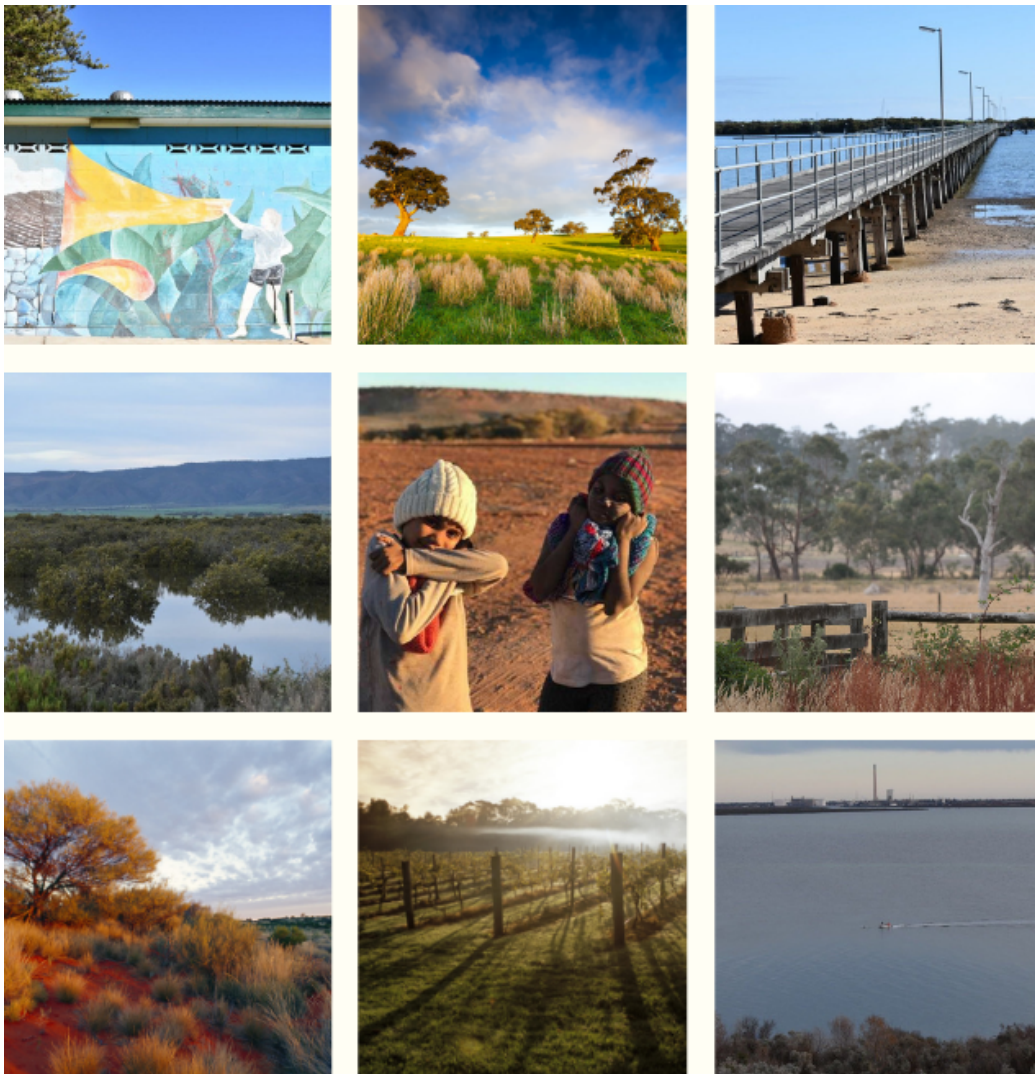


“It’s an important part of keeping small towns alive”

The social and economic value of country-based
community service organisations



Catherine Mackenzie, Jonathon Louth and Ian Goodwin-Smith

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For further information

Dr Catherine Mackenzie

Research Fellow, The Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise

T: +61 8 83027239

E: Catherine.Mackenzie@unisa.edu.au

The Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise

School of Commerce, Business School

Way Lee Building | WL5-32 | City West Campus

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Picture on front cover

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'I shop local as much as possible and am an active member of my community - I think it is important to "give back" or "put in" to community' (full time manager, volunteers 10 hours/week, member of a board, committee member of a sporting club)

'Working with an NGO has opened my eyes to many areas I had not realised were an issue. In country SA we have very few supports available to marginalised communities and members. There are many minorities doing life tough' (full-time team leader/co-ordinator, volunteers 4 hours/week, member of an advocacy group)

'Participation in local community events, groups etc. is incredibly important as it keeps you connected to people and broader community issues. Helps develop social networks and pride in your community' (full-time, manager, volunteers 2 hours/week, member of a board)

'I would like to do more when I am finished studying. It's an important part of keeping small towns alive' (full-time, team leader/co-ordinator, 4 dependent children)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Key findings.....	5
Introduction	7
Literature Review.....	8
Contemporary regional Australia	8
Regional economic development	10
Anchor Institutions: From ‘sticky money’ to ‘sticky capital’	11
Measuring value: Calculating economic multiplier effects	13
Measuring social and civic value	14
Methods.....	16
Collaborative research and co-design.....	16
Calculating a local multiplier effect.....	16
Analysis	17
Findings and discussion	18
Staff survey results	18
Local multiplier effect calculations	19
Staff expenditure	20
Supplier expenditure	21
Volunteering: social, civic and economic value	21
The multiplier effect.....	23
Local money – across the region	24
Study limitations.....	24
Conclusions.....	26
References	28

Figures and tables

Figure 1. Local multiplier effects of the two NGOs in the region. Designed by Freerange Future.....	6
Figure 2. Three cycles of shrinkage in regional Australia.....	9
Figure 3. Locations where survey respondents live and work.	19
Figure 4. Staff survey questions about expenses.....	20
Figure 5. Estimated total staff salary expenditure based on household expenditure patterns of people living in non-urban South Australia.....	21
Figure 6. Direct NGO investment and estimated indirect economic activity.....	24
Figure 7. Local multiplier effects of the two NGOs in the region.	25
Figure 8. Ameliorating regional shrinkage: the influence of country-based community service NGOs on the three cycles of shrinkage	26
Table 1. Survey respondent characteristics	18

Executive Summary

One of the most distinctive features of contemporary regional, rural and remote social and economic development Australia is change (Connell and Dufty-Jones 2014, Campbell and Burgess 2018, Dean and Spoehr 2018). Associated with recent regional industrial and workforce change is precarity (Campbell and Burgess 2018, Han 2018, Kasmir 2018).



EVERY DOLLAR SPENT LOCALLY BY
THE NGOS RETURNS 2.3 TIMES
THE DOLLAR VALUE INTO THE
LOCAL ECONOMY.

One way of addressing regional precarity is by the establishment and support of anchor institutions; organisations that are considered to be stable and enduring, embedded in the communities they are located and contributing to those communities both economically and socially (Elliott 2018). We explore the extent to which locally established non-government community service organisations may be considered as anchor institutions.

The social and economic value that Australian country-based community service non-government organisations (NGOs) contributes to their local communities, beyond service provision, has largely been neglected by researchers and policy makers. Using methods adapted from the New Economics Foundation in the UK, and methods used to measure the effects of volunteering and civic participation, we conducted a pilot study with two country-based NGOs located in the north of South Australia (Ward and Lewis 2002, Mayer 2003).

Key findings

The findings in this study suggest that there are enormous social, civic and economic benefits of choosing to support country-based non-government community service organisations in country areas. These benefits are in addition to the services that the NGOs provide, by directly and indirectly mitigating the decline caused by economic, population and environmental changes in country South Australia. As such, the NGOs play a significant role in reinvigorating local economies and are part of an important transformational process that aligns with the expanding community services sector.

We estimate that the local multiplier effect across the two NGOs' combined footprint is 2.3 (see figure 1), meaning that for **every dollar spent locally by the NGOs returns 2.3 times the dollar value into the local economy**. This is a significant return on investment into the social and economic wellbeing of the community, far exceeding the intended benefits of the social outcomes expected from investment into NGOs.

Our findings show that the very presence of the two NGOs operating within their service footprint leads to high levels of volunteering – with many volunteer hours being undertaken by volunteers for the organisations and also by staff within their local communities. We draw conclusions that the level of volunteering and civic engagement of people involved in the organisations is contributing both directly and indirectly to the social fabric of the communities in which they live.

This study indicates that supporting country-based community services should be recognised as being integral to regional development and economies. We suggest, based on indicative findings of this study, that locally established, country-based community service organisations are emerging as vital contemporary anchor institutions, mitigating some of the effects of precarity.

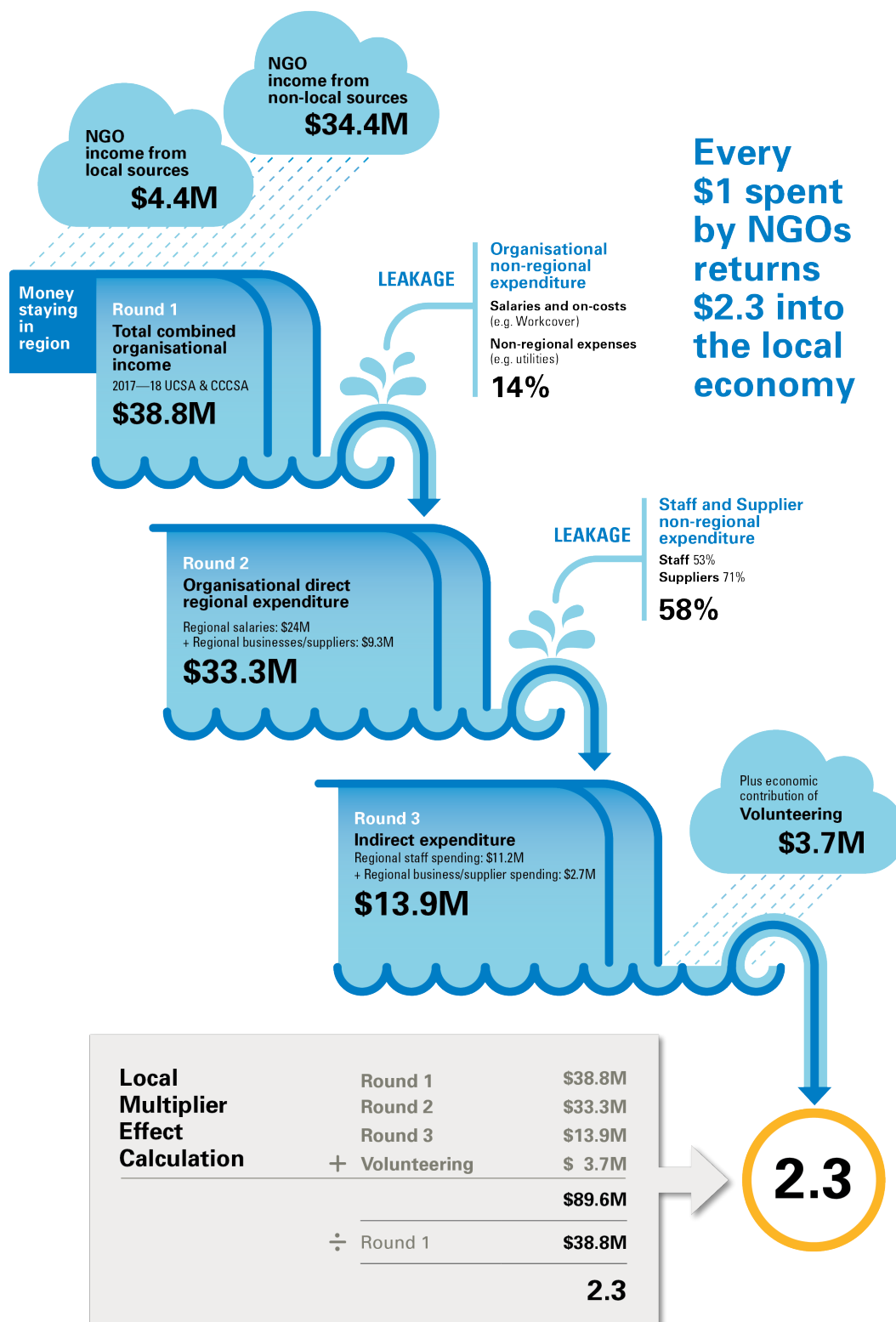


Figure 1. Local multiplier effects of the two NGOs in the region. Designed by Freerange Future.

Introduction

Well-established methods estimate the direct and indirect economic effects of organisations on their communities. Many published studies have estimated the economic (and sometimes social) impacts that large organisations such as hospitals, universities and for-profit organisations have on their regions. Large datasets and expensive, often unnecessarily complex models are usually used to estimate the impacts of large organisations (Dennis 2016). More recently, smaller organisations such as small businesses, local co-operatives and not for profits, have explored the economic impacts on their local communities using simpler, more locally-relevant, local multiplier tools such as the *Local Multiplier 3* tool (LM3) developed by the New Economics Foundation in the UK (Sacks 2002, Ward and Lewis 2002, Sacks 2012).



‘IF YOU WANT TO
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BUT A SECOND, NO LESS
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IS TO PLUG THE LEAKS AND
KEEP MONEY LOCAL’

Ed Mayo, Co-operatives UK, 2016

There is strong evidence that the social, civic and economic engagement of employees of large or medium sized organisations (e.g. educational institutions, health services) directly and indirectly contributes to the social and economic characteristics of the communities in which they live (Bleaney, Binks et al. 1992, Harris 1997, Uyarra 2010). Studies that have estimated a combination of economic, social and civic effects of country-based non-government organisations to the regions in which they are located, however, are few.

The study informing this report furthers our understanding of the extent to which the location of a country-based community service NGOs and their associated service centres may contribute to the social and economic fabric of their local areas. The findings presented herein contribute to knowledge in this under-researched area, providing indications of the economic value of country-based community service NGOs. Further, the study provides insights into the social and civic contributions of country-based workers on their local communities beyond those of service provision.

Drawing on our findings against the regional economic literature, including Australian understandings of industrial transformation, precarity, and regional shrinkage, we consider the potential role of community-established, externally supported (e.g. state/federal government) country-based community service NGOs as emergent anchor institutions. Much of the literature thus far concentrates on government and industry-led solutions to mitigate regional shrinkage. We suggest that it makes good economic sense to support country-based NGOs to play a greater role in regional development.

This report is structured as follows: The literature review below provides a brief overview of the regional literature informing this study and how economic and social value may be measured and interpreted. The methods section provides an outline of and rationale for the methods used. The findings and discussion section provides an analysis of the findings against the literature, using Connell and Dufty-Jones’s (2014) change framework and the concept of anchor institutions (Webber and Karlström 2009). We use these framings to demonstrate the value of supporting the location and management of country community service NGOs in the communities they serve.

Literature Review

Contemporary regional Australia

One of the most distinctive features of contemporary regional, rural and remote Australia is change: Changing industries, environments and populations and transformations produced from the ways in which these intersect (Connell and Dufty-Jones 2014). A stark example of changing industries has been occurring in the northern parts of South Australia, not least within the area known as the Iron Triangle, incorporating Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie (Connell and Dufty-Jones 2014, Dean 2018).

Associated with South Australian regional social and economic transformation is widespread precarity (Dean and Spoehr 2018, Kasmir 2018). Precarity, in its contemporary context as defined by Butler (2009) is distinguishable from a general, shared precariousness resulting from such things as a global reduction in employment security, threats of war or terrorism, and climate change. Unlike precariousness, precarity is unequally distributed across populations and environments (Han 2018, Kasmir 2018). Precarity remains a contested concept; for the purposes of this report, we use the following definition drawn from Butler's work:

Precarity is experienced by marginalized, poor, and disenfranchised people who are exposed to economic insecurity, injury, violence, and forced migration. Further, social value is ascribed to some lives and bodies, while it is denied to others, and some are protected, while others are not (Kasmir 2018 p.2).

The Iron Triangle has been subjected to a cycle of de-industrialisation and transformation over the past few decades, with repercussions including high unemployment associated with extensive precarity experienced across the region (Connell and Dufty-Jones 2014, Campbell and Burgess 2018, Dean 2018). Even during the six months of conducting this study, excitement and disappointment have taken turns as promises of new management of existing industries and new industries taking over from the old are being made and broken (Fedorowysch and Keane 2018, ABC News 2019). Contemporary employment opportunities in the Iron Triangle fluctuate dramatically according to the choices of politicians and non-regionally-owned large corporations (Dean 2018).

Environmental change has never been more notable as in recent years. Climate change features strongly in the north of the state on several levels. For those reliant on agriculture (e.g. farmers, farm labourers and suppliers) diminishing yields and employment opportunities have meant that small agricultural farms and businesses are being subsumed and replaced by large corporate enterprises (Askew, Sherval et al. 2014). Such enterprises tend to employ fewer people and centralise their purchasing from outside the regions in which they operate rather than from local sources, contributing to increasing local economic leakage (i.e. money leaving the region) and often furthering environmental degradation (Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo et al. 2012 See Figure 2.). Further, those living in poverty are increasingly struggling to afford the rising costs of essential utilities (i.e. energy and water) (Askew, Sherval et al. 2014, Connell and Dufty-Jones 2014, Mackenzie and Louth 2019).

Eighty-five per cent of Australia's population resides in urban areas within coastal zones, with the largest numbers of people living along the east coast (Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo et al. 2012). Populations from inland regional and rural areas have been moving to urban regions for opportunities that are increasingly unavailable in their local areas (see Figure 2). This movement is marked by

increasing out-migration of young people and to some extent, highly gendered return-migration (i.e. more males returning than females).

At the same time, working against the shrinking tide, country-based non-government community service organisations have been growing significantly (Productivity Commission 2010, Green and Dalton 2016, Mackenzie, Balaev et al. 2017). Their growth is in part an outcome of a shift from direct to indirect welfare where community services provision has become a part of a shadow welfare state (Mackenzie and Louth 2019). With this in mind, it is necessary to ensure that community services are not viewed as belonging to the rapidly expanding poverty industry but as organisations that make a positive and values-based contribution to the economy and their communities (Mackenzie and Goodwin-Smith 2018, Mackenzie and Louth 2019). Virtually no information is available about the ways in which country-based community service organisations affect their local economics, nor is there information about their social value in their local communities beyond the provision of social services.

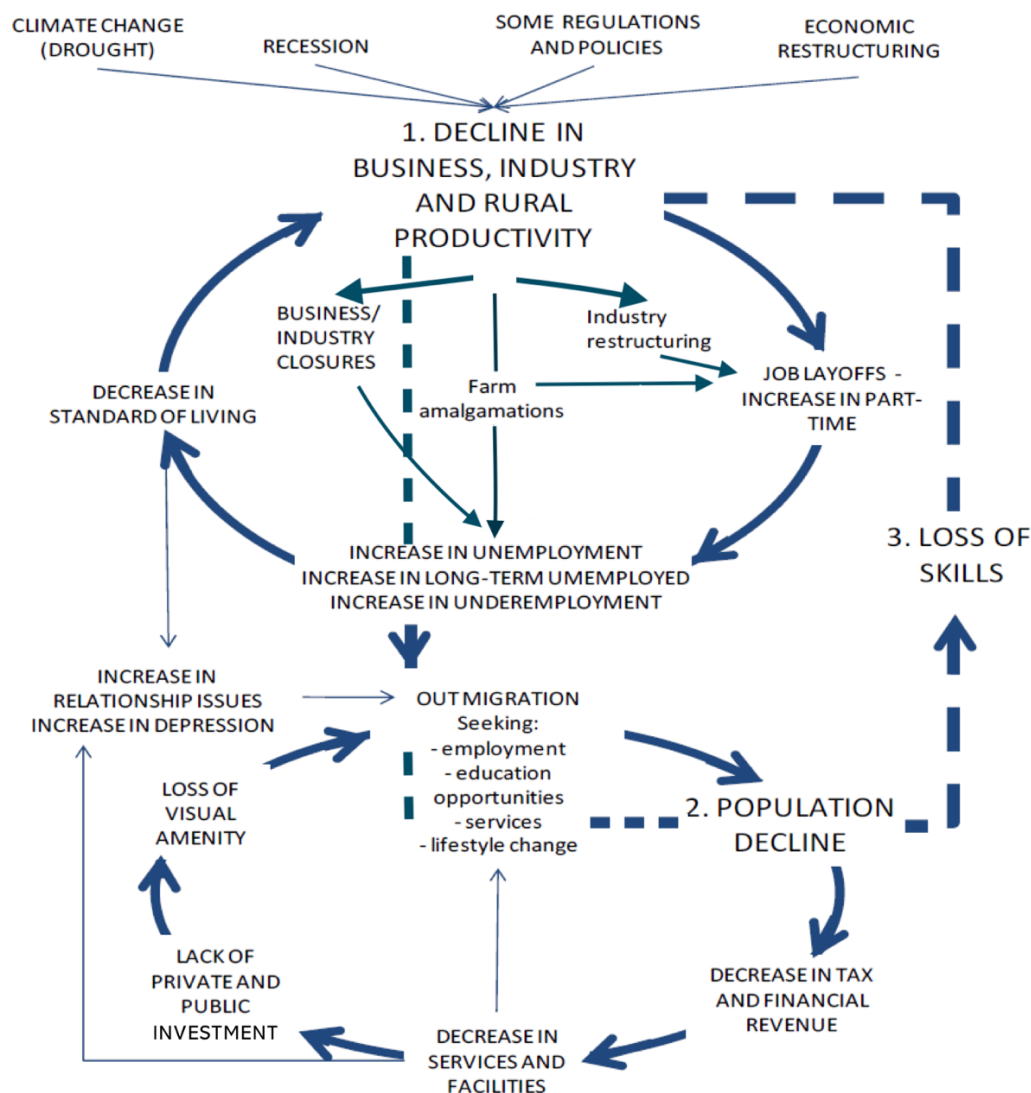


Figure 2. Three cycles of shrinkage in regional Australia. Source: adapted from Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2012. OECD

Regional economic development

In the 1980s, interest in ways to take local action to combat the economic effects of de-industrialisation in the UK led to a resurgence in small scale and community-owned local enterprises (e.g. Dauncey 1985, Pedersen 1985). We see the same phenomenon in country South Australia in the wake of industrial transformation; examples include the closure of the Port Augusta power station and Adelaide-based car manufacturers (Anaf, Newman et al. 2013, Beer 2018, Dean 2018, Dean and Spoehr 2018).



STRONG EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT
LARGE MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES
DO NOT ALWAYS SUPPORT REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT WHEN COMPARED
WITH SMALL, LOCAL BUSINESSES.

Focus is therefore shifting towards innovative, post-manufacturing industries. As part of this, the relationships between regional universities/campuses and their local communities is one area that is being developed - and studied for their social and economic impact (Regional Universities Network 2013, Wise 2016, Dean and Spoehr 2018).

Regionally-based university campuses are germane to this study because their impact on local economies have been well studied within OECD member countries (Uyarra 2010). We contend that they offer an excellent point of comparison to the emerging centrality of the NGO sector in rural and regional settings. This includes improved workforce participation, retention and development by reversing the outflow of human, social and economic capital.

Numerous studies that have estimated the economic effects of regional educational institutions have found that such institutions bring benefits to the communities in which they are located (e.g. see Bleaney, Binks et al. 1992, Harris 1997). Early studies included an exploration of the effects of Nottingham University staff on the local economy to understand the impact of university staff migrating into the area, bringing with them higher than the average local resident's disposable income and contributing to 'brain gain' (i.e. increasing the local pool of professional/skilled people). The authors argued that, without the university, those staff may not have moved to the area which would mean their income would not have been spent there (Bleaney, Binks et al. 1992, Thulin 2015). Further, other benefits that higher salaried people bring have been noted, such as civic participation and associated improved community amenities (e.g. see Brooks 2007, Thulin 2015).

In the contemporary Australian context, studies have explored the economic impact of regional universities; most notably those that are part of the Regional Universities Network (Arthur and Sloan 2013, Regional Universities Network 2013, Nous Group and Centre of Policy Studies 2018). The Regional Universities Network has engaged researchers to measure economic impacts of regional universities, and related impacts such as jobs and productivity associated with universities located in regions (Nous Group 2018). This latter research found that 7 out of 10 students graduating from regional universities remain in regions, by comparison with 2 out of 10 graduates nationally (Nous Group and Centre of Policy Studies 2018).

Strong evidence suggests that large multinational (particularly retail) enterprises do not always support regional development when compared with small, local businesses (McGreevy 2016). A country-based NGO presents an opportunity to retain (and train) local people to stem so-called

regional ‘brain drain’, whereby current or future professional/skilled locals leave their area for employment opportunities elsewhere (Sager 2014). The key point is that, if not for the location of the organisation, those skilled/professional people may not be employed in the region and therefore may not be spending their income in or contributing their time (e.g. volunteering/civic participation) to the region.

While a great deal of research has focussed on the economic impacts of large and small regional businesses, hospitals and educational institutions, it is rare to find information about the impact of country-based non-government community service NGOs.

Anchor Institutions: From ‘sticky money’ to ‘sticky capital’

One way of combatting precarity in rural economies is by the establishment and/or support of anchor institutions. Anchor institutions are those organisations that are considered to be stable and enduring, embedded in the communities they are located and contributing to their communities both economically and socially (Ehlenz 2018, Elliott 2018). Studies suggest that anchor institutions can support communities to withstand industrial ebbs and flows associated with fragile economies and social inequalities (Elliott 2018). Anchor institutions usually include large organisations such as educational institutions and hospitals.



ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS ARE:
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(Rubin and Rose 2015 p. 2).

In the Australian context, regional universities are carving out their position as anchor institutions, with the annual Higher Ed Services conference entitled: *Regional Universities: Anchor Institutions Transforming their Regions* (Services 2018).

Anchor institutions are significant spenders and employers within a local economy (Devins, Gold et al. 2017). Of equal significance is how such institutions contribute to the provision of ongoing and sustainable social infrastructure (Cantor, Englot et al. 2013). Within a city or regional economy, anchor institutions can be defined as:

... large, place-based organizations, often public or nonprofit, that exist as core fixtures in local communities — once established, they do not tend to move. They serve as an economic (and at times social and cultural) center for a local region, and have a significant stake in what happens in their surrounding communities. An anchor shapes the economic landscape and viability of a city and its region as a major employer, local purchaser, and investor and powerful stakeholder in community-development efforts (Rubin and Rose 2015 p. 2).

Anchor institutions can have problematic local effects. For example, large institutions can create a dependency and ‘power over’ or across the local socio-economy. Decisions made by such institutions can have significant, indeed devastating effects on the ecological and socio-economic environments within which they exist (Leach 2013, Pugalis and Bentley 2013). Yet, anchor institutions can mitigate

risks associated with dependency if they belong to (or emerge from) the communities within which they are situated, and if they are not subjected to the vagaries of external business decisions. Their operating structures should be community-focused with an emphasis on developing community assets and collaborative approaches that encourage transformative projects (see Cantor, Englot et al. 2013).



PLACE-BASED ORGANISATIONS OF A CONSIDERABLE SIZE RELATIVE TO THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE ARE WELL SITUATED TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE UNDERLYING STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF POVERTY.

Place-based organisations of a considerable size relative to the community they serve are well situated to address some of the underlying structural roots of poverty (Leach 2013, Pugalís and Bentley 2013, Pugalís 2017). This can occur through inclusive innovation and economic practices, by enabling parameters for inclusive economic and social activities. Anchor institutions can produce dividends for the community through service provision and procurement practices. Such anchor institutions support the range and number of good jobs within the local economy (Cantor, Englot et al. 2013, Schildt and Rubin 2015, Devins, Gold et al. 2017).

Social service provision has been increasingly shifted to non-government organisations as part of a wider trend driven by state and federal government policies, both in Australia and internationally (Alston 2002, Pugalís and Bentley 2013, Green and Dalton 2016, Mackenzie, Balaev et al. 2017). Existing Australian non-government community service organisations have consequently grown significantly (albeit often under-funded) and the importance of NGOs in regional settings has proportionally increased (Productivity Commission 2010, Mackenzie and Louth 2019). Indeed, these institutions commonly *belong to* and are *of* the communities they service. Moreover, they are institutions that often have a social mission and shared values with their communities (Schildt and Rubin 2015, Devins, Gold et al. 2017).

The health and community services sectors together provide significant employment in non-metropolitan South Australia: Across the UCSA and CCCSA footprint, around 15% of employed people work in those sectors (ABS 2017). In the Port Pirie area, 18% of employed people are employed in the health care and social assistance sector; 14% in Whyalla; 16% in Ceduna; 15% in Port Augusta; and 12% in Port Lincoln (ABS, 2017). These data indicate that community service providers not only deliver much-needed services *to* their communities, but also provide employment opportunities *for* their communities.

We suggest that country-based community service NGOs are well-placed for being recognised as anchor institutions (Webber and Karlström 2009). When community service NGOs are embedded in the communities to which they provide services and where their employees live, they are aligned not only with the economic prosperity of the communities which they serve, but also with the broader socioeconomic wellbeing of the community.

Measuring value: Calculating economic multiplier effects

Every estimate of economic value rests on assumptions (Thulin 2015). It is crucial to note at the outset that economic modelling can only be viewed as an indicator of what is going on because it is not possible to capture all economic activity (Thulin 2015, Dennis 2016). Modelling is a form of abstraction in order to understand generalised patterns. Economic models are determined by what is included and excluded according to the assumptions underpinning them (Thulin 2015, Dennis 2016). Nevertheless, 'economic modelling can provide insights into the more and less obvious linkages between a change in one part of the economy and the impact in other parts of the economy' (Dennis 2016 p.140).



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(Dennis 2016 p.140)

Studies dating back to the 1930s used a Keynesian economic multiplier model developed by Richard Kahn, which has been used (and is still used) to show that, at a macroeconomic level, all forms of government spending increase employment and prosperity (e.g. see Dimand 2008, Dimand 2010). In the latter third of the 20th Century, attention started being directed at the ways in which particular types of organisations affect regional or local economies (Moretti 2010). Examples include the impacts on local economies of regional universities and other large educational institutions (e.g. see Bleaney, Binks et al. 1992, Harris 1997, Blackwell, Cobb et al. 2002).

Various input-output economic models have been developed and used to estimate direct, indirect and induced economic multiplier effects. Most use survey data, often from government agency-generated population data, which is entered in to an input-output model (Thulin 2015, Dennis 2016). With advances in software, increasingly detailed insights can be generated, with a view to estimating potential impacts of proposed or existing enterprises (Moretti 2010, Thulin 2015). Such modelling is however, expensive and not necessarily accessible for non-profit organisations such as country-based non-government organisations (Ward and Lewis 2002). Further, the sheer complexity of the models means that they are often impenetrable to simple analysis and understanding, which seriously undermines their usefulness outside of academic circles (Dennis 2016).

Nevertheless, economists have been engaged in trying to understand microeconomic effects of smaller, regional organisations (e.g. see McGreevy 2016). This has included a shift in interest towards the impacts of microeconomic activities on local areas and the recycling of money within local economies; so-called 'sticky money' (Sacks 2012, EY 2014). One such method that has emerged specifically for studying local, microeconomics is the Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) tool, which is a simplified input-output model that can be used in a range of microeconomic contexts (Ward and Lewis 2002, Sacks 2012).

The LM3 tool was developed in the UK by the New Economics Foundation and was designed for community use – particularly for communities experiencing conditions associated with precarity (Ward and Lewis 2002). For this study, we adopted (and adapted) the LM3 calculator because it has been used widely by small to medium sized not-for-profit organisations and has a local, microeconomic focus (Sacks 2002, Ward and Lewis 2002, Sacks 2012). Based on criticisms regarding

reliability of using small-scale self-report survey data alone that is generally collected for this method, we also used ABS household expenditure data and evidence-based estimates of local spending by local and chain suppliers (Thatcher and Sharp 2008, Silovská and Kolaříková 2016, ABS 2017, Civic Economics 2018).

Measuring social and civic value

To answer questions relating to the local impact of a particular organisation or organisations using the LM3 tool, it is necessary to estimate the disposable income that is spent by employees in their local area and the local expenditure of the main businesses and suppliers used by the organisations. The social and civic value that organisations bring, directly and through their employees, to a region should be measured in addition to economic value. This is because studies restricted to the economic contributions of an organisation produce different findings from those that include the social effects (Carrington and Pereira 2011).



THE SOCIAL AND CIVIC VALUE
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Studies of the mining boom in regional areas are a case in point. On the face of it, the economic contribution of mining activities can seem positive for regional communities. Yet, studies have consistently found that local people can be overlooked as employees. Fly-in fly-out/drive-in drive-out (FIFO/DIDO) workers can create a strain on infrastructure and they do not necessarily contribute to local economies to pay for it, for example by rates or taxes (Rolfe, Miles et al. 2007, Carrington and Pereira 2011, Hogg and Carrington 2016). In addition, because mining employees are mainly lone men (i.e. single or leaving their families in their home locations), even if they live locally while working, their presence does not tend to lead to an increase in capital for social infrastructure such as schools (Carrington and Pereira 2011).

Large numbers of FIFO/DIDO workers have also been associated with declines in local sporting clubs which are often viewed by rural communities as being a major source of community participation, beyond participating in the sport itself (Spaaij 2009). Further, social problems such as crime rates have been shown to rise with an influx of FIFO/DIDO workers, which counters direct economic gain (Rolfe, Miles et al. 2007). Moreover, much of the economic gain is transferred to urban centres (i.e. leakage), where industries usually locate their central management, rather than staying in the communities where the mining is occurring (Carrington and Pereira 2011).

Community-based social activities (e.g. being involved in sporting or social clubs), civic engagement (e.g. being a local government councillor, member of a board) and volunteering (e.g. for schools, community centres or community services such as Country Fire Service, State Emergency Service) contributes enormous social and civic value to a community. Social capital theorists have demonstrated that communities with high rates of volunteering also have lower crime rates and better health than communities that do not (Mayer 2003). Volunteering has been shown to increase levels of trust and social cohesion, and has been associated with reducing crime (Kawachi, Kennedy et al. 1999).

One way to estimate volunteer contributions is to monetise them (e.g. Ironmonger 2002, 2011). Several studies have highlighted that most measures of economic growth underestimate the value of volunteering (e.g. Mayer 2003). Surveys of time use and volunteering have been used nationally and in South Australia to calculate the economic contribution of volunteering (Ironmonger 2011).

Volunteering is defined by the UN (cited in Ironmonger, 2011, p. 5) as:

- not to be undertaken primarily for financial gain
- being undertaken of one's own free will; and
- bringing benefit to a third party as well as to the volunteer/s.

The Households Research Unit has distinguished between organised (formal) and unorganised (informal) volunteering. Organised volunteering is that which is undertaken through an organisation or a group (e.g. community service or a sporting club) whereas unorganised volunteering is unpaid care or help provided to family, friends or neighbours (Ironmonger 2011). Given that high levels of organised volunteering are associated with non-government community service organisations, we included volunteering in our calculations.

Mayer (2003) conducted a study in South Australia which used multiplier effect calculations to explore costs and benefits associated with levels of volunteering, using crime and mortality rates as indicators. Further, Mayer used 'Whitely's "parsimonious" model which implies that a one-unit increase in social capital results in a 0.63 per cent increase in the rate of economic growth' (Mayer, 2003, p 13). Mayer (2003) concluded that changes in rates of volunteering have a causal relationship with crime rates and mortality and therefore an indirect, but significant, economic effect.

To summarise, very little research has explored simultaneously the social and economic, direct and indirect value of Australian country-based organisations to their local communities. This project sought to contribute to reducing this gap in knowledge by endeavouring to answer the following research question: 'What is the direct and indirect social and economic value of a country-based NGO (community service) to rural communities?'



RESEARCH QUESTION:

'WHAT IS THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
VALUE OF A COUNTRY-BASED NGO (COMMUNITY SERVICE) TO
RURAL COMMUNITIES?'

Methods

Collaborative research and co-design

This project was undertaken by a research team including The Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise researchers and staff from each of the two case study NGOs: Uniting Country SA (UCSA) and Centacare Catholic Country SA (CCCSA). The methods, including the approach to organisational financial data collection and the staff survey instrument were co-designed by the project team. For this study, we 1) applied well-established methods for applying multiplier effects to the economic inflows and outflows, and 2) considered the estimated social effects of volunteering and staff engagement in social and civic activities in their region.

Calculating a local multiplier effect

We drew on the LM3 calculator because it has been used widely by small to medium sized organisations and has a local, microeconomic focus (Sacks 2002, Ward and Lewis 2002, Sacks 2012). It was also developed with regional and country areas in mind which aligns well with our project goals, although it has mainly been used in the UK (Sacks 2002, Ward and Lewis 2002, Sacks 2012). The model has nevertheless been used recently in South Australia to estimate the value of co-operatives and mutuals in the Barossa (EY 2014). The LM3 model was developed by the New Economics Foundation in partnership with The Countryside Agency in the UK (Ward and Lewis 2002, Sacks 2012). The model includes the first three rounds of local spending because ‘most of the spending takes place in the first three rounds’ (Sacks 2002, p. 19). The three rounds included income, local expenditure and local staff and supplier expenditure. Leakage, which is expenditure outside the area in question, is not included in the multiplier because the amount that would return would be negligible (e.g. through tax-funded expenditure) (Bleaney, Binks et al. 1992). We include the percentage of leakage in the diagram for context and transparency.

The economic value of volunteering has not been included in LM3 estimates before, nor is it usually included in standard input-output models. Monetised volunteering has been measured on its own, as mentioned above (see Mayer 2003). The two country-based NGOs in this study both actively support volunteering, for example they spend significant funds on staff and resources to recruit and coordinate volunteering. We therefore adapted the model to include volunteering in addition to the three rounds to calculate a truer value of country domiciled NGOs. We contend that future studies of anchor institutions should include the value of volunteering in economic modelling because it does contribute a great deal because without volunteering, the real cost would be much greater.

Rounds 1 and 2: Organisational income and expenditure

We sought financial data for the 2017-2018 financial year from UCSA and CCCSA, disaggregated into income (round 1 - sourced outside and inside the region) and expenditure (round 2 - staff salaries and a range of expenses paid inside and outside the region).

Round 3: Staff and supplier spending, social and civic engagement patterns

We conducted a staff survey to elicit information regarding staff spending patterns, their social (including their local volunteering) and civic engagement. The survey included questions about

participant spending (e.g. grocery shopping, entertainment, health and community services, household products and services), social (e.g. sporting, social) and civic (e.g. local council, advocacy) participation. Staff spending was then calculated against ABS household expenditure estimates and the total salary spend of the organisations (excluding non-direct salary expenses). Staff spending patterns were included in the economic multiplier effect calculation as step 3 and monetised volunteer contributions as an additional step. We asked the NGOs to provide data on the amount of money paid to local suppliers and then estimated the amount of money that those suppliers would spend in the region, using findings from previous studies of similar businesses (Sacks 2002, Sacks 2012, Civic Economics 2018).

Economic value of volunteering

NGOs rely on volunteers to carry out their work and undertake important community-based activities. We therefore sought data regarding the number of volunteers and the total number of volunteer hours in the 2017-2018 financial year to calculate the economic contribution of volunteering (ABS 2019). In addition, we sought information from staff (in the staff survey) about the number of hours they volunteer in their hometown/area and in their workplace town if that was different.

Staff volunteering hours included any volunteering they contributed in their local communities. The direct economic value of volunteering by both staff who volunteered and people who only volunteered was measured by multiplying the average hourly wage in Australia by the number of volunteer hours in 2017-2018 (O'Neil, Kaye et al. 2013). We acknowledge that monetising volunteering in this way only partially accounts for the real social value of volunteering. Our main argument for monetising volunteering is to include the value of volunteering as contributing to the final multiplier effect because 1) volunteers are recruited and coordinated by the NGOs, which requires expenditure and 2) because of the potential influence of NGOs (as employers) on staff decisions to volunteer in their local communities.

Analysis

We analysed financial and volunteering data and the staff survey data to estimate: a) the economic impact of the case study community service NGOs on the communities in which they provide services; b) the direct and indirect social and civic outcomes to which the organisations' staff contribute; and, c) the economic and social effects of the NGO volunteers (and staff who volunteered) on their communities.

We estimated the economic multiplier effect by calculating the NGOs' financial inflows, outflows and indirect staff and supplier expenditure, adapting the LM3 model (Sacks 2002, Miller 2017) and then added the monetised value of volunteering. To our knowledge, volunteering has not previously been included in the calculation of economic multiplier effects in this way, however given the enormous contribution of volunteers and staff who also volunteer, simply because of the existence of the NGOs, we contend that the dollar value of volunteering should be included.

Findings and discussion

Staff survey results

Eighty staff from the two organisations (400 staff in total) responded to the survey, giving a 20% response rate. Around 80% of respondents were female, which is representative of the overall gender ratio in the organisations (Mackenzie, Balaev et al. 2017). Just over a third of respondents worked in Whyalla, a further third in Port Pirie and the remainder across other towns (see figure 3). Most staff working in Whyalla also lived in Whyalla, however many of those working at other sites lived in (or near) several other locations (see figure 3) spreading the economic impact across the regional footprint of the two NGOs. Most respondents had been employed at their organisation between one and ten years, suggesting high levels of staff retention and job satisfaction. Almost two-thirds of respondents were employed full time and 40% part-time, which is reflective of the feminised workforce (see table 1).

Respondent characteristics	N=80		
Gender	N=79	Position type	N=78
Female	64	Manager	11
Male	15	Team leader/coordinator	11
Age range (years)	N=80	Case manager/support worker	36
19-25	2	Other	20
26-35	19	Civic activities	N=44
36-45	17	Committee member of a social club (e.g. Apex, Lions)	14
46-55	23	Committee member of a local sporting club	19
56-65	16	Member of a Board	5
Over 65	3	School governing council/ parents & friends	4
Income range per fortnight	N=75	Member of an advocacy group/association	6
Band 1: more than \$3,000	6	Community service organisation (e.g. SA Ambulance)	3
Band 2: \$400-\$2,999	68		
Band 3: \$400-\$799	1	Volunteer hours local area	N=75
Employment status	N=78	0	29
Full time	46	1-5	37
Part time	31	6-10	6
casual	1	11 or more	3
Dependent children	N=76	Volunteer hours workplace area (if different)	N=65
0	46	0	50
1-2	25	1-5	14
3-4	5	6-10	1
No. years at NGO	N=78	11 or more	0
<12 months	7	Influence on NGO work on decision to volunteer	N=59
1 up to 5 years	34	Not at all	21
5 up to 10 years	32	Somewhat	23
>15 years	5	A lot	15

Table 1. Survey respondent characteristics

Staff income ranges and the even spread of age groups indicates that the NGOs provide opportunities for employment advancement and as such, also provide potential for significant local spending. Further, those staff in higher level positions were most likely to be a member of a board and to be a committee member of a local sporting club. Put together, these findings suggest that the presence of the NGOs in their communities very likely contributes substantial social capital to their local region.

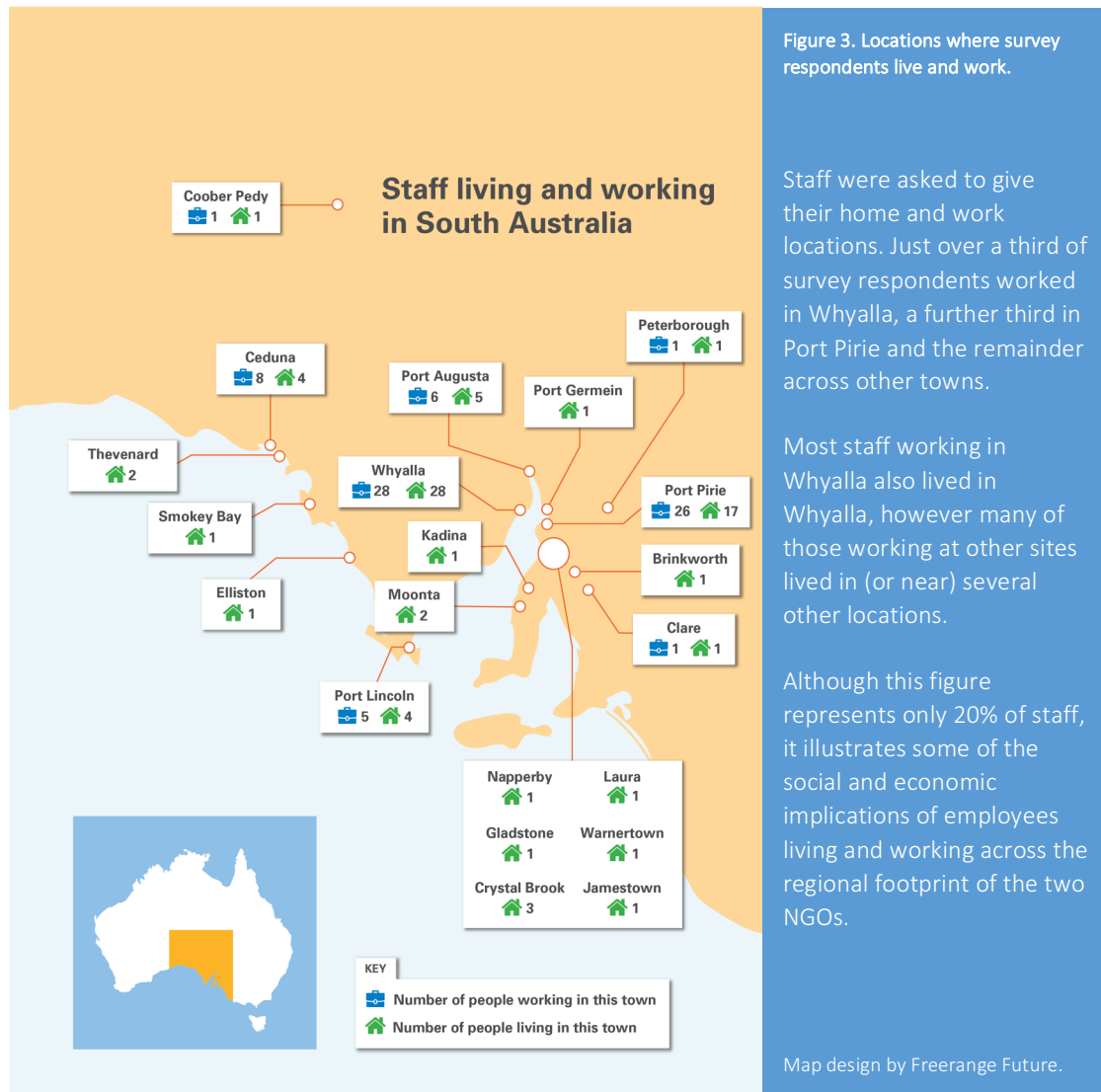


Figure 3. Locations where survey respondents live and work.

Staff were asked to give their home and work locations. Just over a third of survey respondents worked in Whyalla, a further third in Port Pirie and the remainder across other towns.

Most staff working in Whyalla also lived in Whyalla, however many of those working at other sites lived in (or near) several other locations.

Although this figure represents only 20% of staff, it illustrates some of the social and economic implications of employees living and working across the regional footprint of the two NGOs.

Local multiplier effect calculations

Both organisations provided detailed records of their 2017-18 income and expenditure, including a breakdown of all local and external sources of funding and local and non-local expenses. The total income for the two organisations was \$38,798,673.07 and the total local expenditure was \$33,302,111.98 (i.e. local multiplier effect rounds 1 and 2). The organisations also disaggregated expenditure by location across their respective footprints; including salaries, utilities, services and suppliers.

Staff expenditure

To enable estimates of local staff expenditure, ABS household expenditure data for non-metropolitan South Australians and a staff survey were used. The staff survey included questions about where staff spent their disposable income for household items and activities that the research team agreed could be purchased either inside or outside the region, with some degree of purchaser discretion (see figure 4). Estimating staff regional and non-regional spending patterns for these purchases was calculated in three steps. ABS household expenditure data from non-urban South Australia were used to estimate the total proportions that staff spent on each item type by the total salary paid by the two organisations (ABS 2017, see figure 5). Staff were asked to select on a sliding scale where they shopped for groceries and large household items, where they sought entertainment, where they socialised and where they accessed health services (see figure 4). These were then matched with ABS data to estimate the staff salary local re-spend value (ABS 2017).

Finally, staff local spending on each item type was calculated based on the proportion of respondents that stated they purchased the item locally multiplied by the salary percentage of that item. Housing and transport costs were also included, based on ABS estimates rather than survey data, because it is more difficult to make a local versus non-local decision. The ABS provides extensive data on household expenditure, including the proportions of rental types and ownership in the regions studied (ABS 2017). Private rental is generally included as local expenditure, as are housing costs of owners without mortgages (Sacks 2002). It is assumed that house ownership with a mortgage and social housing would be mainly non-local, so these expenses were excluded as leakage. Based on ABS data, 54% of housing costs would be spent locally. Transport costs were estimated by including all non-fuel costs as local (57%) and fuel as non-local (43%). However, this is conservative, because when fuel is purchased from a local service station, there may be a component that contributes to local employment (see figures 5 and 6).

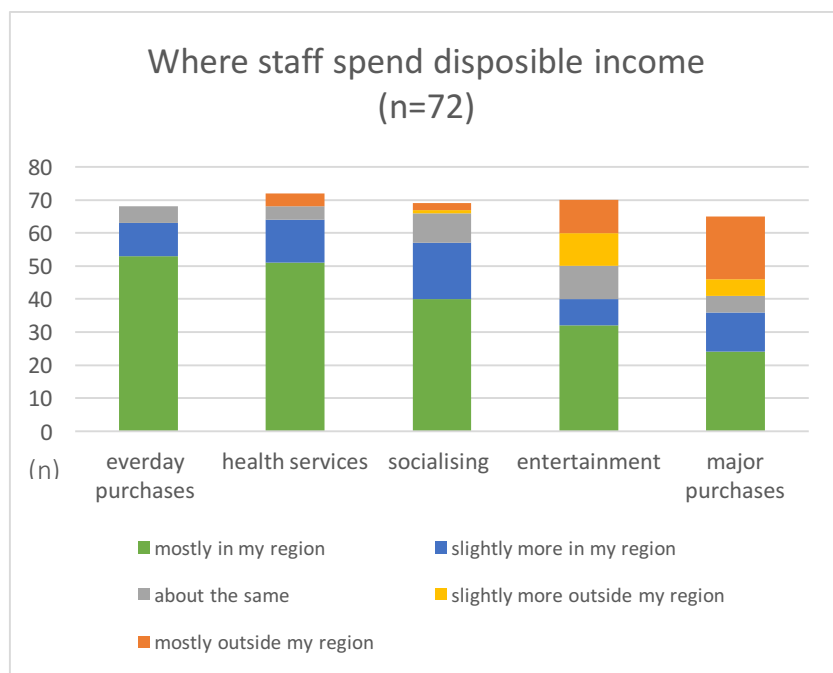


Figure 4. Staff survey questions about where they spend their disposable income on selected expenses.

Supplier expenditure

Supplier expenditure was calculated using estimates from studies which demonstrated consistently that local businesses tend to re-spend 35-45% of their income locally, whereas non-local businesses and suppliers re-spend 10-15% of their income locally (Sacks 2002, Civic Economics 2018). The NGO project team provided details of their expenses including the types of businesses and suppliers based on being local/non-local. Some expenses, such as utilities, were excluded from the calculation based on being almost wholly non-local, although we acknowledge that they would contribute to the income of local technicians.

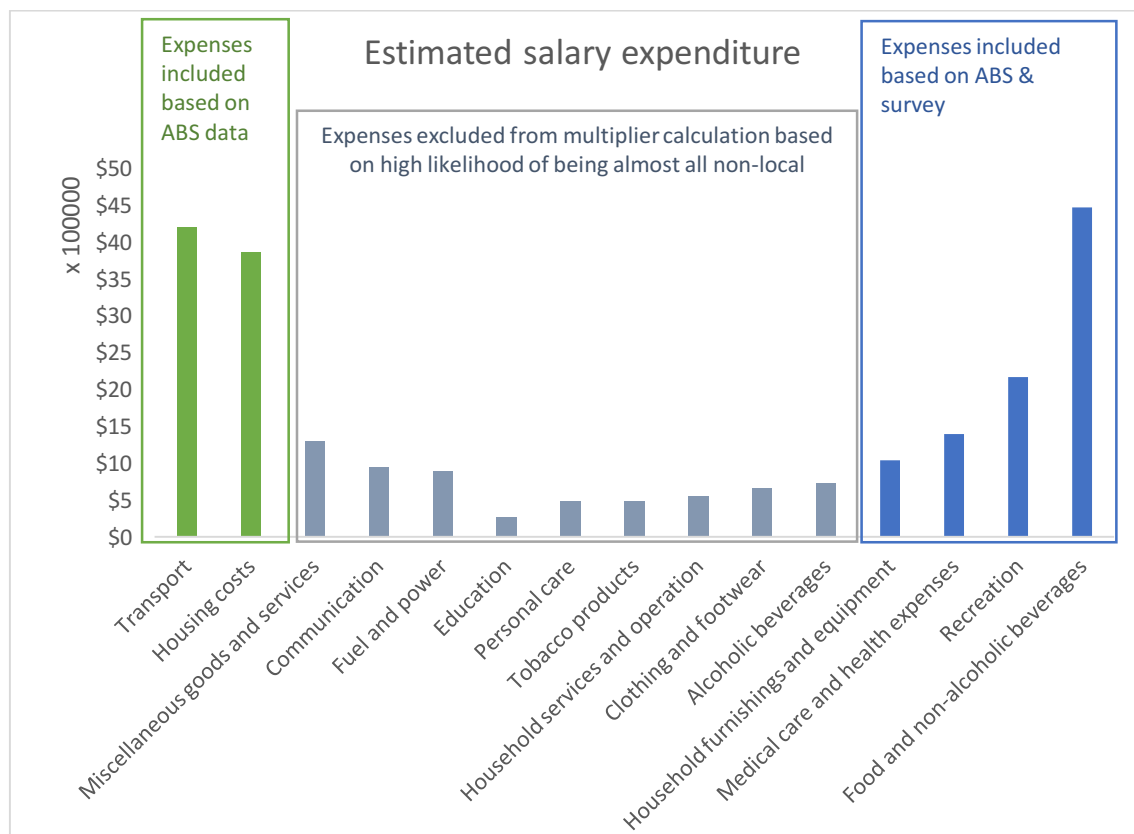



Figure 5. Estimated total staff salary expenditure based on household expenditure patterns of people living in non-urban South Australia.
Data source: Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results, 2015–16

Volunteering: social, civic and economic value

Between the two organisations, volunteers gave 35,194.15 hours of their time. The economic value of volunteering in 2018, calculated by multiplying the Australian average wage of \$39.10 per hour by the number of volunteer hours equates to \$1,376,091.26. In addition to organisation-volunteer hours, the staff survey included questions about volunteering in their local area (e.g. local school, sporting club, charity) and their work town (if this was different). Extrapolating the average number of volunteer hours to the total staff of 400, it is estimated that staff contributed \$2,345,970 of volunteer hours to a combination of their local area and their workplace town over 12 months. The total contribution of volunteers associated with the two organisations, either as organisational volunteers or as staff who volunteered in addition to their paid work was therefore \$3,722,061.00.

The survey sought comments from staff about their own participation in their local community. Fifty-two respondents provided further details about their involvement and the extent to which they felt that their employment in an NGO influenced their community participation. Of those who commented, almost 60% described being very involved in their local community, with the following comment being typical:

I believe that local community participation is extremely important whether it be a small amount of time or a lot. By doing so it creates a greater cohesive and supportive community (full time manager, volunteers 2 hours/week, member of a board).



‘PARTICIPATING IN MY COMMUNITY IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF BELONGING. THE PEOPLE WHO VOLUNTEER ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN COMMUNITIES THRIVING INSTEAD OF SURVIVING. MY WORK HAS HEIGHTENED MY AWARENESS OF SOCIAL ISSUES AND MY CONSCIENCE TO CONTRIBUTE’

(full time manager, volunteers 2 hours/week, member of a board)

Sixty-five per cent of respondents indicated that their employment by an NGO positively influenced their decision to volunteer in their region.

Moreover, some respondents stated that working in an NGO had influenced their decision to increase their community involvement, illustrated by the following accounts:

My work at [NGO] has made me much more aware of community events and organisations which I can choose to support (part time, volunteers 2 hours/week committee member of a social club).

Participating in my community is an important element of belonging. The people who volunteer are instrumental in communities thriving instead of surviving. My work has heightened my awareness of social issues and my conscience to contribute (full time manager, volunteers 2 hours/week, member of a board).

Further, those respondents who were not currently participating because of time restraints such as dependent children or studies, indicated that they planned to volunteer in the future. Several described ways in which their involvement with an NGO influenced their future places, with the comment below being typical:

Will be greater once I retire, and significantly influenced by the time I have spent working at an NGO (full time, case manager or case/support worker, volunteers 1 hour/week).

On the other hand, 35% of respondents felt that their work in an NGO did not influence their decision to volunteer. A few staff indicated that their decision to work in a community service organisation and their decision to volunteer aligned with their personal values rather than the organisation’s influence, which may explain some of these responses. The statement below outlines this view:

I was involved in all of these things before I worked for an NGO so I believe it is my personal values that align to community work, not that my participation in an NGO, has assisted me in becoming more involved in the community (full time manager, previous extensive volunteering and civic participation).

Respondents also provided further information in the comments section about their spending decision-making. Several respondents expressed frustration that they could not shop at an independent supermarket for all their groceries because there was not one available in their local town. Nevertheless, they made a concerted effort to patronise local businesses, as described in the following accounts:

I would love to support more local businesses like Foodland and IGA, but [my town] only has [large chains] so choice is more difficult. For this reason, I support local butchers and fruit and veg businesses (full time, manager).

To summarise, survey results indicate that staff from the two NGOs consciously contribute to the social and economic fabric of their local region. The next section provides calculations of the local multiplier effect of the two NGOs.

The multiplier effect

To calculate the multiplier effect of the two NGOs, we drew on the LM3 calculator and as noted above, because of the extensively demonstrated economic importance of volunteering, we added the value of volunteering as contributing to the multiplier effect. With volunteering included, the estimated local multiplier effect across the two NGOs' combined footprint is 2.3, meaning that every dollar spent by the NGOs returns 2.3 times the dollar value into the local economy (see figure 7). This is a significant return on investment into the social wellbeing of the community, with economic benefits for the community realised which far exceed the intended benefits of the social outcomes expected from investment into NGOs.



'I WOULD LOVE TO SUPPORT MORE LOCAL BUSINESSES LIKE FOODLAND AND IGA, BUT [MY TOWN] ONLY HAS [LARGE CHAINS] SO CHOICE IS MORE DIFFICULT. FOR THIS REASON, I SUPPORT LOCAL BUTCHERS AND FRUIT AND VEG BUSINESSES'

(full time manager)

Further, this estimate is conservative because it does not include specific programs that significantly increase local expenditure. One such program is the UCSA Micro Credit Loan Scheme, which is an interest-free loan scheme that low income clients can access to purchase essential items, usually from local suppliers. That particular scheme is called a circular loan scheme because the money circulates between the program, the client and local businesses and is repaid by the client to UCSA to be used for another loan in a continuous cycle (Mackenzie and Goodwin-Smith 2018, Mackenzie and Louth 2019).

Local money – across the region

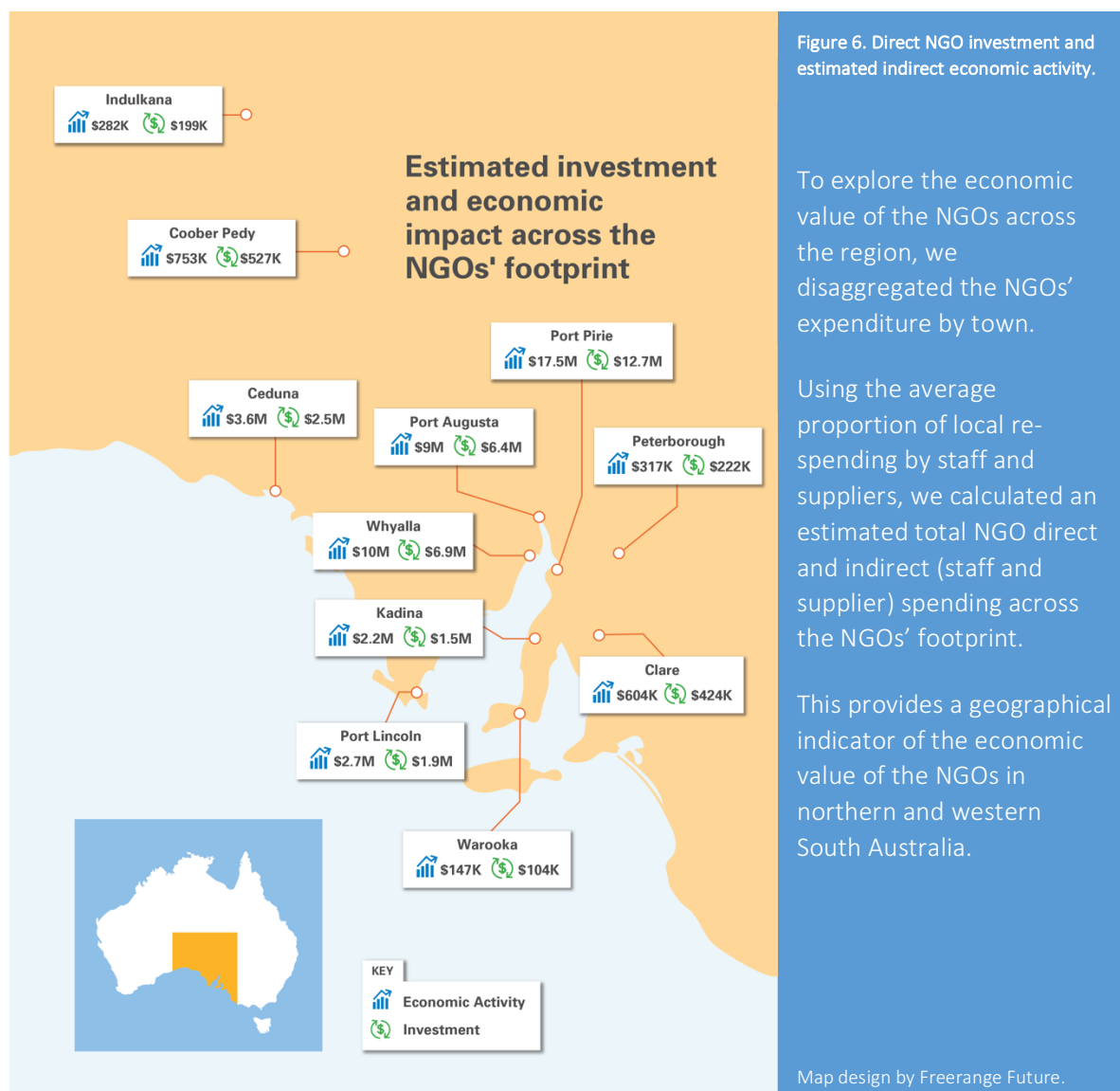


Figure 6. Direct NGO investment and estimated indirect economic activity.

To explore the economic value of the NGOs across the region, we disaggregated the NGOs' expenditure by town.

Using the average proportion of local re-spending by staff and suppliers, we calculated an estimated total NGO direct and indirect (staff and supplier) spending across the NGOs' footprint.

This provides a geographical indicator of the economic value of the NGOs in northern and western South Australia.

Study limitations

It is important to read these findings with a degree of caution because, as is the case with all types of modelling, the findings are indicative rather than definitive or exact. The model has only been used to explore the two NGOs without any other outside influences and this is not a true picture of how any organisation (or an economy) operates – the NGOs are, after all embedded in their communities and affected by various socio-political and economic contexts. The LM3 model is conducted manually, not using a software program that can take into account a range of effects that cannot be accounted for in the LM3 model. The calculations are also based on a particular time-period – that of the 2017-2018 financial year and so do not represent a prediction for future economic or social effects.

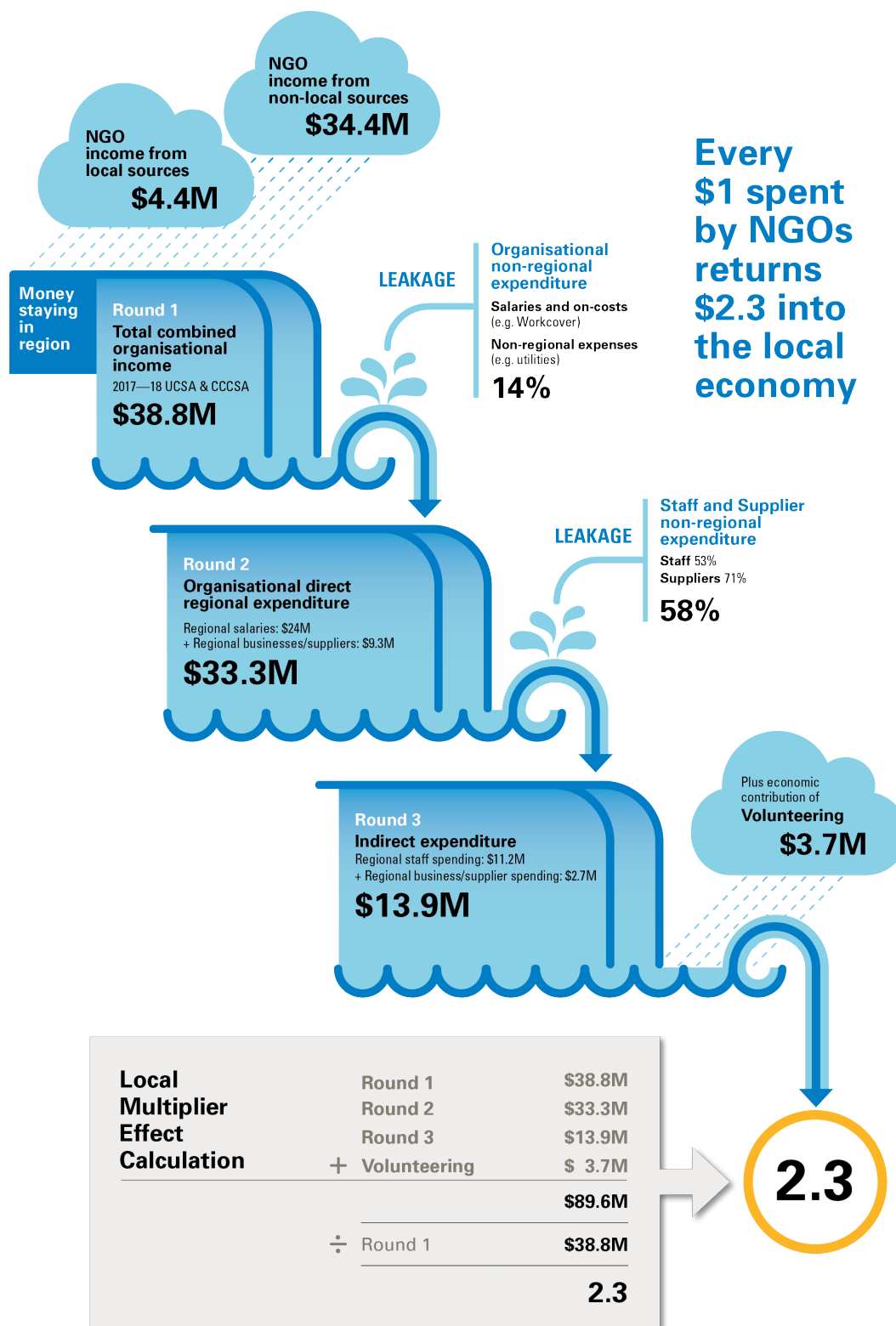


Figure 7. Local multiplier effects of the two NGOs in the region. Designed by Freerange Future.

Conclusions

The findings in this study suggest that there are social, civic and economic benefits of choosing to support non-government community service organisations located in country areas. These benefits are in addition to the services that the NGOs provide by directly and indirectly mitigating the decline caused by economic, population and environmental changes and benefits across country South Australia. As such, the NGOs play a significant role in reinvigorating local economies and are part of an important transformational process that aligns with the expanding community services sector.

Multiple studies have found that the social effects of industries using FIFO/DIDO employees rather than local workers has been shown to create a strain on infrastructure because they do not necessarily contribute to the local economy. Where this occurs, there are many more men than women or children, increased demand on local infrastructure often without compensation and low levels of civic engagement, such as reduced involvement in schools, sporting clubs or other forms of volunteering and associated higher crime rates.

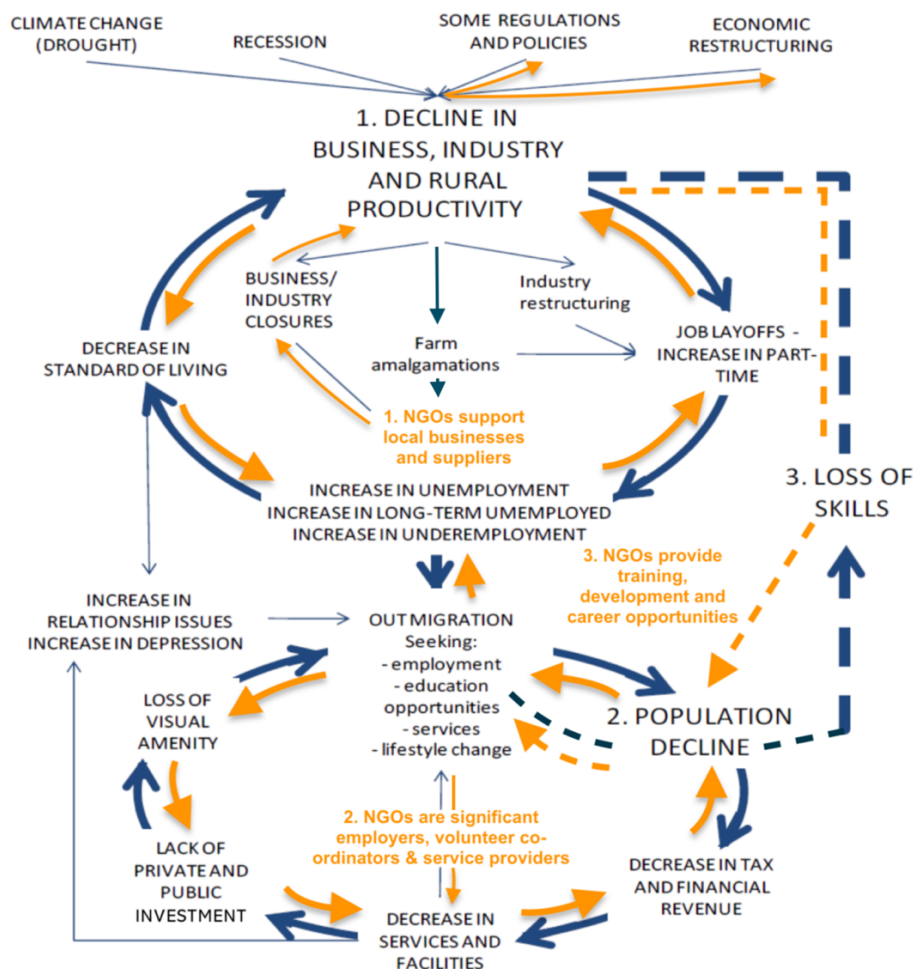


Figure 8. Ameliorating regional shrinkage: the influence of country-based community service NGOs on the three cycles of shrinkage (in orange) in Australia, Adapted from Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2012. OECD

Our findings show that the very presence of the two NGOs operating within their service footprint leads to high levels of volunteering – with many volunteer hours being undertaken by volunteers for the organisations and also by staff within their local communities. We can draw conclusions that the level of volunteering and civic engagement of people involved in the organisations is contributing both directly and indirectly to the social fabric of the communities in which they live.



COUNTRY-BASED COMMUNITY SERVICES ARE INTEGRAL TO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE CAPACITY TO BRING BENEFITS TO COMMUNITIES BEYOND THOSE OF THE DIRECT SERVICE PROVISION.

Volunteering has been shown to increase social capital which in turn increases economic activity (Kawachi, Kennedy et al. 1999, Mayer 2003, Brooks 2007, O’Boyle 2011). These findings demonstrate that an economic stimulus (i.e. funding support for locally managed community service organisations) fosters volunteering which in turn increases economic activity.

Returning to the concept of change in country Australia, our findings show that the location of country NGOs is important for the regions in which they serve in terms of proactively ameliorating the often-negative effects of changing industries, populations and environments. Returning to the Martinez-Fernandez and colleagues (2012) ‘three cycles of regional shrinkage’ (figure 2), we find that there are three areas in which country-based community service NGOs can (and do) work against the shrinking tide: 1) as supporters of local business and suppliers, 2) as significant employers, volunteer co-ordinators, and service provider, and 3) by providing training and development opportunities (see figure 8).



THREE AREAS IN WHICH COMMUNITY SERVICE NGOS AMELIORATE

REGIONAL SHRINKAGE:

- 1) AS SUPPORTERS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES AND SUPPLIERS,
- 2) AS SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYERS, VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATORS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS, AND
- 3) BY PROVIDING TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.

The findings reported herein are so rich and promising that they deserve to be considered by policy makers and the leadership of community service NGOs to enable them to take steps to make an immediate difference to regional communities. Based on these findings, we suggest that country-based community services are integral to regional development, because they have the capacity to bring benefits to communities beyond those of the direct service provision. Viewed in this light, community service NGOs provide a form of strength-based community development with a focus on developing sustainable and healthy communities, rather than simply being part of a poverty industry. As such, investing in NGOs as sustainable anchor institutions is an investment that not only has a significant multiplier effect, but it does (and will) beget further economic activity beyond the 2.3.

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