

FRRR Community Report 2006 - 2007



FRRR Office in Dudley House,
Bendigo, Victoria.

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FRRR Board May 2007

Introduction

How it started

When Sidney Myer arrived in Australia as a penniless Russian immigrant in 1889, he began an enterprise in country Victoria that would flourish and become a leading national retailer.

His marriage to Merlyn Baillieu was to become the foundation for a dynasty that etched its name firmly in Australia's history, not only as successful retailers but as the nation's earliest and most enduring philanthropists. Well before philanthropy became the catchcry for socially aware business, the Myer family made it part of its livelihood.

To celebrate Sidney Myer's life and to recognise the centenary marking his arrival in this country, the descendants of Sidney and Merlyn Myer initiated a major giving program to the Australian community in 1999.

Among their gifts was \$1 million to establish a national foundation for rural communities.

After an international search for ideas and a Regional Australia Summit convened in 1999 by the then Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson, (a farmer from Mullahey in NSW), the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) was born. In short, regional Australia, reeling from tough times thanks to drought and the impact of globalisation, wanted to show it could help itself. The Federal Government kicked in \$10.7 million in 1999/2000 and a further \$3.8million from 2000/2001 to 2008/2009.

Setting up

FRRR began in 2000, setting up its permanent headquarters, appropriately in the home of Sidney Myer's first store – in the regional Victorian city of Bendigo. There it continues to operate from historic Dudley House and to follow the principles and ideals first set down by the Regional Australia Summit.

To date, FRRR has allocated \$12.3 million and has leveraged millions to help communities renew themselves

How it works

FRRR works by attracting support (cash and in kind) from businesses and other trusts, foundations, private individuals and communities. These donations are then distributed through a number of programs as grants for the benefit of rural and regional Australia.

Communities and projects wanting support send in written applications. These are then assessed. The FRRR board then approves projects, according to available resources and FRRR staff distribute grants accordingly. At the completion of each project, recipients are required to provide a project report.

Following are the programs through which grants were distributed during 2006 and 2007.

AFL Foundation Kick Starts: This program provided small rural communities with grants of up to \$10,000 for projects that addressed the broader community.

Annual Grants: Grants from this program support health, social, economic, cultural, environment and education projects

ANZ Seeds of Renewal: This program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to rural communities

Australia Post Victoria and Tasmania: This program offered grants of up to \$1,000 for youth, education (especially literacy), arts and culture projects in rural and regional Victoria and Tasmania.

Back to School: This program delivers vouchers mainly through Community Foundations to help families help meet school costs such as uniforms, books, shoes, etc.

Caring for Ageing in Rural Australia: This program provides grants of up to \$10,000 for community projects that address ageing and aged care issues in rural Australia

Community Enterprise Foundation Cyclone Larry Get Involved in Community: This program funded small rural communities affected by Cyclone Larry.



Left - Right: Samantha Baillieu, Andrew Long, Tim Fairfax AM, Margaret Smith AO, Michael Taylor AO, Wendy Craik AM, Ian Allen OAM, Ian Sinclair AC, Sylvia Admans. Absent: Mark Bethwaite and Bill Kelly.

Community Foundations: FRRR supports Community Foundations in which locals invest money in their own foundations and then use these investments to leverage funds from elsewhere.

Dairy Farmers Creating Greener Pastures: This small grants program provided dairy communities in Victoria, NSW, Queensland and South Australia with grants of up to \$5,000 for community projects.

Donation Account Program: FRRR receives tax deductible donations on behalf of eligible organisations, projects and regions.

Gardiner Foundation Partnership: This program provides small grants to Victorian dairying communities for community projects, and also provides education support in the form of \$50 gift vouchers to families experiencing difficulty in returning their children to school due to drought.

McEwen Foundation: This program provides grants of up to \$15,000 for charitable projects within the Goulburn Valley District with Deductible Gift Recipient Status (DGR)

Pratt Water Projects: These projects seek to address community responses to water management and salinity.

Rural Education Program: Led by private donors, this program funds education projects, particularly in drought affected areas.

Small Grants for Small Rural Communities: This program supported by many partners provides grants of up to \$5,000 for small rural communities.

A message from the Chairman

The Rt Hon Ian Sinclair AC

Since FRRR's last community report, profound social and economic pressure and resultant personal stress have affected many families and communities across rural and regional Australia. Drought and the rising impact of climate change really hit home. Towns have run out of water. City storages are nearly dry. Rice, cotton, grape, grain and horticultural crops have been savaged. Livestock operators – dairy, beef and sheep – have severely culled numbers and most irrigators have had zero water allocation.

Reduced incomes have hit rural families, schools, services and businesses, large and small. As a result, FRRR has concentrated on helping people and communities survive and recover. The focus has been to strengthen community ties, educate all ages, rebuild facilities, shore up water supplies, create jobs and establish strategies for the future with funds allocated mainly through our Small Grants Program.

Partners are vital to FRRR. Our mission is 'to champion the economic and social strength of Australia's rural, regional and remote communities through partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy and government'. FRRR's partners in the Rural Education Program (REP) have been excellent examples. The REP, a philanthropic group operating within FRRR, comprises a small band of active donors keen to boost educational equality across rural and regional Australia. REP's founding donors Baillieu and Sarah Myer, John and Janet Calvert-Jones and Tim and Gina Fairfax continue to be wonderful supporters. They have been joined by the Pratt Foundation, Ian and Fiona McLachlan, Hugh MacLachlan, Robert Maple Brown, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Neilma Gantner, Carillo Gantner, Mark Bethwaite and John and Julia Anderson.

The Rural and Remote Education Forum in Albury in April 2007, hosted by FRRR and the Federal Department of Education, Science and Training, was primarily REP's initiative. The forum brought together parents, teachers, educators, bureaucrats and academics from across Australia to address the education challenges aggravated by drought for those outside capital cities. A national education organisation to represent all interests across rural and remote Australia and proposals to assist parents, teachers, and students are among the forum's recommendations.

Since FRRR's establishment in 1999, more and more partners have joined us in our mission. The Federal Government through the Department of Transport and Regional Services, The Pratt Foundation, ANZ, Perpetual Trustees, The RE Ross Trust, The Myer Foundation, The William Buckland Foundation, The Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation, The Gardiner Foundation, The Wicking Trust, The AFL Foundation, The Ian Potter Foundation, Becher Foundation, The Sarah and Baillieu Myer Family Foundation, Bennelong Foundation, McEwen Foundation, Australia Post, Australian Co-operative Foods (Dairy Farmers), Bendigo Bank and Freehills are all tremendous and generous supporters. I thank each of them.

Patrons Baillieu Myer AC, Lady Marigold Southey and former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson remain dedicated patrons and, along with my fellow FRRR board members, are all great champions for rural and regional Australia.

Each Patron and Director contributes significantly to the effectiveness of FRRR as volunteers and I extend my special thanks for their continuing efforts.

Our excellent staff, led by our outstanding CEO Sylvia Admans, have continued to work competently and efficiently and I thank Sylvia, our FRRR secretary Andrew Long and each of our office staff for their significant efforts.

This report includes a snapshot of FRRR's philanthropy and demonstrates that FRRR is making a significant and heartfelt difference, vital for our nation's future.

Rt Hon Ian Sinclair AC

For businesses, organisations and individuals who wish to support rural and regional Australia and FRRR's programs, tax deductible donations can be made directly to the foundation. These can be made via credit card or cheques.



CEO's Message

Sylvia Admans



In seven years, FRRR has come a long way. These years have seen us gaining greater traction than ever among those we serve - contributing donors and partners and grant recipients – as we continue to work towards our aim to assist giving into rural and regional Australia. Signs of this are manifold. Donation offers are growing: more groups, companies and individuals are coming to us and asking how they can give to rural Australia. On the receiving end, more country communities are learning about us and how we work. They're learning how we distribute funds through different programs and how to apply for those funds. This report showcases current partnerships and programs.

Another sign of our effectiveness is that our long-term partners, including The Pratt Foundation, the ANZ and ANZ Trustees, to name a few, are more enthusiastic than ever to work with us. Indeed, FRRR was privileged with ANZ to win the Prime Minister's Community Partnership Award for Strategic Impact on the Community in 2006. Many of these organisations such as ANZ have been with us since we began in 2000. They recognise our expertise in giving grants into country areas.

The power of working in partnership was exemplified this year through our work with the Rural Education Program, a fund originally established by six partners specifically to provide education opportunities for country children. It has the support of many more donors now and has funded hundreds of projects throughout Australia. However this year the partners used their considerable influence and worked with FRRR to organise a national two-day forum to address rural Australia's growing education crisis. The forum brought together education academics, bureaucrats, principals, teachers and parents from across the nation to focus on how to improve the education opportunities for country kids. Bringing such a diverse group of interested parties to the table, including key people from the Department for Education, Science and Training, was a real achievement.

The Australian Government this year made significant changes which have enhanced FRRR's capacity to give into rural and regional Australia. These changes mean that groups, companies and people making donations to FRRR can specify the geographical region they wish to support. (Tax deductible contributions must continue to be given freely without directing to

particular projects.) The concept of community foundations - where regions establish foundations, invest resources and distribute earnings while seeking additional support from philanthropic organisations like ours - has really come of age. There are now 29 community foundations across Australia and we work closely with them. Another key relationship formed this year is with the newly established Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise™ Foundation. FRRR will work to help their giving into rural and regional Australia.

We work hard to build trust and awareness in country areas. To do that, staff this year travelled far and wide from Yetman in NSW to Williams in Western Australia to St Helens in Tasmania. Even though we are a national organisation, we like to engage directly with communities to learn about their needs and priorities. It's this that singles FRRR out as the key philanthropic organisation for giving into country Australia.

Our staff - grants manager Audrey Elston, office manager Esmae Barnes, executive assistant Glenda Elliott and administrative assistant Amanda Winchcomb – remain as dedicated as ever and this year we engaged Jo Mason and Cheryl Hardie for short-term projects as well. They were an invaluable addition. This year we have also worked intensively with Rural Education Program research officer Helen Morris and I thank her for her contributions.



FRRR Staff, Left - Right:
Amanda Winchcomb, Esmae Barnes,
Sylvia Admans, Audrey Elston, Glenda Elliott

I'd like to thank all of the above, the FRRR board and chairman Ian Sinclair for their support and extraordinary leadership in ensuring rural and regional Australia remains a key part of this nation's future through philanthropy.

Sylvia Admans

About this Report

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report includes stories about some of the projects FRRR and its philanthropic partners supported in 2006-2007. The stories identify those characteristics that clinched FRRR's support. It's hoped this will help future funding applicants understand what makes a project ripe for FRRR's support.

FRRR has 13 main aims. They are to:

- Help rural communities build their own capacity to develop by encouraging leadership training, mentoring, networking and partnerships
- Recognise and enhance the role of women in rural community building, farm management and business development.
- Develop innovative and economically and socially sustainable business ventures, especially those that use advanced information technology
- Enhance community wellbeing by improving rural communities' ability to plan and manage
- Support people to get training and education to improve their job prospects, especially in new or expanded business
- Support environmental projects that add value to existing products, use best practice in natural resource management and sustainable development while creating jobs
- Support Indigenous Australians to realise their economic and social aspirations
- Recognise and help volunteers build rural communities
- Support young people to remain in secondary and tertiary education, to enhance their leaderships skills and to reduce youth unemployment

- Establish regional community foundations
- Support cultural projects that boost a sense of belonging and create jobs
- Encourage economic and social research projects that add to the body of knowledge available to rural and regional communities to enable them to plan their futures more effectively
- Encourage health or community services projects which address key issues in rural areas such as suicide, depression, preventive health, or which seek to improve access to services through the development of new networks of links which extend current services



FRRR Annual Grants Program

“FRRR’s Annual Grants Program provides grants, ranging from a few thousand dollars to \$100,000s, for a broad range of community projects. By strategically investing in important community initiatives FRRR helps create community renewal.”

Sylvia Admans, CEO, FRRR



Bringing Movies to Small Communities (Victoria/NSW)

Shepparton Fruit Growers - \$2,500

The kids came in their pyjamas and brought along beanbags when four rural communities hosted their own screenings of Charlotte’s Web, Happy Feet and Night at the Museum in March and April this year. About 300 people turned out to the small southern NSW town of Bunnaloo in the heart of grazing country for the ‘drive-in’ screening on the town’s footy oval. Drought had seared the land over summer and incomes had been savaged.

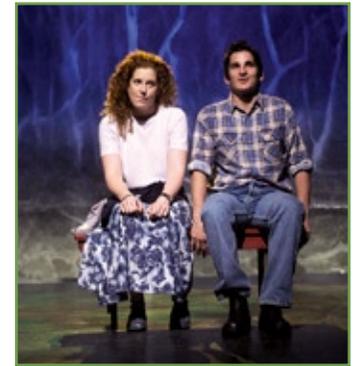
“We are acutely aware that in difficult times it’s imperative that people maintain social connectedness,” says Centrelink social worker Carmel Shellie who, with help from committees in Bunnaloo, Lancaster, Cohuna and Waaia, FRRR, the Victorian and local governments, small businesses and the Gardiner Foundation, co-ordinated the screenings to bring communities together. Barbecues were held at the screenings and drought support workers mingled to let people know about financial and personal aid available to rural families. At Cohuna a working group that co-ordinated the screening agreed to charge \$10 a family for the films. “They wanted to contribute because they are proud of their self-sufficiency,” says Carmel. “Sometimes they view free events as offensive and they’d rather not be seen as victims.”

These communities worked to help themselves through drought by providing occasions for fun and low-key opportunities to promote financial and personal services which are so vital during difficult times.

Taking Bushfire Drama to the Stage (Victoria)

HotHouse Theatre - \$30,000

When disasters such as fire strike, a community rallies, fights the fire and ‘normal’ life resumes. But what’s left behind. Actors in a stage show called Embers which recounted the story of the 2003 bushfires that swept through East Gippsland and the North East of Victoria discovered the impact stays for years when they presented the show at Omeo. Written by Champion Decent from stories told by people of how they survived the fires, the show travelled through 15 communities across north east and eastern Victoria. The idea to represent the fire story on stage came from the Upper Hume Community Health Care Service which knew people were suffering years after. At Omeo, one woman represented in the play approached an actor after the show in tears. “It was the first time she had cried since the fires three years beforehand,” said HotHouse Theatre’s artistic manager Charles Parkinson. “From a health perspective it was better than 1000 counsellors. In my 25 years of working in this business I don’t think I have ever had a night quite like the night at Omeo.” In the hilly and isolated Tallangatta Valley two families who had lived there all their lives, met for the first time at the show.



What a wonderful way to connect communities and help people work through difficult times. This novel project produced great social and mental health results. Bravo!

Outback Training in Mental First Aid (NSW)

Lifeline Central West - \$21,954

Out in central western NSW, stiff upper lips and stoicism reigns, sometimes to the detriment of its people, according to Jennifer Janes. Jennifer manages Lifeline Central West at Bathurst, a service that provides crisis counselling on the telephone and in person as well as community education workshops to improve mental health and how and when people can seek help. She says it's often stock and station agents, vets and rural financial counsellors who walk into crisis on farms so it's these people plus carers, teachers, social workers, Meals on Wheels volunteers, police officers and others who will take part in two-day workshops to identify how to recognise when someone needs help and what to do in a crisis. Lifeline Central West relies on grants and philanthropy for many projects and will use FRRR's contribution to fund these Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) workshops. Eighty people from drought-declared areas will take part in the workshops in Coonabarabran, Mudgee, Parkes and Young this spring and summer. "The training will improve people's ability to recognise mental health disorders, change beliefs about treatment, decrease social distance from people with mental disorders and improve confidence in providing help to others."

Jennifer says the organisation will launch a media campaign to explain how ill-informed attitudes stigmatise those with mental health problems and how these attitudes can actually be as deadly as unaddressed depression. With the region's grain, cotton, grazing and fruit producers struggling to recover after a run of poor seasons Jennifer says Lifeline Central West's Mates Helping Mates campaign will be about encouraging communities to look after their own.

Renewal after a long period of drought takes time and, sometimes, without help it becomes too difficult for some. FRRR likes the way these workshops will equip people with skills to help their neighbours and fellow community members through difficult times.



Taking Budding Teachers to the Bush (NSW)

Charles Sturt University School of Teacher Education - \$30,000

There is plenty of research which suggests those who live in the country have a higher chance of returning there to work following formal education. Wendy Hastings knows this to be true but says many can't afford it. The Sub-Dean of Professional Experience at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst, NSW, co-ordinates teaching rounds in country towns for tertiary student-teachers. Using FRRR's funds, the university provides up to \$500 to help the students cover costs while they're on their rounds. "Most of them live on campus while they're studying," says Wendy. "They have jobs so they miss out on income when they go out (on rounds) and they have to keep themselves fed."

Some students are able to access university or DET scholarships but there are few such scholarships available to the 3500 students in the programs that Wendy co-ordinates. Most of the students are from west of the Great Dividing Range, yet as Wendy says they have little idea of what it's like to live in places like Hill End and Bourke.

"We supported half a dozen students go to Jabiru in the Northern Territory," she says. "One of the students went twice and since graduating he has been appointed to a small school near Broome. We know that students who have experienced life in a rural community are more likely to return to rural schools for employment. Spending four to five weeks out there gives them a good idea of what it's like to live there and most find it's a fantastic experience."

At least forty FRRR scholarships available in 2007 will make significant difference to the students' opportunities as well as the school and communities in which they will undertake their teaching rounds.

FRRR applauds the idea of encouraging 'pre-service' teachers into rural communities because they bring vigour and a sense of renewal to country areas.



"As a major corporate we feel a responsibility and commitment to the communities we live and work in. One of the ways we demonstrate this commitment is by our contributions and we try and give as much autonomy (in this regard) to our local branches as possible. Very often, small towns find it difficult to get project support."

*Rob Goudswaard,
Managing Director, Regional, Rural
and Small Business Banking, ANZ*



Painting a Town's Story (Queensland)

Queensland Rural Women's Network,
Biloela Branch - \$6,000

Sue Churchill was just about to give up after applying for lots of grants to fund a community art project in the central Queensland mining and farming town of Biloela, population 6000. The plan was to create a mural, reflecting the area's black and white cultures and the town's history, on the Biloela water tower. Applications to other organisations fell on deaf ears. And then FRRR came good with the money. "We tried to tell organisations we lobbied for funds that this was more than just a mural we were planning," says Sue, who heads the Biloela branch of the rural women's network. The branch includes a councillor, a medical practice manager, a website designer and farmers. One arts organisation said murals were so 'yesterday' but the women's faith in the idea and FRRR's support was rewarded. "It was originally to be a reconciliation project and we employed two artists, but once we started it we realised it was about bringing all our cultures together to achieve a positive outcome," says Sue. "Each section of the mural represents an era in the region's history and was designed and painted by community volunteers. The images reflect the influence of local Gangalu traditional people, as well as Russians, Albanians, Greeks and Italians who arrived to farm cotton in the 1920s and tell of the unbelievably difficult dangerous and lonely life for women during the early settlement of inland Australia". The project inspired an opening day during which 1000 handprints were placed on the mural, a multicultural festival and two booklets, one of which will be used to teach children in local schools about their local history.

FRRR liked the way this project was driven locally and supported by so many parts of the community. It also provided a unifying focus for different cultures and prompted some wonderful spin-offs.

Raising Awareness of the Dangers of Litter Through Art (South Australia)

Kangaroo Island Community Education - \$5,000

Tonnes of plastic, broken glass, oyster crates, rope, tape and bait basket remnants plus other debris wash on to the shores of Kangaroo Island (population 4000) off South Australia's Fleurieu Peninsula every year. It's so abundant and impossible to ignore that the island school, Kangaroo Island Community Education, embarked on a project to educate students where it comes from and how it affects marine life and the island's ecology. It's a component of their Marine Life and Environmental Studies. The school asked Found Objects sculptor and painter Deb Sleeman to develop an art program which would recycle some of the litter. Using glass found on the shores, the students from the school's Kingscote campus created three large award winning installations which are framed in timber that was also washed up on the shores. The works will be installed in a new school building but there is a greater legacy from this project. Secondary teacher Kenita Williamson developed lessons on the cycle and dangers of dumping litter that could be introduced into schools anywhere. Works have been exhibited on the mainland to raise awareness about litter. Phyll Bartram, a primary school teacher who was raised on Kangaroo Island and now works voluntarily in marine and environmental education, was closely involved with the project. "Now when parents go with their kids to the beach, the kids are always telling them they have to pick up the rubbish," Phyll says. "The kids were notoriously bad at dumping litter in the school yard but they don't as much now that we have really made that connection between their land-based activities and (how they affect) the sea." It's hoped a Powerpoint presentation featuring the Oceans of Glass project will show other schools how to develop similar projects.



This project has taken a problem that affects this small island community and used it to create study units to encourage children's creativity and learning while boosting public awareness way beyond its own shores. It's an outstanding example of a community addressing its own challenges through its students, teachers, parents and wider community members.

Protecting Pioneers' Graves (NSW)

Grenfell Historical Society - \$1,300

Graves may not be the most obvious source for regional renewal, however the very public burial site of the Turland siblings on a main roadside just out of the town of Grenfell, west of Cowra in NSW, and the curiosity they arouse



inspired local historians to undertake a project that resulted in a reunion and renewed interest from far and wide. William Frances Turland was just 15 months old and his sister, Ada, was three weeks old when both died, five months apart in 1863. Their pioneering parents, William and

Hannah Turland, had set out for Forbes when they settled outside of Grenfell to establish an inn at the foot of the Weddin Mountains. The children were buried there but over the years the story of their demise was lost to history, mystery and surmise. They had been shot by bushrangers, some said. They had drowned, others said, or died of diphtheria. Gradually the picket fence around their graves fell to ruin. Nearby families marked the graves with quartz stones and in 1965 two brothers paid for headstones to be erected at the site. Farmer Bruce Robinson, 80, remember passing the graves as a child on outings with his family. "The car always went quiet when we passed by," Bruce says. In the late 1990s, Bruce, then newly retired, and fellow members of the Grenfell Historical Society decided to research the Turlands' story and settle forever the mystery of the children's deaths. With \$1300 from the ANZ Seeds of Renewal program delivered by the FRRR, they re-fenced the graves and erected a permanent sign telling the Turland story. "We badly wanted to do this and felt it should be done but as a historical society we don't make a



lot of money so we were very, very grateful for the funds," Bruce says. In 2000 the society launched a book that included the Turland story and in 2006 invited Turland family descendants to a graves rededication. About 28 descendants were among the 80 people who attended. The graves, with their white picket fence, today remain a traffic stopper that sends people into the Grenfell Museum.

This project tapped into a strong community sense of history and respect for pioneers to draw wider interest from outside the region. It has helped to consolidate the area's heritage.

Renovating a Community Hall Kitchen (NSW)

Delegate School of Arts - \$5,000

Farming is gradually giving over to timber plantations around Delegate in the south of south-eastern NSW's Monaro country, yet the stayers in this old gold and farming town, population 350, including 125 townsfolk, more than ever needed a heart. The town's original School of Arts, which was destroyed by fire in the 1800s, had been replaced but it was time to upgrade the kitchen. The School of Arts committee set about addressing the lack of hot water and rudimentary facilities. A \$23,000 renovation extended an old cloak room which became a kitchen with hot and cold water, new hot plates and oven, fridge and exhaust fan. FRRR's \$5000 grant boosted the tiny community's fundraising efforts to pay for the renovations, former School of Arts committee president Doreen Standen, 60, says the work has paid off. "We have quite a few people hiring the hall now which we never did before. Once upon a time it might be hired out four times a year, whereas now a local mothers' group meets there fortnightly. We've held International Women's Day events there, parenting seminars and community fundraisers. These bookings simply would not have been made without the upgraded kitchen."

A small community was motivated to raise funds to improve a key facility in its town so that locals can meet there. FRRR's grant from the ANZ helped the community to renew itself.

"We believe people are becoming more enamoured to and engaged with ANZ (through our grants). FRRR can identify the projects, it knows the (rural) community better than anyone else and it achieves the results we are looking for. There is high trust in the FRRR."

*Rob Goudswaard,
Managing Director, Rural, Rural
and Small Business Banking, ANZ*

Creating a Place to Cook (Victoria)

Newstead Racecourse and Reserve Committee of Management - \$5,000

Former Victorian Premier Henry Bolte used to sit on the finish line, watching the horses come in at the old Newstead Racecourse, so the story goes around the campfires that often burn in the evenings on the racecourse grounds these days.



Those were the glory years on this land that a former resident bequeathed to this little town on the banks of the Loddon River in central Victoria back in 1890. In the 1970s the course and its surrounding land and few buildings fell into disuse and neglect.



When the government threatened to sell the land, the community jacked up, formed a voluntary committee of management and got to work. Since then they've replumbed and rewired, rebuilt, upgraded and added to create a great campground with toilet, shower and kitchen facilities. It's now a favourite destination for touring motorcyclists' groups including the BSA and MotoGuzzi. A pony club, harness group and other horse enthusiasts use the racecourse and last year Newstead, for the first time, was able to host 5000 cyclists taking part in the Great Victorian Bike Ride at the campgrounds. "We've done about \$80,000 of improvements there and about \$40,000 of that has been volunteer labour," says Mike Bullen, who is part of a mad-keen group of locals who volunteer to realise the community values espoused by the land's original donor. FRRR's funds helped turn an old shed with one tap into a kitchen with facilities to cater for large groups. Mike says the campers spend in town, boosting local businesses.

Renewal is at the heart of this project which FRRR felt met the aims of ANZ's Seeds of Renewal Program very well.

Establishing a Farm Gate Trail (Victoria)

Cobram Barooga Business and Tourism Inc - \$5,000



First there was a promotion and chefs along the Murray River cooked up big feasts using local produce in the towns along the river. In Yarrawonga, regional manager of Moira Tourism Inc Merran Socha contacted lots of farmers to find local produce. The promotion came and went but Merran wasn't prepared to let her new network of producers fade into oblivion so she set about creating a farm gate trail for tourists. She gathered the producers together, shared the idea and then worked out who could be part of the trail. With FRRR's help, The Sun Country on the Murray Farm Gate Trail brochure, featuring 19 businesses, was launched in December 2005. Staff at visitor information centres across the region were taken on a trail tour so they could recommend the trail and the businesses themselves had to lift standards to open their farms to visitors. Farmers now sell oranges, berries, cacti, dairy farm tours, cheese, honey and almonds, buffalo meats, wines, beer, alpaca fibre, other seasonal fruit, roses and lavender direct to tourists.

Says Merran: "Many of these producers had no idea they could be a tourism product and service delivery has improved a lot". Julie Green, who now sells lavender and herbs at her farm gate is building a shop to accommodate visitors to her farm just off the Murray Valley Highway between Cobram and Yarrowonga, thanks to the trail's development. "Four out of every five people who come here visit because they've read the brochure," Julie says. "Then I send them on to the rose farm up the road and they send their visitors on to me."

By banding together and promoting themselves collectively as a farm gate trail, the farmers and food producers in this region have tapped unrealised tourism potential to boost their businesses.

Celebrating a Hall's Opening (Northern Territory)

Groote Eylandt Blue Light Disco - \$4,000



The kids of Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt, 50km off the Australian coast and 630km east of Darwin, turned out in their hundreds for the Blue Light

Disco held to mark the opening of the community's sport and recreation hall. And policeman Benjamin Hamann made sure the disco was suitably loud. With help from the ANZ, Constable Hamann bought extra disco equipment and a trailer to cart it in, especially for the event. Umbakumba is an Aboriginal community on the east coast of Groote Eylandt. Businesses in the island's main town of Alyangala, where minerals are shipped offshore, supported the concept. Blue Light Discos are now run at the end of each school term at the island's schools and the equipment is also used for school formals and plays, community Christmas parties and musicals.



The opportunity this project offered to build relationships and renew the social life in this island community appealed to FRRR.



The Pratt Foundation Partnership

The Pratt Foundation donated \$1million to FRRR for reducing salinity and encouraging more efficient and effective use of water. Building on our experience with the water-related donation, The Pratt Foundation has also donated money to FRRR's Small Grants for Small Rural Communities Program, the Rural Education Program and the Back to School Program. The Pratt Foundation finds FRRR to be an effective and efficient organisation, especially in the submission and grant making process.

*Ian Allen OAM, Trustee,
The Pratt Foundation*

Providing Farmers with Local Weather Alerts (South Australia)

McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Industry Association - \$27,500

Grape grower Derek Cameron has no doubt about the benefits of having a weather monitoring station 2km up the road. Each morning Derek can log on to his computer and check temperatures, rainfall, dew, humidity and evapotranspiration rates, fed in from the nearby station, and decide how to protect the grapes on his 12-hectare vineyard. Should there be 10mm of rainfall in temperatures of 10 degrees and higher over 24 hours, he knows, for example, that Downey Mildew is likely and he can spray to ward off the fungal disease. Without this information, he relies on guesswork and risks unnecessary spraying. Derek estimates the detailed info, supplied by the nine weather stations across the 13sqkm district, could save him up to three sprays a year. "For a grower like me, that's worth about \$7000 over 10 years," he says. But it's not just about saving money. The stations also help growers detect optimal times for watering their vines, and how much water the vines need thus maximising irrigation's impact and reducing water wastage. Growers are paying \$5 a tonne of grapes to help fund the \$100,000 weather station network upgrade which FRRR also helped fund, along with the local natural resource management board. Viticulture and environment officer with the McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Industry Association James Hook says the network has given growers a vital management tool that will be especially helpful as they adapt to a changing climate.

"Grape growers are much attuned to the weather and the climate. We have 340 grape growers and 80 wineries all with access to the weather data. The weather station network is a great plus to the district."

By supporting this weather station upgrade, FRRR is helping growers minimise water use. That growers are also contributing and that it links a grape growing community is very much in keeping with Pratt Water's aims to help communities help themselves.

Giving Men a Place to Meet (NSW)

Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre - \$2,500



When a small business owner in the Hunter Valley found that a mate of his tried to take his own life, he realised that something had to be done. A steering committee was set up through the Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre to deliver a travelling show for blokes in the drought-stricken Upper Hunter Valley. It's called a Virtual Men's Shed but there are no power tools and no shed. Instead with support from FRRR and The Pratt Foundation, speakers will be invited to tour about 18 little communities at men-only nights across the region. The idea is to offer support and to deliver physical and mental health messages with a good dose of humour. Pilot versions had a bush poet talking about his first prostate examination. The small business owner says it becomes very easy for blokes to stay on their farms and to silently get more and more despairing. "These virtual men's sheds will be an opportunity for some relief from the grinding, depressing routine of getting up and watching their stock slip in condition every day." The depressing nature of the drought hasn't been confined to the farming community he says. "I talk to small business people all the time and I find it incredible that an area like this could get to the stage where people feel they have no-one to talk to when they're struggling. This is an opportunity for blokes to have bloke time."

FRRR supports communities who identify problems and respond with programs to alleviate those problems and improve wellbeing.

Building a Region's Self-Reliance (NSW)

Community Foundation of the Tumut Region - \$150,000



Baby massage skills, a DVD promoting local gold heritage, youth philanthropy and a computerised literacy program for local schools are among 12 projects given life in the Tumut region of south eastern NSW by The Pratt Foundation, established by Melburnians Richard and Jeanne Pratt. Each year for three years, The Pratt Foundation through FRRR is giving \$50,000 to the Community Foundation of the Tumut Region to distribute as VISY Community Grants for community strengthening and renewal. Heritage conservator Louise Halsey, who chairs the Tumut Region's Community Foundation, say the funds have helped consolidate the four-year-old organisation in the region.



"While our long term objective is to build a corpus of funds, The Pratt Foundation's funds allow us to give grants each year to make a difference where we live. Grants can be awarded under the categories of youth, families, arts and culture, education, indigenous, environment, heritage, disadvantage, health and social development and community economic development."

The solid beginning has encouraged other donations from memorial fund for a much-loved local music teacher, the business arm of Tumut Shire Council, Viola Environmental Services and individual donors. These in turn have been used to sponsor activities as diverse as visiting performances by the Sydney Symphony Fellows Orchestra and the ABC Canberra Classic FM choir of the year, to extension plans for the Batlow Museum and a breastfeeding support group.

FRRR is keen to help areas that help themselves. Through effective partnerships.

Watering a Stricken Town (Victoria)

Dargo and District Community Group - \$5000

When fire ripped around the Victorian High Plains town of Dargo in April this year, water supplies in the already parched community were polluted. Floods followed in June, washing charred vegetation into the Dargo River from which most of the town's 60 or so residents pump their water. "The river is like a chocolate milkshake," says local school principal and Dargo and District Community Group secretary Rob Christie. "Locals can't use it, the stock can't drink it. It's useless." At the town's hall the local shire has agreed to put in a bore to replace water supplies that have been carted in at the rate of two tanks a week since the fires. With \$5000 from The Pratt Foundation through FRRR, a new tank has been installed at the hall so it can be filled with bore water should the same trouble strike again. "We desperately need water tanks," says Rob. "This will be connected up so we will have fresh water for drinking and for livestock. It will be a great help."

This small community has corralled support from its local council and used this as a starting point to attract funds from elsewhere to shore up water supplies.

The Pratt Foundation Partnership

Creating a New Generation of Civil Engineers (Victoria)

La Trobe University, Bendigo Campus - \$144,550



With \$145,000 from FRRR's Pratt Water program, La Trobe University has established 10 new civil engineering scholarships to help educate a new generation of desperately needed civil engineers for regional areas.

Ten four-year scholarships, valued at \$44,000 each, were offered at the university's Bendigo

campus this year under a scheme that's also supported by industry.

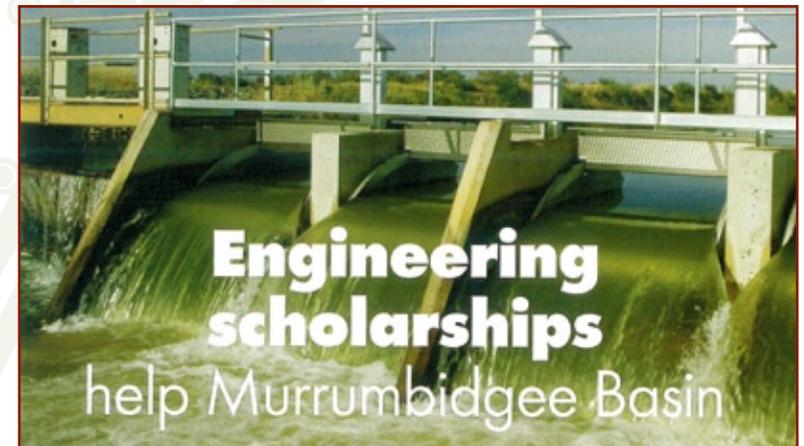
The scholarships will help address critical shortages of engineers in regional communities, especially in the agricultural productive Murrumbidgee Basin. This, in turn, is expected to support infrastructure development to meet the region's environmental and water management needs.

The scholarships were awarded to students from the Murrumbidgee Basin which covers 84,000 square kilometres and stretches from Yass to Griffith and where dryland salinity costs \$43 million annually.

Co-sponsoring industry partners in the catchment will offer relevant employment to encourage the students to work in the region during holidays and once they graduate.

The scheme is expected to become a model for other areas.

FRRR worked with La Trobe to shape the project to ensure it had the best skills, employment and education outcomes to meet regional needs.



Small Grants for Small Rural Communities



Making an Outback Playgroup Safe (Northern Territory)

Douglas Daly Playgroup - \$545
Source: DoTaRS



Once a week, six families from around Douglas Daly, 200km south of Darwin bring their children to playgroup. Usually 10 kids, ranging from baby Billy who is less than six months old to the four-year-old senior, turn up. Cattle and turf farmer Sarah Thomson says the playgroup is a vital part of life for the mostly isolated families who travel up to 50km along dirt roads to get there. So much so that the community association has developed the town 'hall' – a concrete slab with a tin roof to include a bar and kitchen and a playground with slides and swings. "We've held lots of quiz and game nights and raffles to raise \$8000 to buy the playground equipment," says Sarah. "Without it, there would be nothing here for the kids." As most parents know, a vital part of any children's gathering place is a first-aid kit which the playgroup bought with FRRR's support. "Our nearest medical assistance is at Adelaide River about 100km away so it's great to have the kit," says Sarah. "I am so pleased to say we haven't had to use it a great deal."

FRRR wanted to support these reasonably isolated families whose children otherwise have few opportunities to socialise.



Training Outback Women's Health Workers (Northern Territory)

Family Planning Welfare Association of NT - \$3,500
Source: Perpetual

Janet Richardson has worked in outback rural health for 30 years. The Broome-born indigenous health worker conducts retinal diabetic screening in eye health clinics run by the Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation across north east Arnhem Land. With about 50,000 indigenous people living in the NT, half of whom are aged 15-44 years and many of whom live in remote communities without access to medical officers, health screenings by visiting registered and enrolled nurses and health workers are crucial. This is especially so because high numbers of women register cervical cell changes. With FRRR funding, The Family Planning Welfare Association of NT ran information sessions for health workers like Janet on women's health issues such as contraception, sexually transmitted disease, infertility and cervical screening. The idea of the Well Women's workshop was to spread the word about the importance of regular screenings. Janet, 56, now heads out to remote clinics in Mullingimbi, Yirrkala, Ski beach, Gapuwiyak and Ramingining where she supports nurses doing pap smears and breast checks. "Aboriginal women used to be shy about coming to these clinics but when they see their own people involved they are not so shy. Before there used to be doctors only doing this and they would never go to female doctors but since we did that health training there has been a lot more women coming. The Well Women's training workshop was very helpful. We had done basic training but attending the workshop gave me a lot better understanding."

This project was about improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal women in remote communities. FRRR especially liked this project because it involved training Aboriginal women to look after their own.

Small Grants for Small Rural Communities



“They are such an effective way of encouraging self-help. People aren’t looking for a lot of money. They are looking to galvanise themselves around something.”

Bruce Bonybady, Chairman, ANZ Trustees, Sole Trustee of the Wicking Foundation and ANZ Trustee Representative on the Buckland Foundation and (Charles and Sylvia) Viertel Foundation.



Connecting a Festival (Queensland)

Australian Italian Festival - \$2,500

Source: Myer Foundation



Like many of his fellow townsfolk, Pino Giandomenica is an Italian-born descendant of immigrant canecutters who came to northern Queensland in the 1940s and 1950s. Their goal was to come, make money and return once Italy had recovered from the war.

However they soon discovered Australia offered La Dolce Vita (The Good Life) too, so they stayed, married and had children. Their influence is profound in the city of Ingham, population 6000, where an estimated 60 per cent of people are of Italian descent and where once a year people flock from around the nation to eat, drink and dance their way through the Australian-Italian festival. The concept, recommended by James Cook University as a way to boost tourism in the shoulder season, is overseen by a town committee and festival director, Jane Clark, who now uses a computer bought with an FRRR grant. She helps organise the program, coordinate the 80-plus festival volunteers and promote the event. Pino, who arrived in Australia as a three-year-old and is now the festival president and Hinchinbrook Shire Mayor, says it’s a great cultural event – “a cross between South Australia’s Handorf Festival and the Tamworth Country Music Festival”, only done Italian style. Josephine Licciardello travelled from Sydney last year for the festival and especially for the L’Eleganza Sera Di Stile Fashion Awards and The Italian Regional Dinner. She enjoyed them both so much she was there again this year.

The beauty of this project is that Ingham looked to its great cultural strength as a way to bring in external funds. Strong support from volunteers also helped earn FRRR’s interest.

Boosting the Social Heart of a Small Town (South Australia)

Bute RSL - \$3,000

Source: Perpetual

At 40, John Pridham has a few regrets. One is that he didn’t find out more about his father’s war experience, which included time in Hiroshima, when he was alive. But the revival of the RSL Club in his home town of Bute, west of Clare on South Australia’s Yorke Peninsula has given him another way of making



connection with his father’s life. Beleaguered by waning interest from ageing members and with its premises run down, the club in this farming town of 300 people was facing closure. John and his fellow townsfolk decided they couldn’t let that happen. With funds from FRRR they stripped an old room at the club, laid down a concrete floor, covered it with lino and made a meals area. Then they began serving meals to tourists coming to Bute by train on Sundays. Locals began turning up for meals too. Long-forgotten medals and war mementoes have been dug out and framed for the club walls. The spin-offs have amazed the Pridhams. This year the town held its first ANZAC Day march; 480 people came. Many stayed for the celebrations at the RSL. “We had the most wonderful day,” says John’s wife Linda. Now there are plans to apply for another grant to continue the club’s overhaul.

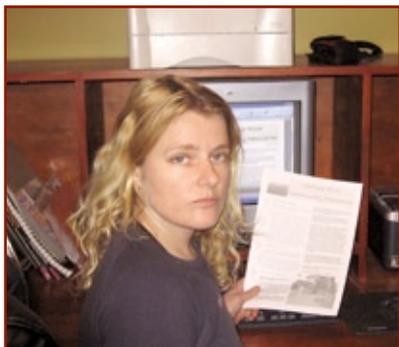
FRRR liked this project because it helped a small community revive its social heart and inspired renewed involvement among younger people.

Spreading the News (Victoria)

Carlisle River Community Group - \$2,000

Source: FRRR

Carlisle River, at the foot of Victoria's beautiful Otway Ranges, boasts lowland forests, a school, a hall and a footy ground. Isolated from the coast by the ranges yet home to increasing numbers of young families and urban refugees who have moved on to subdivided former dairy farms, the town rarely rates on tourist brochures. Yet the 150 people who live in and around there are a bunch of doers. Four years ago, when the Colac Otway Shire, asked outlying towns to form community groups and progress associations, the Carlisle River community rallied. Inaugural community group president Lisa Stafford, a stickler for detail, liked minutes to be kept. Fellow resident Paula Gardiner recognised their news value and began the Carlisle River Community Newsletter, printing copies at the shire offices 40km away. Today Gaylene Simpson voluntarily produces and prints the newsletter in Carlisle River, on a printer bought with FRRR funds. The monthly newsletter is sponsored by 12 businesses in Colac who pay \$50 a year for advertising.



Lisa, a cut flower producer and mother of three, says the newsletter is vital for communication. "It's strengthened our network capabilities," says Lisa. "We don't have a great deal of money so any small grants like this one from FRRR help us provide resources without any one being out of pocket. Most people already volunteer their time so it's good to have help like this."

The beauty of this project is that volunteers are building and strengthening links through a newsletter that informs people about what's happening in their town.



Providing Jobs for Special Needs Workers (South Australia)

Kingston Supported Employment Service - \$3,000

Source: Perpetual

Gianni Spada's family moved from Naracoorte to Kingston, about 100km west, so Gianni, 32, could work in a supported employment service there. Gianni and his 12 work colleagues have high support needs and require constant support and supervision. On Mondays Gianni helps in the service's catering business called



Granma's Pantry and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and sometimes Thursdays he mows lawns with the service's Kingston Lawn Rangers. They're a beautiful outfit: they have a ute and trailer, plus two ride-on and four push mowers and a whipper snipper. But until FRRR's grant, they had no on-site storage. Now they do: a shed with a concrete floor now doubles as storage and a maintenance training area. "It's great," says the service's manager, June Alexander, who has worked doggedly to make the business profitable since federal government disability funding reforms were introduced in 2002. She says the business is a big team effort that gets lots of local support but sometimes feels forgotten or overlooked because it's regional. "Our main job is to employ people with disabilities. We have to run a profitable business so we can buy all our equipment but the shed was something extra and a grant like this is invaluable. The service is paramount to the town. We have 1600 people here: 800 live in the town and 800 live nearby. Our nearest town is 100km away and there is no public transport so if our clients couldn't work here, they would have no work."

Gianni concurs. "It's important we have mowing jobs to do," he says. And a shed. "It's a very good shed," he says.

Highly motivated and with strong local support, the Kingston Supported Employment Service appealed to FRRR as a worthy recipient because of the nature of its work and the dynamism behind it.

Small Grants for Small Rural Communities



Encouraging Kids to Take to the Airwaves (NSW)

Tallimba Public School - \$788

Source: FRRR



Drought has tested the mettle of those in the tiny town of Tallimba, two hours north of Wagga. Wheat and sheep farmers whose children attend the primary school have survived on hope for some years. At the 28-student school, a UHF radio show broadcast by the kids each Friday has been a bright spot during lean times. Using the school's FRRR-funded UHF radio, the Grade Three to Six kids present a 15-minute show called Tallimba Talks to You. It features community and schools events, book readings and short stories.

The kids prepare the scripts and present the show. Sandra Leslie, a teacher's aide and office worker who lives 12km from the school, says farm households tune in religiously. "The children learn about public speaking. In emergencies we can also use the radio to talk to the school bus drivers if needed and the beauty is we don't have to buy anything else to make it work." Sandra says the school has been aware of drought's impact. "Getting the grant has added to the community's morale because we feel we are not forgotten."



This school was innovative with a project that helped children improve reading, writing and speaking skills while providing joy in the surrounding farming community.

Keeping the Sea Free of Plastic (South Australia)

Stansbury Progress Committee - \$1,700

Source: The Pratt Foundation

A seaside market is a great little advertisement for Stansbury that overlooks the St Vincent Gulf. Held monthly from September to April, the market has been a boon for this town of 480 people on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula. The market draws thousands of visitors and helps raise much-needed revenue for this small rural community. It began in February 2004 with nine stalls and has up to 78 stalls at peak holiday times, though usually there are about 40. With a committee already dedicated to keeping the town's spot in South Australia's top 10 tidy towns, an idea that simultaneously would help eradicate plastic bags, keep the area clean, promote the market and bring a little income was welcomed. Why not run a campaign and sell non-plastic shopping bags at the market? Thus was born the campaign slogan "Free the Sea of Plastic." "People come here during their holidays, they see the market, hop out of their cars and realise they don't have any bags," says Stansbury Seaside Market Manager Anne Russell. The market committee used FRRR's grant to buy the bags. Sales of the bags at the market will generate funds to buy more. "The gulf is precious to us and we have to look after it," Anne says. "Freeing the area of plastic helps to eliminate the danger it poses to marine life in the gulf. We just saw this as a way to do that and help promote the market as well."

FRRR liked the way this project built on a community's established priorities and the way it worked to have multiple benefits.

Helping Rescuers (Victoria)

State Emergency Service, Benalla - \$4,048

Source: R.E. Ross Trust

Colin Croxford, 48, puts it this way: "If volunteers were not here to help people in disasters, they would be left to themselves". The Benalla SES unit controller is proud of the rescue unit he joined when he was 18. It includes 30 voluntary members who meet one night a week, train at weekends and respond to about 60 call-outs a year. "We've had quite a few more this year because of the fires in the area," Colin says. Granted \$10,000 a year from state and local governments, members also raise funds to keep the unit equipped and shipshape. "We have a plan for which we need \$260,000 of equipment for the emergencies we can see we are going to have to deal with in the future," says Colin. "We've raised \$50,000 ourselves. We are very active and we've picked up awards for two years running for the best participation by volunteers." Part of the unit's professionalism lies in keeping equipment ready and well stored. FRRR's grant for shelving and lockers for volunteers at unit headquarters has helped. "It helps convince would-be volunteers because when they walk in the door they can see we are a professional outfit," Colin says.

This project has all the hallmarks of rural community strength – strong volunteer support, incredible motivation and a credo of providing a hand in hard times.



Equipping First Aid Trainers (Western Australia)

Williams St John Ambulance Sub-Centre - \$2,760

Source: DoTARS

At Williams, 160km south east of Perth, a voluntary ambulance service provides emergency care since there is no state-funded ambulance service. Highly trained volunteers working in the St John Ambulance Sub-Centre rotate a seven-day, on-call roster. They work in teams of three attending to calls in the town of 400 people and the surrounding sheep, cattle and broadacre cropping country. They need to raise up to \$50,000 a year to run their service. They do this by providing memberships, charging for their ambulance transport service, selling first aid kits and teaching first aid. "We might teach five courses of 12-15 people a year," says mother of two, farmer and municipal worker Heidi Cowcher. An ambulance volunteer and first-aid trainer she says a data projector and defibrillator, bought with FRRR funds, have lifted the quality of training.

"We usually get about 40 calls a year. This year we've had 70. You get through it because at the end of the day you are providing a service to the community."

Here's a small community that already donates generously, willing to dedicate hours of voluntary service to provide an ambulance service.

Small Grants for Small Rural Communities



Reviving the Drive-In (Western Australia)

Shire of Irwin - \$3,000

Source: The Ian Potter Foundation



Just two drive-in theatres remain in Western Australia, one at Dongara, south of Geraldton, is run by teenagers. "If we run a new release film, it's pretty much packed out and we have up to 100 cars," says volunteer youth group co-ordinator Natalie Mawer, 19. The drive-in had closed when the Shire of Irwin's Youth Advisory Council in the coastal town of 3500 people suggested it be re-opened. Since then the Dongara Youth Group has issued tickets, manned the gates, run the café and offered car window cleaning on film nights, usually held on long weekends and school holidays when the popular tourist area is inundated with visitors. Funds raised from the film nights have helped build a skate park and a BMX track. "On a good night we can raise up to \$3000," says Natalie. "We have an absolute ball and the next night we might go out together using the funds." A storm three years ago smashed the screen. The shire rebuilt it and the youth group took the opportunity to upgrade their projector with help from FRRR.

This project illustrates exemplary initiative and leadership on the part of the young people of Dongara/Port Denison who raise funds for municipal projects doing something they enjoy.

Caring for Kids After School (Queensland)

Injilinj Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Children and Youth Service - \$4,000

Source: Sylvia and Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation

In Mt Isa in north western Queensland, the Injilinj Aboriginal community began a youth centre in 1972 to help children with their school and homework. Over the years that centre has grown and developed. It now has an established building where it offers after-school care which is funded entirely by grants. Currently 17 children in Prep to Grade Seven are enrolled. Each school day a bus collects the children after school and takes them to the centre for afternoon tea and cultural activities. They learn about bush tucker among other things. Afterwards they're driven home. "We have lots of working mums who really appreciate this service," says administrative officer Natalie Craigie.

The after school care offered by this indigenous service is vital for working parents.

Training Neighbourhood Mediators (Victoria)

Berry St Victoria - \$3,182

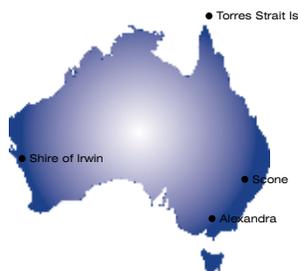
Source: William Buckland Foundation



Disputes in small communities can be deadly. Differences between parents at a school, between neighbours over fences or between families in a street can create bad blood that spills for generations and weakens a community. Berry Street Victoria, which runs services to improve life opportunities for young people through community

development at Alexandra in Victoria, recognises this, with FRRR's support, it has trained people to become professional mediators. They can mediate to help stop disputes becoming entrenched or ending up in court. Twelve volunteers, including a WorkSafe officer, a retired nurse, a teacher and others, completed a six-day mediation course through the Department of Justice. They will be available to work in the East of Murrindindi Shire, a farming and tourist region north east of Melbourne. It includes about 5000 people and the towns of Marysville, Buxton, Taggerty, Alexandra, Thornton, Eildon and Yarck. "We call it Neighbourhood Mediation project and it's part of our Safe and Caring Community project," says one of the volunteers, social worker Judi Walter, who also works at Berry Street's Alexandra office. "Our next goal is to inform people who might have reason to call in our mediators, people like the police and schools and councils, to let them know that we're here. We understand it will be a slow process for people to come forward and use this service but we are excited by its potential.

This project brought skills to a community that will help resolve disputes and build a better social foundation in a rural area.



Equipping Single Women with Household Tools (NSW)

Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre - \$2,500

Source: The Sarah and Baillieu Myer Foundation

Not every household can afford a shed of tools. At Scone in NSW, the neighbourhood resource centre bought its own pool of tools for hire with FRRR's support. "It came about because we have many financially disadvantaged single women who often need to fix things around the home," says centre manager Lee Watts. "A lot of them are struggling on their own to get access to things. Rather than having to go and purchase the tools for a lot of small jobs, they can come here and hire them." Classes in do-it-yourself maintenance are next. "We're about to start promoting them," Lee says. "People can learn how to change a washer, screen a door, straighten shelves, all those little things that not everybody know how to do."



FRRR was keen to reward this centre where resourceful managers have identified a need and found a great way to satisfy that need while generating income.

Becher Foundation Halls of Fame Program

“Susan Varga and I established Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) in the NSW Southern Highlands in 2001 so we have been quite involved with regional issues. We were impressed with the work FRRR was doing especially getting much needed small grants to rural community organisations. Susan and I are both very strong believers in having public spaces for communities to meet, gather, organise and discuss. At one point, 100 RAR groups were meeting in towns around Australia, often in community halls, so we know how important these places are. I was talking with FRRR CEO Sylvia Admans about the kinds of projects FRRR was receiving applications for and she said funds were needed for local community halls. As directors of the Becher Foundation, Susan and I thought this was well worth supporting so the Becher Foundation contributed \$50,000 a year for three years to FRRR’s Halls of Fame Program. In the past year alone, 15 different halls in tiny communities in Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia received funds.”

*Anne Coombs, Co-founder,
Becher Foundation*

Koorawatha Memorial Hall Furniture Renewal (NSW)

Koorawatha Progress Association - \$2,500

As happens in many small towns, Koorawatha’s century-old Memorial Hall was looking a tad jaded when the locals decided it needed a facelift.

Progress association and hall committee secretary Jane Fisher says while the hall’s interior was painted 30 years ago, not much else had been done since.

“We were getting a bit of vandalism,” Jane says. “We thought that if we were to give the place a facelift then people would respect and care for it a bit more. The hall is a really important part of our village (between Cowra and Young in central NSW) and also a reflection of the community ...the state of the hall reflects the state of the community.” Funds were sought and work began. Twenty new trestle tables and 40 chairs were purchased. “We spent \$60,000 in all on the upgrade, with funds from various places,” says Jane. “We got \$11,000 through the Young Shire – the building is owned by them; \$25,000 from the Regional Partnerships Program and \$8000 from the Department of Veterans Affairs: we installed a disabled ramp and toilet. We contributed \$10,000 of our own and used this to leverage other funds.”

The upgrade has sparked a renaissance in Koorawatha: the youth group meets there, the school parents and citizens club and fire brigade run events to raise funds there, it’s hired for weddings, parties and anniversaries and it’s where the community meets when municipal matters arise. Next year a celebratory ball will mark the hall’s restoration.

The Koorawatha Memorial Hall’s restoration is a tribute to a community which used its own funds to leverage a lot more to nurture its sense of identity.

Creating a Cultural Heart (Queensland)

Mt Larcom Art Gallery and Memorabilia - \$3,000



Mt Larcom, just north-west of Gladstone, is feeling the warmth of mining’s boom. With more traffic heading through the little town of 350 people on the Bruce Highway in central Queensland, locals feel it’s time to add a cultural heart. They’ve raised and sought funds to relocate a house to their town which will become the Mt Larcom Art Gallery and

Memorabilia Centre. It will house art, textiles and memorabilia of the surrounding area and capitalise on the town’s popular bi-annual quilt show. “It will be the cultural heart of the community,” says artist Jo Williams who is on a committee that’s worked on the idea for 2.5 years. Keen to check local support, Jo and her committee surveyed locals about joining a “friends” group to support the centre and whether they’d be willing to help ‘man’ it. “We had 65 positive responses to both which is very good,” says Jo. “We have had people offering to do things. The local concreter has offered to help concrete around the house when it arrives.”

FRRR liked the way this community spotted an opportunity to show off its talent and creativity and build a common focus in an era of expansion.

Rural Education Program

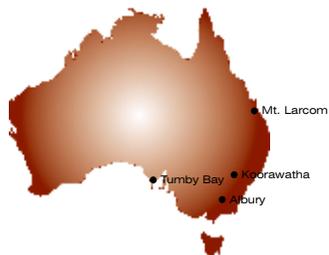
Trumpeting a Region's Credentials (South Australia)

Tumby Bay Skills Centre - \$15,000

Olives are providing more than good eating at Tumby Bay on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula. About 40,000 olive trees are growing around the coastal town, north east of Port Lincoln. Since the trees were planted about nine years ago, the town has created a tourism and skills centre where visitors can learn about olive production. The centre, which is opened and manned by volunteers five days a week, is patronised by growing tourist traffic arriving by ferry after crossing the Spencer Gulf from the Yorke Peninsula. The centre's chairperson, Jill Coates, says promotional material documenting the olive's journey from paddock to plate was created by students. Others have made oil products and crafts and cards. Eventually the centre will offer training in enterprise and entrepreneurship to students from 12 schools in the region and this year there are plans for a seminar to promote careers in olive production and promotion.



This community has shown lots of nous in marrying tourism and agriculture to create education and training opportunities for local kids.



Lobbying for Better Education for Country Areas (NSW)

National Forum for Rural, Remote and Regional Education - \$85,000

Leaders in education including parents, teachers, academics, community organisations and bureaucrats from across the nation met in Albury for two days in April to tackle the education challenges facing rural Australia. Organised by FRRR and funded by DEST, the forum invited 50 delegates. Federal Education, Science and Training Minister Julie Bishop in her address asked for country education advocates to pool their ideas and present a united front. The forum heard that children were deliberately failing their school work so parents would not have to worry about the cost of sending them to boarding school. It also heard that rural students were unable to access Austudy and other allowances thanks to assets tests which include drought-savaged farms and that the mere cost of diesel to run generators to power computers for distance learning is a problem for some families. Participants talked about the lack of choice in education for country kids, drought's devastating impact on their education and hopes for the future, the lack of science and maths education in country areas, the hurdles for student-teacher placements in rural areas, the rural skills shortage and how to educate the poorest Australians. The forum raised the profile of country education and talks are now under way to establish a national rural education alliance.



Founders and supporters of the Rural Education Program used their influence to bring together key players in education to improve educational opportunities for country kids.

The REP was established to help Australia's rural families, especially those in drought affected areas, who are facing education challenges for their children. We believe they must have the same opportunities as their city cousins.

We hope a single voice for rural education in Australia will be formed, that will work with the Government, to make that difference.

The founding donors are enjoying the camaraderie and the challenge, in achieving these goals.

Tim and Gina Fairfax

Rural Education Program

Mentoring Kids (Victoria)

Baimbridge College - \$25,000

In Hamilton, in southwest Victoria, a program called Standing Tall asks people in the community to mentor school children. Established in 2003 the program entails screening and training mentors, pairing them with children who might benefit and offering support. The idea is to help young people develop their potential. It grew from a realisation by teacher Jeanette Pritchard that many of her students weren't learning at their capacity. She read lots of literature, travelled to the US to check out mentoring programs there and with the support of Baimbridge College and the people of Hamilton, instigated the program. Students from Grade 4 to Year 12 at Baimbridge College and the Gray St and North Hamilton Primary schools take part. To date there have been 72 mentors and 107 students. John McKay, 50, a training co-ordinator at Iluka Resources which mines mineral sands near Hamilton, is mentoring 11-year-old gifted child, Zac. A former teacher and separated father of three, John spends one hour a week with Zac usually at school. "You're not there to be a saviour. You're there to be a friend, to listen to their concerns." Zac's teacher, Anthony Hill, says Zac has matured and is much happier and more settled since he joined the mentorship. "How much of that is to do with mentoring or natural maturity we don't know but certainly the mentoring has played a role."

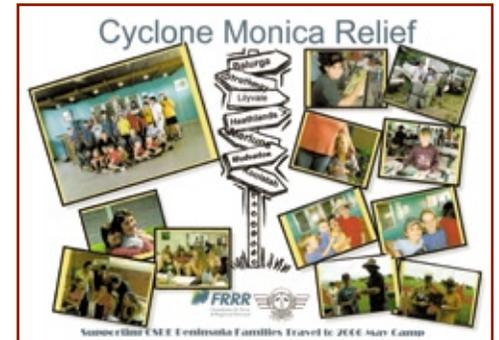


There's a saying that it takes a village to raise a child and the people of Hamilton are investing their greatest gifts, time and presence, to do this. Schools, businesses and individuals are working together.

Beating Isolation (Queensland)

Cairns School of Distance Education - Grant \$11,500

The prospects for joining in the annual school camp weren't looking good for Grade Five, Clay MacLean. Cyclone Monica had dumped metres of rain, his family was landlocked on their cattle property near Coen, 800km north of Cairns, and "Mum and Dad said I'd have to miss out". For a kid who learns over the phone and by internet through the Cairns School of Distance Education, the annual May camp in or near Cairns is a highlight. About 190 kids who live on fishing vessels and isolated properties attend each year along with their home tutors – usually their mums. Clay was looking forward to catching up with his best friend, Lane Taylor, who also lives on an isolated property, about 500km away. Then along came Cyclone Monica. "Up here the wet usually comes in from Christmas to March and we have the camp in May when it's dry so the families can drive out," school principal Richard Huelin explains.



"In April Cyclone Monica came along and flooded 100,000 sq km to a level never seen before, properties were landlocked, houses were inundated and cattle were swept out to sea. It was just too terrible. We decided we'd fly about 15 of the children who were flooded in, some with their mums and dads down to the camp."

Clay was so grateful for the FRRR funds that paid for the flights he wrote a big thank you note.

FRRR's grant flew isolated families to Cairns for an important social event that they would otherwise have missed. The trip helped families get through a difficult time when their isolated properties were flooded.

Shading a Hot Playground (NSW)

Yetman Public School Parents and Citizens - Grant \$4,800

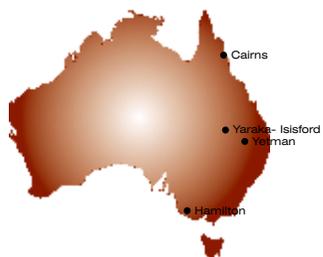


Drought and changing times are stealing families from the farming community of Yetman, 80km south-east of Goondiwindi on the NSW/Queensland border. That leaves fewer families to raise funds for school projects like providing a shaded area

for the school's 30 kids. "Lining up in 45-degree heat in the sun wasn't much fun and when it rained, which isn't all that often lately, there was nowhere for the kids to play," says P&C treasurer Elizabeth Nicholls. "With FRRR funds, we've built a sheltered area and it's just fantastic. We are so appreciative because it's just getting so hard to raise funds. The less people we have here, the harder it is. We are looking at putting in some markings for handball and hopscotch for the little ones to play there."

In March, the Yetman P & C hosted lunch under the new shaded area for visiting REP representatives Gina and Tim Fairfax and FRRR CEO Sylvia Admans. P & C president Simone Tully says it's taken at least five years to raise the funds for the shelter. "The FRRR's funds have been a great boost to people's morale," Mrs Tully says.

This project demonstrates the tremendous boost that small communities receive when interested outsiders join with them to help overcome their challenges.



Bringing the Arts to Isolated Children (Queensland)

Yaraka Parents & Citizens Association – Grant \$5,000

It's a long way to go to learn how to sculpt, make prints, draw cartoons and make other creative works but when you live at Jericho in outback Queensland the rare opportunity to do so shortens the 350km trip to class. About 100 children from eight one-teacher schools in central Queensland and from outback stations travelled to Isisford, about 120km west of Blackall, for a week-long arts class. FRRR funds helped bring artists out to the town of Isisford where the locals opened their homes for showers to the visitors. Children camped in the shire hall and learnt how to make masks and kites. The 'arty-party' created friendships that thrive despite distance. "This is vitally important to children in remote communities," one parent commented.



FRRR liked this project because it encouraged communities to work together for their benefit and introduced isolated children to lots of new skills.

Community Foundations Program

“Community foundations are a way of keeping some of the wealth that’s been generated in a community in that community for the long term and the public good. We work with FRRR on their back to school program. We’re like their agent in communities if you like. They organise \$50 vouchers for kids going back to school (for books, uniforms etc) and we distribute them through our foundations. It gives the community foundations a profile. They deliver the vouchers as a service for FRRR.”

*Andrew Lawson, Community
Foundation Development Officer,
Philanthropy Australia*

Warming School Kids in Winter (Victoria/NSW)

Border Trust, The Community Foundation for the Albury
Wodonga Region - \$5,400

It can get really cold in the Alpine valleys and hills around north east Victoria so vouchers for buying winter school uniforms are in hot demand. The Border Trust Community Foundation has distributed \$50 vouchers funded by FRRR throughout its region across the Indigo, Wodonga, Towong, Albury, Greater Hume, Alpine and Corowa shires for books, pens and other necessities at the start of school this year and last year. Foundation chairperson Chris Horton says teachers have used them at times to buy shoes for the children. “They say it’s really important for the children to feel that they start on equal terms with their peers,” Chris says. This year an additional FRRR program has provided 112, \$50 vouchers for winter uniforms. The Border Trust Community Foundation chose to distribute these to 16 schools, primarily in the Alpine and Indigo Shires of north east Victoria.

“We decided to target the smaller rural communities this time,” Chris says. “Many of these areas have suffered in the past three to four years with drought and bushfires. It’s good to give them a bit of a hand.”

The vouchers are also a great tool for promoting the three-year-old foundation. “We are, like a lot of community foundations, getting started and recognised for what we do,” Chris says. The FRRR funding and back to school programs are quite noticeable. We get a lot of media coverage this way.”

In distributing and promoting vouchers for school uniforms, the Border Trust Foundation is caring for its kids and learning how to promote itself at the same time.

Encouraging Philanthropy in Young People (NSW)

Wingecarribee Community Foundation – \$30,000



For a young, would-be business woman, Meghan Barrell is making lots of connections early in life. The Year 11 radio show host and Young Citizen of the Year nominee in Bowral is on the Wingecarribee Community Foundation’s youth philanthropy committee. Called Making a Difference or M.A.D Youth, the committee seeks and secures funds to make grants for young people’s projects. A boost from FRRR’s Youth in Philanthropy Incentive Fund consolidated their work. Along the way they’re learning about grant making, and how to promote themselves, call for and sort grant applications, allocate grants and follow up on their effect. They also raise funds by running stalls selling everything from home-made dolls, to jewellery and lemonade, running a caber tossing event at the local Scottish Fair and running a Youth Cultural Festival. M.A.D Youth also surveys young people in the Wingecarribee region in NSW’s Southern Highlands to find out what’s

needed. "There are 10-12 of us ranging in age from 14 to 21 but once they hit 17 we lose a few because they're doing Year 12," Meghan says. "Some people think it's a little nerdy club but most of the kids in it aren't that nerdy. You do have to be motivated." This year MAD allocated funds to a road safety program called U Turn the Wheel for Year 11 learner drivers, the local youth community radio station for lighting and speakers, and to the Wingecarribee Adolescent Mental Health Team for a weight management program for 12-17-year-olds. "It's been pretty rewarding says," Bowral born and raised Meghan who says she's made great links with people right across the community.



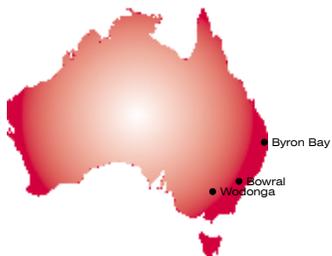
Tomorrow's leaders are getting a head start through this powerful work which creates strong links between all generations.

Encouraging Kids to Stay at School (NSW)

Northern Rivers Community Foundation - \$20,000

Funding yourself through school takes extra motivation when Mum and Dad aren't around to pay the bills. But a program part funded by FRRR, through the Northern Rivers Community Foundation in north east NSW, is stepping in to help 32 independent students at the Nimbin Central School. The pilot program is administered by the Lismore-based Disability and Aged Information Service Inc (DAISI) and provides up to \$500 a year to encourage kids to stay at schools. "These are secondary school aged students who don't have parents supporting them," the foundation's executive officer, Megan Edwards, says. DAISI's CEO Dona Graham says FRRR's Stay at School funding has led to greater things. "Based on the success of the FRRR program and with the foundation's support, DAISI secured \$120,000 from the Ian Potter Foundation and another \$120,000 from the Department of Health and Ageing to establish an initiative to support primary carer grandparents throughout the Far North Coast. "Through this, we hope to reconnect independent young people with their families, starting with their grandparents. The FRRR funding means the students are able to come to us to build up their mandatory driving hours to earn their licences and we can offer them scholarships for sport or cultural and music endeavours." If ever there was a motto for this FRRR/Northern River Community Foundation/DAISI partnership, it's from a seed of funding a forest of sustainable community support can grow.

This project is engaging young people and offering them vital support when they need it most.



Community Foundations Program

Getting Kids Back to School (South Australia)

Stand Like Stone Community Foundation - \$18,950



In Mt Gambier, South Australia, the three-year-old community foundation named after a phrase from an Adam Lindsay Gordon poem, has been distributing \$50 vouchers at the start of each year to financially stretched families for equipping kids with pencils, books and other tools for learning. Chairwoman of the Stand Like Stone Community Foundation Sue Charlton says

the feedback from grateful parents and grandparents is astounding. "We have no idea who gets the vouchers. We leave that up to the principals in the schools to decide but we've had grandparents get in touch with us to say thank you and one mother said it was the first time she'd been able to afford proper school shoes for her child."

FRRR likes this project for its simplicity and effectiveness in creating community links. FRRR recognises the initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund in beginning the program.

Establishing a Community Foundation (Queensland)

Buderim Foundation - \$5,000

Known originally for its timber and ginger production and in the 1970s and 1980s as God's waiting room, Buderim on Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland has outgrown its retirees' paradise image. It has five secondary schools, a university and a long established community organisation. Called the Buderim War Memorial Community Association, it was established instead of a war memorial. "We call it a living memorial," says Buderim lawyer Gary Hopkins, who chairs the community foundation that grew out of the association. "The association co-ordinates the community life in the area and the foundation's focus is to raise money to invest to perpetuate grants to the community," Gary says. "We're responsible for the grant making in the area. We've been operational for three years and with just 30,000 people in our region, we're one of the smallest community foundations in Australia. This year we have been encouraged by a significant increase in donations. We'll begin our grant making next year." Earlier this year the foundation distributed 100 \$50 Back to School vouchers made available by FRRR through locals schools, St Vincent De Paul and the Integrated Family and Youth Services. "We are proud to have developed a strong relationship with FRRR and have extended our appreciation to the Sidney Myer Fund for providing this opportunity to help our community," Gary said.

This strongly linked region is demonstrating that community foundations can work in small communities.

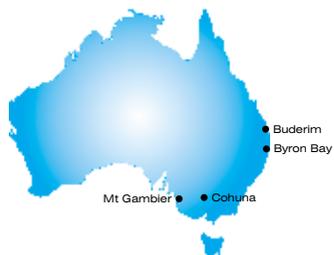
Caring for Ageing in Rural Australia (CARA) Grants Program

Linking Seniors to the World (NSW)

Byron Shire Senior Computers Club - \$9,000

Margaret Taylor still gets nervous about teaching computers to her fellow retirees. Until 10 years ago, the shy 60-year-old was a computer novice herself but slowly she has gained enough confidence to operate a computer, send emails, design web pages and use photos. Now she trains others to do the same. "I was mostly self-taught," says Margaret. "I had a little help from my son but he would say 'do this, do that' and his hands would move so quickly across the computer that I couldn't follow. A lot of people who do formal classes have the same complaint." In Ocean Shores on the NSW north coast, seniors have formed their own computer club to learn about the wonders of computer technology at their own pace. Many are retirees who have moved to the area and want to communicate with their families via the Internet. At one stage they shared premises with another organisation but, then they had to go it alone and the club was ready to fold. "We had nowhere to go and no computers," recalls Margaret, who is the club tutor, webmaster and training co-ordinator. With FRRR funds, the club (annual membership is \$20, workshops cost \$5 for 1.5 hours and members must be 55 years old or more) bought eight laptops and associated software programs, surge protectors and insurance. "We were so thrilled to get that money. Without it the club wouldn't exist now," Margaret insists.

This project's vital social and educational aspects give retirees the means to enjoy rural life while staying in close contact with their families.



Creating a Movie House (Victoria)

Gannawarra University of the Third Age - \$7,000

Going to the movies in the country often entails long trips. The cinemas nearest to the dairying town of Cohuna are at least 50km away but the seniors at the town's University of the Third Age have put paid to that. With FRRR's help, they bought a large screen home theatre system, set it up in a council-owned building and opened it to all. Not-for-profit groups can use it for free and others hire it. Gannawarra U3A president Lillian Webb, 72, thanks her predecessor, Ann Lee, for the foresight. "The sound is absolutely marvellous," says Lillian, a farmer from near Leitchville whose favourite movie to date is Ladies in Lavender.



"The theatre is in an air-conditioned room. We got another grant from the government to put in comfortable chairs for the elderly. The library next door uses it, the progress association uses it for their meetings and there's nothing to stop people hiring it for birthday parties. It's given a lot of people a lot of pleasure." It's also boosted U3A's membership considerably because they run a movie afternoon every third Friday of the month. "The men like cowboy movies," says Lillian.

The beauty of this project is that the U3A was able to leverage funds from elsewhere to help complete their dream to provide entertainment for elderly people. As well it's used by many groups in the town.

"We're trying to have an impact and contribute as many ways as possible to community wellbeing. As part of that we recognise many rural communities don't have the resources city communities do. In looking to grant as effectively as possible to rural communities we recognise FRRR. They are the people with the deep roots and knowledge in rural communities and they are in the strongest position to assess relative need and impact. The thing that continues to amaze me is how significant the Small Grants can be."

Bruce Bonybody,

Chairman, ANZ Trustees, sole trustee of the Wicking Foundation and ANZ trustee representative on the Buckland Foundation and (Charles and Sylvia) Viertel Foundation.

Caring for Ageing in Rural Australia (CARA) Grants Program

Teaching Men to Cook (Queensland)

Australian Red Cross - \$8,500



Beef stroganoff, roast lamb, kebabs and bread and butter pudding. The menu may have been traditional but it's what a group of retired men (aged 50 to 80-plus) around Roma, 374km north west of Toowoomba, liked to eat so that's what they learned to cook at classes run by community nutritionist Liz O'Neill. The classes, run over five weeks last year and funded through FRRR, were organised by the Australian Red Cross to reduce social isolation among the former farmers, road workers and miners, most of whom live alone or in aged care. Retired road worker Darrell Slater, 84, who has lived alone for almost two years after his wife Mavis went to a nursing home in November 2005, enjoyed priming his skills even though he already knew how to prepare a good lamb roast. "We learnt different techniques. We cooked some steak, some pizza although I don't much go for that sort of stuff." Darrell reckons most of the class participants went along "to see how the other half cooked and they want something to do, they're a bit lonely."

With nine pubs in Roma, eating out is an option but like many of his fellow cooking students, Darrell doesn't drink alcohol and he prefers home-cooked meals anyway. "I don't mind cooking," says Darrell, "but I don't like washing up." The lessons became a springboard for the formation of the Roma Older Men's Network.

What a great way to provide companionship, boost self-care and health and encourage new skills among ageing men. FRRR liked the way this project helped older men care for themselves and became a springboard for a new community network.

Directing People to Services (Western Australia)

Busselton Senior Citizens Centre - \$5,000

Almost 5400 of the 28,000 people living in the Shire of Busselton, 230km south of Perth, are aged 55 years or more. This means the senior citizens' centre in this coastal town, just north of Margaret River, is a major hive of activity. Every day it offers physical and mental activities ranging from tai-chai to boot scooting to German language lessons and more to boost the sprightliness of elders. With high numbers of retirees moving to the area, demand for directions to services for older people right across the municipality, which is just north of Margaret River, was also high. The centre used its funds from FRRR to produce a directory of services for older and disabled people. The directory is well used by community and human resource workers, carers, volunteers and more. It lists services ranging from mental health and advocacy, accommodation, allied health, support groups and includes a section for those with Alzheimer's disease.

Helping retirees and older people settle into a rural community is a great welcoming way to encourage wellbeing. FRRR liked this project for this reason.

Transporting the Elderly to Medical Appointments (NSW)

Uniting Care Casino Transport Team - \$5,000



Getting to the hospital, doctor or dentist can be a real challenge for the non-driving elderly people of the northern coastal region of NSW. In the hills around Casino, for example, there are plenty of retired farmers in this category. Hospital closures are also adding distance to medical journeys and cancer patients often have to travel to Brisbane 250 km away. Then there are those who go by ambulance to hospital but have to find their own way home. With little public transport, expensive taxis are about the only option, apart from the Uniting Church Casino Transport Team.



Established in Casino in 1999, it began with three volunteer drivers, clocked up 77 journeys in its first year and cost \$2000 to run. Last year 16,000 patients were driven more than 107,000 km and the service cost \$54,000 to run. Yet it's provided by volunteer drivers, who use their own cars, and survives on grants and donations. Co-ordinator Elizabeth Brand says drivers are paid 40 cents a kilometre, half of which is paid by clients if they can afford it. The other half comes from grants and donations. "We receive calls from the hospitals in Brisbane asking us to come and collect patients to take home," Elizabeth says. "They often go by ambulance and have no way of getting back. This is an area with an ageing population and medical services are moving further away so the demand is increasing." The team's office manager, Shirley Smith, who applies for grants and donations says the service is important for the region's wellbeing.

Volunteers caring for their fellow aged residents contribute generously to this service to help elderly country people overcome the tyranny of distance. That makes it an attractive recipient of funds from the Wicking Trust which provides grants of up to \$10,000 for community projects that care for the aged in rural Australia.



Working in Dairying Communities Grants Program

“The Gardiner Foundation was created by an Act of Parliament for the benefit of the Victorian dairy industry and its communities (for technology innovation and social development). This year the foundation will provide \$5million in cash and we will leverage that through others groups to collectively create projects worth \$25million. We provide \$100,000 for community development grants of up to \$5000 through FRRR. What I’ve seen is funding for an enormous number of projects – some small and some large – most of which are having significant technological impacts on the industry and some of which are making a social impact.”

*Chris Nixon, Chairman,
Gardiner Foundation*

Creating a Place to Play (Victoria)

Gunbower Pre-School - \$5,000



Sometimes when droughts go on for a while, an off-farm project that provides a little social activity is just the ticket for anxious farmers. This was the case with the planned rotunda at the pre-school in the northern Victorian dairy town of Gunbower. Fundraising began in 2005 and continued up to the rotunda’s construction last year.

Suzanne Gundry, a mother of three and a dairy farmer, says dads built it and mums painted it. Finished with internal seating, the rotunda now doubles as a play and lunch area and a concert stage for the pre-school’s 20 three and four-year-olds. “It was a good project,” says Suzanne. It brought the guys into town. They’d spend a few hours there building and we’d get lunch. It was good social interaction.”

FRRR liked the way this project provided a facility for kids, and a goal and social activity for parents during a difficult time.

Feeding Families (Victoria)

East Loddon P12 College - \$750

In the height of drought earlier this year, the administration at the East Loddon P-12 College, 55km north of Bendigo, realised that families of their students were in financial difficulty. The school is in irrigated dairy farm, wheat and sheep country and water allocations to some farms had run out. “We have some proud families here and the parents have always been supportive of the school and have paid for camps and extracurricular activities,” says business manager Sue Cail. “We had a policy at this school of working out what we could do to help them out and we decided we

would try to apply for as many grants as we could.” One of the grants, from The Gardiner Foundation through FRRR, provided 15, \$50 supermarket vouchers to dairying families hit hard after years of little rain. “The good thing was that everybody who applied received a voucher,” Sue says. “We didn’t have to pick and choose. One woman rang us to say thank you because the voucher arrived the very week the family realised they wouldn’t have enough money to put food on the table. People have used up all their reserves.” The school policy has worked well to date, with the school’s entire 2007 budget for camps and excursions funded through grants and donations. “It’s a good way of saying thank you to the parents,” says Sue.

Teachers have gone out of their way to care for the families of their students in this project which enhances community relationships.

Warming a Community (Victoria)

Poowong Football Netball Club - \$5,000

Picture the scene. It’s a freezing day in south Gippsland. The footballers and netballers, fresh from their games are hovering around a tiny gas heater in the club rooms. It’s too cold to hang about so they head home. This was the scenario a few years back at Poowong, a dairy farming town of 300 people in eastern Victoria. With FRRR’s support that tiny heater has been replaced with two large heaters and the rooms are warming social occasions from Lions Club meetings, to ladies cards nights and anniversary celebrations. Club president Peter Notman estimates the rooms are used twice as much since the heating was installed. “There’s no community centre here,” says Peter. The only other meeting spot is the local pub or an older hall which is too big for many occasions.” This year, five of the club’s seven netball teams and three out of the five football teams are due to play in finals this year.

A town’s investment in improvements to its sporting club rooms has returned dividends not just for sporting groups but for many others in the community.

Encouraging Kids into Dairy Industry Careers (Victoria)

South West Local Learning and Employment Network - \$5,000

Jason Beveridge will have to wait some time yet to realise the impact of his work but in years to come if one of his former students steps forward to tell him she or he became a food technician or a geneticist Jason will be very happy. That's because his job is to build links between schools and businesses so students are exposed to a range of careers. Jason recently did that by running a five-session radio workshop during which 32 students, mostly in Years Eight to Nine, in eight schools in south-west Victoria went out and interviewed people working in the dairy industry and then used the interviews to make their own radio show. Broadcast on the community radio station, Otway FM, and recorded live in front of school audiences, the shows were a hit. "One of the main focuses was for kids to see the range of employment opportunities in the industry," says Jason, a community partnership facilitator with the South West Local Learning and Employment Network "Kids might think the only job in dairying is farming but there's a heap of other options. The kids from Mortlake Secondary College, for instance, visited the laboratory of Total Livestock Genetics and they loved it." The Gardiner Foundation's grant in this instance paid for a laptop, recording software and bought on-air time. Jason isn't yet sure how many of the 32 students will take up dairy industry careers but he think there are a lot more 'maybes' among the students now.

This project combined learning and fun while engaging the wider business sector in the region's future



Strengthening Rural Counselling (Victoria)

Upper Hume Community Health Service - \$2,500

The bushfires of 2003 and recent drought taught the people of north-east Victoria something vital: that counsellors helping rural communities need support and professional supervision themselves. "The counsellors are often from rural communities and farms themselves," says Katherine Washington who is part of an alliance of community service organisations and local governments in the Wodonga region, called the Upper Hume Primary Care Partnership Rural Counselling Group. "After the bushfires came through we realised that we needed to make sure that those people supporting their communities were supported in their own organisations so we worked with LaTrobe University to develop a course for people supervising counsellors," Katherine says. "Previously they could get supervision but for many that meant a 3.5 hour drive to Melbourne. We needed a greater pool of supervisors here. We ran the course locally one year and it was oversubscribed but we still weren't attracting agencies and counsellors right out in the rural, mostly dairying, areas in the valleys and mountainous region. The next year, with FRRR's help, we offered five scholarships for counsellors in the rural regions. Doing the course entailed costs; it meant people would be away from the families and they needed accommodation so the scholarships were important." Katherine says most community organisations in the region now have a supervision policy to ensure counsellors in rural areas where there are often crises such as fire, flood and drought are supported.

Recognising a need to care for their crisis counsellors, the communities of north-east Victoria have found ways to support them while simultaneously bringing new skills to their region.



Working in Dairying Communities Grants Program

Catering for Farmers Market (Victoria)

Central Murray Produce Group - \$5000



There's nothing like a top breakfast and a good coffee to crank up stallholders and patrons at a farmers' market. At Echuca the monthly market's voluntary organisers, the Central Murray Produce Group (CMPG), with FRRR's help, have renovated a caravan into a catering van. Their all-weather, council-approved catering service doubles as a fundraiser on other occasions. For example, a catering gig at the national aircraft show in the town delivered enough profits for the group to donate \$1000 to local charities. Olive oil producer and CMPG treasurer John Clifford says other charities use the van and it's helped build the group's profile. "The market has been going for five years now. We get 200 people through most Saturdays. We have 51 members, all local producers who have stalls at the market selling wines, eggs, oil, seasonal fruits, vegetables and fish. We acquired the caravan shell and fixed it up. Volunteers did a lot of the work and we employed local tradespeople. One third of the funding came from FRRR, the rest from stall fees. The Shire of Campaspe helped us with the project submission and continues to help with the market venue and power and water for the van."

A simple idea has evolved into a fundraiser that also helps build the profile of a market that's important for local food producers and buyers.

Cyclone Larry Get Involved in Community Grants Program

Rebuilding a Wildlife Refuge (Queensland)

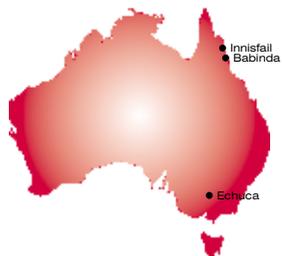
Eagles Nest Wildlife Hospital Inc - \$9,460

When Cyclone Larry tore through Queensland in March 2006, the impact on wildlife was massive. Harry Kunz had 30 to 40 injured animals arriving daily at the Eagles Nest Wildlife Hospital he runs with volunteers near Ravenshoe, west of Innisfail. "It was mainly gliders and possums, injured by falling branches and baby birds," says Harry who simultaneously was busy rebuilding parts of the hospital that had also been wrecked by Larry's fury. Trees, three to four meters in diameter, crashed on to cages and fencing. "It was devastating because we had just finished building 10 aviaries and six large flight enclosures most of which were destroyed by the cyclone," Harry says.

The Community Enterprise Foundation through FRRR funded repairs to the eagle enclosure including new and higher fencing to keep dogs out.

Established 25 years ago by Harry, the wildlife refuge eventually became too costly for him alone but his passion motivated neighbours and supporters into action. "I couldn't afford to keep running it," he says. "It cost me \$17,000 for food and vet bills and I was on a disability pension. I was on the edge of having to give it all up, but the locals said 'we need you'. They encouraged me to get incorporated so I could apply for grants and get tax deductibility for donations. In the first few months we got 150 members. We charged a membership fee and attracted donations for our daily running costs. Now we're working on developing an education centre."

Adversity has only served to consolidate the community behind this project that now promises to expand as an educational centre.



Rebuilding a Theatre (Queensland)

Babinda District Community Association - \$20,628

The Babinda-Munro Theatre, (built in 1956) along with the town hall, was the heart of Babinda, south of Cairns, but then Cyclone Larry ripped that heart out. "It was pretty devastating," says Babinda District Community Association president Debra Quabba. "Because we were the only picture theatre around, people would travel from Innisfail to go to the movies. It added to our economy." When the post-cyclone clean-up began, people said the theatre's restoration was vital. The Community Enterprise Foundation helped fund that restoration. Owner and pharmacist Fred Lizzio, who had bought it 30 years earlier, says the cyclone brought great publicity and fuelled greater interest. More than 12 months after the cyclone, the completely rebuilt and modernised theatre was re-opened and to date patronage has been better than before the cyclone. "The equipment is far superior and the acoustics are better," Fred says.

FRRR liked the way the people of Babinda realised what an asset they had in their own picture theatre and worked to rebuild it.



"The Community Enterprise Foundation, established by the Bendigo Bank, is about sharing the dreams of our community partners to enable social change. We support them by administering funding, providing education around best practice grant-making and strategic planning. Our aim is to strengthen communities.

Bendigo Bank has more than 67,000 customers and 160 staff in the area where Cyclone Larry hit and many were subjected to its devastation. Bendigo Bank ran an appeal which enabled the Community Enterprise Foundation to help the area recover.

This was a great opportunity for two Bendigo-based philanthropic organisations, the Community Enterprise Foundation and the FRRR, to get together to assist a devastated part of Australia. The program was about helping and healing and leaving a lasting legacy. It acknowledged the fantastic community spirit and efforts of local community groups and organisations."

*Natalie Elliott,
Chief Executive Officer, Community
Enterprise Foundation*

Cyclone Larry Get Involved in Community Grants Program

Reviving a Town Garden (Queensland)

Silkwood Action Group - \$3,000



Bette Davis had battled the drought for long enough in the 4.5 hectare garden that the Silkwood Action Group had created on the old railway reserve next door. The hoses were rotting, the taps were breaking and she just couldn't keep up the watering. She and her small group of fellow retirees in the action group had planted the garden to beautify the town in a bid to reinvigorate a real estate market. They organised arbour day when school kids came to help plant 4000 trees. They shifted the town's old bank - at one time Australia's smallest - on to the site and made it into a pictorial museum. Then Larry arrived, dropping trees across watering lines and felling taps. The action group was resolute and with support from their council set about clearing Larry's devastation in the garden. They also installed a new irrigation system and fixed taps. Come the next drought, Bette won't face the same watering slog. "We're a small voluntary group," she says. "We're all in our 60s. We have a lot of ideas but it takes a lot of effort and money so we're extremely grateful for FRRR's help."

This project involved a small band of volunteers keen to help boost their town's economy and future.

Reviving a Green Dinosaur (Queensland)

Millaa Millaa Chamber of Commerce - \$5,500



Cyclone Larry may have destroyed but he also created opportunities. That's what environmental planner and rainforest ecologist Nicky Moore sees happening in her town of Millaa Millaa, population 1000, 50km inland from Innisfail. Just near the town on a plot that had been surrounded by bush, an enormous 1000-year-old kauri tree had lain flat since 2002. Plans to haul it out and make it centre stage of a new tourist and interpretive centre were held up by red tape. But then Larry arrived, flattening the surrounding bush and creating an opportunity for the tree's removal. The chamber of commerce grabbed the moment. "We managed to get eight meters of the tree out," says Nicky. "It cost \$1000 a metre to move. FRRR contributed \$5000 and we got private funding for the rest. The log is now sitting in the main street while we develop a management plan and try to find funding to build a home and interpretive centre for it." The centre, it's hoped, will revive the township's flagging economy which has faltered in the wake of a local sawmill closure, a butter factory relocation elsewhere and dairy deregulation which has reduced the number of local dairy farms from 200 to 78 farms. "When Cyclone Larry hit Innisfail it also hit us," Nicky says. "While it was terribly devastating, it also gave us opportunities. It created impetus in communities that were able to access support and funding. Now we have the log out we have leverage to get our tourist centre established. That was a vital first step."

FRRR liked the way the people of Millaa Millaa used difficult times to establish the foundations for a centre to renew their economy.

Australia Post Stretching the Envelope Tasmania & Victoria



Learning by Hatching Chickens (Victoria)

Create Geelong Inc - \$800

Sometimes kids leave schools because they just can't cope. They may have learning difficulties, be in trouble with the police or be affected by drugs and alcohol. Create Geelong is a community training organisation that provides adult education and training including a program especially for early school leavers. None have completed Year 10 and most are in Years Seven or Eight. "The kids come out of school quite anti-reading and writing, so we tend to do strange things to overcome that antipathy," says Create Youth's manager Fiona Lodge. "We ran a literacy project for people aged 15- 16 who find reading and writing difficult. With the FRRR funds, we bought an incubator, heat lamp and fertilised chicken eggs. The young people raised them for six weeks and we ran a literacy program around this. Some of the learning was around the life cycle of an egg and caring for chickens and small animals. One of the great outcomes was the willingness of the kids to get involved. They were engaging in science, English, maths and biology without being aware they were doing it. Plus it was very exciting waiting for the eggs to hatch."

During the program, a literacy pack that can be used again was developed with FRRR's support. Next up is a frog breeding and rearing project. "The FRRR funding was a really smooth, easy process," says Fiona. "We also got great feedback and were able to discuss any concerns FRRR had with the project because it involved animals."

FRRR liked the way this community organisation engaged disaffected young people to learn, and developed a model that can be used again.



Creating Tomorrow's Defence Forces (Tasmania)

St Helen's Navel Cadet Unit Committee Inc. - \$426

At 15 years of age, Nathan Watkins has already had three years as a naval cadet. The teenager, from St Helen's in Tasmania, has his heart set on becoming a Navy chef's apprentice so when the town's Marine Rescue Association ran a two-day leadership camp for cadets he was keen as mustard. He cooked for the cadets and staff. "I cooked eggs, bacon, porridge, baked beans and toast for breakfasts, lunch was meat and salads and we had roasts for dinner," Nathan says. "It was a pretty cool camp. I liked the teamwork games like tug-of-war." The association's Julie Watkins says Australia Post's fund distributed through FRRR paid to hire a bus to take Nathan and 22 other cadets, aged 12-16, to the camp at Ulverston, four hours from St Helen's. The camp was run military style. Staff and cadets had to be on duty at all hours, similar to a naval situation and the kids had various roles during each watch. Julie says the camp changed wayward kids, many of whom were less disruptive at school upon their return. She says cadets gives young people things to do in an area known primarily for its forestry, fishing and farming industries.



FRRR liked the way St Helen's works to engage its young people and develops their leadership skills.

"It's the knowledge and expertise FRRR has in regional communities that we rely on.

They have built up enormous credibility. We feel very confident with FRRR on board because we know they are going to help us make a difference in local communities."

Janice Mascini, communications manager Vic/Tas, Australia Post

Dairy Farmers Creating Greener Pastures Grants Program

"Dairy Farmers has been part of the fabric of rural Australia for more than 100 years, so it is only natural we support the dairying communities in which we operate to ensure their future sustainability. Working with FRRR on our Creating Greener Pastures community grants program has enabled Dairy Farmers to award more than \$200,000 to support drought-affected rural and regional dairying communities."

*Ian Langdon, Chairman,
Dairy Farmers Group*

Replanting Riparian Zones (Queensland)

Far North Queensland Natural Resource Management Ltd
- \$60,000

High up in Queensland's Atherton Tablelands, dairy farmers make a living from areas cleared decades ago by settlers. For many decades tree-clearing was de rigeur but with experience came the knowledge that clearing riversides reduced nature's ability to filter water. In February the North Johnstone Lake Eacham Landcare Group began replanting riparian areas along the Barron River that eventually runs to the sea at Cairns and along the North Johnstone River that does the same at Innsfail. With \$60,000 from Dairy Farmers through FRRR, the group will plant almost two hectares of trees. Penny Scott, from FNQ Natural Resource Management which sought FRRR's support, says the revegetation is vital for improving the quality of water that eventually flows into the Great Barrier Reef and for building habitat.

Larry Crook, a contractor from the Eacham Shire community revegetation unit which has been engaged to maintain the plantings until the trees have formed their own canopies, says the plantings will end stock access to rivers, reduce erosion and improve the quality of water in the rivers which supply houses and farms.

This project was timely in responding to a community's real need due to damage from Cyclone Larry. FRRR and Dairy Farmers were there to help.

Watering a Community (Queensland)

Freestone State School P & C Association - \$4,400

When water dwindled during drought, the parents of the Freestone State School's 33 children knew a bore was the only way to safeguard supplies to the school. With \$9000 from the Queensland Government they had enough funds to drill the hole but raising enough money to sink a pump was a long-term project. "It would have taken us years of fundraising," says parent Bill McVeigh. "One of our families found out about FRRR funding at a dairy farmers' meeting. We applied but didn't think much more about it. A couple of days before Christmas I got a call to say our application was successful. The FRRR grant from Dairy Farmers allowed us to equip the bore. The drilling rig had to go down to 320 feet to get to water which was further than we thought. The whole project cost \$17,000. Now we have a permanent supply of excellent quality water. The kids have started their own greenhouse and they propagate native trees from seed which they'll plant along roadsides and elsewhere to replace those lost in the drought. This is a big thing for the kids. They children all come from farming families and appreciate and know the value of water."

Bill says the entire community of 350 people at Freestone, 15km east of Warwick in south east Queensland, has benefited. "Our rural fire brigade can tap the bore to fill up. It's been important in the drought to have a local supply of water for fire fighting. If we didn't get the grant we'd just have an empty hole in the ground and we'd be trucking water. At the moment people don't have excess money for fundraising so this was a real boost to the community. It shows somebody does care."

FRRR worked closely with Dairy Farmers to promote the program within local communities. Local participation has been integral to the program's success.

Upgrading a Community Kitchen (NSW)

Jamberoo Youth Hall Committee - \$1,679



A small grant at Jamberoo, 10km inland from Kiama in NSW, funded a new fridge, stove and microwave for the youth hall after it was renovated with funds from the local shire. A popular meeting place for the CWA, scouts and cubs and for exercise and yoga classes, it's also hired out for birthdays and other celebrations. Hall committee treasurer Vic East says that although other halls in the town of 1000 people are larger, they're also more costly to use. "We try to keep our costs down so many groups can use it," says Vic. "We hope to have more private and casual users hire it for weddings and parties now that we have an improved kitchen."

FRRR responds to many requests for improving community infrastructure knowing the importance of facilities to small communities such as Jamberoo.



Providing Exercises for the Mind (Victoria)

Aspire: A Pathway to Mental Health - \$5,000

With figures showing a falling life expectancy for men in the dairying area of Corangamite around Camperdown and with referrals to mental health specialists increasing as a result of the drought, a group of agencies and services figured it was time to go public. Aspire, which supports people suffering depression and other mental illnesses, along with Terang and Mortlake Health Services, Terang and District Racing and South West Health Care, ran a mental health expo at the Terang Racecourse during the recent drought.

Guest speaker fishing guru Rex Hunt helped draw a crowd of about 170 people from around the Corangamite and Moyne Shires in Victoria's south-west. At the expo, crisis support organisations and others promoted their services. They included a men's helpline, Lifeline, beyondblue, youth workers, psychiatric services, RoadSafe advocates, Victoria Police, finance companies, Centrelink and health insurers. "We had three goals," says Aspire's Helen Hunter, a support worker from Camperdown. "We wanted to provide an opportunity for agencies providing drought relief and mental health services to network; we wanted an avenue for the community to find out what services are available; and, we wanted to carry out a community project involving groups that don't normally work together. We were successful in all three. A number of locals commented afterwards that they didn't realise how important it was to keep an eye on neighbours." Helen says that without Dairy Farmers funding through FRRR, the expo would not have happened. "We couldn't get any funding assistance from the health sector," she says. "The rural sector was the one that supported us. Alongside FRRR, we had support from Elders, Warrnambool Cheese and Butter, Murray Goulburn, local MPs and local businesses."

As a Dairy Farmer producing community Camperdown took the opportunity to help people help themselves at an important time.



AFL Foundation Kick Start Grants Program

“Knowing the critical role sport plays in small rural communities, FRRR and the AFL with help from Westfield Ltd, formed a partnership to support communities of up to 5,000 people keep this role alive. These grants have gone all over Australia and the AFL is proud to support rural communities, where ever they are.”

Bill Kelty
AFL Commissioner

Building a Shed for Sports Equipment (NSW)

Boggabilla Central School - \$9,957

A new shed in a school yard is more than just a storage space at the Boggabilla Central School in northern NSW. The shed, funded by the AFL Foundation through FRRR, will be built by a professional construction team and the school's housing and construction students, Kerrod Sampson, Lyndon Binge and Brent Duncan. Principal Denise Burke says the school needs somewhere to store its valuable sport and gym equipment. The shed offered a learning opportunity and solved the storage problem. It will be built this year.

The Boggabilla Central School has found a way to make a domestic addition a learning experience for some students.

Building Up a Small Town Gym (Victoria)

Rainbow Community Gym - \$4,199

A check of calves around Rainbow, in western Victoria, might show a little more muscle in recent years, thanks to the town gym's new treadmill. Three years ago local policeman Stuart Gale and Year 10 students at the Rainbow Secondary College opened a gym on the town's recreation reserve. "It's been a fantastic success," Stuart says. "Three to four people a day come here which is more than ever used the rec reserve before." There are weight stations, a benchpress, a stepper, a recumbent bike and normal bike plus a rower but Stuart says the new treadmill, bought with AFL Foundation funds channelled through FRRR, has been a hit, especially with the town's oldies. "They're really loving it, especially at this time of year because it means they can still walk safely when it's dark and foggy outside." Stuart says the gym is now an integral part of the community and is used by all people of all ages, including the local footballers and netballers.

FRRR liked the many benefits for health, the economy and for boosting social interaction through sport, that this project offered a small rural town.

Donation Accounts Program

Building a Civic Centre (NSW)

Henty Community Civic Centre

Henty, half way between Albury and Wagga has been doing it tough. The farming town of 900 people in the heart of wheat, barley, canola, lupins, wool and cattle country has had five poor seasons in a row. Yet it has just built a new \$1.5 million civic centre and the slab has been poured for a retirement village which will include a 90-bed hostel. By anyone's measure, that's a grand achievement. It's due to people like Milton Taylor, Chair of the Henty Community Bank board. (Henty was the first community bank set up by the Bendigo Bank outside Victoria.) After the town's memorial hall fell into severe disrepair, quotes to fix it came in at \$500,000. The town had \$170,000. However it also had its community bank, which nine years after starting has a \$53million portfolio. The bank agreed to pool its profits with the Henty Community Centre Club. Together they borrowed \$1.5million and they sought grants through the Federal Government's Regional Partnerships Program, help from FRRR and did some good old hometown fundraising.

"We are very pleased with the relationship we have with FRRR. It has made it possible in our small town to have a fantastic venue with the best auditorium around," says Milton.

We don't call it a club. We call it a civic centre. Everyone in the community is a stakeholder. The project has increased the use of the public hall enormously and it keeps people in Henty rather than going to larger centres." Milton says the private company building the retirement village is doing so on the strength of the town's efforts in the past nine years.



"FRRR is effectively helping regions communities, donors and their projects become a reality by offering the Donation Accounts Program. This program allows others to be philanthropic without setting up their own infrastructure. FRRR receives tax deductible donations for approved accounts and then works with communities to ensure the maximum benefit is achieved, economically and socially. This program ensures FRRR is helping rural Australia achieve their full potential."

Sylvia Admans, CEO, FRRR

"If it wasn't for the FRRR arrangement, we wouldn't have been able to achieve what we have. The retirement village is a private project but it has been in response to our success in attracting funding and the success of the community bank model and FRRR's involvement. And in another 18 months we will have paid off the civic centre debt."



Creating Occasional Care for Kids (Western Australia)

Wongan Hills Cubby House Inc



Occasional child care for the farm and town families of the wheatbelt town of Wongan Hills, about 190km north east of Perth, was looking shaky when the leased child care premises were put up for sale. Converting existing buildings would cost the same as building a new child

care centre so a committee of 10 women led by Sue Middleton began a drive to raise \$250,000 to do the latter. Through an arrangement with FRRR, the group was able to offer tax deductibility for donations raised through a sponsor- a-childcare-place drive. Bronze sponsorships were offered at \$350, silver at \$650 and gold at \$1000. This raised \$40,000 setting the committee on the way to their goal. With this, they secured grants from Lotteries, the Federal Government's Regional Partnerships Program, the local Wongan-Ballidu Shire, local businesses, the Variety Club and ran lots and lots of raffles. In July, just two years after the first public meeting to consider their future, Wongan Hill's new occasional childcare centre opened. Managed by volunteers and run by professional staff, it provides childcare four days a week for 40 weeks a year, providing care for up to 19 children at a time.

"We have 34 families on our books," says Shelley McQueen, a volunteer parent who helped make the centre a reality. "Forty per cent of our families are working parents. A lot are from farms on days when mums need to help dads on the farm."

About the Programs

Annual Grants:

Applications are accepted year-round. See www.frrr.org.au for criteria. It is advisable to call FRRR before applying.

Community Foundation Program :

Applications are accepted year-round. See www.frrr.org.au for criteria. It is advisable to call FRRR before applying.

Pratt Water:

Applications for grants in this program must address water management and salinity matters. Priority is given to projects in the Murrumbidgee region. Application forms are on the website and applications close four times a year.

Small Grants for Small Rural Communities Program:

This program offers grants of up to \$5000 to communities of up to 10,000 people for a range of community projects. Applications close March 31 and September 30 each year.

Rural Education Program:

This program provides grants from a few hundred dollars up to \$25,000 for education related projects. Priority is given to drought affected areas. Applications forms are available on www.frrr.org.au. Applications are considered quarterly.

The Gardiner Foundation:

This annual program offers grants of up to \$5000 to Victoria dairying communities of up to 10,000 people. Please visit the website for details. www.frrr.org.au

ANZ Seeds of Renewal Program:

This annual program offers grants of up to \$10,000 to rural communities with a population of 15,000. Funding priorities are determined annually. Please check website for details. www.frrr.org.au

Caring for Ageing in Rural Australia:

This annual program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to communities of up to 10,000 people for projects that address ageing and aged care issues in rural Australia. Please check website for details. www.frrr.org.au

Donation Accounts:

Applications for establishing a donation account within FRRR are considered at any time. Contact FRRR for more details.

Back to School Program:

This annual program is delivered through Community Foundations and other organisations. Contact FRRR for more details.

Australia Post Stretching the Envelope:

This program offered grants of up to \$1,000 for youth, education (especially literacy), arts and culture projects in rural and regional Victoria and Tasmania.

McEwen Foundation:

This program provides grants of up to \$15,000 for charitable projects within the Goulburn Valley District with Deductible Gift Recipient Status (DGR).

If you would like to donate to FRRR or want to apply for a grant, check www.frrr.org.au or email info@frrr.org.au or phone 1800 170 020 or (03) 5430 2399.

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