



## The Indigenous Marathon Foundation

### Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the Indigenous Marathon Project

#### Key findings

- The Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF) is a health promotion charity that uses running to celebrate Indigenous resilience and achievement, and create inspirational Indigenous leaders
- Each year IMF's flagship program, Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP), supports up to twelve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men and women to train for and complete a major international marathon
- Between 2014-2016, 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from around Australia were selected to participate in the IMP, and 33 crossed the finish line
- An investment of \$2.1 million (89% from Australian Government) between 2014 and 2016 created \$13.6 million of present value for IMP graduates, their families, their communities, and Government
- The Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio equates to 6.6:1, meaning that for every \$1 invested in IMP between 2014-2016, approximately \$6.60 of social, cultural and economic value was created
- IMP has a long-term, transformative effect on the IMP graduates that alters their life course. This mobilises a ripple effect for family members, communities members and whole communities who also make long-term behavioural changes
- Government is the single largest beneficiary of the investment into the IMP between 2014 and 2016. This is driven by the significant value associated with resource reallocation resulting from reduced or eliminated adverse health risk behaviours of people impacted by IMP
- In the long term, it is likely that the IMP will contribute significantly to resetting the 'normal' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life outcomes and aspirations in communities across Australia



**INDIGENOUS  
MARATHON  
FOUNDATION**  
#RUNSWEATINSPIRE

*"Being an IMP graduate means everything to me. I feel proud of myself - it showed me resilience, determination, courage and strength that I didn't think that I had. I never get tired of telling my story."*

IMP graduate 2014

## About the Indigenous Marathon Foundation and the Indigenous Marathon Project

The Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF) is a health promotion charity that uses running to celebrate Indigenous resilience and achievement, and create inspirational Indigenous leaders. It was born out of an initiative of marathon champion, Rob de Castella, that involved the training of four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over a 6-month period to participate in and complete a marathon. In 2010, the Indigenous Marathon Project's inaugural cohort became the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to participate in and successfully complete the world's biggest marathon, the New York City Marathon.

Every year since then, up to twelve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women aged 18-30 are selected to train for and complete a major international marathon. Participants are supported with expert coaching advice to ensure they are prepared to complete a marathon. They also receive training and support to develop leadership capabilities to enable them to drive change in their home communities once they complete the program.

### The Impact of the IMP

In the three year period covered by this SROI analysis, IMP created significant value for graduates, their families, members of their home communities and Government.

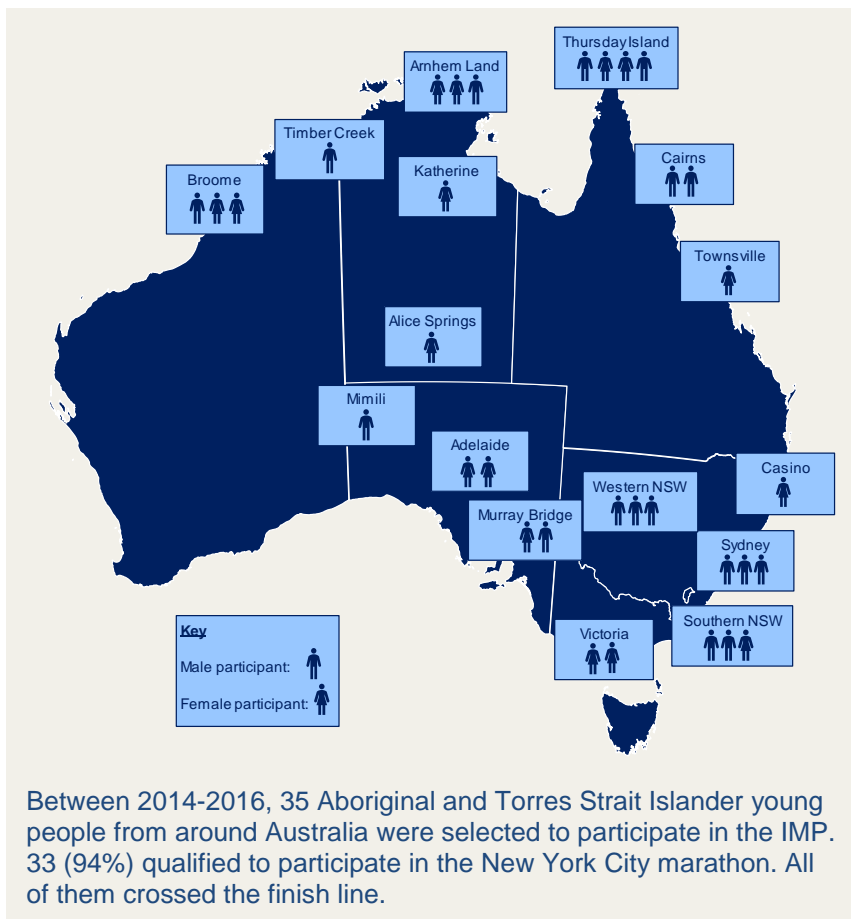
For graduates, their participation in IMP results in a health transformation and mindset shift that sets them up to overhaul their physical health, improve mental health through resilience and positive coping strategies, develop self-belief, set and achieve major goals, and become leaders, both during the program and for many years afterwards. Graduates see benefits flow down to most parts of their lives – leadership opportunities, community and peer network, career development and family functioning.

The personal growth and increased profile of graduates once they come home from the marathon has a direct impact on family and a less direct (but still significant) impact on the communities in which they come from or live in. Graduates share their knowledge and skills and catalyse and support health and wellbeing transformations in family and community members that mirror their own. The achievements of graduates also contribute significantly to an increase in visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement in the wider Australian community.

Government is the single largest beneficiary of the investment into the IMP between 2014 and 2016. This is driven by the significant value associated with resource reallocation resulting from reduced or eliminated adverse health risk behaviours by the impacted stakeholders.

***“My story can be duplicated many times over and over. It’s hard to put into words how much confidence you get from it. That’s just exercising. And being around people who feel like they can do anything.”***

**Family member of IMP graduate**



Between 2014-2016, 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people from around Australia were selected to participate in the IMP. 33 (94%) qualified to participate in the New York City marathon. All of them crossed the finish line.





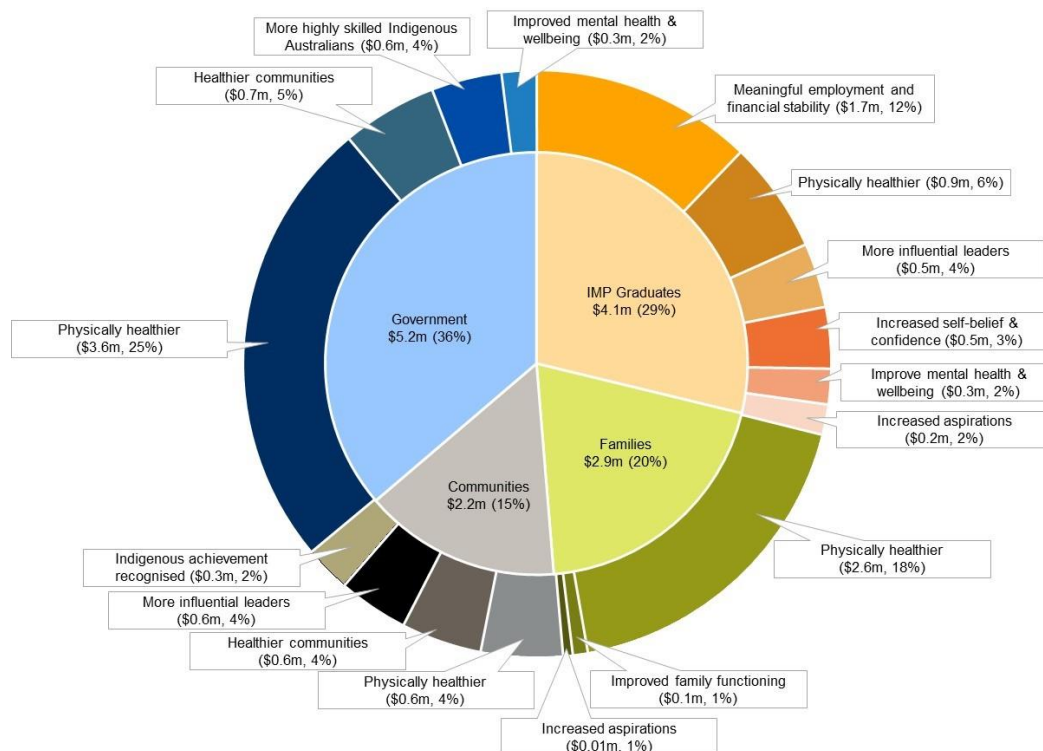
## Value Created

The outcomes experienced by stakeholders often do not have a market value so each outcome was valued using a financial proxy. Examples of valuing outcomes:

Outcomes	Financial proxy	Valuation Technique & Rationale
<b>IMP GRADUATES</b> Physically healthier	Averted value of Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) for physical inactivity and dietary risks	<u>Revealed preferences</u> : The average value people and society is willing to pay to have a good healthy life or to prolong a life
<b>GOVERNMENT</b> Improved physical health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Avoided costs to Government per person by reducing alcohol consumption, BMI and physical inactivity	<u>Resource reallocation</u> : Govt can invest cost savings elsewhere

The total value social, economic and cultural value created by IMP between 2014-2016 is estimated to be \$13.6m. When compared to investment of \$2.1m, the SROI ratio is 6.6:1 based on the investment for three years between 2014 and 2016. That is, for every \$1 invested, approximately \$6.60 of social and economic value has been created.

***“Return on investment? I don’t know what dollars have gone into it - but we have leaders for the next 40 years in this community. Can’t put a price on that”***  
**Mayor, Alice Springs**



## Insights

1. IMP is a transformational journey that alters the course of participants lives
2. IMP creates a ripple effect on the health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, which can lead to long term structural change in communities
3. IMP creates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders of the future
4. IMP is contributing towards more of Government’s priorities than improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
5. IMP contributes to the development of a localised Indigenous health workforce, and there is an opportunity to formalise and build on this

## About this project

IMF engaged SVA to understand, measure and value the social, cultural and economic impact of the investment into the Indigenous Marathon Project over three years between 2014 and 2016.

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology was used to guide the process. SROI is a framework for understanding, measuring and accounting for social, economic and environmental value. It places a monetary value on the impact (the benefit) of an activity, and compares this with the cost incurred in creating that benefit. SROI is stakeholder informed, which increases the depth of analysis required compared to traditional cost-benefit analysis, as it requires direct engagement with those who experience change.

This is a baseline SROI analysis that assesses the value of IMP between 2014-2016, which was informed by the views of stakeholders and available data. The project involved targeted consultation and research and a thorough analysis of three cohorts of IMP participants.

Throughout the analysis, professional judgements have been made to represent the change experienced by stakeholders and the value of these changes where data has not been collected over time. Analysis was developed in close consultation with IMF staff and IMP graduates, and tested and validated by sector experts and data analysis.

SROI ratios should not be compared between programs or organisations without having a clear understanding of each organisation's mission, strategy, program logic, geographic location and stage of development.

### For more information about IMF or IMP, or the full report, contact:

Indigenous Marathon Foundation

T: (02) 6162 4750

E: [info@inf.org.au](mailto:info@inf.org.au)

