

By Five evaluation summary for participants

This document provides a snapshot of the By Five evaluation, its findings and implications, to provide feedback to stakeholders and those who participated in the evaluation.

About the evaluation

The Centre for Community Child Health at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, By Five's research partner, led a participatory evaluation of By Five. The evaluation looked at the changes influenced through By Five, from mid-2018 to mid-2020, and the extent to which these changes represent progress towards By Five's aim of improving children's outcomes by the time children turn five and start school. The 'tiers' of change¹ are shown in Figure 1. The evaluation focused on changes in the first three tiers of foundations, enablers and systemic change².

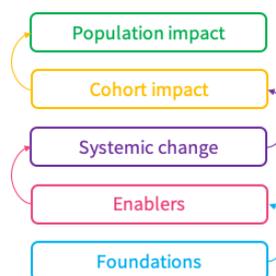


Figure 1: Tiers of change

What did the evaluation find?

By Five has helped to build a good **foundation** for collaboration between health, education and family services. Some of the activities that helped to build this foundation include:

- Community consultations, which helped to identify community priorities and were used to inform local project team work.
- The Continuity of Early Learning course, delivered by the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership, which helped to develop or strengthen relationships and establish a common understanding among participants about the early years. The effort that the training encouraged was acknowledged with a Victorian Early Years Award in 2019.
- Paediatric child development and behaviour workshops, which provided families and practitioners with information and generated interest in improving access to specialist paediatric support.

There is good evidence that By Five is influencing positive change in the **enablers**. Since mid-2018, the evaluation found By Five contributed to 46 positive changes in the relationships, activities and practices of health, education and family service stakeholders in four of its five geographic clusters. Many of these changes related to the establishment of early years teams, representing health, education and family services, who have set shared goals and are working together to address local challenges for families and children in local communities.

¹ The tiers of change are more formally known as the generic place-based theory of change, developed by [Dart \(2018\)](#) and adapted by the [Victorian State Government \(2020\)](#)

² For more information about foundations, enablers and systemic change, refer to the evaluation report, [Dart \(2018\)](#) or the [Victorian State Government](#)

The evaluation found By Five is also starting to influence more advanced changes or **systemic change**, including:

- *Optimising existing funding streams*, such as the use of Enhanced Maternal and Child Health funding to establish the Hindmarsh Positive Parenting Centre
- *Pooling resources*, for example, across multiple local governments and a health service to fund the Specialist Paediatric Support Partnership that seeks to improve children's access to specialist paediatric care and support local practitioners to manage complex health conditions
- *Establishing new services*, such as the facilitation of referrals for children and young people from Donald Family Clinic to the Royal Flying Doctor Service's paediatric telehealth service
- *Expanding existing services*, for example, helping Birchip establish kindergarten for three-year old children in 2019 (ahead of the Victorian government's roll out of three year old kindergarten).

By Five is beginning to influence telehealth and paediatric care policy and practice beyond the Wimmera Southern Mallee, and was recently awarded its second Victorian Early Years Award for its Specialist Paediatric Support Partnership project.

The evaluation identified some areas for improvement. They include: strengthening community member representation and participation in the work, including better engagement of First Nations people and culturally and linguistically diverse groups; and building local awareness and ownership of By Five. Continuing to build leadership capacity and diversification was also found to be important to help sustain collaboration into the future.

Thank you to the evaluation participants

The evaluation involved 38 participants, representing By Five Project Control Groups and Project Teams, the Collaborative Leadership Group, funders or government, the By Five Coordinators and community representatives. We would like to thank all those involved for their important contribution. A special acknowledgment is extended to those involved in the Outcomes Harvest for their time and insights.

For further information

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