

We Need to Talk About Impact...

Impact Investment Provocations Series

Impact investment refers to investments made to intentionally generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside financial return (see theGIIN.org).

In Australia the field has been growing slowly over the past three decades, and is now the subject of a Federal Government Taskforce (Social Impact Investing Taskforce - [terms of reference](#)), which has recently released an interim report. As highlighted in this report, impact investment could contribute to harnessing much needed capital to counter poor outcomes and foster transformative opportunities in disparate fields and places.

However, in order to realise this potential we believe that this field needs

to be expanded, deepened and evolved to deliver transformational impacts for people and places rather than becoming an extension of prevailing financial paradigms and practices.

To date, we contend that in Australia, the focus has been too much on a transactional approach to impact investment (See figure one). In this series of posts we present some provocations which we hope will promote dialogue and contribute to new thinking about the potential for transformational impact investment in Australia, New Zealand and in the wider Asia Pacific region.

Our core purpose in this series is ask some of the hard questions and thereby interrogate how we can reshape impact

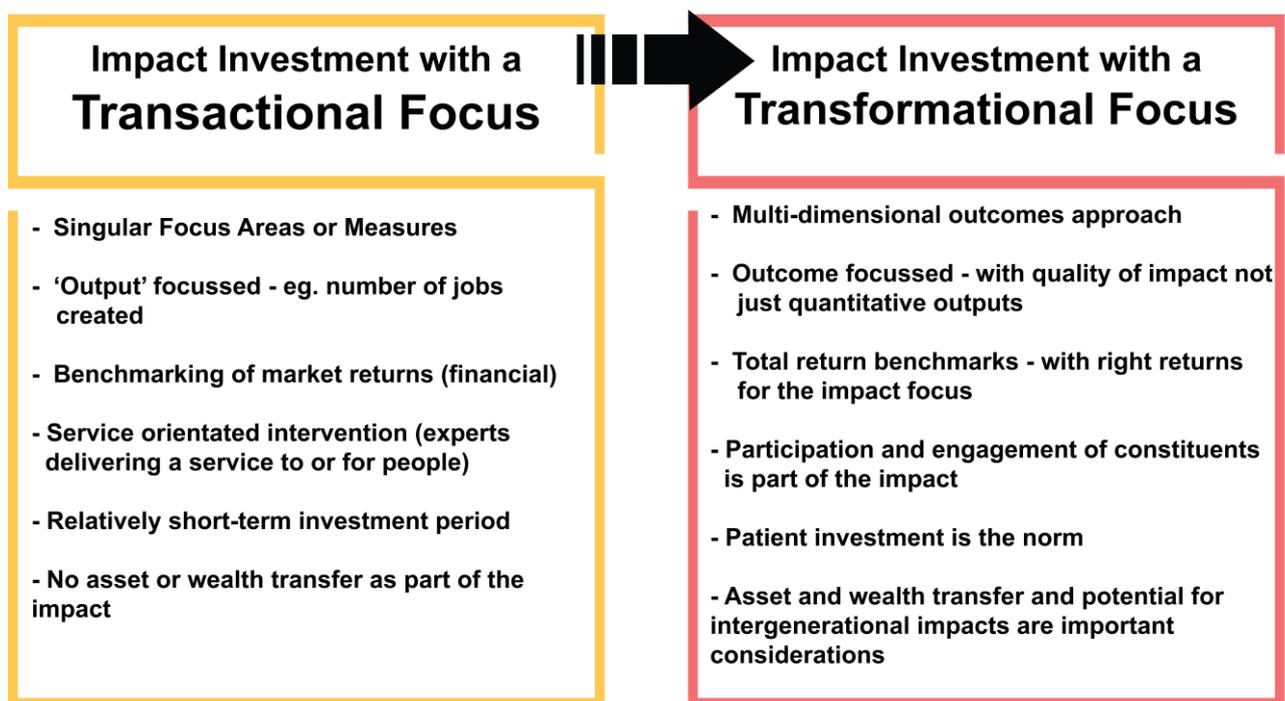


Figure 1: Moving from a transactional focus to a transformational focus in impact investment

investment to ensure that we are actually transforming outcomes for people, places and the planet.

Over the course of seven blog posts, we will traverse some of the core opportunities for impact investment:

1. **Impact Investment needs to stretch horizontally and vertically.** The first post focuses on the emerging field of equity crowdfunding, and the role this could play in provoking dialogue across impact investment about ownership and transfer of wealth
2. **Sleeping giants: Generating Impact in Place through Anchor Investment.** This post moves us from a grass-roots focus to structural approach to transformation in impact investment. We explore how anchor collaboratives could provoke a deeper and much more engaged future for place-based impact investment.
3. **The Missing Middle is Still Missing.** In this post we challenge the focus of impact investment to ask if this form of capital is right for the sorts of impact areas that require finance and new forms of capital.
4. **Depth takes more patience than scale.** In this post we evoke a conversation about the time transformation takes, and propose a space for patient capital, intergenerational impacts and a different conversation about investment exits.
5. **Blending more than investment and impact.** There are a plethora of opportunities for blending mechanisms, capital forms, investment returns and sectoral contributions that could contribute to a more transformative agenda for impact investment. In this post we explore some potential opportunities for significant impacts.
6. **Safeguarding Purpose will require continuous innovation.** Perhaps the biggest threat to transformative agendas in impact investment is the assimilation of purpose as an 'add-on' to mainstream investment agendas (add impact and stir). This post examines what we could do to facilitate a new paradigm for impact finance and safeguard purpose over time.
7. **Scaling ambition to achieve our mission.** In this finale post we look at scale from another perspective and ask what the 'impact' moon shot is for the next generation of impact investors and what it would take to achieve such a mission (not just finance it!).

Authors



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Ingrid is a social designer, designing processes, products and knowledge that deepen social impact and facilitate social innovation. She has contributed to the design of policy and processes in a diversity of fields, including community development, local economic development, disability, procurement and social investment.



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The Yunus Centre equips people with the know-how to navigate change and create positive, societal impact. We are interested in how a progressive, regenerative and inclusive future can be achieved through new models of innovation, entrepreneurship, and enterprise.

Specifically we're focused on navigating impact-led innovation, developing impact literacy, growing the impact economy and fostering impact entrepreneurship.

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