

Annual Review  
2022/23

# Backing Rural Communities



**FRRR**  
Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal

We acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of Jaara Country (Bendigo), where we are headquartered, and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations where we fund organisations and activities, and where our staff live and work.

We acknowledge their connections to land, sea and community and pay our respect to Elders past and present and to the continuation of the custodial, cultural and educational practices of Australia's First Peoples.

This year, we particularly acknowledge the following People, Nations, Places or Country where grants and activities are featured in this report. We apologise for any errors or omissions and would be pleased to make corrections in the spirit of continuing to learn and honour First Nations Peoples and their ongoing connection to land, sea and skies across Australia.

Antakarinja  
Awabakal  
Bagala People  
Jawoyn Nation  
Bidawel Yuin  
Bigambul  
Biripi  
Boandik  
Boorjarah  
Bundjalung  
Bunuba  
Dja Dja Wurrung  
Djab Wurrung  
Djiringanj  
Eastern Maar Nation  
Gadubanud  
Giabal  
Gija  
Giraiwurrung  
Githabu  
Goolarabooloo

Guilidjan  
Gumbaynggirr  
Gunaikurnai  
Gunditjmara  
Iningai  
Jagera  
Jarowair  
Jukembal  
Kamilaroi  
Kartan People  
Kurna  
Koa  
Kulin Nation  
Luritja  
Manang  
Martu  
Monero  
Murrmem  
Ngadjuri  
Ngarrawanji  
Ngoonooru Wajarri Yamaji

Ngoorabul  
Ngunnawal  
Palawa / Pakana of lutruwita  
Pibelmen  
Taungurong  
Thaui  
Turrbal  
Wadandi  
Wadawurrung  
Walbanga  
Wandandian People  
Warumungu  
Worim  
Wurundjeri People  
Yaegl  
Yawuru  
Yorta Yorta  
Yuin Nation  
Yugunga-Nya  
Yurriyangem Taam

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

Photo courtesy Woor-Dungin

# Backing Rural Communities

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

The ongoing impacts of COVID, coupled with the legacy of bushfires and drought, and several incidents of significant flooding, made FY 2022/23 another difficult year.

Despite this, communities once again **pulled together**, harnessing the strengths of local people and their connection and commitment to their places to forge ahead.

FRRR was privileged to support many of them, thanks to the continued **trust and commitment of our partners**. This document is a snapshot of our activities for this reporting year, and of the **resilience and tenacity of the local leaders** who helped sustain and strengthen their communities.

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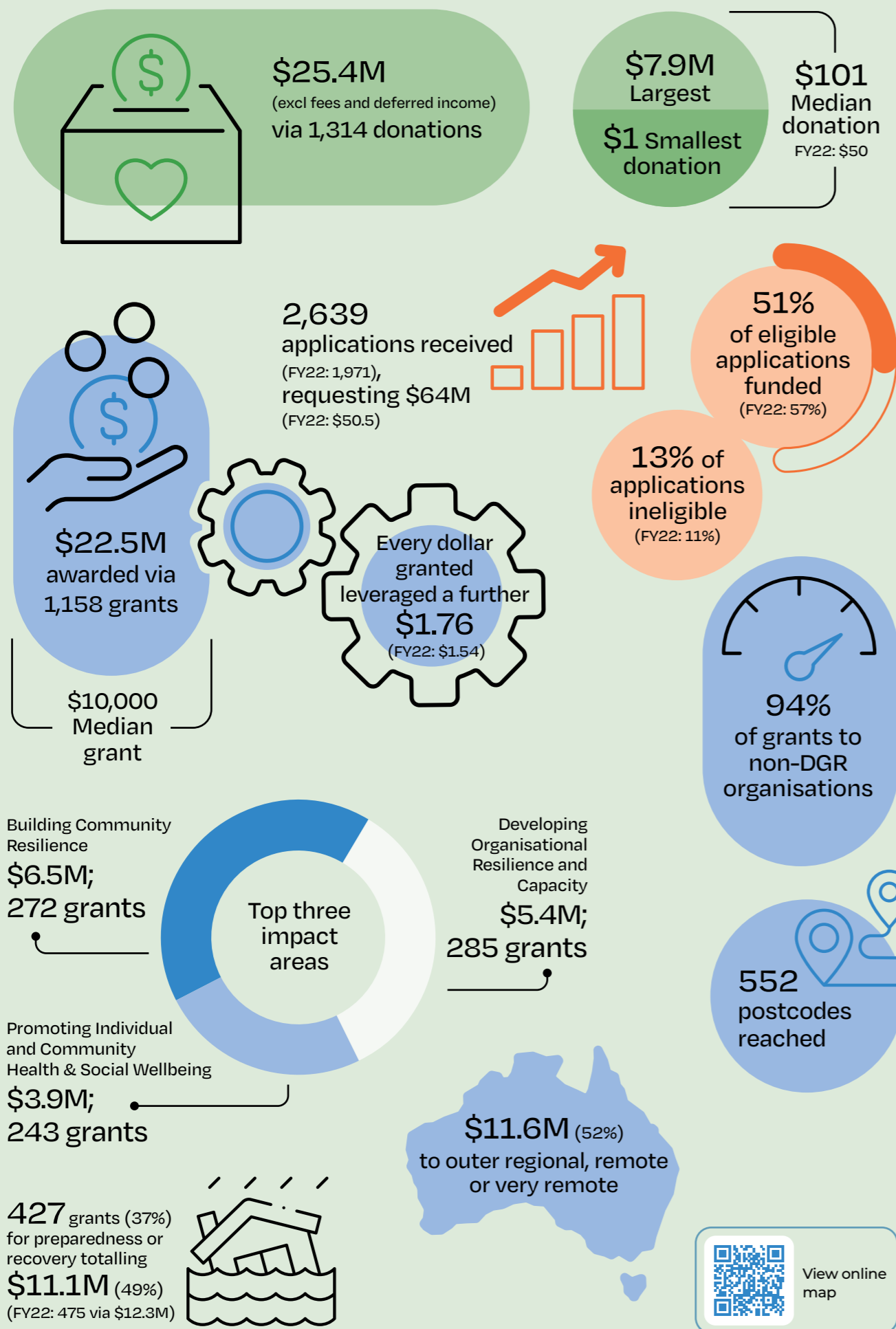
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## Chairman's Welcome

The 2022/23 financial year was another year of growth for FRRR. We saw the largest number of applications in our 23-year history, signalling both that life is getting back to 'normal' following COVID but also highlighting the challenges in securing funding in remote, rural and regional communities for the things that matter locally.

Despite this, local volunteers across the country continue to step up and support their communities, harnessing opportunities and filling gaps in services that those who live in urban areas take for granted. On behalf of the Board, I thank you all for your passion and dedication to creating more vibrant places to live and work.

FRRR was pleased to support more than 1,150 projects this year. The funding that we provided would not be possible without our generous supporters and I want to formally record our appreciation of the trust that you continue to place in FRRR to reach those communities most in need.

I also want to acknowledge the wonderful FRRR team, under the leadership of Natalie Egleton and Sarah Matthee who served three months as Acting CEO while Natalie was on sabbatical. The team continues to go from strength to strength, supporting applicants and constantly looking for ways to enhance the efficiencies of the assessment process to get funds into the hands of community leaders as quickly as possible, while still undertaking the appropriate due diligence.

I also want to formally thank Anne Grindrod, Deputy Chair, and my fellow Directors, who generously volunteer their time to oversee FRRR's governance. Not only do they attend quarterly meetings, but each person serves on at least one Program Advisory Committee. I greatly appreciate each of them sharing their insights.

This year, two long-serving directors, Paddy Handbury and Patrick Myer, concluded their Board terms. We welcomed William Myer as the Myer family representative and are delighted to have David Mackay as the Australian Government's representative, replacing Rachel Bacon who retired in August 2022.

I also acknowledge the untimely passing of The Hon. Simon Crean in June 2023. Simon joined the Board in 2019, continuing the tradition of having bipartisan representation from the major political parties. He was a passionate advocate for remote, rural and regional communities and is sorely missed. I know that he would be proud of what has been achieved this year.

Finally, I thank all those who have agreed to serve on our WA Advisory Board. While it is still early days, I know that you will all bring great local knowledge to the table, as we seek to deepen our reach in WA.

I encourage you to explore this review and hope that you enjoy learning about some of the inspiring projects FRRR has supported in recent years. It is a wonderful reminder of what is possible when we combine our resources and have a shared vision for a better future.

**Tim Fairfax AC**  
Chairman  
*on Turrbal and Jagera Country*

# Governance

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) prioritises strong governance to achieve its vision of supporting a vibrant, resilient and revitalised remote, rural and regional Australia. As a company limited by guarantee with DGR-1 status, FRRR is directly accountable to its members, the Sidney Myer Fund and the Australian Government.

FRRR's governance framework includes a Board of Directors, which oversees the organisation's activities, including regularly reviewing performance and approving grants. The Board is advised by Program Advisory Committees, which review and recommend grant applications and provide expert insight into strategic focus areas; the Nominations and Appointments committee; the Finance and Audit committee, which undertakes detailed oversight of financial management and

FRRR's investment activities; and a new WA Advisory Board.

Independent audits by BDO confirm compliance with statutory requirements and that good operational practices are in place. An ethical investment policy is in place, aligning investments with positive social, environmental, cultural and economic change in remote, rural and regional Australia.



# FRRR Board

FRRR has had a long history of generous people voluntarily serving on our Board. Each of FRRR's Directors is passionate about enhancing communities in remote, rural and regional Australia and we thank them for their service.

We'd particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of the late Hon. Simon Crean, who joined the Board in 2019. Simon was a vocal advocate for remote, rural and regional communities, always striving to ensure that people in the bush were supported. His intellect, curiosity, passion and friendship will long be remembered and appreciated.



Tim Fairfax AC (Chairman)	Georgie Somerset AM
Anne Grindrod (Deputy Chair)	David Mackay (from Oct 22)
Annabel F. White	William Myer (from Jan 23)
Bruce Scott OAM	Paddy Handbury (to Nov 22)
Andrew McKenzie	Patrick Myer (to Nov 22)
Sue Middleton	Dr Rachel Bacon (to Aug 22)
Hon. John Sharp AM	Hon. Simon Crean (to Jun 2023)
James Flintoft	Karen Fazzani (Company Secretary to May 23)

We also appreciate our Patrons' ongoing support and their interest in FRRR's activities:

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



# Committee Members and Volunteers

FRRR acknowledges the support and input of many individuals who serve voluntarily on our committees.

Adam Levin, WA Advisory Board	Aiden Curyer, ANZ Volunteer	Allan Cameron, Gardiner Dairy Foundation
Andrea Gordon, Community Representative	Andrew Coghlan, Australian Red Cross	Ann Kelly, Community Representative
Aspen Kimmorley, ANZ Volunteer	Assoc Prof Ben Lyons, University of Southern Queensland	Brandon Dent, ABC Heywire Alumni
Bronte Gorringe, ANZ Volunteer	Caley Pearce, Telstra Group Ltd	Candice Mohan, Dept. of Ag, Fisheries and Forestry
Carissa Buckland, Nutrien Ag Solutions	Caroline Robinson, WA Advisory Board	Cath Stewart, Suncorp Group
Christina Cawkwell, Telstra Group Ltd	Cissy Gore-Birch, WA Advisory Board	Dan Hirst, ABC Heywire Representative & Mentor
Dan Simpson, ANZ Volunteer	David Hardie, Vincent Fairfax Family Fdn	Debra Morgan, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Donna Digby, Community Member	Dr Alexandra Williamson, Community Representative	Dr Dorin Gupta, University of Melbourne
Dr Fiona McKenzie, Orange Compass	Eliza Bale, Suncorp Group	Emilee Tamison, Futures Isle
Emma Mactaggart, David Mactaggart Foundation & Mentor	Georgina Byron, Snow Foundation	Geraldine Roche, Sally Foundation Representative & Mentor
Ian Allen OAM, Community Representative	Imogen Archer, ABC Heywire Representative & Mentor	Jamie Henderson, WA Advisory Board
Jamie Walker, ANZ Volunteer	Janaya Rose, ABC Heywire Alumni	Jane Thomas, Sidney Myer Fund
Jason Macfarlane, WA Advisory Board	Jenefer Stewart, ANZ	Jenny Gray, Telstra Group Ltd
Jenny Wheatley, Vincent Fairfax Family Fdn	Jeremy Yipp, CCI Giving	Jo Neuling, Australian Government

Joe Castellino, Australian Government	Jonathon Atkins, ABC Heywire	Julia Hunt, ABC Heywire Alumni
Karen Akehurst, Community Representative	Karly Dwyer, ANZ Volunteer	Kezia Jacobs, WA Advisory Board
Kirra Hampson - Youth Chair, ABC Heywire Alumni	Kirrilee Warr, Community Representative	Laura Smith, Dept. of Ag, Fisheries and Forestry
Leisbeth Goedhart, WA Advisory Board	Linda Norquay, Lachlan & Sarah Murdoch Foundation	Lola Cowle, Community Representative
Loretta Willaton, Telstra Group Ltd	Lucy Markoff, Community Representative	Matt Linnegar, Australian Rural Leadership Foundation
Mark Bennett, ANZ Volunteer	Maree Shelmerdine, Sidney Myer Fund	Matthew Etherington, Trailblazer Alumni
Misa Ngan, ANZ Volunteer	Melissa Brooke, Community Representative	Michael Flagg, ANZ Volunteer
Natalie Somerville, Industry Representative	Natalie Weddell, Australian Government	Nathan Janetzki, ANZ
Nathan Taylor, Suncorp Group	Patrick MacDonald, Gardiner Dairy Foundation	Patrick Moriarty, Strategic Australia Communications
Penny Fowler, News Corp Australia	Pravin Madhanagopal, Suncorp Group	Prue Pateras, Donor Partner & Mentor
Ralph Addis, WA Advisory Board	Rapthi Thanapalasingam, Suncorp Group	Renee Whitford, ANZ
Sam Lonard, Dept. of Families, Fairness and Housing Victoria	Sam Watson, ABC Heywire Alumni	Sam Wilson, Trailblazer Alumni
Shelley Nolan, Nutrien Ag Solutions	Suzanne Ryder, ANZ	Swathi Shanmukhasundaram, ABC Heywire Representative & Mentor
Talitha Devadass, Futures Isle	Tracy Foglia, ANZ Volunteer	Vicky Power, Suncorp Group



## Message from the CEO

As I look back on FY 2022/23, regional Australia has continued to be on the frontline of many of our national, and indeed, global challenges. The now all-too familiar effects of natural disasters, acceleration toward net zero and long-standing structural issues - such as housing, energy and food security, service provision and digital inclusion - have all converged in the past year, leaving many further behind and others seeking out innovation and bold systems change. These are complex issues and I am proud of the role that FRRR has played in supporting remote, rural and regional communities across Australia to strengthen, adapt and innovate to navigate and find solutions to these challenges.

This takes collaboration and the efforts of many. I'm pleased to report that through our many powerful partnerships we distributed a record \$22.5M through 1,158 grants in more than 550 locations covering over 50% of Local Government Areas in Australia.

While our flagship Strengthening Rural Communities program achieved record distributions, we also celebrated 20 years of working alongside ANZ on the Seeds of Renewal program and Gardiner Dairy Foundation on their Community Grants program. We renewed many long-standing partnerships, including with CCI Giving for another five years to support better

mental health outcomes, and we welcomed new partners including Telstra. We greatly appreciate the trust that all our supporters place in us to get funds to where they are most needed in remote, rural and regional communities – especially to grassroots groups who often can't easily access grants.

With the growth that FRRR has experienced in the last three years, it was timely to review and refresh our granting operations processes. With the generous probono support of TOYOTA via the services of TSSC Australia, we embarked on a major project to transform our grant assessment processes and embed continuous improvement. We are also grateful to Tanarra Philanthropic Advisors for their probono support to review FRRR's cost structure. As a result, we increased our delivery and engagement component to more accurately reflect the capacity building, community engagement, insights and granting work FRRR undertakes.

This year we also launched a new Small Grants Fund, which has already attracted \$500,000 in donations. FRRR's small grants are our most in demand and by investing these funds in perpetuity, we can ensure there is an enduring and reliable source of funds for the evolving needs of remote, rural and regional communities.

None of this would have been possible without the dedicated efforts and talents of our team. I particularly acknowledge Sarah Matthee, who acted as CEO when I took a three-month sabbatical as part of the SILA program. I greatly appreciate the Board encouraging me to take that break after seven years as CEO and formally thank the SILA funders for making such a generous investment in me personally, in FRRR and in the broader capacity of the sector.

I also express my deep gratitude to FRRR's Chairman, Tim Fairfax AC, Deputy Chair, Anne Grindrod and the Directors whose collective wisdom, experience and passion for rural communities is second-to-none. I'm also very grateful to our many independent committee members who provide their expertise, rural and industry perspectives, and advice on FRRR's grant and capacity building programs. I was particularly saddened by the sudden passing of Simon Crean, who was always generous with his advice and warm in his support. I miss him greatly.

I trust that you find this report informative and welcome any feedback or questions.

**Natalie Egleton**  
CEO

*on Dja Dja Wurrung Country*

## Our Team

At the end of the year, we had 42 people in the team (33.1 FTE). This is a slight increase year-on-year, reflecting the delivery of new programs with dedicated staffing. We continue to hire people who have a strong affinity with rural communities, with most either growing up in small towns or currently living in regional areas. This ensures that the team has a genuine connection with the people and communities that we support.

With the easing of COVID restrictions, we continued to operate as a hybrid team, with many working remotely on a permanent basis and some returning to the Bendigo office. Being able to employ great people from across Australia has been a silver lining of the pandemic.

The 2023 staff survey showed that 97% of survey respondents feel positive about FRRR's direction in the next 12 months. There is a high level of job satisfaction (96%), connection and engagement with FRRR's values and strategy (100%).

Meet the team



We expanded our footprint this year, adding a team member based in WA and another in QLD.



"We received some really great support from your staff during the process of applying for this grant which was really helpful!"

Active Farmers SA

"The Committee's whole experience of working with FRRR has been wonderful. The FRRR staff have been wonderful to deal with and ever so helpful!"

Wyeboo Recreation Reserve



"I always find that the staff are very caring and helpful and will answer any queries swiftly and help with any problems filling in the application forms. It is nice to hear a friendly voice on the phone who is willing to help."

Boolarra & District Historical Society

# About FRRR & Our 2020-2025 Strategy

FRRR is the only national foundation specifically focussed on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional communities. We connect good will with good purpose and align investment from government, philanthropy and business with local community priorities. Established in 2000, as a partnership between the Australian Government and the Sidney Myer Fund, our vision is for a vibrant, resilient and revitalised remote, rural and regional Australia.

To achieve this vision, we back the people and organisations that are in and of their place.

We believe targeted, well-informed investment in people and organisations stimulates ideas that lead to actions, both big and small. We deliberately focus on strengthening not-for-profit organisations, community groups and volunteer-led efforts that foster self-generation, enhancing leadership, networks and skill development. We couple that with support for improving access to sustainable social and physical infrastructure and sustaining vibrant local cultures.

In 2020, the FRRR Board approved a five-year strategic plan that aimed to better-leverage FRRR's assets and capabilities, embed expertise, and build out programs and resources around three pillars of People, Place and Disaster Resilience and Climate Solutions. The graphic below summarises the key areas of focus.

## Grow our corpus to \$50M, including a \$5M Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund

Evolve to a more **dynamic model of philanthropy** that more purposefully utilises FRRR's capabilities, tax status and strategic approaches, to:

1. **Grant and develop** – funding and capacity building support;
2. **Leverage and broker** – harness our unique tax status to both enable donors to give more efficiently and community groups to fundraise; and
3. **Insights and learning** – share our knowledge.

Focus on underlying conditions and **enablers** (rather than specific issues) by applying three strategic lenses:

1. **People** – volunteers, NFPs and community leadership;
2. **Place** – consider local and regional context when directing resources; and
3. **Climate** – disaster resilience and climate solutions.

Direct our funding to support communities to **Seed & Strengthen, Adapt & Evolve or Innovate & Renew**, no matter where they are in the development cycle;

**Extend FRRR's geographic footprint**, build our presence in WA and undertake more targeted engagement in the NT, SA and TAS;

Shift the organisational mindset from **donor-led to community-led**; and

**Strengthen the business model** to better capture the value of FRRR's knowledge capital and create efficiencies in partnership and program delivery.

## Progress 2020-2023

While a lot has changed since we wrote our five-year strategy in 2020, we've achieved most of the targets we'd set as milestones at this point, and are making good progress against others, especially through such disruptive times. In light of some changes, there are a few things that we are reconsidering or changing our approach on, and others that have emerged as increased areas of focus.

### Achieved goals by FY23

- Grow corpus to \$15M
- Grow Disaster Resilience & Recovery Fund to \$5M
- Grow and sustain granting to \$17.5M
- Launch Insights & Learning portfolio
- Scale NFP capacity building model

### In progress as at FY23

- Operating efficiencies to match growth
- Grow cultural competence
- Scale resilience and preparedness programs
- Grow major gifts

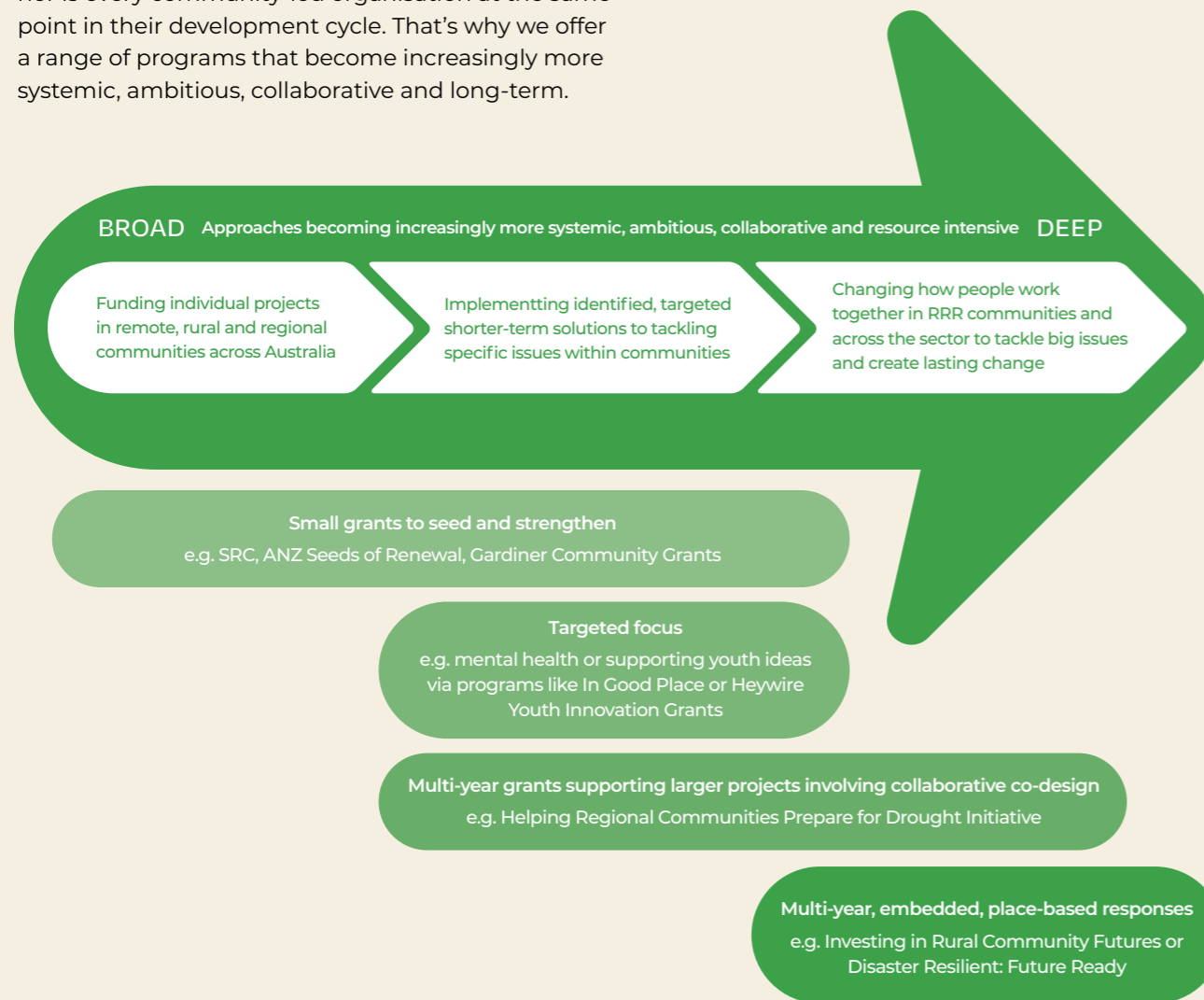


## Future Focus

Looking ahead, we will continue to seek opportunities to grow FRRR's funding base. We are seeking to grow the FRRR small grants and operating corpuses, as well as forging new partnerships with philanthropy and business to shore-up future funding, extend our insights and advocacy work to influence funding and policies for remote, rural and regional communities, and deepen our growing suite of capacity building programs. In addition, we will increase our focus on helping communities to navigate our changing climate through new partnerships and new programs, and explore how FRRR can deepen engagement and partnerships that amplify youth voices and connect young people to their community, so they can help create thriving futures.

# Depth and breadth of support

FRRR recognises that not every community is the same, nor is every community-led organisation at the same point in their development cycle. That's why we offer a range of programs that become increasingly more systemic, ambitious, collaborative and long-term.



## Grant programs

This financial year, FRRR delivered 24 programs. The five-part **Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative**, delivered in partnership with Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, was new this year. We also expanded the **Investing in Rural Community Futures program** in Shoalhaven and into Bega in NSW, thanks to the Australian Government's Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Program. **Disaster Resilient: Future Ready** expanded into the Burnett Inland, QLD and we joined ABC in piloting a new youth program, called Takeover. We also launched Telstra's Connected Communities program and Suncorp Group activated the Rebuilding Futures program to support flood recovery. In addition, we embedded a Prepare & Recover stream of funding within the Strengthening Rural Communities program, offering grants across the broader spectrum of disaster preparedness and recovery.

### FRRR Grant Programs

- **Strengthening Rural Communities (SRC)** – our flagship small grants program, offering three streams of funding – Small & Vital grants of up to \$10,000 to support locally-identified priorities; Prepare & Recover grants up to \$25,000 for projects focussed on helping community groups prepare for or recover from natural disasters; and Rebuilding Regional Communities, which offers grants up to \$50,000 to support NFP's ongoing COVID recovery efforts. SRC is our most in-demand program, as it is flexible and enables community groups to access funding year-round for the issues they prioritise.
- **Grants for Resilience & Wellness – Kinglake Ranges** – provides funding to support recovery following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in the Kinglake Ranges area, using the remaining funds from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund.
- **FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants** – a collaboratively-funded national program that supports community groups to adopt and adapt ideas developed by young people at the annual Heywire Regional Youth Summit.

- **Back to School** – delivered in collaboration with Community Foundations and other local organisations, who distribute \$50 vouchers redeemable at Kmart, Target or select local retailers to help children and families in need start the school year with what they need to be ready to learn.
- **Project Activate** – a new initiative piloted this year to promote a curated set of funding-ready projects to potential supporters willing to fund one-off grants

### Place-based Capacity Building Programs

- **Investing in Rural Community Futures** – a multi-year program focussed on building the capacity of not-for-profit organisations in the areas of strategy, systems, processes and people, with an aspiration of strong local organisations. It now operates in eight NSW communities.
- **Disaster Resilient: Future Ready (VIC and Burnett Inland, QLD)** – a program focussed on enhancing preparedness and risk reduction in disaster-prone communities. FRRR is working in three Victorian towns – Whittlesea township and surrounds; Myrtleford; and

- Korumburra. This year also saw it launch in the Burnett Inland in Queensland, working in partnership with Red Earth Community Foundation and supported by Minderoo Foundation.
- **Future Drought Fund Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative** – a multi-year program funded by the Australian Government through the Future Drought Fund, which FRRR is delivering in partnership with Australian Rural Leadership Foundation. Working nationally in 35 regions, alongside a broad small grants program, the focus is on strengthening social capital in agriculture-dependent areas, to enhance drought preparedness.
- **ABC Takeover Youth Grants** – a collaboratively-funded program where FRRR works closely with ABC in one regional community each year, to build capacity of young people to share their ideas providing grants to encourage local organisations to act on the ideas and support paid advisory roles for the young people.

Giving Sub-Funds

- **ANZ Seeds of Renewal** – this year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year of this program, which provides small grants of up to \$15,000 designed to help build vibrant and sustainable rural communities, to ensure the ongoing prosperity of regional Australia.
- **Gardiner Dairy Foundation Community Grants** – this program offers grants of up to \$5,000 to grassroots, community-led projects in Victorian dairy communities, helping to build their capacity to deal with local needs, and enhance existing community infrastructure.
- **NSW COVID Regional Community Support** – COVID Regional Community Support – a program funded by the NSW Government, through Resilience NSW, which provided funding to enhance the capacity of organisations that provided critical support during the pandemic.
- **Telstra's Connected Communities** – a new small grants program offering up to \$10,000 to improve resilience, environmental sustainability and liveability through the power of connection.
- **Suncorp Rebuilding Futures** – a natural disaster recovery program, offering grants of up to \$25,000 to help select communities recover from significant disaster events. This financial year, the program was available in northern NSW and southern QLD, to support recovery following the March 2022 floods.
- **Nutrien Ag Solutions Community Grants** – a small grants program offering up to \$5,000 to contribute to the success, vibrancy and wellbeing of rural and regional communities nationwide.
- **First Nations Philanthropic Funders Working Group** – FRRR is the Funding Coordinator for a grant from Paul Ramsay Foundation to support remote, rural and regional Aboriginal Communities in South Australia to respond to the impacts of COVID, putting 'Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands'.
- **Sally Foundation Grants** – FRRR works with The Sally Foundation to support young people, including providing grants to support Trailblazers.
- **The Yulgilbar Foundation Fund** – provides grants to support communities in the Clarence Valley and surrounding regions of NSW to strengthen their capacity and resilience in response to the 2019/20 bushfires, flooding and continued challenges across the region.
- **Visy Tumut Region Recovery Fund** – a program that provides support to the Tumut region in its recovery from the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires.
- **The Corbett Family Fund** – FRRR works with The Corbett family to direct funds to projects focussed on primary and secondary age literacy development.

- **In a Good Place** – funded by CCI Giving, this program offers grants of up to \$20,000 to support projects that enhance the mental health and wellbeing of people in remote, rural and regional communities.
- **Bushfire Recovery Fund** – A partnership with HMST & Sidney Myer Fund, this program provides operational and capacity building funding for backbone organisations playing an ongoing role in the recovery of Victorian communities affected by the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires.

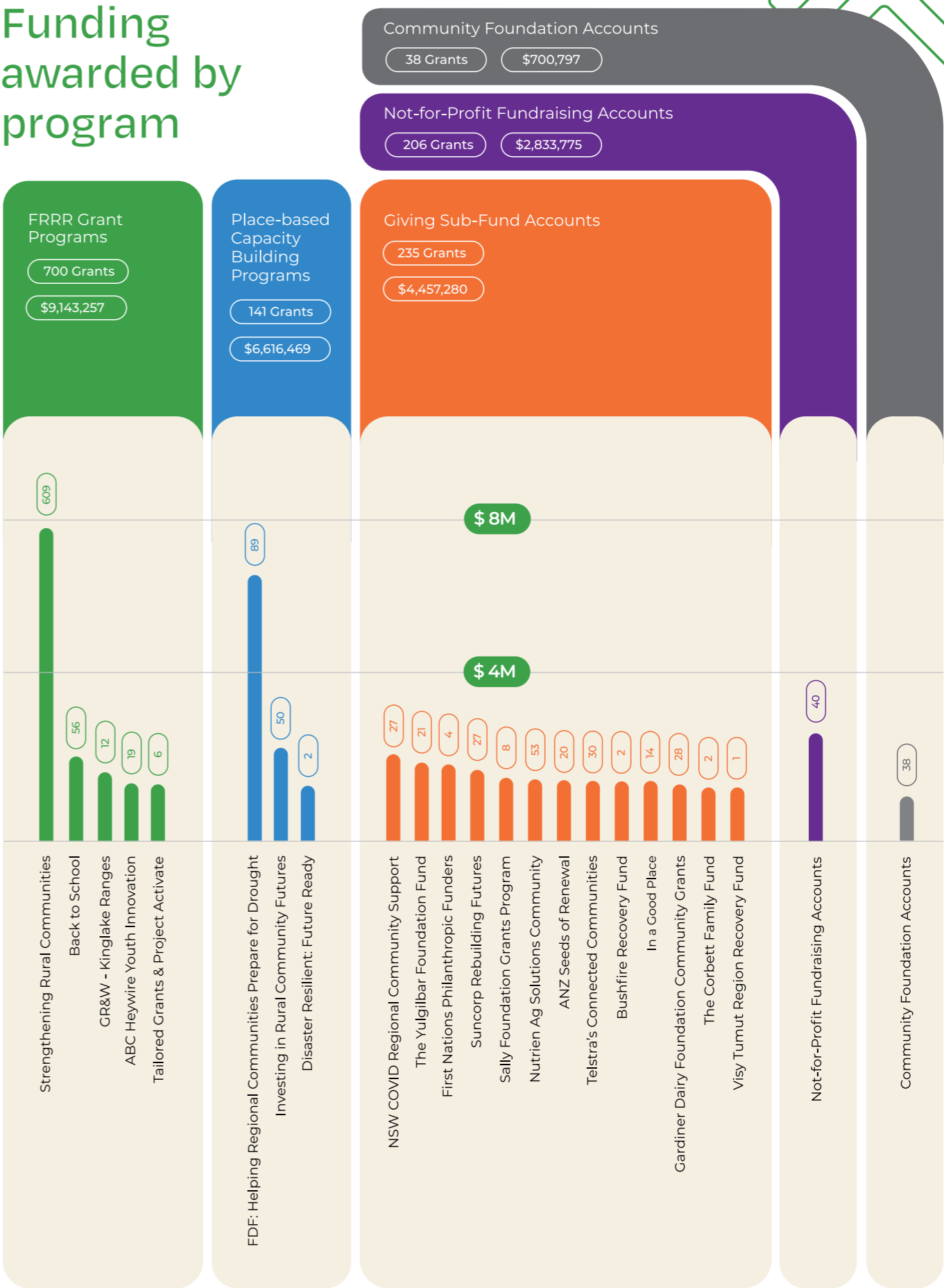
Community Foundation Accounts

- These accounts allow Community Foundations to leverage FRRR's special tax status, so that they can offer tax deductions for donations to support their work.

Not-for-Profit Fundraising Accounts

- NFP Fundraising Accounts can be established for community projects that have a charitable purpose that aligns with FRRR's vision and mission. These accounts allow the community group that is driving the project to attract tax-deductible donations toward their initiative, so they can and deliver programs such as entrepreneurial training, education programs or community infrastructure projects.

Funding awarded by program



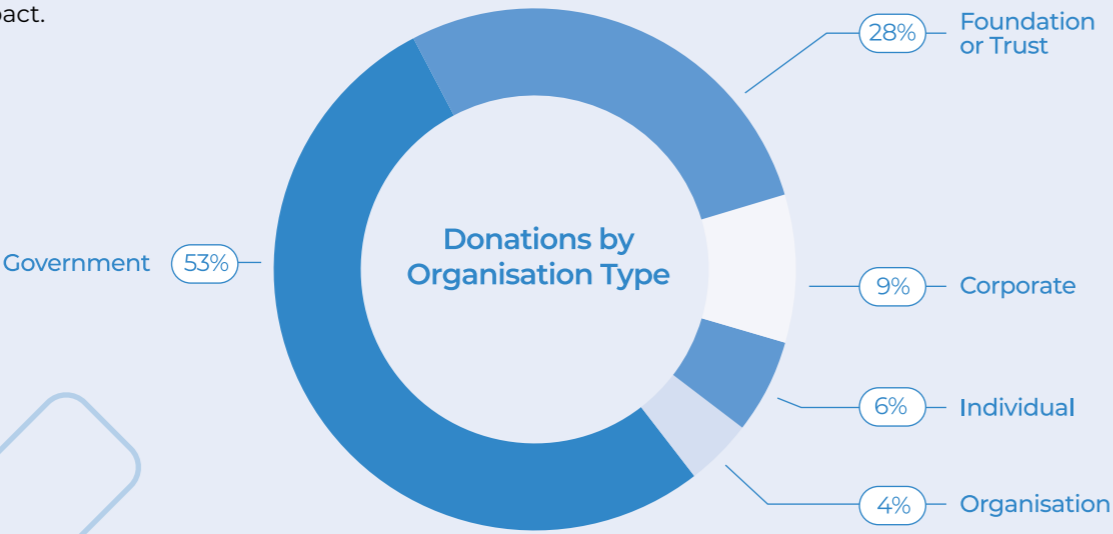
# Thank you!

Partnerships and collective giving are in FRRR's DNA and we continue to be inspired by the spirit of generosity and collaboration that sits behind all of our work.

Our suite of programs and services offer different ways in which organisations can work with us, including contributing to collaboratively-funded programs; donating to our perpetual Funds, which we invest and draw on annually for grant funding; or leveraging our knowledge and reach through a Giving Sub-Fund to enable funds to reach specific groups and support initiatives that align to their individual giving priorities. We also appreciate the many individual donors who either make one-off contributions or support rural Australia through workplace giving contributions. Every donation is greatly appreciated and makes an impact.

"We were getting a lot of signals that FRRR was a trusted, reliable organisation very much in alignment with the value set of GlobalGiving, in the way that we think about responding to disasters in terms of resourcing local organisations that otherwise had been overlooked and excluded from some broader flows. Recognising there's often the same core set of larger national organisations that really bring in the vast majority of funding and then it's smaller local organisations that get the short shrift at the end of the day. We heard a lot of good things from a variety of folks about how FRRR was responding in and after times of the fires, and so that brought us together. And I think more tactically, it led to a multi-year grant partnership that was bolstering and investing in the flexibility and support that FRRR was already driving out to its networks."

Chase Williams, GlobalGiving



"I've always been very impressed with the lens FRRR takes to these things, because it does recognise the kind of ecosystem even within single communities, but the point is it takes that systemic lens, and I think we have no choice anymore but to do that, if we're going to be effective funders."

Michelle Cortan, Macdoch Foundation

"When I was doing my investigation, reading about FRRR – it was a very well read and reputable Board of Directors that were running the place. What we thought was so good about it was that they do lots of small, small grants to non-DGR status charities. This suited our Foundation enormously!"

Neville Bertalli, Bertalli Family Foundation

Every donation to FRRR is treasured. Listed below are some of the supporters who made larger donations but we also acknowledge and greatly appreciate the many private and individual donors who support FRRR with their time, talents or treasure.

### Donors to FRRR programs

AMP Foundation	Maple-Brown Family Foundation
Aurizon Community Giving Fund	Minderoo Foundation
Australian Government	National Emergency Management Agency
ANZ	Newcrest Sustainability Fund
Australian Rural Leadership Foundation	NSW Government
Bertalli Family Foundation	Nutrien Ag Solutions
Bill and Elizabeth Corbett	Paul Ramsay Foundation
Boundless Earth	Pinnacle Charitable Foundation
Bowness Family Foundation	Portland House Foundation
Cargill Australia	Pratt Foundation
CBH Group	Raine & Horne Foundation
CCI Giving	Schroders Investment Management Australia Limited
Center for Disaster Philanthropy	Shine On Foundation
Chasam Foundation	Sid and Fiona Myer Family Foundation
Commonwealth Bank	Sidney Myer Fund
Community Enterprise Foundation *	Suncorp Group
Community Impact Foundation *	Telstra Foundation
Counterpoint Community Services Inc	Telstra Group Limited
David Mactaggart Foundation *	The Calvert-Jones Foundation
Dawkins Family Gift (APS)	The Collie Foundation +
Department of Health & Human Services	The Danks Trust
Desmond Prentice Charitable Trust	The Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Doc Ross Family Foundation	The Humphries Family Fund (APS)
Dr George Jacobs	The Ian Potter Foundation *
Erdi Foundation	The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
Estate Late Harold Gordon Jones	The John Villiers Trust
Findex Community Fund	Perpetual Foundation - Julian Flett Endowment
Gardiner Dairy Foundation	The NSW Stud Merino Breeders Association Trust
Gilbert + Tobin	The Sally Foundation
GlobalGiving	The Snow Foundation
Grant Family Sub-Fund of BeBlueRock Foundation	The Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation +
Hand Heart Pocket - the Charity of Freemasons QLD	The Unsworth Foundation
Handbury Foundation *	The William Buckland Foundation +
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust	The Yulgilbar Foundation *
Ian Rollo Currie Estate Foundation	Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC
John Chandler Tuxworth (DCPM)	Tim Fairfax Family Foundation (TFFF)
Kellogg Australia Charitable Foundation	Transgrid
Kenyon Foundation	Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF)
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation	Waislitz Family Foundation
Macdoch Foundation	Wilson Asset Management
Macquarie Group Limited	

### Donors to Fundraising Accounts

Spoint Foundation
ACME Foundation
Andrew, Rebecca, Molly & James Gift (APS)
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Fairness Fund
Fkg Group
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The Vedmore Foundation
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### Pro Bono Partners

ABC Heywire
Herbert Smith Freehills
Tanarra Philanthropic Advisors
TOYOTA via the services of TSSC Australia

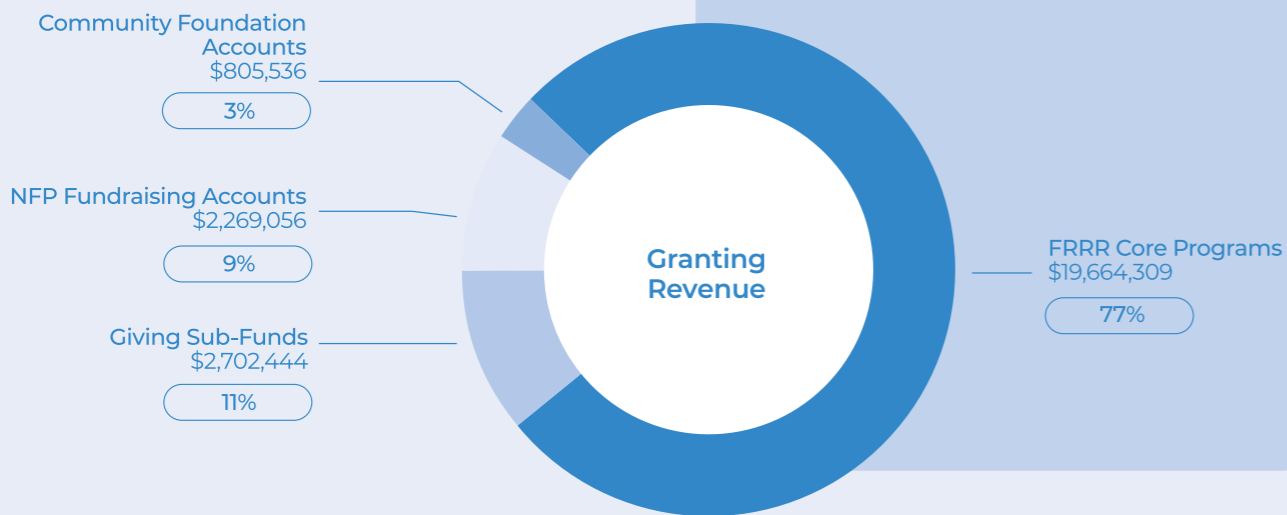
\* Also donated to Fundraising Accounts  
+ Managed by Equity Trustees

# Performance & Impact

In FY23, we received \$25.4M via 1,314 donations. (FY22: \$21.4M via 2,366 donations). There were around 45% who were returning donors (FY22: 55%).

The largest single donation was \$7.9M (FY22: \$3.3M) and the smallest donation was \$1, while the median contribution was \$101 (FY22: \$50). In total, 131 donors contributed more than \$10,000 each. The most donations (398) to any one program were to the Strengthening Rural Communities program, which now includes our Prepare and Recover stream and the Rebuilding Regional Communities stream, which supports COVID recovery.

Our total income included funds for granting via core programs, as well as contributions to our Community Foundation Accounts and Not-for-Profit Fundraising Accounts, and a further \$6.7M in operational revenue. For a more detailed breakdown, refer to FRRR's audited financials as [lodged with ACNC](#).



FRRR's work is so much more than granting. With support from Tanarra Philanthropic Advisors, we reviewed the cost involved in FRRR's community engagement, capacity building, insights and grant administration, and the percentage of donations that supports this work. This had not been changed in FRRR's 20 plus years of operation and the review found that our fees we were not reflecting the costs and value of the support that FRRR provides. The Board subsequently considered and approved an adjustment to our delivery and engagement component that is levied on donations to our core grants programs and Giving Sub-Funds.

This year, we also continued to invest in strategic initiatives to strengthen our capacity and build out new areas of impact. These include the Insights Portfolio, development of FRRR's Impact Framework, a strategy for working more deeply in WA, growing our corporate partnerships, and growing giving through FRRR programs. The operating loss for the year is attributable to this financial commitment.

## Our Corpus

We ended the year with net assets of \$31.9M (FY22: \$30.6M). This comprises the main corpus, which was valued at \$19.7M (up from \$13.7M at the end of FY22). It also included two sub-funds – the Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund and a new Small Grants Fund.

## Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund

FRRR has a strong track record in disaster preparedness and recovery, spanning floods, bushfires, cyclones, and droughts in rural and remote areas. Recognising the increasing severity and frequency of climate-related disasters, we established the Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund (DRRF) through a founding gift from the windup of Aussie Farmers Foundation. At the end of FY23, this fund was valued at \$5M. This perpetual fund ensures that donations continue to have a lasting impact, benefitting disaster preparedness and recovery efforts in remote, rural and regional areas where the capacity to invest in these areas is limited.

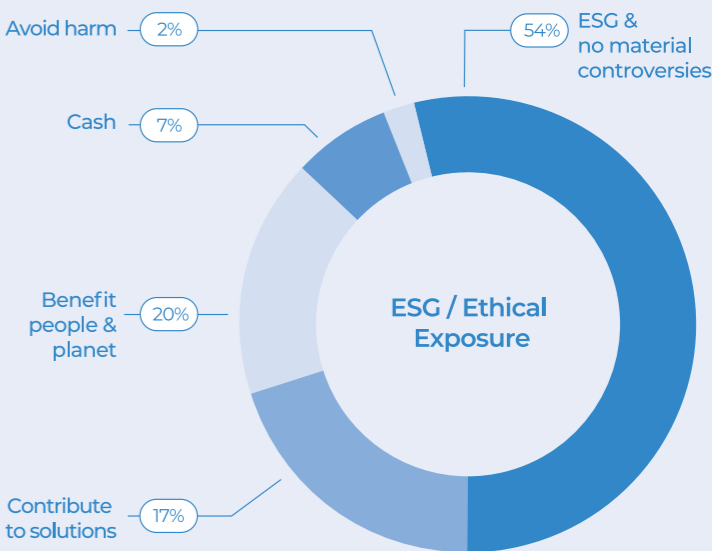
Our commitment to assisting communities in need, long after the headlines have moved on, reflects our dedication to building resilience and preparedness at the community level. Our approach aligns with national policy and regional strategies and champions the importance of locally-led solutions in disaster management.

## Small Grants Fund

Our Strengthening Rural Communities grants are our most in-demand and enable us to offer funding that is targeted to the needs and capacity of small and remote communities, who face ongoing barriers to accessing right-size and flexible funding.

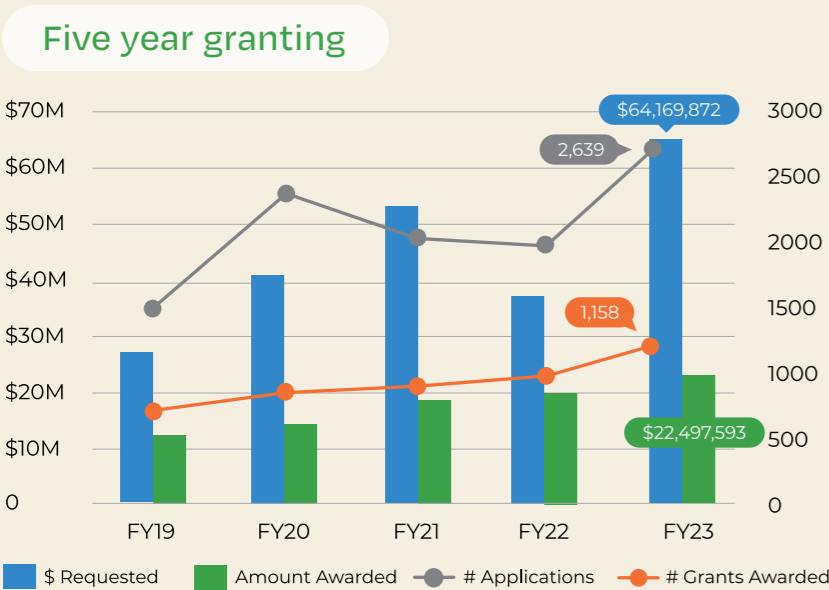
FRRR's small grants are one of few continuous sources targeted to their needs and the Small Grants Fund was launched as a means to ensure a steady supply of grants to these vital parts of Australia. At year end, the fund stood at \$497K. This fund will help us bridge the gap in funding requests and create lasting, positive impacts in remote, rural and regional communities. Over time, this fund will create an endowment, ensuring a perpetual source of support for remote and regional communities in need.

Both the DRRF and Small Grants Fund work by pooling and investing donations, with FRRR's Board and Finance Committee working closely with Koda Capital, our investment advisors, to generate returns that are used to support communities. Funds are invested in line with our investment policy, which requires us to not knowingly invest in an organisation that operates at the expense of the environment, human rights, the public safety, and the communities in which the organisation conducts its operations or the dignity of its employees. Where possible, we have a preference for investments that benefit regional and rural Australia and that are aligned with FRRR's strategic aims, which includes impact investments.



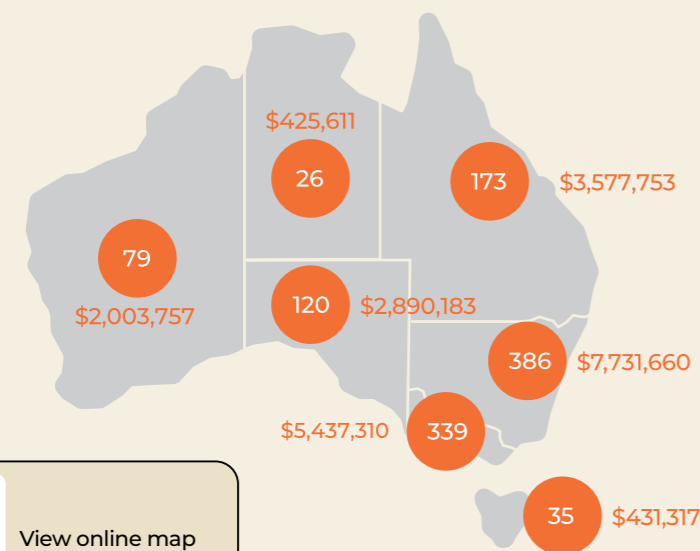
# Grant & Develop

FRRR received a record 2,639 grant applications in FY23, requesting \$64M (a year-on-year increase of 71%). This reflects a combination of reactivation of projects and events post-COVID; the breadth of disaster impacts across the country; and an increased value of funding on offer, particularly through the Future Drought Fund's Helping Rural Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative.



It was another record year too, in terms of grant distributions with 1,158 awarded (up 17%) totalling \$22.5M (up 12%), well ahead of strategic goal (\$17.5M). Thanks to our supporters, we were able to fund 51% of eligible applications. However, there were more than 440 funding-ready projects seeking \$6.6M that we could not support.

For every dollar we awarded, community groups leveraged a further \$1.76 in cash or in-kind contributions. Our grants comprised 36% (FY22: 39%) of the \$62.1M (FY22: \$50.4) in the value of projects supported.



Our reach also increased, with 552 unique postcodes benefitting from grants (FY22: 526) and grants were awarded in 300 out of the 566 Local Government Areas across Australia. Nearly 52% of funding awarded went to outer regional, remote or very remote communities (559; \$11.6M) and more than half of all grants awarded were in communities with a SEIFA index of 1-40 (53%; 611; \$11.88M).

In line with our strategy to increase funding in WA, SA, NT and TAS, we saw a 34% increase in funding awarded year-on-year. Funds to these states and territory represented 26% of total funding, up 4%.

Pleasingly, the strong demand for preparedness investment continued, with grants for preparedness outstripping grants for recovery, driven in large part by the drought preparedness program kicking off.

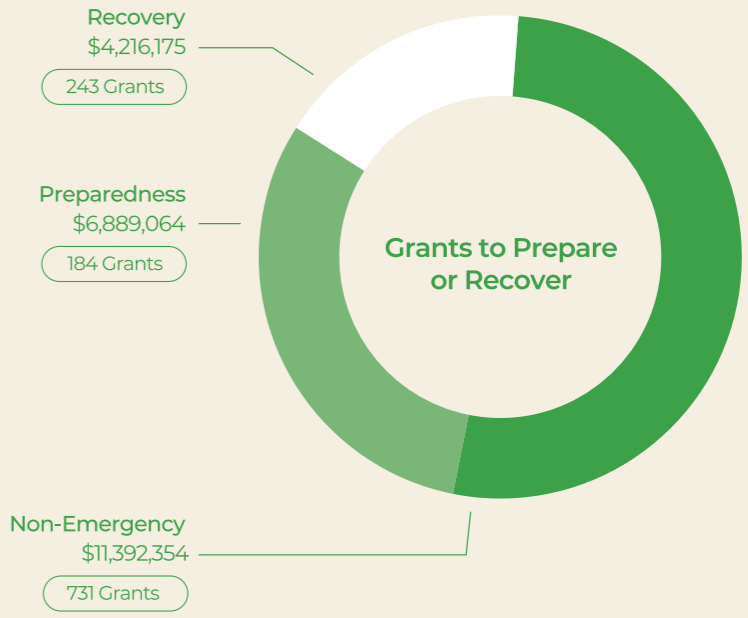
While there was widespread flooding during this financial year, our granting to support their recovery will largely fall into FY24, reflecting our medium to long-term focus.

This year, we awarded 427 grants valued at \$11.1M (FY22: \$12.1M) to support disaster recovery efforts.

## Change Mechanism & Primary Outcomes

Grants were relatively evenly distributed in terms of the change mechanism, although this year we saw the greatest proportion of funding (29%) go toward providing access to services and activities, reflecting the cost of living pressures and ongoing challenges in community (FY22: 20%). This was closely followed by investing in infrastructure and equipment (27%; FY22: 27%).

To help measure the impact of our grants, we ask community groups to indicate the main focus of their project. This year, most grants awarded went toward developing organisational resilience and capacity, closely followed by building community resilience and promoting individual and community health and wellbeing. This reflects the increased in funding through capacity building programs like the Helping Rural Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative and Investing in Rural Community Futures.



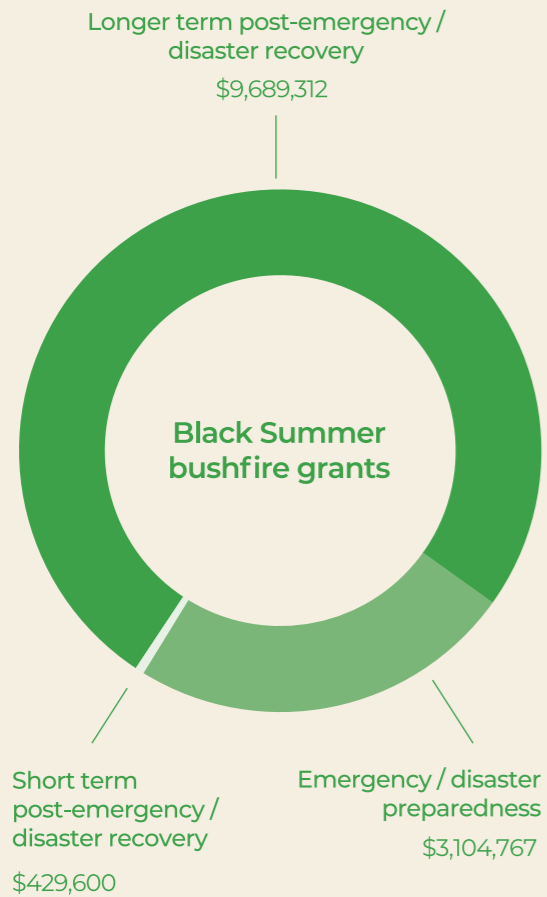
## Outcomes Supported



# Strategy in Action

In FY23, community groups sought support to help address the impacts of rising living costs, which both intensified demand for their services, especially around food security and housing, and restricted local giving. Recovery continued post-bushfires and COVID, emphasising the need for long-term support for community rebuilding. Engaging and retaining volunteers remained challenging but innovative strategies emerged. We also saw more groups working to bridge the cultural connection gap with Indigenous communities. Meanwhile, mental health remained the top priority for young people, followed closely by concerns regarding cultural diversity and access to education and career opportunities in their communities. Throughout FY23, we also saw many communities take active steps towards self-reliance, particularly around power supply, community safety and disaster communications.

These complexities are why we focus our investment at the intersection of People, Place, and Disaster Resilience & Climate Solutions. This is where we believe the core conditions for community resilience lie, and where resourcing, investment and policy-settings can be best-focussed.



## Black Summer recovery continues

It's now three years since the devastating Black Summer bushfires. In line with FRRR's strategy to support medium-to-long term recovery and preparedness, as at the end of FY23, we had distributed 57% of the \$23.1M that was donated to FRRR.

Unsurprisingly, most funding (54%) went to NSW (\$7.2M via 366 grants), with VIC communities sharing \$3.9M via 180 grants. Grants reached every state or territory, other than the NT. Most funding went to outer regional, remote or very remote areas and 315 grants went to support communities experiencing high disadvantage (SEIFA <40).

By focusing on People, we support place-based organisations and community leaders to grow their skills, networks and collaboration, leading to more sustainable delivery of vital services and resourcing. This includes amplifying the voices of young people, bringing their ideas to life through targeted grants and capacity-building programs.

Our activities in the People portfolio range from broad grants through the SRC program and Fundraising Accounts, targeted funding and support via the FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program and Takeover program, to the long-term place-based Investing in Rural Community Futures initiative, which targets investment in communities ready for transformative development.

Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) now operates in eight communities across rural New South Wales, significantly impacting their resilience and cohesion. Heywire returned to Canberra post-COVID, underscoring the resilience of young regional leaders. A new program, Takeover, which involves going into a regional area and working intensely with high-school students in partnership with ABC, was piloted in-person in Mildura, a milestone as the first standalone program after two hybrid years alongside Heywire in Broken Hill and Shepparton.



## Connecting the Southern Shoalhaven community

The Southern Shoalhaven area in NSW was devastated by the Black Summer bushfires in early 2020. With COVID following soon after, the Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber sought ways to support business, community and tourism in the region aligned to the local priorities developed through the IRCF Milton-Ulladulla community roadmap.

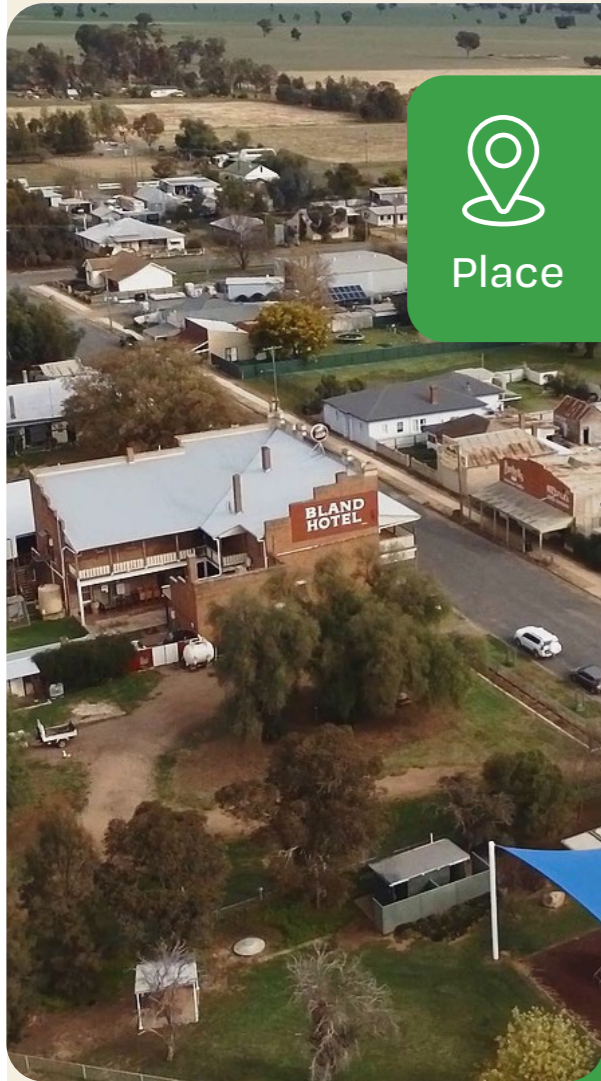
Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven (CCSS) was subsequently set up as a vehicle to coordinate activities and deliver on community-identified roadmap priorities. It is run by volunteers, for volunteers, helping them better connect, communicate and collaborate, under the auspice of the Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber.

Five grants totalling \$81,690 (funded by The Snow Foundation) have supported the launch and resourcing of CCSS and early outcomes are showing a stronger, more connected, coordinated and vibrant volunteering community in Ulladulla.

"The multi-year IRCF program, with roadmapping and year-on-year capacity building grants has been wonderful. It has supported further community networking and collaborative project planning to support other grant applications. The capacity funding supports the core areas that are not always part of traditional grants."

Matt Dell,

Volunteer with Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven and President of the Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber



For a place to thrive, it not only needs skilled, confident local leaders but also access to services and facilities that enhance its livability and underpin a thriving economy.

Small, grassroots community groups that are in and of their place step up to connect their communities, provide missing services, capitalise on opportunities and enhance local amenities that help to connect the community so that together they can drive or navigate change.

FRRR's small grant programs help enable these outcomes in a way that meets small and remote communities where they are at and supports incremental progress. Using small grant funding to demonstrate the viability of a community idea can generate the evidence needed to secure larger grants or other support to bring the idea to reality.

While much of the work is about granting, there is also a significant focus on helping communities to shape their projects and on building capacity to apply for grants in the first place. That's why this year, we developed The Know and The How webinar series and undertook several community visits, particularly in the Northern Territory and Queensland.

### Persistence leads to access and equity

In a remote bushfire-affected area of East Gippsland, volunteers from the Deddick Valley Isolated Community Group (DVICG) brought to life an innovative solution to overcome a lack of access to basic local healthcare services.

DVICG's idea was to establish a technology-enabled, nurse-led health service model by equipping suitable spaces (known as Hubs) with appropriate technology and high-speed communications, enabling community members to access services face-to-face or by video conference.

A \$24,680 SRC grant, supported by a private donor, helped employ a project manager and conduct a study to identify community needs and assess the project's feasibility. The findings validated the idea and FRRR awarded a further \$24,750 SRC grant that funded signage, interior furnishings and equipment.

The group has since secured funding to have the Hubs staffed regularly, through the Gippsland Primary Health Network (GPHN), making their nurse-led model a reality.

"We are most proud of the fact that as a community, we have remained central to delivery of a new health model for our district. It is a community designed and led approach to solving local issues. We have been able to do this whilst remaining in control, improving our district-wide community relationships and networks, and building community capacity."

Shelly McLaren, Chair of Errinundra to Snowy Community Recovery Committee

FY23 was another challenging year in terms of disasters, with 27 major incidents recorded. Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements were activated by the Government in response to 36 events across 317 councils.

FRRR funded 427 projects (37% of FY23 grants) through 15 programs (from 710 requests) to a value of \$11.1M to support disaster response, recovery or preparedness efforts. This highlights the ongoing impact of current and previous disasters on the people and places of remote, rural and regional Australia. These grants also highlight the critical role that small community-based NFP organisations play, often in a highly resource constrained environment, led by local volunteers, who continue to show up, even with high levels of fatigue.

Key initiatives this year included the expansion of community-led disaster resilience building in Queensland with the support of the Minderoo Foundation and National Emergency Management Agency, in partnership with local delivery partner, Red Earth Community Foundation. Work also continued to focus on drought resilience, with the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative operating in 35 key regions, supported by the Australian Government and delivered in partnership with Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.

### Online platform creates connection

Karridale is an agricultural community in the Blackwood region of southwest WA. Established in 1991, the Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee (LBLCDC) members are local landholders interested in sustainable agricultural and land management practices.

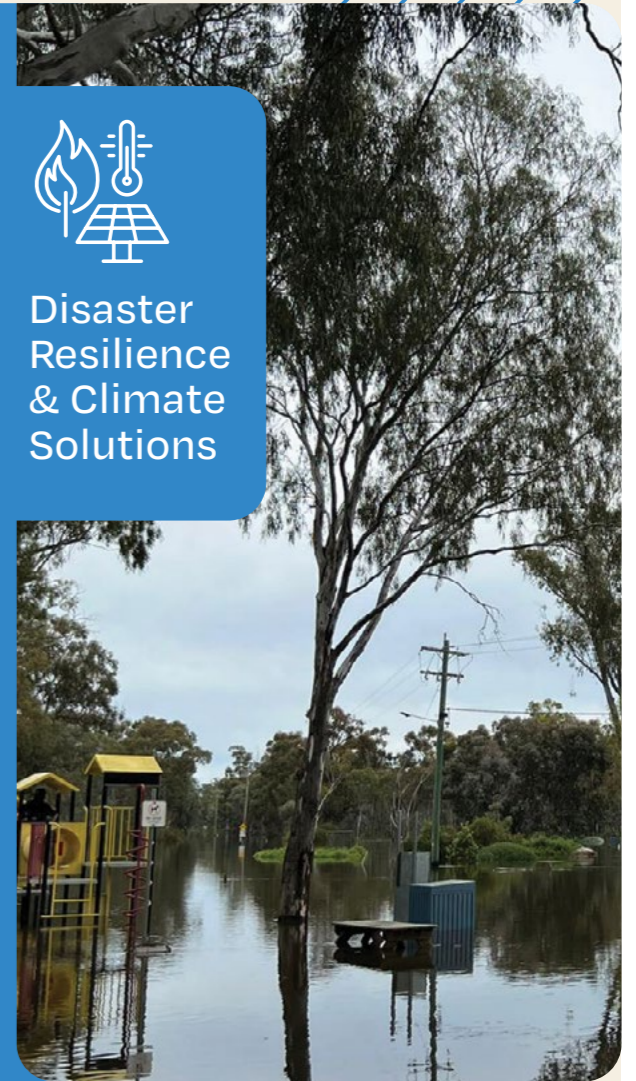
However, a lack of access to resources and expertise was hampering farmers in creating resilient and responsive landscapes. LBLCDC also saw the need for more peer-to-peer support and felt that more conversations could combat isolation and foster a sense of community among local farmers.

Supported by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, FRRR provided \$49,850 to assist the LBLCDC with the design and delivery of an online platform. It meant farmers and the community could learn about regenerative agriculture and sustainable land management practices and their role in managing drought risks when and where it is convenient for them.

The interactive and engaging platform has been warmly embraced, strengthened resilience to future drought and fostered community and connection by developing a cohesive, relevant and applicable resource base for individual and community learning.



### Disaster Resilience & Climate Solutions



"The ability to share ideas, discuss and compare notes on issues, actions and solutions with other community members in a safe and convenient space has and will promote a more adaptable and resourceful community!"

Lower Blackwood Land Conservation District Committee

# Impact Stories

## New South Wales

New South Wales was the leading state again this year, in terms of the largest proportion of funding support received (34%) via 16 different grant programs. State-specific programs (including Investing in Rural Community Futures, COVID Regional Community Support, The Yulgilbar Foundation Fund and the Visy Tumut Regional Recovery Fund) accounted for just over half of the total funds awarded in NSW (\$2.7M; 52%).

The Shoalhaven and Clarence Valley LGAs had the highest number of requests for funding, as well as grants awarded (50 requests, 38 grants, \$467,427 awarded; 34 requests, 19 grants, \$578,958 awarded respectively). In both cases, more than 78% of the funding was awarded through place-based programs.

Projects primarily focussed on building community resilience or developing organisational resilience and capacity (60% of funds awarded via 227 grants, \$4.67M). In total, 45% of the grants awarded across NSW related to disaster resilience and recovery activities, as communities continue to grapple with the aftermath of the Black Summer Bushfires and multiple flooding events.

386 Grants  
\$7,731,660



"We are extremely proud of being able to deliver free professional development workshops specially tailored to the creative sector – artists, arts orgs and cultural groups – especially during a time where the impacts of restrictions were being felt by artists and businesses. Helping others to develop their business skills and watching them grow and succeed was deeply rewarding. It is also rewarding to see the positive ways participants have applied the knowledge they have learnt in their own creative businesses."

– Erin Olafson, Project & Communications Officer, STARTS

## Professional development in the Arts

Southern Tablelands Arts (STARTS) in Goulburn has operated for 23 years. After a number of community groups and creatives approached them seeking advice and information on governance, Southern Tablelands came up with 'Dare to Deliver'. The goal of the project was to offer a professional development course to creative organisations and community groups in Yass and Braidwood that could not afford such training.

With the help of a \$10,000 SRC grant funded by FRRR through the Small & Vital stream, STARTS was able to deliver 11 training programs including ones on getting started in the arts; raising your profile; marketing; and more. Overall, the programs, which were attended by 150 people, helped to improve participants' financial security by giving them the knowledge and skills they needed to leverage their artistic skills.



## Healing from floods through music and connection

After school children across Grafton, Lismore and Casino were displaced by floods, Big Scrub Orchestra came up with the idea of running musical workshops to help build resilience and wellbeing in young people, boosting their confidence and enabling community connection. Thanks to a \$25,000 SRC grant supported by Suncorp Group, the workshops were rolled out in schools across the region. The project culminated in a performance at the local Jacaranda Festival and some of the young people participating were even invited to perform at Bluesfest in Byron Bay!

## Restoring a sense of belonging after the Black Summer bushfires

After the Black Summer bushfires destroyed large parts of the south east coast of NSW, Campfire Co-op, who are a key IRCF partner, delivered their Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter (aka The Art of Participatory Leadership) training in bushfire-impacted communities, with the help of a \$25,000 Strengthening Rural Communities grant supported by the Waislitz Family Foundation in partnership with Australian Community Media.

The program proved effective, with participants reporting increased capacity for recovery as they stepped into hosting difficult conversations and supporting those experiencing trauma. One participant said they were grateful for "the sense of belonging that has grown in my heart."



"A strong and growing community of Art of Hosting practice is developing across the South Coast – one of the strongest in Australia. What we are experiencing now is some of the ripples that have come from the training in the months afterwards – a greater use of participatory practice in the region."

– Mel Geltch, Chair Campfire Co-op Ltd

VIDEO LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vTnSHC6iFM>



## 'Up Armidale Road': A bushfire recovery tour

Following the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires, Arts Northern Rivers wanted to give bushfire-affected communities the opportunity to connect, reflect and enjoy themselves amongst friends and neighbours. Thanks to a grant supported through The Yulgilbar Foundation Fund program, they were able to roll out a music and documentary screening tour, 'Up Armidale Road', across 21 rural and regional towns in NSW. As a result, many NSW communities were able to begin rebuilding with a stronger social fabric after the bushfires.



## Victoria

Nearly a quarter of this year's funding went to VIC, with \$5.4M awarded across 339 projects - a 15% increase on FY22. Fifty-nine percent of grants were through the SRC program (200; \$2.3M), with a further 44 grants through place-based programs specific to VIC. This included 12 grants via the GR&W Kinglake Ranges program, the final distributions from the programs funded by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund that supported communities impacted by the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

East and South Gippsland regions topped the VIC LGA list for the number of grants requested and awarded, with \$884K distributed via 41 grants. Across the state, \$7.6M was requested for activities to help build community resilience, with 29% of funding awarded (\$1.6M) supporting 87 projects in this category. A further \$1M (19%) was awarded to projects with a focus on lifelong learning, education and / or training.

In terms of funding for disaster resilience and recovery, grants supported 123 projects (36% of VIC grants awarded; 46% of funds awarded). Of these, 63 projects totalling just more than \$1.3M focussed on longer-term post-emergency or disaster recovery.

339 Grants  
\$5,437,310



"I've been reminded over the last two years just how important community is. To campaign for a strong climate, we need a strong community and Green Fest brought together people motivated to achieve both. As well as promoting sustainable habits, Green Fest empowered people to get more involved in the community organising that is so crucial to demanding climate justice."

– Finley Japp, BACC

### Ballarat's 'Green Fest'

Ballarat Action Climate Co-operative (BACC) is a youth-led organisation dedicated to promoting climate justice through direct action. Food is Free Inc is a food security assistance and community inclusion organisation operating out of Green Space – a purpose-built outdoor classroom with over 40 raised garden beds, growing food that's free to the community, 24/7.

These groups collaborated to deliver a series of fun and inclusive community events comprising workshops on gardening and seed collection, a clothes and book swap, market stalls and emerging music talents at what they dubbed

'Green Fest'. Three more youth-led workshops followed on from the initial festival and included a film screening and sustainability workshops, as well as a Punk-Arts workshop.

A \$9,904 grant from the FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program, supported by Friends of FRRR, helped cover the costs of hiring the venue and paying Food is Free Inc to manage the events. The projects were successful in increasing awareness of BACC and promoting environmental health and sustainability, with more than 200 people attending the first event. The feedback was so positive that they hope to make it a yearly event.



### Crops for community

The Crops for Community volunteer program, supported by an ANZ Seeds of Renewal grant of \$15,000, educated and empowered volunteers of all abilities at ECOSS Community Garden's market operations in the Yarra Valley. Participants learned skills from plant propagation to sales, becoming more independent and socially connected in this vibrant and active environment. The program also included selling native plants through the garden's nursery and the weekly Valley Market, which supports local food producers and small businesses to sell directly to the public.

### Taungurung addition to the Dindi Arts Trail

Across the Kinglake Ranges region, arts and culture projects have helped build connection and wellbeing as part of disaster recovery efforts. The Dindi Arts Trail is one such project, with community groups and local not-for-profits working together. In all, five grants have been awarded to this project since 2021 through the GR&W grant program, funded by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund (VBAF).

The Trail features a series of murals throughout the Kinglake Ranges, each telling their own story. Most recently, the Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House received a grant for \$53,604 to include large-scale First Nations murals and art work that celebrate Taungurung people and culture, further strengthening connection to place and local identity.



### Activating connection and kindness in Cobden

Progressing Cobden Inc used a \$10,000 SRC grant supported by the Australian Government to reconnect the local community after several years of challenges, including COVID. The project promoted kindness, caring and gratitude through local social activities like a giant interactive art installation, social quilting for good, a community kindness postcard campaign and a gratitude wall. The series highlighted Cobden's sense of community and resilience, along with the many positives of collaboration and showing empathy.



### The life story projects

Residents of aged care facilities faced significant social isolation due to COVID restrictions. Using a grant of \$6,810 from the SRC Small & Vital program, funded by the Ian Rollo Currie Estate Foundation, the St Arnaud Neighbourhood House enabled young local people to interview 24 older community members and capture their stories in the Life Story Project. Each resident received a life history book and a keepsake box celebrating them and their contributions to the community. The project strengthened community ties and created a stronger social fabric across generations.

## Queensland

Queensland received 16% of national funding (173 grants; \$3.6M), a slight decrease on FY22 (-1.82%). This year 70% of QLD funding reached outer regional, remote or very remote communities (104 grants; \$2.5M), an increase of 18% on the previous year.

Sixty percent of funding focussed on building community resilience and developing organisational resilience and capacity. This is in line with the objectives of the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative, which made up 51% funds awarded via 20 grants - \$1.8M. A further 34% of funding was distributed via our small grants program (98 grants; \$1.2M).

The remaining 15% of funds was distributed via 12 programs, including fundraising accounts. More than one third of all projects focussed on disaster resilience and recovery activities, with 58% of funding awarded going towards emergency or disaster preparedness projects across the state.

173 Grants  
\$3,577,753



### Safe swimming skills flow to Queensland's rural west

In rural Australia, drowning risk is 65 times higher in remote areas, mainly due to poor swimming skills, limited resuscitation knowledge and slower emergency services response.

Financial pressures worsened by drought had reduced children's enrollments in swimming lessons, further threatening safety in rural and remote areas. The Royal Life Saving Society Queensland (RLSSQ) received two grants from FRRR's SRC program to tackle this issue.

In 2020, a \$25,000 grant supported by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation supported RLSSQ's

free water safety program in five towns in the Barcaldine region. Collaborating with local providers, they delivered learn-to-swim lessons and CPR workshops. In 2021/22, a \$25,000 grant funded by the Sylvia & Charles Viertel Charitable Foundation enabled RLSSQ to teach swimming and water safety in Winton, benefiting both children and the wider community. These initiatives increased water safety, provided professional development, enhanced rural family engagement and helped stimulate economic growth by paying instructors and bringing families to town more regularly.

### Getaway in Goondiwindi



In Goondiwindi, ongoing disruptions and economic challenges due to border closures and climate events were taking a toll on the community's mental health and overall wellbeing. To combat the stresses following COVID border restrictions, the Creative Getaway 2022 Committee organised a three-day arts-based event. Supported by an \$8,000 SRC grant, funded by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, the event featured 32 workshops. It brought together locals as well as participants from afar, providing an economic boost to the area, including employing local tutors. The happiness and sense of accomplishment among participants was evident throughout the weekend, reinforcing the positive impact that arts-based initiatives can have on mental health and the community as a whole.

### Lifting the Darling Downs

Across the Darling Downs, prolonged drought had many and varied impacts, including business closures, family disruption and economic downturn, all of which negatively affected wellbeing. Momentum Mental Health secured a \$50,000 grant from the Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience program, funded by the Australian Government and the Pratt Foundation, to provide support. Partnering with local Chambers of Commerce, they delivered wellbeing workshops to 57 businesses, equipping 200 individuals with strategies to cope with drought and fostering confidence in supporting others informally. The multiplier effect extended the program's reach to 4,000 people, promoting positive wellbeing practices in the workplace and at home and providing tangible tools to support community members before they require clinical assistance.



### Tanny Hall's cherry on top

Established in 1910, Tannymorel Hall is a central gathering place for a broad area of rural Queensland. Since COVID, it has hosted a centenary celebration, a concert, a historical exhibition, trivia night, markets, two weddings and a funeral. The area is experiencing a real estate boom and anticipating new opportunities, the committee wanted to restore the hall for future generations. A \$9,690 SRC grant enabled repainting of the roof, the final item in a long list of repairs. This completed a very active hall committee's plans to upgrade the loved local icon that unites so many.

**"I am most proud of the fact that your funding has helped maintain the Tanny Hall for future generations. It costs money to look after these facilities and, if you don't invest in them, they fall into disrepair. The end result of that is loss of something that unites the community. The real benefits will really be seen in the longer term as a new generation of volunteers takes over."**

– Angela Phillips, Tannymorel Hall Committee



## South Australia

SA experienced a year-on-year increase of 19% in overall funds distributed (120 grants; \$2.9M) and a 35% increase on the amount awarded last financial year. This was around 13% of funding awarded nationally and can be attributed largely to a new program designed to put Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands, particularly in terms of managing the ongoing impacts of COVID in a way that works best for them. This program, supported by Paul Ramsay Foundation, accounted for 25% of funds awarded (\$711K) via four grants.

The Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative was the other big contributor in SA, with more than \$1M awarded through 18 grants. In total 74% of grants and 77% of funding reached outer regional, remote or very remote communities throughout SA, a total investment of \$2.2M across 89 grants. These results are encouraging in terms of seeing our strategic outreach and engagement activities come to fruition.

120 Grants  
\$2,890,183



### Retail coffee and training for the Community Bakery

Peterborough is a small town in the mid north of South Australia with a strong community spirit. Peterborough Community Enterprises (PCE) is a joint partnership between Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North Inc (RDAYMN) and other local not-for-profits, providing employment options to improve social outcomes.

In 2022, PCE's social enterprise community bakery opened. To ensure the Petersburg Bakehouse could offer barista training to job readiness program participants, RDAYMN received a

\$10,000 grant through the Strengthening Rural Communities grant program for a coffee machine, equipment and training. In the first six months, 12 people had been through the training program, developing valuable accredited skills in hospitality, commercial bakery operations and retail experience. The bakery continues to provide ongoing employment for a small number of job seekers and creates future opportunities for training and skills development for people living in Peterborough.



### Noorla Yo-Long Blue Light Adventure - replacement climbing equipment

For more than 25 years Noorla Yo-Long (NYL) in South Australia has provided opportunities for young people to engage with adventure-based learning through their youth camps. With COVID impacting the group's ability to self-fund the replacement of much needed equipment, Blue Light SA Inc auspiced a grant on their behalf, receiving \$4,337 through the Nutrien Ag Solutions Community Grants program to purchase new climbing gear. With improved resources, NYL can confidently continue delivering activities that support young people to build life skills, increase self-esteem and connect through stronger relationships.

"Since the purchase and receipt of the equipment back in March 2022, we have hosted 1,058 young people for a mixture of single day and multi-night camps, all of whom will have had access to this equipment through our programs. It has meant that the full range of adventure activities has been available to the young people to experience the challenges, self-growth and personal success at all levels and ages".

– Geoff Yates, Senior Constable, Blue Light SA Inc

### Fire awareness session and 4WD training

After devastating bushfires in 2020 led to wildlife and habitat destruction, the Kangaroo Island Wildlife Network secured \$5,580 through the Volunteer Emergency Services Fund program, funded by the Lachlan and Sarah Murdoch Foundation, to build volunteer capability and secure additional resources. Funds were used to deliver a Fire Awareness Session, along with 4WD driver training, and purchase a fire extinguisher and blanket for their emergency response vehicle. Both sessions were hugely successful, bringing volunteers together to develop essential disaster preparedness skills.



Photo: Lou Davey

### Onkaparinga Rotary fencing project

Committed to supporting local bushfire recovery efforts, the Rotary Club of Onkaparinga Inc received a \$25,000 grant funded by Australia Post through SRC to purchase crucial equipment and resources, allowing volunteers to help rebuild damaged infrastructure and strengthen community wellbeing.

"FRRR's grant enabled us to be prepared for future disasters in our local area and to share this experience more widely across the country."

## Western Australia

Our continued focus on growing awareness of FRRR among WA communities is yielding results, with 9% of all funds awarded going to the state this year (79 grants; \$2M) and represents a 35% increase on the amount awarded in WA last financial year.

Most grants were awarded through the SRC program (44; \$503K), while 67% of the funding was awarded via 17 grants via the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative.

While 72% of all grants awarded in WA supported non-emergency / disaster recovery projects, just over \$1.5M still went toward disaster preparedness and recovery activities. Most of this (69%) was channelled through projects aimed at building community resilience through drought preparedness activities (12 projects; \$925K).

79 Grants  
\$2,003,757



### Saltwater Academy

Saltwater Country, an Indigenous-led voluntary organisation, runs the Saltwater Academy, offering year-round training and employment opportunities for Indigenous people in the Kimberley. The aim is to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma. The program leverages the strength of Aboriginal stockmen and women, providing culturally relevant education, training, therapy and employment for at-risk Indigenous youth.

A \$25,000 SRC grant supported by The Yulgilbar Foundation allowed the Saltwater Country team to create the Academy's financial model and outcomes framework. This tool also enabled the provision of financial literacy training to the wider Kimberley community.

Ultimately, the Saltwater Academy aims to establish itself as a rite of passage for Aboriginal people in Northern Australia, empowering young Aboriginal people with opportunities to build resilience and strength. This will enable them to reengage and contribute to their communities.



### Foodbank WA provides emergency food hampers

Food insecurity is a pressing issue in Wiluna and Meekathara and became even more challenging during COVID, especially as unemployment increased. Families struggled to provide daily meals for children, while adults relied on others to deliver food. Thanks to a \$9,750 SRC grant supported by the Kellogg Australia Charitable Foundation and the Kapikarnpi Community Fund, Foodbank WA partnered with Mission Australia to provide 250 emergency food hampers to support these communities throughout the year.

## Tasmania

It was pleasing to see a 28% increase in the number of applications from TAS. This resulted in around a 46% increase in the number of grants awarded (35; \$431K) and an 8% year-on-year increase in overall funds distributed. Nearly one third of the grants focussed on projects promoting individual and community health and social wellbeing (10; 55% funds awarded).

SRC funding was most popular, with 21 projects sharing \$263K. The second highest distributions were through two Not-for-Profit Fundraising Accounts, accounting for nearly 22% of funding across TAS (\$94K).

35 Grants  
\$431,317



### Tassie's a good place for gardening

Established in 2018, DIGnity runs therapeutic gardening programs in two Tasmanian community gardens, serving diverse groups. The program emphasises nature, plant nurturing and social interaction to boost mental health and community engagement, especially for those facing isolation factors like chronic diseases, mental health conditions, poverty, ageing and intellectual disabilities.

A \$19,440 grant through the In a Good Place program, funded by CCI Giving, supported 26 sessions for 431 participants. The grant covered an Occupational Therapist and mental health counsellor, fostering inclusivity.

### Seymour's conservation victory

Seymour Community Action Group Inc (SCAGI) aimed to rehabilitate and reclassify the 54-hectare Seymour Conservation Area, running regular working bees. In 2021, they secured a \$10,000 SRC grant, funded by IKEA, to help control invasive gorse and lower the bushfire risk.

### Flood recovery through WinterFire

In October 2022, devastating floods struck the Meander Valley, exacerbating financial hardships for families and youth. Arts Deloraine, a long-standing local organisation, emerged as a force for recovery and resilience-building through the arts. With 30 years of nurturing artists and schools, their WinterFire festival, a beloved annual tradition since 2015, became a beacon of hope. Showcasing local talents, it not only lifted spirits but also strengthened community bonds and the local economy.

Using a \$25,000 SRC grant funded by Nutrien Ag Solutions, they enhanced event production, empowered young participants and celebrated Indigenous culture. WinterFire remains an enduring symbol of community wellbeing, growth and cultural richness.

"Ultimately, your support not only made WinterFire possible, but also created a lasting impact on our community's wellbeing. From social connections and economic growth to cultural celebration and community unity, the benefits of this event are immeasurable."

– John Summers, President, Arts Deloraine



## Northern Territory

While there was a slight year-on-year decrease in the number of grants awarded in the NT (down 2 to 26), the amount of funding awarded increased by 33% for the 26 grants that were awarded via six programs for a total of around \$426K. Once again, the Strengthening Rural Communities program was the most popular (18 grants; \$326K), accounting for 77% of funds awarded. Funding mainly supported projects that contributed to building culturally vibrant communities and activities focussed on promoting individual & community health & social wellbeing, such as those detailed below.

26 Grants  
\$425,611



### Club upgrades step up support in Kulgera

In the remote Kulgera region, the local Gymkhana Club has been revived as a vital community centre, combatting isolation by offering playgroups, social events and education. The area primarily comprises station employees who are vulnerable to drought impacts. With a \$29,724 Networks to Build Drought Resilience grant funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, the club improved its facilities, upgrading a generator and acquiring kitchen equipment.

The club now acts as a space for locals, including police officers, roadhouse staff, station employees and contractors to unite, offer support and nurture social skills in children. It will help residents build resilience and support one another in the face of challenges.

"This is a big stepping stone achieved in our path to bring the community together regularly."

– Bonnie Chapman, Secretary

### Reviving Tennant Creek

The Paterson Street Hub is First Peoples Disability Network's shopfront presence in the Northern Territory, and is a community centre with a disability focus. They received a \$60,000 TTTT grant funded by the Australian Government for their Spirit of Place project, which aimed to increase participation in community life and enhance community cohesion in Tennant Creek and the surrounding town camps. A range of activities was delivered during the April school holidays, which coincided with National Youth Week, and included music, sports, games and BBQ events. A portion of the funding also supported a program run in conjunction with King's Narrative, an Aboriginal counselling business, to support eight Aboriginal men in and around Alice Springs to reconnect with their culture and address societal barriers. The three-day camp underscored the importance of community healing and addressing sensitive issues within the community, showcasing the power of community-driven initiatives in even the most challenging times.



## Community Feedback

"FRRR has been the most valuable and supportive organisation after the bushfires, and here is why. You recognised that other organisations only wanted to pay for actual goods for functions and they expected everyone to volunteer their time for advertising, marketing, building and maintaining websites, grant writing and acquittals, accounting and bookkeeping, and anything that is required by any business.

You provided funding for capacity building which for us, meant that we could have a really good website professionally made amongst other very necessary functions required for running a NFP in its early stages.

We were losing faith and energy because of having no money to pay for the enormous back end required and I personally felt that FRRR listened to our needs and delivered. All of the staff that I met at the two events you ran here in Bega were incredibly helpful and sympathetic to our needs. I was feeling tired, weary and jaded after a long time of volunteering and I felt heard AND you took action.

I don't think I would have carried on with the Cobargo Wellness Group if you hadn't structured your meetings in a collaborative way so that everyone was heard and acted on your findings. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your involvement in all of our organisations after the Black Summer Bushfires."

– Cobargo Wellness Group

"We are extremely happy and proud to be able to say to anyone within our shire, "YES, we can help you". The grant funding was the final piece we needed to make this project happen!"

– Holbrook Meals on Wheels Service

"Thank you so much for providing this grant. With your help we were able to impact many people who would otherwise not have been able to have this learning experience. We were also able to engage with the local community and have discussions around disabilities and mental health issues."

– Next Gen Theatre

"We believe the greatest achievement from the FRRR grant was that our programs potentially saved lives and improved lifelong outcomes by providing a healthy foundation for youth."

– One Vision Productions Limited

[watch video](#)

"While not our biggest financial partner (the bulk of our fundraising was for the renovations), FRRR's contribution towards our project was critical at an important development phase. Many projects fail at this juncture between getting the ideas and finding substantial financial support."

– Engawala Art Centre Aboriginal Corporation



"Who would have thought something as simple as a local garden club could lead to an increase in health service delivery and accessibility in the area! This is the real strength of embedded local service providers delivering community driven services."

– North Burnett Community Services Inc

# Leverage & Broker

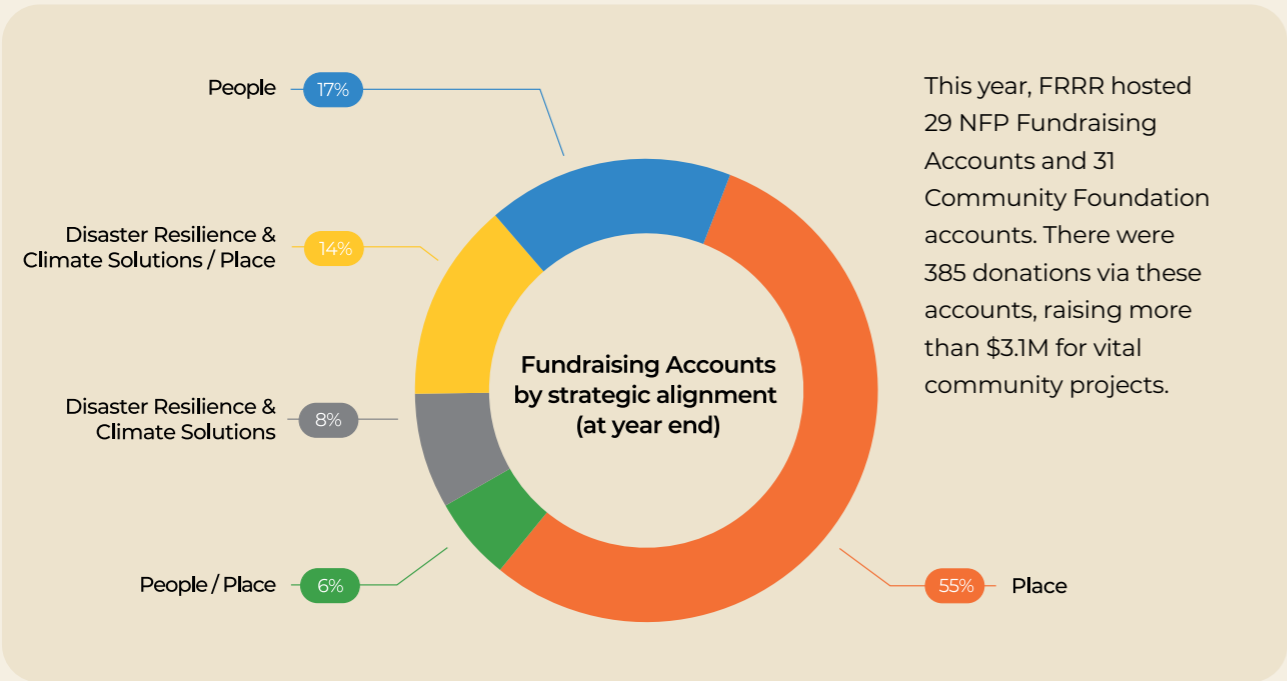
The Partnerships and Services team manages FRRR's relationships with the supporters who make our work possible, as well as supports community groups to fundraise by leveraging our special tax status.

FRRR's brokerage service leverages our DGR-1 status to enable donors to give more effectively and supports NFPs that don't have DGR-1 to attract tax deductible donations. The services that we offer include:



In FY23, we saw strong partnerships continue where impact aligns with our partners' strategic focus. Philanthropy once again demonstrated its power to collaborate on key issues, such as partnerships on multi-year disaster recovery, collaboratively-funded small grants and support for flood-impacted communities. New corporate partners joined us and other long-standing relationships renewed, which we appreciate, increasing the overall pool of grants available.

Despite these successes, there remains a growing and unmet demand within our flexible small grants program, as NFPs seek funding to implement important projects. We need to ensure communities have access to grants to embark upon these projects that matter to them, so that they can develop the contextual and innovative responses to our country's most challenging issues. We encourage all our supporters to consider the significance of providing broad and flexible support, perhaps as a portion of a more targeted focus.



## Housing Matters Action Group

Since 2017, Housing Matters Action Group (HMAG) has helped find and create achievable, affordable and environmentally responsible housing solutions in the Bellingen Shire on the NSW mid-north coast.

HMAG is working hard to expand its services and impact, and transitioning from a volunteer-led organisation to one with a physical local presence and paid staff.

In 2020, HMAG partnered with FRRR to open a Not-for-Profit Fundraising Account. This facilitated a donation from the Siddie Family Foundation, which helped cover core operating expenses. This partnership has been instrumental in the establishment and development of the Housing Matters Hub - a physical site from which HMAG can coordinate its work, provide services, hold meetings and provide free or low-cost drop-in services to support community members.

The funds are also supporting HMAG to increase its capacity to respond to the emerging needs and opportunities presented by the regional housing crisis. Their partnership recently extended to enable the launch of the Community Land Trust, an initiative aimed at providing affordable housing solutions for locals.

"HMAG would not have been able to enter into this partnership with Siddie Family Foundation without FRRR being able to facilitate it. It has also given us considerable reputational advantage when talking about our work with other potential funders and/or partnering organisations."

Emma Belcher,  
HMAG Project Officer

## South West Community Foundation

The South West Community Foundation (SWCF) operates across six local government areas in south west Victoria, covering an area around 23,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Founded in 2007, SWCF has distributed more than \$1M in grants to help the region address challenges such as access to healthcare services, education and leadership activities, support for an ageing population and literacy and connectivity.

They opened an FRRR Community Foundation Account in 2020, which has received donations of more than \$300K in the past three years. SWCF uses the account to partner with donors, support local organisations to fundraise tax effectively and strengthen their communities through small grants.

Recent strategic planning activities have confirmed SWCF's potential to further expand its roles as a facilitator and partner in fundraising activities, as they focus on growing the Foundation, increasing its impact and building organisational capacity and sustainability for the future.



# Insights & Learning

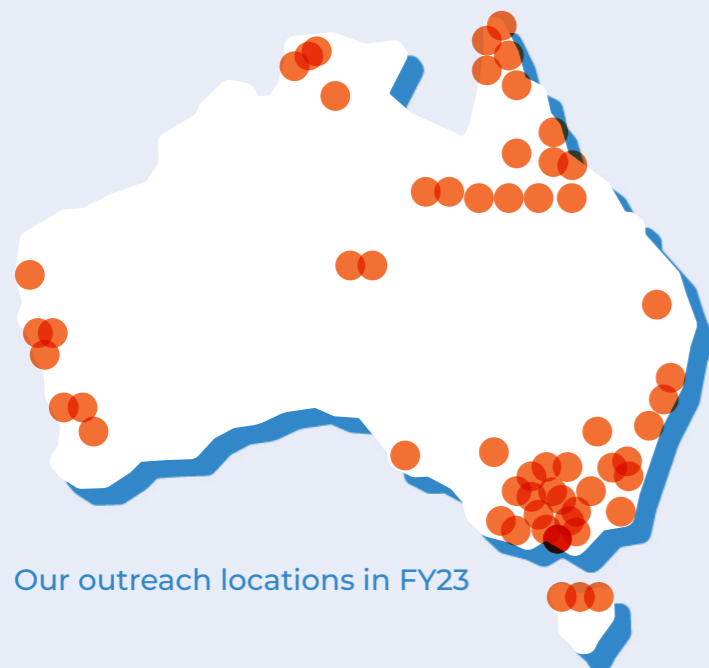
Our staff connect with communities daily, whether it be over the phone, via video or in person. The time spent building these relationships and listening help us understand local systems, where momentum is building and which gaps and opportunities FRRR can support communities to make progress on.



## More than money

Our role increasingly involves coaching, capacity building and fostering connections. Our conversations and experiences confirm the value of broad and flexible support, allowing each community to advocate for what it uniquely needs.

Our outreach efforts create momentum; we find that groups often lack the capacity and time to apply for funding and in some instances, the grant 'literacy'. For example, the team spent 28 days on the road in regional QLD this year, meeting 85



organisations one-on-one, many of whom were new to FRRR. It's rewarding when our support pays off, as has happened recently. One applicant was unsuccessful in three rounds of applying for funding but took on board feedback and their project has now been recommended. This is especially gratifying as it is a project led by a local organisation in a remote, deeply COVID-impacted First Nations community.

Grantseeker workshops empower local groups to access critical funding and we saw increased applications from, and collaboration among, groups in areas we've visited. This year, we hosted 25 online or face-to-face workshops, with at least 750 registrations. This included our Know and How series where we shared tips about what makes a good grant application or shared grantseeker experiences.

Learning is a two-way process and the FRRR team regularly invites community groups to present at team meetings, sharing their insights into challenges and opportunities. We are grateful to all who made time to speak to us.

# Reports, evaluations and submissions

During FY23, FRRR published the following reports and submissions:

- [New National Drought Arrangements Review](#)
- [Future Drought Fund: Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry](#)
- [Future Drought Fund: Response to the Productivity Commission Inquiry Interim Report - Senate Committee on Australia's Disaster Resilience](#)
- [Measuring What Matters](#)
- [Response to Pride of Place: Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into the Future of Regional Australia](#)

We also published a report on the [Investing in NFP Capacity in NSW program](#), one on the outcomes of the [Future Drought Fund's Networks to Build Drought Resilience](#) program and, in partnership with Creative Recovery Network, a report on the long-term [Impacts of Creative Recovery](#).

To further share our insights, we hosted several roundtables and events, often in partnership with our donors. We were grateful for ANZ, Suncorp Group and Nutrien for hosting these events with us this year. They are an invaluable opportunity to share what is happening in remote, rural and regional communities, as well as for our partners to share where and how they are supporting communities.

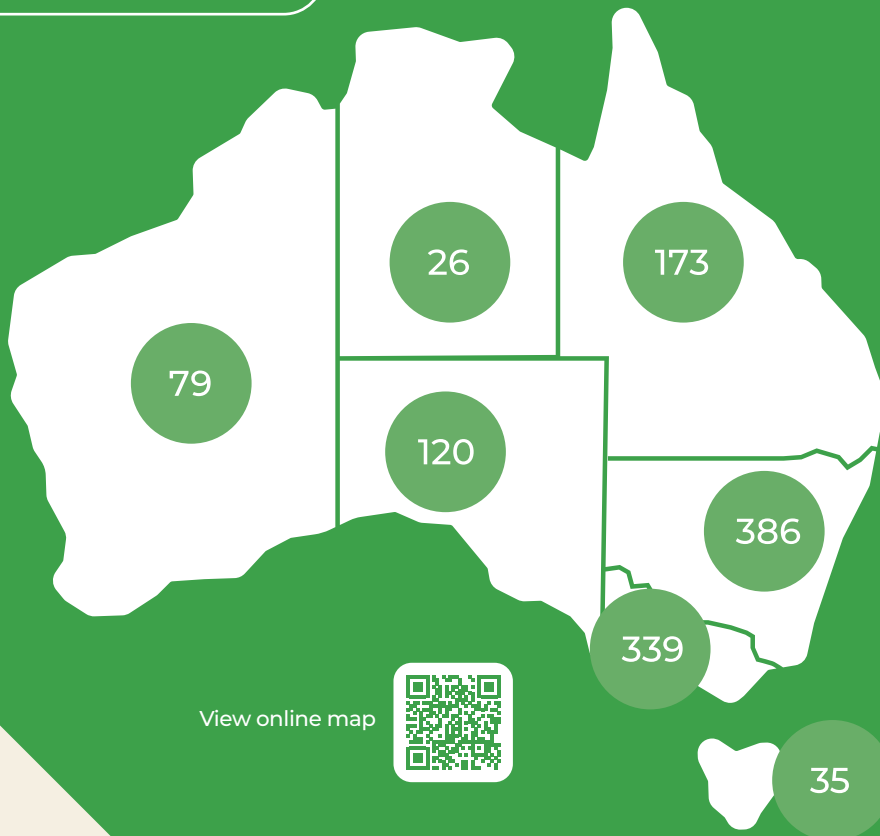


Members of the leadership team and senior staff also had input to several panels and round tables, and spoke at events, including:

- NRRRA National Risk Reduction Framework Action Plan Summit
- Future Drought Fund Science to Practice Forum
- SEGRA conference
- Nexus Australia Summit
- International Funders for Indigenous Peoples convening
- Philanthropy Australia Conference
- Roundtable hosted by Hon. Catherine King
- Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience conference
- F&P Conference, alongside Origin Energy Foundation
- Community Foundations Australia conference
- Creative Regions Summit
- Industry and Community Resilience Panel at the Home Affairs staff briefing
- Social Enterprise Regional Forum
- Fundraising Institute of Australia Conference
- Future Drought Fund Productivity Commission Inquiry follow up discussions
- National Disaster Funding Arrangements Inquiry focus group
- Consultation with Digital Transformation Agency
- National Taskforce for Creative Recovery



## Grants Awarded



View online map



## Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal

Dja Dja Wurrung Country

PO Box 41  
Bendigo VIC 3552  
ABN: 27 091 810 589  
info@frrr.org.au  
Ph: 03 5430 2399  
www.frrr.org.au

Report written by FRRR and JAW Communications,  
designed by Twenty20 Graphics

