

Impacts from
Investing in
Rural Community Futures:
Nowra, Ulladulla and
Batemans Bay



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal





Acknowledgement of Country

FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal) acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Jaara country (Bendigo) where we are headquartered and extends this acknowledgement to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations where we fund organisations and activities.

We especially acknowledge the Dharwal / Tharwal, Jerrinja, Wandiwandian, Wandandian, Brinja, Brinja-yuin, Budawang, Murramarang, Djiringanj, Walbunja peoples of the Yuin Nation and the many lands in the communities where the IRCF program has been embedded for the past five years. The warm welcome and spirit of collaboration offered by Elders and Aboriginal organisations has been extraordinary. We are grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside First Nations people in this work and for the cultural knowledge they have shared so generously. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend our thanks for their continuation and sharing of the cultural and educational practices of Australia's First People.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that despite our best efforts, this report may contain images or references to people who have passed away.

About FRRR

FRRR is the only national foundation focussed on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional Australia. Our vision is for more vibrant, resilient, sustainable and empowered communities.

FRRR provides funding and capacity building support at the hyper-local level. We back the people and organisations that are in and of their place because we believe targeted, well-informed investment in people and organisations stimulates ideas that lead to actions, both big and small.

Working with our partners, we deliberately focus on strengthening NFP organisations, community groups and volunteer-led efforts that foster self-generation, enhancing leadership, creating networks and developing skills. We couple that with support for improving access to services, sustainable social and physical infrastructure and sustaining vibrant local cultures.

That's why we connect good will with good purpose and align investment from government, business and philanthropy with the genuine local needs of rural people and places.

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Introduction

Over the last five years, FRRR has delivered the Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) program in the NSW communities of Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay, thanks to the generosity of Snow Foundation. In each of these communities, the IRCF team worked alongside dedicated South Coast not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) to strengthen their capability using a highly relational and deeply considered place-based approach. Our overarching goal was to support these organisations to build collaboration skills and learn ways to work together effectively to tackle issues and embrace opportunities, so they can maintain their critical community work well into the future.

As we walked alongside these organisations, we saw them grow in confidence. We also saw them develop strategic partnerships and networks that have led to community-wide advocacy efforts to advance solutions for local and systemic issues.

Embedded and regular evaluation processes confirmed that the IRCF model, which provides flexible support and funding to not-for-profit organisations, leads to more capable, collaborative and resilient organisations that can advocate for themselves effectively. The evidence showed an increase in capacity and capability for the majority of the participating NFPs in Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay.

None of this would have been possible without the willingness of Snow Foundation to work alongside FRRR – to take a leap of faith to implement this program on the South Coast and to engage with us, with our other partners and with community groups directly over the last five years. The path hasn't always been linear and patience and trust in all aspects of the program – from philanthropic investment to community facilitators and between not-for-profit organisations - has been an important element in the lasting impact of the IRCF program in communities.

The commitment from the communities and organisations who took up the IRCF program was also remarkable. It took courage and trust in FRRR and in the process for them to invest in their organisations and in leadership development, at the same time as responding to increased service need and disruption, especially after disaster events and shocks like COVID. The shifts in sustainability from engaging with IRCF supported initiatives have been a game-changer that will reap benefits for all parties and other communities well into the future.

In this report, we reflect on the design of the program, the capacity building activities undertaken, noting what has been of most benefit to the NFPs we have partnered with, the conditions affecting success and the areas that were challenging in delivering this capacity building initiative. We also offer some recommendations for further place-based capacity building work on the South Coast. In sharing these insights, our hope is that this document continues to mobilise the learning and capability of rural and regional NFPs and all those who wish to continue this impactful work into the future.

Natalie Egleton

CEO
on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Executive summary

Vibrant, resilient, sustainable and empowered communities require a capable and well functioning local not-for-profit sector. However, there has typically been little external investment in organisational capability.

With the generous support of the Snow Foundation, the Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) South Coast program brought together local NFPs to learn, identify strengths and common challenges. They worked collaboratively to lift up each organisation for the benefit of each community.

The South Coast program, led by FRRR, built on the [successful program pilot](#) funded by Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF), which invested in organisational capacity.

It involved a mix of on-the-ground support, coupled with a regular participatory 'roadmapping' process through which local NFPs identified gaps and opportunities, and prioritised activities to address them as a group. While some grants were provided to individual organisations, there was also 'toolbox' funding available for projects that benefited multiple organisations on common areas of capacity needs, such as strategy. Enhanced investment from the Australian Government also supported a series of bespoke targeted workshops, investment in local leadership and extra resourcing to support the program. FRRR engaged locally-based IRCF Community Facilitators who were of and from each of the three communities. Running alongside this was a robust evaluation program to track learnings. The demonstration of the uplift in capacity confirms the overall vision for the IRCF program to have stronger, more resilient regional not-for-profits, fulfilling their mission with greater impact, leading to a high-functioning, more viable, more sustainable not-for-profit sector across community.

This report outlines how IRCF built resilience and supported revitalisation. The story of how communities have shifted from surviving to thriving is a powerful message about just what local groups are capable of achieving when provided with targeted, place-based capacity building resources and funding.

Fast facts

Community	Grants Awarded	Funding Amount	Partner organisations
Nowra	37	\$644,359	13
Ulladulla	34	\$626,969	9
Batemans Bay	32	\$640,745	8
Total Granting to date	103	\$1,912,073	30

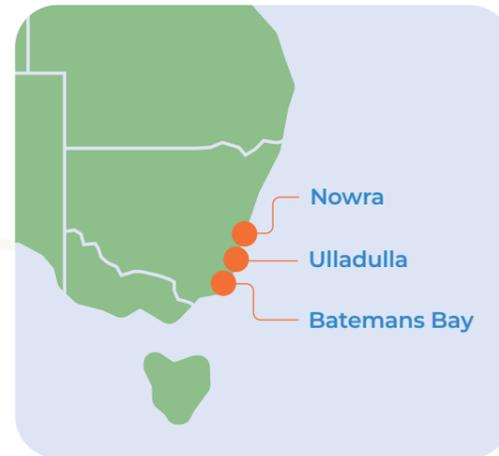
This table shows directly funded organisations. More than 100 additional NFPs engaged in the wrap around elements of the program.

Bringing IRCF to the South Coast

Inspired by [FRRR's 2017 Impact Report](#), which found a significant unmet demand for NFP capacity building, VFFF and FRRR explored what a collaboration focussed on a place-based model of NFP capacity building could achieve.

The Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) program, which launched in 2018, was a place-based response designed to invest in building collective NFP sector capability for small rural and regional communities.

In 2019, Snow Foundation committed \$2,656,000 over five years across three communities to bring FRRR's IRCF program to the South Coast. This initiative aligned with Snow Foundation's "Our Place" pillar that identified the South Coast as a priority for support, as well as focussed on increasing capacity and skills of the for-purpose sector.



"Investing in Rural Community Futures responds to the challenges local organisations experience in managing their sustainability and viability, which in turn affects the contribution they make to addressing local challenges and opportunities."

Natalie Egleton, FRRR CEO

Snow Foundation CEO, Georgina Byron, said that the partnership with FRRR was designed to strengthen local organisations and it ended up being very timely, given the Black Summer bushfires and the impacts of COVID.

"The IRCF program provides a framework to strengthen community capacity by empowering people and enhancing strategies and systems. It helps local organisations navigate disasters, fosters community resilience and encourages collaboration among community groups in a way that enables them to thrive and provide the critical support they do across our region."

FRRR CEO Natalie Egleton and Snow Foundation CEO Georgina Byron listening to young people in Ulladulla.



It is with deep respect that we acknowledge the passing of Terry Snow AM, a cherished leader, philanthropist and visionary. As the Chair and Founder of Snow Foundation, Terry was instrumental in embedding the Investing in Rural Community Futures program on the NSW South Coast. Terry's unwavering dedication and strong connection to the coast have left an indelible mark on our community and built capacity in the not-for-profit sector across the region.

His commitment to fostering growth and support for local initiatives has empowered countless individuals and organisations. His legacy of compassion, leadership and service will continue to inspire us all.

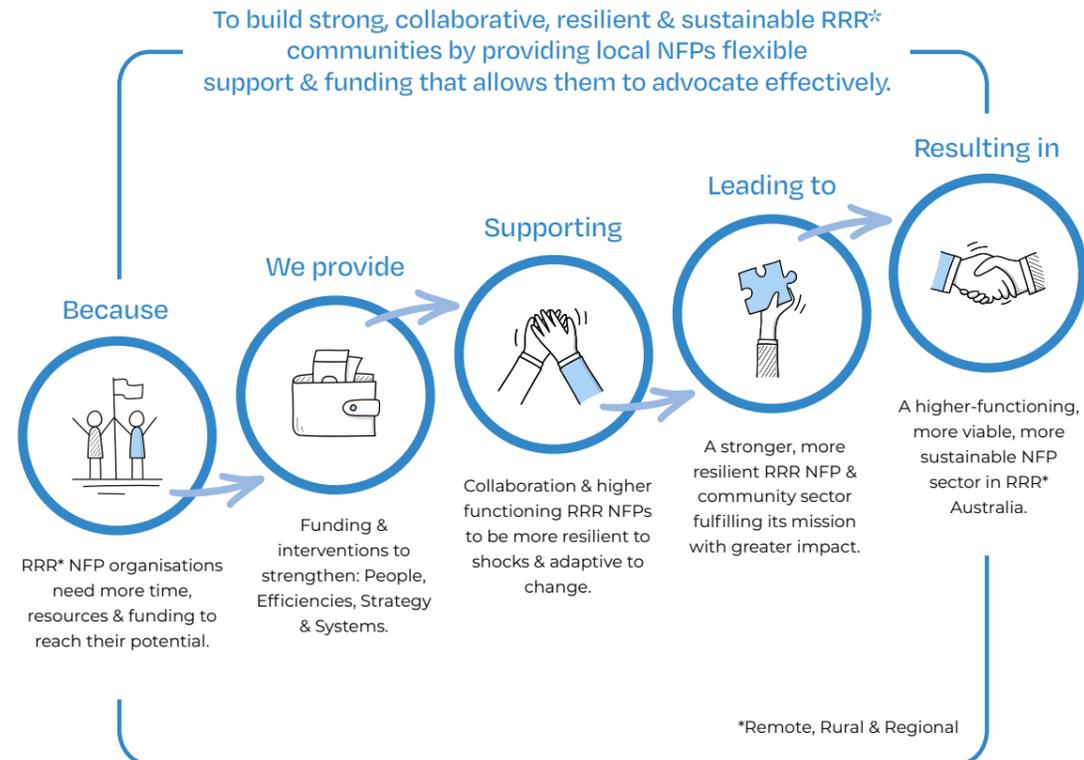


Vale Terry Snow AM.

IRCF Theory of Change

The delivery of the South Coast IRCF program followed the previously designed model and theory of change.

The master theory of change (ToC) was developed by strategy consultants Goodwolf. It was amended after input from IRCF Advisory Committee members and the program's evaluation partner, Matrix on Board (MoB), and the model below was adopted for South Coast Communities.



The ToC also set out four principles of engagement that would support change and continued learning.



IRCF Model

The model included the following six elements to support locally-governed NFPs.



- 1. Community Roadmap:** Each community co-designs a Community Roadmap, which identifies and documents local needs and priorities. At these sessions, the community sets their vision and establishes principles around how they want to work together towards common goals. The roadmap is used by both participating NFPs and FRRR to guide and inform decision-making throughout the program.
- 2. Community Facilitator:** Contracted by FRRR in each IRCF community, this person's role is to coach, mentor and facilitate collaborative conversations between participating organisations. The Facilitators also act as an important intermediary between organisations and FRRR funding, and other capacity building initiatives.
- 3. Partnership grants:** These funding opportunities occur multiple times throughout the program and support capacity building initiatives from the community roadmap, tailored to the needs of each individual organisation.
- 4. Capacity building and development activities:** Activities varied from networking and training opportunities in the broader sector, such as attending national conferences, to "Toolbox" grants. These were used to fund a range of initiatives that benefit multiple NFPs, such as:
 - a. governance training;
 - b. workshops in areas such as effective communication, succession and strategic planning;
 - c. developing an Advisory Committee; or
 - d. developing a database.
- 5. Program evaluation:** Undertaken by a third party, the program evaluation involved a range of different activities, undertaken at intervals throughout the program. (See more detail on page 11).
- 6. Digital channels:** A dedicated section of FRRR's website was established to share program progress, announcements and updates. Some communities were also funded to develop place-based, community specific hubs that served a similar connection and information purpose, including Ulladulla and Kangaroo Valley.

Communities focussed on identifying activities in four areas, which became known as the *strategic priorities* or *pillars*, and set the direction for funding distributions, as the videos below demonstrate.

PEOPLE	STRATEGY	EFFICIENCIES	SYSTEMS
<p>Develop leadership capabilities, a renewed sense of community spirit & foster skill development to create strong organisations that bring together various leaders, groups & residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recruit & train staff & volunteers ➤ Encourage inclusivity ➤ Time management ➤ Develop leadership ➤ Digital inclusion ➤ Mentoring 	<p>Provide tools & measures that support & enable the sustainability of organisations, into the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Purpose & vision development ➤ Strategic planning & monitoring ➤ Revenue strategy ➤ Grassroots innovation & creativity ➤ Developing & embedding a framework for change 	<p>Foster relationships & practices that support efficient & effective collaboration with other NFPs to enhance community impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnership development & management ➤ Collective impact training ➤ Peer to peer mentoring ➤ Lead agency support ➤ Networking & sharing platforms ➤ Forming an NFP working group 	<p>Support community leaders to gain new insights & energy by sharing knowledge, systems & structures that demonstrate best practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Legal structures, compliance & governance ➤ Financial management ➤ Communications & measurement ➤ Develop Board skills & financial literacy ➤ IT & security ➤ HR & performance management
			

"The fact that we went from a dream... something we wanted to do... to one of those steps... to we can make this work... to committing to that vision... to we can do it. The grant, the relationship with FRRR, the whole IRCF regional project. The grants are small but it's being part of that whole strategy."

South Coast Women's Health & Welfare Aboriginal Corporation (Waminda)

Evaluation and learning

As the South Coast IRCF program got underway, learnings from the VFFF-funded communities were emerging. As a result, an action research model was adopted, with the South Coast evaluation framework adapted to include:

1. an annual [self-assessment survey](#) completed by the community organisations;
2. annual online, one-on-one meetings with organisations to identify narrative on reflection of survey responses;
3. monthly written reports from Community Facilitators;
4. end of program interviews with Community Facilitators;
5. Umbrella Organisation survey; and
6. a direct question about the most significant changes within community organisations, which were captured on video.

Evaluation was deliberately aligned with the four strategic pillars. For example, the self-assessment survey enabled NFP representatives to select levels of competency of their operations, categorised by the pillars.

For several participating organisations, the evaluation activities were highly valued, as they provided an opportunity to reflect on their project and its impact.

"At the start... I thought why do we need to do this (evaluation)... now I would be the strongest advocate. We needed to look at our governance... too many programs don't look at that... it was so helpful to look at the six stages... so then we had process, we knew what good governance could look like. You have helped us on that."

South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA)



With good governance, SHASA was able to auspice the Eurobodalla Support Network.

"The evaluation is interesting but for a volunteer-led organisation it would have been good to have questions aimed at a more grassroots level. Everyone in volunteer organisations have different levels of skills and experience - some of the questions in the funding application and evaluation were beyond some volunteers."

Red Head Village



Monique Carson, Former Mayor Amanda Finlay, Fiona Phillips MP and Dr Lorraine J Larri PhD.

Program oversight and staffing

The IRCF Advisory Committee provided guidance and insight on delivery and, for the first three years, made grant recommendations to the FRRR Board. As more partners joined the IRCF program in NSW and FRRR's governance practices changed, the Donor Group was formed. The group generally met twice a year and was hosted in the communities of Nambucca and Bawley Point, affording them the opportunity to connect with local communities, delve into insights from Program Management and Community Facilitators and to share their practices and areas of interest.

FRRR is grateful to the following people for their generous commitment of time during the program:

- Annabel White (FRRR and VFFF – Panel Chair);
- Georgina Byron, Carolyn Ludovici and Megan Parsons from Snow Foundation;
- Jenny Wheatley, Emily Fuller, David Hardie and Claire Mannion from VFFF;
- Fiona McKenzie from Orange Compass;
- Matt Linnegar, CEO of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF); and
- Patrick Moriarty, formerly an executive with sector intermediary Our Community.



Internally, the IRCF program was overseen by FRRR's CEO, Natalie Egleton, Deb Samuels, People Portfolio Lead and Allison Mudford and then Carolyn Ardler, IRCF Program Managers. In addition, we acknowledge the enormous contributions made by local Community Facilitators:

- Kate Dezarnaulds (also Program Manager to 2021)
- Monique Carson
- Natalie Lloyd
- Jules Klugman
- Stephanie Chiu
- Meg Stratti
- Kate McBride

Context of disaster during delivery

The IRCF South Coast program was underway at the time of the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. The Currowan Fire, which burned for 74 days across 499,621 hectares and destroyed 312 homes, severely affected Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay. This disaster event was followed soon after by the COVID pandemic, which significantly affected tourism, a major economic driver in this region, as well as social cohesion.

These communities experienced considerable cumulative trauma, which has been evident throughout the program. Community fragmentation, feelings of isolation, loss of volunteer engagement, communication oversaturation, loss of operating premises, equipment and machinery; and actual loss of life are just some of the issues these NFPs have been navigating.

The Donor Group and each of the FRRR staff involved in the program were very conscious of these factors. Drawing on its many years of experience in community-led disaster recovery and the many existing relationships across the communities, FRRR was able to walk alongside these communities and adjust the program focus, timing and pace as we went. This enabled the program to continue and to support these critical local NFPs as they navigated the aftermath of two of the biggest disruptions and shocks in recent history.

Australian Government investment

FRRR identified an opportunity to leverage Snow Foundation's investment to enhance and broaden the IRCF program into additional areas of the South Coast affected by the fires. Through the Australian Government's National Emergency Management Authority, FRRR secured \$1.3 million for a project called: "Strengthening Capacity, cooperation and resilience of Shoalhaven's local NFPs".

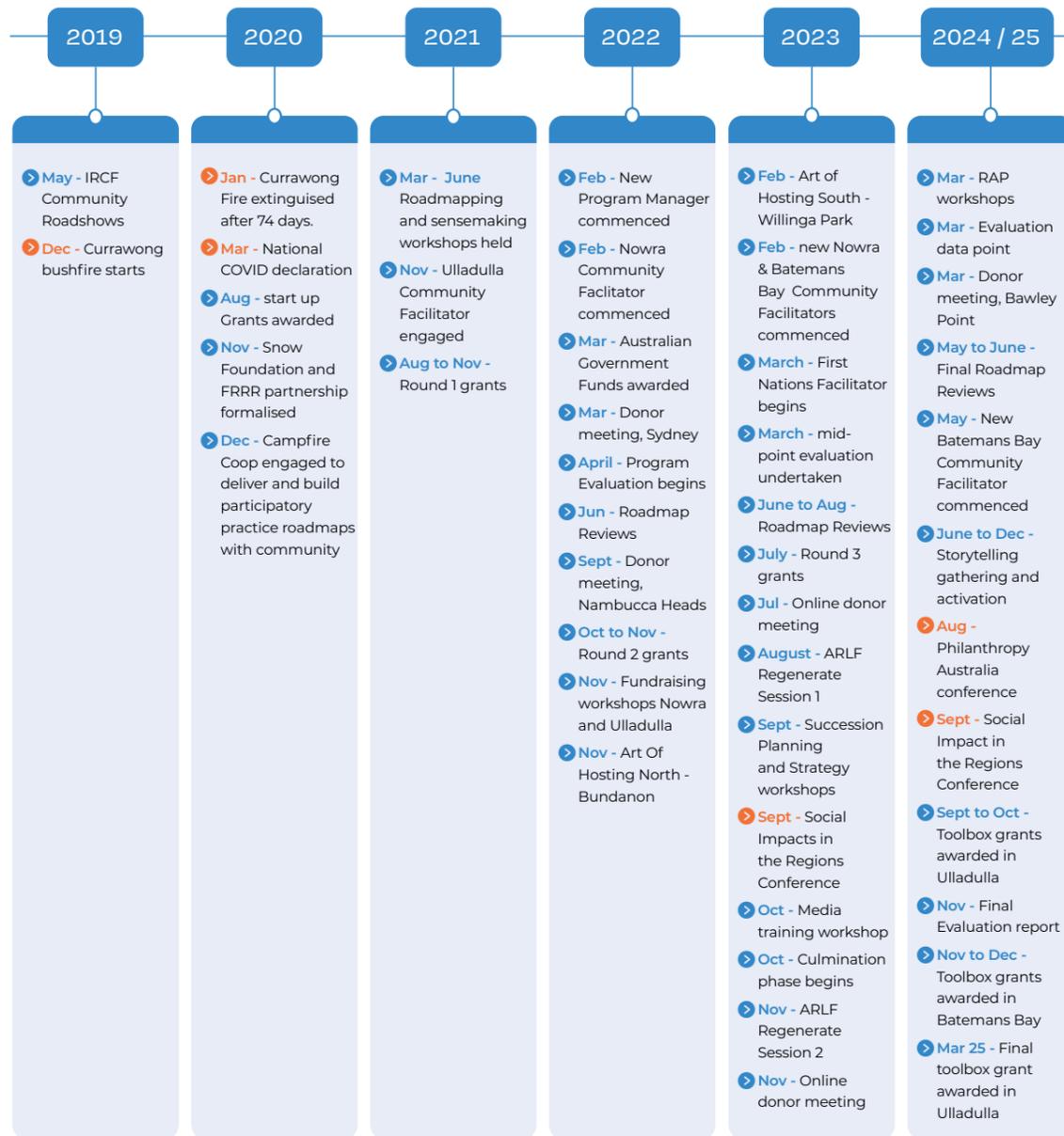
This led to IRCF supporting Kangaroo Valley, Lake Conjola and Bay and Basin, including delivering two Art of Hosting training sessions and the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation's Regenerate program, as well as engaging two additional Community Facilitators. Operational costs were funded through the partnership with the Australian Government allowing additional Snow Foundation grants to be awarded. This resulted in a further \$422,073 in Snow Foundation funding being directed toward grants, bringing the total to \$1,912,073.



FRRR and Australian Government staff working with community members to explore future fundraising options.

Program Timeline

Snow Foundation expressed an interest in providing significant support to build NFP capacity on the NSW South Coast. Following discussions with VFFF in 2019, the IRCF program was introduced to the South Coast, kicking off with roadshows. The roadshows, delivered in a hybrid model due to COVID restrictions, introduced the concept of IRCF and shared more details about what would be involved. A detailed timeline is below.



▶ Blue months - internal program activity
▶ Orange months - external activity

Donor and community engagement

During the program, Snow Foundation and donor partners visited Nambucca Valley and Bawley Point. Our partners gained a tangible sense of place-based solutions, while local leaders increased their confidence through these opportunities.

Snow Foundation's IRCF journey culminated in a presentation on place-based capacity building at the 2024 Philanthropy Australia Conference in collaboration with FRRR and Mujaay Ganma Foundation from Nambucca. This was a wonderful opportunity for the Foundation to advocate for culturally friendly ways to support First Nations organisations.



Megan Parson, from Snow Foundation (pictured second from right), joined FRRR and representatives from Mujaay Ganma Foundation in presenting about IRCF at the 2024 Philanthropy Australia conference.

Impacts and outcomes

The overall vision for the IRCF program is stronger, more resilient regional not-for-profits, fulfilling their mission with greater impact, leading to a high-functioning, more viable, more sustainable not-for-profit sector across community.

Thanks to the trust of the South Coast communities and the unwavering support of Snow Foundation, we have seen this vision become reality over the past five years. The support of Snow Foundation enabled the South Coast's NFP sector to engage in driving long-term solutions and change. IRCF has elevated the visibility of the local sector and increased their capacity to serve and support South Coast communities, for both short and long-term recovery.

The greatest overall benefit was experienced by NFPs that engaged with all aspects of the IRCF model. Those that flourished had input into the Community Roadmap, applied for multiple grants, participated in leadership development or sector networking activities, attended upskilling workshops, met regularly with their Community Facilitator and participated in all aspects of the evaluation. Some organisations noted that even stronger outcomes were seen when multiple people from an organisation could participate.

The model itself is most effective when all elements support and interact with one another. It is the combination and interrelation of elements, including the network of support and leverage, that resulted in an effective program. For example, a skilled Community Facilitator without an accessible funding program to point an NFP towards would have been ineffective. Similarly, the ability to flex the parameters of the program meant it could adapt and respond to the community needs that emerged after the bushfires and COVID.

"They deliver local programs with local people - they aren't parachuted in. They think about what will be effective locally and deliver it with a local person. Because of that, the quality of the program is better. Because roadmapping is done first, they find out what the community wants. Having conversations and asking what do you need and listening is support by itself. They focus on capacity building activities, not doing for you."

Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber

Strategic clarity

Several NFPs were funded to work with consultants to gain greater clarity on their core purpose. This work increased the capacity and confidence of NFPs to collaborate to find solutions, engage more effectively with the next generation and proceed with greater clarity of purpose.

Coupled with improved branding and a greater professional public profile, this increased clarity about service delivery and organisational purposes contributed to organisational change, forward momentum and increased visibility. This led to new project and funding partners for several NFPs, new and more professional Board profiles, and in some cases was a key component in achieving service accreditation.

Increased partnering and collaboration

NFPs reported higher motivation to form new project partnerships and be more outward facing in their relationships with the wider community. The program also promoted the recognition and appreciation of local culture and values. Organisations reported improved relationships with First Nations organisations through increased internal capability and access to supports to develop tailored cultural protocols and initiatives.

Some of the siloing that was present previously dropped away and NFPs became more likely to contact each other to discuss shared problems or collaborate on projects. This meant grassroots problem solving became more evident.

NFPs recognised networking, collaboration with other organisations in their community, trust and communication as essential capabilities in an increasingly difficult operating environment.

"There is a change in how organisations want to work together and there is a motivation to collaborate and solve problems together".

Participant organisation

"The policy project confirmed the value of collaboration for us. With IRCF funding we collaborated with another organisation to get a policy and procedure manual for both organisations. Through policy development we discovered things we needed to do to make the hall safer!"

Tomerong School of Arts



The Tomerong School of Arts Hall is a vibrant community meeting place.

Stronger relationships with First Nations organisations

This program was intentionally designed to engage the entire NFP sector across Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay. Early on, we experienced challenges, particularly with limited recognition within the broader community of the gap of local Aboriginal-led organisations participating in the whole program and what that signified. This prompted us to look more deeply into relationships and historical contexts, recognising that our approach needed to genuinely acknowledge the impacts of colonisation and be truly inclusive and accessible to all groups.

We learned that meaningful inclusion required more than a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country at gatherings. It demanded deeper engagement, cultural humility and a commitment to creating safe spaces. Through circle conversations during workshops, we tackled difficult topics and supported the sector in building cultural capacity, understanding and stronger relationships.

Community	Vision	Principles
Nowra	2021 – “We are deeply engaged with Aboriginal organisations and communities with mutual trust and respect.”	2021 – “We commit to learning from and connecting to local Aboriginal history, culture, Country and community, and supporting local leaders.”
	2024 – “We walk alongside the Aboriginal community, privileging their voices. Unlearning to learn for Aboriginal community to thrive.”	2024 – “We commit to learning from and connecting to local Aboriginal history, culture, Country and community, and walk alongside local leaders.”
Ulladulla	2021 – Indigenous Engagement had not yet emerged as a long term vision for the NFP sector.	2021 – A core principle expressing indigenous engagement had not yet emerged for the community.
	2023 – “Our organisations have strong, respectful relationships with First Nations people and organisations.”	2023 – “We commit to listening to, learning from, and walking alongside First Nations people in organisations.”
Batemans Bay	2021 - Indigenous Engagement had not yet emerged as a long term vision for the NFP sector.	2021 – “We deeply appreciate our place in Walbunja country between the mountains and the sea.”
	2024 – “We draw on the skills and knowledge in our community.”	2024 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ “We respect and celebrate community wisdom and value the voices of those with lived experience.” ▶ “We deeply appreciate our place in Walbunja country between the mountains and the sea.”



Cleone Washington and Hayley Longbottom presenting decolonisation workshop to IRCF participants.

As the program progressed, communities expressed a clear desire to strengthen their engagement with Indigenous cultural services and organisations - particularly around cultural immersion, decolonisation, reciprocal learning and culturally appropriate practices. We observed a shift in vision and principles, as organisations and individuals embraced true participatory co-design of the roadmaps.

While the program has fostered stronger connections within the sector, it has also cultivated a readiness across the communities to engage more deeply and meaningfully in this work moving forward.

“What I observed throughout the years was the growth of community and organisations starting to attend a lot more of the workshops and the observation of the needs and things that needed to happen in community and the projects that people were putting together. I think growth in community and business was one of the things that stood out the most for me [in the IRCF program].”

Uncle Vic Channel, Murramarang Traditional Owner, attended, contributed to and provided a Welcome to Country at our roadmapping workshops.

As a result of attending workshops and building their understanding, organisations like Treading Lightly introduced a First Nations lens and prioritisation on First Nations knowledge and self-determination.

“As the Regenerative Development Officer, I am now a lot more aware of time and to take more time and be a lot more respectful!”

Monica Mudge, Treading Lightly

Walking Together in the Shoalhaven

The Shoalhaven Walking Together Alliance (SWTA) members in Ulladulla engaged in the program and attended workshops over the years, however they did not apply for funding until the final roadmap was developed. The funded project Together We Thrive was developed to *foster opportunities in the Milton Ulladulla District for positive connections and cultural pride, strengthen existing local First Nations initiatives and aspirations, and develop a Resource Hub for cultural exchange.*



Didge workshop of SWTA members at the Giiyong Festival.

SWTA also planned to create further opportunities for cultural exchange, recognising that community groups and businesses were at a point of readiness to be more involved in local Aboriginal initiatives and celebrate Aboriginal culture. Their project provides an opportunity for the community of Milton Ulladulla to undertake real, meaningful and community-building consultation processes that enhance community hope, resilience and capacity.

Travelling Together in Eurobodalla

The Travelling Together project was thoughtfully co-designed in community following the capacity building workshop Koori Smarts, which was requested following the referendum. This workshop left participants with a desire to understand the cultural journey in Eurobodalla more deeply. The Travelling Together project asks the question: How do we, in our organisations, deepen our understanding and connection in two ways?



Building on and strengthening relationships with our First Nations partners.

The project is intended to *Increase capacity, courage and confidence to work with First Nations communities, organisations, staff and volunteers of local NFPs through locally led and designed First Nations engagement programs.*

The cultural immersion sessions strengthened connections and relationships with First Nations stories and culture, knowledge of important dates, events, local history and cultural places. The program aimed to provide a different way of seeing things, increase capacity, courage and confidence to work with First Nations communities, organisations, staff and volunteers, deepen connection to Country, people and culture, and create better awareness of systemic injustice.



BlakCede staff sharing their story and products with the Shoalhaven community.

Uplift in capacity and leadership capability

At the outset of the IRCF program, communities were still reeling from the collective trauma of the bushfires and many NFPs, and their teams, were exhausted from holding their communities together and solving immediate recovery issues. Investment in organisational leadership enhanced networking and collaboration, which was particularly important in these disaster-affected communities.

IRCF supported the building of resilience and revitalisation by providing access to skills, knowledge, experiences and resources aimed at strengthening community networks and fostering social capital through community-led initiatives. **A shift from surviving to thriving across the community is one of the most visible outcomes of the program.** The co-designed roadmap helped to develop strategic opportunities that capitalise on existing strengths, experience and knowledge to drive better outcomes and meet local needs.

Another strong outcome of the program has been the bolstered investment in and recognised development of leadership capability within IRCF funded NFPs and FRRR's team of Community Facilitators. While the core focus of IRCF is in providing support to local NFPs, the South Coast delivery elevated the role and value of local community leadership as a core component of building strong, collaborative, resilient and sustainable rural, regional and remote communities.

Investment in paid staff also supported organisations to become more sustainable and professional. This positively impacted organisations, through additional skills and knowledge, transformation of business systems, volunteer coordination and increased governance capacity. Multiple organisations **sustained the employment of staff beyond the funding from IRCF through other income sources.**

Funding that supported the employment of people in roles such as Coordinators, Project Officers or subsidies for a CEO / Manager led to positive impacts for both the recipient organisation and the wider community. Funding these roles not only provides employment but creates time and skills capacity to enable a focus on longer term outcomes such as sustainability.

For one NFP, employment of a Project Officer led to significant non-FRRR funds being leveraged not only for that 'umbrella' organisation but for many other organisations and projects they supported. **NFPs that had paid Coordinators for the first time found their organisations matured from 'projects run by volunteers' to more sustainable organisations that were better equipped to make an impact in their community.**

"(When FRRR first started) we only had the Department of Communities and Justice funding. If we didn't have FRRR it would have been harder for the CEO to do her work... the branding, accreditation work, policies. There are so few organisations that fund capacity building. It gave us financial capacity!"

The Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Limited (ROCC)

Strong systems underpin success

Investment in foundational business systems allowed increased internal efficiency, greater clarity when reporting to Boards and increased confidence and creativity to address future challenges. An increase in use of technology, such as communication databases and social media platforms in the face of low volunteer levels is a visible outcome. Increased connections also meant that resources, information and improved skills and expertise that resulted from enhanced systems were shared between groups.

The IRCF program has strengthened the capacity of organisations to network and co-deliver solutions, with collaborative groups emerging in all three communities, bringing an increased sense of self-generation. Using the IRCF framework, leaders are now demonstrating and sharing the confidence they have in their collective abilities and local knowledge.

The IRCF program has clearly demonstrated an increase in capacity and capability of the majority of participating NFPs. The NFP sector in Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay will continue to recover and thrive in the face of disruption, resulting in a collective impact on community well-being into the future.

"I find FRRR and IRCF is the most understanding of what a regional area and NFP needs. There's a real understanding of NFPs, of their struggles and time constraints."

Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation

Leverage drives additional impact

The IRCF model also enabled organisations to leverage additional external funding. The total reported funds leveraged by August 2024 is shown below and adds up to a significant additional investment across the region, with more to come.

At an economic level these funds have been injected into three South Coast NSW communities, contributing to the local economy, generating jobs and employing contractors and small businesses.

Ulladulla	Nowra	Batemans Bay	TOTAL
\$ 887,900	\$ 2,640,250	\$3,088,032	\$6,616,782

Securing these additional funds, including some capital infrastructure grants, has been possible by increasing the capacity of NFPs through a range of mechanisms including:

- employing a dedicated Project Officer whose role was to secure funding; or build partnerships;
- subsidising an existing role to provide more capacity / time to enable focus on more strategic partnerships and nurturing stakeholder relationships; and/or
- the creation of a new leadership role, to elevate the capacity of the organisation.

Some organisations reported that their self-generated income capacity had increased overall, even though securing additional financial resources proved challenging to connect directly to IRCF involvement. This was the case for the Tomerong School of the Arts Committee, who are custodians of Tomerong Hall. A Committee member said that, as a result of their hall renovation project (with leveraged funds), *"This has led to a 50 percent increase in hall bookings."*

Community journeys

Snow Foundation's partnership in the IRCF program resulted in 30 funded NFPs across Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay receiving grants. An additional 100+ organisations were involved in IRCF, attending training, workshops or the development of community roadmaps, as well as new project collaborations. The involvement of these additional organisations demonstrates the significant footprint and impact of IRCF beyond the funded organisations. The different journeys of the communities, and participating organisations, are outlined in more detail on the following pages.

Nowra

Nowra lies on the Shoalhaven River, surrounded by stunning natural landscapes of mountainous hinterlands, rainforests, rivers, estuaries, beaches and national parks. It has been cared for by the Dharwal / Tharwal and Jerrinja people of the Yuin Nation for thousands of years, with Aboriginal people now making up 5.9 percent of the population of the Shoalhaven Local Government Area (LGA).

Part of the Shoalhaven City Council, Nowra takes in East Nowra, North Nowra, Worrigea, South Nowra and villages of Bomaderry, Kangaroo Valley, Shoalhaven Heads and many smaller villages. The main industries are healthcare and social assistance, education and training, construction, retail, manufacturing, and accommodation services. The region also has agriculture, forestry and fishing industries and Nowra Hill is home to the HMAS Albatross Royal Australian Navy air station. Visitors are drawn here to experience nature and engage in recreational activities. With a combined population of more than 46,127 people, the community is supported by many NFPs, with more than 146 registered charities, all of whom were welcome to be involved in the IRCF program.

Many organisations participated in the program regularly, with those listed below receiving grants.

Type of organisation	Participating organisations	# orgs
Community Centres (Disability / Aged Care / Family Services / Housing / Social Wellbeing Programs / Digital Access or Multicultural Support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc* Illaroo Co-operative Aboriginal Corporation (also noted below) 	1
Arts Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoalhaven Health and Arts Inc* 	1
Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nowra Community Food Store Inc* 	1
Education Providers, P&C's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoalhaven Community Preschool Inc* Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Inc* Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Aboriginal Corporation (also noted below) 	2
Women's Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd** 	1
Primary Industry Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Coast Beef Producers Association Inc* 	1
Progress Assoc. / Chambers of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoalhaven Business Chamber* 	1
Youth Focussed Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beyond Empathy** 	1
Community-based Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bomaderry Community Inc* Kangaroo Valley Voice Incorporated* Nowra RSL Sub Branch* 	3
Aboriginal-led Organisations (registered with ORIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Aboriginal Corporation# Illaroo Co-operative Aboriginal Corporation# Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation**# Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council** 	4
TOTAL		16

^ Organisations with a gender lens - 2

* Organisations offering employment pathway programs - 3

Local Aboriginal Lands Council, Indigenous Corporations & First Nations focussed outcomes. - 4

* Organisations registered with ACNC - 12



Nowra community members.

Nowra's principles and vision

As part of the roadmapping workshops, community groups set their vision and principles for how they worked together. Each was different, as illustrated below for Nowra:

Vision	Principles
We are able to listen and respond to what our diverse community needs.	We model community pride and possibility by showing up with enthusiasm, passion and commitment.
There are many opportunities for young people to lead, participate, and contribute.	Local organisations are stronger together and seek to share and learn from each other.
Our foundations are strong, our work is sustainable and we are guided by our principles.	We commit to seeking out and listening to all voices with an open heart and mind.
We are known, trusted by, and part of our community.	We strive for the diversity of our community to be reflected in our organisations and supported by our work.
We work together and share and learn from each other.	We share the work, to support our own wellbeing and growth and the wellbeing and growth of others.
Our people are nurtured and fulfilled by their work.	We encourage creativity and innovation for growth and change.
We walk alongside the Aboriginal community, privileging their voices. Unlearning to learn for Aboriginal community to thrive.	We commit to learning from and connecting to local Aboriginal history, culture, Country and community, and walk alongside local leaders.
	We have the courage to advocate for equity and fairness in our community.

Strategic priorities also differed slightly in each community. Nowra's goals were as below, including a few revised or added as the program went along:



People	Strategy	Efficiencies	Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment - attracting and retaining the people who are needed (new 2022) Our people maintain good health and wellbeing and are taken care of People have the skills and capacity to do their work well Develop trusting relationships to enable NFPs to work with Indigenous communities Volunteers who are well-skilled and connected Organisations have programs to support leadership Creating pathways for young people (new 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are clear about the needs of our community For organisations to have the capacity to manage change and growth Organisations have the capacity and tools to measure our impact Organisations Develop and Implement Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) (updated) Organisations to have a master plan For organisations to have strategic plans We have fundraising strategies for sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective approach to accessing and maximising funding opportunities (sustainable) To have the skills to deliver our services and shared learning experiences (updated) We have a strong collective to share knowledge and coordinate services Access to grants database and support to apply for grants (moved from Strategy & Structure) To have a shared pool of resources and shared spaces Organisations have programs to support leadership Volunteer recruitment (new 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural audits for organisations (new 2023) Tailored and integrated IT infrastructure that is well-maintained and adaptable Well-promoted local NFPs with good brands and active PR, marketing and social media Well-documented policies, procedures, and induction processes

Granting



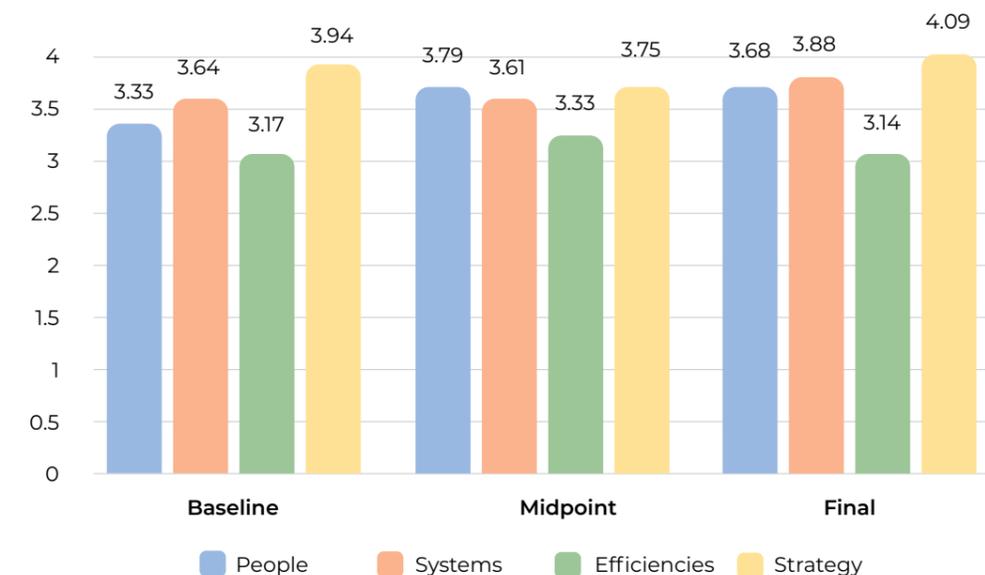
In each community, groups reported additional funding that they attributed to the IRCF program. This could either have been funding secured as additional direct grant funding, additional funds they felt they could raise or sometimes simply funding they believed they secured because of better people, systems, efficiencies or clearer strategy articulation. For Nowra, as at August 2024 (the timing of the last formal evaluation), that amounted to \$2.6M.

The funding provided also directly or indirectly created 62 employment opportunities – 45 full-time, part-time or casual roles; 12 contract roles; and five consultants.

Impact on individual participating NFPs

As part of the evaluation, funded NFPs self-assessed their capacity against each pillar at multiple points in the program. The assessment uses a five-point scale across 12 areas of organisational competency, resulting in a score out of 60. The table below shows a mean of this score across funded organisations. The aggregated scores below, which are subjective as they are self-assessed, show an increase in three of the four pillars from the baseline to final data collection

Nowra - Progress against IRCF pillars



Analysis of this self-assessment in Nowra shows a pattern that is consistent across the three communities, where the pillar of **Strategy** (strategic planning, internal planning tools and grassroots problem solving) is consistently high and has shown the greatest increase across the duration of the program. This reflects investment in planning processes such as strategic development, but more so the confidence of grassroots NFPs to collaborate on solving local problems.

* Secured as either direct additional grant funding or increasing fundraising – due to their involvement in the IRCF program. Note, this was the value as at November 2024, the time of the final evaluation.

It's not unusual to see a drop in some scores over the life of a program, as in the case of the **Efficiencies** pillar, which declined at the final data collection. Evaluation interviews revealed that there are significant and sophisticated partners and shared business systems in place across Nowra NFPs, but some organisations underwent changes in circumstances; or their projects or key partnerships were on hold at the time of data collection.

Increased clarity of purpose

Several Nowra organisations identified that increased organisational clarity was a significant outcome and that clarity has changed the way they relate to other organisations. This included Shoalhaven Health and Arts, and Waminda, who were supported to develop strategic plans.

"We have a much greater sense of who we are and where we are going in the future, much greater clarity... because of that we are able to engage more with the wider community and other organisations."

Shoalhaven Health and Arts

"It was the opportunity to think through what we needed and have access to that expertise to help us... but it was the conversation and getting clear. That was the turning point."

Waminda (South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation)



Meg Stratti Community Facilitator and Janis Gordon Shoalhaven City Council.



Staff from the Blak Cede Café.

IRCF leads to social enterprises, employment and increased cultural safety

\$68,000

● Strategy and ● People (2021)
● People (2023)

Waminda is an Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation on the South Coast of NSW that supports women and their Aboriginal families. Employing around 125 mostly Aboriginal-identifying women, Waminda is based on the belief that women need access to culturally safe services and supports, and meaningful employment.

A sector leader in linking culture with education, health and wellbeing, Waminda was well-placed to develop social enterprise initiatives for Shoalhaven communities with the support of the IRCF program.

After the first roadmapping workshop in Nowra in 2020, Waminda received a \$23,000 grant to develop strategic and business plans for three social enterprise start-ups, such as cultural immersion and native foods. These strategic efforts provided the framework to raise additional funds to launch the social enterprises under the banner of Blak Cede, including development of a webpage. An overall fundraising strategy has since been built, which has contributed to capital to sustain the enterprise.

Following the Nowra Roadmap review, Waminda received a \$28,000 grant to support a culturally safe NFP sector in the Shoalhaven. The key focus of the initiative was to deliver Waminda's Cultural Immersion Program as a sustainable, social and cultural enterprise. Two Aboriginal women were mentored in a

safe space to enable them to deliver the Cultural Immersion and Decolonisation Program. Two very well-received workshops were attended by 48 people from IRCF partner organisations. The community has since embraced the Cultural Immersion program, engaging Waminda to deliver it more broadly in the Shoalhaven.

In 2023, another \$15,000 grant further supported Blak Cede to create pathways into culturally meaningful employment for Koori women and girls. Building on the existing social enterprise, the initiative provided opportunities for Aboriginal women and girls to connect and re-connect to culture and traditional knowledge, gain valuable experience and explore options for their future. It involved workshops, work experience and mentoring.

The current enterprise strategies developed from the initial IRCF grant include:

- ▶ Blak Cede – producing products from traditional plants for food and body care;
- ▶ Blak Cede Café - a hospitality / kitchen and café space in the CBD of Nowra; and
- ▶ Kareela Ngura the Bush Foods Garden / Hub and nursery - rejuvenating and growing local traditional plants on Yuin country, supporting the regeneration and greening of Country.

The three projects funded by IRCF have supported Waminda's vision to provide mentoring opportunities and work experience, as well as funded training.

"(We are) building up women and giving them the tools to solve the problems in their own life. We walk beside them, build up their confidence and skills, listening to what they need. We go into the community and talk with elders about what is going on. We do a lot of outreach services.

We are part of the community, not a separate service provider - it makes us very accountable."

Faye Worner CEO, Waminda (South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation)



WATCH this video highlighting the most significant change through this program, from Waminda's perspective.

Ulladulla

Originally a fishing village, Ulladulla is surrounded by agricultural and dairy farming land. The town lies on the lands of the Jerrinja, Wandiwandian and Wandandian people of the Yuin Nation. The current Aboriginal population of Ulladulla is five percent.

Located in the Shoalhaven LGA, it takes in the towns of Milton, Burrill Lake, Mollymook Narrawallee and the small villages of Lake Conjola, Fishermans Paradise, Manyana and Bawley Point. Ulladulla has employment in accommodation and food services, retail trade, construction, healthcare and social services sectors. The area has a population of 17,330 (ABS 2020), who are supported by many NFP organisations and 35 registered charities.



Local leaders in Ulladulla during an IRCF session.

Ulladulla's principles and vision

Vision	Principles
Our community is enthusiastically and actively involved in our organisations.	We always support each other and seek opportunities to work together and share resources.
We have effective, sustainable, and resilient organisations.	We take time to celebrate the big and the small wins.
Our organisations are inclusive to join and easy to leave.	We really take care of the people in our organisations.
Our organisations are closely connected and working together.	We embrace our diversity and seek to connect those who are disconnected.
Our organisations reflect and serve the community's changing needs.	We spend time building relationships, through listening and learning.
Our organisations are generously sharing our resources.	We work creatively and collaboratively across all sectors.
Our organisations attract skilled and talented people to and from within our community	We commit to protect and preserve the natural beauty of our place.
Our organisations have strong, respectful relationships with First Nations people and organisations.	We seek to balance tourism and growth with preserving what's special about our place.
	We commit to listening to, learning from, and walking alongside First Nations people in organisations.



Ulladulla Community Facilitators Kate McBride and Monique Carson, with Carolyn Ardler, IRCF Program Manager.

Type of organisation	Participating organisations	# orgs
Community Centres (Disability / Aged Care / Family Services / Housing / Youth / Social Wellbeing / Digital Access / Multicultural Support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation Limited* ➤ Ulladulla and Districts Community Resource Centre Inc* 	2
Social Welfare (Community Chest / Food Pantry / Op Shop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Independence Ulladulla Inc* 	1
Community Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Growing Together South Coast Inc* ➤ South Coast Book Clubs Inc* ➤ Story Fest Incorporated* ➤ Treading Lightly Inc** ➤ WE Women of Conjola* ➤ Ulladulla Yarning Mob^# 	6
Education Provider / P&C's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Inc* 	1
Progress Assoc. / Chambers of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bawley Point and Kioloa Community Association Inc* ➤ Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber (Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven) =* ➤ Red Head Villages Association Incorporated* 	3
Aboriginal-led Organisations (registered with ORIC) #	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shoalhaven Walking Together (Milton Ulladulla branch) 	1
TOTAL		14

^ organisation participated and supported by Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven- received support under the Black Summer funding no grants provided.

* ACNC registered

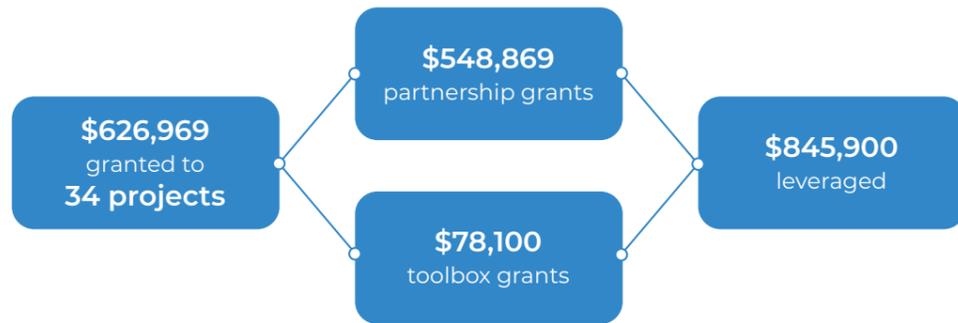
+ Youth focussed

~ Regenerative focussed

Aboriginal outcomes focussed

= Seed Funded by IRCF

Granting



In total, Ulladulla's community groups leveraged an additional \$845,900 from IRCF funding and support. The grants created 39 employment opportunities – 13 full-time, part-time or casual roles; 21 contract roles; and five consultants were engaged.

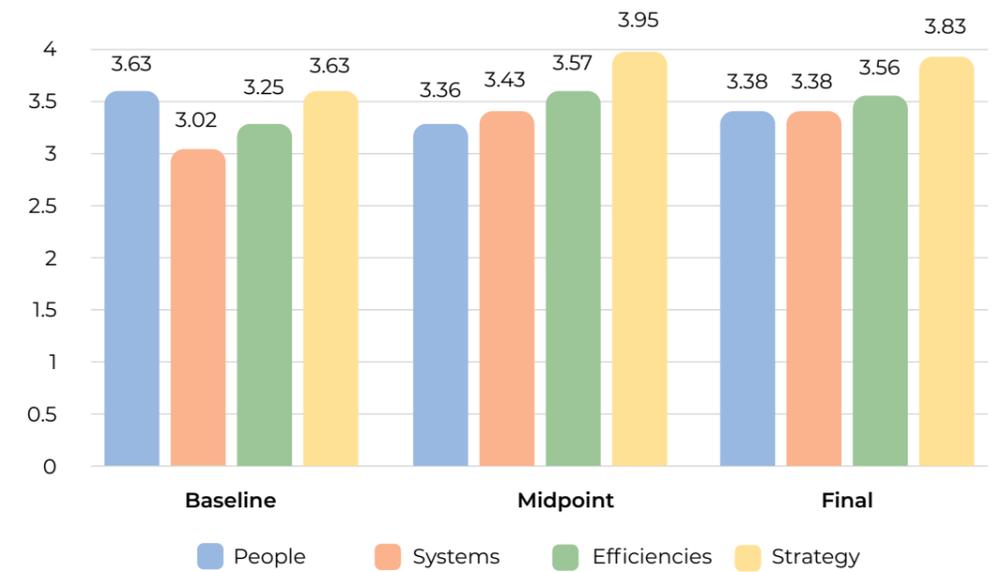
These were the enduring goals for Ulladulla:

People	Strategy	Efficiencies	Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Mentoring program for volunteers › Training in mental health & trauma › Induction and training of new members › Wellbeing program for our people › Recruitment pathways (specifically for youth volunteers) › Shared recruitment strategy & resources for qualified staff › Recruitment pathways for volunteers › Removing barriers to participation within organisations (new 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Support organisations to create strategic plans for growth › Build capacity for project leadership & co-design › Organisations that advocate for systemic challenges › Assess Cultural service needs in the community & provide support to local First Nation Service providers (new 2023) › Collaborate & codesign with youth to capture a youth specific roadmap (new'24) › Build capacity to protect & support our natural environment (new 2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Organisations share resources (equipment, space, group buy essentials) › Organisations are well-positioned & supported to apply for grants › Organisations have a clear picture of skills & deficiencies › Storytelling - capture & share stories of how organisations are getting stronger (new 2022) › Organisations have good internal communication (new 2023) › Long-term financial sustainability of community groups – individually & collectively (new 2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › NFPs that network & share › Raise awareness of local groups & services (updated) › Modernised IT & accounting systems to meet compliance › Committee development program (orgs have governance training & coaching support) › Well established NFPs helping smaller & new groups › Developing & modelling ways of working as a team outside traditional Committee / governance structures (new 2023)

Impact on individual participating NFPs

The table below provides the results of Ulladulla's self-assessed evaluation across funded organisations. The aggregated scores show an increase in three of the four pillars from the baseline to final data collection.

Ulladulla - Progress against IRCF pillars



The two pillars where there was greatest increase in self-assessed capacity were Efficiencies and Strategy. This reflects the uplift in collaboration, partnerships and building of networks, which strengthened the Ulladulla cohort over the three years of IRCF.

The People pillar score was the only one that didn't increase and the drop between the baseline and final data collection could reflect a range of things, including changes in Committee / Board composition, low levels of volunteer participation, as well as overconfident scoring at the baseline.



Ulladulla Community Facilitator, Monique Carson, with Carolyn Ardler, IRCF Program Manager, in Bawley Point.

Social enterprises empower people with startup and systems support

\$89,000

● People ● Systems ● Strategies
(2022-2023)

Independence Ulladulla was established by parents of people with disabilities in the 1980s. The organisation started its community programs in response to the closure of other services and to provide more choices for participants.

Central to its aims is the empowerment of people with disabilities to live independent and fulfilling lives. During the IRCF program, the opportunity emerged to establish two new social enterprises to offer opportunity for employment, including a café and shop. The goal was to upskill participants, so they could transition to open employment where appropriate.

Independence Ulladulla received a \$50,000 IRCF startup grant to secure its tenancy and operations, modernise operating systems and update training. A café was set up as a social enterprise, with accompanying communications assets. This included a website and engaging a photographer to create collateral for social media, the website and other promotional material.

The organisation then identified the need for some support to manage finances and with a \$20,000 grant purchased an all-encompassing financial system to help streamline processes and operate more effectively.

A third grant of \$19,000 went toward improving systems to support leadership to innovate and grow. The organisation has now opened a third social enterprise called The Frog N Owl, from where participants sell gifts made inhouse to the public.

“The people working in the Café are really proud of what they produce - it’s really meaningful for them. They are making friends and they have a purpose. The Café has enabled us to set up the Free Friday Meal service, which benefits 100 people each week. The Café has engaged younger participants as well so now we’re able to provide options for a broader age range.

“The Café has a focus on food services (free meals for people who are homeless); we work with Woolworths on this.

“FRRR helped us connect with others - some of the other participating organisations use us for catering.”

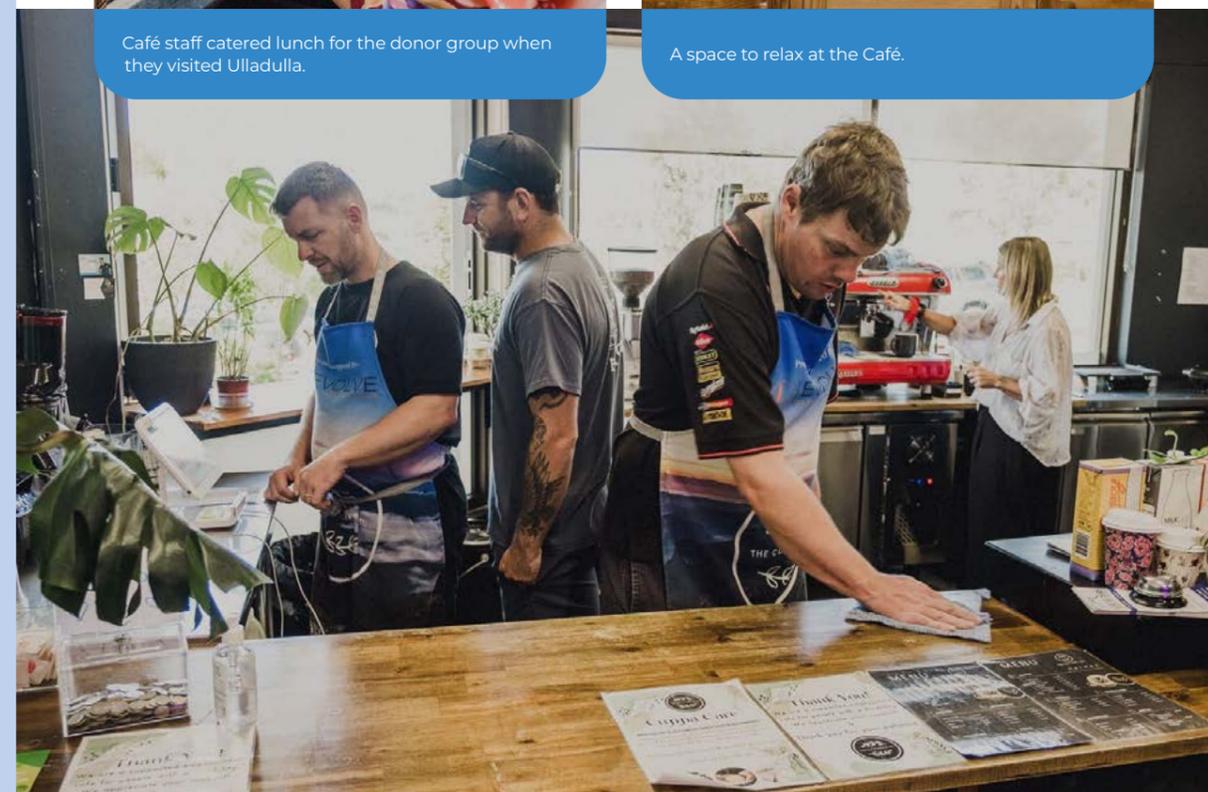
Independence Ulladulla



Café staff catered lunch for the donor group when they visited Ulladulla.



A space to relax at the Café.



Staff serving at Cup'n'Cake'n'Co.

Batemans Bay

Batemans Bay, in the Eurobodalla LGA, is home to three important river systems – Clyde River in the North, Tomago River and Moruya River in the south. It includes stunning natural landscapes of mountainous hinterlands, rivers, estuaries, beaches and national parks. The region is located on the lands of the Walbunja, Brinja Yuin and Diringanj people of the Yuin Nation. The current Australian Aboriginal population of the shire is nearly six percent.

The healthcare and social assistance industry is the largest employer, with construction and retail trade the next contributor. Accommodation and food services is a large employer during the tourist season. Visitors are drawn here to experience nature and engage in recreational activities.

Batemans Bay and surrounds, including Malua Bay, Broulee, Tomakin and Mossy Point, has a population of 23,214 people (2023), while Moruya, which also wanted to be part of the program, has a population of 6,933. There are many NFPs in the area, including 58 registered charities.

Type of organisation	Participating organisations	# orgs
Community Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEARMS Aboriginal Corporation* 	1
Culture, Arts, Tourism, Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society* Arts Council of Eurobodalla* River of Art Incorporated** 	3
Community Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurobodalla Woodcraft Guild Incorporated* Anglican Diocese of Canberra Parish of Moruya (Moruya Commons Council)* 	2
Education Providers P&Cs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd (Muddy Puddles)* 	1
Community Health and Wellbeing Focussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA)*# The Circle Foundation Cooperative Ltd** Family Place Inc** Community Life Batemans Bay Inc* 	4
Food Security and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Agriculture and Gardening Eurobodalla (SAGE)*# 	1
Service Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Batemans Bay Rotary* 	1
TOTAL		13

* ACNC registered organisations

* Focussed on Aboriginal outcomes

^ Collaboratively funded by lead organisation

Climate solutions focus

- Seed funded by IRCF

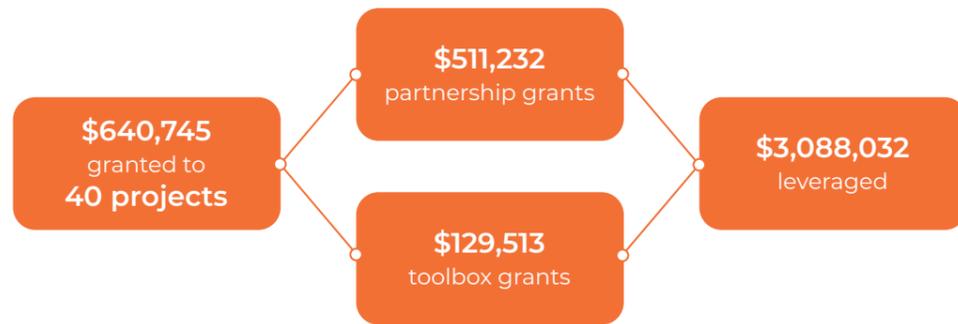
Batemans Bay's principles and vision

Vision	Principles
We make a positive difference for the people in our community.	We show care and empathy for others in our work.
We collaborate to strengthen our community.	We keep our passion and creativity alive through our work in our community.
We are an influential voice in our community.	We embrace diversity in our community.
We have skilled and engaged people working in diverse teams.	We persist and adapt in the face of challenges.
We inspire resilient and sustainable climate leadership.	We respect and celebrate community wisdom and value the voices of those with lived experience.
We have a culture of innovation.	We deeply appreciate our place in Walbunja country between the mountains and the sea.
We draw on the skills and knowledge in our community.	We value the opportunity to contribute and be supported by our community.
We have access to long-term and affordable spaces.	We actively share and promote what resources we have.
We have a valued and motivated volunteer workforce.	We seek out positive and effective relationships with local government.
	We will be transparent and accountable with each other.
	We support and mentor each other as individuals and organisations.



Community volunteers Ewan Morrison, Clyde River Historical Society; Ali Worthington, Shire Councillor; Lisa Cornthwaite, MESA; Fiona Phillips, MP; and Kathryn Maxwell from SHASA.

Granting



Batemans Bay leveraged the most of the three communities supported by Snow Foundation, with more than \$3M leveraged. In addition, the funding created 24 employment opportunities – 11 full-time, part-time or casual roles; nine contract roles; and four consultants were engaged.



Roadmapping workshop with Batemans Bay community members.

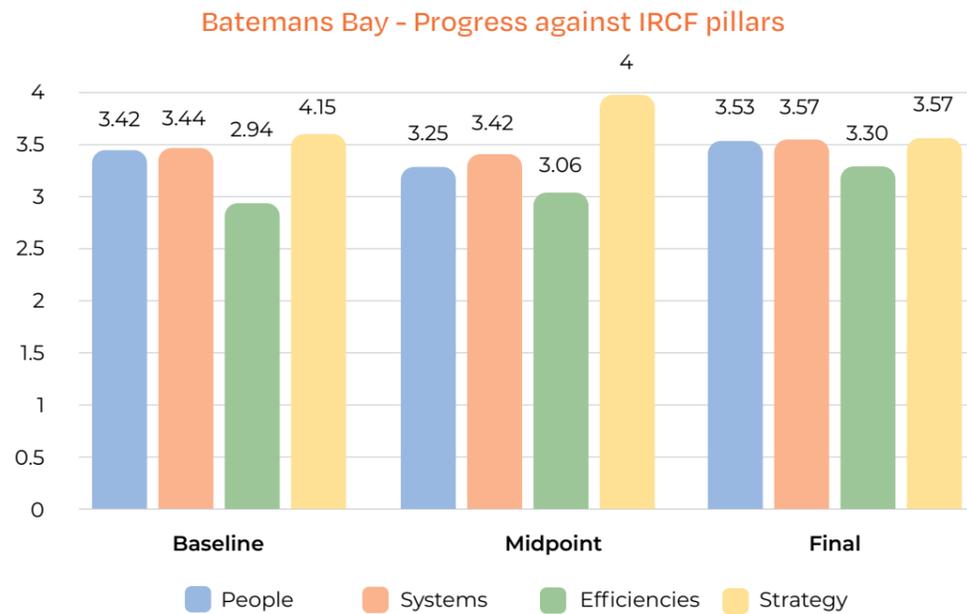
For Batemans Bay the following were the enduring goals:



People	Strategy	Efficiencies	Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop employment pathways Improve & support wellbeing for our teams Reduction in staff turnover in the community sector (especially service sector) Resourced NFP website including collaborative volunteer resource directory Teams have opportunities to build cultural awareness, diversity & inclusion Build capacity for paid & unpaid team members Viable, active volunteer base Community leaders are well-trained, well-connected with other leaders, had extensive mentoring & trained in succession planning Establish mentoring program for community Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a marketing & communications strategy so others better understand what we offer Trained & resourced to implement a co-design process Measure effectiveness of our service to enable continuous improvement & grow evidence base Implement strategic projects & manage the associated change Support for sourcing appropriate revenue streams (new) Strategies for addressing housing crisis (new) Access to seed funding to support new ideas (new) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared training & resources Establish a relationship between NFPs & EAC, for regular liaison Establish an NFP coordinator Establish an NFP network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing training & coaching for NFPs AICD training available to all organisations Community consultation about access to meeting spaces (new) Leveraging funding to enable NFPs to transition to Electric Vehicles (new) Strategies for lowering operational costs for NFPs (new)

Impact on individual participating NFPs

The table below provides the results of Batemans Bay’s self-assessed evaluation across funded organisations. The aggregated scores show an increase in three of the four pillars from the baseline to final data collection.



The standout feature is the consistently high scores from the Batemans Bay region in the Strategy pillar. The Batemans Bay cohort of NFPs included SHASA and The Family Place, both of which engaged fully in IRCF, received multiple grants and were funded for internal staff / project officer roles to build their organisational reach and capacity. The slight drop in scores over the life of the program relates to a deeper understanding of strategy in the self-assessment process.

In this context, it isn't surprising that across Batemans Bay there is high confidence in NFP purpose, mission and goals, planning capability and strong sense of grassroots responsiveness. The other pillars show gradual increase in scores across the life of the evaluation demonstrating small steps of growth and capacity, which is a key feature of IRCF.



Batemans Bay – SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation Living Library project.

Increased visibility and professionalism

A number of Batemans Bay NFPs used funds to re-brand or refresh the branding and marketing of their organisations. These activities have increased their service and program visibility, while also communicating a greater sense of professionalism. A positive flow-on effect has been attracting more professional staff and partners, including philanthropy. In some cases, it has also helped with successful accreditation assessments.

“The most notable transformation ... has been enhancing brand visibility through our transition to digital platforms. We have been able to establish a much wider platform from which to convey important information ... and therefore support our community groups and the wider Kangaroo Valley community.”

Kangaroo Valley Voice



Final roadmapping workshop Batemans Bay.



Community representatives strengthening connections in Batemans Bay.

Strategic review, merger and improved local health support

\$97,500

● Systems ● Strategies
● Efficiencies (2020-2023)

Muddy Puddles is an education and therapy service operating in Eurobodalla. Volunteers actively support events and activities, including fundraising, working bees, administrative support, gardening and maintenance and service delivery.

A critical provider of allied health services, Muddy Puddles aspired to improve the model of support offered and bolster the Eurobodalla health workforce, but it also needed to increase its internal capacity. After participating in the initial roadmapping and other IRCF activities, in 2020 the organisation received \$37,500 in funding to build both the capacity of its team and stronger, more effective relationships with other organisations to strengthen the delivery of allied health services.

Clarifying their strategic goals was an initial priority, alongside a strong focus on financial sustainability. A subsequent \$30,000 grant in 2022 went toward developing a competency framework, improving the ability to attract and retain allied health professionals, and support student placements.

Along the way, it became clearer that as a small organisation solely providing NDIS services, Muddy Puddles' model was not sustainable. Without larger scale space for clinicians to provide services, finding and retaining staff and meeting registration requirements presented significant challenges. During 2023-2024, Muddy Puddles merged with Noah's Inclusion Services, ensuring they could better respond to community needs.

Following the merger, a third IRCF grant for \$30,000 was varied to allow the organisation to refresh its brand and build a new website, making them more visible and creating a more professional interface with community. This focus on marketing, with the support of a subject matter expert and in consultation with stakeholders, helped to clarify who the target clients were.

The funding also supported volunteer engagement and change management, with investment in an IT learning and development platform. The organisation reports that these activities have significantly improved their capacity going forward under Noah's Inclusion Services.

At the conclusion of IRCF in 2024, the following successes were reported:

- Staff and volunteer induction and training improvements.
- The rebranding process from Muddy Puddles to Noah's Inclusion Services was a well-managed change at a pace aligned with stakeholder needs.
- Succession planning for key staff - capturing the knowledge of senior staff.
- Policy review after the merger.

The organisation also raised an additional \$15,000 through fundraising and donations, leveraging IRCF support and retaining previous donors due to the branding and marketing work undertaken during the merger.

Noah's Inclusion Services shared that the most significant change is that the Eurobodalla community now has access to a wider team of staff and resources such as information on their social media, staff teams and knowledge/ support. Staff feel proud to work at Noah's and feel that their history as Muddy Puddles is valued and respected.



[WATCH this video about the most significant changes for the community, from the perspective of Muddy Puddles former CEO, Kate McMath.](#)

"That we have retained employees and gained new ones through reputation in the transition."

Alice Lans, CEO, Noah's Inclusion Services



A student-led clinic run by Noah's Inclusion Services.



Alice Lans CEO Noah's Inclusion Service and Kate McMath outgoing CEO of Muddy Puddles.



Some of the allied health team and students.

Strategic pillars guide investment

IRCF is designed on the premise that investment in strengthening the four capacity building pillars of People, Systems, Efficiencies and Strategy using a flexible delivery format, leads to strong, collaborative, resilient and sustainable for-purpose organisations in remote, rural and regional communities that can advocate for their interests.

In this section of the report, we dive more deeply into some of the key activities undertaken within each of these pillars and highlight the impact those actions had.



Watch this video to hear about the cumulative impacts of the IRCF program.

People

Investing in current and future leaders

The IRCF Theory of Change has always recognised the centrality of investment in the people involved in NFPs. However, the South Coast IRCF delivery elevated the role and value of local community leadership as a core component of achieving the overall IRCF purpose - building collaborative, resilient and sustainable rural, regional and remote communities.

In the early stages of IRCF, it was identified through an advisory panel with ARLF that investment in local leaders would enhance the program significantly. The additional deliberate investment in dedicated leadership initiatives, such as the Regenerate Leadership Program and Art of Hosting participatory practice workshops have shown additional local level impact. Funded through the Australian Government investment, this included support to community members to attend the Social Impacts in the Regions conferences in 2023 and 2024 as well as a Changemaker program. Direct granting also supported leadership development.



Shoalhaven Regenerate program participants.



Shoalhaven graduates of Regenerate with Carolyn Ardler, Meg Stratti, Matt Linegar, Deb Samuels and far right Senator for South Coast, Liz Butler.

"[What's been positive about the IRCF program?] Regenerate, meeting other people. A lot of the stuff for Safe Waters falls back on me. Having those external other people who also feel that way. Sharing stories, meeting new people and being able to bounce off ideas."

Sarah Date, Safe Waters Community Care, Ulladulla



2024 Social Impact in the Regions IRCF cohort, taking up a place on the main stage lounge.

"From a qualitative perspective our staff group and our ability to operate, the staff cohesion, would not have been at the level it is (particularly) the Emerging leaders training. I can tell the impact. The people who did that training together... the maturity level by which they think about things is so much more developed. Those people are the linchpin... that group is really steady and on the same page. Overall... personally, I've learnt a lot from the process about how to do things and harness the strengths of staff. The relationship I've been able to build with the FRRR staff to genuinely know our organisation... hopefully that's a two-way thing."

Noah's Inclusion Services

Active investment in Community Facilitators as local leaders, in both their roles and as individual community members, was a feature of the South Coast program. This reflects a maturing of how Community Facilitator roles are regarded by FRRR – they are now seen as both key operational program positions and as people who model practices of collaboration, networking and high-quality communication. This investment will pay dividends for individuals and their communities long after the conclusion of the program.



[Watch this video to hear more about the value of investing in people](#)



Participants at the Art of Hosting workshop hosted at Willinga Park.

“As a result of the funding and consequent implementation of crucial policies and procedures, the quality and quantity of our Emerging Leaders and participants increased significantly. We were able to employ a part-time Emerging Leader on staff at Beyond Empathy as a direct result of the training, mentoring and professional development provided through increased resources and business development at BE Studios .”

Beyond Empathy.

Employment

Employment emerged as an important element of the People pillar. Several organisations received funding to employ people internally in various capacities. These strategic positions provided immediate capacity and helped develop organisational sustainability as part of broader organisational change.

For example, one organisation recognised that employing clinical leaders in their workplace enabled them to better support students who worked within the NFP. As a result, the organisation has now contributed to a pipeline of healthcare workers, not only for their group but also for other organisations across the health sector. These internal leaders deepen the expertise across the organisation, and through their leadership, increase the impact of service delivery.

Another organisation employed a Project Officer for a year to help build connections to other community organisations and to source grant funding. They secured more than \$240,000, which improved partner organisational resilience and strengthened their local network.

A critical aspect of success was getting the right combination of skilled and engaged people. One organisation noted that if people weren't engaged, motivated and valued there was little point developing systems.

Governance

The composition of many South Coast NFP Committees and Boards is strong, drawing on former senior government administrators or business leaders who bring high-level project management, governance, financial management and strategic thinking to their roles. While this experience doesn't prevent governance problems in organisations, it does mean there is greater resilience to rebuild following issues or if a key person leaves. This was the case in several NFPs on the South Coast.

Despite this broad skill base, there are a small number of organisations that struggled to attract Committee / Board members and achieve quorum. To support them, several governance workshops were conducted across the communities. Things improved but there is still a need for upskilling in business literacy and financial literacy. Several groups also suggested they would also benefit from refresher training on topics such as managing conflict of interest, preventing 'key person' risk and restructuring an organisation in the face of changed or refined purpose.

Another interesting focus area was understanding cultural governance and some good progress was made at Waminda, in particular. An Aboriginal corporation, they restructured their governance model during IRCF, as part of a larger internal 'governance decolonising' initiative. The new model adopts a collective leadership approach led by five female 'CEO type' roles rather than one leader; and a 'wisdom council' of Elders who provide culturally informed guidance to support overall organisational governance and direction, which has driven change and innovation.

“The leadership model (now) reflects the cultural governance. It is much more honouring the Aboriginal way of doing things.”

Waminda leader

In another example of a commitment to strengthening governance, **Noah's Inclusion Services** created a Governance Scholarship, following a bequest. The scholarship supports governance training, mentoring and guidance from other Board members for one member each year. The recipient is selected after considering the Board skills matrix and succession planning.

Digital Literacy

There was generally a high level of digital literacy within participating NFPs when the program began. Examples included using video conferencing for Board/ Committee meetings, cloud-based financial management software or internal information sharing platforms.

Across the life of the program, several organisations invested in upgrading or installing new IT systems and infrastructure, both to increase data security and to improve efficiencies. At the final data collection, even more were using technology to overcome challenges like declining volunteer numbers. For example, the **Nowra Sub-Branch of RSL** upgraded their technology systems boosting their social, web page, mail distribution, and bulk SMS messaging to distribute information, build networks and increase capacity and local profile.

"Internally we've had to work smarter. We're not getting the volunteers, so we have had to leverage the technology!"

Robert Grant, Nowra RSL

Several NFPs also noted a need for increased preparedness and risk management to prevent cyber security breaches. One organisation invested in cyber security risk management software and another had a cyber security breach of their IT system and were managing the fallout from that incident.

Volunteering

Attracting, retaining and growing a volunteer base was a common challenge, especially in the wake of the bushfires and COVID. Some NFPs have well-developed volunteer strategies, induction, and mentoring programs, while others struggle to attract volunteers, including committee members. Groups came together to share their insights and effective strategies and even recruit new volunteers.

One effective strategy that is now an annual event is the Ulladulla Community Expo. Local NFPs set up stands hosted by volunteers to explain what they do and invite others to join them.



Volunteers from Safe Waters at the Community Expo.

In August 2024, several NFPs identified increased cost of living pressures impacting on both their ability to secure sponsorship from businesses and the level of volunteering. They noted that their volunteers needed to pick up extra work or return to work rather than volunteer, which was further putting strain on NFPs who rely on volunteers for service and program delivery. An opportunity now exists to support NFPs to rethink their volunteer strategies to adapt to this shifting reality

Program of free skill-building workshops

The South Coast IRCF program included a series of free workshops delivered by locally-based consultants. Workshop topics included developing strategic plans and producing better Committee / Board minutes. These sessions were well-received.

"Being able to get funding to organise workshops - has grown the strength of our Committee and helped other organisations. The workshops helped us work out our future direction."

IRCF participant

Two three-day workshops were also delivered on the participatory practice model – **Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter**. Art of Hosting is a highly effective approach for harnessing collective wisdom and self-organising the capacity of groups. Developing a shared language and understanding of holding difficult conversations was of great value, particularly in the wake of disastrous climatic events and economic pressures. Feedback on this training was overwhelmingly positive. Specific skills participants identified were:

- project planning;
- hosting rather than leading;
- a range of facilitation techniques including World Café;
- roles within a system;
- the Four-Fold practice; and
- Open Space Technology.

Individuals who engaged in this training reported feeling more empowered and heard.



Art of Hosting workshop Northern Shoalhaven.

Social Impact in the Regions Conference - 2023 and 2024

In September 2023, representatives from each of the communities were supported through IRCF to attend the Social Impact in the Regions (SIITR) conference in Coffs Harbour; and again in 2024 in Kempsey.

Attendance at SIITR built local level networks and strengthened leadership capacity. Additionally, attendees were exposed to other sources of philanthropic funding, learnt how to build relationships with philanthropic partners and heard about and the experience of other regional communities in attracting philanthropy. SIITR also broadened participants' perspective beyond their local areas, provided tools to start measuring social impact and offered many a greater awareness of their core purpose.

"I found that the conference really opened my mind around community, and it really helped in the planning and execution of our recent Noah's Challenge event where I was able to more significantly shift my thinking from 'for our community' to 'with our community'."

Julie Munley, Noah's Inclusion Services



IRCF-funded delegates and FRRR staff at Social Impact in the Regions Conference in Coffs Harbour.

Systems

Policies and Procedures

While some NFPs had informal or basic policies in place, there has been an overall uplift of policy infrastructure across the South Coast sector, through dedicated policy development projects or as part of accreditation requirements.

The participating NFPs that operate in highly regulated sectors such as childcare, disability and aged care generally had quite high capacity in terms of policies, with peak bodies, regulators and larger parent organisations providing structure and support. In contrast, organisations not associated with accreditation had fewer policy sets, formal and informal training programs and other organisational systems and IRCF helped them enhance practices.

Several NFPs were funded to develop a policy set or be part of a collaborative policy development project. The evaluation data shows a gradual increase in the development and implementation of suites of policy and procedures to strengthen internal operations and provide greater clarity for Committees / Boards, paid staff and volunteers.

"It gave us more breathing space to put some structure. When we took over, there wasn't any structure. Over time you realise how far we have come. ... Without the grant, it would have been a low priority to do those things. Now they are systematic. Now there is an induction process, follow code of conduct. People with disabilities come in to do work experience. (Now) we need 1.5-2.0 hours (volunteer workers) tops (per) shift."

Nowra Community Food Store

Multiple organisations also recognised the impact that funding governance capacity work has made to their organisations' sustainability and effectiveness.

"We've gone from being a small organisation with an ad hoc process that worked... what we've put in place is a governance structure... it's less reliant on the good will of individual people. We've been able to embrace structure. "We've got a structure, consistency in where we put stuff. It's democratised us."

SHASA

The Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Limited (ROCC) also commented on the impact of working with an external consultant to better develop governance processes and how this subsequently influenced their choice of a new CEO.

"Before, our governance was OK but a bit ad hoc. I was struggling to get other Board members to know what good governance actually meant. We were suspicious to talk about risk management plans etc. The consultant tried to get us to see what we were doing... and this shifted the discussion to look at why formal governance is important. We are now much more rigorous, more skill-based. The CEO has been central to this. In the (new) CEO, we were looking for someone who understood governance."

ROCC



WATCH this video, where Arts Council of Eurobodalla speaks about the importance of conversations, collaborations and small grassroots organisations asking themselves the hard questions.

Financial Management

While capabilities in financial management varied across participating NFPs, several targeted actions and initiatives positively impacted financial management, some funded through IRCF and others by NFPs themselves.

Some organisations engaged accountants - either hiring someone into their internal finance team or engaging an external accountant to support their volunteer treasurer. One organisation employed an experienced Finance Manager who, in addition to their operational role, also mentored and built the capacity of the staff and Board in financial literacy. This contributed to an overall increase in the understanding of NFPs' finances and in particular a Board's role as leaders in this area.

Meanwhile, another organisation outsourced their financial management, which led to stronger financial policies and processes, brought expertise into the group and freed up the Manager to focus on their strengths in service delivery.

Several NFPs reflected that the development and use of financial policy and procedures increased their Committee / Board's ability to control finances and feel more confident in financial management.

Efficiencies

Business Systems

Many of the increased efficiencies evident through the program came through business system enhancements – ranging from sharing systems or activities, to reviewing IT systems and upgrading or consolidating, to better managing key-person risk.

The most commonly shared systems or activities were auspicing, IT platforms and policies. A small number of NFPs hired out buildings or equipment to bring in income.

A strategic review of organisational IT programs and applications also helped minimise or consolidate the platforms they use. Improving and upgrading technology-based tools like websites and databases helped remove barriers for volunteers to engage with the organisation, increased the profile of organisations and helped facilitate interagency meetings and groups. Groups also noted stronger internal communications and better time management within their teams.

"It's all so interwoven. Through our ability to promote ourselves effectively, we had a massive response in five programs. Before it was really hard to fill the programs and communicate effectively what the programs were. Also what we are as a service and how we fit in the scheme of things. We are all about connecting people through activities. It directly led to us being able to get numbers from the program."

Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation

Better managing key-person risk - a common issue in small to medium NFPs – was also achieved through a range of means, including the formalisation of leadership roles with detailed position descriptions. For small NFP founders or 'working' committees who tend to do a broad range of tasks, it is not always clear where responsibilities lie and what is involved in running an organisation or event. For example, a key capacity building initiative for StoryFest was the creation and formalisation of the Festival Director role and creating less reliance on the Director (Adam).

"We've created the role to run the Project, that has 'de-Adamed' the organisation."

StoryFest



StoryFest was provided funding to work with P&Cs to scale their program.

Once systems are in place, greater efficiencies can be achieved. Efficiencies like partnerships, where people and systems come together, allow organisations to then achieve strategic objectives. Without the foundation of stable and skilled people, NFPs often struggle to deliver on larger strategies.

Partnerships

Partnerships were recognised as central to most organisations to enable increased capacity and to deliver their services and expertise to other geographical locations and into settings like schools, youth groups, preschool, aged care and business groups. Of note are IRCF-funded projects where NFPs worked with business groups or business chambers to share skill sets and expertise. These organisations report benefits and anticipated future benefits for both the business and NFPs.

For example, The Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Limited (ROCC) received a Shoalhaven Business Chamber membership and attended networking events. Twelve months later, ROCC won the Outstanding Community Organisation award, in recognition of the dedicated work the NFP delivers supporting women. This partnership built the profile and confidence of ROCC and also strengthened the relationship between the SBC, its other members and the wider NFP sector.

Based on IRCF evaluations, most NFPs' capacity to secure and manage impactful partnerships is very high. Most said they had several partnerships either through formal MOUs or informally. Several noted they had experienced and well-connected board members who generated and maintained these relationships. Organisations lacking strong partnerships aspired to gain them and wanted to learn to develop these.

As two of only three community owned and managed halls in the Shoalhaven, Tomerong School of Arts and Kangaroo Valley Progress Association partnered to create shared policy and procedures. They included the Wandandian Progress Association in their conversations to share and boost the efficiency of the project.

"The unexpected and favourable outcome from this is that the three organisations have agreed to establish a network aimed at sharing information, shared problem solving and working within a supportive environment that has the potential to reduce our isolation and increase our ability to provide services to our local communities".

Robyn Sedger, Tomerong School of Arts.

Another strong capability scored highly by the majority of NFPs was grassroots problem solving. Most organisations saw this as a core strength, recognising networking and collaboration as essential capabilities to problem solve in an increasingly difficult operating environment.

"...we need to collaborate; it's about activating at the grassroots level. It's that bottom half activation."

Bomaderry Community Association

IRCF investment also led to strong partnerships with other philanthropic bodies.

"We have much stronger relationships with philanthropy. Philanthropic groups are much more about partnership. FRRR one of the early ones. [Our Community Facilitator] was very active, she made those connections and followed up. Philanthropy is interested in the story. Much more flexibility. Remain accountable. Much more relationship based."

Circle Foundation

Moruya Commons

In Moruya, there was a desire for a shared community hub for local volunteer-led organisations, which became The Moruya Commons initiative. The Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn - Parish of Moruya had the physical property - a large block, the Red Door Hall and office space - and the community embraced the Diocese taking the lead to create space that was inclusive and open to everyone. Many of the participating IRCF organisations were involved, such as SHASA and SAGE, who now share the space.



Moruya Commons has become a critical community hub.

Pastor Linda Edwards said the project was a crystallisation process of 'explicitly bringing people together'. The Moruya Commons successfully created a space for more explicit conversation between groups. The IRCF grant also enabled access to equipment for local organisations. The hall also has internet access which led to the church and grounds becoming an official evacuation point and heatwave haven.

The Moruya Commons model of hub-based partnership provides a range of benefits beyond one or two organisations, demonstrating the importance of both physical infrastructure and human connectivity to ensure ongoing sustainability and provision of a resilient local resource.

Strengthening First Nations understanding and engagement

A common theme across South Coast communities was an ongoing motivation and commitment from non-aboriginal NFPs to engage with and work more closely with local Aboriginal Corporations and First Nations leaders. Some identified that they had made connections and were working to strengthen these networks, while others aspired to do this, and felt they still had work to do to make genuine and sustainable project partnerships.

The program allowed NFP volunteers to be supported to attend the Waminda 40 years celebration conference.

"It was incredible to be in a space entirely held by Black matriarchs who not only know the answers but are doing the work in their communities. It was a space for truth and positivity even about upsetting issues. Themes explored were healing, spirituality and self-care, decolonising and sovereignty!"

Georgie Lowe, conference attendee.

Aboriginal corporations indicated they were equally invested in building partnerships and ensuring that cultural competency and a decolonised approach is central to how they work with partners. As noted earlier, IRCF supported Waminda to develop and deliver their Cultural Immersion and Decolonisation Program, which are all about establishing shared understanding.



Uncle Vic and Alisdair from Ulladulla – key partners.

“We can’t do it without those partnerships. We’ve got more mindful about what we want from those partnerships. We invest more in those partnerships. We’ve worked with them for a long time.”

Waminda

Umbrella or backbone organisations

A small number of organisations were funded to provide coordinated networking, training or other resourcing to other NFPs in their communities. Feedback from these supported NFPs included gaining greater clarity about their purpose and goals, greater networking within their community and overall support for their operations. The full impact of funding larger umbrella organisations will take time to be fully understood.

In Batemans Bay, the Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society sought funding for and delivered seven well-attended, targeted training sessions, in line with the roadmap for the NFP sector.

“We were impressed and enthused by the approach taken at the original FRRR Roadmap workshop, and the fresh ideas that networked groups can initiate under professional guidance. The Historical Society reached out to a creative consultancy to augment the traditional methods of volunteer management through a process of a one-on-one workshop conducted with representatives of diverse groups in the Bay / Moruya district.

“During this initial training we increased membership numbers simply through the NFPs attending, 11 of whom we did not know prior.”

Myf Thompson, Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society

Strategy

A number of NFPs were funded to develop strategic plans and other internal strategic documents. Some also saw the value of a business plan to facilitate conversations with partners to grow their social enterprise aspirations, as in the case of Waminda.

“We had a business plan. It enabled us to talk to people. For us it was a good process... we could harness other expertise. That product in itself has been helpful.”

Waminda

In another example, Beyond Empathy was funded to explore expansion of their social enterprise.

“The [capacity building] grant provided much needed opportunity to take stock of organic development and pivot to an evaluation session to develop and implement strategic planning. We had the resources to ensure we mitigated risk, built processes and financial systems that were more efficient and meaningful. This lightened the burden on staff and ensured that our social enterprise is equipped to safely, sustainably continue delivering important work for Beyond Empathy and our community stakeholders.”

Beyond Empathy



Beyond Empathy’s social enterprise engages in a range of activities to support youth, such as podcasts.

Mission and goals

A common theme of the South Coast program was a desire of NFPs to review their purposes, following a range of internal and external disruptions.

Early in the program, bushfires impacted many South Coast communities. Some organisations found themselves holding community funding provided to support local recovery, resulting in their core purpose and focus being put to the side. Post bushfires, these organisations have done considerable internal work at Board / Committee and staff levels to clarify their focus.

“We’ve really honed-in on some key elements of what we do. Even 12 months ago we were still everything to everyone... now... this is what we do.”

Treading Lightly



Monica Mudge Founder of Treading Lightly, speaking Georgina Byron.

In many cases, this resulted in a narrowing of focus and delivery of different or fewer services, with organisational rebranding and website upgrades following. In other cases, such as Muddy Puddles, this reassessment resulted in them merging with Noah's Inclusion Services. In the final evaluation, there was a noticeable increase in purpose clarity, compared to the first survey in April 2022.

Rebranding activities have been central to the recovery of many organisations to ensure that their funding and project partners and stakeholders understood their purpose. In many cases, this raised their profile and led to service growth and expansion.



"The rebrand has had a direct impact on staffing. It says, 'I can see you have rebranded and this says something to us'. It has attracted new Board members."

ROCC

Several Batemans Bay NFPs that rebranded or refreshed the positioning of their organisations attracted more professional staff and partners, including philanthropy. In some cases, it has also helped with successful accreditation assessments.

"We have noticed organisations becoming polished, functioning and visible. We've seen that though their social media, their (branded) cars and more employed staff!"

The Family Place

It is too early to tell exactly how well the IRCF investment has prepared these organisations for the next disaster, however one organisation in Nowra did say they feel they now have capacity to respond to disasters on the ground.

Learnings

The South Coast program benefitted from the insights and early experience of the VFFF-funded pilot program. Its design iterated on their experience and reaffirmed many of the learnings. These shared insights are already enabling the next IRCF communities to build on the model.

Observations shared across IRCF locations

The following observations were noted in the South Coast evaluation, with many of the themes consistent with the evaluation conducted in other IRCF communities:

- There is a strong appetite for **sharing and learning** through a **regular or annual online catch up** or other sharing opportunity.
- **Locally-based, locally-connected skilled Community Facilitators**, especially people who bring their own professional skill set in areas such as business, interpersonal communication, strategic thinking and grant writing are critical to the program. With their deep understanding of the fabric of the NFP sector, the role they played in South Coast communities was just as critical as in other locations, whether as **advisor, facilitator, coach or mentor**.

The South Coast evaluation highlighted that the continuity of dealing with one person was highly valued, as was the value of having local understanding and connections. NFPs also felt that FRRR staff were 'easy to deal with' and all about helping, and they didn't see it as a big bureaucracy. IRCF Program Manager, Carolyn Ardler, was also based on the South Coast, which enhanced communication, local context and accessibility to FRRR.

"Having a person you can contact and call is important, and who is across all of the other programs and activities - great for networking. She can share what others are doing that we might not know about."

Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services

- **Roadmapping** is a vital element of the program. On the South Coast the participatory approach to roadmapping enabled groups to see themselves in the roadmap, as well as take this capability with them in exploring other conversations internally in their organisations. Roadmapping is a critical community engagement tool to record decisions made, as well as the energy in the room.
- The **program won't be a good fit for every NFP**. While some organisations see IRCF as a funding program, it is focussed on strategic capacity building. Those that see the merit in all related activities will benefit the most and achieve the most positive change.
- **Time** is a scarce resource. The IRCF program structure - multi-year and small grants for targeted priorities - creates time and space for participants, with funding for the right thing at the right time.

Capacity building activities to be more inclusive of volunteer-led NFPs

Capacity building activities such as training workshops and professional development need to be more tailored to the availability of volunteers. Where possible, the Community Facilitators offered trainings in many modes: online, over weekends and evenings. Some volunteer-run NFPs wanted to engage more fully with all program activities but couldn't due to the timing of workshops or the mode of delivery. To maximise participation and demonstrate value, events need to be delivered flexibly (e.g. outside usual business hours and/or have a greater online offering).

"I've done some of the training through FRRR; it's good, but a lot of the things about NFPs tend to be for org's of social needs, health. They tend to be run more commercially, they have staff etc. But as a volunteer org you are reliant on who you have. We dreamed at one stage about paid staff but not a reality for now!"

Sustainable Agriculture and Gardening Eurobodalla (SAGE)

Assess resilience in five years

As a region severely impacted by the Black Summer Bushfires, many South Coast organisations were completely destabilised, losing significant assets and volunteers. The evaluation has shown many of these organisations are more stable now. However, it would be especially valuable in five years to evaluate the impact of IRCF in preparing participating NFPs for future disaster events. Even where the program is run in communities not severely impacted by disasters, a longer-term assessment of the program's impacts would be valuable.

Investing in Community Facilitators alongside local leaders

In the South Coast program, there was a deliberate strategy of investing in Community Facilitators alongside the NFP organisations and leaders, creating an additional legacy that is reaping benefits now the locally-embedded person has finished up with the program. Each of the Community Facilitators recognised the benefits of this investment, in particular their leadership development.

Ulladulla Community Facilitator, Monique Carson valued the investment and the space and time created for her to engage in professional development activities as part of her role. Monique also noted the impact of learning from her IRCF peers and being included in broader FRRR conversations.

"...They invested in me, leadership skills, ability to host - Art of Hosting. It gave me time to go and do that. It was also the opportunity to go to the FRRR meetings. That small investment allows you to see the industry. I felt I had access to Nancy (IRCF VFFF Program Manager) and the other team. You are part of a team and it builds your confidence. It is a perception and it's a confidence. I did ARLF Regenerate, which was good!"

Monique Carson, Community Facilitator, Ulladulla

As the role has been integral to the success of IRCF, aligning the position tenure of Community Facilitators with the funding period might deepen their impact. Currently Community Facilitators are employed on part-time, short-term contracts, mostly 6-12 months. Due to these employment conditions, it attracts a limited pool of people - excluding those needing greater financial security.

Enhanced support for First Nations NFPs

Active and overt consideration needs to be given to creating the right structure to support maximum participation by First Nations NFPs. A First Nations Community Facilitator was engaged in Shoalhaven for a time. They drew on their deep connections and knowledge of the First Nations community to build networks and form strong links with Shoalhaven City Council. Their time in the role highlighted the need for more culturally-informed and appropriate mechanisms within IRCF for First Nations people to engage and find value in the program. The current model of autonomous Community Facilitators, contracted for 6-12 months, may not be the best way for the IRCF program to engage local First Nations wisdom in the development of the program.

Based on this insight, future iterations of IRCF will ensure cultural competency is a priority for all team members, and marketing language and communication will be enhanced to ensure First Nations accessibility to the program. FRRR will also explore approaches that engage the wisdom of a broader group of local First Nations community advisors in program design and delivery.



Welcome to Country during leadership training at Willinga Park.

Flexible program delivery

With each community having different strengths and challenges, and a diverse range of participating organisations, groups appreciated the open-ended and flexible nature of the program - especially the funding model. NFPs also valued that the program is set up to meet specific identified needs and the 'back end' foundational elements of an organisation.

This flexibility, within reason, should be retained as it enabled IRCF to be responsive to the specific and evolving needs of each community, based on the stage they were at. For example, funding was able to flex in response to natural disasters and COVID shutdowns.

This gave organisations the sense they were trusted and that FRRR was open to requests for changes in timing and how the funding would be spent, when NFPs could demonstrate the need and benefits. The small and targeted grants were compatible with the 'seasons' of a small to medium NFP where there are often organisational delays or quiet periods.

"Diversity and listening to the needs of the community. Most are prescriptive about what is being funded so eligibility is limited. The flexibility of the program is great - it's exciting for communities like us. (IRCF) allowed communities to come together in a broader sense - at a collaborative level not at the individual level."

Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services

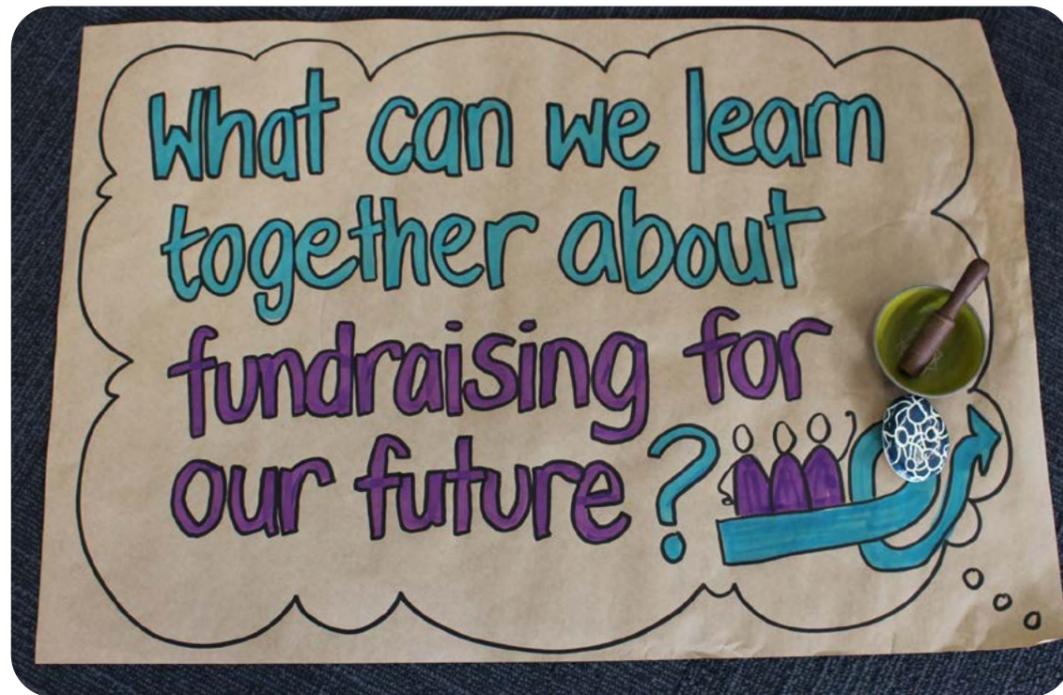


Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services team on Harmony Day.

Participatory practice and co-design

A key contributor to the success of the IRCF program was a commitment to participatory practice. FRRR worked with local participatory practice experts Percolab (formerly Campfire Co-op) to co-design and deliver the initial three roadmapping workshops, which built the capacity of the community to think differently together about shared challenges and opportunities. Future programs should also consider partnering with a local participatory practice expert, as they hold the necessary skills to host conversations, know the community, may already be trusted and can add additional support / upskilling. Creating or strengthening these relationships ensured community groups could draw on their expertise after the program had finished, as well as enabling them to hold training sessions focussed on participatory practice models in their local area to grow capacity of local volunteers.

Within the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla, communities of practice have independently emerged and many of the backbone organisations have adopted participatory practice and/or tools from the Art of Hosting model as business as usual and to support collaborative co-design conversations in community.



Offer additional workshops and skill-building opportunities

The South Coast program offered capacity building and skill-building workshops to participating organisations. These sessions, identified by communities, should be included in future programs.

These workshops contributed to leadership development for Community Facilitators and NFP participants, who recognised an increase in their capacity and confidence to continue their work, in particular building new local networks and strengthening collaboration.

"Each session involved hands-on experience in the use of the practices in very practical ways, planning future meetings & discussions, bringing questions for discussion to the wider group, bringing project ideas from the community to small groups in the designing for wiser action. There were so many lovely interactions, as well as opportunities for people to really connect and collaborate with others. From as early as the first afternoon, participants could step into small hosting roles within the workshop sessions. Those who took up this opportunity were given coaching & guidance during breaks, before & after the day's workshops. Resulting in real hands-on collaborative sessions that were very diverse & wonderful!"

Monique Carson, Ulladulla Community Facilitator on the impact of Art of Hosting

Actively involve local youth

Each community identified a desire to engage more deeply with youth across the sector. NFPs often voice the desire however do not have the capacity to engage with youth in a way they find comfortable. It is vital to acknowledge this in early roadmapping of future programs and ensure there is a strong connection to local schools to deliver this.

The investment from Australian Government enabled the Ulladulla community to co-design and pilot a youth roadmap approach with the FRRR Youth Futures team. The roadmap consisted of deliberate initial engagement of meeting youth where they are at. This entailed strong connection with the school, going to the swimming carnival initially to spark interest and then engagement through a series of exploratory workshops, roadmap design, project identification and pitches to funders to bring their ideas to life. The groups were also supported to apply for youth specific funding auspiced by the local youth foundation and enact ideas such as a weekly connection space, which supported Christmas celebrations in Ulladulla.



Ulladulla youth actively contributed to a local roadmap.

Continue to focus on capacity building

The core aim of the IRCF program is to boost the capacity of local NFPs so they can better serve their communities. Pleasingly, capacity was self-assessed to have increased across most pillars in all communities. This perhaps indicates that regardless of which pillar received the greatest investment the cumulative support and investment across the breadth of capacity building pillars led to overall improvements. The combination of different funding components and a diversity of activities has increased capacity in these organisations, not just in one particular area. This finding has further validated FRRR's commitment to ensuring this approach remains core to IRCF's program model.

Several organisations said that funding capacity building is a key point of difference for FRRR from other sources of funding. Organisations were grateful for capacity building support rather than only infrastructure or service delivery support.

Many were very grateful to be able to seek funding that specifically supported their internal growth and development, rather than applying for project-based funding (via standard grant programs). Internal areas particularly identified were website development, financial systems support, rebranding assets, staff development and general strengthening as an organisation.

"The FRRR funding is the only money we've been able to put into the corporate bucket to sustain the back end."

The Family Place, Batemans Bay



Watch and hear more from the CEO of The Family Place about the impact of the IRCF funding.

Storytelling

The evaluation showed that community groups are eager to find out about other IRCF experiences, prompting FRRR to capture and share stories more broadly. This has been done around six themes that encapsulate the lasting impacts of the program: Collaboration, Confidence, Investment in People, Cumulative Impacts, Importance of Roadmaps and Investing in Systems.

Effective storytelling detailing specific projects and models allows organisations to gain insight into how their peers have leveraged the IRCF model and benefitted from it. This has continued momentum in communities beyond the completion of the program, as well as allowing FRRR to reinforce the value of investing in community capacity.

Through videos, regular newsletters and articles, we have been able to share and embed learnings in a way that celebrates, connects and further inspires community organisations.



Community Facilitators together exploring the cumulative impacts for the storytelling strategy.

Final reflections

Traditionally, support for organisational capacity building has been hard to find. The IRCF program, with the involvement of philanthropy and Snow Foundation's generosity, has changed that. The program evaluation has confirmed that the IRCF model of providing flexible support and funding to for-purpose / not-for-profit organisations leads to more capable, collaborative and resilient organisations that can effectively advocate for themselves. The model has shown an increase in capacity and capability for the majority of participating NFPs.

Over five years of delivery, **time, collaboration and connected local leaders** have been essential to success. A relationship-centred approach that includes regular access to people with the right skills, who hold what's best for the broader community at heart builds the trust required to support learning and problem solving, which in turn leads to successful capacity building.

Organisational 'seasons' are often where the greatest risks and vulnerabilities lie for small NFPs and a program that can provide support through these transitions goes a long way towards ongoing sustainability and risk mitigation. Program Managers note that the issues and problems may often be similar in different communities, however locally-based solutions to these issues vary significantly. Program flexibility that allows communities to explore their own solutions is what distinguishes FRRR from other funding bodies.

The South Coast IRCF program has shown that building capacity and strengthening networks creates an ongoing ripple effect. Participating organisations become more resilient and connected, and better able to serve their local communities.

Through working together, the collective strength of organisations is amplified, leading to new ideas, stronger partnerships, and greater impact.

The ongoing and willing sharing of culture and history both ways with First Nations community groups and Elders has enhanced the cultural competency of entire communities.

Bringing community members together with a clear purpose consistently created beneficial relationships, enabling opportunities that frequently developed into partnerships that generated sector efficiencies. At the end of the program, the desire to continue meeting or have regular sharing sessions between NFPs across IRCF communities confirms this appetite for connection and learning with similar organisations.

The IRCF legacy

The cumulative effect of the program elements - locally-based Community Facilitators, participatory design, evaluation, regular funding rounds, additional government investment and flexible granting management with a relationship-centred approach - all contributed to community confidence and the program's success.

The roadmaps co-created in the three communities provide a strong sense of direction for the NFP sector and the shared visions and principles developed are an ongoing scaffold for community groups to work together into the future. Groups now apply for and explore larger funding applications and advocate for their entire community rather than with a piecemeal competitive mindset. The growth in applied learning focussed on capacity building, sustainability and social enterprise will have an ongoing impact on the community sector more broadly.

“Initially people were not sure of what capacity building meant or could look like for their organisation. Then as the program of community consultation and roadmapping progressed, the groups really harnessed the uniqueness available to them. The diversity of really valuable capacity building ideas started to flow, along with amazing surge of energy and passion. And this is continuing to flow, supported through an increased sense of confidence & can-do attitude.”

Monique Carson, Community Facilitator

This approach is a tailored pathway unique to the community it serves. While some elements of the community’s roadmap may take time to be fully realised, the investment in people and organisations ensures that the community remains resilient, adaptable, and ready to face future challenges. The IRCF program has demonstrated the power of place-based capacity building and provided a model of inspiration and guidance for the Shoalhaven to thrive following a devastating series of disasters.

Each community has emerging backbone or collective benefits that will endure beyond the program, below are some examples of this:

Nowra

Connection to the Chamber & social enterprise

The Shoalhaven Business Chamber has engaged with the local not-for-profit sector through the program funding they received. This has enabled channels of support to emerge between the Nowra community and business sectors. There is a desire and demonstration of holding and maintaining successful social enterprises such as the Blak Cede Café, managed by Waminda; the Nowra Community Food Store, which has emerged as a strong blueprint for an approach to food security; and Independence Ulladulla which has The ‘Cup’n’Cake’n’Co’ Café, uniform shop and newly opened ‘Frog and Owl’ gift shop supporting meaningful employment for staff with a disability.



Nowra Community Food Store.

Ulladulla

Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven (CCSS)

The Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber will continue to auspice Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven whilst they explore the possibility of locally held funding through foundational models to enable community groups to attract ongoing funding. They have plans for a third community expo which is now running with a sustainable model in the community as well as continuing their mission in community to “help the helpers”.

Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation

Working closely with CCSS, the Dunn Lewis Centre has activated their community space to empower youth to connect to the Centre. Initially built and dedicated to the community following the loss of two local youth in the Bali Bombings, the building was funded by community through the Foundation in 2003. It has now been activated with rebranding, strategy and partnerships with FRRR, through IRCF, CCSS and the community to deliver podcasting, youth events and a youth roadmap process.

The elevation of the youth voice through IRCF, particularly in Ulladulla, made a visible difference in the confidence of young people in the region. They have advocated directly to council, applied for and received funding to enact their ideas to support youth and young people, participated in community events such as local festivals and created spaces for young people. A second youth roadmap (2025) has commenced in Ulladulla, building on the success of 2024. Exploring questions with youth and diving into more detail with three questions:

1. What connections do you have in the community? i.e. what do you love about living locally? what do you do with your time?
2. What ideas do you have for youth in the local area?
3. What are the barriers that stop you being able to live your best life?



WATCH Matt Dell from CCSS speak about the impact of the roadmapping process, FRRR and Snow Foundation’s support and the legacy it has left.



Regenerative practices

Treading Lightly will continue to focus on regenerative practices and youth-led climate solutions across the region and inspire local not-for-profits to identify where they sit in the regenerative landscape, through culturally led storytelling and collective sensemaking of solution.

Growing Together Inc

This organisation has emerged as a strong climate action group working with their vulnerable community around food security issues. They are a strong group focussed on collaborative values-based solutions.



The welcoming environment of the Cup'n'Cake'n'Co.

"Thank you to FRRR and Snow Foundation for your tremendous support. Without the grant we would never have been able to turn an idea/wish into the reality of The Cup'n'Cake'n'Co, which will continue to serve the community and most importantly, people with disability, with paid, meaningful and enjoyable supported employment well into the future. The confidence and skills and personal growth of our participants has been amazing to watch since the launch of the Café. We are eternally grateful!"

Independence Ulladulla

Batemans Bay

Eurobodalla Community Support Network

The Eurobodalla Community Support Network (ECSN) was set up after the Black Summer Bushfires to facilitate communication between NFPs and government agencies working in the resilience space, increase networking and to advocate on behalf of emerging community issues. During the IRCF program, connection and roadmapping events identified the sustainability of this network as a key goal.

Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA)

SHASA was identified as a suitable auspice for a toolbox grant to employ a coordinator for the network for 12 months. This investment in people will ensure ECSN can continue to function and flourish to provide social cohesion, capacity building and future resilience for the region. The ECSN will now hold the community roadmap to continue to action goals identified by community.

The support provided to SHASA has helped to embed a leading climate action and emissions reduction group in the South Coast that now provides support and advice nationwide as well as ensuring the local community are set up to tackle the next disaster



Batemans Bay participants at Art of Hosting workshop Southern Shoalhaven..

Looking ahead

This report aims to share, acknowledge and celebrate with Snow Foundation the significant impact of their investment in the NSW South Coast and to amplify the conversation around the importance of carefully considered place-based capacity building initiatives. This work also provides hope towards finding solutions to the considerable systemic issues that rural and regional communities face and, most importantly, the importance of including local NFPs in decision making.

Many grants from the program are still active at the time of writing and the impacts continue to emerge.

FRRR welcomes the opportunity to explore future collaborations or to simply share more detail about any of the points raised here. If you'd like to know more, please email info@frrr.org.au.



South Coast leaders ready to take on the next challenge.

Participating NFP Partner Organisations

Name	Project Title	Grant Amount
BATEMANS BAY		
Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn Parish of Moruya	Moruya Commons Community Hub- Fostering Participatory Culture	\$20,546
Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn Parish of Moruya (toolbox)	Strengthening Volunteer capacity in Batemans Bay	\$10,770
Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn Parish of Moruya (toolbox)	TRAVELLING TOGETHER: How do we, in our organisations, deepen our understanding and connection in two ways?	\$29,991
Arts Council of Eurobodalla Inc (toolbox)	SASI - Shared Administrative Systems Implementation	\$30,000
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc	Aspire, Acquire, Become!	\$22,923
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc (toolbox)	Future Proofing our Organisation	\$7,716
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc (toolbox)	Helping Hands - Attracting and Retaining Volunteers	\$7,659
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc	Creative Ways to Recruit and Retain Our Volunteers	\$6,426
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc (toolbox)	Turning Windows into Doorways	\$4,916
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc	Preserving our Collection - Stage 1	\$6,885
Community Life Batemans Bay Inc	Look Listen Learn	\$5,045
Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd	Building Allied Health in the Eurobodalla	\$37,500
Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd	Attract and retain allied health professionals: Learning and development framework	\$20,000
Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd	Better understood - brand refresh	\$20,000
Eurobodalla Woodcraft Guild Incorporated	Eurobodalla Woodies Mogo Workshop	\$10,000
Rotary Club of Batemans Bay Inc	Batemans Bay Connections ... Linking our community services, charities and clubs – now and into the future.	\$24,680
Rotary Club of Batemans Bay Inc	Batemans Bay Community Hub (online)	\$19,370
SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation	Community - Stronger Together	\$40,000
SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation	Living Library - Knowledge Circle	\$14,000
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance	Turbocharging South Coast Volunteer, not-for-profits	\$37,500

Name	Project Title	Grant Amount
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance	Growing A More Resilient Batemans Bay Region Community Sector	\$30,000
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (toolbox)	Eurobodalla Community Support Network Coordinator	\$30,000
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance	Batemans Bay Community Coordinator and Business Manager	\$20,000
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance	Governance In Action - Enhancing Sustainability and Collaboration for NFPs	\$14,400
Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (toolbox)	Bushfire and Heatwave Preparation for community sector organisations in the Eurobodalla	\$10,750
Sustainable Agriculture and Gardening Eurobodalla	Policies, Procedures and Capacity Building for SAGE Volunteers	\$10,000
The Circle Foundation Cooperative Ltd	Building Capacity: Circle Foundation Cooperative Business Systems Development	\$22,675
The Circle Foundation Cooperative Ltd	Building capacity for operations, fundraising and community co-design of the Circle Foundation Cooperative Ltd	\$20,000
The Family Place Inc	Growing a strong service for a strong and vibrant community	\$40,785
The Family Place Inc	Scoping Housing Solutions - community creating a better future	\$26,208
The Family Place Inc	Building a Resilient Future: Advancing Sustainable Growth through Fee for Service Expansion	\$20,000
The Family Place Inc	Managing Growth in Recovery	\$20,000
TOTAL GRANTS TO BATEMANS BAY		\$640,745
NOWRA		
Beyond Empathy Limited	BE Studios Capacity Building Project	\$14,144
Bomaderry Community Inc.	Paying It Forward - Supporting Those People Who Sustain Our Community	\$3,240
Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Aboriginal Corporation	Laying the foundations for the future of Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Aboriginal Corporation	\$30,000
Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Aboriginal Corporation	Maintaining momentum - Cullunghutti master plan	\$20,000
Illaroo Co-operative Aboriginal Corporation	Pathway back to compliance for Rose Mumbler Village through digital transformation	\$24,000
Kangaroo Valley Voice Incorporated	Kangaroo Valley Voice capacity building and longevity project	\$20,000
Kangaroo Valley Voice Incorporated	Kangaroo Valley Hub	\$15,000
Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Ltd	Enhancing the strength, effectiveness and longevity of the Noah's Inclusion Services workforce	\$30,000

Name	Project Title	Grant Amount
Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Ltd	Our Workforce - A New Way	\$9,400
Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Ltd	Knowledge, Strength and Resilience- Sharing for the Future	\$7,900
Nowra Community Food Store Incorporated	Operation Go Digital	\$14,300
Nowra Community Food Store Incorporated	Planning for the Future - Develop a five-year plan	\$13,000
Nowra Community Food Store Incorporated	HR Plan implementation	\$7,377
Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council	Strong Foundations - capacity and governance support	\$18,315
Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council	Strong Board Foundations	\$9,500
Nowra Sub Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia New South Wales Branch	Nowra RSL Sub-Branch Upgrade Project 2021	\$16,469
Pathways Foundation Limited	Pathways To Community	\$30,000
Pathways Foundation Limited	Pathways To Leadership	\$24,000
Shoalhaven Business Chamber Incorporated	Community Plus - strengthening links between community and business	\$20,000
Shoalhaven Business Chamber Incorporated	Resource Hub Shoalhaven	\$11,490
Shoalhaven Community Preschool Inc.	Administration and Operations Manager	\$30,000
Shoalhaven Community Preschool Inc.	The Growth Strategy Project	\$22,000
Shoalhaven Community Preschool Inc.	Staff Wellbeing and Capacity Building Program	\$15,000
Shoalhaven Health and Arts Incorporated	Capacity Building for SHAA's Future	\$14,112
Shoalhaven Health and Arts Incorporated	Shoalhaven Restorative Bush Picnic (SRBP) and Shoalhaven Crack Up	\$10,000
Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc.	Client Management System (CMS) enhancement to enable Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services to become more sustainable, flexible and adaptive	\$28,304
Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc.	Creating efficiencies: streamlining policies and procedures	\$10,000
Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd	CREATING A FUTURE - Delivering Diversified Revenue to Thrive	\$18,810
Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd	Strategic Aim 2 - Successful and sustainable operation of ROCC	\$15,000
Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd	Capacity and capability building	\$10,000
South Coast Beef Producers Association Inc.	Shoalhaven Cattle Industry Training Centre	\$47,508

Name	Project Title	Grant Amount
South Coast Beef Producers Association Inc.	Governance training for South Coast Beef Management Committee members	\$10,590
South Coast Beef Producers Association Inc.	Upgrading the South Coast Beef website	\$3,000
Tomerong School of Arts	Connecting Community, Building Resilience	\$5,900
Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation	Building a culturally safe not-for-profit community sector	\$28,000
Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation	Waminda's Social Enterprise Initiatives	\$23,000
Waminda South Coast Women's Health and Wellbeing Aboriginal Corporation	Blak Cede Social Enterprises- Pathways to cultural employment	\$15,000
TOTAL GRANTS TO NOWRA		\$644,359
ULLADULLA		
Bawley Point and Kioloa Community Association Inc.	Keeping Communities Connected	\$7,567
Growing Together South Coast Inc.	Growing Stronger Together	\$14,900
Independence Ulladulla Inc.	Everybody deserves to THRIVE	\$50,000
Independence Ulladulla Inc.	Everybody deserves to FLOURISH	\$20,000
Independence Ulladulla Inc.	Helping Hands	\$19,000
Milton Promotions Committee	Milton Back in Business	\$10,000
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc.	Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven - Community Database, Training Resources & Shared Community Campaigns	\$22,010
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc.	Community Connect - Information creates endless possibilities	\$20,830
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc. (toolbox)	Enabling effective financial understanding & reporting capabilities within NFP Community groups	\$19,700
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc. (toolbox)	South Shoalhaven Community Foundation	\$19,000
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc.	Community Connect Southern Shoalhaven (CCSS) Data base, website	\$17,870
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc. (toolbox)	Amplifying Voices and Stories in our Community	\$8,120
Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber Inc. (toolbox)	Collaborative networking exercise for the Ulladulla IRCF participants	\$1,280
Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Ltd	Destination Ulladulla	\$30,000
Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Ltd	Destination Ulladulla Part 2	\$12,000
Red Head Villages Association Inc.	Master Plan for the Red Head Villages Local Area	\$31,971

Name	Project Title	Grant Amount
Safe Waters Community Care Inc.	Leadership development and establishing operation of safe shelter	\$30,000
Safe Waters Community Care Inc.	ASES Accreditation for financially sustainable homeless services in Ulladulla	\$16,565
Safe Waters Community Care Inc.	De-Escalation Training and Occupational Violence Prevention Training for Volunteers & Management Staff	\$3,900
Safe Waters Community Care Inc.	Engagement of an Operations Manager	\$30,000
Shoalhaven Walking Together Alliance Inc..	Together We Thrive	\$29,300
South Coast Bookclubs Inc.	Growth of Services	\$7,200
South Coast Bookclubs Inc.	South Coast Bookclubs - Saving and expanding existing bookclub service	\$6,456
StoryFest Inc.	StoryFest Sustainable Schools Program	\$15,000
StoryFest Inc.	StoryFest Inc. - Donor Fundraising for StoryFest school students	\$10,000
The Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation Limited	Connected Space	\$22,460
The Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation Limited	Ulladulla Youth Roadmap 2025	\$14,300
The Dunn & Lewis Youth Development Foundation Limited	Community spotlight - youth podcast series	\$10,795
Treading Lightly Inc.	Establishment and ongoing leadership from a paid REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER role	\$30,000
Treading Lightly Inc.	Treading Lightly Community Hub	\$25,000
Treading Lightly Inc.	Treading Lightly Inc.. Regen Project Advisory Committee	\$10,640
Ulladulla and Districts Community Resources Centre Inc.	Building Foundations	\$45,902
Ulladulla and Districts Community Resources Centre Inc.	Village Collaborations	\$11,722
Ulladulla and Districts Community Resources Centre Inc.	Building Sustainability-Internally and through Support Networks	\$3,481
TOTAL GRANTS TO ULLADULLA		\$626,969
GRANT FUNDING TO SOUTH COAST		\$1,912,073



Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal

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This report was written by FRRR
with support from JAW Communications,
designed by Twenty20 Graphics

Published April 2025