



Evaluating Many Rivers' Microenterprise Development Program

Summary report

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Purpose of the study

- Many Rivers had four objectives when commissioning the project:
 - understand if they were making a difference
 - demonstrate value to current partners
 - demonstrate value to future partners
 - contribute to raising standards for evaluations of similar programs elsewhere in Australia

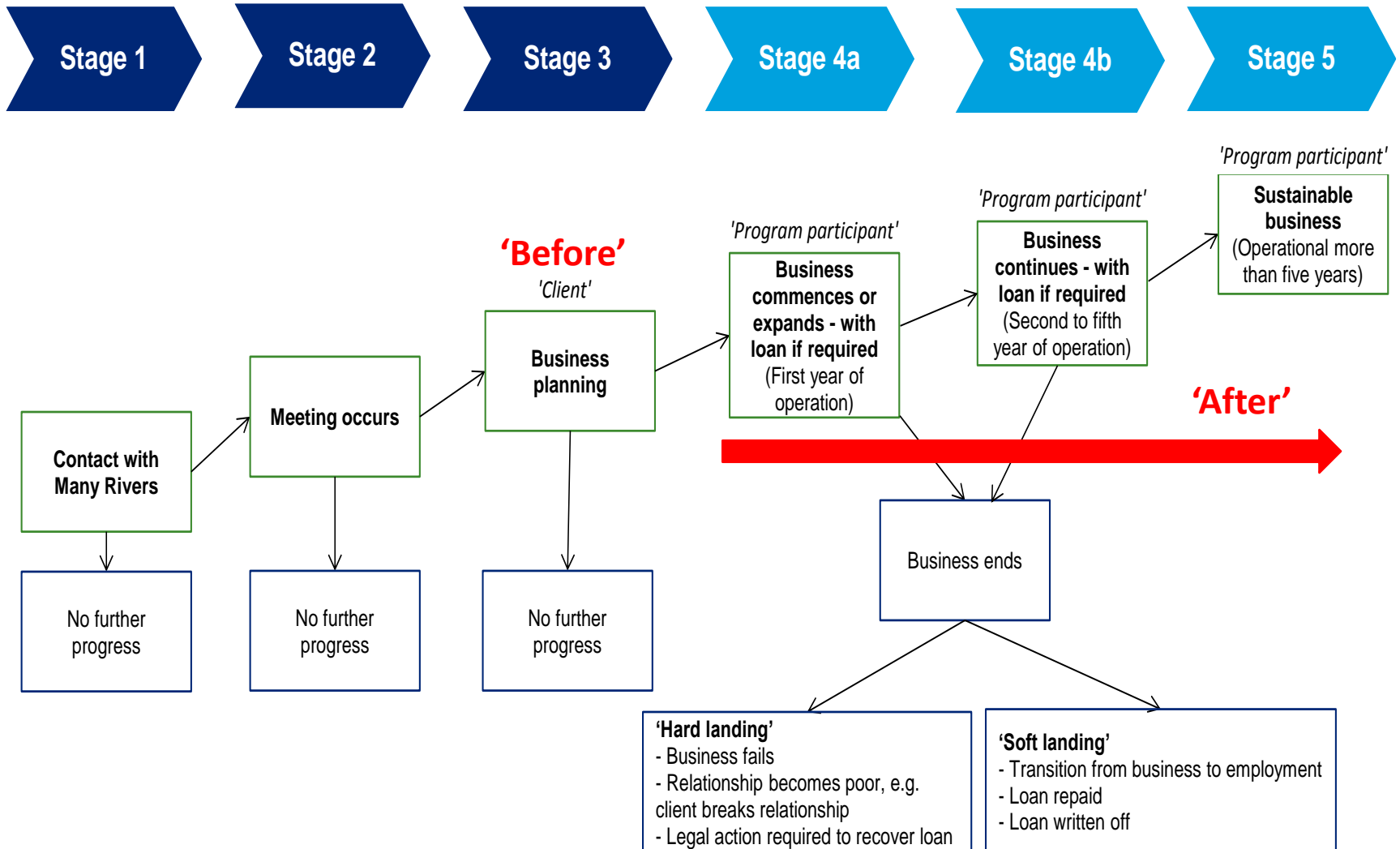
What we did

- Key tasks included:
 - working closely with Many Rivers to understand its mission, operations and activities
 - reviewing literature relating to similar programs focused on Indigenous Australians and other international microfinance evaluations
 - visits to a number of communities in which Many Rivers operates to meet a sample of its clients in Blacktown, Kurri Kurri, Port Hedland and Karratha
 - consultations with Many Rivers' field officers and partner organisations

What we identified

- Best practice evaluations are structured around four key questions:
 - What is the **need** for the program?
 - What are the **outcomes/effectiveness** of the program?
 - What is the **efficiency** of the program?
 - What **enhancements** could be made to the program?
- Evaluations of similar programs in Australia are generally limited by:
 - a lack of quantitative indicators covering outcomes and effectiveness
 - a reliance on qualitative measures
 - a focus on outputs, not outcomes

What we identified



Framework indicators and data collection

- Indicators were developed to address four evaluation questions
 - most indicators relate to effectiveness
 - 67 indicators overall, with varying levels of priority
 - 19 could be assessed now, based on existing information
 - identification of ‘disadvantaged’ clients
- Future data collection
 - data collected before and after support, via surveys or field officers
 - **inputs** tracked and categorised for efficiency indicators
 - further qualitative information through consultations
 - can be presented as **report card** once sufficient before/after data exist

Examples of framework indicators

Examples of indicators by type

Category	Example of indicator to be measured
Inputs	Field officer time
Outputs	Number of businesses assisted at various stages of client journey
Outcomes	
Business	Number of businesses that continue to operate over time
Individual – economic	Change in income for program participants
Community – economic	Employment of people in community by supported businesses, clustering of small businesses
Individual – social	Subjective change in wellbeing for program participants
Community – social	Change in educational attainment at community level
Individual – capacity building	Change in skill level for program participants
Community – capacity building	Participation in Many Rivers' community programs
External leverage	Level of link-in with partner and referral organisations

Where to from here?

- this approach is a significant advance on previous analysis of similar programs in Australia
- the framework is established but this is just the start ...
- over time a more complete story will emerge
 - in **one year**: information on change in program participant income
 - in **three years**: information on proportion of ‘sustainable’ businesses (from those first assisted)
 - in **five years**: information on change in homeownership for program participants

Please stay involved and watch the progress of Many Rivers!



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