



STARLIGHT EXPRESS ROOMS

Making an Impact – Social Return on Investment
Conducted by PwC

Starlight

Starlight's in-hospital programs are delivered every day to children around the country, lifting their spirits, building resilience and forming an integral part of their total care.

While health professionals focus on treating illness, Starlight programs provide distraction from the pain and stress of treatment, providing the opportunity to simply be a child. All Starlight programs aim to support wellbeing and resilience, and are underpinned by the World Health Organisations social model of health.

Pain, loneliness and isolation can sometimes dominate the lives of children in hospital, and they often miss out on normal experiences that healthy children take for granted. Starlight programs provide experiences that bring happiness, joy and hope to the whole family.



Starlight

Starlight is the only children's charity with a physical presence in every paediatric hospital in Australia.

Starlight Express Rooms are located in Australia's paediatric hospitals providing respite for children and their families. The Starlight Express Room is a treatment-free space for children to access a range of facilities and activities, socialise and enjoy time away from the stress of the wards during their stay in hospital. Starlight Express Rooms are operated by Captain Starlight.

The **Captain Starlight** program is designed to reduce the loneliness, pain and stress often associated with hospitalisation. It features professional performers who entertain and engage children in a variety of activities.

Other Starlight programs include Starlight's Healthier Futures Initiative, Livewire and Starlight's Wishgranting program.

Aims of the Evaluation

A Social Return on Investment Approach

In 2012 PwC was commissioned by Starlight to conduct an assessment to quantify the impact and value delivered through the Starlight Express Room and Captain Starlight programs.

A **Social Return on Investment (SROI)** approach was used to provide a baseline estimate of the wider social and economic benefits of the Starlight Express Room and Captain Starlight programs.

What was involved?

The project involved the collection of data from records provided by Starlight, including:

- Starlight Express Room daily schedule
- Starlight Express Room special events schedule
- Cost data
- Monthly sign in sheets

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders:

- Parents
- Health professionals
- Starlight team members

A PWC Evaluation

Starlight Express Room Locations

Today, Starlight has Starlight Express Rooms located at:

- Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney
- Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick
- John Hunter Children's Hospital, Newcastle
- The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne
- Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, Brisbane
- Perth Children's Hospital
- Women and Children's Hospital, Adelaide
- Royal Darwin Hospital
- Monash Children's Hospital, Melbourne

Questions focused on the perceived benefits and change that the programs had on the hospital experience of children and their families, as well as the implications for their broader health and wellbeing. Data collected during the interview phase informed the benefit indicator and assumptions used in the analysis or program impact using SROI. Data used to create proxy assumptions is sourced from a range of publicly available sources, including prices from community and company websites and Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item prices. The project identified a range of benefits that the Starlight Express Room and Captain Starlight programs provide to patients, siblings, parents, health professionals and the hospital.

“SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for the 'value' stakeholders ascribe to a program. It estimates a value for the change that a program has for its stakeholders and compares this value to the investment required to achieve that impact, resulting in an SROI 'ratio' that compares benefit to investment. In summary, it is a method that enables a monetary value to be placed on social returns.”

—PwC



Having fun with Captain Starlight



“ The Starlight Express Room...it's just so much fun, the atmosphere, and everyone is always happy and cheery and you meet someone new every day.”
—Patient



Key Benefits

The key benefits were wide ranging and included but were not limited to:

Increased entertainment, a benefit to patients and their siblings	Starlight Express Rooms provide children with a range of activities and access to equipment and facilities.
Anxiety reduction, a benefit to patients	Starlight Express Rooms impact on the patient's experience while in hospital; playing a part in reducing the anxiety associated with being in hospital, contributing to improved health and wellbeing.
Less missed appointments, a benefits the hospital	The Starlight Express Room provides outpatients with an appealing option for wait time between scheduled appointments, resulting in a reduction in the costs associated with missed appointments. Parents and health professionals noted that the Starlight Express Room typically increases the appeal of attending hospital.
Increased socialisation, benefit to parents of patients	Isolation and pain can dominate patients' lives and impact those of their families. Ill children can be particularly isolated because they are removed from their existing community supports. Seriously ill children and their parents can use the Starlight Express Room to meet and socialise with others in similar circumstances.
Better workplace, a benefit to staff and the hospital	Starlight Express Rooms provide opportunities for children in hospital, their siblings and parents to meet and socialise with others in similar situations.



These positive results show that through the Captain Starlight and Starlight Express Room programs, Starlight is able to bring about real value to children, young people, their families, health professionals and the hospitals that we work in partnership with.



Arts and crafts with Captain Starlight

The Overall Benefit

In 2012, Starlight engaged PwC to establish an SROI for the Starlight Express Rooms.

In 2018, Starlight decided to undertake a review of the SROI to understand the impact of program changes on the SROI, including improved data collection and increased program reach.

This review found that the SROI for the Starlight Express Room had increased to a ratio of 5.7:1 compared to 4.1:1 in 2012. This means that now for every dollar of investment there is a return of \$5.70 to the community.



More information about all Starlight programs can be found on the website at starlight.org.au.

Starlight is committed to research and evaluation so that we can ensure programs are making a significant difference to the lives of seriously ill children, young people and their families. If you would like to learn more about the work of Starlight please email: impact@starlight.org.au

“The Starlight Express Room provides for children and families a sense that they are not in a hospital. It is an oasis for them. It is a safe place, a sanctuary where doctors, nurses or any other clinicians are not able to do anything to them. It is a place of play and rest for both patients and their parents.”

—Health Professional