Strong and Resilient Communities (SARC) – indicative Program Logic
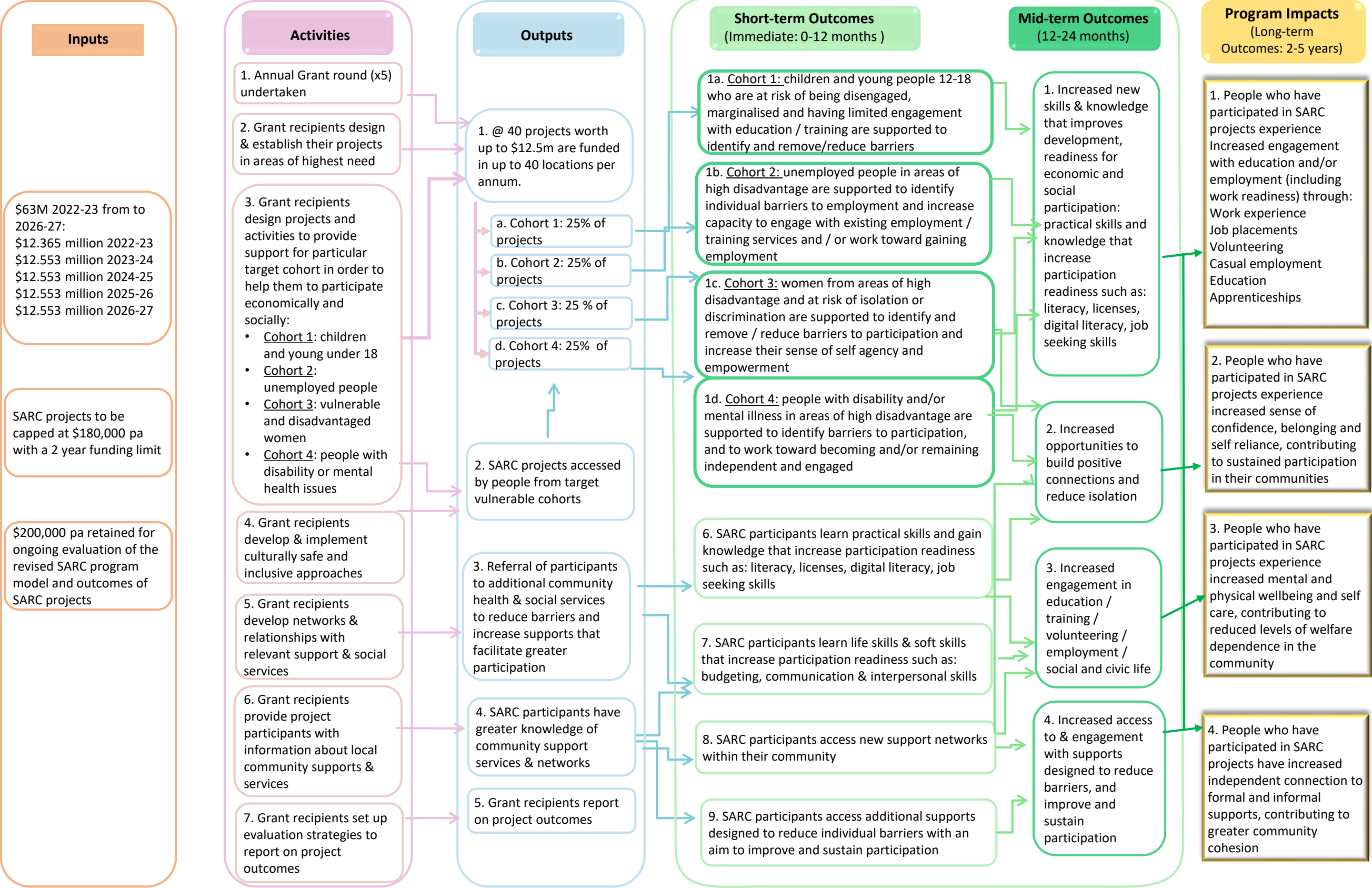
Program Goal
To put vulnerable and disadvantaged people on pathways to self-reliance and empowerment through local community driven solutions that support them to participate socially and economically.

Program Need
Marginalised and disengaged vulnerable and disadvantaged people need to be reconnected to local community activities, networks and services, assisted to access and maximise the benefits of education, training, and employment opportunities, in order to achieve positive life outcomes

Inputs

$63M 2022-23 from to 2026-27:
$12.365 million 2022-23
$12.553 million 2023-24
$12.553 million 2024-25
$12.553 million 2025-26
$12.553 million 2026-27

SARC projects to be capped at $180,000 pa with a 2 year funding limit

$200,000 pa retained for ongoing evaluation of the revised SARC program model and outcomes of SARC projects

Activities

1. Annual Grant round (x5) undertaken

2. Grant recipients design & establish their projects in areas of highest need

3. Grant recipients design projects and activities to provide support for particular target cohort in order to help them to participate economically and socially:
- Cohort 1: children and young under 18
- Cohort 2: unemployed people
- Cohort 3: vulnerable and disadvantaged women
- Cohort 4: people with disability or mental health issues

4. Grant recipients develop & implement culturally safe and inclusive approaches

5. Grant recipients develop networks & relationships with relevant support & social services

6. Grant recipients provide project participants with information about local community supports & services

7. Grant recipients set up evaluation strategies to report on project outcomes

Outputs

1. @ 40 projects worth up to $12.5m are funded in up to 40 locations per annum.
   a. Cohort 1: 25% of projects
   b. Cohort 2: 25% of projects
   c. Cohort 3: 25 % of projects
   d. Cohort 4: 25% of projects

2. SARC projects accessed by people from target vulnerable cohorts

3. Referral of participants to additional community health & social services to reduce barriers and increase supports that facilitate greater participation

4. SARC participants have greater knowledge of community support services & networks

5. Grant recipients report on project outcomes

Short-term Outcomes (Immediate: 0-12 months)

1a. Cohort 1: children and young people 12-18 who are at risk of being disengaged, marginalised and having limited engagement with education / training are supported to identify and remove/reduce barriers

1b. Cohort 2: unemployed people in areas of high disadvantage are supported to identify individual barriers to employment and increase capacity to engage with existing employment / training services and / or work toward gaining employment

1c. Cohort 3: women from areas of high disadvantage and at risk of isolation or discrimination are supported to identify and remove / reduce barriers to participation and increase their sense of self agency and empowerment

1d. Cohort 4: people with disability and/or mental illness in areas of high disadvantage are supported to identify barriers to participation, and to work toward becoming and/or remaining independent and engaged

6. SARC participants learn practical skills and gain knowledge that increase participation readiness such as: literacy, licenses, digital literacy, job seeking skills

7. SARC participants learn life skills & soft skills that increase participation readiness such as: budgeting, communication & interpersonal skills

8. SARC participants access new support networks within their community

9. SARC participants access additional supports designed to reduce individual barriers with an aim to improve and sustain participation

Mid-term Outcomes (12-24 months)

1. Increased new skills & knowledge that improves development, readiness for economic and social participation: practical skills and knowledge that increase participation readiness such as: literacy, licenses, digital literacy, job seeking skills

2. Increased opportunities to build positive connections and reduce isolation

3. Increased engagement in education / training / volunteering / employment / social and civic life

4. Increased access to & engagement with supports designed to reduce barriers, and improve and sustain participation

Program Impacts (Long-term Outcomes: 2-5 years)

1. People who have participated in SARC projects experience Increased engagement with education and/or employment (including work readiness) through:
Work experience
Job placements
Volunteering
Casual employment
Education
Apprenticeships

2. People who have participated in SARC projects experience increased sense of confidence, belonging and self reliance, contributing to sustained participation in their communities

3. People who have participated in SARC projects experience increased mental and physical wellbeing and self care, contributing to reduced levels of welfare dependence in the community

4. People who have participated in SARC projects have increased independent connection to formal and informal supports, contributing to greater community cohesion

Target need: Vulnerable and disadvantaged people of workforce age (15-64 years), with priority on: Children and young people aged 12-18, unemployed people, vulnerable and disadvantaged women, people with disability or mental illness.
Program partners: Local communities, community organisations, service providers, local councils, state/territory governments, education/training providers, job providers

External factors and stakeholders:
- Other organisations that provide similar programs such as
- DSS: Reconnect, DES, VMA, FAC Activity, TTL
- DESE: Job Active
- Office for Women
- Health: sport and recreation
- Home Affairs: Community hubs, Fostering integration grants
- Youth hubs trials
- State/Territory Government programs/interventions.
- Indigenous, CALD and disability groups

Other external factors:
- The demand capability of organisations/grant recipients to set up time limited projects with clear outcomes measurement frameworks.
- Accessibility, demand and uptake of the project activities.
- Significant events that impact on project delivery and on the mental health and wellbeing of Australians, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assumptions:
That increased community engagement is a mechanism for building individual self-reliance, confidence and mental health. This can be described as a pathway to self reliance.
By improving people's connection to education, employment and social participation opportunities they will also experience:
- Increased social connection and support
- Improved mental and physical health
- Increased life/soft skills and practical skills

That needs can be addressed by SARC projects within 2 year project timeframes.
That the projects are able to demonstrate clear short term outcomes within 2 year timeframes.

Program hypothesis:

- Individuals who are at risk of poor life outcomes (because of disengagement with communities and institutions which reduces their opportunities for social and economic participation) can benefit from locally driven supports that are responsive to the needs and circumstances of particular geographic locations and/or communities of interest. Such supports should enable disadvantaged individuals to become more competent, confident and self-reliant, and/or increase their social and economic participation. The benefits individuals gain from this will also have a positive effect on the community more broadly through greater community cohesion. Communities which are more cohesive are better able to withstand shocks because of their capacity to care for and support their members.

Social Cohesion Pillars

Participation

Belonging

Social justice and equality

Acceptance and rejection

Worth
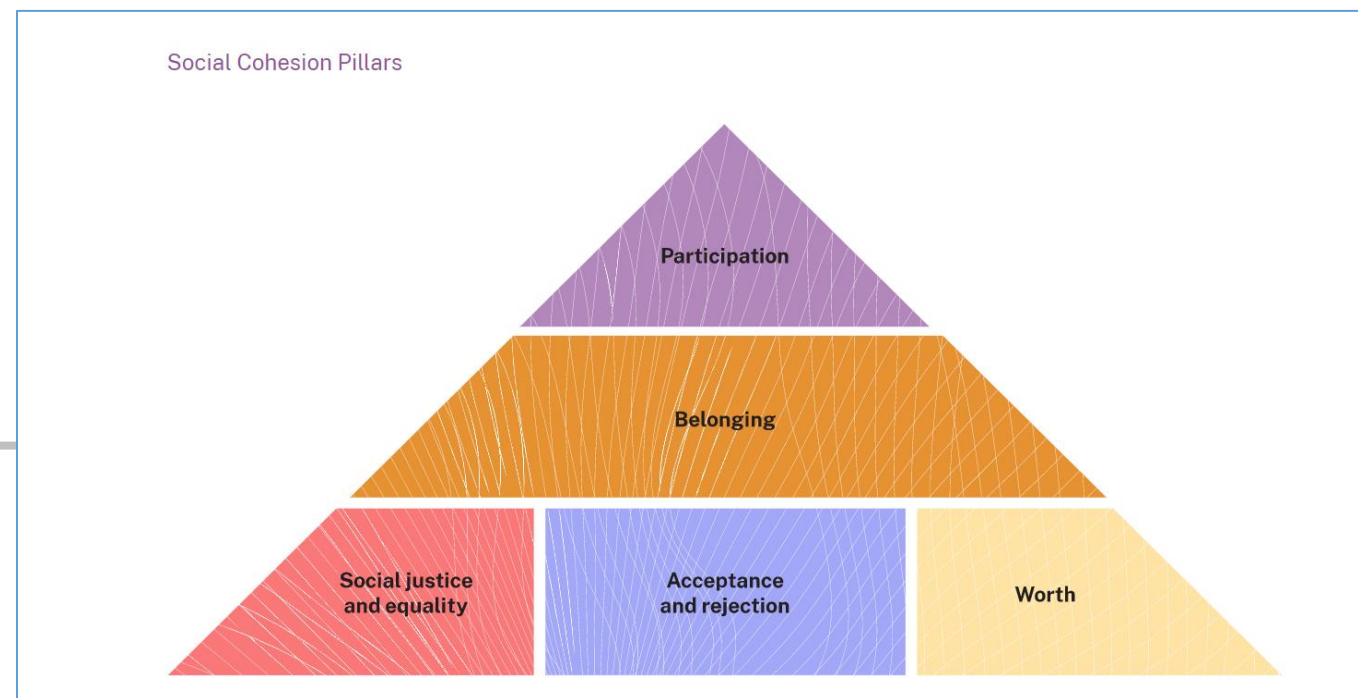
Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion