



18 November 2019

Committee Secretary

**Select Committee on Regional Australia**

PO Box 6021

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

via email to: [regional.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:regional.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir / Madam:

Please find enclosed a short submission on behalf of Australia's regionally based Community Foundations for consideration by the Select Committee on Regional Australia.

Australian Community Philanthropy (ACP) is the peak body for Community Foundations in this country.

The Select Committee's Chairman Mr Tony Pasi MP, Member for Barker, is aware of the work of Community Foundations and their importance for community building and resilience especially in regional areas.

We commend the attached submission to the Committee. We would be pleased to provide any additional information that may be of interest and to respond to any questions. You can contact ACP at the address, phone number or email included below.

Thank you in advance for your interest.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Rodgers".

Ben Rodgers  
Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerlinde Scholz".

Gerlinde Scholz  
Executive Officer

# Submission to Select Committee on Regional Australia

---

## About this submission

This submission is made by Australian Community Philanthropy, the peak body representing Australia's Community Foundations, on behalf of Community Foundations based in regional Australia.

## About Community Foundations

Community Foundations are community-owned and -managed philanthropic institutions that bring together people and resources to address local issues and support community development.

While there is no legal definition of Community Foundations and some entities that may be corporate or private foundations use the term 'community foundation' in their name (eg. RACV Community Foundation), a *bona fide* community foundation is an incorporated body with the following characteristics:

- 1 it is charitable;
- 2 it engages in community building activities and may also make grants, usually for a defined geographic region;
- 3 the directors and members are connected to the relevant geographic region;
- 4 it is able to support a broad range of charitable purposes; and
- 5 it is supported by a number of donors.<sup>1</sup>

In Australia, four out of five Community Foundations operate in regional areas. They provide vital social infrastructure and social capital in their local communities.

## Select Committee on Regional Australia – Terms of Reference

This submission refers specifically to the following items among the Select Committee's Terms of Reference:<sup>2</sup>

- d. Promoting private investment in regional centres and regional infrastructure;
- and
- l. Consider other measures to support the ongoing growth and sustainability of regional Australia.

---

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Smith Freehills, Constitution, Australian Community Philanthropy Ltd, p.14

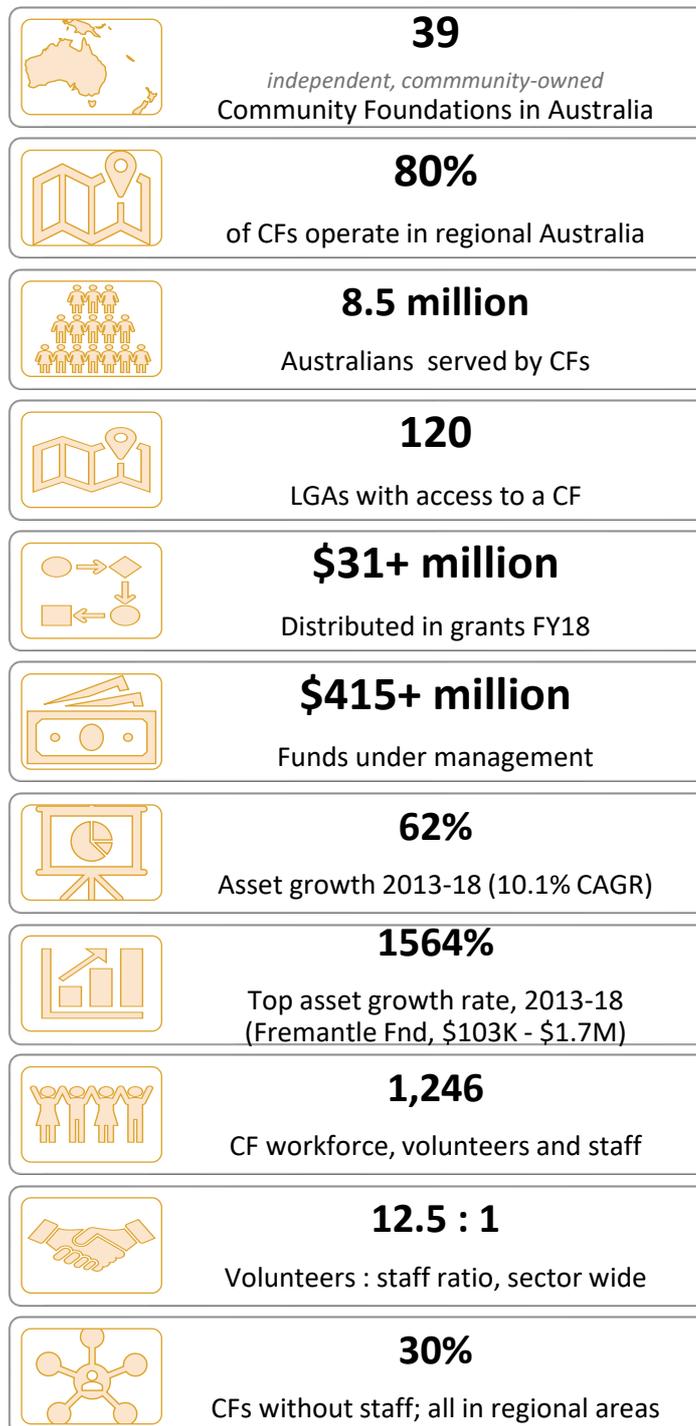
<sup>2</sup> [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Regional\\_Australia/RegionalAustralia/Terms\\_of\\_Reference](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Regional_Australia/RegionalAustralia/Terms_of_Reference)

## Community Foundations in regional Australia: facts and figures

- There are 39 *bona fide* Community Foundations in Australia.
- Community Foundations as a sector have over \$415 million in funds under management, representing assets contributed by their communities
- In FY17/18, Community Foundation grants to community organisations, groups and projects in their respective local areas totalled more than \$31 million.
- Cumulative grants over time from Community Foundations to their communities exceed \$300 million; the lions' share of that has been distributed in the past 15 years.
- Geographic distribution is uneven: 17 CFs are based in Victoria; 10 in NSW; 4 in South Australia; 3 each in WA and Queensland; 1 each in ACT and Tasmania.
- Community Foundations fund across 120+ local government areas (LGAs) serving a combined population of 8.5 million Australians
- 31 out of 39 (80%) Community Foundations are based in regional communities:

	Foundation name	Town / State / Postcode of registered address		
1	Albany Community Foundation	Albany	WA	6330
2	Border Trust	Albury	NSW	2640
3	Ballarat Foundation	Ballarat	VIC	3350
4	Northern Rivers Community Foundation	Ballina	NSW	2478
5	Mumbulla Foundation	Bega	NSW	2550
6	Community Foundation for Central Victoria	Bendigo	VIC	3550
7	Tomorrow Today Foundation	Benalla	VIC	3672
8	The Southern Highlands Foundation	Bowral	NSW	2576
9	MCRAAG Community Foundation	Broadford	VIC	3658
10	Foundation Broken Hill	Broken Hill	NSW	2880
11	Upper Murray Innovation Foundation	Corryong	VIC	3707
12	Buderim Foundation	Cotton Tree	Qld	4558
13	Denmark Community Foundation	Denmark	WA	6333
14	Red Earth Community Foundation	Durong	Qld	4610
15	Geelong Community Foundation	Geelong	VIC	3220
16	Give Where You Live Foundation	Geelong	VIC	3220
17	Kinglake Ranges Foundation	Kinglake	VIC	3736
18	Mackay Community Foundation	Mackay	QLD	4740
19	Marysville and Triangle Community Foundation	Marysville	VIC	3799
20	Mornington Peninsula Foundation	Melbourne	VIC	3000
21	Mirboo North & District Community Foundation	Mirboo North	VIC	3871
22	Glenorchy Community Fund	Moonah	TAS	7009
23	Stand Like Stone	Mount Gambier	SA	5291
24	Into Our Hands Community Foundation	Myrtleford	VIC	3689
25	Barossa Region Community Foundation	Nuriootpa	SA	5355
26	Eyre Peninsula Community Foundation	Port Lincoln	SA	5606
27	Community Foundation for Tumut Region	Tumut	VIC	2720
28	Fleurieu Community Foundation	Victor Harbour	SA	5211
29	Lake Macquarie Foundation	Warners Bay	NSW	2282
30	South West Community Foundation	Warrnambool	VIC	3280
31	Bass Coast Community Foundation	Wonthaggi	VIC	3995

## Community Foundation sector snapshot



Data reflect status at 30 June 2018

Sources:

- o ACP 2019 Community Foundation Census
- o Additional information sourced from Community Foundations' Annual Information Statements published at [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)
- o Comparative data from 2014 ACP *Mapping the Community Foundation Sector* survey

## Re.: Promoting private investment in regional centres and regional infrastructure

Private investment includes philanthropic investment.

Community Foundations are excellent partners for philanthropic or multi-sector partnerships for investment in regional Australia. A Community Foundation has in-depth knowledge about local community needs, strong local networks with key stakeholders and is a trusted intermediary to foster local community engagement in development projects. Leveraging this knowledge and connections can mean the difference between a successful investment or not.

However, the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) system as it currently applies to Community Foundations creates a significant barrier to effective partnerships with other trusts and foundations:

- Most Community Foundations in Australia operate as Public Ancillary Funds (PuAF), which have DGR2 status. As such, Community Foundations are unable to receive funds from other Public Ancillary or Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs). This constrains their ability to partner with private philanthropists for community initiatives.
- Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs) have become a popular structure for private giving. By 2016/17, there were more than 1,600 PAFs in all states and territories with combined assets in the order of \$8 billion.<sup>3</sup> The PAF guidelines mandate that 5% of funds under management, or approximately \$400 million, be distributed each year to eligible charities. The DGR regime creates a structural impediment to accessing this important source of support for the benefit of regional communities.
- Australian Tax Office data highlights that most PAFs are registered in capital cities, often disconnected from grassroots community activity. Community Foundations are able to offer deep local knowledge and networks to connect philanthropic resources to local community priorities, helping to move investment and capital from the cities to the regions. To play this essential bridging role, they need DGR1 status. A change to the DGR rules to allow Community Foundations to contribute in this way will enable more strategic philanthropy to reach regional, rural and remote communities where it is much needed.
- Experience in the US, where Community Foundations receive substantial funds from the major private foundations to tackle issues in their local areas like homelessness, mental health, family violence or educational disadvantage shows that such cooperation helps to 'grow the pie' of philanthropic funding that reaches grassroots needs effectively.
- DGR2 status is not only problematic for receiving funds from private philanthropists wishing to invest in regional areas. It also creates difficulties for grant-making. As DGR2 entities, Community Foundations are allowed to distribute funds only to charities that have DGR1 endorsement. However, very few DGR1 charities operate in rural and regional communities while conversely, many local charitable organisations that have wide public benefit including sports clubs, schools,

---

<sup>3</sup> JBWere 'Support Report', 2018, pp15-16

homework clubs for disadvantaged students, or mobile laundry services for the homeless, do not have DGR1 endorsement. To support such worth-while local initiatives, Community Foundations have to work through intermediaries. One of these intermediaries is the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), which has been a valuable partner and proactive supporter of Community Foundations since its establishment in 2000. Similar mechanisms exist in other domains; for example the Australian Cultural Fund and Australian Sports Foundation allow culture and sports projects to receive tax- deductible charitable contributions.

- Most regional Community Foundations (and also Australian Community Philanthropy) have donations accounts with FRRR that provide a practical solution for working around current DGR restrictions, and we value our partnerships with FRRR. Nonetheless, working around a regulatory system that is not enabling incurs administrative overhead for Community Foundations that often have very limited administrative resources. (NB: 30% of CFs are entirely volunteer-led and have no staff; a further 25% have only one part-time staff member. The majority of these are regional foundations.) If the DGR restrictions were removed, it would free up Community Foundations and FRRR to collaborate and partner in more value-adding ways for the benefit of regional communities.

#### **Recommendation**

On behalf of Australia's regional Community Foundations, we seek support from the Select Committee on Regional Australia for making DGR1 endorsement available to Community Foundations to enable them to attract increasing private philanthropic investment to their local regions and communities, and to cut red tape and increase operational efficiency of grant-making in regional Australia.

## Re.: Consider other measures to support the ongoing growth and sustainability of regional Australia

The concept of Community Foundations is more than 100 years old. The Cleveland Foundation in Ohio, USA was the first known community foundation, established in 1914. Today, there are over 1,800 Community Foundations throughout the world.

Community Foundations are growing most rapidly in areas where people feel marginalised by global economic forces and wish to (re)build and strengthen civil society, having a say and participating actively in the development of the place they call home. Based on self-help, reciprocity, social cohesion and interdependence, the community foundation idea has a natural affinity with traditional liberal values. In Western democracies including the USA, Canada, the UK, Germany and Australia where the community foundation model has gained currency, these foundations are mainly found in regional communities outside capital cities. Community Foundations offer a social infrastructure model tailor-made for community engagement and development to build regional sustainability.

A strong network of Community Foundations will be an invaluable asset for connecting regional communities around Australia to resources, investment, capacity building and sustainability. Governments at all levels can help support the continuous strengthening, development and expansion of this network. A strong Community Foundations network is a resource and enabler to help improve outcomes on the ground from public, private and philanthropic funding directed to regional areas.

In Australia, Community Foundations are still an emerging sector. Some 90% (35 / 39) of these foundations (94% for regional CFs – 29/31) have been established since 2000 and are thus less than 20 years old. Data from overseas and from Australia's oldest CFs shows that community foundations require on average 25-35 years to mature to a point where they reach a self-sustaining 'virtuous cycle of growth'. The large majority of Australia's Community Foundations, especially in regional areas, are still building their capacity and momentum for growth. There is compelling evidence that an infrastructure support ecosystem can accelerate this development and assist Community Foundations get further faster.

The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), established in 2000 as a partnership between philanthropy and the Federal Government, has been a vital part of that support infrastructure system. FRRR has been a strong proponent of the community foundation sector. It has provided technical assistance, expert advice and resources to the sector and has through seed funding, matching and challenge grants supported the initiation and growth of a number of community foundations.

It is no accident that the majority of Community Foundations operating in Australia today were founded in the decade after 2000 with help from FRRR and others, including different levels of government, philanthropic supporters, Philanthropy Australia, and later Australian Community Philanthropy as the support organisation specifically dedicated to the community foundation sector.

There is compelling evidence from overseas, particularly from Canada and the UK, that a well resourced infrastructure support organisation is critical for the growth and success of Community Foundations.<sup>4</sup>

Governments across the country value and wish to support vibrant and sustainable communities in regional Australia. The presence of a vital and successful community foundation is a marker for a community being actively engaged in creating its own future, self-reliant and resilient in the face of adversity – whether in the form of drought, fire, or economic challenge.

While Australia's Community Foundation sector is proud that we are serving 8.5 million Australians across more than 120 Local Government Areas, there are still many locations – and people – that do not have access to their own community foundation.

We strongly believe that 'measures to support the ongoing growth and sustainability of regional Australia' should include

- investment in building the capacity of existing Community Foundations in regional Australia, and
- a commitment to assist the growth of new Community Foundations in places that would be able to support a Community Foundation but need a little help to get this off the ground.

This kind of support could be provided via ACP as a one-stop-shop for the sector, or directed at selected communities with ACP's help as expert support and coordinator.

ACP has identified, researched and quantified investments needed for a range of sector-wide capacity building projects, and support needed to help establish new Community Foundations in new LGAs. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss these with appropriate counterparts in Government.

### **Recommendation**

On behalf of Australia's regional Community Foundations, and on behalf of communities that do not currently have access to a local Community Foundation, we seek support from the Select Committee on Regional Australia for starting a structured dialogue with appropriate counterparts about Government investment towards these goals.

---

<sup>4</sup> WINGS-CF, *Unlocking philanthropy's potential. What funders can do to build strong philanthropy ecosystems*. 2018, p.3

## About Australian Community Philanthropy

Australian Community Philanthropy (ACP) was established in 2007 by and for Community Foundation practitioners as a network and support organisation for this sector.

ACP is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is registered as a charity with the ACNC. It is governed by a skills-based board of directors.

According to the objects in its Constitution, ACP exists to

1. build the capacity of Community Foundations in Australia
2. help create an optimal operating environment for the growth of Community Foundations in Australia
3. provide a focus point for the community foundation movement's interaction with external stakeholders  
*including government, donors, philanthropic sector peers, national and international organisations.*

**We stand ready to work with the Select Committee, its Chairman, Minister Seselja and other counterparts in Government, philanthropy and the private sector to progress the growth and capacity building of Community Foundations in Australia.**

We thank the Members of the Select Committee on Regional Australia for your consideration of this submission.

Australian Community Philanthropy  
Melbourne, November 2019

## APPENDIX

---

### SELECT REGIONAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION CASE STUDIES

# NORTHERN RIVERS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OR ISSUE THAT NEEDED A RESPONSE?

Each year NRCF's Community Grants Round attracts more and more requests for funding. This year requests for funding more than doubled, reaching over \$375,000.

With a Corpus of \$1,450,185 and other grant programs in operation, each year NRCF only has on average \$29,000 to give to the Community Grants Program.

In the recent past, thanks to partnerships with Yulgilbar Foundation and Portland House, NRCF has been able to increase grants to about \$110,000 per year. However there was still a huge gap to fill. We didn't want to wait until our Corpus grew to \$10 million; we needed action now.

## WHAT DID THE FOUNDATION DO?

We set about improving our Grants Assessment process so that it met best practice, in transparency and objectivity. We also started to work on how we could better identify needs in our region and be an advocate in our community. We then looked to promote our grantmaking services with newly formed private foundations or businesses across the region who were looking to have impact now.

But how were we to know where these Foundations and Businesses were? We formed a relationship with a financial services company who have a philanthropic services arm. As they met new clients with investment portfolios, they were also able to identify those who had philanthropic aspirations, and were able to talk about NRCF and what impact it was having in the region.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

About a year later, after growing the relationship and showing our knowledge and advocacy around need, we were invited by the financial services company to meet a newly formed private Foundation that had no experience in grantmaking or identifying need in our region.

We introduced our Community Foundation and presented a list of viable projects for funding from our recent Grants Round. That Private Foundation was amazed at the diversity of projects they could support that met their criteria, not to mention the small amount of work it would take at their end to reach their granting goals.

This year NRCF will attract over \$200,000 in funding and we are well on our way to bridging the gap.

## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

A financial services company

A private foundation

A community foundation

Our community of donors and partners who vouch for our authenticity and professionalism

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

We believe collaboration is key for reaching our goals of meeting the needs of our community both now and in the future.

Whilst our focus is on building our corpus we realise we must also address not only the growing needs in our region, but also the diversity of donors out there. Some of them look for impact now, and our Grants Round helps them see where the needs are and what they can do to help.

But how do we keep at the forefront of peoples' minds when determining where and how to donate? We have to be part of the conversation when people are talking about the flow of money. We have to be represented by those in a position of authority & credibility, who can advocate for our Foundation and in turn advocate for the needs of our community.

## ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

Heartfelt thanks to all the advice from other Community Foundations & ACP - without their support we would never have got this far in such a short time.



# DENMARK (WA)

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OR ISSUE THAT NEEDED A RESPONSE?

Community groups and individuals in country towns often have difficulty accessing small grants to assist with getting projects or events realised. Denmark WA is no different and with over 100 local community groups, grants are hard to come by, with major organisations and better established entities often absorbing sparse community funds. The Denmark Community Foundation (DCF) Board decided to address this situation by offering easy-to-access community grants to smaller, struggling community groups and their volunteers and developing a "Leaving a Legacy" program to encourage local giving. Each year DCF runs a community grants round and has been successful in distributing over \$80,000 over the past 7 years.

### WHAT DID THE FOUNDATION DO?

Denmark Community Foundation essentially acts as a community initiative enabler by accepting, managing and then redistributing those funds back to the community.

One leadership initiative is the Foundation's newly launched "Leaving a Legacy" Program, whereby making a bequest in a will or giving whilst living can make a lasting difference to the Denmark community. We encourage people to keep the Foundation in mind when thinking about contributing directly to the future of their community and making that difference necessary in building a healthy corpus for local growth and happiness.

Our Foundation does what no other organisation can in Denmark WA.

### WHAT HAPPENED?

Community funds are distributed more evenly throughout the community each year with groups like:

- \* Riding for the Disabled - Denmark (Horsepower) being funded for a mobile mounting unit to assist disabled riders and supporting volunteers to mount their horses.
  - \* Weavers for Waste WOW) - a program where disabled young people use the ancient practice of hand weaving to transform recycled fabrics into unique rugs for floor or wall. Experienced and practicing volunteers encourage the weavers to produce works for exhibition and possibly purchase.
  - \* Amaroo Retirement Village recreation club members were able to purchase craft materials and equipment to assist seniors to become socially and physically active in the place where they live.
  - \* Denmark Baroque Inc. were able to hire the services of professional musicians and choral experts to train local vocalists up for a recent major recital, which was successfully performed last month.
  - \* Denmark High School performing arts students produced the production Happy Days this year assisted by DCF funding which enabled 90 students to participate in various creative ways towards and in the production.
- These are just some of the outcomes the Foundation's grants have produced with many other diverse, small projects and events in the last few years.

### WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Members and directors of Denmark Community Foundation and community representatives from many community groups were all involved in ensuring the granting was fairly adjudicated and grants made to those who most needed the funds to continue their important work.

All associated with the Foundation are volunteers, providing an equitable and accessible organisation, which seeks to improve and maintain the health and well being of the Denmark community through mindful giving fueled by local donations and gifts and a not-for-profit, philanthropic operating structure .

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

So many small community groups find it difficult merely running their clubs and associations, often spending much time getting committee members, let alone skilled people to assist in grant application writing.

The Denmark Community Foundation runs on the premise that by encouraging locals to donate to the Foundation, funds stay in town and go directly to local endeavours, rather than attempting to compete with bigger, better funded entities who often suck the 'oxygen', even at lower levels, from existing granting opportunities.

DCF embodies the "give where you live" mantra and has maintained its slogan " Prosperity Through Kindness" for 13 years now.



# RED EARTH

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OR ISSUE THAT NEEDED A RESPONSE?

Red Earth Community Foundation's "Community Leadership Program" responds to supporting individuals within rural and regional communities build confidence, capabilities and networks within their communities to lead themselves and others to prosperity and resilience.

### WHAT DID THE FOUNDATION DO?

Red Earth facilitates an annual community leadership program in the Bunya Mountains.

Red Earth in partnership with leadership training entities and the South and North Burnett communities hosts a facilitated program split over 2 separate periods.

Sponsors along with local businesses are invited to either financially support or pay for a staff member to attend as part of their in-house training.

Since its inception 6 years ago, over 120 participants have completed the program.

### WHAT HAPPENED?

The Alumni take their learnings and newly formed networks back to their community, family, business or region and more confidently contribute to strategic issues and challenges faced.

Numerous Alumni are contributing to strategic conversations about the future of their communities, businesses, industry and government policies that shape rural and regional Australia. Many have started new businesses that are taking advantage of niche markets.

### WHO WAS INVOLVED?

The Board of Red Earth Community Foundation, Vision 21, the alumni of the Australian Rural Leadership Program, numerous community organisations that sponsor and/or pay for staff to attend, local government, FRRR, and many other individuals who support the long term capabilities of the South and North Burnett.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Rural and regional Australia's current and future prosperity relies on resilient and innovative individuals contributing and taking opportunities at every level. Without confident and capable people engaged at all levels rural and regional areas like the South and North Burnett become stagnant.



# EYRE PENINSULA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OR ISSUE THAT NEEDED A RESPONSE?

Several years ago, a local resident nursed his wife at home following a diagnosis of cancer. He greatly appreciated the service provided by the Palliative Care nurses from the Community Health Service. However, after hours he found it difficult to cope and realised there was a need for in-home assistance to be available during the night, on weekends and holidays on the Eyre Peninsula.

## WHAT DID THE FOUNDATION DO?

The Eyre Peninsula Community Foundation (EPCF) at that time decided to establish a Home Hospice Fund to pay for nurses to be available free of charge to patients and their families after hours. The Charity Bookshop, Eyre Peninsula Book Bazaar, was established to provide some funding and this has now been operating very successfully for six years by a volunteer management team and 30+ volunteers. Donations are also received from private donors, community service organisations and the local community banks.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

After an 18-month trial period during which many operational issues were identified and resolved, the service became permanently available from February 2017 when Matthew Flinders Homes agreed to take responsibility for providing front line clinical services. The EPCF continues to fund these services.

This is the first, and still the only, service of its kind in South Australia. In fact, this is a unique collaboration involving separate partnerships between our charity (the EPCF), the service provider (MFH) and a state government agency (Community Health Service) to ensure the objectives of the home hospice service are achieved.

The Home Hospice service is currently averaging around three patients per month and in fact was so popular at one stage that the Community Health Service ran short of beds to provide to patients staying at home. The EPCF donated a new bed to the palliative care team for use where needed outside the hospital.

## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Mike Leech and Liz Penfold (EPCF Director 2012 to 2014) were instrumental in establishing the trial and the Eyre Peninsula Community Foundation and Matthew Flinders Homes are proud to have been able to take the next step to a permanent service.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The Eyre Peninsula Community Foundation board responding to a need in the community, and the community continuing to support this need on an ongoing basis with continued donations.

This is the first, and still the only, service of its kind in South Australia. In fact, this is a unique collaboration involving separate partnerships between our charity (the EPCF), the service provider (MFH) and a state government agency (Community Health Service) to ensure the objectives of the home hospice service are achieved.



# MACKAY

# COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OR ISSUE THAT NEEDED A RESPONSE?

Our Mackay Women's Service (MWS) and in particular the Domestic Violence Resource Service (DVRS) had 400 young people (victims of DV/Family separation) needing counselling assistance and had only funding to support 100.

Our attention was brought to the fact that 300 young people were at risk of the spiral into substance abuse, juvenile offending, homelessness, disconnection and potential self-harm if we weren't able to find support to meet that need. Those statistics in our small community were horrendous.

## WHAT DID THE FOUNDATION DO?

We discussed and agreed that an opportunity existed to make a major impact on the issue were we to partner with the Sunrise Rotary Club who organise the annual Mackay Region Mayors Charity Ball - a fundraiser the proceeds of which are distributed to charities and services supporting community needs in the region. We committed \$50,000 from our annual grant allocation to be pooled with the funds raised at the Ball which was then provided to the MWS for the DVRS counsellors.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Those combined funds equaled \$120,000 which enabled much needed counselling staff to be employed full-time for 12 months. Within the first few weeks of the additional staff being provided an extra 11 families and 17 of their children had been provided with support and Counsellors are fully engaged with young clients who are embracing the support. Reports from school on the positive behavioural changes being demonstrated by 3 siblings who had been traumatised by witnessing severe ongoing physical abuse of their mother are a demonstration of the results of the supported counselling. Their school results have improved markedly and they are actively engaging and enjoying the sibling sessions conducted by the service.

## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Mackay Women's Service, Mackay Sunrise Rotary Club, Mackay Community Foundation, Mayor Greg Williamson (also a Director on the Mackay Community Foundation Board).

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Research shows that young victims (children and teens) of domestic violence are at increased risk of engaging in substance abuse, juvenile offending, homelessness, disconnection and potential self-harm, if we weren't able to find support to meet that need. Those statistics in our small community are horrendous.

## ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

The outcomes for those young people continue to improve, supported by the Mackay Community Foundation, Rotary and Mackay Regional Council and most certainly under the Directorship of Dr Anne Butcher, Executive Director of the Mackay Women's Services, a wonderful advocate for ensuring equity in service provision for all those impacted by domestic violence. It has been our privilege to be able to make a difference.



# GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE FOUNDATION

## WHAT WAS THE SITUATION OR ISSUE THAT NEEDED A RESPONSE?

Food insecurity is an issue that has plagued the Geelong region. Historically our Foundation has supported this issue only through grants and while it appeared many were working on the issue, little was known about that work. As a result in 2014, the Foundation undertook the first needs assessment of food assistance in the region. This resulted in the publication of the Food for Thought Report. The 2014 report provided an overview of the system (e.g. number of programs and organisations, kinds of assistance provided, resources use by the system), the food (e.g. where food was sourced from, availability of different kinds of food, volume of food distributed) and the users of the system (e.g. gender, family type). The report also identified a number of recommendations related to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

## WHAT DID THE FOUNDATION DO?

As part of our response to the issues highlighted in the 2014 Report, GWYL Foundation helped establish and continues to support the Geelong Food Assistance Network (GFAN). This Network brings together all the organisations in the region (big and small) which provide food assistance. Members of the Network meet 3-4 times a year to network, share resources and information. The Network also works to identify challenges facing the system and potential solutions to those challenges.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Since 2014 the Foundation has continued to support GFAN and the implementation of solutions to issues identified by the GFAN.

For example highlighted by the 2014 report was the volunteer nature of the food assistance system workforce. The GFAN identified that many smaller organisations lacked appropriate policies and procedures related to managing volunteers. The Foundation was able to provide a small grant to our local volunteer centre to work with GFAN to develop a volunteer manual and policy template for food assistance organisations and to provide free training on volunteer management for the members to build their capacity.

In 2017 the Foundation undertook a second Food for Thought Report. Data from this report suggested that there was a gap in the system – that the need for food assistance was high around the Christmas/ New Year Holidays, but that the bulk of the system was closed during this time period. The Foundation worked with GFAN members to collect information about organisational openings and closings during December and January and created a flyer that could be used with clients to assist them in both preparing for closures and identifying where assistance could be accessed during this time.

## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

The Foundation has worked with local council, and over 60 organisations that deliver some form of food assistance. These food assistance organisations ranged from schools, to community organisations, to religious institutions.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Access to food is a fundamental human right. There is no clear government ownership of this issue, which means that the community must pick up the pieces. Many of these organisations are small, lack significant resources and are volunteer led and staffed. Providing an opportunity for these organisations to see themselves as part of a larger system, to share information and resources and to identify and solve challenges together has supported more efficient and effective delivery of food assistance in the region.

## ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

To date the GFAN has focused on food assistance delivery. Increasingly the Network is recognising that while this meets the immediate need this is not actually solving the problem or dealing with the root causes of food insecurity. This change in understanding was highlighted when the Network reviewed its terms of reference earlier this year and added a statement about advocacy.

