

2019/20 Annual Review **FRRR** Strengthening & Responding



At a glance

\$24.8M *

raised up from \$11.7M

34,201

donors up from 623

\$2.8M

Largest donation

\$1

Smallest donation

53

Fundraising Accounts

raised

\$1.9M

7

Giving Sub-Funds

raised

\$2.4M

2,360

applications
requested

\$41.8M

to support projects
valued at

\$88M

874

grants awarded
(37% of applications)
totalling

\$15M

\$150K

Largest grant

\$490

Smallest grant

61%

disaster related

474

postcodes

333

hours on

3,865

phone calls

Welcome

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal is the only national foundation focused on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional Australia. Our unique model links goodwill with good purpose to enhance the vitality of remote and rural communities.

This Review records FRRR's performance over what has been a tumultuous year, and also looks back on some of the highlights of FRRR's first 20 years. We trust that you find it interesting and always welcome your feedback or suggestions.

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We acknowledge and extend our respect to the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which our Foundation is located in Bendigo, and to the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our programs are assessed and delivered. We pay respect to their ancient and continuing cultures, their connections to the land, and to the Elders, past, present and emerging.

* All donations are after admin fees

Celebrating a milestone - 20 years

2020 marks 20 years since FRRR was founded, and from where we sit, the 'experiment' has been a success. The foresight of Baillieu Myer AC and the efforts of the many people that have lent their support have shaped an organisation that is genuinely focused on supporting remote, rural and regional communities.

Fast Facts 2000 – 2020

Applications:	32,148
Requesting:	\$316M
Grants:	10,967
Median grant:	\$4,800
Awarded:	\$115M Includes:
▪ Disaster projects:	\$26M
▪ Learning, education:	\$22M
▪ Building community resilience:	\$24M

We have always been inspired by the resilience and dedication of local community leaders, and we know that they are best placed to know what is needed. Our role is to trust and support them, and amplify their voices.

We are grateful to the hundreds of donors who have partnered with us to support those diverse needs - from upgrading community facilities, to resources for remote preschools, funding aged-care equipment, upskilling young people, supporting communities through drought, or funding creative projects to connect people following natural disasters.

We are proud to have spent the past 20 years helping create vibrant, sustainable remote, rural and regional communities, and look forward to the next 20.

“FRRR started out as a unique experiment in public policy. It brought together the federal government, philanthropic community and also Australian regional communities, to try and build a new model of how we funded and supported regional Australia.”

Mike Mrdak AO

Our long-standing partners

FRRR has had long-standing support from many people and organisations. Those listed below have been part of FRRR's story for all or most of our 20 years.

ANZ
Australia Post
Australian Government
Gardiner Dairy Foundation
Ian Rollo Currie Estate Foundation
John T Reid Charitable Trusts
Percy Baxter Charitable Trust
Sidney Myer Fund
The Calvert-Jones Foundation
The Ian Potter Foundation
The Pratt Foundation
The Ross Trust
The Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation
The Yulgilbar Foundation
Tim Fairfax Family Foundation
VIC Dept of Health & Human Services
- VIC Bushfire Appeal Fund
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
William Buckland Foundation

...and many hundreds of individual donors

Murgon: One in 1,993

Over our 20 years, FRRR has awarded grants in 1,993 postcodes. One of them is 4605 - Murgon, in south east Queensland, where we've awarded nearly \$280,000 via 35 grants to 11 organisations.

Over the last 15 years, FRRR and the Murgon community have worked together to support the needs of the region through some of the most challenging times.

Education has been a key focal area, with \$60,000 distributed via FRRR's Back to School program to support 1,200 students in need. For a community that has had to deal with climate vagaries from flood to drought, these micro-grants have helped ease financial stress and helped ensure children start the school year ready to learn.



The Murgon SES played a critical role in supporting and ensuring the safety of the community during the 2011 floods, including performing swift water rescues and transporting medical staff to care for patients in hospital, all without emergency radio contact. They were very grateful to receive assistance from FRRR to fund equipment that provides consistent communication channels for emergency services personnel working around dangerous situations.

The Murgon community is focused on its history, as well as its current challenges and future needs. With FRRR's support, the community has helped strengthen its sense of place through projects at the Dairy and Heritage Museum and the Cherbourg Historical Precinct. At the same time, there has been investment in building economic strength and sustainability to ensure the community has the tools and skills to deal with the challenges it has faced, and will continue to face, into the future.



“What our community values most about FRRR is its belief in the power of people to build our communities, and that FRRR takes a risk on emerging projects and opportunities – thank you and Happy Birthday!”

Red Earth Community Foundation

**PLACES
& FACES**

**CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE & PLACES
OF RURAL & REGIONAL AUSTRALIA**

Click on the QR code to see more stories of FRRR's impact in communities over the last 20 years, and hear from some of the people who have helped shape FRRR.



The way we work

FRRR is the only national foundation specifically focused on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional Australian communities.

Our unique model connects common purpose and philanthropic investment with locally prioritised needs. It amplifies these grants and support into longer-term capability, momentum and resilience. Harnessing goodwill for real and better results.

We are inspired and driven by the needs and abilities of the communities we support and our programs are co-created and responsive. We understand the big picture, and the fine detail. Our passionate team coupled with our reach and proven processes mean we can deliver on real needs at scale.

In the reporting year, FRRR reviewed our role and set our strategy for 2021-2025. Through well-informed investment in people and organisations that are in and of their place, we believe we can stimulate ideas that lead to actions, both big and small, and drive vitality.

That's why we focus on:

- **People** – strengthening local not-for-profits, community groups, and volunteer-led efforts;
- **Place** – celebrating vibrant cultures, encouraging self-generation, and improving access to social and physical infrastructure; and
- **Disaster Resilience and Climate Solutions** – partnering with communities before, during and after disasters, and investing in solutions for increased climate resilience.

We listen and respond to the different needs of each community and support them to:

- **Seed and Strengthen** – funding and facilitating ideas and projects to fill gaps that will make a long-term difference to community strength;
- **Adapt and Evolve** – supporting communities to manage through change and disruption, and take advantage of new opportunities; and
- **Innovate and Renew** – backing communities to find new ways, try new things and to sustain momentum.

Our model is layered, and more than money. We use our expertise to:

1. Grant and Develop

With the support of governments, business, philanthropy and generous individuals we provide grants and resources that support the priorities that communities determine

2. Leverage and Broker

We harness FRRR's special tax status, knowledge, and networks to support innovation, self-generation, and unlock more giving to address community needs.

3. Share Insights and Learnings

We keep a pulse on the needs of remote, rural and regional communities and connect policymakers, communities, and funders with ideas, knowledge and lived experience to influence more targeted and relevant support for communities.

We believe that doing these things helps to create vibrant, adaptive and sustainable remote, rural and regional communities.

Diligent governance

FRRR is a **company limited by guarantee which holds DGR1 status via a special listing in the Tax Act**. Its operations are overseen by a Board of Directors that exercise the powers vested in them by corporation's law and the company's constitution. The Board is directly responsible to its **members**, the Sidney Myer Fund and the Australian Government, for the long-term health and prosperity of FRRR.

As we distribute funds contributed by a variety of donors, we rigorously adhere to **strong governance processes**. Applications are generally assessed by at least two FRRR staff, before being discussed by an advisory committee specific to each grant program, who confirm the projects to be recommended for approval. These are led by an FRRR Director as a sub-committee of the FRRR Board.

Where possible, independent subject matter experts are involved in the assessment of the applications. These people provide their support voluntarily and we thank them for their ongoing commitment. A highlight of the year was the continued development of the youth-led advisory panel for the ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program (pictured).

Applicants must acquit their grant within the time agreed, and program reviews are undertaken on a rotating basis. This year, we began reviewing the Strengthening Rural Communities program. Evaluation also began on the Disaster Resilient: Future Ready program, and the Investing in Rural Community Futures program.

FRRR's policies and practices provide the framework that govern day-to-day operations, ensuring that activities are conducted ethically and in accordance with best practice and, of course law, including well managed and transparent annual financial statements. FRRR regularly reviews and updates these policies. Pleasingly, FRRR's systems and processes have stood up extremely well to this unprecedented year.

In March 2020, FRRR appointed a Corporate Services Manager, who is responsible for the company Secretariat function, as well as oversight of all financial processes, working closely with the CEO. This has brought an even tighter focus on policies and processes, and greater support in internal accounting, given the increasing complexity of the Foundation. We thank Lisa Norden for her support in this role for the last six years. Her advice and assistance was greatly appreciated.

The Board has a **Nominations and Appointments Committee**, which meets as required, and a **Finance and Audit (F&A) Committee**, which meets quarterly. The F&A Committee oversees all aspects of financial investment and management of the Foundation. Koda Capital was engaged as investment advisors, and we subsequently refreshed our investment strategy, which has held relatively well through the pandemic. Our financial reports are independently audited by KPMG to confirm our financial processes meet all statutory requirements.



A message from Anne Grindrod

In July 2019, I became Acting Chairman of FRRR, following the retirement of the Rt Hon Ian Sinclair AC. I am delighted that both he and Bill Kelty AC agreed to become Patrons of FRRR and maintain their important association with the Foundation. The Board was pleased to welcome three new directors - the Hon Simon Crean and the Hon John Sharp AM, as well as Simon Atkinson, who replaced Dr Stephen Kennedy PSM as the Australian Government's representative.

The launch of our Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund at a Parliamentary breakfast hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister in August, was timely. Little could we have known that the devastating bushfire season that lay ahead would begin in September.

By focusing on sustainable community-led recovery, FRRR's team ensured grants reached affected communities. Program Managers spent time on the ground in many regions, increasing our collective understanding of emerging and continuing needs.

At an organisational level, the Board and staff conducted a review of FRRR's strategy. This involved consultations with donor partners and community leaders; reviewing the Foundation's strengths, and importantly, what we are uniquely able to achieve.

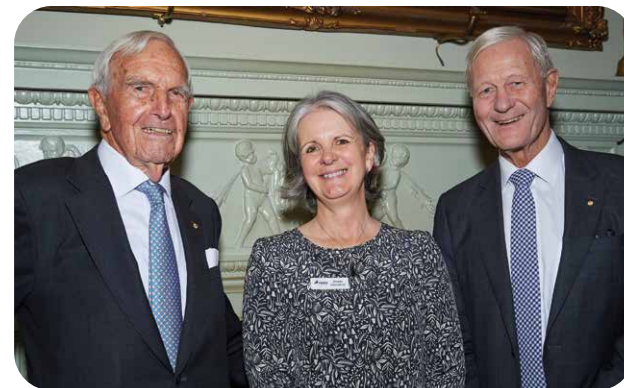
This work resulted in a five-year strategic plan which aims to strengthen social, economic, environmental, and cultural vitality for smaller and more remote communities, with a focus on targeting investment in the people, places, and disaster and climate resilience of remote, rural, and regional Australia. FRRR will continue as a grantmaker, playing a crucial role in leveraging and brokering support for remote and rural communities. Increasingly we will draw on our insights

and learnings from the last twenty years to both enhance capacity in communities, and to drive best practice.

In all FRRR's activities, the support of our donor partners is crucial, and we greatly appreciate both our long-term partnerships, and the newer relationships that have developed over the last 12 months. I wish to sincerely thank our energetic and enthusiastic CEO, Natalie Egleton, and her team for the wonderful way in which they have responded to all that this year has presented. They have always remained focused on supporting communities, and I am very grateful for their commitment and dedication.

Despite the difficult year many have faced, FRRR is well placed to enable great opportunities for renewal. I am confident of a positive future, if we continue to trust local leaders to identify community-led solutions to the many challenges ahead for remote and rural communities throughout Australia.

Anne Grindrod
Deputy Chairman



From the Chairman

I have had the privilege to be involved with FRRR since 2002, first as a Director, and now as its second Chairman. I am immensely proud to lead this organisation - the only national foundation specifically focused on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional Australia.

I thank Anne Grindrod for serving as Acting Chairman for the first half of the reporting year. I greatly appreciated her leadership and am fortunate to continue to work closely with her as the Deputy Chairman, especially at such a unique juncture.

The first half of 2020 was a testing time for so much of country Australia. Although there was good rainfall in some places during the year, the effects of drought are ongoing in many places, and even where it has rained, true recovery will take years.

Australia also experienced severe bushfires, stretching across nearly every state and territory. As they have time and again, FRRR's generous donor partners stepped forward, committing funds for both immediate and long-term recovery. We are very appreciative of the trust placed in us to support affected communities as and when they need it in the years to come.

Then came COVID-19, which affected every aspect of life. With some lateral thinking and a little flexibility on FRRR's part, many local leaders have been able to find innovative ways to continue to support their communities over recent months. As with a natural disaster, the impacts of this pandemic are yet to be fully understood, but we stand ready to support communities.

I acknowledge and thank FRRR's employees, under the very capable leadership of CEO Natalie Egleton, for the way in which they have responded. We know it has been extremely challenging on many fronts, and the Board sincerely appreciates your efforts.

As I reflect more broadly on FRRR's 20 years, I want to record my gratitude to Baillieu Myer AC and John Anderson AO for their foresight in establishing FRRR.

I also acknowledge and thank the thousands of community leaders, donor partners, our dedicated staff, Board members and committee members, both past and present, who have all worked so hard to make FRRR a success. Together, we have all made a difference to the long-term vitality of remote, rural and regional Australia. I am confident that the Foundation will continue to make an even more impactful contribution over the next 20 years.

Thank you again for your support, and I trust that you will enjoy this Review, which offers a glimpse into the work of the Foundation this past financial year.

Tim Fairfax AC
Chairman

Board

FRRR's Board members are experienced and knowledgeable individuals who have strong backgrounds in government and business:

- Tim Fairfax AC, Chairman (01/01/2020)
- Anne Grindrod, Deputy Chair (Acting Chairman 01/07/2019-31/12/2019); Chair, Nominations & Appointments Committee
- Ian Allen AM
- Paddy Handbury
- Fred Grimwade – Chair, Finance & Audit Committee
- Patrick Myer
- Annabel White
- Bruce Scott OAM
- Sue Middleton
- Andrew McKenzie JP
- Hon Simon Crean
- John Sharp AM
- Simon Atkinson

Patrons

- His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
- Baillieu Myer AC
- Hon John Anderson AO
- Rt Hon Ian Sinclair AC
- Bill Kelty AC

From the CEO

FY2019/20 was a year in two parts – before bushfires, and after them.



The first half began in July 2019 with FRRR and the Blackall-Tambo Regional Council's Barcoo Way project being named the winner of the **2019 Best Small Grant Award** at the Australian Philanthropy Awards. This wonderful honour was a great opportunity to highlight the role philanthropy can play in supporting economic revival and diversity, especially in a drought-ravaged community.

We then moved into **strategic planning**. This work was led internally, with support from GoodWolf Partners and a Board sub-committee chaired by Acting Chairman Anne Grindrod. We consulted partners, identified gaps and reflected on FRRR's strengths.

While the strategy was being developed, the team continued to deliver on our granting activities. The **drought** continued, with more and more parts of the country being affected. In fact, this financial year we distributed more than \$6.3 million through 209 Tackling Tough Times Together grants, which stretched to every state and territory, bar the ACT.

In August, ahead of the expected bushfire season, we launched the **Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund (DRRF)** at an event in Canberra hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister. Our partnership with Aussie Farmers' Foundation saw the first donation of \$500,000 into the Fund, followed by an incredible response from a number of donors totalling nearly \$4.2 million by the financial year end. These funds are invested alongside FRRR's corpus, with returns to be granted out for locally-led preparedness and disaster recovery initiatives.

Black Summer Bushfires

From September through to April, FRRR's focus turned to supporting bushfire-affected communities, and managing an **unprecedented level of support** from donors. FRRR was grateful to be trusted by

many existing and new corporate, philanthropic and individual partners to support the medium to long-term recovery of fire-affected communities. Absorbing the significant influx of donations (more than 30,000 transactions) and new partnerships was a challenge alongside business as usual activities.

However, the **team stepped up** to support one another, to support communities, to manage donor enquiries, and to rapidly adjust and scale our systems to find more efficient solutions, saving time and money for the organisation, but also enabling a smoother solution for donors, and ultimately support for communities.

Seeing a need for coordination and information sharing, FRRR was pleased to **convene and participate** in government and philanthropic forums, championing the important role of community-led recovery, volunteers, and community leadership; bringing a practical and pragmatic lens to climate resilience and climate solutions. At every opportunity, we highlighted the importance of communities having control over their recovery and being able to access flexible funding.



Responding to COVID-19

Just as fire-affected communities were beginning their recovery journey, the impact of COVID-19 began to be felt.

Like so many, FRRR made a **rapid transition to remote working**, and despite the disruption, our team remained focused on keeping funding flowing into communities. We adjusted our policies and procedures, including providing a blanket six-month grant acquittal extension and increased grant variations. This gave grantees the **flexibility** needed to manage their projects, adapt plans with new timeframes, or adjust expenditure to respond as needs emerged. I continue to be inspired by local leaders and the ways in which they manage these kinds of situations. We have seen many wonderful examples of communities adjusting their plans, yet still supporting one another. I feel privileged to be able to walk alongside you as you strive to create stronger, more resilient communities.

I also extend my appreciation to our **Patrons and Directors**, who have offered so much advice and support during the year. It is wonderful to be working with Tim Fairfax AC, and to have worked so closely with Anne Grindrod for the first six months.

I particularly thank Dr Stephen Kennedy PSM for his support while on the Board and formally welcome Hon Simon Crean, Hon John Sharp AM and Simon Atkinson as Directors. I also thank Lisa Norden who stepped down this year as Company Secretary, after supporting FRRR for the last six years.

In closing, I thank all of our **donor partners** who have also offered FRRR flexibility and support, and partnered with us to help create vibrant and sustainable remote, rural and regional communities. You have helped us raise a record amount of funds – some \$24.8 million - and to award a record 874 grants valued at nearly \$15 million. I am grateful too for our external agencies and partners, especially those who helped us scale up our operations during the bushfires.

It has been an extraordinary year to mark FRRR's 20th anniversary. As we head into FRRR's next 20 years, I am delighted to be leading the Foundation, and to have the opportunity to guide FRRR as we embark on our next five-year plan.

Natalie Egleton

Natalie Egleton
CEO



"Finally, I take my hat off to the incredible FRRR staff team. They have shown strength, resilience, and perseverance during a year full of challenges, for which I am immensely grateful and full of admiration."

A dedicated team

Everyone on the FRRR team has a strong affinity with rural communities, with many either growing up in small towns, or currently living in regional areas.

This year, the team expanded to 20.4 FTE roles, reflecting the increased granting and more on-the-ground work in regional New South Wales.

The onset of the pandemic in March saw FRRR's offices close, and staff transition to working from home, which they continued to do for the rest of the calendar year. We are very grateful for the highly professional way in which they have continued to operate. It certainly hasn't been easy creating new ways of working and building new working relationships virtually. However, the team has stepped up and supported one another, and the communities we are all so passionate about.

Year in Review

The 2020 financial year was a memorable one for FRRR, in more ways than one. It was a record year for FRRR both in terms of donations and grants awarded.

Generous donors

FRRR had **operating and granting revenue of \$27,567,783**. Of this, there was **\$24,802,294 in grants received and donations**, including \$5,556,382 to support drought-affected communities.

Most donations during the year were in response to the **Black Summer bushfires**. In total, \$10 million was directed into granting programs to support bushfire recovery. We were grateful for donations from many long-term partners, including the Pratt Foundation who partnered with us to create a dedicated grant program to support the Snowy Valleys region in NSW. There were also several new partnerships, including News Corp Australia who established a Bushfire Recovery Fund. Other organisations to lend support included Go-To Skincare, who matched donations made alongside online sales; IKEA, who held a dedicated weekend for in-store donations; R.M.Williams and hundreds of small businesses, from cafes to breweries, artists to artisans who also held fundraisers.

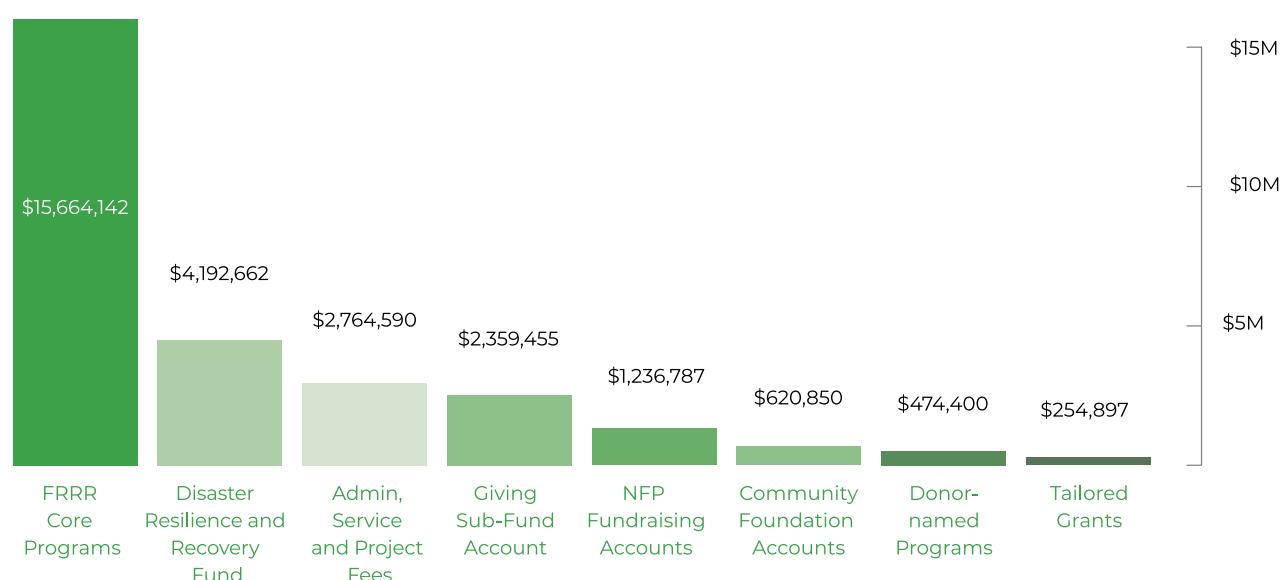
FRRR was extremely fortunate to be a nominated charity partner at three major music events, including Down to Earth in Melbourne, and Fire Fight Australia in Sydney. FRRR was chosen as the TV broadcast charity partner for Fire Fight, which raised \$3.2 million from the day-long event for FRRR to support medium to long-term bushfire recovery.

A further **\$4,192,662** was donated to FRRR's new **Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund (DRRF)**. The fund launched in August 2019 and by investing these core funds, we will be able to support communities in the event of a natural disaster or to fund preparedness activities in perpetuity.

The first donation came from Aussie Farmers Foundation, who transferred their assets to the fund on winding up. A subsequent significant increase came from Wilson Asset Management successfully offering to match donations from their network, resulting in a \$1 million contribution, for which we were extremely grateful.

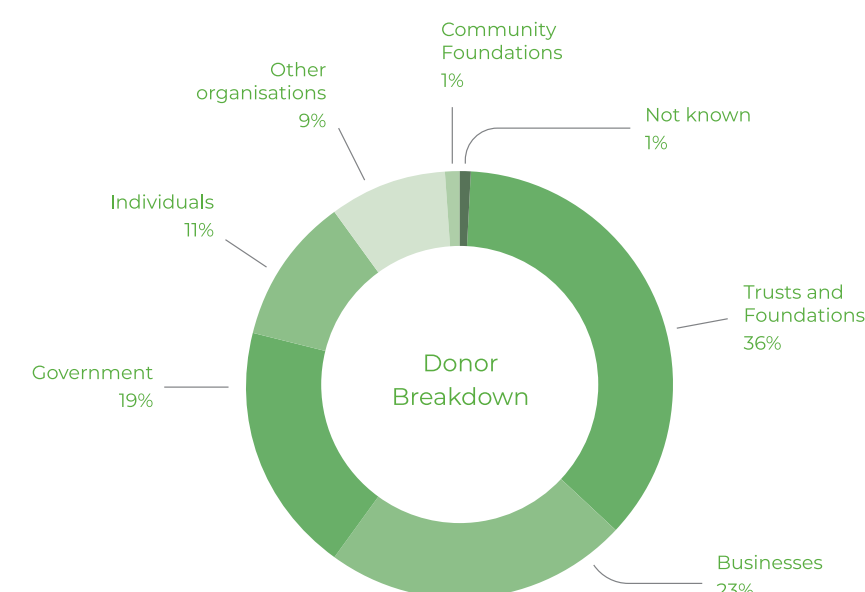
“We know that recovering from the devastating bushfires and drought will be a long and difficult road for the families and communities that have been affected. We hoped to make a small difference by supporting our fellow Australians and knew that our shareholders and supporters would want to contribute too.”

Kate Thorley, CEO, Wilson Asset Management, Donors to Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund



Total revenue included \$2,764,590 in administration and service fees (including the COVID-19 stimulus payments).

FRRR received a further \$664,568 in net investment income. The latter was significantly down on prior years, reflecting the general decline in returns as a result of COVID-19.



Balance sheet

As at the end of the financial year, the corpus sat at \$17,146,563, including the DRRF, with additional committed grant funds of \$11,328,745 and a further \$8,526,840 of deferred revenue. The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on investment earnings and capital value during 2019/20, with a 10% decline in the overall capital value of the corpus.

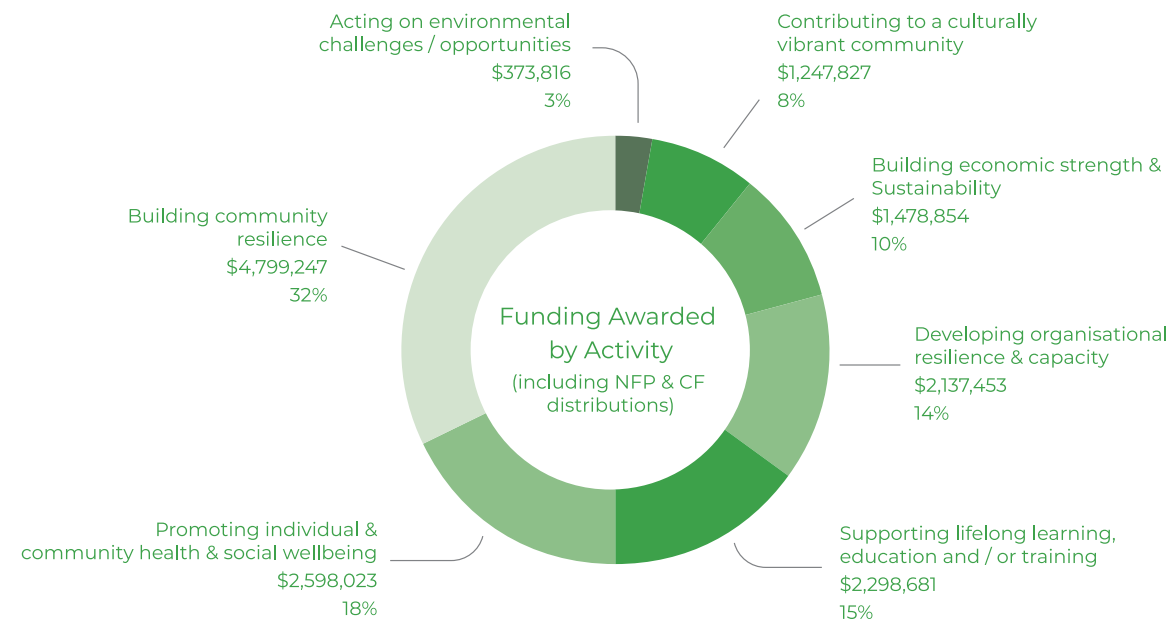
An efficient model

During the year, FRRR awarded \$14,933,901 in grants, an increase of \$3.35M on last year. Consequently, the staff team grew during the year to 20.4 FTE, reflecting the increased breadth of programs and scale of funding and partnerships. Approximately 21.5% of FRRR's expenses were covered by returns on the corpus (excluding DRRF). Employee costs as a percentage of funds distributed were 13%, with total operating expenses as a percentage of funds awarded at 21%. This is in line with sector benchmarks.

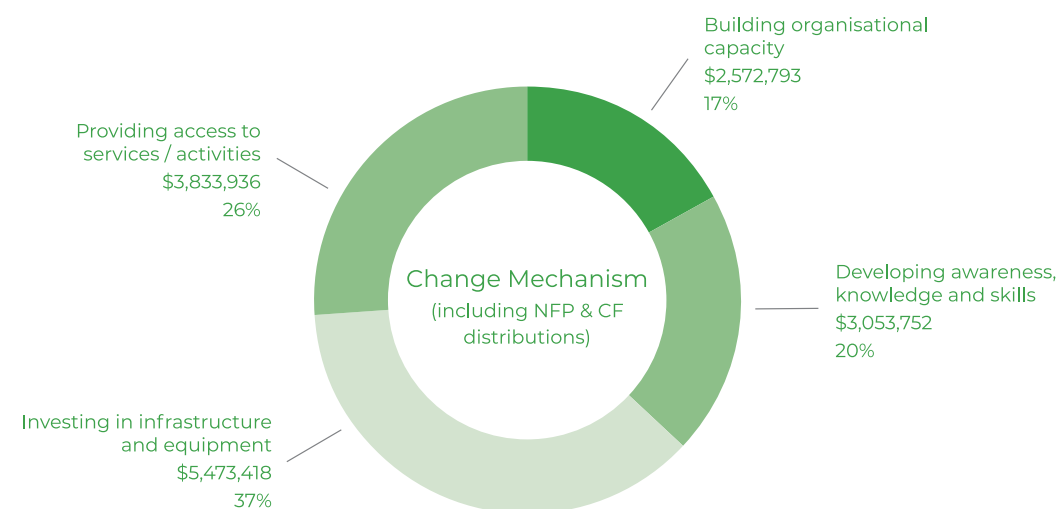
Granting

In this 20th year of operations, FRRR awarded **874 grants totalling \$14,933,901**.

Unsurprisingly given the effects of the ongoing drought and bushfires, nearly a third went toward project activities to build community resilience (32%), closely followed by promoting individual and community health & social wellbeing, at nearly 18%.



In terms of how communities sought to effect change – and consistent with long-term trends in FRRR's granting - 34% (299 grants) went toward infrastructure and equipment, a further 30% (266 grants) were to improve access to services or activities and 25% for developing awareness, knowledge and skills.



In total, there were requests for nearly \$42M in funding, via 2,360 applications. Once again, requests for funds across all areas of need exceeded the funding we had available, with a total of 1,486 unsuccessful applications. Of these, 485 applications requesting \$7.796M would have been supported had the funds been available. In an effort to have more applications funded in future, FRRR is exploring establishing an online clearinghouse to connect donors directly to these worthy projects.

As in previous years, many community groups (961 applications) sought support to undertake disaster resilience and recovery initiatives. Some \$9,165,506 was awarded to support disaster resilience and recovery projects (61% of all funds awarded, up from 45% in FY19). This equated to 385 grants (16% of all applications; 40% of all grants made). Most of these grants were awarded in **NSW (150; \$4,064,171)**, followed by **VIC (101; \$1,950,105)**, and **QLD (81; \$1,864,023)**.

The **largest grant** made through FRRR's collaboratively funded or donor-named grant programs was \$150,000 through the Tackling Tough Times together program, which went toward the Jamestown Regional Shearing, Wool Pavilion and Sheep Industry Education Centre in South Australia. Outside of scholarships of \$490 to enable Community Foundation leaders to attend the annual conference, the **smallest grant** was for \$783 to support delivering emergency service training across the Paroo Shire in far western Queensland. The median grant awarded was \$10,000, reflecting FRRR's decision to increase the maximum value of the Small & Vital stream of the Strengthening Rural Communities grants from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Geographic spread

As in previous years, most of the funding was distributed on the east coast, which aligns both to the national population distribution but also reflects the location and preferences of most of FRRR's donor partners. Most funds went to NSW (\$6,266,275 via 279 grants), followed by Victoria (\$3,536,394 via 254 grants). Pleasingly however, we saw an increase in the number of grants awarded in all states. In particular,

there were more than double the number of grants awarded to Tasmania and the Northern Territory, a 58% increase in SA, and a 26% increase in WA.

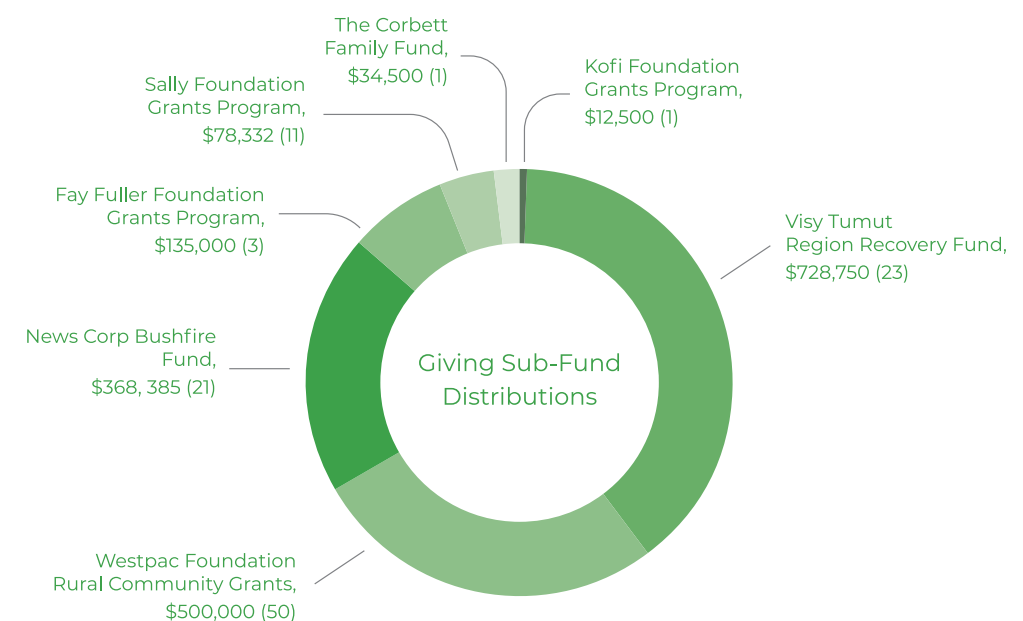
Most funds awarded went to outer regional or rural areas (41%), with 26% going to remote or very remote areas (excludes distributions made via fundraising accounts).

Fundraising Accounts

FRRR continued to partner with not-for-profit organisations and community foundations to support their fundraising. In total, after administration fees, \$1,895,648 was raised via these accounts. There were 53 FRRR Fundraising Account partnerships, with 42 accounts actively fundraising during the year. The most active account was Farmers for Climate Action, which attracted 35 donations. In total, \$1,609,572.86 was distributed toward these approved projects.

The largest distribution through the **Community Foundation fundraising accounts** was \$178,800 to the Northern Rivers Community Foundation Community Fund, while the largest distribution to a **Not-for-Profit fundraising account** went to Collaboration for Impact, who received \$495,000.

This year saw FRRR expand its **Giving Sub-Fund accounts**. These accounts allow philanthropic entities and corporate partners to work with FRRR to reach communities that they could otherwise not reach. Some of these partners use the accounts to support particular areas of interest, while others partner with FRRR to run a targeted grants program. There were seven active accounts this year, which contributed \$2,838,682 after administration fees. Distributions from these accounts during the financial year totalled \$1,857,467 via 110 grants.



Grounded and connected

An important part of FRRR's remit is to connect with remote, rural and regional communities.

The purpose is to see first-hand the impact of their projects, to support them and increase their capacity and, most importantly, to understand their ongoing needs and opportunities. This includes hosting workshops across the country, from a Men's Shed in Castlemaine to halls in western Queensland, to Katherine in the NT and we even took them online for the first time.

In addition to sharing our expertise, we learn from innovative, community-led projects and share this information with other community leaders, policy makers, funders and industry bodies. We take pride in being able to support and amplify the effort, opportunity and innovation in communities.

From a donor perspective, one of the highlights of the year was formally farewelling Ian Sinclair and Bill Kelty. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the enormous contribution that both men made to FRRR. It was also a rare opportunity to connect face-to-face with several of FRRR's donor partners and key stakeholders.

During the year, we also met with policy makers, politicians and donor partners. At every opportunity, we shared insights from the bush, and discussed the challenges and opportunities facing rural Australia.

This year, as the bushfires worsened, FRRR convened two roundtables as part of the Private Public Partnership Network, now part of Bushfire Recovery Victoria. We also participated in the National Charities Bushfire Recovery Coordination Forum. This was a great expression of the trust in FRRR from the philanthropic community. We also joined the Minderoo Foundation Bushfire Roundtable, and the Alpine Valley Community Leaders Bushfire Forum.

As the recovery process began, we were invited to share insights on how the bushfires were affecting communities with The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia, and The Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister for Education, Ms Fiona Phillips MP, and Andrew Colvin from the newly-established National Bushfire Recovery Agency.

In addition, we made a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees' inquiry into lessons to be learned in relation to the preparation and planning for, response to and recovery efforts following the 2019-20 bushfire season.

Once COVID hit, our face-to-face engagement came to a halt. However, we changed our approach to online and virtual forums, allowing us to remain connected, and continue to share our insights and perspectives with a wide range of audiences.

FRRR's expertise is around how to build community. They are the undisputed experts in Australia around natural disaster thinking, change, preparation, planning for resilience, recovery and rebuilding. They have led this work in Australia for all of philanthropy and the not-for-profit sector for many years, so it is fabulous to tap into that expertise.

Sarah Davies, CEO, Philanthropy Australia



Snapshot of Engagements

- Regional Australia Institute, Regions Rising Victoria Summit
- Philanthropy Benchmarking Forum
- Victorian Men's Shed Association Network Meeting
- Philanthropy Meets Parliament
- Community Foundations Forum
- Rural Funder Group meetings
- GIVE Wangaratta
- Lighting of the Australian Parliament Giving Tree (FRRR was a beneficiary)
- Mobilising Communities to Eliminate Poverty – Panel – PA event
- Roundtable on the Govt's role in Social Impact Investment
- Australian Dairy Leaders' Luncheon
- Panellist, Xfactor Collective RESET 2020 workshops
- Collaboration for Impact Webinar – Collaborating in Changing Times
- PA Webinar – Disaster Resilience & Recovery
- Rural Aid Community Builder Grantseeking Webinar
- Women in Philanthropy re Disaster Recovery
- IRCF Community Roadmap workshops
- Private Public Partnership Network Bushfire Recovery Roundtables



- 333 hours
- 3,865 callers



Inspirational communities

The **dedication, commitment and passion** we see year in, year out from community leaders and volunteers is simply remarkable. They work tirelessly to build and improve the amenity, facilities and services where they live, work and play to **address the pressures and challenges** facing their communities, including climate change and natural disasters, generational, population, and industry change. This often results in **incredible achievements and outcomes**.

FRRR is proud to help local leaders achieve sustainable long-term outcomes by providing **funding and development**, sharing **insights and learning**, and **brokering and leveraging** to unlock more funding and opportunity for these communities. Of course, this is only made possible with the generous support of our donor partners.

The map below shows the spread of grants awarded in FY2019/20. In all, 874 community projects were awarded \$14,933,901 to build vibrant, adaptive and sustainable remote, rural and regional communities.

In the following pages, we share a few examples of the projects that really stood out for us this year.



This year, New South Wales received the largest proportion of funding support, with most awarded to projects relating to disaster resilience and recovery (nearly 65%, \$4,064,171). Nearly 42% of all funding was through the Tackling Tough Times Together program. The average of these grants was \$32,768, reflecting the reduced ability for local fundraising.

Our partners responded quickly to the Summer bushfires. For example, the place-based Visy Tumut Region Recovery Fund program was established in partnership with the Pratt Foundation. Through this Fund, \$728,750 (18% of all disaster resilience and recovery grants funded in NSW) supported the recovery of people in the Snowy Valleys Council region.

New South Wales



Awarded
\$6,266,275
Grants
279

Tenterfield and the Beat of the Bush

Recently ravaged by drought and fires, the small town of Tenterfield in northern NSW was experiencing hard times. Hartbeat of the Bush teamed up with the Cuskelly College of Music's Winter Music School to offer Tenterfield and the surrounding communities a brief respite. The result was the week-long 'Beat of the Bush' music school and festival, led by more than 50 teachers, many of whom are internationally acclaimed.



Musical experiences like this help develop social skills and build confidence. Children from all over the region, many of whom had never met one another, played an instrument nor sung in a choir before this program, amazed their family members with the talent and skills they learnt in just five days.

What's more, the economic benefits for the town were significant, with cafes, restaurants and retail outlets benefitting from a lot of foot traffic at a time when the impacts of drought were being deeply felt.

The \$20,000 grant received by Hartbeat of the Bush was funded by the Australian Government through FRRR's Tackling Tough Times Together program. This covered the costs of running free daily buses within a 100 km radius for commuters from Warwick, Bonshaw, Glen Innes and Tabulam, as well as accommodation for tutors and volunteers.

Nambucca Heads' future makers

A practical vocational skills program at Nambucca Heads High School in northern NSW led to many students gaining work in the community. It also resulted in an increased understanding and celebration of local Indigenous culture.



Students steer-ing the way

A \$5,500 grant from the FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program meant that the South Coast Beef Producers Association (SCB) could spend three months mentoring 200 students from 11 different schools around Nowra. They learnt how to feed and prepare steers for the Hook and Hoof competition.

Several students involved in the 2018 School Steer Spectacular are now studying agriculture. The event has successfully run in subsequent years, including 2020 which went ahead with a COVID-safe plan in place, delivered as a live stream event on Facebook.



With small populations and remote locations, many WA and NT communities experience inequity in access to services and opportunities. **The solutions for improved social, environmental, and economic opportunities lie in local knowledge.** That is why FRRR is committed to increasing our grant-making in WA and NT.

We are developing a targeted outreach and engagement strategy to better understand the needs and gaps of community groups in these states, and inform how best to target our support. Early signs are it is having an impact. In FY20, in Western Australia there was a 26% increase year-on-year on the number of projects funded, and a 150% increase on the prior year in the Northern Territory.

Western Australia & Northern Territory



Awarded
\$771,923
Grants
73

Bright minds in Peel offer ESTEAM career advice on screen

In WA's Peel region, the Bright Minds Peel initiative is focused on increasing engagement in entrepreneurship, science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (ESTEAM) activities. Its goal is to position communities so they are ready to upskill and respond to a rapidly changing world and workforce.

In 2019, supported by an \$11,144 ANZ Seeds of Renewal grant, Bright Minds Peel set out to simplify the quandary of choosing a locally relevant career path for high school students. The project developed five videos featuring local employment success stories from young professionals in ESTEAM careers.



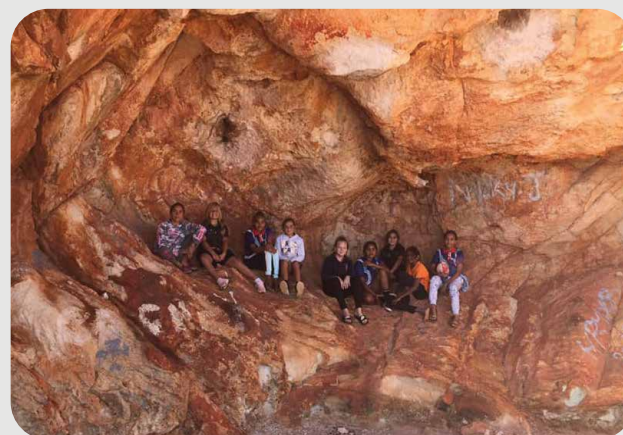
Shooting for the stars in remote WA

The futures of young Aboriginal women in remote WA look much brighter than before, thanks to the 'Shooting Stars' program. Created by Netball WA and Glass Jar Australia, it uses netball to empower young Aboriginal women to improve their school attendance rates, at the same time as promoting health and wellbeing. Participation is incentivised with the opportunity to be rewarded with attendance at a camp and this has had a huge impact on the success of the overall program.

In 2019, an FRRR Small Grant of \$5,000, awarded in partnership with the Kapikarnpi Community Fund, funded the Confident Me Cultural Rewards Camp in Meekatharra, which was attended by 30 girls. The camp is much more than a netball program, as Shooting Stars addresses the gap created by gender imbalance in Indigenous support programs and achieves really inspiring results to drive social change. The participants travelled On Country with a local Elder, experienced cultural activities and took part in a workshop addressing self-esteem, confidence, and managing social pressures.

"Being accepted onto the camp empowers these girls to feel that if they work hard, anything is possible."

Melanie McKee,
Community Investment Coordinator, 2019



Community tree planting in remote NT

A Strengthening Rural Communities grant of \$4,946, funded with the support of the John T Reid Charitable Trusts, helped address long-term food security, as well as create a more inviting and welcoming street scape in the remote Indigenous homelands of Peppimenarti and Nganmarriyanga.

The grant supported the local Council's tree planting initiative, which engaged community members in growing food and also created shady areas in these two homelands in the remote north of the Northern Territory.

In such extremely remote communities, food security is a very real issue. Many of the homeland communities do not have a shop and people must travel vast distances for basic supplies. Fruit trees are a great resource, as they contribute to improved individual and community health by enhancing and expanding the communities' natural food resources. In addition, they support lifelong learning and education, from Elders to young children.



"West Daly Regional Council acknowledges the significant contribution of FRRR and its donor partner - John T Reid Charitable Trusts - for the grant funding for our tree planting in Nganmarriyanga and Peppimenarti; a meaningful project that highly benefits our Indigenous Australians in our remote communities."

Kristine Matienzo, Grants Manager, West Daly Regional Council

Supporting NT's seniors

NT Friendship & Support Inc (NTFS) hoped to find 10 additional volunteers by using some of a \$4,090 Small Grant from FRRR, supported by The Yulgilbar Foundation, to advertise their volunteering opportunities.

With only a limited response from the drive and therefore reduced training and onboarding costs, NTFS found themselves with surplus funds. With FRRR's approval, they directed the remaining funding to the Seniors Community Bus initiative, ensuring Seniors had support through the COVID-19 crisis. While not the volunteering outcome they originally wanted, this project has had a positive impact on the community.



Queensland



Awarded
\$2,457,496

Grants
145

Queensland received 16% of all FRRR grants this financial year, with nearly half of the funding supporting projects in remote or very remote communities. Of this, 67% (59 grants, \$1,657,380) were through the Tackling Tough Times Together program, reflecting the extensive impact of the drought. Recognising distances and the challenges of local fundraising, the average grant awarded via the TTTT program in Queensland was \$28,091.

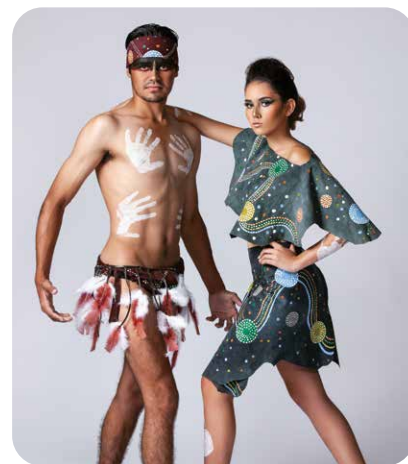
Funds were distributed via 12 different FRRR programs including fundraising accounts, with the Strengthening Rural Communities program receiving highest demand.

Dress the Central West

Red Ridge (Interior Queensland), a creative community organisation that provides opportunities for learning, connection and community in Queensland's Central West, knows how hard it can be to tackle tough times. After being drought declared for six years, Winton, Longreach, Barcaldine and Blackall really needed a boost.

The Dress the Central West project received a \$60,000 Tackling Tough Times Together grant, funded by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation. Their idea was to find beauty in the drought by creating wearable art at 46 creative workshops, which was then presented at three major community events. It was about having fun, while also enhancing mental health and offering general wellbeing support.

This combination of creative skills development, physical health and emotional wellbeing was important. The events were incredibly well received by the community and garnered extensive media coverage. The costume collection has gained ongoing and widespread interest, with a number of groups and gallery spaces enquiring about exhibiting them, and even participating in Melbourne Fashion Week.



Photographer: Matthew Gianoulis
Designs: Aunty Joyce Crombie (Anpanuwa)
Models: Yaryn Lewington and Yasmin Weldon

“This was such an amazing project that would not have achieved what it did without FRRR and the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation. The grant enabled us to deliver the best project possible that exceeded all expectations.”

Louise Campbell, Red Ridge (Interior Queensland)

Don't burn the BUTT!

Taromeo Rural Fire Brigade (TRFB) is an important emergency responder, with their remit extending well beyond fire preparedness and response. Because of their wide range of responsibilities, they needed more volunteers to support their work, and to engage with more residents.

Thanks to a \$4,170 grant from FRRR's Small Grants program,

funded by the David Mactaggart Foundation, they created the 'Don't Burn The Butt' campaign. They door knocked every home in their community to discuss bushfire preparedness and the benefits of volunteering. They also ran workshops for the community and purchased some much-needed equipment to ensure they can respond effectively to any emergencies.



Photographer: Melanie Doheny

Victoria



Awarded
\$3,536,394

Grants
254

Nearly a quarter of all funds granted in FY20 were distributed in Victoria, via 20 different programs.

Victoria benefits as many donor partners nominate either the whole state or specific places for support. Funding continued for communities affected by the 2009 Victorian Bushfires, with 32 grants valued at \$654,230 awarded during FY20. The Strengthening Rural Communities program also drew a strong response from Victoria, with more than \$590,000 distributed to 67 community groups. The effects of drought were also felt in Victoria this year, with more than \$870,000 awarded via 33 grants.

Spreading 'Harmony' across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region

Tourism and hospitality are key drivers of economic development in the Horsham Council and Regional Strategic Plans. However, local businesses were experiencing a shortage of trained cooks, chefs, baristas and food service assistants. By providing training and experience in hospitality, food handling and barista skills to marginalised groups, the Centre for Participation knew they could address the skills gap and be confident that trainees would gain employment in the community.

But their 'Harmony Van' needed some new equipment to allow them to provide hospitality and food handling training to migrant women and disabled youth across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

A \$4,944 Small Grant, co-funded by The Ross Trust and Portland House Foundation, meant they could get a coffee machine and other accessories to equip their trainees with better experience. Since then, they have served the community at more than 40 events, run weekly training sessions, and started a social enterprise café for the community.

“While there are multiple benefits to our rural community as part of this funding, the most successful to us was that eight migrant ladies and two young people with a disability have gained employment as a result of taking part in the program.”

Robbie Millar, Project Coordinator



Tambo's 'Living River Water Bugs'

Agricultural chemicals can have adverse impacts on local rivers and waterways, often without people realising. Thanks to a \$5,000 Small Grant funded by The William Buckland Foundation (managed by Equity Trustees), farmers and community members in Swift Creek in East Gippsland were able to learn about the importance of river-care and how they can make an important difference.

Local artists were commissioned to create sculptures of the water bugs that had been collected from the Tambo River by school students. The art installation on the river's edge helped to raise awareness and engender community participation and ownership in keeping the river water clean.



Photographer: Anne Richardson

South Australia & Tasmania



Awarded
\$1,901,813

Grants
123

FRRR is always seeking to deepen its knowledge and insights, and extend networks, awareness, and reach, particularly beyond the eastern seaboard. This has seen FRRR move to a state-based staffing model, increase time spent with community leaders and not-for-profit organisations, and deliver more grantseeker workshops and project development support.

This effort is paying off, as there have been year-on-year increases in the number of grants in both South Australia (up 58%) and Tasmania (up 100%). In the case of SA, this is due in no small part to the worsening drought, with \$990,702 supporting 32 projects distributed via the Tackling Tough Times Together program. Our new partnership with Fay Fuller Foundation, who are focusing on increasing wellbeing and moving towards mentally healthy futures by building on the strengths, skills and talents in various communities, has also seen funds go into the state.

“Thank you - this project means a lot to our volunteers and community. It is fantastic to find funding to build on projects to increase our community support and engagement.”

Faye McGoldrick, MPNRC
Coordinator



The pleasant nature of volunteers

Mount Pleasant is a thriving and innovative rural community, 55 km east of Adelaide, that acts as a hub and provides services for a range of nearby smaller towns. The town hosts regular community events, and has several local groups and service clubs, including the Mount Pleasant Natural Resource Centre Inc (MPNRC).

MPNRC realised their building needed a revamp to increase the workshop's capacity and volunteer workspace to make it into a safer, all-weather environment.

With a \$4,800 Small Grant, collaboratively funded by individual donors, and the enthusiastic assistance of volunteers and local tradespeople, MPNRC refurbished The Share Shed (as the locals call it). Community and tradespeople joined forces to weatherproof, install, refit, replace, and repurpose the shared workspace.

The new space has had a positive effect throughout the community, with new workshops and events held, more locals putting their hand up to volunteer at the Centre, and they've even been able to employ additional staff.



Bundaleer's nature play trail

A \$5,000 Small Grant, funded by The Yulgilbar Foundation, supported the design and construction of seven nature play structures along the Maple Walk in the Bundaleer Forest Picnic Ground. This is the first step in delivering a larger vision to develop Bundaleer as the largest nature play space in regional South Australia.

The project has created an exciting nature play trail, where families can reconnect with nature and each other. The trail gives local children a much-needed space to imagine and explore, and is proving to be a drawcard for visitors, which has a flow-on effect of boosting the local economy.

Kingston Beach SLSC

Kingston is one of the central points on southern Tasmania's Kingsborough sandy coast, and it is the home to about 1,990 people. Though small, this town plays a big role in keeping the coast safe.

The Kingston Beach Surf Life Saving Club is the most accessible lifesaving club in the south, and therefore part of Surf Life Saving Tasmania's emergency response services. Run by a group of volunteers, the Club wanted to increase their preparedness for, and ability to respond to, emergency flood and bushfire events.

They received a \$3,382 Strengthening Rural Communities grant, funded by Australia Post, which allowed them to purchase what they needed to conduct their new water rescue and evacuation training, making them now ready for any emergency.



Connecting community in COVID times

The George Town Neighbourhood House is a vibrant community centre in the very north of Tasmania, offering a range of programs to support disadvantaged people and families in the local community. To help spread the word about their services, they used a \$10,000 Strengthening Rural Communities grant, funded by the Sidney Myer Fund, to hire a communications officer.

Despite COVID-19 disrupting many of their planned activities, the Neighbourhood House showed great resilience and adapted to the new circumstances with grace. Networking, online bake-offs and collaborations with other local organisations are just some of the things they achieved with their new staff member.

New approaches

FRRR has long known that well-prepared communities recover better following natural disasters. This was a strong driver in FRRR creating the Disaster Resilient: Future Ready (DR:FR) program.

In partnership with private donors, and the NSW Government through its Get Ready program, we have piloted a community co-designed disaster resilience framework in Ocean Shores, North Richmond / Kurrajong and Wee Waa, NSW. Communities have prioritised locally-relevant disaster preparedness initiatives, which have then been supported with grants. Sydney University has also been engaged as the program Learning Partner, helping to build the evidence base for community-led disaster resilience approaches. The research findings will be published in 2021.

The program will begin rolling out in Victoria in 2021, with seven communities to be invited to express their interest in participating in the program.

DR:FR - StreetConnect

North Richmond and Kurrajong, which are said to have the highest single flood exposure in New South Wales, if not Australia, and are also in a high fire-risk area, were the first of the three communities to complete its DR:FR pilot journey, with their StreetConnect initiative attracting further funds to expand.

StreetConnect aimed to increase the awareness of natural disasters, connect residents to trusted local information sources, and ensure they have access to a home emergency / evacuation kit.

It was managed through the local schools, with an adult working group combining forces with students to test some ideas to connect residents, street by street.

Michael Laing, StreetConnect Community Project Leader, reported that after trialling a street survey, they changed tack, including developing a touching video.

“Due to low levels of participation in the survey, the focus shifted to more event-based engagement through the schools, community events, and ideas from students such as a poster competition.

“This project led to the promotion of the StreetConnect vision for the students, their families, and the wider school community. It also produced a resource that was promoted at major events, as well as online throughout the community.”



▶ Link to video



Investing in Rural Community Futures

This new flagship program, established in partnership with the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, works proactively with locally led and governed not-for-profit organisations to strengthen their effectiveness and sustainability.

The IRCF program provides grant funding, facilitation support, and capacity building tools to increase the long-term vitality, livability, and regional competitiveness of their communities.

IRCF has been running in the New South Wales communities of Junee, Leeton and Nambucca Valley. This financial year, the VFFF IRCF program:

- distributed \$300,000 for Start Up grants, to kickstart the IRCF journey;
- facilitated the development of sector roadmaps that prioritise needs and actions to strengthen capacity, delivery, and collaboration;
- appointed local facilitators to support capability building in each community.

South Coast

At the beginning of 2020, the Snow Foundation committed \$2.6M to expand the IRCF program to Nowra, Ulladulla and Bateman's Bay, NSW. The program has already brought community groups together via COVID-safe online forums, provided \$525,000 in Start Up grants and appointed a locally-based IRCF coordinator.

The longer-term, flexible approach to funding, and being able to listen, reimagine and respond to the future represents a unique and exciting opportunity to support all these communities as they adapt and respond to existing, new, and emerging challenges and opportunities..



“Each community has its own challenges, unique personalities and the depth and breadth of not-for-profits that work within its boundaries. FRRR’s role in the IRCF journey is to act as facilitators and supporters, to enhance the ability of local leaders to deliver the change they wish to see.”

Alli Mudford, IRCF Program Manager



Photographer: Alice Payne



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