

## Request for Proposal Evaluation of the Youth Network

Issue Date: 06 May 2022

Proposal Due: 30 May 2022

### 1. RFP Purpose

Mission Australia, in collaboration with the Sir David Martin Foundation, seeks to engage a skilled and experienced organisation to collaboratively design and deliver a multi-year impact evaluation of the expansion of youth AOD residential Aftercare through the Youth Network initiative.

### 2. About Us

**Mission Australia** is a national non-denominational Christian organisation, with more than 160 years' experience in standing together with Australians in need on their journey to independence. Our evidence-based, client-centred community services are focused toward our goal of ending homelessness and ensure people and communities in need can thrive. In the 2019-20 financial year, we supported over 167,268 Australians through 483 programs and services including: programs targeting homelessness; services providing integrated family support; parenting programs; early childhood education; mental health services; residential drug and alcohol programs; youth programs; access to safe and secure housing; and programs to build capacity, resilience and opportunity for local communities.

**Sir David Martin Foundation** is a 30-year old family foundation, helping young people in crisis. The Foundation is the major funder of Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm, a unique, holistic treatment centre, which each year gives over 200 vulnerable young Australians, aged 16-24, a safe place to get well and prepare for new opportunities. Through philanthropy, we enable best practice models of treatment for youth drug and alcohol addiction.

### 3. About Youth Network

#### 3.1 Background

In 2020, Sir David Martin Foundation published a Research Report<sup>1</sup>, that showed high demand and widespread unmet need across Australia. With seven recommendations, the report called for a nationwide expansion of youth-specific services to prevent vulnerable young people being caught in the cycle of addiction. Aftercare was recommended as an effective wraparound program which is fundamental to counter the risk of relapse and can help sustain alcohol and other drugs (AOD) treatment outcomes following community-based or residential rehabilitation.

In response to the recommendations the Foundation, in partnership with Mission Australia, will expand Aftercare services nationally in a new initiative called **Youth Network**.

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<sup>1</sup> Evolve 2020: Are you doing enough for young people with drug and alcohol addiction? [SDMF-Research-Report-2020-singles-1.pdf \(martinfoundation.org.au\)](https://www.martinfoundation.org.au/research-reports/evolve-2020-singles-1.pdf)

### 3.2 Objectives of Youth Network

The Foundation and Mission Australia share the vision of a network of Aftercare workers across Australia for young people who have participated in residential AOD treatment programs. This will help avoid the cycle of addiction and set young people up for success with improved health and wellbeing, engagement in education and employment, housing, community connections and social support networks.

The objectives of Youth Network are to:

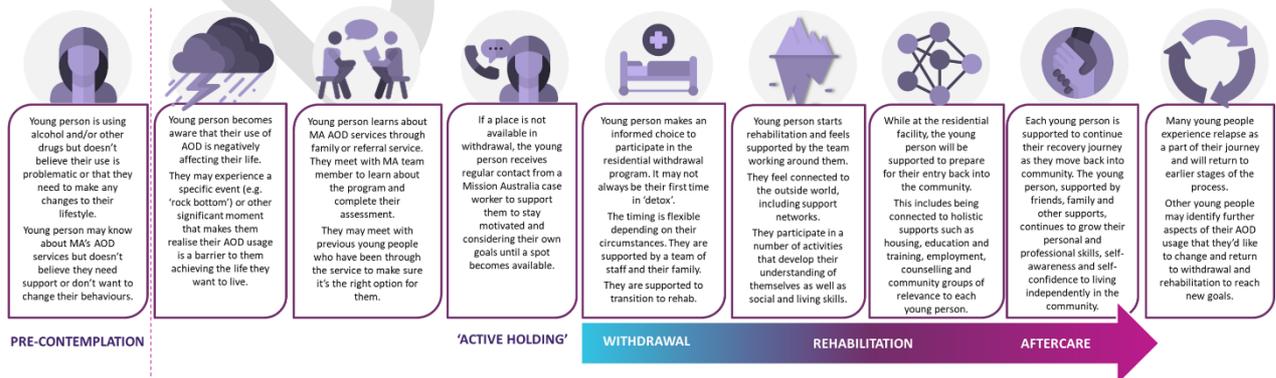
- Expand Aftercare services to support vulnerable young people to live safely back in their community after completing residential AOD treatment programs.
- Create a network of youth AOD specialists who will share best-practice knowledge, access professional development opportunities and work together to decrease the cycle of addiction and help young people achieve their goals through the provision of Aftercare.

### 3.2 Expansion of Aftercare

Aftercare is a voluntary program which provides wrap around support for up to six months to young people (12-24 years old) to assist them to transition back to the community after receiving residential withdrawal and/or residential rehabilitation AOD treatment. The model involves a dedicated youth worker who supports 20-50 young people per year to:

- Plan for their transition out of an AOD residential treatment program so they feel confident, healthy and equipped to manage the process.
- Re-build their life in the community, including accessing housing, education, training or employment opportunities.
- Connect to supports, both formal and informal, so the young person has a sustainable support network which they can access should their needs escalate.

The journey of each young person through their withdrawal and subsequent AOD recovery is complex and rarely follows a linear pathway, as described in the figure below. Aftercare provides individualised support for young people at different stages of their recovery journey. For example, Aftercare can support young people when they relapse to re-enter treatment in a timely way before a crisis occurs. It can also be a useful strategy to reengage young people who drop out of treatment to support them to re-enter when they are ready.



Youth Network will be rolled out initially across five existing Mission Australia youth AOD residential programs across Southern Highlands, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Batemans Bay (NSW) and Perth (WA). The table below provides a summary of the different locations and estimated expansion timeframes.

Service	Information
<b>Triple Care Farm</b> Southern Highlands, NSW Continued funding	Target cohort: 16-24 No. of beds: 28 Main source of referrals: Health, NSW Youth Justice and Self
<b>Drug and Alcohol Youth Service (DAYS)</b> East Perth, WA Aftercare commencing FY23	Target cohort: 12-21 No. of beds: 12 Main source of referrals: Community AOD services, Health, Justice, Department for Communities, Parents and Self
<b>Junaa Buwa!</b> Coffs Harbour, NSW Aftercare commencing FY24-	Target cohort: 13-18 (60% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) No. of beds: 8 Main source of referrals: NSW Youth Justice
<b>Mac River Rehabilitation Centre</b> Dubbo, NSW Aftercare commencing FY24	Target cohort: 13-18 (mostly Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) No. of beds: 32 Main source of referrals: NSW Youth Justice
<b>Triple Care Farm</b> Bateman's Bay, NSW Aftercare to be delivered in a new facility due to open FY24	Target cohort: 16-24 No. of beds: 10 Main source of referrals: NSW Youth Justice and Self

As described above there are notable differences when comparing the locations:

- Aftercare in WA will be delivered at DAYS, the only youth AOD service in the State, as part of an integrated service model, including Mission Australia's Youthbeat, Detox Centre and Youth Outreach Service. Aftercare will be provided predominantly as an outreach model supporting young people in the community.
- Junaa Buwa! and Mac River engage a high proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people who are primarily referred through NSW Youth Justice. These young people access residential rehabilitation after withdrawing at a hospital.
- Triple Care Farm is an existing integrated service model which includes Withdrawal, Residential and Aftercare (in operation since 2004). A new facility will be opened in Bateman's Bay in late 2022.
- The age of young people varies from 12-24 years, which means there will be difference in the way that services operate locally, their focus and how they address the different needs of young people.

### 3.3 Available data

All locations will collect an Aftercare Minimum Dataset. This will include administration data (i.e. client characteristics, service activities and outputs) and outcome tools. Whilst some assessment tools used in existing services are prescribed by funders, where possible a suite of consistent outcomes tools will be implemented. Tools will measure outcomes for young people at regular time

points, for example at entry, after rehabilitation and during Aftercare. Some of the psychometric tools used by services include:

- Brief Situational Confidence Questionnaire
- Severity of Dependence Scale
- The World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment
- Brief Symptoms Inventory

The following table provides examples of Mission Australia’s Outcome Domains and service outcomes measured through youth AOD residential programs.

Outcome Domain	Service Outcomes
<b>Safe and Healthy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction and management of AOD use and tobacco use</li> <li>• Increased coping skills (AOD use, gambling, mental health)</li> <li>• Improved physical health and lifestyle</li> <li>• Increased self-care skills</li> <li>• Improved mental health, emotional stability and wellbeing</li> <li>• Increased safety and security</li> </ul>
<b>Housed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to secure, safe and stable housing</li> <li>• Increased capacity to sustain housing</li> <li>• Improved ability to manage finances</li> </ul>
<b>Connected and Resourced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced family / support-based relationships</li> <li>• Increased connections to health and safe relationships</li> <li>• Increased skills and capacity to access support services when needed</li> </ul>
<b>Developing and Achieving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased aspirations for the future</li> <li>• Increased enrolment and engagement in education/training</li> <li>• Entry/re-entry the workforce or vocational pursuits</li> </ul>

## 4. About the evaluation

Mission Australia, in collaboration with the Sir David Martin Foundation, seeks to engage a skilled and experienced organisation to collaboratively design and deliver a multi-year impact evaluation of Youth Network to build an evidence base and secure long-term investment in Aftercare. The evaluator will work closely with the established Youth Network Evaluation Reference Group, who will meet regularly to provide oversight and feedback on the evaluation design, management, and reporting. It is critical that the evaluation design and delivery is informed by the voices and lived experience of young people. This will occur through either representation of young people on the Evaluation Reference Group or a Youth Advisory Group.

### 4.1 Evaluation objectives

The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of Youth Network. The objectives are to:

- Assess the expansion and implementation of Aftercare, including the appropriateness of the service design, delivery, and local adaptations to meet the needs of young people.

- Identify any barriers, enablers and service model components that are critical to establish, implement, and expand the Youth Network, as well as integrate Aftercare within youth AOD residential programs.
- Understand and evidence the impact of Aftercare and the value-add provided to young people at different stages of their recovery journey and in different local contexts.
- Explore the benefits of creating a network of youth AOD specialists to share best practice, access professional opportunities and support young people through the Aftercare service.
- Assess the cost-effectiveness of Aftercare in delivering outcomes for young people, the indirect impact on families and broader community, and avoided costs to the government.

The evaluation findings will be used for both formative and summative purposes:

- Secure long-term funding and investment in Aftercare.
- Inform the expansion of the Youth Network across Mission Australia sites and potential partners.
- Continuously improve the delivery of Aftercare services to ensure the best possible services are being provided to young people receiving AOD residential treatment.
- Share best practice and evidence within Mission Australia and the broader sector to improve knowledge of what works to break the cycle of addiction and improve outcomes for young people.

Specific evaluation questions to meet these objectives and purposes will be developed in collaboration with the Youth Network Evaluation Reference Group.

#### **4.2 Scope of the evaluation**

The evaluation will assess the implementation and outcomes of the Youth Network, which includes the expansion of Aftercare, as well as the creation of a network of youth AOD specialists. It will encompass the five existing Mission Australia youth AOD residential programs. Whilst the scope is focused on the Youth Network, it will be critical for the evaluation to explore the implementation and outcomes of the youth AOD withdrawal (where possible) and rehabilitation component of each program to understand the critical success factors needed to deliver an integrated youth AOD residential treatment program. As such, data to explore the service continuum will be in scope of the evaluation.

Evaluation stakeholders will include young people engaged in the youth AOD residential programs including cultural representation, their families and carers, Mission Australia, Sir David Martin Foundation, partner organisations, government departments (i.e. health, justice, child protection) and stakeholders in each location.

### 4.3 Evaluation design

We are seeking a phased mixed methods evaluation design to assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the Youth Network. It should include:

- Participatory approaches to capture the voices, experiences and outcomes for young people and their families.
- An impact evaluation design to understand the value-add of delivering Aftercare as part of an integrated youth AOD residential service model.
- Utilisation and adaptation (if needed) of existing data collected by Mission Australia, as outlined in section 3.3.
- Value for money analysis, in the final year, to explore the cost effectiveness of the service model and avoided costs.

The evaluator will be expected to design the evaluation in collaboration with the Youth Network Evaluation Reference Group and young people with lived experience.

### 4.4 Deliverables and timeframes

The timeframe for delivering the evaluation is 3 years from the date of contract commencement (end of June 2022). The specific deliverables required are outlined in bold under the key phases of Mission Australia’s Evaluation Project Management approach.

Evaluation Stage	Key tasks and deliverables
<b>Manage</b>	1. Commencement of the evaluation contract.
<b>Design</b>	2. <b>Initiation Workshop</b> with the Youth Network Evaluation Reference Group to provide an overview of the initiative, introduce the proposed evaluation approach, develop key evaluation questions for each evaluation phase and establish shared ways of working, including involvement of young people with a lived experience. 3. Develop an <b>Evaluation Plan</b> , including questions, methodology, timeframes, data collection plan, analysis approach, ethical and cultural considerations and evidence sharing approach. 4. <b>Obtain ethics approval</b> from a suitable ethics committee, including completing the application form and all supporting materials .
<b>Measure</b>	5. <b>Establish any additional data collection systems, procedures and templates</b> to support data collection and monitoring, including training of staff in data collection tools if needed. 6. Meet regularly with the Evaluation References Group to discuss data collection and address any challenges that may arise. 7. Undertake any additional data collection, as per the Evaluation Plan.
<b>Analyse</b>	8. Conduct analysis according to the data analysis section outlined in the Evaluation Plan. 9. Facilitate a <b>Validation Workshop</b> , before the interim and final evaluation report, with the Evaluation Reference Group and young people with a lived experience

	to present early findings and to seek clarification, interpretation and synthesis of data sources for each evaluation question.
<b>Report</b>	<p>10. Produce a high quality and succinct <b>Preliminary Evaluation Report</b> which answers the key evaluation question focused on the expansion of Aftercare and local service implementation.</p> <p>11. Produce a high quality and succinct <b>Interim Evaluation Report</b> focused on the effectiveness and benefits of creating a network of youth AOD specialists and the early outcomes for young people.</p> <p>12. Produce a high quality and succinct <b>Final Evaluation Report</b> which clearly answers the key evaluation questions and provides recommendation based on the key findings. The report will include implementation, outcomes and value for money analysis.</p>
<b>Action</b>	13. Facilitation of <b>Key Findings Presentation</b> with the Evaluation Reference Group and key organisational stakeholders after the final evaluation report has been produced.

#### 4.5 Budget and milestones

The costs will be guided by the evaluation design; however, payment will be made in accordance with the following milestones.

Timeframe	Indicative budget	Deliverables
By 30 June 2022	\$30,000	Milestone 1: Commencement of contract
July/August 2022	-	Milestone 2: Evaluation Plan
August 2023	\$30,000	Milestone 2: Acceptance of Preliminary Evaluation Report
August 2024	\$40,000	Milestone 3: Acceptance of Interim Evaluation Report
August 2025	\$50,000	Milestone 4: Acceptance of Final Evaluation Report

## 5. About your proposal

Please provide a proposal **by 5:00 pm (EST) on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022** outlining your demonstrated experience and capacity to complete the evaluation. Proposals should not exceed 10 pages and should include a concise description of:

- The proposed evaluation approach and methodology, including options for the impact evaluation design and methods.
- Content knowledge and previous experience, including key personnel who would be involved in the evaluation team.
- Capacity to deliver to the timeframes and milestones listed above.
- A quotation with the breakdown of costs for each deliverable/milestone.
- Overview of insurances held by the provider.
- Key contact for the proposal – name, position, telephone, and email address;
- An example of previous work and two referees.

The following selection criteria will be used to compare and evaluate all proposals. A shortlist of Applicants will be invited for a virtual interview. The successful applicant will be based on the

strength of the proposal against the selection criteria and the additional information provided in the interview.

Criteria	Description
<b>Appropriateness of the proposed approach</b>	The proposed approach and evaluation design is appropriate to the requirements of the RFP. All aspects of the service design, cohorts, locations and ethical considerations have been considered and addressed.
<b>Demonstrated experience and content knowledge</b>	Experience in delivering similar evaluation projects and impact evaluations. Demonstrated content knowledge about young people and substance abuse and AOD youth residential interventions.
<b>Organisational capacity</b>	Ability to deliver the project on time and within budget. The evaluation team includes technical skills, suitable experience and the ability to respectfully engage with local staff, young people and other key stakeholders across diverse geographical sites across.
<b>Value for money</b>	Demonstrated value for money through careful considerations of the evaluation design costs, benefits, options and risks.

Selection of the successful applicant will be subject to negotiation and execution of a contract by Mission Australia.

All enquiries and submitted proposals should be sent by email to:

Cherie Pereth  
Impact Measurement and Evaluation Manager  
Centre for Evidence & Insights, Mission Australia  
[perethc@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:perethc@missionaustralia.com.au)