

REPORT SUMMARY



Prevention Grants for Regional and Rural Victoria Program evaluation

2018 – 2019

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Responsible
Gambling
Foundation



Front cover image: Waradjuri Dance group, James Fallon High School performing at the Annual Community Cultural Christmas Festival supported by Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and Gateway Health

This is a summary of the report:

Healey, M, Trickey, K, Clarke, D., 2019, Evaluation of the Prevention Grants for Regional and Rural Victoria, First Person Consulting, Melbourne



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Evaluation findings at a glance

PROGRAM-LEVEL IMPACTS

PROGRAM REACH



265

people were engaged in training sessions and capacity building activities

>30,000

people attended information sessions, presentations, community events and alternative recreation activities

An estimated

>362,000

people were reached through broadscale awareness-raising (social media, mass media, newsletters)

PARTNERSHIPS



5

organisations were provided a grant, who worked with

43

different organisations, with

49

different partnership arrangements between them,

24

of which were new, indicating a demonstrated emphasis on partnership building

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Fully achieved or exceeded:



Funded organisations have increased capacity to design and deliver prevention activity in the future



The Foundation learns more about how prevention works in rural and regional communities



Funded organisations are confident to take on larger prevention projects in the future



Funded organisations and the Foundation have strong relationships

Partially achieved:



Increased or sustained awareness amongst target populations of the risks of gambling

The Prevention Grants for Regional and Rural Victoria Program

Research has highlighted that rural and regional communities in Victoria are more likely to experience harm from gambling¹. This may be as a result of their remoteness and rurality, as demonstrated through lower Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) ratings than recorded in metropolitan areas.

In addition, rural and regional communities typically experience higher degrees of social isolation and therefore vulnerability to gambling harm, as well as stigma and shame that can inhibit help seeking.

With these factors in mind, in 2018-19 the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (the Foundation) announced the Prevention Grants for Regional and Rural Victoria Program (the Program). The Program provided a total of \$250,000 to five organisations to deliver a range of activities in different locations and settings to:

- raise awareness within their communities about the risks associated with gambling
- promote help-seeking pathways
- gather intelligence on the issue of gambling related harm in the context of their community
- establish partnerships to support the prevention of gambling related harm in rural and regional Victoria.

The aim of the Program was to increase the capability and capacity of the funded organisations to deliver prevention programs in regional Victoria. The Program was also a key aspect of the Foundation's 'Regional Statement'², which demonstrates the Foundation's commitment to regional and rural Victoria.

Summaries of the five funded projects are provided at the end of this document.

First Person Consulting (FPC) were engaged by the Foundation to evaluate the Program and this document provides a summary of their report.

Community members taking part in a gambling harm awareness activity provided by Gateway Health Gambler's Help at the Christmas festival in December 2018 (Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation funded project).

¹ Browne, M, Langham, E, Rawat, V, Greer, N, Li, E, Rose, J, Rockloff, M, Donaldson, P, Thorne, H, Goodwin, B, Bryden, G & Best, T 2016, Assessing gambling-related harm in Victoria: a public health perspective, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

² Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Regional Statement, published April 2018. <https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/documents/344/Regional-statement-2018.pdf>



Evaluation design and methodology

The purpose of the program-level evaluation was to:

- gather information about 'what works' in preventing and minimising gambling harm in rural and regional communities
- document the lessons, learning and experiences of the projects to provide insights into potential future prevention activity for rural and regional communities
- demonstrate accountability by capturing project outputs and outcomes.

The evaluators gathered information and data through interviews with project and Foundation staff and reviewed the final reports submitted by funded organisations.

The evaluation also discussed the value of the program and provided recommendations for future grant schemes.

Limitations

Limitations of this evaluation to consider when interpreting the findings are:

- data was provided or collected by project staff rather than collected independently by the evaluators or directly from project participants
- the evidence base for preventing gambling harm is still developing. Therefore, the ability to demonstrate contribution more broadly is limited at this stage
- Funded projects were short term in nature, making longer term outcomes difficult to measure.



◀ Celebrating culture dressed in beautiful Kitenge (African ladies dress) at the Cultural greetings Christmas festival.
L to R Rosy, Annie, Jeannette, Adeline, and Estelle.

Key findings

Overall, the Program has:

- achieved four out of five intended outcomes and partially achieved the fifth
- produced 576 key outputs (see below)
- reached over 390,000 people from remote rural and regional communities that may not have been reached through the Foundation's other programs
- Created 24 new partnerships and strengthened many pre-existing relationships.

Program outcomes

INTENDED OUTCOMES (AS DEFINED BY THE FOUNDATION)	OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EVIDENCE AND RATING
Funded organisations have increased capacity to design and deliver prevention activity in the future	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>Project learnings indicate increased capacity to design and deliver prevention activities and implement new skills in prevention practice.</p> <p>Existing and new partnerships forged through the program will contribute to increased capacity to design and deliver prevention initiatives in future</p>
Funded organisations are confident to take on larger prevention projects in the future	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>All projects noted that they had increased confidence to design and deliver prevention initiatives in future.</p>
Increased or sustained awareness among target populations of the risks of gambling	<p>PARTIALLY ACHIEVED</p> <p>There was a moderate level of evidence that activities successfully increased awareness among target populations.</p> <p>Evidence relating to whether awareness increases were sustained was limited by time constraints.</p>
The Foundation learns more about how prevention works in rural and regional communities	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>There is a strong level of evidence of the contribution made to this outcome.</p> <p>All projects reported key learnings in delivering prevention activity.</p> <p>Staff at funded organisations had regular communication with the Foundation throughout delivery which enabled knowledge and information transfer.</p>
Funded organisations and the Foundation have strong relationships	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>There is a strong level of evidence of contributions to this outcome.</p> <p>All funded organisations indicated that their relationship with the Foundation strengthened over time.</p>

Activities and Outputs

The main activities and approaches were:

- Identification and recruitment of key stakeholders and/or expertise to projects
- Project promotion and advertising
- Developing and planning outputs such as events, information sessions, resources and other written or visual materials.

The main outputs produced were:

- Attendance at meetings, conferences, forums and community events (72)
- Information and workshops with the broader community (29)
- Media publications (20)
- Capacity-building activities with key stakeholders (15)
- Products such as reports, art projects, event kits, messaging campaigns and literature reviews (6)
- Delivery of a festival (1)

The number of outputs and extent of activity highlighted that, despite the relatively small scale of grants, the funded projects have undertaken and completed a large amount of activity. All projects engaged with a range of local partners and their communities in the development and delivery of activities and outputs.

Reach

Funded organisations documented the reach of each activity according to both the intensity (or 'dose') of the intervention, along with the number of individuals or communities that were reached. For example, typically, broadscale awareness raising (such as social media campaigns) reaches more people but is less intense ('dose'), whereas workshops and other face-to-face and/or repeat interactions reach fewer people but can potentially produce greater change or outcomes due to the higher dose. Figure 1 summarises these concepts.

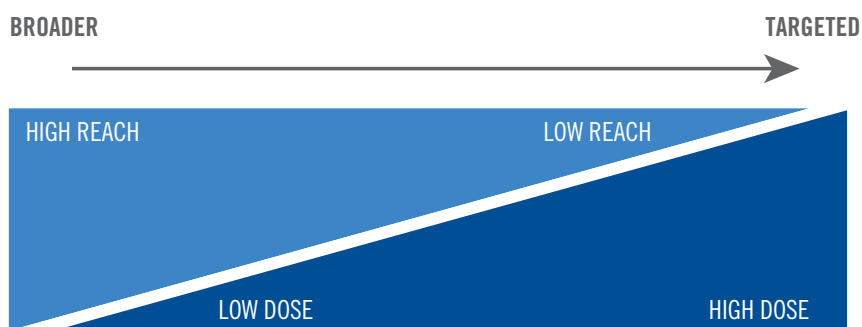


Figure 1: Distinction between reach and dose

Generally, the expectation would be that higher-level intensity interactions would produce greater and longer-lasting outcomes, but reach fewer people and have greater budget requirements. The other consideration is the duration of the Program and the size of grants provided to organisations. Thus, complementary activities across the spectrum of reach that connect with a range of people would be ideal, particularly when considering the results at the Program-level.

Data was reported against the reach-dose spectrum in Figure 1 and shows:

- Approximately 265 people engaged in training and capacity building activities
- Over 30,000 people attended information sessions, presentations, community events and alternative recreation activities
- Approximately 362,500 were reached through different broadscale awareness raising methods (social media, mass media, newsletters, etc.).

Overall, the activities and outputs from the projects have collectively reached over 390,000 people. Importantly, these individuals come from remote rural and regional communities that may not be reached through the Foundation's other programs.

Vicki Bradley, South Gippsland Shire Council, Lauren Sewell, Gamblers Help, Heather Butler, South Gippsland Shire Council, Tony Askwith, Gamblers Help delivering the 'Community Champions Go Gambling Free' project at Leongatha hospital.



Partnerships

One of the Foundations' three strategic priorities (2018 – 2021) is:

“Work in partnership with those who share our vision to improve community health and wellbeing.”³

All funded organisations indicated that their relationship with the Foundation strengthened over the period of project delivery, which was a key intended outcome for the Program. The Foundation's support of funded organisations throughout delivery – particularly in the provision of advice – was a key factor in increasing the capacity of the organisations to deliver prevention activity.

In total, there were 48 organisations involved in the Program (5 funded projects and 43 partners including the Foundation) with 49 different partnership arrangements between those organisations (see Figure 2).

Of these 49 partnership arrangements, 24 were new and 25 were pre-existing – a good result for the Program which sought to foster new and strengthen existing partnerships. This suggests that the Program has enabled the rural and regional organisations to develop a range of new relationships that may not have otherwise happened.

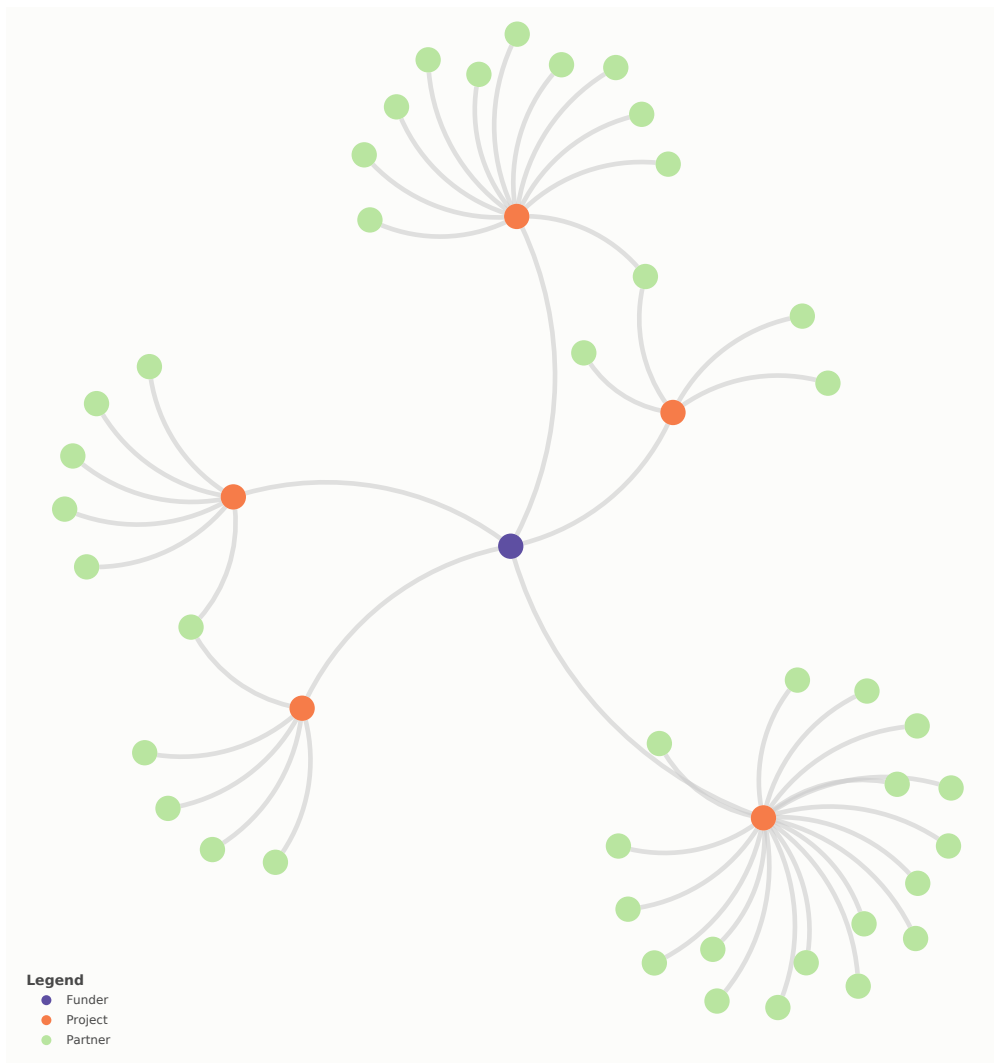


Figure 2: Network map of Program Partnerships.

³ Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF) 2018, Our Strategic Priorities 2018 – 2021, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne, p.8.

Projects also self-reported on the importance of these relationships in the delivery of their activities. The five project representatives were required to provide a rating on the value they perceived each of their partners provided to their project. As can be seen in Figure 3, 22 of 49 partnerships were felt to be essential/critical to the delivery of activities within projects, whereas nine were rated as not important.

Significantly, it was confirmed that each partner needed to have a purpose for being involved as partnership management can take time and resources to support and must add value to the project.

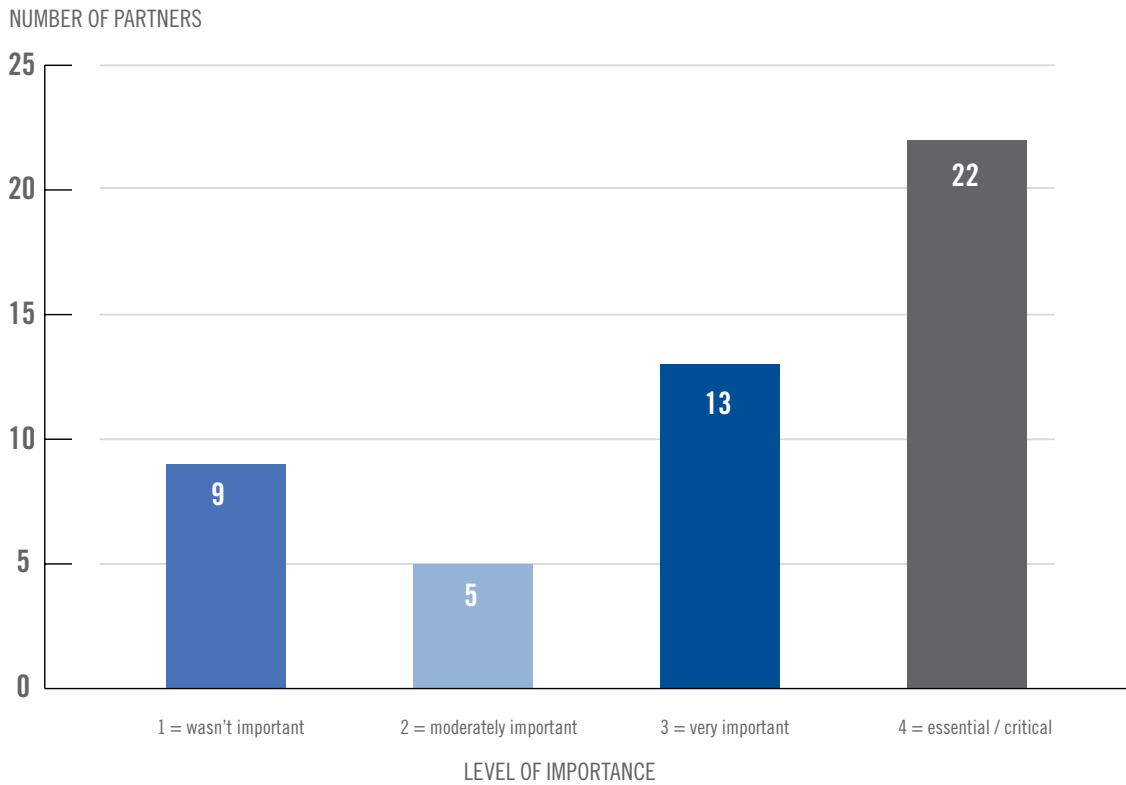


Figure 3: Projects' self-reported importance of each partner to project delivery (n=5)



Glenn Whitting, Belinda Stevens and Darren Harris from Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation

Challenges

RESOURCES

Almost all organisations noted challenges with resourcing, whether that be in relation to time, staffing or scope creep. Aside from the time-intensive nature required to develop partnerships, the planning and implementation of projects took more time than was originally planned:



[The] time taken to run the grant...took more time than I thought. But we were like, how do we fit this in on top of what we are already doing? But we did manage it and fit into our guidelines and meet timelines.

– funded partner



ENGAGEMENT

Direct engagement of a specific demographic can be challenging when there is no pre-existing relationship. One out of the five funded organisations had difficulty initially engaging with their target audience in part due to the lack of a pre-existing relationship.

The type of engagement used was also important in effectively engaging the target demographic. Some organisations noted the value of a collaborative approach when engaging with the target demographic:



All participants were equals and felt equals and that was what brought the engagement... and so it's about taking a more collaborative approach... a discussion about it – not lecture to them. Being aware of those power dynamics in the room and trying to equalise it. It's not about being an expert.

– funded partner



PARTNERSHIPS

Importantly, a key objective of the Program was to increase partnerships and connections between funded projects and other organisations within their rural and regional communities. The significant number of new partnerships formed (24) coupled with the strengthening of many pre-existing relationships is a testament to the Program's success.

Some organisations faced challenges engaging with partners. One organisation reported that this was due to the partner organisations lack of awareness of the prevalence of harm in their community, so they did not see the value in engaging with the project. Therefore, time must be spent raising the awareness and understanding of the partner organisation upfront, before external community engagement can occur.



Sometimes different types of organisations bury their heads in the sand say they don't have problem and go away – so just getting through that (is a challenge)... sometimes you do have to back away and just wait until someone is willing to be a champion for the issue, then others follow.

– funded partner



Learnings and recommendations

Key Learnings for funded organisations

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH THE TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC

Funded organisations noted the value of working collaboratively with the target demographic in face-to-face sessions, but also ensuring power dynamics were equalised, so participants felt empowered to contribute their ideas and knowledge.

RESOURCING

The value of working in partnership was recognised by all funded organisations, however this was also considered a time-consuming investment that should be accounted for in the planning stage to ensure project timeframes can be met.

WHAT HARM LOOKS LIKE

All organisations noted that they had increased their knowledge about what harm looked like in their target communities, especially in relation to the ways in which gambling harm occurred (e.g. through specific technologies) and the way in which the harm manifested within target communities.

Key Learnings for the Foundation

COMMUNICATION

Overall, funded organisations indicated that they received a high level of support from the Foundation which assisted them in the delivery of their projects, including networking opportunities and directly linking projects to each other.

Organisations spent a large amount of time in the development of resources, which in turn needed to be approved by the Foundation and in some cases, adjusted following feedback. The evaluators noted that the Foundation needs to remain cognisant when working with new organisations – particularly regionally and rurally based organisations – in that they may not have a thorough understanding of the Foundation's structure (i.e. who is responsible for what and how decisions are made internally).

Recommendations

The evaluation report provided four recommendations, which are summarised below. The Foundation accepted all recommendations.

- 1. The Foundation should explore the development of an inventory and record of the range of resources and materials produced as part of previously funded prevention projects – particularly where these could be used or adapted by other funded organisations.**

ACTION: Accepted and work underway.

- 2. The Foundation should consider development of an orientation pack for use when working with new organisations that covers some of the internal governance arrangements of the Foundation. This will help to ensure that there is a base level of understanding about how the Foundation works and who is responsible for what.**

ACTION: Accepted and completed.

- 3. There is continued value in the Foundation spending time engaging with rural and regional organisations to broaden their understanding of the sorts of organisations in the regions and their target demographics. This intelligence can continue to be used to design programs that consider the unique contexts of the organisations and regions themselves.**

ACTION: Accepted and work ongoing.

- 4. When promoting the use of partnerships, the Foundation should ensure funded organisations are cognisant of the time needed to build such relationships and factor this timing into project planning documentation and resourcing requests. This is particularly pertinent when working with rural and regional organisations who typically experience greater resourcing constraints than metropolitan organisations.**

ACTION: Accepted and work ongoing.

Conclusion and next steps

The Prevention Grants for Regional and Rural Victoria Program has provided some key insights into the ways in which prevention work can be undertaken in regional and rural communities.

Given that published evidence and literature on effective gambling harm prevention practice is still developing, these insights and lessons learned will be used to better inform delivery of gambling harm prevention programs (and other health promotion activities) by both the organisations involved as well as the Foundation more broadly when considering regional and rural communities.

Since funding the Program, the Foundation has further invested in preventing and reducing gambling harm in regional and rural communities through:

- implementation of the Prevention Partnership Program 2019 – 21 – grant funding to 14 projects, of which six are focussed on regional or rural communities
- continued support for the state-wide Community Engagement Program delivered by Gambler's Help funded partners, of which six are in regional and rural Victoria
- continued investment in gambling harm prevention advertising campaigns targeting regional and rural communities.

Mr Peace sharing his moves with the kids at the Cultural greetings Christmas festival in Albury, supported by Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation



The funded projects

Five organisations were funded through the Prevention Grants for Regional and Rural Victoria Program 2018 - 2019. The Foundation is grateful to all of them for their outstanding work in reducing and preventing gambling harm in their communities.

Youth Gambling Support Program

BENDIGO FAMILY AND FINANCIAL SERVICES INC.

Bendigo Family and Financial Services conducted a pilot education program in the Bendigo region for people under 25 years who receive Centrelink Newstart or Youth Allowance, to learn about risks associated with micro transactions and loot boxes, and the normalisation of gambling through gaming.

A young person's message

BETHANY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This project involved working with 15–25-year-olds in Hamilton, Warrnambool and Geelong to develop localised messages with the aim of reducing gambling harm experienced by young people.

Sport is a Game NOT a Shame

MALLEE SPORTS ASSEMBLY

Mallee Sports Assembly engaged with local sporting clubs in the Northern Mallee region to investigate the prevalence of gambling in these venues and the impact on the community, especially for Aboriginal and young people, and to provide support through information sessions.

'Cultural Festivals' the heart of community health events

MUNGABAREENA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

This project involved the development of a 'Koori Event Kit' to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and members of the Aboriginal, African, Nepalese and Filipino communities in Wodonga, to run 'Cultural Festivals' the heart of community health – events that increase local knowledge of gambling harm risks and raise awareness of Gambler's Help services.

Community Champions Go Gambling Free

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

South Gippsland Shire Council worked with the rural communities of Mirboo North and Leongatha to develop policies and activities to reduce harm from pokies and other forms of gambling.

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'Helping other young people achieve their dreams is part of my recovery.'

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