

LIGHTHOUSE

PARTNERSHIPS



Social Return on Investment 2024-25

Blue Light Victoria

Summary Report
September 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

As an Australian organisation, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land across Australia and pay respect to elders past and present. We acknowledge that this land, which we benefit from occupying, was and always will be Aboriginal land.

This report was prepared on Gadigal land, and covers programs and activities taking place across Bunurong, Dja Dja Wurrung, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri country.

Thanks to our contributors

Thank you to the team at Blue Light Victoria, and the many people who contributed to this report, including from Victoria Police, Victoria Department of Education, Australian Federal Police, youth services organisations, independent fitness trainers, families, and young people.

About Us

Lighthouse Partnerships is a not-for-profit, values-based consulting organisation. Our mission is to help other organisations to reflect, learn, and grow. We empower organisations to better understand their impact, embed learning, and strengthen their effectiveness in driving positive change.

Find us at www.lighthousepartnerships.org

LIGHTHOUSE
PARTNERSHIPS

Inspire, engage, and equip young people to be their best self



About Blue Light Victoria

Blue Light Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation that has been delivering early intervention and prevention programs for children and young people across Victoria since 1976.

Blue Light aims to empower young people to thrive and reach their full potential, while fostering a strong connection to their community.

About this report

Blue Light commissioned us to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis because it wanted to understand the social return on its programs for young people, and the value they deliver for stakeholders.

This report covers Blue Light's four main programs (these are described on the next page), which together reached 869 young people in 2024-25. The report is evaluative, looking back at these programs over financial year 2024-25 and analysing their social return.

Our SROI methodology

SROI focuses on understanding the social value created by a program, including health, environmental, and economic value. By comparing the value the program creates (expressed in money terms) to the investment the program requires, SROI can generate an estimate of a program's social return.

This is captured in an SROI ratio. For example, a ratio of 2 indicates that every \$1 invested in the program delivered \$2 of social value. Throughout this project, our methodology was guided by the seven social value principles. We engaged key stakeholder groups (including young people, families, Community Partners, teachers and other school staff, and fitness instructors). These stakeholders helped to generate and validate key SROI parameters, as well as verify the overall results.

We also drew on Blue Light's routine pre-program and post-program survey data (covering young people, Community Partners, and other stakeholders), which provided key quantitative and qualitative evidence for measuring change. Cost analysis of direct financial costs was completed by Blue Light, while we (together with stakeholders) generated an analysis of the in-kind investment they provided.

Social value principles

- Involve stakeholders
- Understand what changes
- Value the things that matter
- Only include what is material
- Do not overclaim
- Be transparent
- Verify the results

LIGHTHOUSE
PARTNERSHIPS

SUMMARY REPORT || 3

Blue Light's four programs

All four programs covered in this report involve young people connecting with Community Partners (drawn from Victoria Police and other community-oriented organisations) as well as focusing on socioemotional skills, identity, and mental health. Three programs (Blue EDGE, Blue EDGE+, and 1:1 mentoring) also involve a physical activity component, where young people participate in sport, cardio, or strength training to create a foundation for positive engagement and connection.



01 Blue EDGE

- 587 young people (31 schools)
- Years 7-9
- Small group (up to 20)
- Fitness, shared meal, group workshops, community role models
- 8 weeks

02 Blue EDGE+

- 31 young people (3 schools)
- Years 7-9
- Small group (up to 15)
- Fitness, shared meal, group workshops, community role models
- 8 weeks

03 CoRE

- 228 young people (17 sites)
- Years 9-11
- Whole class or small group
- Group workshops, community role models, volunteering
- 8 weeks

04 1:1 Mentoring

- 23 young people (2 sites)
- Years 5-11 Individual
- Fitness with community mentors
- 4 or 8 weeks + ongoing weekly drop-in gym sessions

“ [The best part was] feeling more safe around the police and learning more about my values and myself
(Blue EDGE participant) ”

“ My favourite part of Blue EDGE was learning how to collaborate with a group of people I'm usually not around
(Blue EDGE participant) ”

“ Everything was my favourite
(Blue EDGE participant) ”

“ I enjoyed going out and cleaning up the environment
(CoRE participant) ”

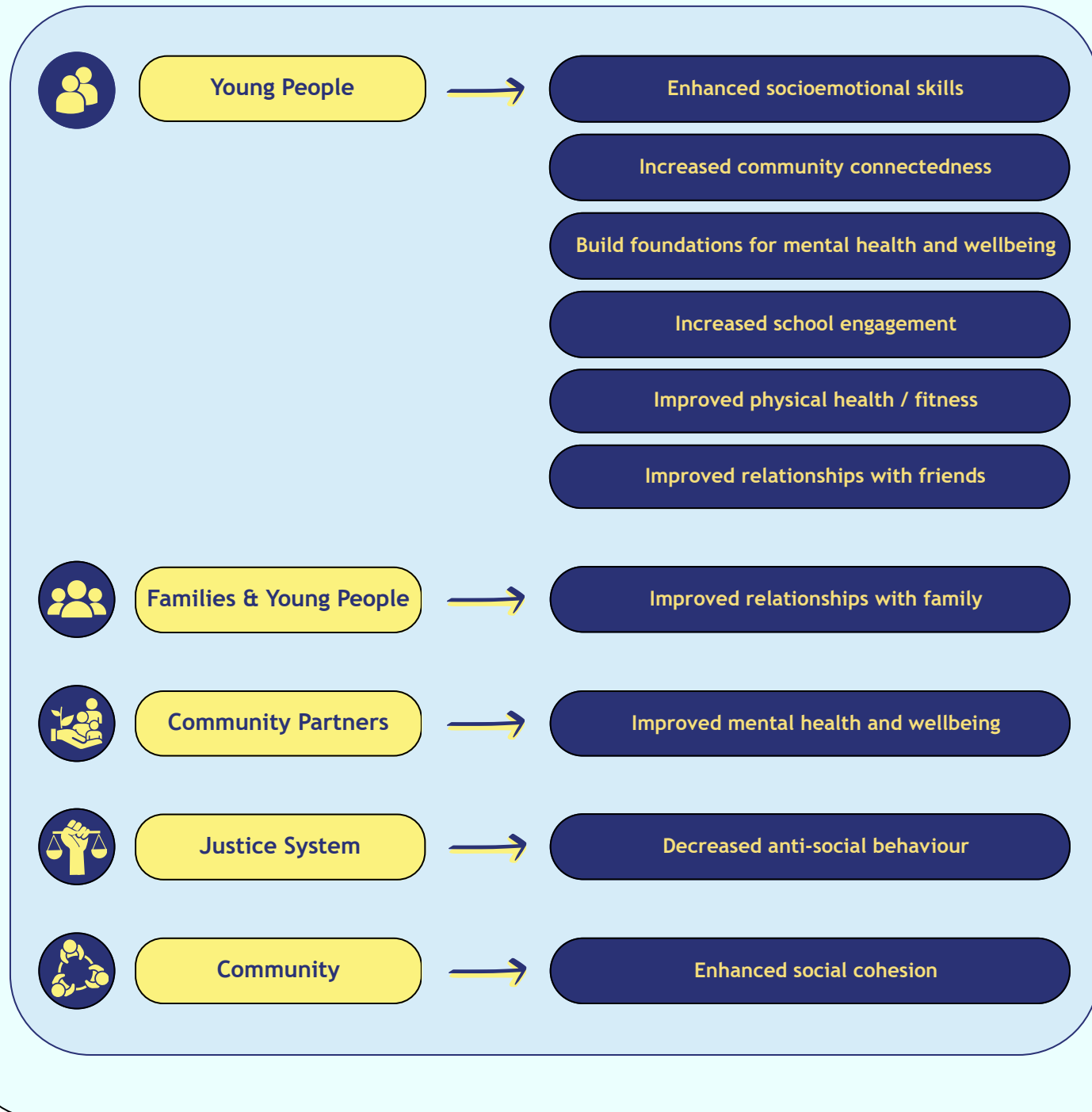
“ It was my favourite part of the week
(CoRE participant) ”

“ I got to boost my confidence
(1:1 participant) ”

“ I enjoyed boxing and getting fit and everyone here is really nice and I love talking to them about my day
(1:1 participant) ”

Understanding what changed

This SROI change map is an extended version of Blue Light's overarching theory of change. It shows the stakeholder groups and sources of social value included in our analysis. The SROI change map applies across all four programs, except for the outcomes "improved physical health/fitness" and "decreased anti-social behaviour", which are not relevant to the CoRE program.



Measuring change

We primarily measured change through Blue Light’s routine preprogram and post-program surveys of young people and stakeholders. These anonymous surveys collect a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

We triangulated outcome measurements wherever possible using qualitative survey data from young people, stakeholder survey data, and expert input from the stakeholders we consulted for this SROI. We found that many stakeholders offered detailed personal stories and experiences corroborating the outcomes measured through survey data.

The stakeholders we consulted for each program deliberated and provided an estimate of the duration of each change. To be conservative, we assumed that all multi-year outcomes reduced by 50% in each subsequent year (drop off).

As an additional step to make sure the analysis does not overclaim, the amount of change was also reduced using either measured or stakeholder-estimated assumptions for deadweight (ranging between 10% and 94%) and stakeholder-estimated assumptions for attribution (20% all outcomes).

Survey Data Collection	Blue EDGE / Blue EDGE+	CoRE	1:1 Mentoring
Young people pre-program	615 (99.5%)	204 (89%)	23 (100%)
Young people post-program	495 (80%)	103 (45%)	13 (57%)
Stakeholders post-program	86 (45%)	10 (15%)	16 (46%)



“The other day I went into [school] for something else, and three people from the Blue EDGE program came running up to say hi and how well things are going. And to see [that compared to] what they came into the program like. They wouldn’t even look at police [before].”

Blue EDGE stakeholder



“

School engagement and relationships with friends; they’re all the ones that came to mind first.

Blue EDGE stakeholder

School engagement was a main factor; they did definitely engage better with school. They were also able to connect with the schoolbased staff who were working on the program.

Blue EDGE stakeholder

The community connectedness was definitely one that stood out; the social cohesion was another one that was really good; and socioemotional skills.

CoRE stakeholder

It really changed things for our whole household.

1:1 mentoring stakeholder

”

Valuing change

The changes created by Blue Light’s programs do not have a market value. Instead, SROI uses financial proxies to reflect the value of each change.

Our valuation approaches for generating financial proxies included revealed preference, wellbeing valuation, direct financial benefit, and resource reallocation.



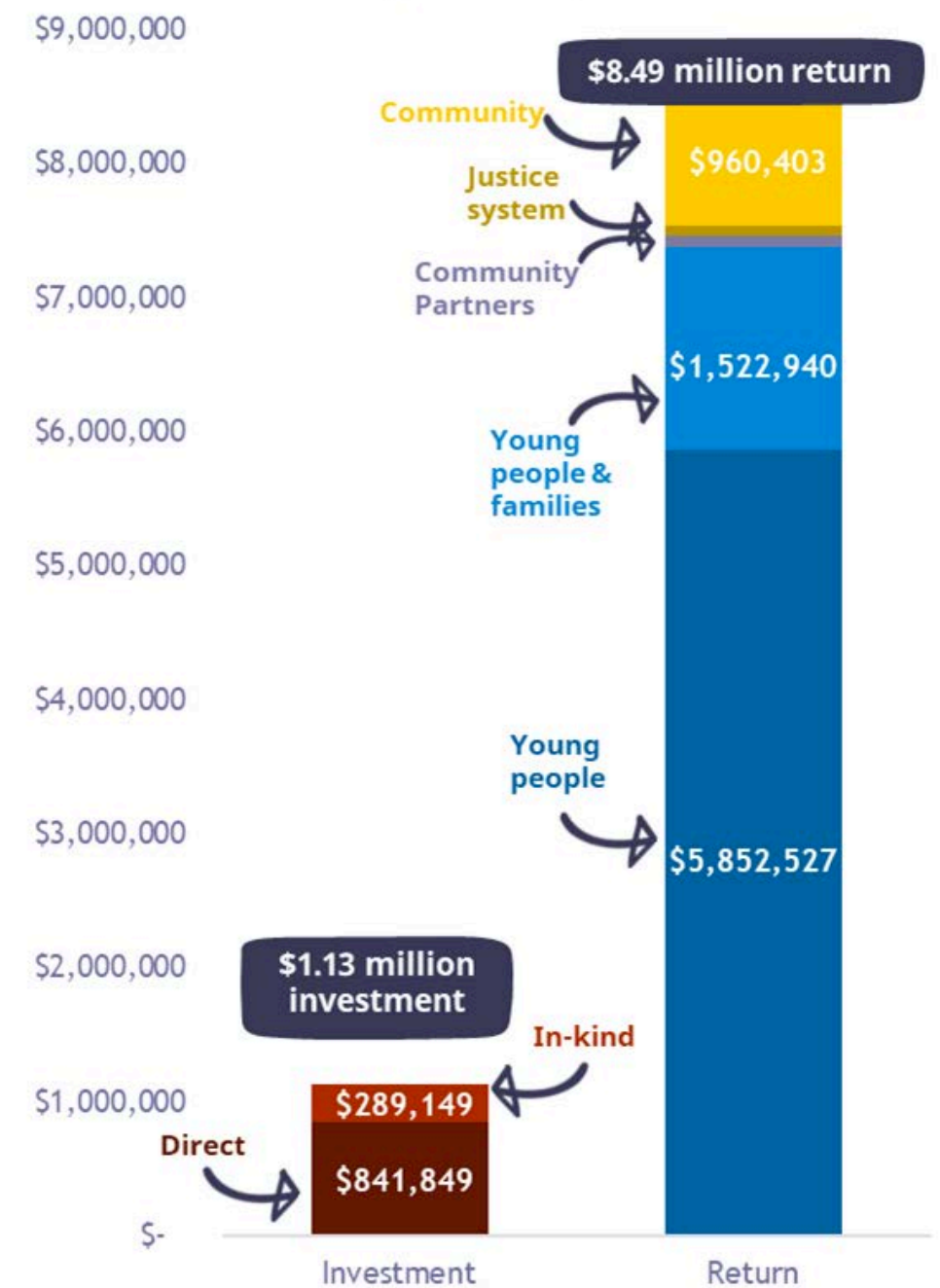
Results: strong positive overall return

\$7.50
Social Value
created for every
\$1 invested

We found the four programs generated a positive social return on investment over 2024-25. The combined \$1.13 million investment required to deliver the programs was substantially exceeded by the \$8.49 million social value the programs created. Overall, we estimate that the programs generated **\$7.50** of social value for every \$1 invested. More than two-thirds of this value overall (69%) is created for the young people participating in the programs, with most of the remainder flowing to the young people and their families (18%) and the broader community (11%).

Stakeholder	Stakeholder	Number	Value	%
Young people	Enhanced socioemotional skills	739	\$0.38m	4%
	Increased community connectedness	407	\$4.43m	53%
	Build foundations for mental health and wellbeing	732	\$0.01m	<1%
	Increased school engagement	218	\$0.43m	5%
	Improved physical health / fitness	413	\$0.28	3%
	Improved relationships with friends	359	\$0.33m	4%
Young people & families	Improved relationship with family	289	\$1.52m	18%
Community partners	Improved mental health and wellbeing	92	\$0.08	1%
Justice system	Decreased anti-social behaviour	22	\$0.07	1%
Community	Enhanced social cohesion	145	\$0.96	11%

Overall results for BLV's four programs (2024-25)



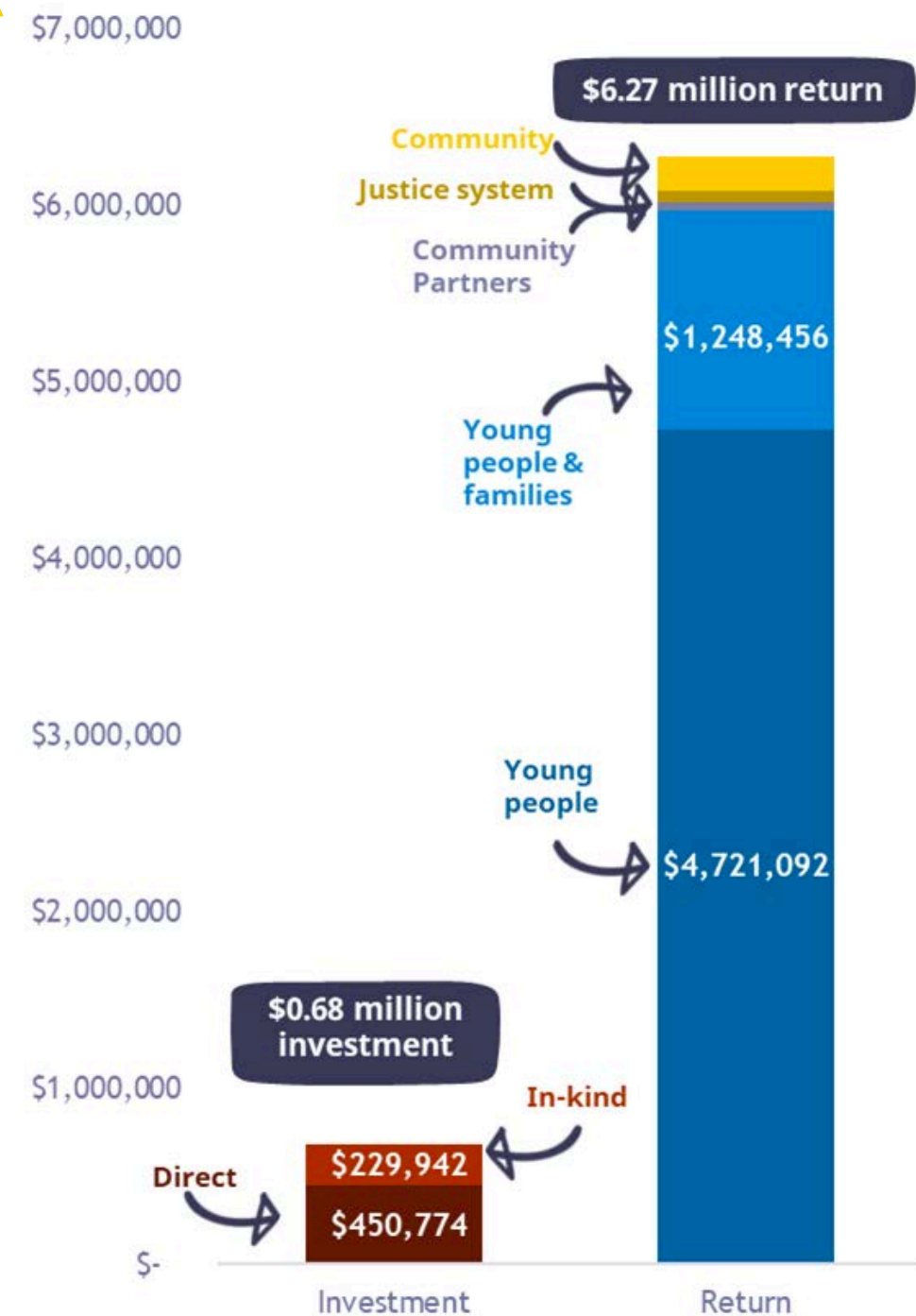
Results: Blue EDGE & Blue EDGE+



“
 The skills and experiences are some of the best I have had.
Blue EDGE participant
 It was incredible. The kids were very much engaged and excited to come to each session.
Blue EDGE Community Partner
 ”

\$9.20
 Social Value
 created for every
 \$1 invested

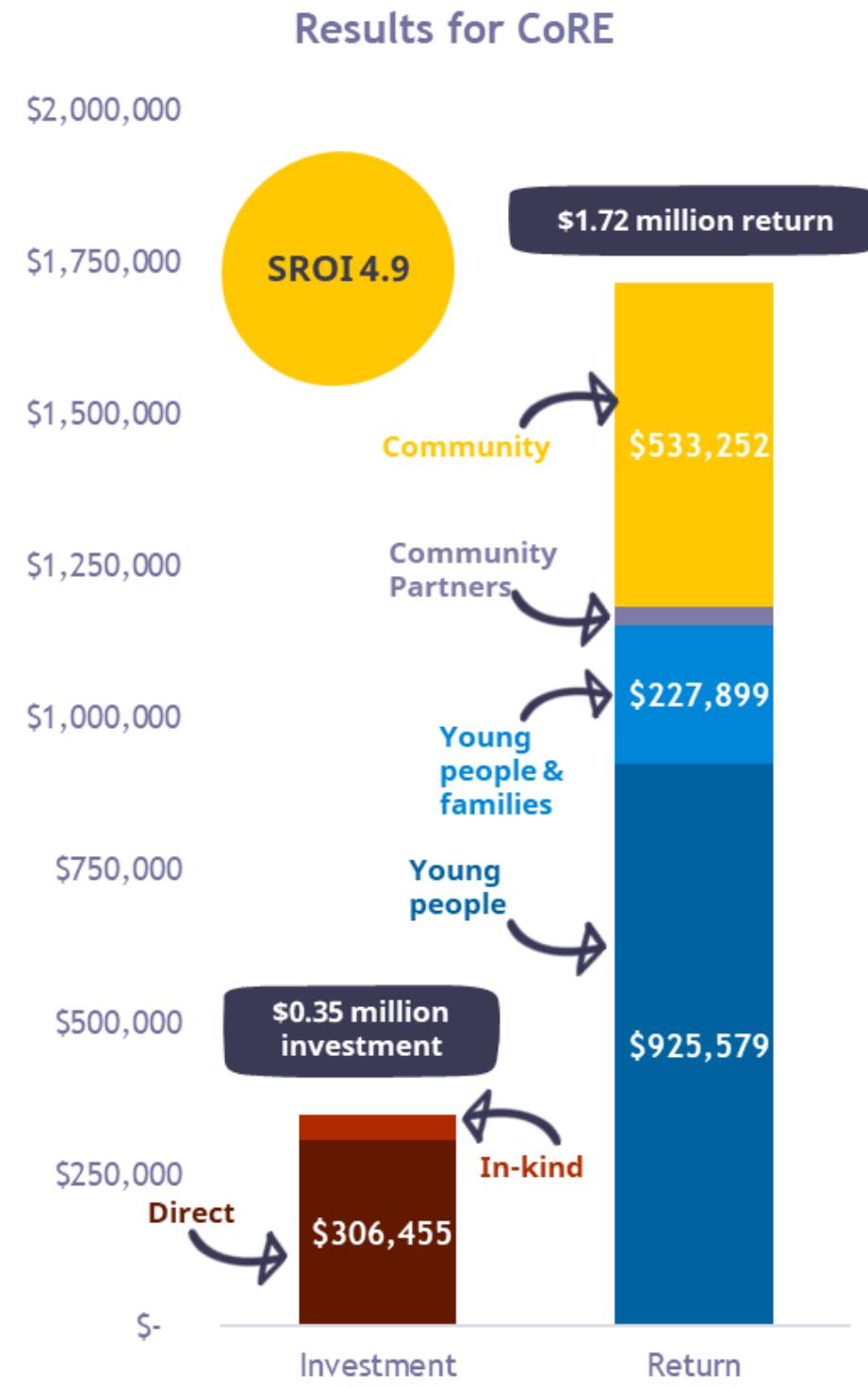
Results for Blue EDGE & Blue EDGE+



Blue EDGE/Blue EDGE+ are very similar programs, so we analysed them together. In combination, the two programs produced the highest SROI, with **\$9.20** social value created for every \$1 invested. The **\$6.27 million** total social value generated primarily flowed to young people participating in the programs (**\$4.72 million**, or **75%**). Young people and their families experienced another **\$1.25 million** (**20%**), with the remainder generated for Community Partners (**1%**), the justice system (**1%**), and the broader community (**3%**). Blue EDGE is the most well-established of the four programs covered in this analysis, which may partially explain its higher SROI. It was first piloted in 2019, and Blue Light has progressively revised and refined the program over subsequent years. Blue EDGE/Blue EDGE+ also have the lowest average cost at **\$1,101** per participant, including both direct costs and in-kind contributions. These low average costs along with the programs’ strong social returns generate a high SROI. These results make a clear case for the value of the programs. Blue Light can keep delivering these programs to new cohorts of young people, building on the social value they are producing.

Results: CoRE

\$4.90
Social Value
created for every
\$1 invested



The CoRE program produced an estimated **\$4.90** of social value for every \$1 invested. As a new program that only commenced in 2025, this SROI is a very positive starting point. There may be further opportunities for Blue Light to strengthen this result as the program matures. The \$1.72 million total social value generated was distributed somewhat differently across stakeholder groups for the CoRE program compared to Blue EDGE/Blue EDGE+. Just over half (\$0.93 million, or 54%) flowed to young people participating in the programs. Young people and their families experienced another \$0.23 million (13%). A larger component of the social value generated flowed to the community as a whole (\$0.53 million, or 31%). These results fit with the overall design of the CoRE program, which includes a strong focus on community belonging, responsibility, and contribution. The remaining 2% (\$0.03 million) was experienced by Community Partners, who benefited from improved mental health and wellbeing through their contribution to the program.

“ I did see that improvement in social awareness CoRE stakeholder When you get to engage with young people in a positive way, it can help your own socioemotional skills and your own mental health...when I go to these programs, it's really positive. And that can lift me out of a different space.
CoRE stakeholder

I loved everything CoRE participant Great program and amazing to see students so engaged.
CoRE Community Partner

We had a young person who wasn't participating much in class activities but when they got to the community garden, he was engaged, enthusiastic, and very hands on, it was incredibly rewarding.
CoRE Community Partner

”

Results: 1:1 Mentoring

\$4.90
Social Value
created for every
\$1 invested



I find it a great escape from [my usual duties] ...rewarding too
1:1 mentoring stakeholder

The level of investment made in my child [is what I value most]
1:1 mentoring parent

It's amazing. I feel very privileged to be able to do the program
1:1 mentoring stakeholder

[The young person] is much more engaged socially and is really enjoying school, [they] seem more confident and happy
case worker

The 1:1 mentoring program achieved a similar result to the CoRE program, producing an estimated \$4.90 of social value for every \$1 invested.

With only 23 participants in 2024-25, 1:1 mentoring generated the smallest overall social value at \$502,645. Of this, 41% was generated for young people participating in the program (\$205,856), and 9% (\$46,585) for young people and their families.

A substantial proportion (46%) flowed to the community as a whole, through the enhanced social cohesion created by embedding at-risk young people in supportive community relationships. The program also produced the highest proportion of social value for the justice system (3%) of all the programs, reflecting the higher needs cohort and positive effect in reducing anti-social behaviour.

At average cost of \$4,416 per participant (including direct costs and in-kind contributions), 1:1 mentoring is Blue Light's most resource intensive program, due to its individualised approach. Given this higher cost, the SROI of 4.9 demonstrates the substantial social value the program creates for participants and the community.

Testing the sensitivity of the results

The SROI results are based on some estimates, particularly for outcome duration, the social discount rate, and the SROI filters (drop off, deadweight, and attribution). These estimates were generated by and validated with stakeholders, but our stakeholder engagement was done with a non-random (purposive) sample. Stakeholders who were willing to be involved in this SROI may be more positive about the programs than stakeholders overall.

However, our sensitivity analysis shows that, even when replacing these estimated parameters with much more conservative estimates, the social value produced by the programs still substantially exceeds the investment required. Increased community connectedness was the the highest value outcome for young people in each program, so we also tested halving the financial proxy for this outcome. Again, the SROI was still well above 1. This sensitivity analysis give confidence that the overall positive result is robust to possible changes in key parameters.

Area	Base	Test	Effect	SROI
Discount Rate	4%	Higher rate (7%)	This reduces the value of outcomes in future years	7.3
Deadweight	10%	Higher assumption (25%) (for outcomes with estimated deadweight)	23 (100%)	6.3
Attribution	20%	Higher assumption (50%)	13 (57%)	4.7
Drop off	50%	Higher Assumption (100%)	16 (46%)	4.8
Community connection	\$8,844	\$4,422	Halves the value of the outcome	5.5



“Great program and amazing to see students so engaged.”

“Blue EDGE was fun I wish I could do it again.”

“It was great to learn more about our community and how we can take action to make a change.”

Blue Light Victoria

Level 24, 311 Spencer Street, DOCKLANDS VIC 3008

0474 237 599

hello@bluelight.org.au

<https://www.bluelight.org.au/>

For a copy of the full impact model and SROI value maps for this project, please contact:
info@lighthousepartnerships.org
 or
hello@bluelight.org.au