

# Social Impact: Social Return on Investment



A/Prof Julia Carins

# What is social impact?

**Societal and environmental changes  
(positive and negative, intended and unintended)  
resulting from investments**

- adapted from *Epstein and Yuthas (2017)*

Societal impacts relate to issues such as:

equality, livelihoods, health, nutrition, poverty, security, justice

# What is social impact?

Social impacts are:

- Longer term
- Compounding
- Not constrained to the activity/investment  
(always other things at play)
- Like a ripple... that gathers momentum along the way and becomes a wave (crashes into obstacles along the way)...



# Mapping social impact



## An Impact Chain

### Inputs

What goes into the program

### Activities

What happens in the program, e.g. what we do

### Outputs

Tangible, observable products + services resulting from activities

### Outcomes

Immediate measurable changes after the people interact with your outputs

### Impact

Longer term changes that accrue over time

# The social impact chain



# Inputs

- Investments or resources that are used to pursue impact objectives
- ***These resources are used to create***

Examples include:

- Funding
- Partners time
- Volunteer time
- Partners infrastructure (locations)
- Sponsorship



# Activities

- Actions or tasks that are undertaken in support of specific impact objectives
- ... these activities which result in quantifiable numbers of ...

Examples include:

- Team meetings
- Planning
- Budgeting
- Analysis



# Outputs

- Tangible, immediate practices, products and services that result from the activities undertaken
- **...these outputs, which within them or because of them change occurs ...**

Examples include:

- Events
- Training offerings
- Communications (videos, social media posts, web site content, media advertisements, leaflets, posters)



# Outcomes

- Changes, or effects, on the individuals, animals or the environment that follow another person's interaction with the products, practices, or services your team produces
- **...which are reflected in these outcomes...**

Examples include

- Change in behaviour
- Change in attitudes
- Change in awareness



# Impact

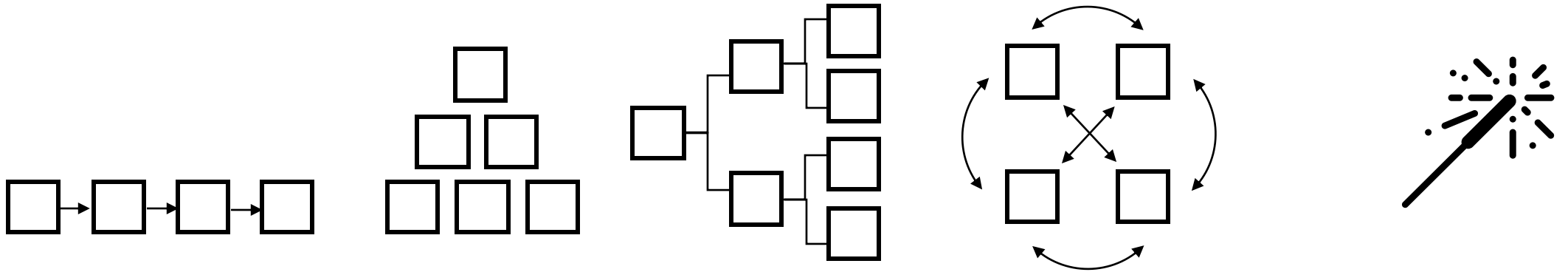
- Changes in society or the environment that follow from the outcomes that have been achieved
- **...which in time will manifest into these impacts**

Examples include:

- Reduced hospitalisations
- Cost savings to community

# The dynamic & temporal nature of social change

Outcomes must be recurring, cumulative, evolving and/or interacting to generate Impact



Time

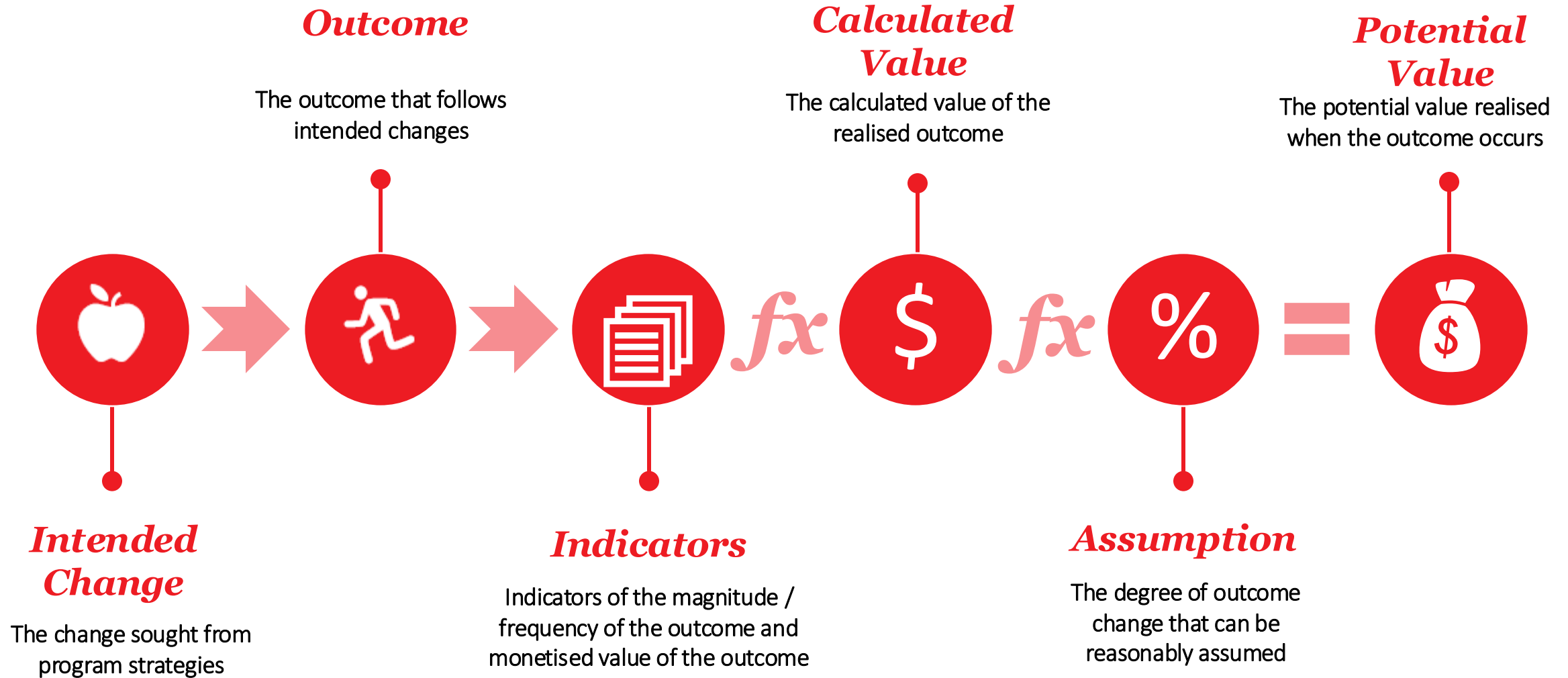
# Value estimation (SROI)

# The value of social impacts

- Things that can be bought and sold are considered valuable
- We can't put a price on many things (social impacts) – but they are so valuable!
- A process that measures and values social benefits:
  - **Increases** the importance of these impacts
  - **Identifies** what contributes to impact (effectiveness)
  - **Encourages** maximisation of impact (efficiency)
  - **Justifies** future investment

**What are the positive outcomes and what is their value?**

# Value estimation



# Impact Case Study

Battery E-waste



# 2024 Sunshine Coast Battery Safety Campaign



# 2024 Sunshine Coast Battery Safety Campaign

- Batteries cause fires
- Never bin your batteries
- Give batteries a new life
- Get rid of leaky batteries
- Keep our drivers safe
- 40+ drop off locations available on the Sunshine Coast

## Keep our drivers safe

**Never bin your batteries**

Find your drop off point at

RecycleMate 



**Get rid of batteries before they leak!**

**40+ FREE SUNSHINE COAST DROP OFF POINTS**

Find one here 

 RECYCLE mate



[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)



**Batteries cause fires.**

**40+ FREE DROP OFF POINTS**

Don't bin batteries. 

Find a drop off point here

 RECYCLE mate



# Value estimation

**Problem:** Many people dispose of e-waste into landfill

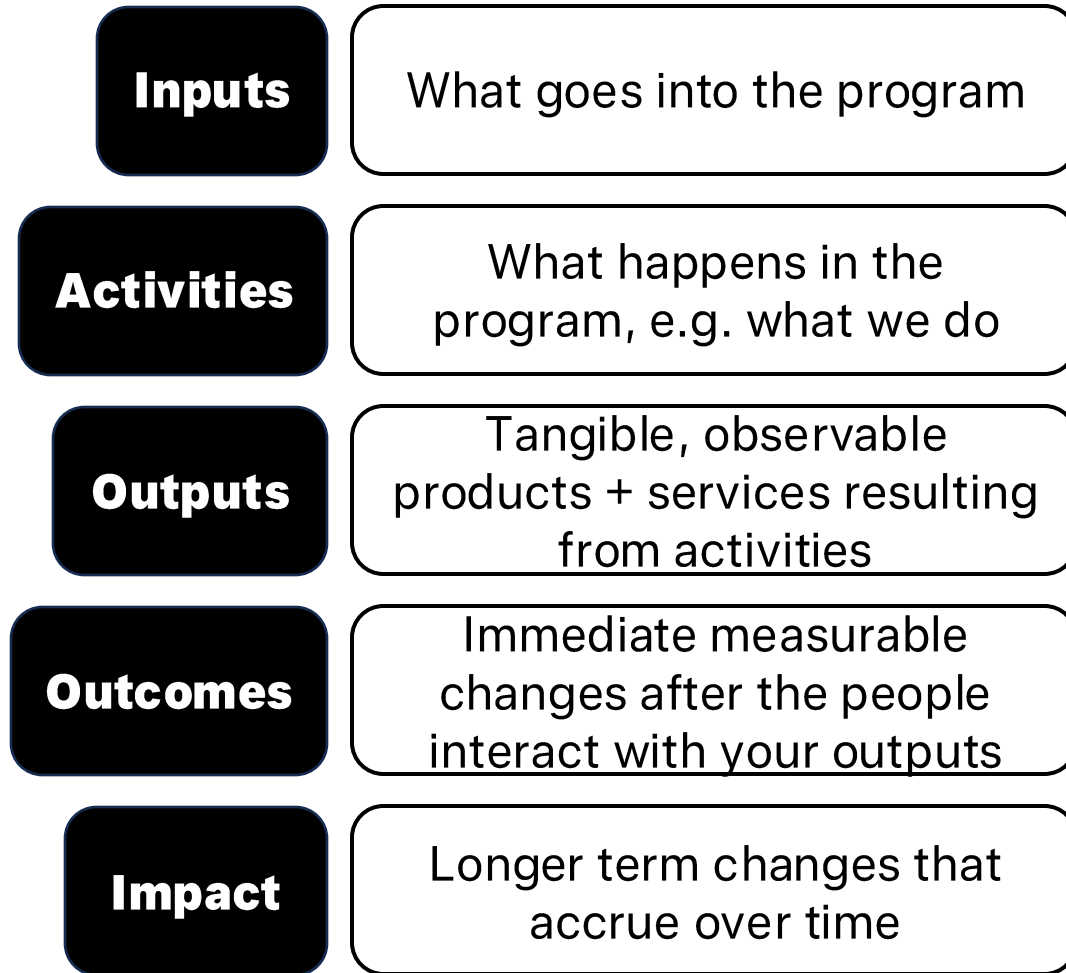
Determine the potential value of reducing e-waste in landfill

Create an impact map > indicators for the monetary value of outcomes > state assumptions of the likelihood of those outcomes > calculate the combined value of all outcomes <sup>1</sup>

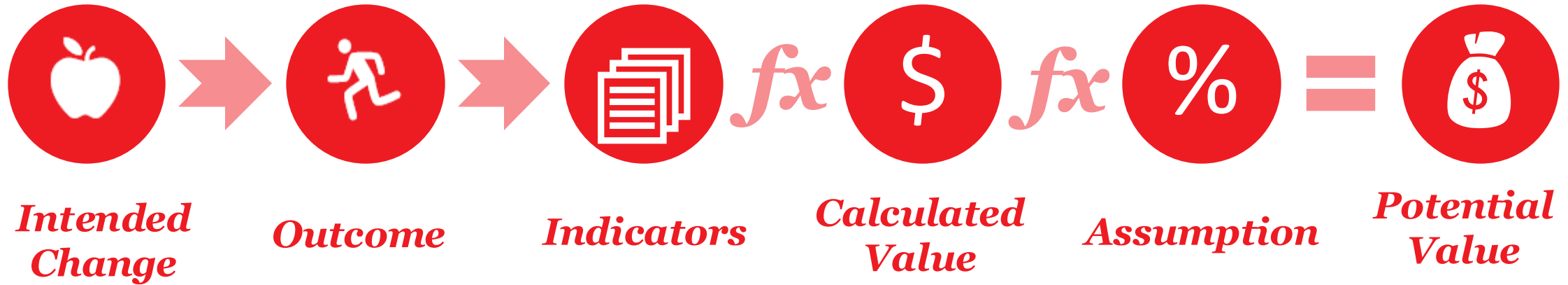
1. Cabinet Office of the Third Sector, 2012



# An Impact Chain



# Value estimation



<b>Increase recovery use of e-waste</b>	Diversion of e-waste from landfill	Tonnes (that go to recycling)	Value of resources recovered	Degree of change because of program	<b>Calculated</b>

<b>Reduce e-waste in landfill</b>	Diversion of e-waste to recycling	Tonnes (that go to landfill)	Costs of landfill disposal	Degree of change because of program	<b>Calculated</b>

# Value estimation

Intended Change	Outcome	Indicators	Calculated Value	Assumption	Calculation	Potential Value
Increase recovery of e-waste	Diversion of e-waste from landfill	<p><sup>1</sup>In Australia, <b>\$430 million</b> worth of recoverable materials are sent to landfill</p> <p><sup>2</sup>There are <b>27,400,013</b> people living in AUS: (430 M/27.4 M) Total = <b>\$15.70</b> of lost value per person</p>	<p><sup>3</sup>Number of people in program area: <b>407,859</b></p> <p><b>407,859</b> * <b>\$15.70</b> is <b>\$6,403,386</b> per year in lost recovery value</p>	<p><sup>4</sup>Program improves recovery by <b>10%</b></p>	<p>Yearly costs of: <b>\$6,403,386</b> by improvement of <b>10%</b></p>	<b>\$640,338</b>

# Showing the value of work you do

# The Value of Social Impacts: SROI

## SROI (Social Return on Investment)

- A calculation, but also a process of understanding
- Requires judgement and decisions based on best available evidence
- Principles are used to guide judgements:
  - Involve the right people
  - Understand what changes
  - Value the things that matter
  - Only include what is material (give a true and fair picture)
  - Do not over-claim, be transparent, verify with others (openly show the logic)

# The Value of Social Impacts: SROI

## SROI (Social Return on Investment)

- Measures change in terms of:
  - What is 'experienced' compared to what is 'contributed'
  - A ratio of benefits to costs (ROI)
  - E.g. A ratio of 3:1 means investment of \$1 delivers \$3 of social value

**SROI is about value** rather than money

- Money is a common unit – and widely accepted way of conveying value
- Other considerations: Deadweight, Displacement, Attribution, Drop-off

# Connect

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