

SisterWorks

2022 Social Return on Investment Report

May 2023

“SisterWorks won my heart. I started to gain back confidence. I can now do public speaking, go and order food, talk to strangers for directions and make so many friends. I’ve never until now felt like I belonged. SisterWorks is not just a job for me. It’s also my family.”

- Sister in Social Enterprise program



About SisterWorks

SisterWorks is a not-for-profit social enterprise, based in Melbourne

Our mission and vision

Through work and entrepreneurship, our mission is to support women who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants to improve their confidence, mental well-being, sense of belonging and economic outlook.

Our vision is an Australia where all migrant women are given the opportunities to become economically empowered.

Everything we do is grounded in the belief that work empowers women

SROI analysis

SisterWorks commissioned Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Consulting to determine the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of its activities over the 2022 calendar year.

SROI is an internationally recognised methodology used to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or organisation. The outcome of an SROI analysis is a story about the total value of change created, relative to the investment.

Impact of SisterWorks in 2022

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis found that SisterWorks generated positive social value for migrant women, volunteers and interns, businesses and community partners, the Government and other funders.



\$2.2m was invested in SisterWorks, creating an estimated **\$9.5m** of social and economic value

Almost **\$0.5m** of the investment (20%) corresponded to in-kind support from volunteers

Almost **800 migrant women** engaged in and benefited from SisterWorks programs

73% of the value was created for Sisters

- ✓ All Sisters improved their wellbeing and developed social connections
- ✓ 255 Sisters earned an income through SisterWorks
- ✓ 60 Sisters were supported to create or grow their business

123 volunteers and interns supported SisterWorks' activities, volunteering a total of 17,500 hours. 60% of them were themselves migrant women.

6.5% of the value was created for migrant volunteers
2% was created for other volunteers

125 business partners employed Sisters or purchased its social enterprise products. **5 community partners** are now delivering SisterWorks' programs in remote communities

11% of the value was created for business and community partners

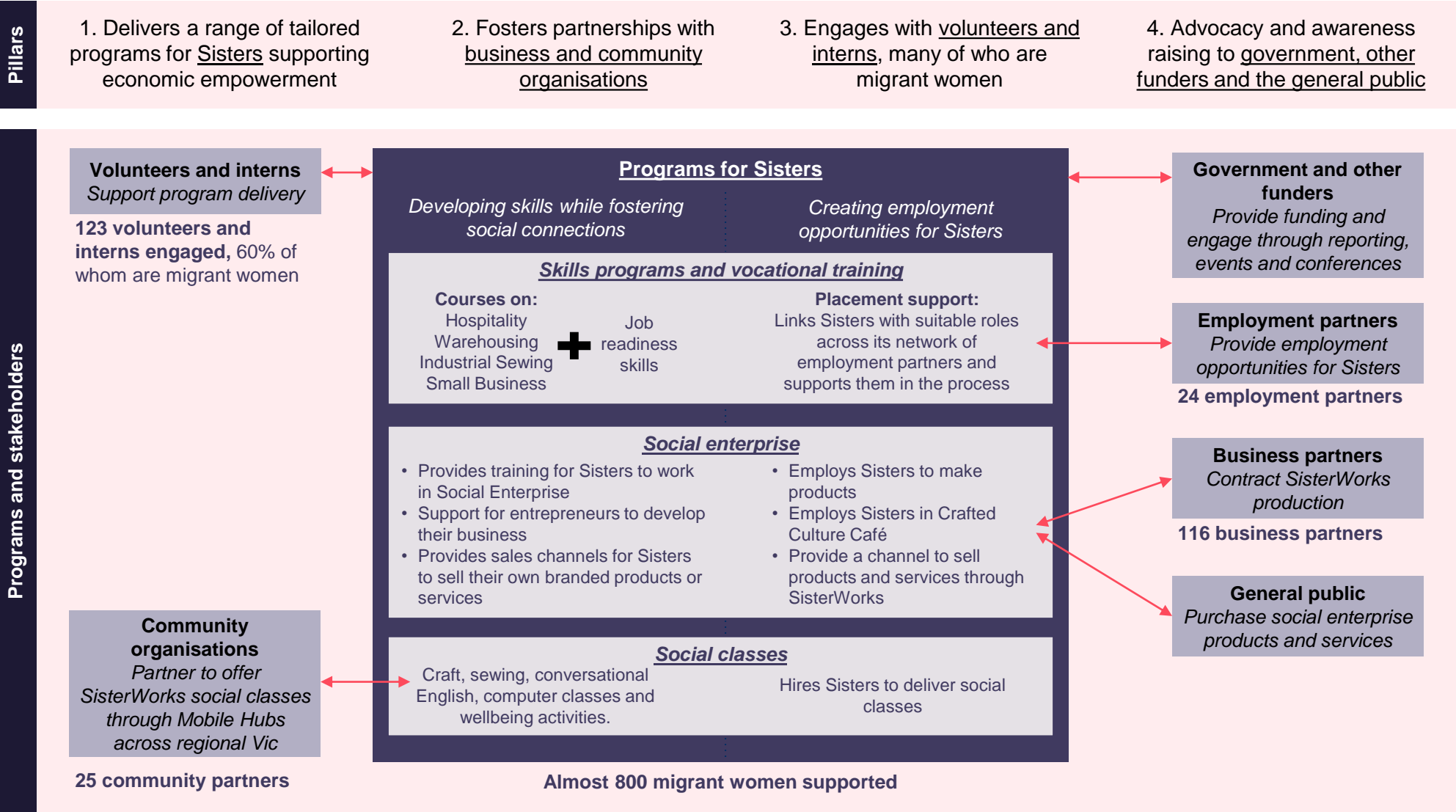
Government generated savings thanks to SisterWorks, and together with other **funders**, gained insight on how to better support economic empowerment of migrant and refugee women

7% of the value was created for government and other funders

The 2022 SROI reflects the remarkable growth and development of SisterWorks as it reaches its 10 year anniversary. Compared with the 2019 SROI analysis, there is a significant increase in the number of Sisters and other stakeholders impacted, total value created, and social return on investment ratio.

What SisterWorks does

To support its core programs for Sisters, SisterWorks partners with businesses, community organisations, Government, other funders and volunteers.



Note: Figures correspond to calendar year 2022

Programs delivered to Sisters in 2022

In 2022, SisterWorks offered a range of programs and services for Sisters including:

Job ready and small business program



SisterWorks provides education, vocational training and pre-employment programs to equip Sisters with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to overcome barriers and enter employment or entrepreneurship in Australia. In 2022, SisterWorks **supported approximately 451 Sisters through employment programs** including barista, hospitality, food handling, small business, sewing and warehousing courses, and job information sessions, through its Pathways to Employment and Social Enterprise Employment programs.

Employment / placement support



After completing SisterWorks' training courses, **189 Sisters gained employment** in 2022 with SisterWorks and its partners:

- Employment partners: SisterWorks has developed partnerships with businesses to help them fulfill their recruitment needs while increasing employment opportunities for Sisters. This includes providing additional support to industries in their recruitment process, and to Sisters in their application and onboarding process. In 2022, **145 Sisters were employed by employment partners**.
- Employment at SisterWorks Social Enterprise: SisterWorks has also created additional opportunities for Sisters to work while developing their skills and gaining work experience in Australia. In 2022, **SisterWorks employed 44 Sisters** to work at the Crafted Culture Café, or at SisterWorks' production hub, where they pack or manufacture products for different clients.

Social Enterprise



SisterWorks social enterprise sells unique products which have been locally made by Sisters. This work not only connects Sisters with employment, but also provides entrepreneurs with the opportunity to sell their products via SisterWorks established retailer platforms of online shopping and a brick-and-mortar shop. In 2022, **SisterWorks had 59 entrepreneurial Sisters**, 18 of whom were also equipped with skills to facilitate workshops, and 37 could run markets. Some of these Sisters started or expanded their business' thanks to SisterWorks Small Business Vocational Training program.

Social Classes



SisterWorks also offers social classes for Sisters to develop social connections, enhance their wellbeing and build confidence. In 2022, **287 Sisters participated in social classes** including computer classes, craft, sewing, conversational English and wellbeing activities like yoga and meditation. 40% (113) of them were supported through mobile hubs which delivered classes in additional locations throughout Victoria, in partnership with community organisations.

Key outcomes created as a result of SisterWorks' activities in 2022

	Shorter-term outcomes	Longer-term outcomes
Outcomes for Sisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sisters increase their self-confidence Sisters learn new, transferable skills Sisters develop supportive community connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sisters feel safe to be their full self at SisterWorks Sisters gain opportunities to work and earn money in Australia Sisters have improved emotional and mental wellbeing Sisters are economically empowered
Outcomes for Volunteers and Interns*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers and interns gain confidence in their skills and abilities Volunteers and interns learn new, transferable skills Volunteers and interns develop supportive community connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers and interns improve their future employment opportunities Volunteers and interns have an increased sense of purpose
Outcomes for Businesses and Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses better understand the value of a diverse workforce Businesses and community have increased access to high-quality, sustainable products and gain marketing and brand benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses have greater access to a pool of trusted and diverse employees to fulfill their recruitment needs Businesses have a deeper understanding of the benefits of ethical procurement Community partners adopt more services tailored to community needs Businesses and community have a better understanding and respect for migrant and refugee communities Businesses and community members better engage with migrant and refugee communities
Outcomes for Government and other Funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government and other funders have greater access to information about the needs of migrant and refugee women and what works to support them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government savings in welfare payments and reallocation of resources for training subsidies and employment services Increased contribution to the economy of traditionally excluded women who are now meaningfully employed

Insights about how SisterWorks drives impact

The SROI analysis revealed key insights about SisterWorks that drive its impact on migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women, and other stakeholders:

Sisters

SisterWorks deeply understands the needs of Sisters, and its program offering offers pathways to meet different needs

SisterWorks has a deep understanding of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women, their needs and how to address them. Its programs support the need for social connection and English language skills, as well as provide a range of pathways towards economic empowerment to suit different skills, interests and aspirations.

SisterWorks is a community of migrant women across Sisters, volunteers and staff. “Once you become a Sister, you will always be a Sister”

Sisters build close relationships with each other and with SisterWorks which is fostered over time. For many, SisterWorks is a key connection to other like-minded migrant women in Australia and helps them to develop friendships and overcome isolation in a new country. Many stay to support the programs and the majority of staff and volunteers are also migrant women with lived experience: 76% of staff and over 60% of volunteers identify as someone with a culturally diverse background.

SisterWorks’ is a model for how to break down barriers to employment for migrant women

SisterWorks tackles the multi-dimensional barriers to employment and creates multiple pathways for Sisters to work in Australia. This includes training and job readiness support, targeted volunteering opportunities (over half of their volunteers are migrant women), collaborating with businesses who recruit Sisters, direct employment, and supporting entrepreneurship.

Businesses and community partners

SisterWorks offers access to a highly adaptable range of social procurement opportunities and helps its partners to drive diversity and inclusion within their organisations

SisterWorks links partners to its social enterprise products and has the capability to produce a wide range of customised products made by Sisters in its Production Hub. It also helps businesses to find suitable staff and provides support in the recruitment process to ensure it is tailored and culturally appropriate for women from a migrant background. For community partners, it provides a model for services tailored to migrant women.

Government, funders and broader community

SisterWorks is driving systemic change towards increasing diversity, inclusion and gender equality

SisterWorks is an influential leader in the sector and is known for its expertise in driving economic empowerment of women from migrant backgrounds. It shares its knowledge and experience, raises awareness, and advocates for what works with Government, other funders and with the broader community.

Benefits for Sisters

The majority of the social value created by SisterWorks (73%) is for participating migrant women across six key outcomes, which have a lasting impact on their lives. Through these outcomes, SisterWorks plays a critical role in supporting women on the path to greater social and economic inclusion and participation.

Sisters increase their self-confidence

\$1m
10.5%

SisterWorks supports migrant women to increase their self-confidence by creating opportunities for them to learn and practice English, and other skills that will create job opportunities. It also fosters a community of fellow Sisters and volunteers who support each other and inspire them to feel confident in their abilities and recognise their talents.

"Now I am confident to travel alone and speak to everyone"

- Sister in Social Classes

Sisters feel safe to be their full self at SisterWorks

\$1.25m
13%

At SisterWorks, Sisters find a safe space to be themselves, and take opportunities to explore and develop their potential as migrant women living in Australia.

"I am able to completely escape in this amazing environment where we create, interact, socialise and discover ourselves as human beings, women in particular, and learn from each other. SisterWorks allows you to be yourself, assert yourself as an individual, build your confidence, help you discover your skills and reach your goals, your dreams."

- Sister in Social Classes

Sisters develop supportive community connections

A key focus of SisterWorks' is to create an environment where Sisters can create a community and feel supported by other migrant women, volunteers and SisterWorks staff. Sisters have consistently reported that they've made a lot of new friends thanks to SisterWorks. This becomes particularly relevant for a cohort that is generally far from family and childhood friends.

"I've kept in touch with friends from SisterWorks and even go out with them on a regular basis to chill in the park or in the city."

- Sister in Employment Pathways program

Sisters learn new, transferable skills

\$1.35m
14%

SisterWorks provides vocational training programs in hospitality, warehousing, sewing and entrepreneurship for Sisters to develop skills that will increase their employability. SisterWorks also offers social classes in computing, craft, sewing, conversational English and wellbeing activities, for Sisters to learn new hobbies and develop social connections.

- "With all the certificates I can apply for jobs more easily"*
- "I got my first job in Australia as a cake decorator. I've improved my English and gained new perspectives of the Australian life"*

- Sisters in Employment Pathways program

Sisters gain opportunities to work and earn money in Australia

\$2.3m
24.5%

SisterWorks has increased their efforts in creating pathways for migrant women to gain employment and earn income. They do this through their social enterprise where they employ Sisters at the café and production hub, by developing partnerships with businesses to employ Sisters, and creating a platform for entrepreneur Sisters to improve their skills and increase sales.

- "I like SisterWorks because it's lightening my spirits of going back to work"*
- "With extra income earned I actually go out and dine more often"*

- Sisters in Employment Pathways program

Sisters have improved emotional and mental wellbeing

\$1m
10.5%

As a result of increasing Sisters' confidence and skills, creating meaningful friendships and social connections, and getting opportunities to gain employment and income, Sisters' emotional and mental wellbeing also improves. In the Sisters' own words, they feel happy at SisterWorks.

"SisterWorks gave me a sense of connection with the society, also lots of friends and an opportunity to earn money and be empowered and feel more confident speaking the language."

- Sister in Social Enterprise program

Benefits for other stakeholders

Value is also created for three other stakeholder groups: migrant and non-migrant volunteers and interns, businesses and community partners, and the Government and other funders. SisterWorks has created value for each one of these stakeholder groups in the following ways:

Volunteers and interns

SisterWorks creates volunteering and internship opportunities for migrant and non-migrant women. In these spaces, volunteers practice or develop new skills, gain work experience and increase their future employment opportunities, increase their confidence, develop social connections and have an increased sense of meaning and purpose.

This impact is particularly relevant for migrant volunteers, who will significantly benefit from having work experience in Australia to be able to find employment in the future, and develop social connections that might otherwise not have been possible.

Migrant volunteers and interns

\$0.6m
6.5%

Other volunteers and interns

\$0.2m
2%

"It gives more sense to my life and sets an example for my children"

"I think this work broaden my understanding of work of non-profit organisation and program of helping immigrants in Australia"

"SisterWorks gave me a fun, proactive and productive social circle that feels young, vibrant and family-like."

8 | - Volunteers in survey conducted for SROI

Businesses and community partners

\$1m
11%

SisterWorks has developed partnerships with businesses to increase employment opportunities for migrant women, at the same time linking businesses with employees to fulfill their recruitment needs.

SisterWorks also provides products and services developed or delivered by migrant women, for businesses to purchase through social procurement.

Its work leads to increased sector understanding of, respect for, and engagement with migrant communities. At the same time, it provides marketing and brand benefits for businesses: SisterWorks regularly shares case studies, success stories and the impact of their work through social media, articles or in the news.

SisterWorks has also partnered with community organisations to deliver their programs in remote communities, reaching more Sisters. This has increased the capacity of these organisations, some of which have now launched similar programs internally.

"My team is much more diverse now. Before we had only young Australian graduates. Now we have more diversity in terms of age and cultural background. It opened eyes to our teams in terms of possibilities."

- Business partner consulted for SROI

Government and funders

\$0.69m
7%

SisterWorks has become an influential leader in the sector for diversity, inclusion and gender equality matters. The data collected and shared creates an important evidence base to drive advocacy and systemic change. Government and other funders benefit from this information, and regularly rely on SisterWorks to understand this cohort and what they need.

Additionally, thanks to SisterWorks some women have been able to set up small businesses, gain employment at SisterWorks or other organisations, or grow successful and profitable enterprises, which allow them to contribute to the economy through tax contributions. Furthermore, some Sisters are no longer dependent on welfare payments.

Government is also able to reallocate training subsidies where Sisters complete courses with SisterWorks, instead of through subsidised places with other training providers.

"We've learned about the challenges and barriers that migrant and refugee women experience. SisterWorks shares case studies in progress reports that increases our understanding. I find it so powerful to hear stories from participants, for example Sisters working in the café. Makes me think, how can I amplify their work outside of my team and inform other team's policies? So I've invited SisterWorks to one of our branch meetings to talk more about their work."

- Partner and funder consulted for SROI

Calculating the SROI ratio

SisterWorks delivered an SROI ratio of 4.3:1 based on the investment for the period of the analysis. For every \$1 invested by SisterWorks, \$4.3 of social and economic value is created.

Stakeholder	Outcome	Value by outcome (\$'000)	Value by stakeholder (\$'000)	% of total value by outcome	% of total value by stakeholder
Sisters	Sisters increase their self-confidence	\$998	\$6,922	10.5%	73.0%
	Sisters feel safe to be their full self at SisterWorks Sisters develop supportive community connections	\$1,253		13.2%	
	Sisters learn new, transferable skills	\$1,349		14.2%	
	Sisters gain opportunities to work and earn money in Australia	\$2,328		24.5%	
	Sisters have improved emotional and mental wellbeing	\$995		10.5%	
Migrant volunteers	Migrant volunteers learn new, transferable skills	\$129	\$613	1.4%	6.5%
	Migrant volunteers gain more confidence in their skills and abilities	\$81		0.8%	
	Migrant volunteers develop supportive community connections	\$95		1.0%	
	Migrant volunteers have an increased sense of purpose	\$24		0.3%	
	Migrant volunteers improve their future employment opportunities	\$284		3.0%	
Other volunteers and interns	Other volunteers and interns learn new, transferable skills	\$16	\$189	0.2%	2.0%
	Other volunteers and interns gain more confidence in their skills and abilities	\$31		0.3%	
	Other volunteers and interns develop supportive community connections	\$24		0.3%	
	Other volunteers and interns have an increased sense of purpose	\$15		0.2%	
	Other volunteers and interns improve their future employment opportunities	\$103		1.1%	
Businesses and community partners	Businesses better understand the value of a diverse workforce Businesses and community have a better understanding and respect for migrant and refugee communities	\$151	\$1,072	1.6%	11.3%
	Businesses have greater access to a pool of trusted and diverse employees to fulfill their recruitment needs	\$683		7.2%	
	Businesses have a deeper understanding of the benefits of ethical procurement Businesses and community have increased access to high-quality, sustainable products and gain marketing and brand benefits	\$147		1.6%	
	Community partners adopt more services tailored to community needs	\$91		1.0%	
Government and other funders	Government and other funders have greater access to information about the needs of migrant and refugee women and what works to support them	\$53	\$687	0.6%	7.2%
	Government savings in welfare payments and reallocation of resources for training subsidies and employment services	\$445		4.7%	
	Increased contribution to the economy of traditionally excluded women who are now meaningfully employed	\$188		2.0%	
Total value of outcomes (\$'000)		\$9,484		100%	
Total investment in CY 2022 (\$'000)		\$2,213			
SROI \$ per \$		\$4.3 per \$1			

Investment

- The investment included in an SROI analysis is a valuation of all of the material inputs required to achieve the outcomes that will be described, measured and valued.
- The total investment in SisterWorks during 2022 was \$2.2m, reflecting the operating costs of the organisation.
- This investment includes an in-kind investment corresponding to the time volunteers invested in 2022. To calculate this non-monetary investment, the total hours volunteered in 2022 by all volunteers was multiplied with the minimum wage rate of that year. With 17,500 hours volunteered, the value of the volunteer investment is estimated at almost \$0.5m.





SROI Methodology

The SROI methodology was used to identify, measure, and value the impact of SisterWorks’ activities for different stakeholder groups, including migrant women and volunteers. SROI is an internationally recognised approach that provides a framework to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or organisation. It is a form of cost-benefit analysis that examines the social, economic and environmental outcomes created by the activities of the program and the costs of creating them.

Social value is the value that people place on the changes that they experience in their lives. The Principles of Social Value provide the basic building blocks for anyone who wants to make decisions that take this wider definition into account.

The outcome of the SROI analysis is a story about the value of change created, relative to the investment. The SROI ratio is a shorthand for all of the value for all of the stakeholders.

Social value principles

1	 Involve stakeholders	Stakeholders should inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued.
2	 Understand what changes	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.
3	 Value things that matter	Use financial proxies so the value of the outcomes can be recognised.
4	 Only include what is material	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.
5	 Do not overclaim	Organisations should only claim the value that they are responsible for creating.
6	 Be transparent	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.
7	 Verify the results	Ensure appropriate independent verification of the analysis.
8	 Be responsive	Pursue optimum Social Value based on decision making that is timely and supported by appropriate accounting and reporting.

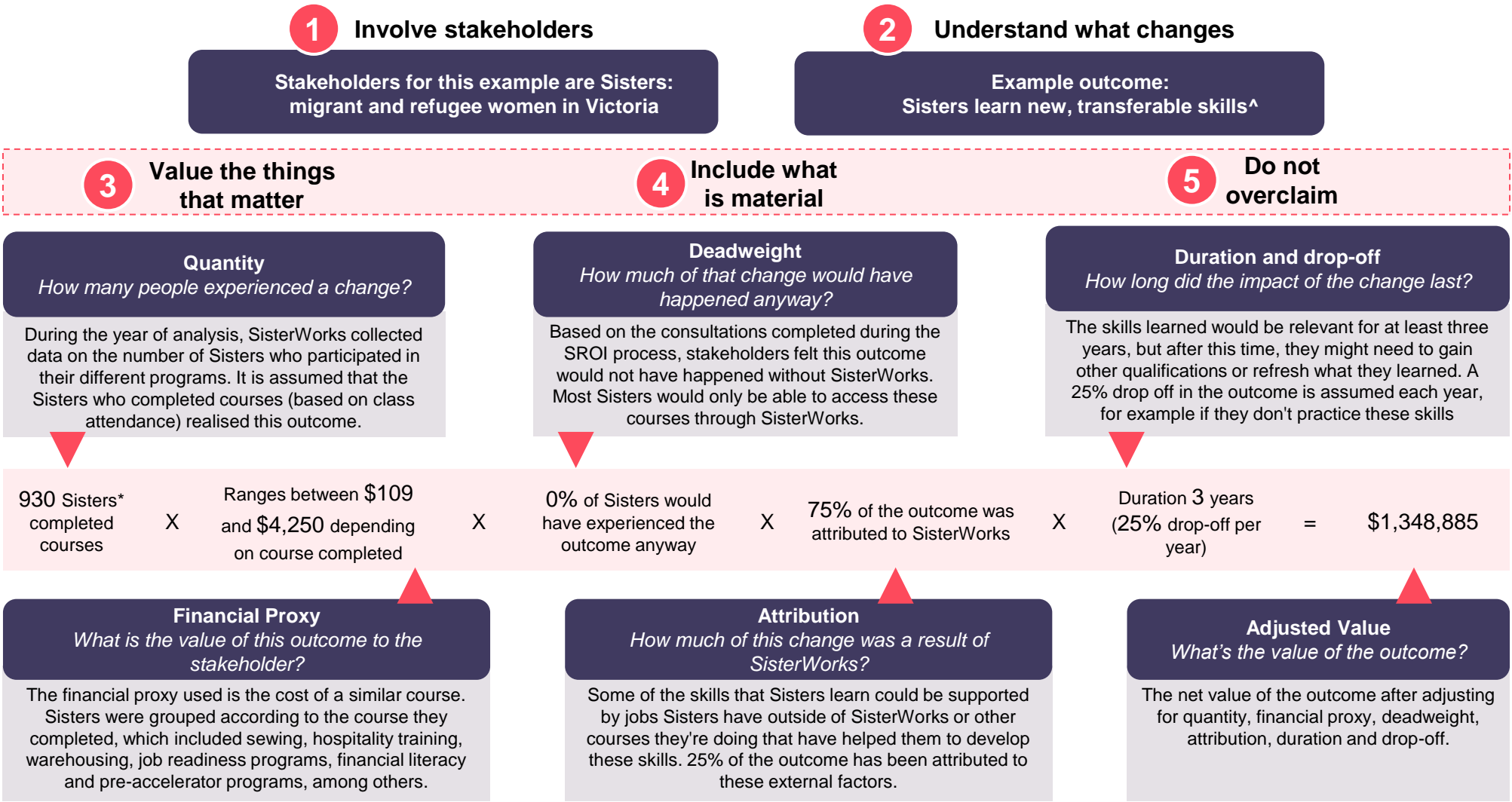
Data collection

The SROI analysis draws on program information from SisterWorks, surveys, focus groups and interviews conducted by the SVA team, and external research to determine suitable financial proxies.

- Four focus groups were conducted with Sisters from the different programs. In total, 36 Sisters participated.
- Surveys were completed by 21 businesses and funders and 40 volunteers (35% of them are migrant women). Community partners were also invited to respond to a questionnaire, 6 of them provided input.
- Interviews were conducted with 6 business partners and funders.

Applying the social value principles

The first five social value principles were applied to each outcome identified in the SROI analysis. The following illustrates a worked example of one outcome and how the social value is calculated.



^ Outcomes included in the analysis are those reported as material by stakeholders, and are distinct from each other. For example, the long-term outcome 'Sisters are economically empowered', is not separately valued as it is a culmination of other preceding outcomes. Some outcomes are represented by the same financial proxy so are analysed together.

* This figure might include one Sister multiple times as they were counted individually for each course they completed, considering that they would gain different skills from each program.

Acknowledgement

SVA would like to acknowledge the participation of SisterWorks' employees, Sisters, volunteers and other stakeholders who took time to provide thoughtful and thorough input, contributing to the strong evidence base that is critical to this analysis.

Professional Disclosure statement

Social Ventures Australia (SVA) have prepared this report in good faith on the basis of our research and information available to us at the date of publication, without any independent verification. Information has been obtained from sources that we believe to be reliable and up to date, but SVA do not guarantee the accuracy, completeness or currency of the information. The information in the report is general in nature and is not intended to and should not be used or relied upon by readers as the basis for any strategic, business, financial, tax, accounting, legal or regulatory decisions.

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Social Ventures Australia (SVA) is a not-for-profit organisation that 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 social-purpose sector and by working with partners to strategically invest capital and expertise.

SVA Consulting is Australia's leading not-for-profit consultancy. We focus solely on social impact and work with partners to increase their capacity to create positive change. Thanks to more than 10 years of working with not-for-profits, government and funders, we have developed a deep understanding of the sector and 'what works'. Our team is passionate about what they do and use their diverse experience to work together to solve Australia's most pressing challenges.

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