

11 April 2018

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Social Services Legislation Amendment (Drug Testing Trial) Bill 2018**

Dear Secretary

Mission Australia is a national non-denominational Christian charity that delivers evidence-based, community services across Australia.

- In the 2016-17 financial year we supported over 140,000 people through 470 programs and services.
- We work with families and children, young people and people experiencing homelessness and also provide specialist services for mental health, disability and alcohol and drug issues.
- We deliver alcohol and drug services in most States and Territories and assisted about 12,000 clients through our 23 alcohol and drug services in 2016-17 (see attachment).

I wish to reiterate Mission Australia's opposition to the drug testing trial, previously contained in the Welfare Reform Bill

Whilst drug addiction is a barrier to employment, recreational drug use is not. Drug addiction is a health issue and should be treated as such by providing effective supports for rehabilitation rather than a punitive approach through suspending social security support. Most unemployed people are not drug addicts and our experience tells us that those who are should have access to treatment and rehabilitation.

There is currently a shortage of available and accessible residential detox and rehab, especially for young people. What is required is a public health approach with appropriate assessment, referral and treatment options. Unfortunately, demand for treatment services currently outweighs supply in Australia and there is a need for further investment in detoxification and rehabilitation facilities in many areas.

A holistic approach to recovery which addresses the underlying issues promoting substance misuse is a necessary component of turning lives around. Evidence suggests that holistic approaches to substance misuse issues deliver more positive outcomes as opposed to siloed approaches.<sup>1</sup> Our experience shows that people given the opportunity to seek treatment, develop their skills and gain employment will embrace these supports as they continue on their journey to independence. Providing adequate services including rehabilitation, training and employment support for those with complex needs must be given greater priority.

Further investment is required in increased detoxification and rehabilitation facilities in areas of most need including the provision of holistic supports. Ensuring treatment is available when sought would be a much more effective approach to supporting people on their journey to recovery than penalising them through the social security system.

We therefore recommend that the Bill be rejected.

Yours sincerely



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James Toomey

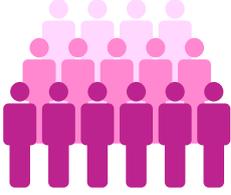
Chief Executive Officer, Mission Australia

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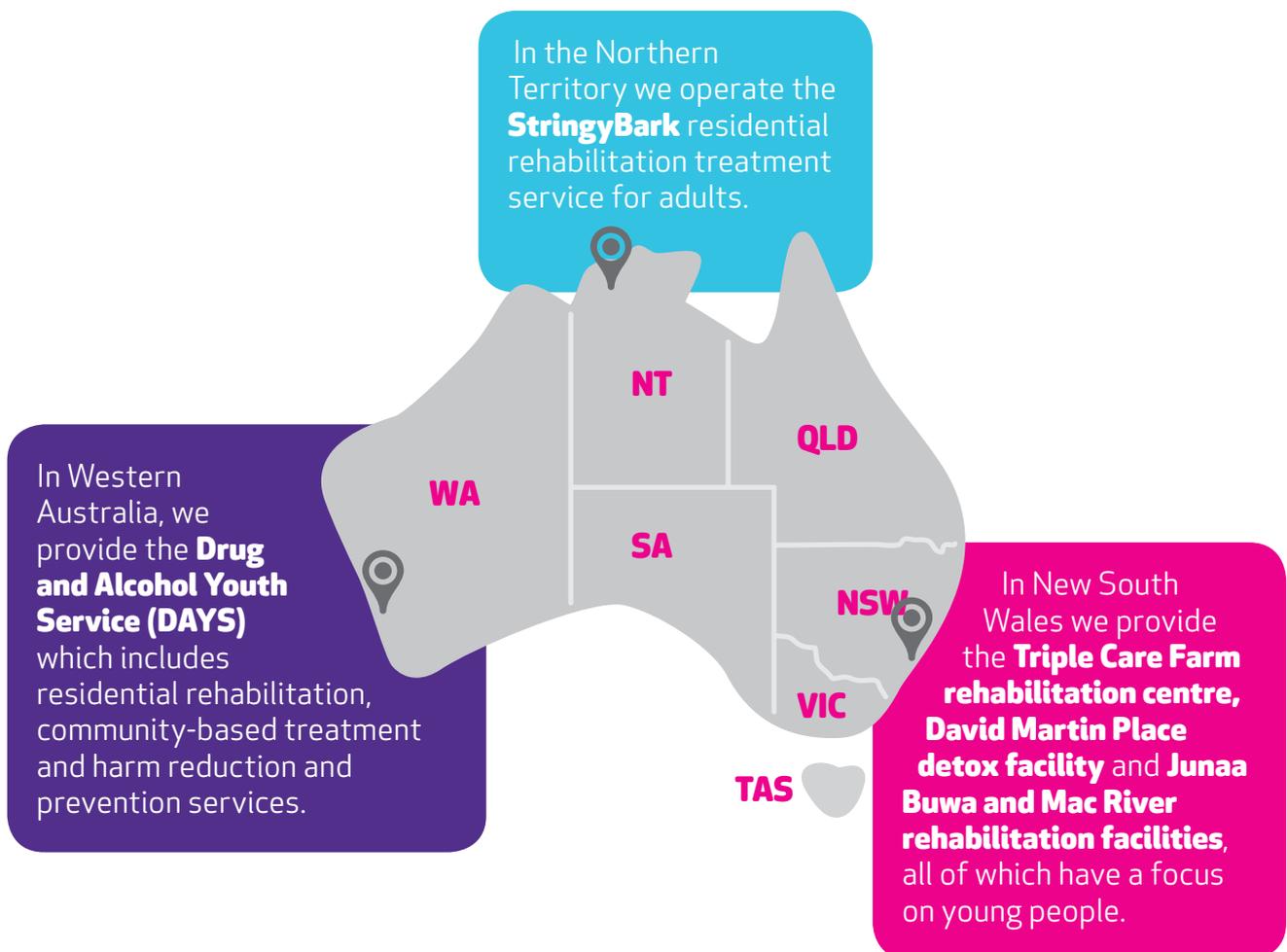
<sup>1</sup> Samuel Obembe, *Practical Skills and Clinical Management of Alcoholism and Drug Addiction*, 2012, p.3.

# Alcohol, drugs, and other dependencies

Alcohol and other drugs 2016/2017 snapshot:

**11,619**   
people assisted

**23**   
services



# Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm

## Baseline Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis



Triple Care Farm (TCF) is a Mission Australia residential Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) rehabilitation and treatment program for young people aged between 16 and 24 years.



Located on 110 acres in the NSW Southern Highlands, TCF is a national service receiving referrals Australia-wide.

### Key findings:



Triple Care Farm has had a significant positive social and economic impact on its stakeholders including young people, their families / carers, Government and the wider AOD sector.

# 2.9:1

SROI ratio achieved when total investment in TCF between FY09 and FY13 is compared to the total social and economic value created.



For every dollar donated



of social value is created

