



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal



Investing in Rural Community Futures Program

Bega Valley Community Update

What's happening now and what you can do

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- **Share** your Collaborative Capacity building idea with Leah ASAP so we can assist you in refining your idea. A project proposal form has been developed.
- **Keep an eye out** for the draft Bega Valley IRCF Roadmap. The roadmap summarises the co-design work so far and gives us a way forward and will be published on the [IRCF website](#) shortly.
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Workshop Overview



Tuesday 14 March 2023 – Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre

Twenty-eight participants representing a diverse range of not-for-profits across the Bega Valley came together to co-design a Community Roadmap – with the vision of a sustainable Bega Valley not-for-profit (NFP) sector. We were welcomed to country by Djirriganj Elder, Aunty Glenda. We were hosted by Mel Geltch (Campfire Coop), Carolyn Ardler, Deb Samuels (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal), Chani Keefer, Leah Szanto, Bree Morgan (Bega Valley Shire Council), with Alli Mudford, Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.

Check in

We had a three-round check in, meeting different people to explore these questions:

- What is one thing that has made you smile since yesterday?
- What's one thing you hope for from today?
- What's one key idea you believe would help strengthen the Bega Valley NFP sector?

We collected the ideas and added them to our ideas wall.

Carolyn Ardler introduced the [Investing in Rural Community Futures program \(IRCF\)](#) and its four pillars: People, Strategy, Systems, and Efficiencies. The program is currently working with seven communities in NSW, and now Bega Valley.

FRRR has already worked with organisations in the Bega Valley through funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation (the INFPC program). IRCF will build on the work already done and workshops held throughout 2022.

This version of the program is unique, funded by an Australian Government grant of \$1.3 million and delivered in partnership with Bega Valley Shire Council (BVSC) and the [Australian Rural Leadership Foundation](#) (ARLF). It has three main features:

- Roadmap to identify a way forward together, with a toolbox of \$150,000 per annum or (\$300,000 total) in funding to work on collaborative initiatives to benefit the NFP sector.
- [A Leadership program](#) for 24 Bega Valley residents, focusing on current and emerging NFP leaders.
- Community Facilitators on the ground supporting NFPs to build capacity. These roles are filled by Leah Szanto and Bree Morgan who work with Chani Keefer at BVSC.

Purpose

We played the purpose game to explore our shared understanding of the purpose of the Bega Valley IRCF program. Here are some clear themes that showed through, with some examples. These will be expressed in the draft Bega Valley Roadmap.

Support Bega Valley NFPs:

- **to collaborate**
Strengthen through collaboration
Building resilience, future proofing
- **through a shared purpose and a way forward**
Indicate a way forward
Provide focus and direction, and common purpose
- **to work together to solve challenges**
Sharing of thoughts, ideas and solutions
Identifying common goals, gaps and solutions
- **to support and strengthen workers and volunteers**
better support the workers
- **to coordinate activities**
better coordinate services
- **to build capacity** create and strengthen pathways.



Storytelling and principles for collaboration

In pairs we shared stories, telling about a time when we were part of a collaborative effort that really worked. We listened to each other for the **ingredients for collaboration** that showed up in our stories. From these, and in small groups, we drafted principles for how we want to work together as a sector, based on stories we heard. The group gave initial approval - 'good enough for now, safe enough to try'. These will be expressed in the draft Bega Valley Roadmap, with an intention to revisit them.

- Our work is driven by adapting to changing community needs
- We share leadership
- We invite people to contribute to what we are working towards
- We respect all perspectives
- We empower people to work to their strengths and beyond
- We strengthen relationships by being non-judgemental, open and transparent
- We value open, transparent and timely communication
- We create innovative solutions through thought leadership
- We value and utilise the skills and knowledge bank of our broader community
- We acknowledge that fun is an essential ingredient (for any volunteer-based activity).



Needs

We looked at existing data from previous workshops that identified the needs of the NFP sector. There were some that relate to much bigger issues, critically important, such as housing and transport. These were left out of this list since they are not within the remit of this program. We asked - *What else is needed for our sector to thrive? What is missing?*

Existing

- Central coordination of volunteers
- Clarity of volunteer roles
- Recognise, reward and support volunteers
- Attract more volunteers (Activate volunteering in younger people ☒ ☒)
- Inclusion: ages / cultures / minority voices / Indigenous engagement / smaller communities
- Coordination of funding and service delivery

- Central community information and support directory (Referral service - better and updated community directory; upgraded community directory NFP notice board + volunteer opportunities + events + grants available + someone to run it/coordinate it)
- Central communication distribution method
- Communications capacity building
- Collect data to inform what's worked and what's important
- More collaboration between NFPs (break the silos, increase meaningful collaboration. Collaboration - reduce duplication. Share resources ; avenues for cooperation; increased collaboration, skill sharing, partnering across organisations on projects ✓)
- More opportunities for meeting and networking
- Skilled staff and volunteers (skills training; skill development, outsourcing, project management)
- Offer career paths and opportunities for young people (development of fair and creative employment pathways for young people in the arts)
- Peer mentoring across sector (mentorship grants and programs)
- Beneficial amalgamations
- Collective training.

New additions

We've added those not already included in the list above.

- Improved communication and links (network and communications; prioritise communication between NFPs; broaden the communication channels within the Bega Valley; communication; cross-organisational communication)
- Access to refined data and storytelling platform
- A community halls development strategy and development as active, vibrant community centres
- Access to IT support and administration support
- Incentivise mentorships and internships
- Evidence-based BVSC community development strategy to unify projects and capitalise on funding when available
- Better use and understanding of auspice (reduce need for treasurer)
- Connectivity and collaboration with governments
- Treasurers / financial skills, organisational skills, people to occupy executive roles
- Improved assessment process for grants, better feedback loop
- Continuity of funding
- Paid permanent staff multi-year
- Housing for all
- Overworked volunteers need time
- Shared resources - grant write (leverage) multi-year (share resources; united multi year funding)
- Financial support, easier grant process
- More funds to support the services to support the community ✓✓✓✓.

Ideas

Here is a list of existing ideas that have come from three previous workshops over the past 12 months and fit into the IRCF funding framework:

- A 'Project Lab' and coordinator (Eden) ✓✓✓✓
- Project Lab with a community development officer ✓✓✓
- Bega Community Access Centre (including outreach services and transport) ✓✓
- Volunteering social media campaign for 12-25 year olds. 'Why volunteer?' Benefits and outcomes ✓✓
- Mentoring group to share knowledge (eg: auspicing, governance) ✓
- Funded role to support project ideas come to fruition ✓
- A common, shared service platform (HR, volunteers, zero accounting etc) for small NFPs ✓
- Create a promotional video for volunteering, focussing on the benefits ✓
- Social media training
- Community services directory and mapping
- A bank of well-crafted projects ready for grant funding
- Host regular/annual Big Ideas Forums
- Rostering and record keeping support
- Mentoring system for volunteers
- Create a template for identifying volunteer roles
- Volunteer coordinator - advocate with central voice to identify overlap/gaps
- Reach out to schools to encourage volunteers
- Funding for volunteer dinners.



And some additional ones that came from our morning check in: (some were added to our needs list)

- A one-stop shop for info sharing like grant opportunities, collaboration, contacts. Involve interagencies, a strong community directory ✓✓
- Skills and experience database ✓
- A portal for NFP organisations to share information and better coordinate effort
- An evidence-based community development strategy ✓
- Providing refined data and storytelling platform
- A community precinct on vacant hospital land. A central hub and sharing resources
- A backbone organisation – BVSC – taking the responsibility to continually drive and monitor groups action.

Project co-design

Using a [co-design graphic template](#) and process, we worked on potential initiatives and projects that may seek funding through IRCF, with support from Leah and Bree.



We prioritised. Everyone had three dots to vote for the projects / ideas we felt were most important. This would help guide the initiatives and the support Leah and Bree offer going forward – and are included below ✓

Initiative/Project	Organisation/people	Next Steps
Community centre precinct, Bega -Fling, PCYC, Sapphire Community Pantry, Library, Business hub, Community Cafe	John, Bega Chamber	A business plan, seek other orgs that may be interested ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
Collaboration platform / Community directory -Including easier to find volunteer opportunities, grants, collaborative opportunities, events calendar	Allan, Ange, Robyn	More research to see what's already around, and being used as a platform in other places ✓✓✓✓
Reach out to young people to encourage community engagement	Mick SJA	Reach out to Cal at BVSC Get TAFE and Unis involved too ✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓
A bank of well crafted projects ready for grant funding -Examples include: Aslings Beach rock pool restoration (Eden Access Centre, Tourism Inc, Chamber of Commerce); Creative projects with youth; Community wellbeing creative art workshops for women)	Angela & Eric	A concept plan. Address barriers Go out into community ✓✓✓
Combination of 3 projects (below)		✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓
Auspice / hub / NFP community umbrella - skillshare/specialties - governance, legal, accounting, grants/admin, overseeing sub committees of NFPs	Kass & Kylie	What other models are out there? Contact Bree, Leah and Carolyn
Strike team of admin / project management employees – mobile, to purchase by the hour	Veronica & Glenda	Identify the gaps. What people are available?
Full time permanent coordinator role to support NFPs	Nigel	Seek funding. Develop position description

Next steps

- An ask of the community is to tap on the shoulder any emerging, active and involved leaders in the Bega Valley Shire to apply for the Regenerate program.

Alli Mudford from the ARLF shared that *“Leaders of local not-for-profit organisations in the Bega Valley are invited to apply for this locally-delivered leadership development program, designed to build their capacity to help with ongoing bushfire recovery and response. There are 24 scholarships offered for local leaders who’ll get access to some of the best leadership thinking and practice available, plus practical tools and skills via experiential learning.”*



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Check out: What's one thing you will carry with you from today?

Here are the clear themes that showed up in everyone's responses:

- Hope
- Gratitude and appreciation
- Inspiration
- Excited about possibilities together
- Feeling connected.

