

Tumbelin Farm

An Innovative Live-In Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation
Program for Young South Australians



Preliminary Outcomes Report
October 2021



Tumbelin Farm

A Place to 'Awaken and Live'

Baptist Care SA is currently piloting the innovative Tumbelin Farm program – a voluntary, trauma-informed, holistic, live-in AOD rehabilitation program which provides up to 12-months support for young people aged 16–21.

'Tumbelin' is a Ngarrindjeri word which means 'awaken and live' – a word which perfectly captures the nature of the journey that a Tumbelin Farm client undertakes.

The Tumbelin Farm program is based upon a restorative practice approach and provides a unique opportunity for young people to step away from their situation and begin a journey of change in a safe and supportive community setting. The group training and activity program is delivered in a relaxed, rural setting where participants can reconnect with nature and focus on re-building and establishing relationships built on trust, fostering self-confidence and resilience.

The Tumbelin Farm pilot has been funded through the Australian Government Department of Health 'Support for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse SA – AOD Treatment' grant program in 2019. Tumbelin Farm has been established on a beautiful 80 acre rural property in the Mount Lofty Ranges, 45 minutes' drive from Adelaide, with a \$1.3m co-investment from Baptist Care SA.

The funding contract concludes on 30 June 2022, and Baptist Care SA is currently seeking ongoing support to continue this valuable program.

Preliminary analysis of outcome data coupled with stories of positive change, indicate that Tumbelin Farm's approach to delivering drug and alcohol treatment is producing strong outcomes for young people and their families. Baptist Care SA is pleased to share these early results with stakeholders.



Tumbelin Farm Program Model

Tumbelin Farm is the first therapeutic rehabilitation farm for young people in South Australia, however successful models have been operating internationally for many years including *Gould Farm and Hopewell (USA)*, *Slí Eile (Ireland)* and *Urtica de Vijfsprong (Netherlands)*. Participating in the life and industry of a working farm delivers tangible results by teaching new skills, building self-esteem and fostering supportive relationships between people. Therapeutic farms in the United States and Europe have found that these solutions provide a formula for long-lasting change, sustainable mental health outcomes and increased levels of independence and quality of life¹.

Tumbelin Farm clients go through a 4-stage journey over a period of up to 12 months.

Fig 1. Tumbelin Farm – Stages of the Client Journey



As a working farm, Tumbelin Farm is an immersive, social and experiential learning program which is built around four distinct but integrated 'Lives':

HOME LIFE	A fundamental approach of Tumbelin Farm is to afford young people an opportunity to temporarily step out of their day-to-day environment - one that may well be surrounded by anti-social elements that encourage or enable AOD use - to stay in the warm, welcoming, therapeutic, and supportive environment at the Farm in the care of House Parents.
FARM LIFE	Opportunities to engage in hands-on tasks that require hard work and resilience, to achieve long-term reward for effort which is unlikely to be seen or experienced in the short-term. Draw on the metaphor of "planting seeds for the future" consistent with the notion that journeys of recovery occur over months and years, not days and weeks.
ADVENTURE LIFE	Adventure therapy provides opportunities for developing resilience, positive risk-taking, improved self-esteem, problem-solving abilities, constructive coping strategies, and a sense of competence and achievement through experiential learning activities in outdoor settings.
LEARNING LIFE	Opportunities through group and 1:1 settings to engage in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Management to develop Relapse Prevention skills & strategies • Counselling to unpack trauma behind AOD use, and Community of Support (CoS) work including conferencing and decision making.

The **Alumni Program** allows clients to continue to stay connected with Tumbelin Farm and creates opportunities for them to 'give back' to clients who are newer to the journey.

¹ L. Heatherington et al, Sustaining Outcomes Research in Residential Treatment: A 15-Year Study Of The Gould Farm Program, Psychological Services 16-4 (2016)

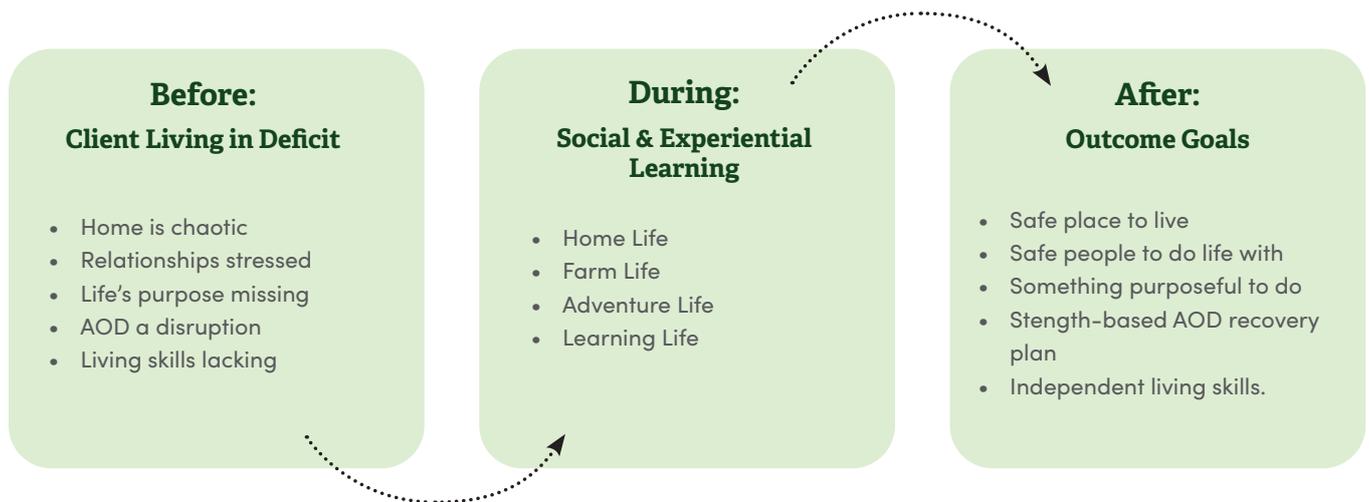
Theory of Change

Tumbelin Farm takes a whole of life approach, recognising that recovery is not a single moment in time and is instead an ongoing process, one that may last a lifetime. Tumbelin Farm supports young people to design and begin their journey to recovery by:

- Providing opportunities to break patterns of AOD use
- Facilitating healthy restorative relationships with workers and other residents
- Building on everyone's strengths and future goals
- Developing capacity for young people to take responsibility for their welfare and actions
- Providing visceral experiences of change through active participation in Home Life, Farm Life, Adventure Life, and Learning Life.

The Tumbelin Farm theory of change proposes that young people are more likely to sustain positive change in relation to their AOD use if they leave the Farm equipped with the five 'tools in their toolbox' outlined in the model below.

Fig 2. Tumbelin Farm Theory of Change



About the Team

Tumbelin Farm is delivered by an experienced and skilled transdisciplinary team comprised of a Counsellor, Case Manager, Adventure Therapy Practitioners, and a Farm Supervisor. Collectively they hold qualifications in Integrative Psychotherapy, AOD counselling, Youth Work, Trauma and Grief and Loss Counselling, and Outdoor Recreation.

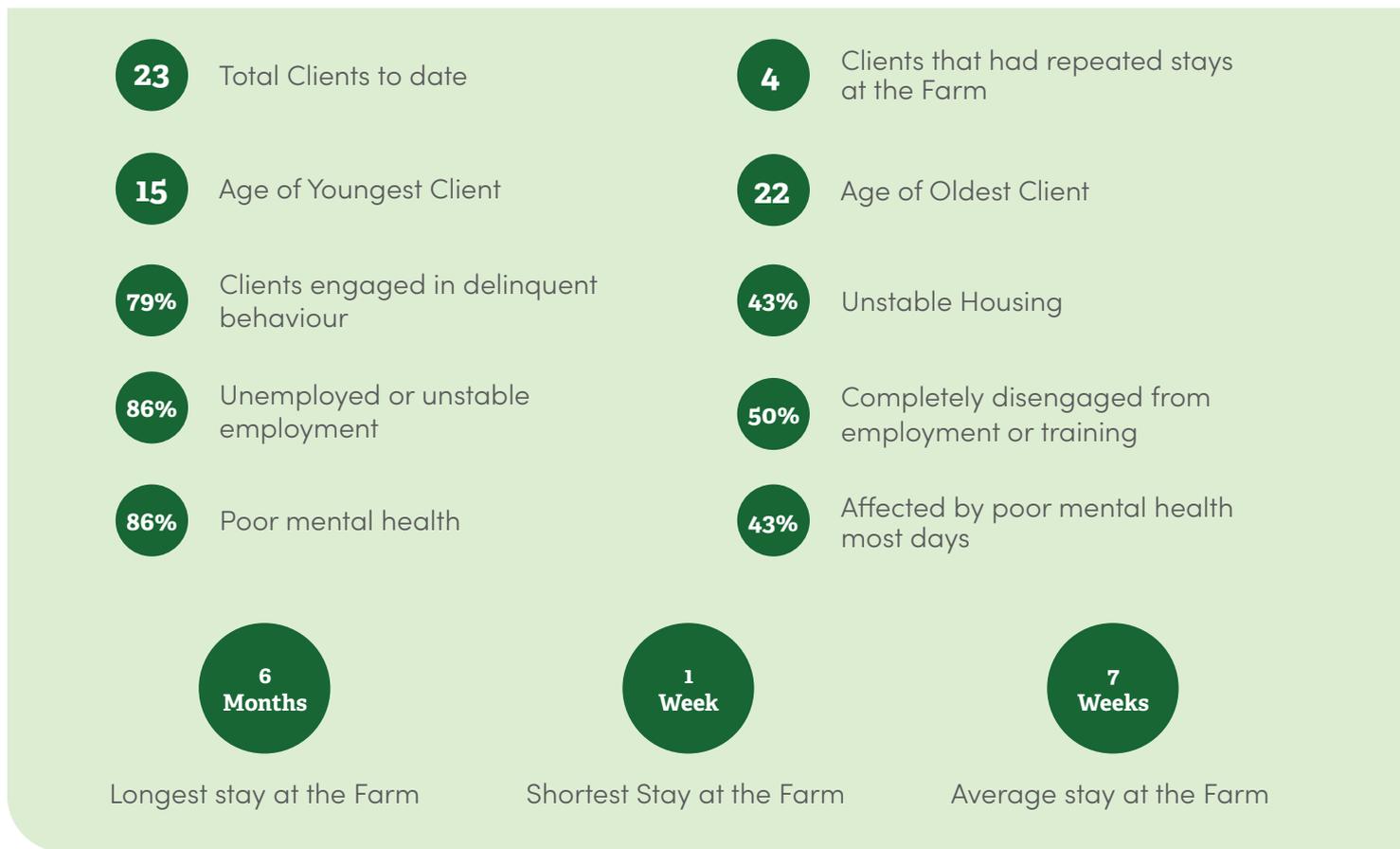
All Tumbelin Farm staff hold DHS Working with Children Checks, Apply First Aid or Wilderness First Aid, and are trained in creating Safe Environments for Children and Young People.

Outcomes Snapshot

Tumbelin Farm has now been in full operation for 18 months since welcoming the first residential client in February 2020. Program evaluation on the pilot program will be completed at the conclusion of the pilot program. This Preliminary Outcomes Report has been developed to provide insight into the client outcomes and program learnings so far.

Most young people accessing the Tumbelin Farm program report significant improvement and reduction in their drug and alcohol misuse, but the positive outcomes are much broader than that.

The Story So Far



Main Substances of Concern:



The Impact of COVID-19

It is difficult to quantify the impact of COVID-19. The Tumbelin Farm property was purchased and established in late 2019, opening its doors to the first client in February 2020. The first COVID lockdowns began in March 2020.

Tumbelin Farm has been able to operate throughout COVID, however it is relevant to note that overall client numbers for Tumbelin Farm have been lower than anticipated over the first 18 months of operations.

While Tumbelin Farm has no historical benchmark data with which to compare, anecdotally other residential rehabilitation programs across Australia have also experienced a drop in client numbers over the same period.

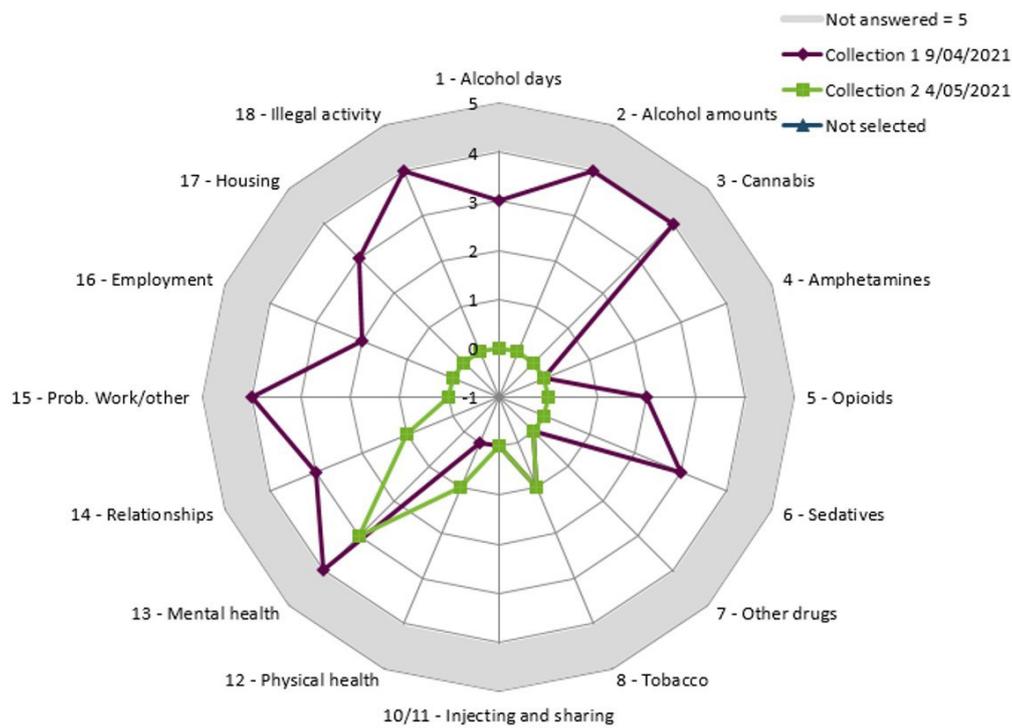
Nevertheless, while total client numbers have been slightly lower than expected, outcomes for clients have been very promising.

Alcohol and Drug Outcome Measure (ADOM)

Tumbelin Farm uses the Alcohol and Drug Outcome Measure (ADOM) as a primary outcome measurement tool. ADOM was developed in NZ and measures alcohol and drug use (frequency and amount) as well as the impact of misuse on other life domains such as housing, education/employment, relationships and physical and mental health.

The diagram below contains the pre- and post-treatment outcomes for a Tumbelin Farm client (with '4' being daily use/impact, and 0 being 'not at all'). This client was a resident at Tumbelin Farm for 4 weeks, and while the feedback wheel below does not necessarily represent a typical outcome it illustrates how an intensive, immersive intervention like Tumbelin Farm can result in improvements across multiple life domains.

Fig. 3 ADOM Feedback Wheel



14 out of 23 clients completed both a pre-treatment and post treatment ADOM and are included in the outcomes summary on the following page.

There are several reasons why a client would not have concluded a pre-treatment or post-treatment ADOM, including that their treatment is still ongoing, the client did not complete the program, and/or client refusal. Our data gathering methodology has also improved throughout the course of the pilot program.

Client Progress against goals:

71%

Respondents reported that they made progress in their AOD recovery

43%

Respondents made a significant improvement in their AOD recovery (a 5-point change or greater on a 10-point scale)

79%

Respondents reported they were '**Considerably Satisfied**' or '**Extremely Satisfied**' in the progress they achieved towards their recovery goals after completing Tumbelin Farm

Reduction in AOD Use:

93%

Respondents reported a reduction in use of their principal substance of concern

100%*

Respondents who completed the 3-month follow up (n= 6) had maintained some or all improvement

50%*

Respondents who completed the 3-month follow up (n= 6) had maintained a drug and alcohol free lifestyle since leaving the Farm.

* Self-selection bias is likely to be a factor in the lower response rate at the 3 month follow up and the relatively high results of those that did respond.

Improvements in Health & Wellbeing

79%

Respondents reported improved **mental health**

71%

Respondents reported that their **relationships** had improved

64%

Respondents reported that their **employment situation** had improved

79%

Respondents reported that AOD use was causing **less problems** in their life

100%

Of the respondents who reported that **housing** was a problem at commencement of the program (n=7) were able to secure and maintain stable accommodation.

94%

Of the respondents who were engaged in **illegal behaviour** at commencement (n=11) ceased or considerably reduced their illegal behaviour.

Note: A full program evaluation is scheduled for completion in June 2022.

Tumbelin Farm

Case Study 1 - Cody's Story

Cody was 19 years old when he arrived at Tumbelin Farm, approximately 12 months after he was first diagnosed with anxiety and depression. In March 2020 he'd taken leave from work for mental health reasons and then, with the outbreak of COVID-19, his apprenticeship was put on hold when employment opportunities dried up.

Soon after this, Cody's behaviour started to become erratic and he spoke of voices in his head. He became socially and emotionally withdrawn from family and friends, and quickly spiralled into self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Cody overdosed on his own anti-depressant medication in May 2020. This was the first of 6 visits to a hospital Emergency Department from drug overdose over the next 4 months². In this period Cody was arrested twice and placed on bail³, issued with an Inpatient Treatment Order, completed four short-term stays in two different hospital mental health support units, and attended a sobering up unit once.

With his family exhausted and options seemingly limited they discovered Tumbelin Farm. Cody subsequently checked in to the DASSA Withdrawal Unit and was discharged directly to Tumbelin Farm a few days later.

Cody was highly engaged with the adventure therapy and Farm Life program components of Tumbelin Farm.

His motivation for change was strong, and he was able to maintain regular contact with his mum and Grandma, who were his greatest supports. 8 weeks later, and after several family group conferences, Cody transitioned back home in November 2020 physically stronger and healthier and committed to working on his mental health.

Several weeks after returning home Cody disclosed to his Mum that he'd been abused by a family member when he was young. This triggered another downward spiral. He began to have trouble sleeping. He lost his appetite and feelings of depression returned. Days later he self-medicated and threatened suicide, which resulted in another trip to Emergency and admission to an acute mental health ward.

Cody decided to return to Tumbelin Farm at the end of January 2021 and set about working through his underlying trauma. After another 13 weeks, with the support from the multi-disciplinary staff at Tumbelin Farm and another series of family conferences, Cody left Tumbelin Farm once again to live with his cousins.

Two years after his initial diagnosis Cody is now living independently, his legal matters have been resolved, he is working full time, is medication-free and connected to support services. Cody has strategies in place to help him sustain his recovery journey and continues to rebuild his relationships with his family and friends.

According to Cody's Mum, Cody is:

"Inspiring to watch. (He) has grown into an independent, driven young man with a growth mindset. He has been empowered to take responsibility for his actions and has developed a better understanding of the impacts of his choices and behaviours on others.

I believe (Tumbelin Farm) has been instrumental in supporting Cody on his road to recovery. I dread to think where the path he was on twelve months ago would have led him without the intervention he received."

² Each acute care hospital admission is estimated to cost \$17,720 – AIHW 2013

³ The direct financial cost of a young person in detention in SA is estimated at \$1200 per day – Australian Children's Commissioner, April 2016

Case Study 2 - Josh's Story

Josh's substance use began when he was 13 years old, not long after the death of a family member. By the time he was 15 years old Josh was beginning to deal in drugs.

He was also stealing goods from family members and selling them online under a false identity to support his drug use. On numerous occasions he engaged in extreme risk-taking behaviour which put his life in danger.

As a result of the excessive drug use and underlying mental health issues, aggressive behaviour was impacting everyone in family at both Josh's Dad's house and Mum and Stepdad's house. Josh had been engaging in drug and alcohol counselling but nothing was changing. As a last resort the family arranged for him to stay at a youth accommodation facility operated in conjunction with a family reunification program⁴. Josh felt like he was being kicked out of home, and his drug use risk-taking behaviours continued.

His parents continued to reach out for support and eventually discovered Tumbelin Farm. Josh's withdrawal from cannabis, alcohol and opioids was limited to a two-day stay at an acute mental health hospital ward.

Josh doesn't remember arriving at Tumbelin Farm owing to heavy sedation at the time. His first week was extremely difficult, with several violent emotional and physical outbursts and an increasing sense of hopelessness. This led to another two-night stay in hospital following suicidal ideation.

After a medication review Josh returned to Tumbelin Farm and committed to staying for another three weeks. In this time, he began sleeping better, engaged in the adventure therapy program, and learned to cook meals for himself and the other residents.

The Tumbelin Farm Counsellor facilitated the development of a **Community Re-engagement Plan** with Josh through regular communication with his Mum, Stepdad and Dad, which culminated in a family group conference. The negotiated plan, while difficult to formulate, was eventually agreed to, and saw Josh return to live at his Mum's place, with periodic visits to his Dad's.

Josh's recovery journey continues, and his accommodation has stabilised. He is engaging in flexible learning 2-3 days a week, and regularly meets with a psychotherapist to unpack the thoughts and emotions associated with his underlying trauma.

⁴ The average cost of support and/or accommodation in specialist homeless services programs is estimated to be \$15,000 per young person per year. The Cost of Youth Homelessness in Australia Research Briefing, 2016. Swinburne University et al.

Tumbelin Farm Testimonials

A Client Perspective

Lachlan's Story

<https://youtu.be/HF05nA8IPWw>

"Tumbelin Farm saved my life. I'm 98% confident of being clean for good. If you want to sort out your life, I recommend coming here."

Client - Tumbelin Farm

"Tumbelin Farm has to be one of the best residential resources and places for growth and development and healing I have seen in 32 years of working in Child Welfare."

"It has a combination of natural resources and environment with a beautiful building, that is an ideal place for sanctuary, recovery and healing. In addition you have a group of highly motivated staff who are adaptable and client centred. In the context of what can only be described as a crisis, in terms of lack of placements and resources for vulnerable young people, (with external placements costing the government extraordinary rates to put children into motels and institutions), surely this is a precious resource for the young people of South Australia."

Paul Nixon - Former Chief Social Worker of New Zealand

"Tumbelin Farm is perfectly placed to be one of the interventions of first resort."

"Transforming the life of a young person with alcohol and other drug issues results in lifelong benefits for that person, their family and community, their future partner(s) and children and their employment and education. It can terminate their engagement with the justice system and reduce the health and social burden on the community. It is not necessarily an easy job."

"It takes time, commitment, the creation of long-term stable supportive and therapeutic relationships. It takes an understanding of alcohol and drug use, trauma, family and wider social dynamics. It takes a team of committed workers, who are there for the long haul, and that means they need stable funding and employment. Treatment and support at Tumbelin Farm costs about \$50,000 per child. Detention in Kalarna Tapa cost about \$350,00 per year."

Michael White - CEO SANDAS

The Future of Tumbelin Farm

Baptist Care SA is contracted to deliver the Tumbelin Farm pilot program until 30 June 2022.

Baptist Care SA has co-invested by purchasing the 80-acre property on which Tumbelin Farm operates, with a view to delivering AOD treatment services for young people well into the future. It is our hope and vision that Tumbelin Farm becomes a valuable resource to young South Australians for decades to come, sustained through a mixed funding stream including government funding, philanthropy, fundraising, and social enterprise.

Tumbelin Farm is currently a 4-bed facility, with the capacity to support approximately 20 clients per year.

Baptist Care SA has developed options to expand the capacity of Tumbelin Farm as client demand increases.



Baptist Care SA invites commitments from the Federal Government, State Government and other stakeholders to enable Tumbelin Farm to continue providing this critical service to vulnerable young people in South Australia.

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Tumbelin Farm



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