

Annual Review 2020/2021

Adapting and Evolving



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

Our Vision: A vibrant, resilient and revitalised remote, rural and regional Australia. At FRRR, we seek to achieve this by connecting good will, with good purpose and aligning government, philanthropic and local community purpose and investment.



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Adapting and Evolving

Despite the difficulties of the past 12 months, we saw remote, rural and regional communities across the country adapt and evolve, as we did, and continue to strive toward a more vibrant, resilient and revitalised remote, rural and regional Australia.

We invite you to browse this report, which reflects on what we achieved together in the 2020/21 financial year. There is more detail of our activities and performance at www.frrr.org.au/AR21.



Contents

➤ Chairman's welcome	2
➤ Highlights	3
➤ Our Strategy	4
➤ Governance	5
➤ CEO's Message	6
➤ Our Performance	8
➤ People	10
➤ Place	12
➤ Disaster Resilience & Climate Solutions	14
➤ Leveraging & Brokering	16
➤ Insights & Learning	17

FY21 Highlights



Chairman's Welcome

While rural Australia experienced its fair share of drought, floods and fires this reporting year, the dominant issue was the impact of COVID-19.

The pandemic, which is still with us as I write, has created significant challenges for the whole country, whether directly affected by lockdowns or not. In some states, community groups were unable to do their normal work; volunteers had to stay home to stay safe; travel and tourism was severely curtailed; and events - so often a source of local fundraising, as well as being critical for keeping people connected - virtually stopped.

Despite all of this, with the generous support of **our donor partners**, both long-standing and those that partnered with us for the first time, FRRR granted out more than \$19.7M to support more than 900 local projects.

This confirms the resilience of rural communities, and their ability to adapt and evolve, no matter what comes their way, and continue to create vibrant remote, rural and regional communities.

This is all the more remarkable given that communities were also dealing with the ongoing impacts of bushfire recovery, as well as floods and storms, the ongoing drought in so much of Australia and the devastating mouse plague that worked its way down the east coast.

I thank and congratulate all of the **local leaders** who have persevered and continue to work so hard to sustain their communities.

I know too that COVID-19 has been a challenge for **FRRR's staff**. On behalf of the board, I acknowledge and thank them all for the way in which they have responded, ably led by CEO Natalie Egleton. What began as "working from home for a while" has now become the norm. The team continues to support one another, and most importantly, to support the communities across the country.

We continue to enjoy the support of our **Patrons**, who are generous with their wise counsel. I also thank **my fellow Directors** for so generously giving their time to attend meetings and serve on committees to review the grants we award. We have all had to adjust to a new way of working and I appreciate your support and ongoing efforts.

It is this collective commitment to ensuring a strong, vibrant remote, rural and regional Australia, that is at the heart of a strong and vibrant nation. I trust that you will enjoy this Review, which offers a glimpse into the work of the Foundation this past financial year.

Tim Fairfax AC

Chairman
on *Turrbal and Jagera Country*

2,041 applications, requesting \$55M toward projects valued at \$169M

funded 55% of eligible applications

75% of grants to non-DGR organisations

597 postcodes benefitted

18,240 minutes on the phone to community groups

16 grant-seeker workshops reached 661 people

awarded 917 grants totalling \$19.7M

59% to outer regional, remote or very remote communities

largest grant \$571K

smallest grant \$200

71% new applicants

203 core & GSF grants totalling \$4.1M to support Black Summer bushfire recovery

>2,200 donations

donations received \$19.3M

6 Giving Sub-Funds raised \$5.2M

37 Fundraising Accounts raised \$2.7M

average gift \$8,315

39% from Foundations and Trusts

Our Strategy

The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) was formed in 2000, at the instigation of the Sidney Myer Fund and the Australian Government. Our founders believed that philanthropy could help local leaders respond to the economic and social decline being experienced in many remote, rural and regional areas.

Twenty years on, we are still the only national foundation specifically focused on ensuring social and economic strength in remote, rural and regional Australia. We do this by connecting good will, with good purpose and aligning government, philanthropic and local community purpose and investment.

We focus this 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-focused.

Because every place is different, we believe in community-led approaches and provide support that's more than money. We work with local networks to amplify funding into longer term capabilities, momentum and resilience. We do this using three levers:

- **Granting & Development** - Funding for not-for-profit community organisations to implement local solutions to local problems;
- **Leveraging & Brokering** - Partnering with non-DGR not-for-profit organisations to fundraise, receiving funds on their behalf for an agreed purpose, and activating our networks to offer support; and/or
- **Sharing Insights & Learnings** - Sharing knowledge and making connections to advocate for remote and rural communities.



Governance

FRRR is a company limited by guarantee which holds DGR-1 status via a special listing in the Tax Act. Our operations are overseen by a Board of Directors, which exercises the powers vested in it by the Corporations Act and the company's constitution. The Board is directly responsible to its members, the Sidney Myer Fund and the Australian Government, for the long-term health and prosperity of FRRR.

With a commitment to continuous improvement, a simplified and modernised Constitution was adopted during the year. The Board Charter was also updated this year, and the regular review, update

and development of new policies, procedures and the risk framework continued. We extend our gratitude to Herbert Smith Freehills for their guidance on these initiatives.

The Board has a **Nominations and Appointments Committee**, which meets as required, and a **Finance and Audit (F&A) Committee**, which meets quarterly. The F&A Committee oversees all aspects of financial investment and management of the Foundation.

During the year, FRRR adopted a new **ethical investment policy**. This includes a commitment to invest in companies that avoid harm and work toward solutions

for the benefit of the environment, human rights, public safety and the communities in which the organisation conducts its operations. Where possible there is a preference for investments that benefit regional and rural Australia and that are aligned with FRRR's mission, values and strategic aims, which includes impact investments.

We also appointed a **new Audit partner**, BDO Australia, and adopted a simplified presentation of accounts. They confirm our financial processes meet all statutory requirements, and you can find a copy of the [audited accounts](#) on our website.

The Board

[FRRR's Directors](#) all bring different skills and expertise to the table, but they share a passionate belief in the critical role that remote, rural and regional Australia plays in our prosperity.

- Tim Fairfax AC, Chairman
- Anne Grindrod, Deputy Chairman; Chair, Nominations & Appointments Committee
- Ian Allen AM
- Paddy Handbury
- Fred Grimwade – Chair, Finance & Audit Committee
- Patrick Myer
- Annabel White
- Bruce Scott OAM
- Sue Middleton
- Andrew McKenzie JP
- Hon Simon Crean
- John Sharp AM
- Simon Atkinson (until 21 April 2021)
- Rachel Bacon (from 21 April 2021)



Patrons

We 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
- Baillieu Myer AC
- Hon John Anderson AO
- Rt Hon Ian Sinclair AC
- Bill Kilty AC

Committee Members

FRRR also acknowledges the support and input of many individuals who serve voluntarily on our committees. You can see the full [list on our website](#).



CEO's Message

Writing this message is always a welcome opportunity to reflect on just how much has happened since our last report.

We have been inspired by the many amazing community leaders, who think innovatively and are so persistent and dedicated to strengthening and sustaining their community.

The way in which they have adapted and evolved is truly impressive, especially given the trauma, burden and fatigue that many are feeling.

The financial year began with FRRR celebrating our 20th anniversary, a chance to reflect on FRRR's history and the impact we've made through powerful collaborations and with the support of our donor partners. If you didn't get to do so last year, I encourage you to [watch some of the videos captured](#).

In the first year of our new five-year strategic plan, and with 20 years behind us, it was time to refresh our **new brand** and launch a **new website**. Our new look builds on the strength, connections and interdependence of remote and rural areas. It also reflects FRRR's model of connecting philanthropy, business,

government and community groups to make Australia stronger and more vibrant.

Another highlight of the first six months was our Tackling Tough Times Together program being recognised as the Best Grant Program at the Australian Philanthropy Awards. The award confirmed the value of targeted, considered and effective philanthropic grant programs in bringing about positive social, cultural or environmental change.

Our work over the last 12 months has further affirmed that, especially in the wake of the significant disruption caused by cumulative (and occasionally simultaneous) disasters – fires, floods, storms, a mouse plague – and of course the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. While these events meant that many projects had to change, we were able to work with community groups to ensure funds were directed where they were most needed, or allow for projects to be rescheduled.

It is a privilege of my role to learn about the ideas communities have, and the impacts they are making on issues ranging from energy security and revitalising community assets, to economic development initiatives that capitalise on both natural beauty and local creativity, hosting events (this year rarely in person) and housing supply, access and affordability. These are being driven from the hyper-local level, with local, regional and national impact.



Thank you to our partners

The ability to support these locally-led initiatives is only possible thanks to the generosity and shared vision of our donor partners. Despite many competing requests, their ongoing support meant FRRR could sustain, and in some cases expand, our grant programs, and launch new initiatives.

That support also enabled us to provide **bushfire recovery grants** just a few months after the Black Summer fires. In this financial year, we distributed a further \$4.1M, through our core programs and dedicated Giving Sub-Funds, with a focus on medium to long-term recovery.

A huge thank you to all of our donor partners – large and small – for their trust in FRRR and their belief in the value of investing in community-led projects.

Thank you too, to the **Directors of FRRR for their ongoing voluntary support**, both in the governance and strategic direction of the organisation, and as advocates for rural communities. In addition, the expertise they bring to program advisory committees and grant decisions is invaluable.

Despite only being able to meet face-to-face once during the year, they have all been actively engaged in FRRR's work, and I especially appreciate the support of FRRR's Chairman, Tim Fairfax.

I also want to acknowledge the truly extraordinary **efforts of the entire FRRR team**. While we were lucky to come together face-to-face in December, the bulk of our year has been spent working from home. It has been a very challenging time, especially for those who have experienced multiple lockdowns and those who added home-schooling to their workload.

Despite all those challenges, the professionalism, dedication and willingness to support the communities we partner with was as strong as ever. So too was their support for one-another. I am very proud to work alongside them. Thank you.

Looking ahead

FRRR will continue to adapt and evolve, and to work closely with our donor partners, and our colleagues to help remote, rural and regional communities thrive. In the coming year, we will work hard to expand into states where we are not as well-known, especially Western Australia, with work underway to appoint an Advisory Board. We will increase our focus on engaging with and granting to remote communities, recognising the additional costs and inequities they face.

We will also broaden our work within communities, working closely alongside local leaders to strengthen capacity through support beyond grants – whether that's sharing expertise, leveraging our networks, brokering collaboration or advocating on their behalf.

We will continue to focus our efforts on the intersections of people and place, and the pressing challenges around disaster resilience and climate solutions, using all of our organisation's levers to connect, learn, resource, inform, influence and back the ideas and actions of those leading the charge for their community's and the nation's aspirations.

I look forward to sharing that journey.

Natalie Egleton
CEO
on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

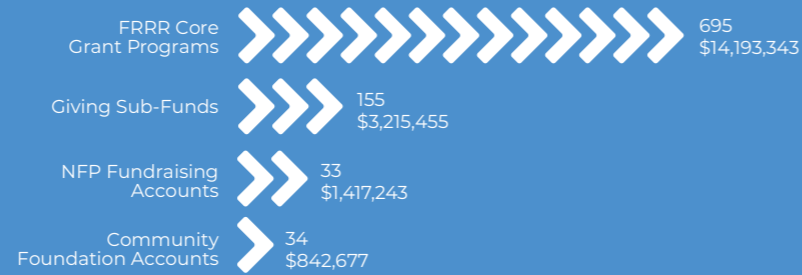
Our Performance

The 2020/21 financial year was another strong year for FRRR. We considered **2,041 grant applications** (down from 2,360 in 2020), and provided funding to **917 grants** (up from 874 in 2020), valued at **\$19,668,719** (\$15M in 2020). In total, we funded 55% of all eligible applications, and supported projects valued at \$40,623,718.

As in previous years, most grants (73%) supported organisations without Deductible Gift Recipient status. Grants benefited at least 597 postcodes, across all states and territories, with nearly 59% in outer regional, remote or very remote areas.

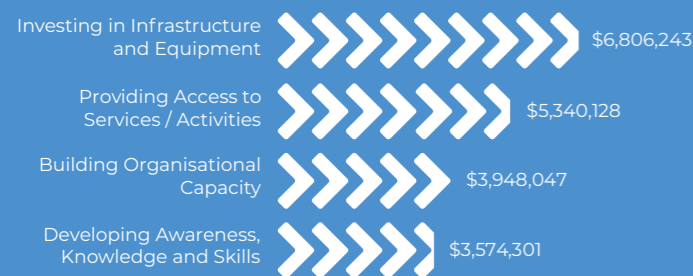
Most funds were distributed via core FRRR programs. Tackling Tough Times Together, which supports drought

Grants Awarded by Stream



affected communities, awarded the most funding (\$5.06M), while FRRR's flagship Strengthening Rural Communities program awarded the most grants (304). A further \$2.26M was shared via 67 distributions through NFP Fundraising and Community Foundation Accounts, reinforcing the critical role of place based philanthropy.

Change Mechanism



Most funding was directed toward infrastructure and equipment, or providing access to services and activities.

Of the 917 grants awarded, \$4.1M went toward 203 projects in communities impacted by the

2019/20 Black Summer bushfires. Most were for repairs and enhancements to community facilities, for local activities that strengthen community resilience, and for recovery initiatives focused on enhancing individual and community health and social wellbeing. While grants were offered just months after the fires, more than 80% of projects funded were for medium to long-term recovery.

Our work is far more than the money. Our team spends time every day listening, learning, guiding, and coaching community groups and leaders, mostly by phone, and whenever possible, through workshops and community conversations. This year, the team spent more than 304 hours in 3,490 phone conversations and embraced online channels by delivering 18 workshops, which reached more than 660 people.

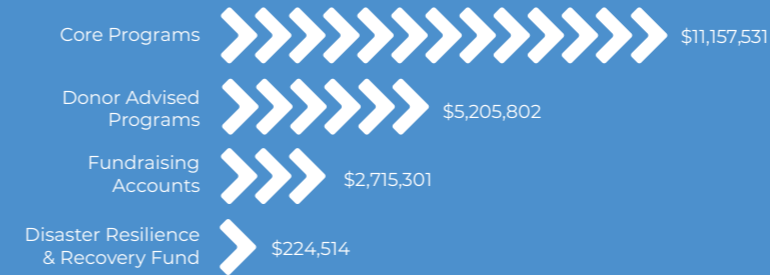
A strong balance sheet

Despite the uncertain economic environment, thanks to prudent management from our investment advisers, Koda Capital, and diligent oversight from the Board, **the corpus grew to \$20,887,036**. The core corpus increased \$1,931,566 on the prior year, representing approximately 14% growth. The total corpus includes the Disaster Resilience and Recovery Fund (DRRF) (\$4,944,162, up \$1,097,649 on FY20).

Corpus grew to **\$20,887,036**

Our funding base

Grants Income After Administration Fees



It was another strong fundraising year for FRRR, thanks to new and ongoing partnerships.

We received \$19,303,147 in grants and donations through more than 2,200 donations (compared to the record 34,042 in FY2019/20 in response to the bushfires). More than 825 were first time donors. The median gift was around \$50, demonstrating the immense collective impact that small amounts can make.

FRRR sourced most of its donations from Foundations and Trusts (c. 39%), with about a third in partnership with Government. Pleasingly, our corporate partners also continued to increase.

Philanthropic Services

Our Philanthropic Services area continued to grow, establishing several high performing Not-for Profit (NFP) Fundraising Accounts, delivering ongoing support for Community Foundations (CF), particularly in bushfire-affected regions, and offering place-based support targeting disaster recovery and preparedness through our Giving Sub-Fund Accounts (donor advised funds).

This year, NFP accounts remained steady at 37. This included two high-performing accounts:

- St Paul's Carcoar Community Facility, which raised \$635,506 to purchase the local church as a meeting place; and
- DeadlyScience, which attracted 393 donations and raised \$277,886 in the seven months since it opened. It is an organisation focused on introducing science to First Nations students.

Community Foundation accounts increased by three, and several community foundations established highly successful fundraising

campaigns in response to bushfire events, including Border Trust and Northern Rivers Community Foundation, allowing local people to direct their funds to local recovery.

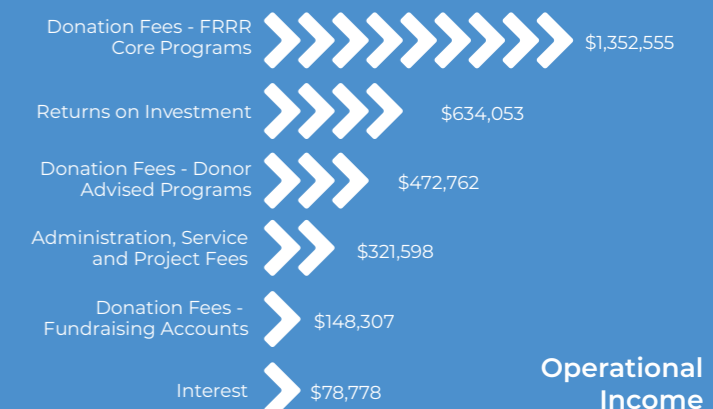
We refreshed our Giving Sub-Funds. These Funds have been well-received by our corporate and private philanthropy partners, in particular their ability to offer employee and family engagement opportunities, with eight corporate and philanthropic Giving Sub-Funds now in operation.

Operational performance

Our operating income was just over \$3M, which includes interest, fees on donations, service and project fees, and returns on investment.

During the year, we changed our organisational structure, and invested in resources to align with and enable the strategy. Total operating costs (excluding program or strategic expenditure) were \$2.7M, some 21% of which was covered by returns on the core corpus. The bulk of this was employment costs (\$1.9M - 48% of total operating costs and a 10% ratio to grant distributions), reflecting the increased staff to support new grant programs and partnerships. There are now 25.8 FTE employees delivering FRRR's suite of grants, donor advised programs, insights and learning, community capacity building initiatives and fundraising and partnership stewardship, and ensuring a high standard of compliance and corporate services.

Most of FRRR's operational costs were met through a percentage of donations. Depending on the program, this ranges from 2.5% to 10% of the donation, and for some more intensive programs, operates on a full cost recovery basis. Those fees were supplemented by investment returns.



People

We believe in the power of people and the role of local not-for-profits, community groups and volunteer effort to drive prosperity, and to build and sustain vibrant remote, rural and regional communities.

This year, particularly in disaster-affected communities, we saw more evidence of the impact of cumulative disaster events on local leaders, manifesting as fatigue.

It was therefore not surprising that we saw more requests to support volunteers in their work, whether to attract more volunteers, fund operational or project-delivery resources to lighten the load, or to invest in equipment to make their work more effective and efficient. We were pleased to increase our support to ensure their vital work could continue.

Laundry benefits social fabric of Byron Bay

The SHIFT Project in Byron Bay, on Arakwal Country, aims to increase financial wellbeing, employability, and community connection of vulnerable local women – and ultimately relieve homelessness. The Linen SHIFT provides transitional employment alongside training, mentoring, and skill development to help disadvantaged women sustainably enter the workforce. It is a tailored approach, including a qualified support worker to address housing needs and underlying hardships of participants.

FRRR helped to fund The Linen SHIFT's expansion and relocation at a critical point in their growth. A grant of \$14,265 from the ANZ Seeds of Renewal program helped to purchase an ironing roller. Since launching in March 2020, several women have been employed and provided with income and stability. Support letters from regular clients give glowing reviews, and there's lots to be proud of.

"Our women have provided feedback that since joining our team they feel safe, connected, encouraged and valuable – directly addressing the isolation and low self-esteem that poverty can generate!"

And they are set to make an even bigger impact, with projections that in five years the project could support upward of 100 women to shift from disadvantage to independence.



Investing in Rural Community Futures

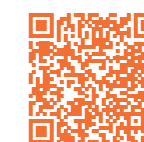
For the last two and a half years, FRRR has been piloting a new way to strengthen the capacity of local not-for-profit organisations, through the Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) program. The model works at a community level, bringing local not-for-profit organisations together to agree on priorities that will make the entire local NFP sector stronger. A local facilitator, engaged by FRRR, supports the groups to have much needed conversations, providing access to training and sourcing additional resources to strengthen local capacity.

There are now seven sites across NSW, thanks to our founding partners Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, and the subsequent support of the Snow Foundation. This year, Bendigo Bank's Community Enterprise Foundation enabled the program to expand to Bay and Basin area on the NSW South Coast.

The model is already making a significant impact. We have seen communities participating in the program secure additional funding and resources for projects, often attributing their success to skills gained and connections made through the IRCF program. For example, in the Nambucca Valley, FRRR provided initial funding to Mujaay Ganma Foundation to develop a garden concept that offers an employment pathway for three trainees. This project has now secured nearly \$300,000 to fund a further two years' operation and an additional five trainees. In the same community, poor digital connectivity was identified as a significant issue. The local IRCF Facilitator gathered NFP feedback and fed it into Council's conversations with telco's, leading to a \$971,250 upgrade to infrastructure.



Coming of Age



WATCH

Big hART Inc's innovative Radio Diaries project allowed young women in northern Tasmania to take ownership of their stories, changing perceptions, building their confidence and digital skills at the same time.

A \$10,000 Strengthening Rural Communities program grant, funded by the Bertalli Family Foundation, supported the development and presentation of podcasts, including the workshops and mentoring.

Place

As you move across our vast country, it quickly becomes apparent that every place is different. While there may be similar issues, the landscape, history, make-up of the population, its location and many more factors will make the response to those issues different from place to place.

That's why we have grant programs that focus on creating a stronger sense of place, that allow people to celebrate vibrant cultures, encourage self-generation, and improve access to sustainable social and physical infrastructure.

We support projects that seek to inspire and connect, encouraging community conversations and learning through workshops and capacity building activities, and place-focused collaborations.

By supporting these kinds of initiatives, we believe that we can strengthen the social, cultural and economic fabric of remote, rural and regional Australia.

Injalak Arts celebrates contemporary culture

Gunbalunya's Injalak Arts centre in West Arnhem Land supports more than 350 Indigenous Kunwinjku artists. Before COVID-19, they welcomed thousands of tourists every year.

With pandemic restrictions meaning no visitors, Injalak Arts ran a two-week music workshop and a week-long live video production workshop. This enabled local artists to demonstrate their creative expertise and talents, as well as develop new skills in live television production.

This involved song recording contributions from local musicians, and coaching and mentoring for eight members of a newly formed Media Unit.

A \$10,000 Strengthening Rural Communities grant, funded by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, enabled Injalak Arts to pay artist and consultation fees to the Indigenous Australians who led the workshops.



"We have since utilised this experience and equipment on other video projects in western Arnhem Land, so it is not necessary to employ external camera operators to document and live-stream cultural events in western Arnhem Land. It means we can employ local Indigenous people and keep money circulating within our community, as well as taking the representation of Kunwinjku culture to wide and diverse audiences."

Alex Ressel, Injalak Arts' Culture and Media Officer

Pambula paintings given pride of place

Professional artists from the Bega Valley created six vibrant and colourful large-scale artworks in Pambula NSW to complement a 22-site historic walking tour - and boost morale, employment and tourism following the devastating Black Summer bushfires.

The Bega Valley LGA was among the most impacted by the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires, with 465 houses destroyed, 1,279 rural landholders impacted and around 60% of the area burnt. Pambula has also experienced drought and COVID-19, with the cumulative effects leading to loss of livelihoods, employment, prospects, wealth, environment, sense of security and mental wellbeing.

The Pambula Art Project was granted \$25,000 through FRRR's Strengthening Rural Communities program, thanks to the Waislitz Family Foundation in partnership with Australian Community Media.



Future plans include 11 more large-scale artworks, with additional funding from FRRR, as well as celebrating more Yuin Nation history in the self-guided History Walk, following ongoing extended consultation with both the Bega Aboriginal Land Council and the Twofold Aboriginal Corporation.



Photos: Brayden T Photography.

Dancing in the Dirt Gala Ball gives town a break

The Fitzgerald Biosphere Group (FBG) used a \$5,000 Strengthening Rural Communities grant, jointly funded by the Bertalli Family Foundation and FRRR to pay for the entertainment at the much-anticipated Dancing in the Dirt Gala Ball on Koreng Country in Jerramungup, Western Australia.

The Gala attracted 300 people, and was a welcome chance to reconnect and "have a night off" from the stresses of farming in the wake of years of drought, fire and severe winds that have left their lands badly damaged and their spirits low.

"Dancing in the Dirt achieved everything we had hoped - and more. Our little town was buzzing with excitement in the lead up to the event, it took our minds off the past few difficult seasons and gave our town a fresh focus and outlook on the season to come."

Jessica Bailey, FBG Administration Officer



Disaster Resilience & Climate Solutions

Rural communities are on the frontline of the impacts of our changing climate. Longer droughts, more severe bushfires, storms and cyclones, and temperature extremes affect the social, economic and cultural wellbeing – and ultimately the vitality – of these communities.

These impacts on people and place are why strengthening disaster resilience and supporting climate solutions is at the core of our strategy. We aim to bolster the capacity, capability and organisational resilience of local place-based organisations, who have the knowledge, trust and networks to foster community preparedness and recovery.

This year, around 52% of grants we awarded went to support disaster recovery or to enhance preparedness. This included \$4.1M toward 203 projects in communities impacted by the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires.

Creating connections through craft

In towns devastated by the 2019/20 bushfires, financial and emotional stress can be significant, and ongoing. On Wiradjuri Country around Tumbarumba in New South Wales, the residents are still dealing with the threat of job loss and trauma from evacuations caused by the fires. This ongoing pressure has left many feeling emotionally and physically exhausted.

Using a \$7,000 grant through the Visy Tumut Region Recovery Fund, funded by The Pratt Foundation, the Artists on Parade Co-op hosted 16 workshops over several weekends starting in October 2020, designed to create a safe and inclusive space. The 115 attendees were offered a wide range of activities that encouraged them to network with people who had experienced similar things.

The workshops were low cost to remove any financial barriers to participating, and allowed discussion and bonding about the impacts of the fires. The sessions, which were open to everyone in the community with activities for children and adults, were a great success.



Heritage Hotspot

In the small drought-stricken town of Orroroo on Ndadjuri Country in South Australia, volunteers have spent the last few years hard at work restoring the locally-famed Black Rock Woolpress. This circa 1850s piece of manual machinery was used to press bales of wool and may be the only one of its kind still in existence.

An initial grant of \$20,000 from FRRR's Tackling Tough Times Together (TTTT) program, supported by the Australian Government, helped to confirm the feasibility of the Heritage Hub project. Thanks to another TTTT grant of \$143,252, a stone and glass rotunda now houses the historic woolpress as part of a landscaped Heritage trail in the town's centre. This new attraction has seen more tourists flock to the area, and is helping to boost the local economy.



“We have already had so many locals and visitors stop to comment on how impressive the building is. It’s been such a huge success to date, a great story of local volunteers who have remained involved in the planning right the way through to highlight some of our early pioneer history!”

Jodie Bouilly, District Council of Orroroo Carrieton Community Project Officer



Staying connected, protecting the desert

A \$25,000 grant from FRRR's Strengthening Rural Communities program, funded by the Baxter Charitable Foundation, enabled Indigenous Desert Alliance to take their 2020 Southern Desert Rangers Forum and Annual Conference online.

The Forum is an important opportunity for Indigenous desert rangers on Ngaanyatjarra Country to come together and build their alliance for personal and professional outcomes, to share their successes, challenges and opportunities, to spend time with valued partners, stakeholders and experts and ultimately enhance Indigenous land management industry in the desert.



“Despite many people thinking it couldn’t be done, we managed to ‘keep the desert connected’ during a pandemic and during travel restrictions. It was a landmark event for Indigenous desert rangers in regional and remote communities,” said IDA's Coordinator Emmanuel Hondras.

Leveraging and brokering

As noted earlier, it was another strong fundraising year for FRRR, thanks to new and ongoing partnerships. More than \$19.3M was donated to core grant programs or via our philanthropic services.

In addition to collaboratively-funded grants, FRRR supports communities by facilitating tax-deductible donations for their activities.

We are uniquely able to do this because of FRRR's special tax status, which allows us to direct funding toward virtually any charitable project that offers a broad community benefit. But it's more than funding. We also leverage our knowledge and networks to support innovation, self-generation and unlock more giving to address remote, rural and regional needs.

Our Not-For-Profit and Community Foundation Fundraising Accounts allow non-DGR groups to access support that they otherwise might not receive, while also helping funders target their giving and enhance their reach and impact.

Our Giving Sub-Funds, a high-value and high-impact donor-advised service for corporates and Foundations, allows them to tailor a program that supports their interests. We are also building collective funding mechanisms to scale efficient access to funding for remote, rural and regional communities, and ensure that support is there when they need it.

These partnerships all further FRRR's mission and play an important role in connecting more funding with community-driven ideas and solutions. Below are some examples of their impacts.

Visy Tumut Region Recovery Fund

The Pratt Foundation was among the first donors to approach us just weeks after the 2019/20 bushfires. Through the Visy Tumut Region Recovery Fund, FRRR facilitated the awarding of 36 grants totalling \$970,136. Thirteen of these (\$241,386) were shared this year.

Farmers for Climate Action (FCA)

FCA established a Fundraising Account with FRRR in 2017 to help them raise awareness in agriculture that it's time to act on climate change. More than \$823,340 was raised through the account.

Mirboo North and District Community Foundation (MNDCF)

MNDCF partners with FRRR through a Community Foundation Account which helps them with their giving, facilitating and investing. They have also been Back to School program partners since 2012, distributing more than \$38,000 or 760 vouchers.



Insights & Learning

FRRR engages with thousands of community groups, so we hear what is happening on the ground, where the needs are, where a particular approach is working well, and where it isn't. We share this knowledge with policymakers, communities, and funders to influence more targeted and relevant support for communities.

The range of forums, working groups, roundtables and collaboratives that FRRR engages in is illustrative of FRRR's sector-spanning role and the value of the cross-cutting perspectives that our work has. We play different roles – sometimes leading, sometimes supporting.

While we didn't travel much this year, we still participated in many events and forums, and ran many grantseeker workshops online. While it's not the same as being in the room, it did mean that we could still connect and share our knowledge.

We also believe in testing and learning, trialling new approaches, evaluating them and then sharing our findings. This year, we worked with Resilience NSW and University of Sydney to evaluate the action research approach of the **Disaster Resilient: Future Ready** model. [This report](#), released in September 2021, contains several practical recommendations on how to strengthen resilience, which we are already putting into practice through our programs. Research is also underway into the effectiveness of the **Investing in Rural Community Futures** model, which will be released in FY22. We also published the [Art Resides Here](#) book, sharing stories of how five Victorian communities embraced the arts in different ways.

Our approach to continuously learning and building skills applies internally too and this year, we had more than 12 guest speakers join our daily online check-ins.

Looking ahead, we will undertake a new flagship research project, **Heartbeat of Rural Australia**, to understand how community groups and not-for-profits are faring. This will establish a critical baseline and help to quantify the vital role that community groups and not-for-profits play in a vibrant remote, rural and regional Australia.





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