



Local Solutions, Lasting Impact

An update for FRRR's partners & supporters
April 2025



FRRR acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work across Australia, and we pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

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25 year celebrations kick off

Earlier this month, we formally kicked off the celebrations of FRRR's 25th anniversary year with a garden reception, kindly hosted by the Myer Family and Sydney Myer Fund at Cranlana in Melbourne. Nearly 100 partners, supporters and staff joined us to celebrate. In his welcome speech, FRRR Director and the current representative of the Myer family on the FRRR board, Will Myer, said that for his family, FRRR has always been more than just an organisation.

"It has been a mission, a commitment, and a source of great pride. From the very beginning, we have believed in the power of this foundation to strengthen rural and regional communities and seeing what has been achieved over these 25 years has been nothing short of extraordinary.

"The past 25 years have proven that when we invest in rural and regional Australia, we invest in the heart of this country. A thriving rural and regional Australia is a thriving Australia. I have no doubt that FRRR will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that these communities thrive," Mr Myer said.

FRRR Chairman, Tim Fairfax AC, thanked all of the partners and supporters of FRRR, big and small over the years, noting that FRRR is proud that we have become a trusted partner enabling local solutions with lasting impact.

Below are some of the images from the evening but you can also [view the full gallery](#).



A word from Natalie



As I write, there is widespread flooding across large tracts of Australia. When remote and outback areas experience disasters, the impacts can be catastrophic on so many fronts, yet is often far less visible and therefore less supported: yet stock and property losses, isolation, disruption to economies and wider supply chains, all impact on mental health, wellbeing and the prosperity of those who work tirelessly to produce food and fibre for the world. But with the [generosity of our partners](#), we will be there to support them in their recovery.

As noted above, it was exciting to formally kick off our 25th anniversary celebrations. We are very grateful to the Myer family for hosting the gathering. It was wonderful to have so many family members attending, including our former Patron, Lady Southey AC, alongside so many of our long-term supporters.

Collective giving in the early years of FRRR has left a huge legacy. At the event, we launched a report called [Local Solutions, Lasting Impact](#), which highlighted that with the support of our partners, we have distributed more than \$200M via more than 15,000 grants to more than 1,700 unique locations. Thank you.

As I said on the night, it is wonderful to look back and acknowledge what we have achieved, but this is also an opportunity for FRRR to look forward. We envisage a future where rural Australia is not only in the public consciousness when there is a crisis; where we are not just fixing or replacing things, but where there is a new vision - a new sense of prosperity and opportunity. FRRR wants communities to be more self-generating, more prosperous, more sustainable - and able to drive the future they want for themselves.

We are proud of what we have achieved but there is still a lot to do. For FRRR to continue to walk alongside local NFPs, we too need to be strong, resilient and self-generating. That's why we have launched a major gifts campaign alongside our celebrations. We are asking for those who share our ambitions for remote, rural and regional communities to be thriving places to live, work and invest to [contribute to our endowment funds](#). By doing so, we can be confident that we can provide the support they need to seed and strengthen, adapt and evolve, innovate and renew. There is more detail about those funds below and of course, I'm always happy to chat to you about what we can do together.

As ever, if you'd like to know more about anything we share, please email partnerships@frrr.org.au.

Until next time,

Natalie

Natalie Egleton
Chief Executive Officer
on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

In case you missed it



FRRR regularly publishes reports on our website and shares our insights in articles on LinkedIn. Below are a few from the last few months.

- [Local Solutions, Lasting Impacts](#) - a look-back over the last 25 years of FRRR supporting remote, rural and regional communities, and where to next.
- [Disaster recovery approaches must evolve](#) - FRRR's CEO, Natalie Egleton, reflects on current disaster recovery models and what can be done to improve how funders approach disaster recovery.
- [Introducing Community Led Climate Solutions](#) - Late last year, Sarah Matthee, FRRR's Climate Solutions Portfolio Lead, spoke with Alexandra Williamson, Researcher at Queensland University of Technology - Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies about the Community-Led Climate Solutions (CLCS) program and how it encourages diverse community-led projects, aiming for sustainable environmental, social, and economic outcomes.
- [Why are rural not-for-profits embracing clean energy?](#) Explores the key motivations driving regional community groups to adopt solar and battery solutions. From cutting costs to boosting energy resilience, these projects are making a real impact. Read more about how organisations like the Hotspur Hall Management Committee and Tarnagulla Fire Brigade are benefiting.
- [Submission into disaster funding arrangements](#) - Just prior to Christmas, FRRR made a submission in response to the Colvin Review into disaster funding. We generally welcomed the recommendations but highlighted some areas where further enhancements would be welcome.
- [Submission to QLD Government inquiry into volunteering](#) - In this submission, we highlighted the critical need to recognise and resource local community groups, as well as the importance of nurturing the next generation of leaders and finding innovative ways to engage them, on their terms.
- [New board members](#) - FRRR has appointed two new board members - Kylee Hansen from WA and Amy Crawford from Canberra. They join David Hardie from NSW and Donna Digby from the NT as the most recent appointees to the Board.
- [25th Anniversary Stories](#) - FRRR is inviting community groups to share their stories about the impact that grants from FRRR and our partners have made. As submissions are received, we are sharing them on the website and in socials. We'd also welcome any stories from our partner and supporters about your experience of working alongside FRRR.

Thanks to you, communities thrive



Applications received
624

Grants awarded
236

Total distributed
\$2.98M

Towards projects valued at
\$13.8M

In the January - March quarter, your generosity made a real impact. We granted **\$2.98 million** to support 236 community-led projects across remote, rural, and regional Australia.

To date this financial year, we have awarded \$5.3M to 408 projects.

With **\$8.3 million in donations** received, we're able to continue helping communities tackle challenges and seize opportunities. Your support fuels this vital work - thank you for making it all possible!

In conversation with

PRF PAUL RAMSAY FOUNDATION

With similar purposes that aim to see people and places thriving, it's no surprise that Paul Ramsay Foundation (PRF) has partnered with FRRR since 2019. Their first donation went toward supporting communities affected by drought but as PRF's strategy has evolved, their support has moved to backing more projects that build resilience and help to drive systemic change. Most recently they have supported FRRR's Community Led Climate Solutions program.

This conversation between FRRR's CEO, Natalie Egleton and PRF's Chief of Alliances, Liz Yeo, explores the evolution of the relationship, what makes a good partnership and, as FRRR looks ahead to our next 25 years, Liz shares what she would like to see for rural communities in 2050 and what it will take to get there.

[WATCH](#) the video or [read the transcript](#).



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. There is more detail in the full story on our website.

- **Strengthening First Nations-led initiatives:** Increasingly, remote Indigenous media organisations are seeking funding to improve community communications, particularly for disaster preparedness and recovery. We continue to listen and learn, to ensure our work is informed by lived experience and cultural knowledge and that our support helps local groups implement locally-appropriate solutions.
- **Energy transitions:** While this is an area where communities want to do more, accessing capital and insurance remains a significant barrier. The move to renewables is also proving divisive in some communities. Our focus is ensuring communities have the skills and capacity to have constructive conversations and ensure the whole community benefits.
- **Supporting outback and remote communities:** Demand for funding to support arts and cultural programs in very remote areas is increasing, focussed on strengthening social capital. At the same time, access to adequate health services remains a pressing concern, alongside the need to address gaps in mental health care. We're seeing increasing requests for funding things like first aid training. To deepen our understanding of what will help most, we are creating an Outback Advisory Board.
- **Disaster resilience and recovery:** The second quarter of FY25 saw 14 disasters declared across NSW, Victoria and Queensland, while drought conditions are obvious in SA, western VIC and parts of NSW. We are seeing more requests to support social cohesion and for mental health initiatives, and we continue to advocate for greater support for small, locally based not-for-profits.
- **Engaging the next generation of volunteers:** A generational shift in volunteering is underway and we are seeing more organisations seeking funding to strengthen their long-term sustainability by investing in volunteer capability and succession planning. We are currently working with one of our long-term partners to do more work in this space, which will begin by listening to young people and those organisations that are engaging them well. We'll share more on this soon.

[You can read more detail on these points here.](#)

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.



For 25 years, FRRR has worked alongside communities to strengthen the vitality, resilience and sustainability of remote, rural and regional Australia. Through well-informed investment and strong local relationships, we've supported thousands of locally-led initiatives that create lasting impact.

But there's still so much more to do. As we look to the next 25 years, we are committed to scaling our work to meet the growing needs of rural Australia. To ensure we can continue to fund critical projects well into the future, we are strengthening our perpetual funds. Our priorities are:

- **Small Grants Fund:** FRRR's small grants are our most popular and most in demand. We have awarded more than \$38M through our core small grants programs but have been unable to meet a further \$91M in requests. We are seeking to build our Small Grants Endowment Fund so we can provide flexible support for community-led priorities well into the future.
- **Disaster Recovery & Resilience Fund (DRRF):** DRRF builds resilience in rural Australia by investing in people, infrastructure and the environment. With 71 major disasters in 2024 - double the previous year - demand is rising. Prioritising preparedness saves \$9.60 per \$1 spent, reducing recovery costs and strengthening communities for the future.
- **Backbone Fund:** To continue making impactful grants, FRRR needs to be strong, well resourced and resilient, just like the groups we support. FRRR's Backbone Fund will help us increase granting efficiency, strengthen reporting and do more outreach and advocacy. It will also allow us to do more program evaluation and drive innovation to meet evolving needs. By improving our systems and freeing up resources, we can focus on high-impact work, ensuring long-term support for rural communities across Australia.

As we look ahead with a renewed commitment to empowering the communities at the heart of our nation, your support will help us sustain and grow this vital work. [You can donate securely online](#), or to explore deeper collaboration, please [contact our Partnerships Team](#).

Fundraising Account



Gippsland Community Foundation

[Gippsland Community Foundation](#) was established in 2020 to support the region in its recovery from the Black Summer Fires. They aim to make a difference to the lives of local people by inspiring and supporting local solutions to local problems in ways that promote equity, resilience and sustainability.

Created by the community, for the community, the Foundation has distributed more than \$7.8M to through 263 grants for recovery projects. They've also awarded 113 scholarships valued at \$672,375 and delivered 97 events totalling \$370,282.

Initially, the Foundations focus was on East Gippsland however, they now extend to support communities into parts of Gippsland where there was previously no active community foundation representation. This includes Wellington, Latrobe and Baw Baw Shires. The Foundation can offer services such as auspice support for local community groups; administer funds disbursement on behalf of government and private organisations that want to support their region; and they have the ability to create perpetual endowment funds.

To extend their reach, improve community wellbeing and grow philanthropic involvement in Gippsland, the Foundation opened a community foundation account with FRRR in December 2024. All donations will be used towards Gippsland-based, community-led projects and activities. So far, the account has raised just under \$1,000 and all donations are tax deductible.

If you'd like to support Gippsland Community Foundation, [you can donate via FRRR](#).

Fundraising Accounts enhance an organisation's network and fundraising capabilities by offering tax deductibility for donors. FRRR manages the funds and offers valuable administrative support. If you'd like to know more about how this works, contact Hayley Troy at [FRRR](#).

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

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.

[DONATE NOW](#)

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Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal

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