

The know and the how



FRRR

Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal



An update for FRRR's Partners and Supporters - JUNE 2025

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Freezer enhances food security

Food insecurity is a growing issue across the country and while there are systemic issues to address, many local groups are taking matters into their hands and creating **simple, yet impactful solutions**. These approaches often deliver benefits far beyond simply improving access to food.

In 2024, the Tasmanian Producers Co-operative Ltd received a \$7,358 Strengthening Rural Communities Small & Vital grant to buy an **upright freezer**, which would support resilient local food communities. In reporting back on their project, they noted an immediate operational impact.



"With increased storage, we've been able to scale up our intake of produce and improve consistency in supply. It has enhanced how we support our local farmers and respond to community needs quickly and safely. In the current financial year alone, we've put more than \$210,000 back into local economies by sourcing directly from Tasmanian growers and producers. The new freezer has played a key role in enabling that scale and reliability.

"We're proud that this infrastructure investment is already **contributing to a more resilient, fair, and sustainable food system** in Tasmania—one that values both people and produce. Most importantly, it has **strengthened the resilience of regional communities** by supporting a short supply chain model. By working directly with local producers, we reduce reliance on long, fragile national distribution systems and keep food supply more stable and predictable, especially in times of disruption."

A word from Natalie



As I write this update, I've just returned from an **offsite with the FRRR Board and leadership team**, which we held in Seymour, in rural Victoria. Our purpose was two-fold: to spend some time in community, visiting projects we've funded, see their impact first-hand and hear about the challenges and opportunities; and to come together to create a shared vision for the future. It was a rare and important time to take stock of all we've achieved after 25 years, but more importantly to **consider how best FRRR can support remote, rural and regional communities**, as we set our strategy for the next three years. We made some great progress and I'm excited about the direction we are headed and look forward to sharing it in the new year, once it is finalised.

One thing that is clear from the discussion is that rural Australia needs significant ongoing support and for that, **FRRR needs to be strong**. That's why our fundraising focus is on **growing our corpus** to ensure FRRR can provide the support to the NFPs on the ground, who are driving change in their communities, when they need it. Local groups know what's needed but they often don't have access to the funding and capacity building support. That's where your support of FRRR is so vital and below, we've outlined some of the ways your support could make a real difference.

As we've seen in the last couple of months, **disaster events are increasing both in frequency and severity**. FRRR has been in contact with local leaders in communities affected by the western Queensland flooding and the more recent NSW coastal flooding, providing extensions to project acquittals for example. We will continue to fund medium to long-term recovery but we know that for every dollar invested in preparedness activities, more than \$9 is saved in future recovery costs. The impacts of both events are still emerging but we know that there will be medium to long-term needs and so [we welcome your donations](#), so we know that we can support those communities in the next 12-18 months.

We hope that you find these updates helpful and if there is anything on which you'd like more information, please [get in touch](#).

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Natalie".

Natalie Egleton
Chief Executive Officer
on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Securing the future



When remote, rural and regional communities thrive, Australia thrives. But to truly strengthen the social fabric of our nation, we need to invest not just in programs, but in the organisations and intermediaries that make them possible. This EOFY, we're inviting visionary partners and major donors to join us in building a stronger, more resilient FRRR, by investing in these three critical funds:

Small Grants Fund - Small grants can make a big difference and providing them has been FRRR's core work since 2000. These grants are usually leveraged at least 2- 3 times through in-kind & financial contributions and are often the catalyst for further funding. The Small Grants Fund provides stability for these types of grants and supports FRRR's delivery & engagement work. By helping us grow this endowment, you're helping ensure future generations of community groups can access the flexible, responsive funding they need - when they need it.

Disaster Recovery & Resilience Fund (DRRF) - This fund has been a lifeline in the wake of disaster. Since it was established in 2019, the DRRF Fund's investment income has allocated \$420K to projects to assist with longer term recovery and preparedness initiatives. But the cost of disasters in Australia is mounting, and growing this endowment will provide support for communities in their medium to long term recovery and to prepare for climate related disasters - things that take years, trust, and patient capital.

Backbone Fund - This is about backing long-term capacity, agility and innovation, so FRRR can continue to show up where and when we're needed most. With your support, we can:

- Invest in our systems & software to increase our effectiveness.
- Support our outreach work and connection with communities.
- Ensure we can continue to provide advice and assistance to community groups seeking grants.
- Expand our evaluation, research and insights program.
- Invest in our people through & training

Together, we can ensure that remote, rural and regional communities have the resources, support and voice they need - not just to survive, but to thrive. With your gift, **you'll help FRRR sustain the heart of our nation, for today and for generations to come.**

[Donate >](#)

Investing in ourselves delivers broad benefit

We're always seeking better ways to support remote, rural and regional communities – and that includes our systems and processes. That's why we partnered with the **Toyota System Support Centre (TSSC)**, who generously provided pro bono guidance to help us apply the Toyota Production System (TPS) methodology to the administration of our Strengthening Rural Communities (SRC) grant program.

SRC runs year-round but with large demand, our assessment process was taking up to 16 weeks - too long for communities waiting on funding decisions and leaving little time for our team to do other vital work. By working with TSSC, we **learned to apply Kaizen** - the **philosophy of continuous improvement** - and empowered our whole team, from program officers to senior managers, to co-design more efficient and effective solutions.

Together, **halved the time it takes to notify applicants, simplified the application process and improved the experience for both grantees and staff.** Team members **now have more time for high-value work** like evaluation and community engagement and we're embedding a culture of collaboration, confidence and continuous learning.

And we're not stopping here. We've already kicked off a **second project, focussed on reporting and impact measurement.** Looking ahead, we know that there are more opportunities to harness technology and innovate our operations to more effectively work toward our vision of vibrant, resilient, sustainable and empowered communities.

[Read More >](#)



Insights from the bush

Our team is constantly connecting with remote, rural and regional communities through our grant programs, partnerships and advocacy, giving us a unique position from which to amplify community voices and drive meaningful change. The following are some of the issues, observations and opportunities that have come up recently.

We're seeing more communities banding together on **shared disaster preparedness projects**, using existing local assets rather than acting as individual organisations. Increasing requests to **upgrade community halls as refuges** - that aren't designated by emergency services - speaks to the need for local communities to play a more active role in their own emergency planning. Despite the significant impact from flood in far-west and northern QLD, communities are optimistic about the upcoming growing season, and **strong community spirit and determination** to work together is driving events and local recovery projects - a reminder that social capital is vital for resilience.

Extreme weather is increasingly cited as a **driver of poor mental health** in farming communities, and drought-affected areas in SA and western Vic are seeking support for **mental health, youth wellbeing and water security**. Mental health is an underlying theme in increasing numbers of funding requests. Many community houses and local health services are seeking funds to **maintain basic mental health services**, following withdrawal of other services. This reinforces the broader trend of increasing barriers to access health and other services in rural and remote communities, however it also illustrates grassroots responses deserving of support.

There's growing interest in **Indigenous-specific funding programs**, but as many communities struggle to move from interest to completed applications we are working to improve our granting processes to work better for First Nations organisations, and share our experiences [as we did with Spinifex Foundation](#). FRRR is part of Philanthropy Australia's First Nations Funder Group, and our work in this area is informed by the findings of the [recent survey report](#). Strengthening trust by direct engagement, extending grant terms and improving processes should match the noticeable rise in applications for **sustainability and capacity** building from Indigenous-led organisations in the NT and top end (and will benefit all potential applicants.)

Funding for technology is in high demand from essential service providers (aged care, preschools, community houses). Surprisingly, based on the number of applications seeking basic equipment required to operate, (internet upgrades, smart whiteboards, etc.) there's a need for greater investment in **digital equity as infrastructure for wellbeing**. This need is present in small and larger scale organisations in the bush.

There is much more that we could share, so if you'd like to know more about any of these comments, or are interested in a particular geography or issue, please get in touch via info@frrr.org.au.

On the road again



During May, Program Managers April and Marls hit the road to connect with communities across regional Queensland and New South Wales – including Roma, Glenmorgan, Mitchell, Goondiwindi, Boggabilla, Moree, Coonamble and Tooraweenah.

In Queensland, they were **heartened by a sense of optimism**. Young families are returning to farms, enrollments are growing in local schools, and volunteer groups, often led by capable and determined women, are driving grassroots change. While freight costs, insurance, and ambulance services remain a barrier for community projects and events. Groups continue to show incredible resilience, particularly those that were established in response to the drought and then weathered the COVID years. Despite not travelling into the areas badly impacted by the recent QLD floods, it was evident that tourism has reduced.



In New South Wales, they saw first-hand how **local initiatives can offer so much more than their name suggests** - like the Gilgandra Community Garden, which has become a true social hub. And in Tooraweenah, a passionate group is working to preserve and share their unique aviation history at the Arthur Butler Memorial Aerodrome – a project full heritage and heart. Alongside these initiatives, remote areas are seeing declining access to in-person service delivery and there’s an urgent need for support in digital literacy and infrastructure, particularly for remote residents. In other areas, there are concerns around youth crime and they heard that Indigenous youth in particular have negative views about their future.

These visits reminded us how important it is to continue listening deeply, supporting local leadership and investing in the unique solutions that rural communities are creating every day.

**New partnerships
more than money**



At FRRR, partnerships are one of the key foundations of meaningful, lasting change in remote, rural & regional Australia. That’s why we’re proud to be working alongside two long-term philanthropic partners - the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) and Snow Foundation - to deliver **two bold new initiatives that build on years of shared impact**.

Together with **VFFF**, a new collaboration called the **Next Gen Blueprint** will support initiatives that champion young people to see a vibrant, sustainable future in their rural communities and feel empowered to shape it. Kicking off in the next few months, we will start by listening deeply and exploring innovative projects, leadership and collaborations already underway, unearthing opportunities to invest in the next generation of doers, leaders and changemakers across rural NSW and Qld.

On the NSW's South Coast, we will soon be launching **South Coast Futures** in partnership with **Snow Foundation**. This exciting multi-year program will extend our work supporting grassroots not-for-profits through tailored capacity building and community-led solutions in the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla regions. This next chapter will be all about amplifying local solutions already having an impact—from youth engagement, gender equity, First Nations self-determination to climate resilience and beyond.

Both initiatives reflect our **shared commitment to flexibility, place-based action, and listening deeply** to community voices. By trusting, working side by side, and pooling our collective resources, we’re taking what works and evolving it - ensuring rural communities have the confidence, capacity and connections they need to thrive, now and into the future.

Watch this space—there’s much more to come, and it's about so much more than funding.

Fundraising Account



Using energy to catalyse community resilience

Through its bold Mycelia Energy Collective pilot, Mycelia Renewables is proving that energy can power more than just homes - it can build resilience, agency and equity. With community at its core, this regenerative model is lowering costs, raising capacity and lighting the way for a fairer energy future in rural and regional Australia.

They are supported by a FRRR Fundraising Account, and in 2024, were awarded a \$60,000 Community Led Climate Solutions grant.

[Read More >](#)

In case you missed it



Celebrating 25 years of impact

As part of FRRR's 25th anniversary, we're inviting community groups to share stories about the impact of grants, highlighting the long-term change and resilience that community-led initiatives can create with the right support behind them.

We're also warmly inviting our partners and supporters to share your own reflections - whether it's a memorable project, a longstanding collaboration, or your experience of working alongside FRRR over the years. Selected stories will be featured on our website and social media, as we celebrate the collective impact we've achieved together.

[Read More >](#)

"FRRR is a great philanthropic partner, we've really appreciated their support and the expertise and huge capacity that they bring when pulling governance around a scheme like our community grant scheme. We were really attracted to partner with FRRR because of the synergy in their alignment with the wellbeing of rural and regional Australia, which is really important to us as a rural agribusiness."

- Carissa Buckland, Director, Corporate Affairs & Marketing, Nutrien Ag Solutions

FRRR is grateful for your support of remote, rural and regional communities.

Donate Now

If you have any questions about any of these stories or would like to chat at all, please contact our Partnerships Team on 03 5430 2399 or via partnerships@frrr.org.au

Rural and remote communities are critical to so many aspects of Australian life: food production, tourism, energy supply, logistics infrastructure and so much more. It's more important than ever to make sure RRR communities have strong local not-for-profits and community groups, functional infrastructure, and well-developed plans in place to ensure they not only survive but thrive into the future.

