FIRST FOOT FORWARD
SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

- 230 participants shared their perspectives in an evaluation of the First Foot Forward (FFF) program through online and paper surveys. The participant groups were comprised of 203 year 5 and 6 students, 20 parents, two teachers, three FFF Project Officers and two Western Sydney University (WSU) Support Staff members.
- Participants stated that getting a job they like, finishing year 12, spending enough time with family, and doing homework and other activities were considered the most important study-based priorities.
- As a result of taking part in the FFF program, participants reported improved understanding of how going to university can help their future, being more interested in going to university and being more comfortable about going onto a university campus.

WHAT IS FIRST FOOT FORWARD?
The First Foot Forward program has been running since 2013 in 39 primary schools across Greater Western Sydney, inspiring students in their final two years of primary education to think about university and other tertiary educational pathways as viable options for the future. In 2017, the First Foot Forward program worked with 3,659 primary school students. The key features of the program are:

- Year 5 and 6 students: A one-hour in-school workshops and three five-hour on-campus workshops per year.
- Parents: One two-hour Family Open Night on campus, consisting of an information session and family workshops.
- Teachers: Professional Learning workshop given to teachers by WSU Support Staff, in two six-hour sessions.

WHAT IS SROI?
The Social Return On Investment (SROI) is a principles-based methodology for measuring additional financial value relative to the resources invested. The methodology assigns a financial proxy to the impacts and places participants at the centre of the research process – students, FFF Project Officers and WSU Support Staff participated in this evaluation. Their perspectives shared through the surveys determined what the program did well and how people have been helped by it. The SROI ratio is represented as a return, in dollar value, for every dollar invested (see below).

MEASURING IMPACT
Four schools took part in this research project, to provide a cross-sectional look at the program. Participant perspectives were collected through paper (for students and parents) and online (Project Officers and WSU Support Staff) surveys. Schools were chosen on the basis of having an active working relationship with the program. Participants were asked basic questions regarding their school level and professional background, what they considered important from a list of study-related topics, what the best parts of the program were, and what had improved and changed as a result of the program for the 2017 academic year. The results were analysed and developed into academic journal articles by the research team (see contact details below).

“[We are] getting to know what it’s like in university, so we can prepare. If we didn’t know, we would stress in university and have a harsh life.”

FFF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT
STAKEHOLDER OUTCOMES

The outcomes of this evaluation were different for each stakeholder group:

**Year 5 and 6 students** had a greater understanding of how going to university can help when they get older, the importance of doing homework and study, and being more familiar with what happens at a university.

**Parents** discussed that their children’s confidence to go on to further education improved, their child’s understanding of how further education and training can help their futures improved, and their child’s interest in finding out more about going to university improved.

**Project Officers** stated that students are more comfortable about going onto a university campus, more familiar with how a university operates, more familiar with the services available at a university, more confident to talk to their parents about going to university and more motivated to go to university.

**WSU Support Staff** reported that students have more confidence to go onto further study, improved interest in finding out more about going to university, increased understanding that further education and training can help their future, increased comfort about going onto a university campus, more confidence to talk to their parents about university and are more motivated to go to university.

"I have learned that it is possible for kids to learn at a young age and be excited at the idea that they can go to university, if that is what they choose to do."

FIRST FOOT FORWARD PARENT

CALCULATING VALUE RATIO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>Research Participants</th>
<th>Investment (Present Value)</th>
<th>Benefits (Present value)</th>
<th>SROI Ratio</th>
<th>Value per $1 Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>$70,422</td>
<td>$505,356</td>
<td>7.18:1</td>
<td>$7.18</td>
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</tbody>
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A Present Value Investment of $70,422 for 230 students from 4 schools involved in the First Foot Forward SROI Research Project resulted in a Present Value Benefits of $505,356 i.e. $7.18 for every dollar invested.

INSIGHTS

- A total of 69% year 5 and 6 students said that their parents either did not attend university or were unsure of their attendance, while 84% of these same students’ parents encouraged them a lot or somewhat to attend university in the future. The First Foot Forward program is creating aspirations in young people from an early age to start imagining and taking steps towards a future that involves tertiary education in a meaningful way.

- Parents were encouraged to see their children exposed to higher education at an early age and the role it can play in their futures, as well as an increase in their own understanding of what university offers their children.

- Project Officers enjoyed the fact they were able to inspire students to reach their goals, problem solve and work together, and work with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Working with these students allowed Project Officers to consider how different students learn and encouraged open mindedness in the learning process.

CONSIDERATIONS

- The figures presented here are a cross-section of four out of 39 schools that took part in the First Foot Forward program in 2017. As such, the findings in this summary are representative and do not speak for each individual school.

RESEARCH TEAM

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