e. geographically isolated; facing financial hardship; suffering from poor physical and/or mental health; otherwise vulnerable)
- Women of all ages, including younger women
- Women on the rural fringe (e.g. from regional cities such as Orange and Wagga Wagga)
- Women who are studying at university and considering a rural placement in their careers, or are the partner of someone who is considering a rural placement
- Indigenous women
- Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

As part of this process, DPI needs to consider how best to reach these women (i.e. what forms of marketing and communication are most appropriate and effective) and how to make attending the Gathering as easy and useful as possible for these women.

DPI currently provides some free registrations to women in need. DPI should consider expanding this initiative or seek out additional sponsorship from other sources (corporate sponsors, donations made by other Gathering participants) for these women.

### **2. Increase assistance with organisational aspects of the Gathering and create a Committee alumni group**

Feedback from the survey of Committee members indicated that some aspects of organising the Gathering could be smoother. Some 're-inventing the wheel' is done from year to year, which has a negative impact on some Committee members and the overall impact of the Gathering.

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In consultation with past Committee members, DPI should develop a toolkit including a set of templates that have been used by past Committees for various tasks (e.g. applying for sponsorship, communicating with guest speakers), tips and other relevant information. The toolkit should also include an indicative timetable setting out when certain aspects of organising the Gathering (i.e. registrations) need to be completed by to assist Committees with planning. Improving certain organisational aspects of the Gathering would make organising the event more enjoyable for Committee members, and would increase the impact overall (e.g. providing templates to assist Committees applying for sponsorship money could increase the amount of women who could attend).

In addition, DPI should create a Committee alumni group and encourage past Committee members to join. The success of the program logic session with DPI and past Committee members indicates that there is interest among past Committees to share their learnings and contribute to the Gathering in this way. A Committee alumni group could contribute to the toolkit and could be a resource for the current Committee to call upon. This would enable guidance about the Gathering to be more easily disseminated and would create efficiencies and increased impact from the Gathering.

### **3. Support Committees to hold pre-Gathering and post-Gathering activities**

The SROI analysis demonstrates that the local community hosting the Gathering is positively impacted through increased income for local businesses and receiving profits from the Gathering. Stakeholder engagement indicated that, to smaller extent, the local community experiences other benefits including an increased profile and a celebration of their identity which may lead to more local tourism in the future however in this analysis these outcomes were not widespread and therefore not measured on the basis of materiality.

DPI should support Committees to hold pre-Gathering activities in their community approximately 12 months prior to the Gathering to educate people about what the Gathering is and ensure increased participation. By encouraging and helping Committees to hold pre-Gathering activities, as some Gatherings in the past have done, more locals would become involved which could lead to more of a celebration of the local community's identity.

DPI should also consider whether post-Gathering activities are needed to harness the energy created by the Gathering and potentially support the local community (e.g. the Rural Resilience Program visits to the host town, mental health workshops, financial literacy workshops). This should lead to greater outcomes for the women themselves as well as their families and the local community.

### **4. Support Committees to provide information and services that address key policy issues for NSW Government**

The NSW Government experienced \$7,500 worth of value as a result of the Gathering, amounting to 3% of the total value created. While numerous outcomes were identified in the program logic for the NSW Government, only one material outcome was identified and measured which meant that the value created by the Gathering for the NSW Government was relatively low.

In order to increase the value created by the Gathering for the NSW Government, more could be done to ensure that key long-term policy issues of the NSW Government are targeted through the event. If other long-term outcomes are material, such as "Less stress on the health system" and "Government has more effective early intervention and crisis response programs in place", the NSW Government would experience approximately \$207,705 worth of value, amounting to 47% of total value created.

For this reason, DPI should support Gatherings to provide information and services that benefit the women who attend and align with policy outcomes of the NSW Government. Based on SVA Consulting's discussions with DPI, this is likely to include:

- Assisting Gatherings to provide, for example, the services of counsellors, a breast cancer screening van and access to other health experts plus information about a variety of health issues and where people can get help in a discrete and safe environment
- Assisting Gatherings to offer sessions addressing gaps in the financial skills of rural women and information about where people in financial distress can go for help.

In addition, the Gathering will be able to more effectively address key policy issues of the NSW Government if more NSW Government representatives attend the Gathering to experience the engagement with rural women first hand. DPI should encourage other NSW Government departments to become more involved with the Gathering by having staff attend the Gathering in a representative capacity and to participate for professional development purposes.

In order to understand whether DPI is addressing key policy issues in the future, DPI should take steps to measure the impact of the Gathering on some of the long term outcomes, by asking questions in the post-Gathering questionnaire or through liaising with other government departments (such as health) and interpreting data that they collect.

### **9.3 Interpreting the results and analysis**

The valuations and SROI ratio should be interpreted in conjunction with the program logic of the Gathering. SROI ratios should not be compared between programs, activities or 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 investment decisions can only be made when using comparable data.

This report is not an analysis of the operations of the Gathering or an assessment of the Gathering model. It does not focus on the sustainability of the operations of the Gathering, but rather focuses on understanding the impact the Gathering has had on major stakeholders. As such, this report should not be relied upon by any party, particularly regarding the impact that the Gathering may create in the future.



# 10 Appendices

## 10.1 Appendix 1 – Interview template for Gathering participants

Area	Questions
<b>Background</b>	What is your involvement with the Gathering?
	Was the Gathering in Coolamon the first Gathering you have attended?
<b>Objectives</b>	How did you hear about the Gathering?
	What do you hope to get out of the Gathering?
<b>Outcomes</b>	What do you think has changed for you as a result of attending the Gathering?
	What has the Gathering helped you to do?
	What do you think the changes you have experienced as a result of attending the Gathering will mean for the future?
	What bad things (if any) happened to you as a result of attending the Gathering?
<b>Social Value</b>	Discussion about the value of the outcomes (identify financial proxies)
<b>Deadweight</b>	To what extent do you think you would have been able to achieve the things you have achieved, if the Gathering did not exist?
<b>Attribution</b>	Do you think you could have gotten the support from the Gathering elsewhere? (e.g. from family, friends, colleagues, other events/organisations)?
<b>Duration + drop-off</b>	How long do you think the changes you have experienced as a result of attending the Gathering will last for?



## 10.2 Appendix 2 – SROI Filters

To present an accurate view of the value created through the Gathering, valuation filters (SROI filters) are applied to the financial proxies. This is in accordance with the SROI principle of not over-claiming. The SROI filters adopted for this project are discussed below.

**1. Deadweight** – Deadweight is an estimation of the value that would have been created if the activities from the program did not happen.

An outline of the deadweight categories adopted for this analysis is included in Table A1.

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%

*Table A1 – Deadweight description*

**2. Displacement** – Displacement is an assessment of how much of the activity displaced other outcomes.

An outline of the displacement categories adopted for this analysis is included in Table A2.

Category	Assigned displacement (%)
1. The outcome did not displace another outcome	0%
2. The outcome displaced another outcome to a limited extent	25%
3. The outcome partially displaced another outcome	50%
4. The outcome displaced another outcome to a significant extent	75%
5. The outcome completely displaced another outcome	100%

*Table A2 – Displacement description*



**3. Attribution** – Attribution reflects the fact that the investment and core program activity is not wholly responsible for all of the value created.

An outline of the attribution categories adopted for this analysis is included in Table A3.

Category	Assigned attribution to others (%)
1. The outcome is completely a result of the activity and no other programs or 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 in 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%

*Table A3 – Attribution description*

**4. Duration and Drop-off** – Duration refers to how long an outcome lasts for. 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.

An outline of the drop-off categories adopted for this analysis is included in Table A3.4.

Category	Assigned drop-off (%)
1. The outcome lasts for the whole period of time assigned to it	0%
2. The outcome drops off by 1/3 per year from year 2 on	33%
3. The outcome drops off by 2/3 per year from year 2 on	66%
5. The outcome drops off completely by the end of the time period	100%

*Table 4 – Drop-off description*

**End of report**

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