

Capacity building program strengthens vital NFP sector

Report reveals successes and learnings of South Coast program

25 August 2025: A report published today by FRRR confirms that communities in the Nowra, Ulladulla and Batemans Bay regions of NSW have benefitted substantially from the support of a five-year program designed to strengthen the local not-for-profit (NFP) sector.

More than 100 NFPs across the three local government areas benefited from FRRR's [Investing in Rural Community Futures \(IRCF\)](#) program, thanks to the support of Snow Foundation. The program brought together local organisations to identify strengths and common challenges, and then supported them to work together for the benefit of their communities.

Support from a local facilitator in each community was coupled with a rigorous, regular participatory 'roadmapping' process through which local NFPs were able to collectively prioritise activities. Grants and flexible funding were then provided to enable agreed priorities to be actioned.

A detailed evaluation found that this cohort of community groups progressed on nearly every aspect of the four core pillars identified as essential for a sustainable NFP sector – strategy, people, systems and efficiencies. [The report](#) confirms that FRRR's IRCF program built resilience and supported revitalisation by providing access to skills, knowledge, experiences and resources aimed at strengthening community networks and fostering social capital through community-led initiatives.

Natalie Eggleton, FRRR CEO, said it was pleasing to know that the overarching goal of strengthening local NFPs so that they could continue their critical community work well into the future had been realised.

"Back in 2017, we identified that one of the most common needs was for support to enhance the capacity of NFP organisations. After successfully piloting this program in three other NSW communities, we partnered with Snow Foundation to bring it to the NSW South Coast.

"As we walked alongside these organisations, we saw them grow in confidence. We also watched on as they developed strategic partnerships and networks that have led to community-wide advocacy efforts to advance solutions to local and systemic issues," Ms Eggleton said.

The formal evaluation, undertaken at regular intervals across the five years of the program, confirmed that this model of tailored flexible support and funding to not-for-profit organisations leads to more capable, collaborative and resilient organisations that can advocate for themselves more effectively.

"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," Ms Eggleton explained.

"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 FRRR's IRCF program in communities."



Ms Egleton said the design of IRCF is tailored to respond to the unique challenges that local organisations in each place experience in managing their sustainability and viability.

“The findings of the report tell the story of how different cohorts have shifted from surviving to thriving by addressing the issues that mattered to them as a community. It sends a powerful message about what is possible when vital organisations are trusted and empowered, and bolstered by targeted, place-based capacity building resources and funding,” Ms Egleton said.

Lynne Dooley, Strategic Policy Manager at Waminda said that the support of FRRR's IRCF program enabled her organisation to attract funds to deliver key projects supporting social, cultural and educational initiatives in the region.

“It can be challenging accessing funding for local initiatives that are flexible, are not report heavy, that have a quick turn-around and support capacity building efforts to strengthen our local community networks, programs and infrastructure,” Ms Dooley said.

In total, Snow Foundation committed \$2,656,000 over five years across the three communities, with more than 100 grants awarded to date.

Snow Foundation CEO, Georgina Byron, said that the partnership with FRRR ended up being very timely, given the Black Summer bushfires and the impacts of COVID.

“The IRCF program provided a framework to strengthen community capacity by empowering people and enhancing strategies and systems. It helped local organisations navigate disasters, fostered community resilience and encouraged collaboration among community groups in a way that enabled them to thrive and provide the critical support they do across our region,” Ms Byron said.

FRRR's IRCF program is now being implemented in three communities in rural Victoria. FRRR welcomes the opportunity to partner with other funders and communities to implement this model. For more information, contact FRRR's People Portfolio Lead, Deb Samuels on 03 5430 2399.

[Read the report.](#)

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About FRRR

FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal) is the only national foundation specifically focussed on ensuring the social and economic strength of Australia's remote, rural and regional communities. Established in 2000, it has since delivered more than \$200 million to more than 15,000 projects. 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. FRRR's DGR-1 listing and broad charitable remit are key to empowering grassroots organisations to create communities that are vibrant, resilient and sustainable.

In 2025, FRRR celebrates 25 years of supporting remote, rural and regional communities across Australia. Celebrate with us at www.frrr.org.au/25th-anniversary/.