FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

# Investing in Rural Community Futures Victoria

Strengthening local not-for-profits for the vitality of rural and remote communities

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Roadmap

Year 1

Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

THE JACK BROCKHOFF FOUNDATION

THE ROSS TRUST

THE WILLIAM BUCKLAND FOUNDATION WBF

# Table of Contents


About FRRR 02

Purpose of this Community Roadmap 02

IRCF Call to Action 03

Swan Hill & Surrounds NFP Sector 04

Four Pillars of Capacity Building 05

Swan Hill & Surrounds Shared Principles 06

Swan Hill & Surrounds Shared Vision 07

Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Assets 08

Community Roadmap Goals 09

Taking a Goal to Action 13


# Acknowledgement of Country

FRRR acknowledges the Wamba Wamba, Latji Latji, Tatti Tatti, Wadi Wadi and Barapa Barapa peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Swan Hill region, where the Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) Victoria program is occurring.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and are grateful for their continued custodial, cultural, and educational practices which are so important now and into the future.

# About FRRR

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal - FRRR - (phonetically: F-triple-R) - is the only national foundation specifically focused on ensuring the social and economic strength of remote, rural and regional communities. FRRR's unique model of support is more than money - it connects common purposes and investment from government, business, and philanthropy with the genuine needs of rural people and places. Since FRRR's inception in 2000, it has delivered more than $200 million to more than 15,000 projects.

# Purpose of this Community Roadmap

This Community Roadmap has been created alongside representatives of not-for-profit (NFP) organisations, community groups, and other key stakeholders connected to Swan Hill regions active NFP sector.  The principles, vision, and goals were developed at a Community Roadmap Workshop in May 2025 held in Swan Hill with opportunities for feedback through a survey form and online forum in July 2025. This document is for use by the community of Swan Hill and nearby townships, and is intended to:

- Inform how the funding and resources available through FRRR's IRCF Victoria program are invested to achieve locally-led impact across the NFP sector and community,
- Help direct community resources and planning towards commonly desired capacity goals for the NFP sector, and
- Continue to adapt and evolve throughout the five-year IRCF Victoria program in Swan Hill and nearby townships.

This Community Roadmap will be publicly available on the FRRR website.

**Image 1**: Community Roadmap Workshop in Swan Hill, May 2025

# IRCF Call to Action

## What can the Swan Hill region NFP sector achieve together through the IRCF Victoria program?

FRRR's IRCF Victoria is a grassroots program to strengthen NFP organisations in three partner communities, being Colac, Maryborough, and Swan Hill. Over five years, the program offers flexible and tailored support to the local NFP sector to more effectively advocate on shared issues, contribute to a thriving community, and achieve long-term impact across priority areas.

Leveraging a proven program model incorporating a locally based Community Facilitator, community-led and informed funding, collaborative planning processes, and skill building opportunities, the IRCF program can be game-changing for rural communities to achieve positive change together.

Focused on small to medium-sized NFPs the program progresses at the pace of the community and can contribute to a range of priorities for NFPs, including, but not limited to, governance skills and strategic planning, volunteerism, organisational systems and processes, and local partnerships.

The impact of the IRCF program is demonstrated through the many outcomes achieved in the eight NSW communities FRRR has been working alongside since 2018 (starting in Junee, Leeton, and Nambucca Valley, and expanding further to the South Coast region). The program is expanding to our three Victorian community partners thanks to the support of four philanthropic organisations: Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, The Jack Brockhoff Foundation, The Ross Trust, and The William Buckland Foundation.

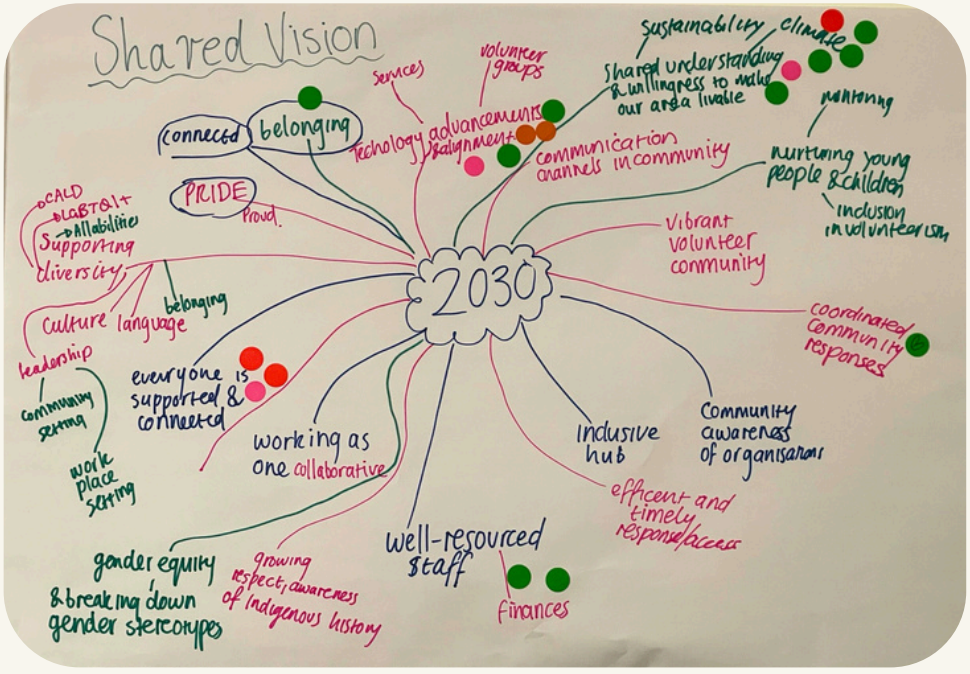



**Image 2**: Community Roadmap Workshop 'Vision for 2030' in Swan Hill, May 2025

# Swan Hill & Surrounds NFP Sector

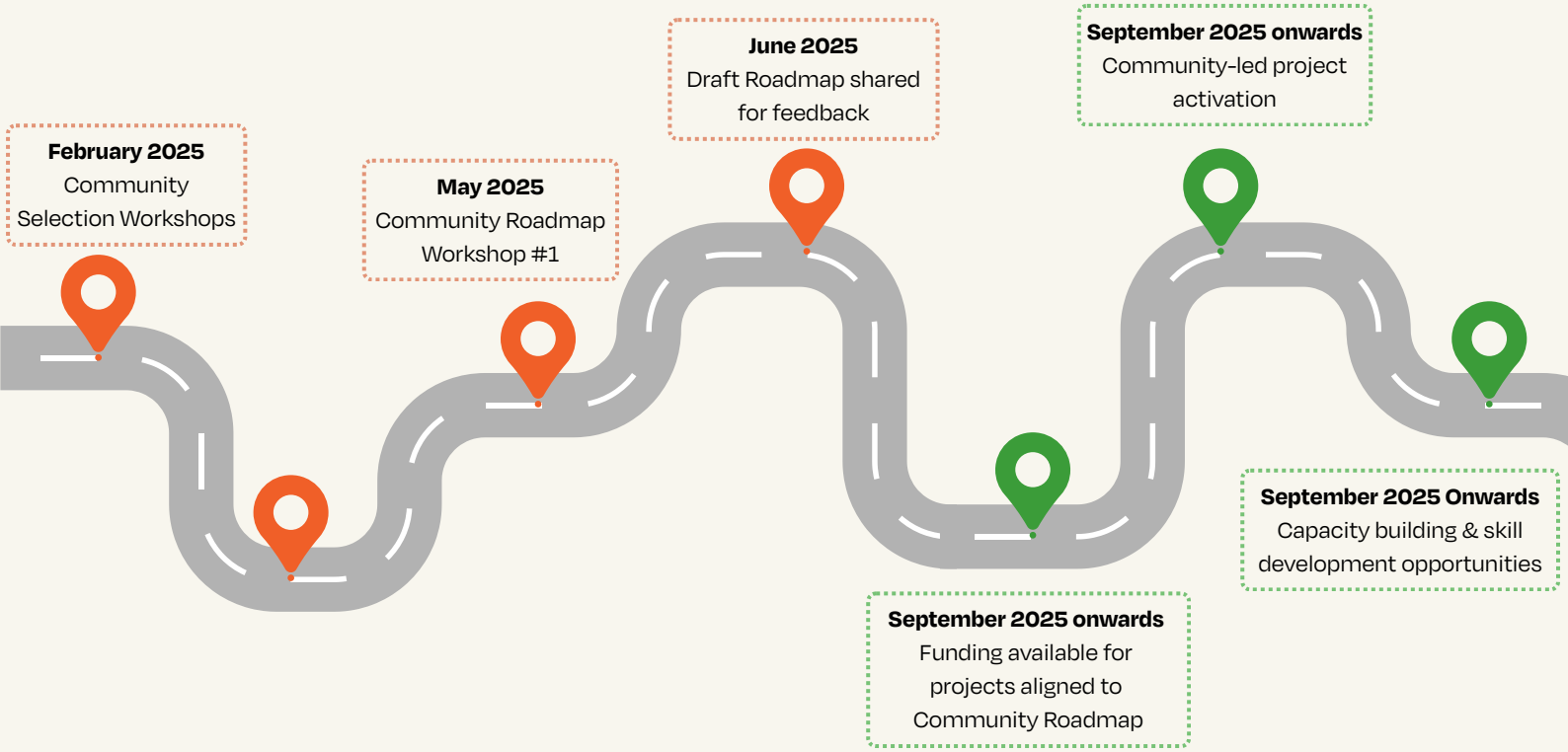
Swan Hill, located on the Murray River in north-western Victoria, is home to a population of approximately 11,000 people and is an important regional centre for smaller nearby townships including Lake Boga, Woorinen, Manangatang, Ultima, Nyah, and Nyah West. The community is rich in cultural diversity, has strong agricultural roots, and a vibrant community spirit. A broad network of NFPs and groups support service provision, health and wellbeing, and local events and activities in the region.

This Community Roadmap reflects the commitment of local organisations towards a shared vision for a connected, engaged, and sustainable future. In doing so community members value collaboration, inclusion, and innovative approaches to meet both current and future priorities and opportunities.

**Image 3**: Swan Hill Community Roadmap workshop, May 2025

More than 30 organisations have contributed to shaping this Community Roadmap reflecting a desire for strong leadership, trusted partnerships, practical action, and creative solutions that will deliver lasting benefits across the region.

## Swan Hill & Surrounds - IRCF Journey Year 1

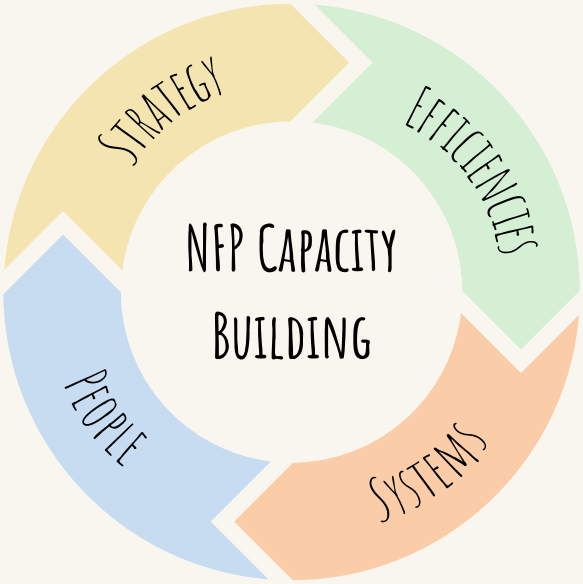


# Four Pillars of Capacity Building

These are the IRCF Four Pillars of Capacity Building for NFP organisations. The pillars guide the program and are the focus areas for investment to help strengthen organisational capacity, activate ideas, and achieve community-led change.

The shared goals for the program as outlined in this document align to these pillars. By their nature, the pillars are connected and activity related to one pillar will likely have flow on effects to another pillar.

For example, developing leadership skills under the People pillar may in turn improve collaboration (Efficiencies), strengthen internal processes (Systems), and contribute to long-term organisational sustainability (Strategy).




## People

Develop leadership capabilities, a renewed sense of community spirit & foster skill development to create strong organisations that bring together various leaders, groups and residents.

- Recruit & train staff & volunteers
- Encourage inclusivity
- Time Management
- Develop Leadership
- Digital Inclusion
- Mentoring

## Strategy

Provide tools & measures that support & **enable the sustainability** of organisations into the future.

- People & vision development
- Strategic planning & monitoring
- Revenue Strategy
- Grassroots innovation & creativity
- Developing & embedding a framework for change

## Efficiencies

Foster relationships & practices that support **efficient and effective collaboration** with other NFPs to amplify community impact. Such as:

- Partnership development & management
- Collective impact training
- Peer to peer mentoring
- Lead agency support
- Networking & sharing platforms
- Forming a NFP working group

## Systems

Support community leaders to gain new insights & energy by sharing **knowledge, systems & structures** that demonstrate best practice.

- Legal structures, compliance & governance
- Financial management
- Communications & measurement
- Develop Board skills & financial literacy
- IT & Security
- HR & Performance Management

**Figure 1:** IRCF's Four Pillars of Capacity Building for NFP organisations

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Shared Principles

These principles outline how we agree to work together:

## Respect

We **respect** others & value **kindness**, **diversity**, **inclusivity**, & **equity**.

## Supportive

We are **supportive** & **listen actively** ensuring all voices are heard & valued.

## Accountability

We are **accountable** & take responsibility for our actions & outcomes.

## Transparency

We practice **open communication** & **transparency** keeping everyone involved & informed.

## Solution-focused

We are **resilient**, **solutions-focused**, & prepared to adapt to new opportunities.

## Innovation

We are **courageous**, willing to learn & open to new ideas, embracing **creativity** & **innovation**.

## Collaboration

We seek **collaboration** to **build strong partnerships,** achieve shared impact & common goals together.

## Strengths-Based

We **leverage our assets** & **strengths** to grow & maximise our potential.

## Efficiency

We seek **efficiencies** & **value for money** ensuring resources are used effectively.

## Connection

We **connect** with other IRCF communities to learn & expand our **networks**.

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Shared Vision

This is what a strong and resilient NFP Sector looks like:

## Thriving Volunteers

Volunteering is **valued**, **visible** & **thriving**, with highly engaged people **stepping up** to support our community.

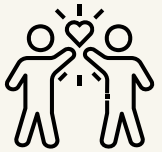
## Empowered

Our NFP sector is powered by **skilled** & **supported** staff & volunteers delivering **impactful** services to our community & recognised for the **valuable role** they play.

## Inclusive

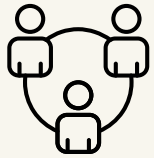
Our NFP sector is **welcoming** & **accessible** to everyone, actively **embracing** & **reflecting** our diversity and **First Nations wisdom** (age, culture, ability, gender & background).

## Belonging



Our community feels included, **supported**, & **represented** across our organisations & sector, with **new residents welcomed & engaged in community life.**

## Connected



Our organisations are closely **connected**, working together & **sharing resources** to achieve **common goals** without duplication.

## Sustainable

Our organisations are **effective**, **sustainable**, & **resilient**, backed by reliable funding, infrastructure, & shared resources. Our activities are well-planned, coordinated and **embedded** in our community.

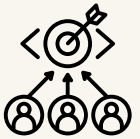
## Youth Involvement

Our organisations & activities are enhanced by the **passion** & **involvement** of **young people** developing into capable & confident leaders.

## Nurturing

Our organisations actively **nurture** the **physical & mental health** & wellbeing of our staff, volunteers, & community members so people feel **supported,** and **in turn, all our activities flourish.**

## Shared Purpose



Our organisations & community are **proud**, **proactive**, & **inspired** by the **shared purpose** to make our region a great place to live.

## Relevant

Our organisations are **reflective**, **adaptive** & open to **new ideas & opportunities to upskill** to stay **relevant** & keep improving for the future of our community.

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Assets by pillar

Workshop participants identified some of the local and regional assets available to leverage towards shared community priorities (noting this is not intended to be a complete list).

## People

- Harmony Day
- Cultural diversity – knowledge & skills
  - Elders
  - First Nations – culture, community
- Community mindset
- Event planning experience
- School involvement in volunteering
- Skilled professionals & specific skill sets
- Volunteers - willingness to do multiple roles
- Skilled volunteers:
  - Legal, financial, communications, governance, IT/HR
- Groups:
  - Lions, Rotary, Progress Associations, CWA, Sporting groups, faith groups, Youth Council, education (schools, TAFE, CUC etc.)
- Networks & partnerships
- Arts organisations – Gallery, Marruk
- Leaders – governance experience (industry/body)

## Strategy

- Swan Hill Rural City Council (SHRCC)
  - Council Community Plan
- Technical knowledge to improve efficiency
- Funding streams
- Community needs assessment
  - Communities for Children plan, Woorinen District Community Plan, Nyah District Action Plan
- Swan Hill District Health
- Willingness for change
- Human resources
  - Grass roots innovation, NFP shared visions & collaboration
- Revenue strategy - SHRCC 10-year funding plan
- SHRCC & Robinvale Our Place - ECEC training
- Regular meetings (brainstorming)
- Financial advisers
- Communication
- Community engagement
- Swan Hill Masterplan (Showgrounds)
- Communities for Children Plan
- Parks & recreation facilities
- Established organisations and spaces, e.g. Mallee Family Services, schools, library, Community Centre, CUC, TAFE, Neighbourhood House, employment agencies, MMLEN, MDAS, Murray Ace, churches, Art Gallery, sports clubs, hospital, Headspace, charities, emergency services, Men's Shed, Murray Downs, Swan Hill Inc.

## Efficiencies

- Council
  - Conduit for NFP organisations, allowing collaboration between NFP with similar projects or knowledge
- Community groups:
  - Existing services and clubs
    - Lions/Rotary/BPW, Northern Victorian Domestic Violence Housing Group, Swan Hill Gender Equity Network, Murray Mallee LLEN, Orange Door
- Some NFPs have lists of what/who is available - could be expanded:
  - e.g. early year collaboration, refugee network/Uniting Church
- Current mentoring:
  - Networking & sharing platforms are ad hoc
  - Opportunity to strengthen - more sustainable, inclusive
- Shared resources for events (trestles & chairs)
- Shared meeting spaces
  - e.g. SHRCC, CUC & MMLLEN
- Shared IT resources & training, e.g. Neighbourhood House

## Systems

- IT resources:
  - Neighbourhood Houses shared Zoom subscription and training
  - Early Years Hub social media platforms
  - RTOs training courses
  - MMLLEN
- Diverse range of skills/knowledge across LGA
- Collaborate with SHRCC
- Newsletters and networks:
  - e-lists, CYFN, Youth Services Network, social media, Better Collective
- Skilled volunteers (legal, finance, communications, governance, IT)
- Cultural:
  - First Nations organisations and Elders
- Accounting & legal firms, JPs
- Specialist volunteers, progress associations, Masonic lodges

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Roadmap Goals

## People

Develop **leadership** capabilities, a renewed sense of **community spirit** & foster **skill development** to create strong organisations that bring together various leaders, groups and residents.

- Recruit & train staff & volunteers
- Encourage inclusivity
- Time Management
- Develop Leadership
- Digital Inclusion
- Mentoring

**Project Goal Area:** Investing in People

| Goals | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|
| NFP staff and volunteers have strong leadership and governance skills and capabilities | | | |
| NFP sector have training, pathways and systems to support volunteer recruitment, retention, and succession planning, for all age groups and backgrounds. | | | |
| Network connecting volunteers is established and sustained (e.g. digital and physical) | | | |
| NFP staff and volunteers are connected to mentoring programs to support involvement, share and develop skills (e.g. IT skills, leadership) | | | |
| Volunteers are recognised, empowered and celebrated (e.g. opportunities, events, activities) | | | |
| NFP sector recruitment pathways and training for future staff is accessible and widely available, including for young people | | | |

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Roadmap Goals

## Strategy

Provide tools & measures that support & **enable the sustainability** of organisation, into the future.

- People & vision development
- Strategic planning & monitoring
- Revenue Strategy
- Grassroots innovation & creativity
- Developing & embedding a framework for change

**Project Goal Area:** Investing in Strategy

| Goals | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|
| NFP organisations have strong leadership, skilled staff and volunteers supported by existing local assets (TAFE, RTOs, CUC, ECEC) | | | |
| Raise community awareness and understanding of the local NFP sector – including, services, activities, access, opportunities, and collective impact (e.g. through local media channels) | | | |
| Celebrate and empower young people's involvement in NFP organisations and build skills for meaningful youth participation | | | |
| NFP organisations in surrounding towns are engaged and connected with Swan Hill based organisations. | | | |
| NFP organisations are resilient and ready to adapt to future disruptions and shocks. | | | |

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Roadmap Goals

## Efficiencies

Foster relationships & practices that support **efficient and effective collaboration** with other NFPs to enhance community impact.

- Partnership development & management
- Collective impact training
- Peer to Peer Mentoring
- Lead agency support
- Networking & sharing platforms
- Forming an NFP working group

**Project Goal Area:** Sector Efficiencies

| Goals | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organisations leverage community evidence, data, strategies and plans to achieve shared aspirations | | | |
| NFP digital hub established and maintained (organisations, information, templates, policies, procedures, multiple languages etc.) | | | |
| Volunteer database and register is developed and maintained | | | |
| NFP organisations have the skills, resources and opportunities to partner and work together, including with other sectors | | | |
| Regular volunteer expo event is delivered | | | |
| Approach and framework developed for shared technology and equipment (e.g. physical/subscriptions) | | | |
| Establish and sustain NFP working group (e.g. collaborative, information sharing, event planning) | | | |
| Develop and maintain a community asset register/map to leverage in project planning and delivery | | | |

# Swan Hill & Surrounds Community Roadmap Goals

## Systems

Support community leaders to gain new insights & energy by sharing **knowledge, systems & structures** that demonstrate best practice.

- Legal structures, compliance & governance
- Financial management
- Communications & measurement
- Develop Board skills & financial literacy
- IT & Security
- HR & Performance Management

| **Project Goal Area:** Systems & Structures | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Goals** | **2025** | **2026** | **2027** |
| NFP boards and committees have strong leadership and governance skills and capabilities (via training, coaching, policy development etc.) | | | |
| NFP organisations are supported by accessible, functional, and actionable evaluation and measurement systems to monitor their activities | | | |
| NFP organisations are supported by skilled secretariat support | | | |
| NFP organisations have access to IT systems and AI technology and skills to operate effectively | | | |
| Explore and develop a community governance approach to support the collaborative elements and potential of this Community Roadmap | | | |

# Examples: taking a goal to action

During the Community Roadmap workshop, participants brainstormed some examples of taking a shared goal into an actionable project. Below are three examples discussed during the workshop. Please note that these are intended to be examples only, and future funded projects may take an alternative approach and have other considerations. All projects funded through the IRCF Victoria program must align with at least one goal in the Community Roadmap. The Swan Hill Community Facilitator will be available to support project development and applications for funding.

**Goal**: Establish a Volunteer Network

- Document leaders
- Map existing resources and information sources
- Identify volunteer needs in the community
- Checklist or Information Request form (availability etc)
- Develop key contacts list
- Host volunteering network to discuss next steps

**Goal**: Regular Volunteer Expo

- Establish planning group
- Identify community groups
- Identify location
- Establish budget & in-kind support, identify funding source
- Develop communication plan

**Goal**: Recognition & Celebration of Volunteers

- Map ways to celebrate volunteers
- How do we do it now?
- Research how others do it
- Ask volunteers for ideas, what they would like
- Links to existing events