

# YOU *Thrive*

## VICTORIA

A legacy of Helen Macpherson Smith

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022







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# YOU *Thrive*

## VICTORIA

A legacy of Helen Macpherson Smith

## PURPOSE

To strengthen rural communities and support young people to be leaders.

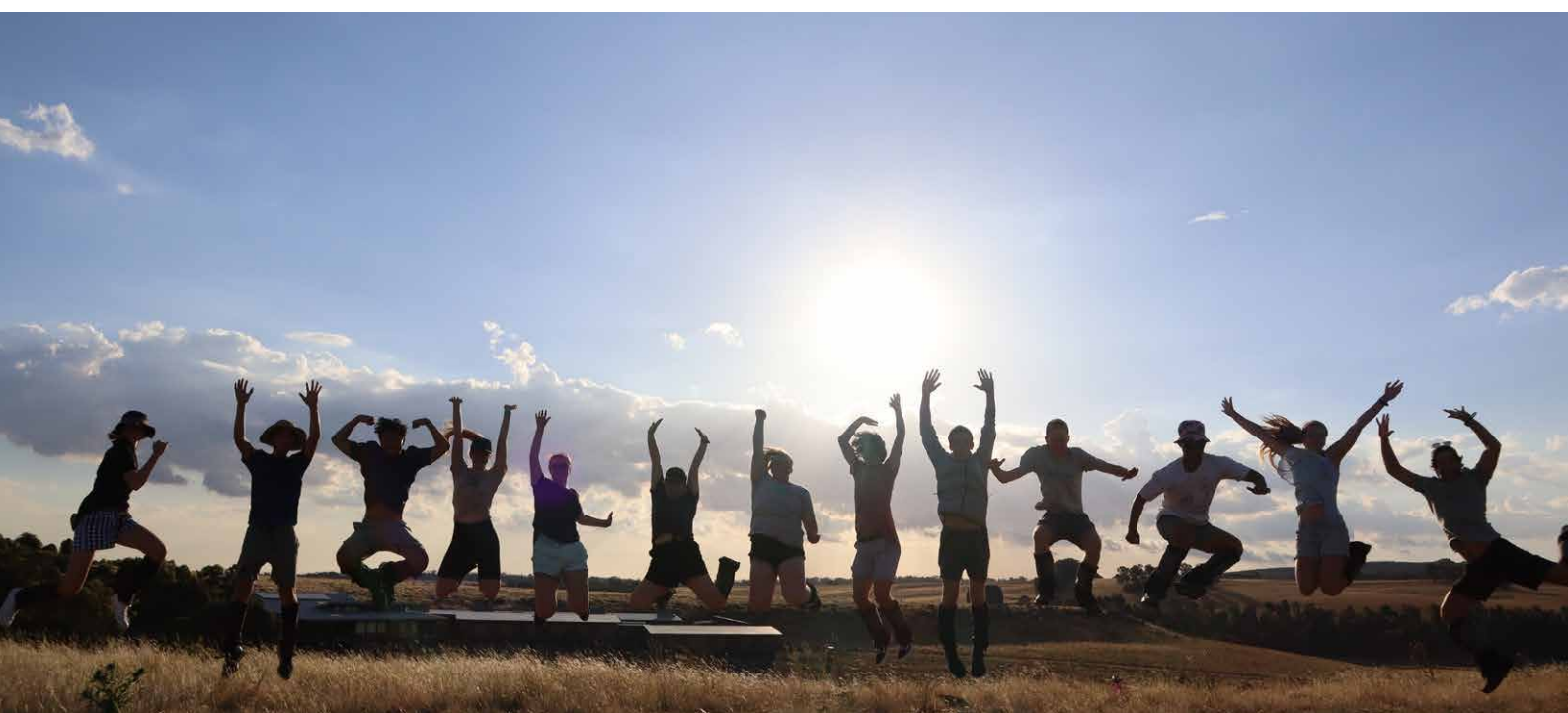
## VISION

Victoria's rural and regional communities will be thriving, with strong input from skilled, resilient and motivated young people.

## MISSION

We will collaborate with partners, donors, communities and alumni in delivering services to young rural Victorians that assist them to develop their personal, professional and leadership capacities.







# CHAIR'S REPORT



We are proud to have continued our important work in strengthening rural communities by supporting young people to be leaders. This past year has been as challenging for us as it has been for our young people, and their communities, and collectively our resilience has been critical to our ongoing success.

Our young people are integral to our progress with their ideas and initiative to meet the ever-changing needs of their cohort in times not previously experienced by any of our communities. Many young people in rural Victoria are experiencing difficulties they cannot solve alone, especially as they consider their educational options beyond secondary school.

The changing needs of our young people, and the restrictions the pandemic placed on their lives, hastened the next phase of development of our web-based initiative, the Rural Youth Network (RYN), an idea developed by our young people. Though a web-based tool, the implementation and promotion of the RYN has required a coordinator and five rural engagement leaders visiting rural schools and communities throughout Victoria. The visits and solutions developed by the team have been enthusiastically embraced by the participants. The expansion of the RYN is a major focus for additional funding in the year ahead due to the positive impact it can have upon the mental health, connection to others and resilience of our young people.

Our programs and services continue to adapt to meet the needs of the young people and the changing conditions for delivery due to the pandemic.

Our leadership program was able to operate between lockdowns and received positive feedback from participants. Our mentoring programs were provided to our seven new university scholarship holders and 14 vocational recipients alongside a larger number of young people studying at University or TAFE colleges. Branch Out mentoring for year 11 and 12 students supports their commitment to be their

best in these critical years and has expanded due to demand from other schools.

Our services have never been more important to overcome the challenges of our rural young people to extend their education and development through secondary school and into tertiary studies.

We are thankful for the financial support provided by the Helen McPherson Smith Trust, H&L Hecht Trust, Freemasons Foundation Victoria, Colliers Charitable Fund, VicHealth, Office for Youth Engagement and our scholarship supporters.

Mandy Hutchinson joined our Board in early 2022 adding a breadth of experience from a variety of leadership roles in her professional life and community commitments in Cohuna and North-western Victoria.

Dr Maryann Brown continued her outstanding work as our CEO, committed to our young people and their communities. Maryann is forever optimistic and energised by the young people she leads so expertly, gathering their ideas to create viable solutions for their cohorts.

After suffering from poor health for an extended period our Board colleague Tim Weight died on December 27, 2021. Tim brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to our Board and is sorely missed. We were able to convey our gratitude for his contribution on the Board to his family at his memorial service and our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Our support for our rural young people to successfully navigate their education pathways with information, guidance from their peers and new connections is crucial for them and their communities to thrive. Though challenged by the past two years we look forward optimistically to the year ahead.

**Bruce Anderson,**  
Chair - The Rural Foundation

# CEO'S REPORT



The pandemic years brought change and challenge for all of us. We were truly fortunate to be able to run our July 2021 and January 2022 Young Rural Leadership programs; some Dream Seeds visits; some alumni and mentoring activities and many online engagement activities. We did, however, see a general 'Covid fatigue' creep in, particularly for young people who were missing rites of passage and opportunities to socialise and connect. We held a debriefing meeting in Melbourne where Alumni shared their experiences of the past two plus years. The outcome provided a powerful and poignant insight into the lived experience of young people. Here are some key findings:

- *"Covid took something away from me – missed experiences, routine plans and progress in key areas."*
- *"Covid gave me something – time to stop, consider what matters, revisit old hobbies"*
- Social fatigue and self-dependence – committing late or not turning up, lacking motivation for reviving previous social activities; less connection to community; didn't want to deal with drama; and
- Fear of engagement and illness – lack of confidence plans can be carried out, is it worth getting sick, media saturation.

A common experience of ours was the feeling of loss associated with Covid years- from missed experiences, to losing routine, to stalled progress (in a course, career, relationship). This loss could lead to resentment or anger, as it seemed to be a very real feeling of being robbed of something belonging or deserved.

After so many plans over the course of 2020 and 2021 were cancelled it is inevitable that many of us have developed a lack of trust that plans can always be carried out.

The rollout of the Rural Youth Network (RYN) is a strategic priority and a key driver to building connections and helping build resilience and wellbeing of young people. Our interactions with key state Government stakeholders and potential partners have been very positive. This is particularly relevant in growing our scholarship base and the reach of the RYN.

We were fortunate to receive funding from the H & L Hecht Trust and VicHealth to support our RYN activities through the employment of five enthusiastic young RYN Engagement Leaders in early 2022. Along with the inherent requirements of their roles, they have also shown advocacy for the RYN and You thrive while actively contributing and engaging with external parties and potential supporters to help better our reach into new areas. They are keen to learn and are actively making connections and growing the RYN across the state.

A grant from the Collier Charitable Foundation provided funding for the employment of our first RYN Coordinator. We have ambitious plans to recruit 1000 young people to the RYN per year and with the right people in place we continue to aim high.

2022 saw us welcoming seven new university scholars and thirteen Rural Chances scholars and we look forward to sharing their progress in the years ahead. Scholarships are funded mainly by private donors and trusts, and we deeply appreciate the generosity of all donors and supporters.

We received grant funding from the Freemasons Foundation Victoria, to build our internal fundraising capacity and this provided a range of opportunities for us to learn from and implement. We also received our first Office for Youth, Engage! Grant which is supporting elements of several of our programs.





Overall, the past year has been productive and interesting, but has reminded us all that community and connection matters. The cornerstones of what we aim to achieve in expanding rural networks and empowering young rural Victorians to follow their dreams is more critical than ever. We are so grateful to our supporters in making this happen.

Thanks also to the steadfastness of our Alumni members, our small and hard-working team of staff, and our numerous volunteers for contributing in so many significant ways. Also, my personal thanks to our Directors for their strong governance and support during another year which has brought with it more unique challenges, but also more opportunities for us to shine.

**Dr Maryann Brown,**  
CEO - Youthrive Victoria







# ALUMNI REPORT

The second half of 2021 saw Covid-19 lockdowns and disruptions to our Alumni events calendar. We had to overcome several challenges, coming in and out of lockdowns and having to spontaneously postpone or cancel events. Our team rose to these challenges and planned some online and in-person events where possible. We hosted online Story Circles with fantastic guest speakers Thenu Herath, Anna Tambien, Bree-Anna Cummins, and Jacob Chacko; online game nights; and cooking challenges to keep our alumni engaged.

We also managed to host some valuable in-person activities including the Barra Nyannee Goopma (Wathaurong for ‘think, do’) Leadership Weekend at Narmbool.

One of our inaugural 2011 Scholars, Rachel Tharratt, shared her story about working in media/communications for Members of State and Federal parliament. Nick Richardson, Chief Storyteller for Philanthropy Australia, spoke to approximately 40 Alumni about working with media, telling your story and relationship building.

The 2022 Alumni Committee had six new members representing our 500 strong Alumni: Sophie Fontaine and Escher Russell (Co-Presidents) and committee members Kitty Robinson, Charlotte Robinson, Aidan Goode, and Amy Zuell. A big thanks to Sam McColl for his leadership as President in 2021, and to all our dedicated past committee members for creating a great online events calendar to keep alumni connected throughout Covid-19 lockdowns.

The new year saw possibilities emerging again for re-establishing a calendar of events, as Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed. February 2022, we kicked off with a picnic in Melbourne’s Carlton Gardens and our first ever, Rural Youth Network barefoot bowls community event, at Charlton Bowls Club.

In March, we held the long awaited You thrive Ball at the Creswick Neighbourhood Centre, with 70 tickets sold. It was wonderful to be able to meet in person and entertainment was provided by Alumna, and emerging pop musician, Kitty Rae! We also organised a Scavenger Hunt in Melbourne which provided new alumni a chance to explore the city – and to connect and meet with past alumni at a dinner held after the event.

The You thrive team and alumni collaborated with the Hepburn Shire youth team and young Creswick locals to host the You thrive Stage and youth program at Cresfest – a local folk music festival. Our stage featured young rural artists and other fun activities, as well as an opportunity for the team to reach out to community members and promote the Rural Youth Network.

Other activities included alumni rural dinners hosted in Warragul in May and Wangaratta in June. All alumni events contribute to building connections between young rural people.

In June, the “Careers, Aspirations and Planning” night at CityCite with a panel of guest speakers was well attended. A design competition was also held to create You thrive artwork to go onto rurally sourced merchandise available for purchase. The award-winning design by Alumna and contemporary Indigenous artist Chloe Jones, will be used on You thrive Alumni clothing.





Alumni also played a significant role at events in our Rural Youth Network, as well as supported other community-based events including the Western Victoria Careers Expo, and YACVic's "Reshape Our Future" event.

Thanks to all alumni who got involved, volunteered at events, and helped create networks despite the challenging circumstances.

**Escher Russell & Sophie Fontaine,**  
Alumni Committee Co-Presidents 2022





# UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS 2022



**Connor Pall**

Conor grew up in Mildura and was the Vice-Captain of Mildura Senior College in 2021.

As part of this role, he enjoyed working with other students with differing demographics, cultures, and races to build a strong and vibrant college community.

Conor is the first member of his family to attend university and is studying a Bachelor of Social Work. He was a member of the Mildura Youth Parliament team for 2021, and organised Mildura's School 'Strike4Climate' in May 2021.

Growing up in Mildura, he has a strong sense of community and a desire to advocate for social change to improve the lives of rural and regional Victorians - more specifically the youth of regional Victoria - and has a passion for human rights.



**Chloe Jones**

Chloe is a young Aboriginal Yorta Yorta woman and former Mooroopna College student.

Through participating in the Ganbina leadership program, Chloe has developed exceptional leadership skills.

Passionate about celebrating, sharing and preserving Indigenous Australian culture and contemporary Indigenous art, Chloe currently operates a small business providing educational services within her community that cater to a range of age groups.

Chloe is studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Monash University. She hopes that she can use her studies to continue supporting Indigenous youth by assisting them in gaining access to skills development, education opportunities, and building their confidence to be great leaders within their communities.



**Jasmine Van Der Molen**

Jasmine van der Molen attended Woodmans Hill College in Ballarat.

Jasmine is a well-respected role model for her peers and is a capable student.

She balanced study and school commitments with part time work and significant responsibilities within her family. Jasmine is undertaking a Bachelor of Business majoring in events management and would like to develop a career around music and management.

For her outstanding leadership and commitment to rural and regional communities, Jasmine Van Der Molen was awarded a 2022 You thrive Victoria University Scholarship, funded by the Glenys McIvor Trust.



*“These scholarships are genuinely life changing”*

**John (2022)**



**John Nghiem**

John grew up in Mildura and is studying a Bachelor of Science/ Master of Teaching (Secondary) at Deakin University, Burwood.

He is an avid learner and has a positive influence amongst his peers. He was the School Captain in Year 12 at Mildura Senior College and was extensively involved in the Student Representative Council and in all aspects of the community.

John is self-driven and self-directed and juggles many commitments, school, sport, friends and family. John believes that teachers have the job to shape future generations. His goal is to become a great teacher and role model who inspires others and motivates them to reach their full potential.

John has been a very involved in many You thrive Alumni events.



**Sarsha Layton**

Sarsha is a VCE graduate of Maryborough Education Centre and in 2022 and is studying nursing at Deakin University.

She is a resilient and empathetic community leader who inspires others.

Sarsha demonstrated strong leadership skills in variety of roles throughout her time at Maryborough Education Centre as SRC President and House leader.

Enthusiastic about creating long lasting community connections, Sarsha hopes to use her experience to mentor young rural people, inspiring them to pursue their educational dreams.



**Victoria Biggs**

Victoria completed her VCE studies at East Loddon College and is studying a Bachelor of Science in Biomedicine at Melbourne University.

She is a hardworking and resilient community leader who has demonstrated strong leadership skills in a variety of roles throughout her school life. Victoria continues to value community and social connections that have come from these volunteering experiences.

Victoria is passionate about community connection and when she has completed her studies, she plans to work in rural Victoria with a vision of creating greater access to healthcare services for rural people and their families.







Rural Chances Vocational Scholarships continue to provide financial and mentoring support to young people wanting to study, train or undertake apprenticeships, from across rural Victoria. In 2022, we welcomed 13 impressive young people, who are now undertaking training in a diverse range of courses, all of which will be useful in rural communities.

*“Words can’t describe how much this scholarship has helped me. Without it I wouldn’t have been able to even pursue my course and dream passion.*

*Youthrive is such an amazing network of amazing people!”*

**Dylan (2022)**

**Tarneisha Ryan**

Bonshaw | Early Childhood

**Taylah Clements**

Leitchville | Community Services

**Jake Beggs**

Katunga | Welding Fabrication

**Zoe Smith**

Corowa | Nursing

**Sydnei Wright**

Moama | Nursing

**Amber Zuidema**

Yanakie | Baking

**Shayla Carlson**

Bass | Animal Studies

**Gillian Jessup**

Warragul | Early Learning

**Dylan Watson**

Elliminyt | Photography

**Georgie Simpson**

Scarsdale | Animal and Pet Grooming

**Karly Robinson**

Nursing

**Sophia Stirling**

Swan Hill | Mental Health

**Deon Croft**

Stawell | Hairdressing





# YOUNG RURAL LEADERS PROGRAM

With the support of our donors, each year we run two Youthrive Young Rural Leaders Programs aimed at young people aged 18-22 from rural Victoria.

The six-day residential program is a great opportunity to meet new young people, learn new skills, and be challenged to excel and thrive. It is designed for, and by young rural Victorians and aims to build confidence, develop leadership skills, and foster leadership capacity, as well as build a network of young leaders in rural and regional Victoria. The program is designed on the key pillars of Sustainable Me (wellbeing); Sustainable Community and Sustainable Environment.

The July 2021 Young Rural Leaders Program had 26 young rural participants and coaches at Narmbool. The feedback received from both the participants and the coaches was very positive, with 87.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the content of the program “had developed their leadership skills and knowledge”. Another highlight included the presentation of a piece of artwork co-created by dozens of Youthrive Alumni to Robin Ferry the previous owner of Narmbool, and Sovereign Hill CEO Sara Quon. We also continued our connection with the older generation via our Intergenerational Morning Tea session.

Fortunately, we were able to deliver the January 2022 program as planned, with additional Covid-19 precautions. We welcomed 18 new young people from across Victoria to the alumni group and look forward to learning from them in the future.

We received very positive feedback from the participants and coaching team alike. The collaborative and safe environment created, along with newly formed connections, were common themes in the feedback. These reflections continue to highlight the success of the program and the positive impact it is having on upcoming leaders across Victoria.

Within a changing post-Covid-19 environment, and after 11 years of delivering this life changing program, a major review was conducted. The review took place in Melbourne with 8 of the participants joining on Zoom (including two in Thailand and one in the Netherlands!). The review was led by CEO Maryann Brown and explored the strengths and challenges of the existing model. Key future considerations included finding more ways to directly engage and support young rural Victorians and the development of a condensed program which could potentially be delivered multiple times throughout the year. The magnificent input of alumni program leaders and coaches, and the pathway from participant to alumni member, coach and potentially program manager, remain key highlights of our program.





# THE YOUTH RURAL NETWORK

The Rural Youth Network (RYN) provides a life-changing way for rural young people to connect with each other and highlights possibilities they may not be unaware of.

This initiative has continued to develop well with extensive positive engagement and interest, despite the challenges post-lockdown.

The RYN is not only about providing opportunities to rural young people for their careers or study, but it encourages connecting with their community and fosters linkages between young people across Victoria. It's also about having fun.

In 2021, the RYN website was developed with a grant from the H&L Hecht Trust. A large group of staff and Alumni also contributed to its development. Alumni members, Finn Poxon and Bree-Anna Cummins were employed to work on the RYN and developed various online events and activities including the 'Spring Fling', an online talent contest and showcase.

In 2022, Charlie Bracey was appointed RYN Program Coordinator, thanks to a grant from the Collier Charitable Foundation, working to support and upskill our Engagement Leaders. It allowed the expansion of the Branch Out Mentoring program, which now sits under RYN, and assist with the continued growth and development of the RYN.

Post-Covid-19 lockdowns, we were able to create or contribute to community-wide events. This included hosting a barefoot bowls competition and live music evening in Charlton in February with major partner North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NCLLEN), a pop-up drive-in theatre in Mortlake, as well as hosting the youth stage at the Cresfest music festival in April.

Additional funding from VicHealth Big Connect grant and Victorian Government Engage! grant in 2022, ensured the appointment of RYN Engagement Leaders, Jarrod Stephens from Bairnsdale covering East Gippsland; Stephanie Hartshorn from Swan Hill covering Northwest Victoria; Courtney Casey from Maryborough covering Central Goldfields region and Ella Jacobsen from Seymour covering Northeast Victoria. The growing team of Engagement Leaders have been connecting with rural communities at a variety of events, where they have successfully shared the network with young rural people, community members and potential supporters. The Engagement Leaders are deeply passionate about this initiative and are paving the way to great success.

We attended the Western Victorian Careers Expo in Horsham and a regional YACVic youth forum on "Reshaping Our Future" in Robinvale and Bairnsdale in June 2022. Stephanie was invited as a guest speaker to share her personal story and experience of RYN and her leadership experiences, and Conor Pall, Youthrive Scholar, and recipient of the 2022 Young Achiever Award, spoke about "Connecting Communities". The RYN and team of Engagement Leaders have connected with over 650 young people through events and school presentations since the start of 2022. Our Engagement Leaders also worked hard to upload and promote different events and opportunities in their areas to share with young people signing up to the RYN. With the addition of our Brand Style Guide and a social media strategy devised by Kitty Robinson, key social media channels were successfully launched. The RYN is set for growth. Tameka Lougoon was employed to work with the web developer to help improve the user experience and ensure smooth operation of the website.

We are very excited about the achievements of the Rural Youth Network this year and we are looking forward to seeing it evolve and develop in the years ahead.





# MENTORING

## Transition and Career Mentoring

The You thrive post-school mentoring program progressed well in the latter half of 2021 during what can only be described as an incredibly challenging time. We received updates from mentoring pairs and were impressed with the resilience they have shown alongside the creative ways they have continued to stay in touch and support each other throughout this period.

The 2021 mentoring group was the biggest to date, with 55 mentoring pairs.

Post-pandemic fatigue, and the fact that many students were still in the throes of online learning, saw a slow start to engaging new mentors and mentees in 2022. However, with dedication, persistence, and an adaptive approach we have continued to build capacity.

We looked to provide more group mentoring opportunities based on common interests or

university locations, to foster greater support networks and create further opportunities in a supportive environment. This has been achieved through relationship building with university groups.

It is great to have ongoing input and insights from our young leaders towards future program development. In addition to supporting individual mentees, university groups offered transition/study/ social support to any young rural person seeking connections at Melbourne University, RMIT, LaTrobe Bundoora, Deakin Geelong and Burwood, and Swinburne University. Leaders were encouraged to invite any young rural people seeking support at their university to sign up through the You thrive Victoria website and Rural Youth Network.

***“Mentoring support was helpful as my mentor was working in a similar field to the one I want to enter”***

– 2022 Scholar

## Branch Out Mentoring

Branch Out Mentoring was developed by our Alumni to support students in year 11 and 12 as they transition out of school to study, training, or employment pathways.

The Branch Out Mentoring team enjoyed developing connections with rural Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) students in Gippsland, northeast, northwest, and central Victorian regions. Throughout the year, the team was busy establishing a different type of mentoring program suited to schools specifically in a post-Covid-19 climate. One of the core strengths of this program is that our mentors are usually aligned with the school or region they mentor in. They aim to create connections, awareness of opportunities, build confidence and aspirations for young rural people during what is a very important time for them to consider life beyond school.

Currently Branch Out is funded partly by an Engage! grant from the Office for Youth, a VicHealth Big Connect grant, and a William Angliss

Charitable Fund grant, with considerable targets to grow the program and build engagement.

The Branch Out mentoring program is now part of the Rural Youth Network. RYN Engagement Leaders hosted a mentoring group in one specific school relevant to them and oversaw the development of groups in other schools. Our Branch Out Mentors met with eight schools to encourage them to get involved with the program at a school-level to further assist students explore new avenues beyond high school. In 2021, we welcomed Warrnambool College and Terang College to our mentoring community, and Branch Out was introduced in 2022 at Kerang Technical School, Orbost Secondary College, Beechworth Secondary College, Yea High School, Mildura Senior College and St Mary Mackillop College, Swan Hill.

***“I’ve been kind of worried for ages that I would just finish year 12 and have no idea what to do about anything but I think Branch Out Mentoring has helped me to figure out what to do after school.”***

– 2022 Participant









DREAM  
SEEDS®

DREAM SEEDS®

As Covid-19 restrictions lifted toward the end of 2021, our Dream Seeds team launched into action, delivering several successful workshops across rural Victoria in December.

The first visit was to Cathedral College in Wangaratta, where seven presenters delivered two workshops to 60 students.

The next Dream Seeds trip was funded by North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN). Through that funding, six program presenters delivered workshops to 133 students in five schools across North Central Victoria.

The appointment of Ella Jacobsen as the Co-ordinator of the Dream Seeds Program, assisted by Evana Miesen and Michaela Humphries and a committee of 12 Alumni members, helped us get off to a great start in 2022.

The first Dream Seeds trip for 2022 was held in June, funded by a community grant from the Rural City of Wangaratta. Five further workshops were delivered across seven schools engaging 150 students in years 5 and 6.

The Dream Seeds team joined forces with the Rural Youth Network (RYN) to speak to 30 of Beechworth's VCE students, raising awareness about the RYN website, scholarships available through Youthrive and Branch Out Mentoring.

While the number of in-person workshops was impacted by Covid-19, the "Dream Team" were still able to deliver 12 workshops and reach 343 rural students with the support of 20 presenters. To date, Dream Seeds has provided workshops across the state to 1964 students, across 82 schools and efforts continue to promote key resources on the website and social media channels.

## Student Feedback

*"[I learnt] how we can make a difference and about finding my favourite values"*

*"I learnt about being persistent and never giving up"*

*"Dream Seeds® made me more confident to talk to others"*





# OUR REACH

Bacchus Marsh  
Bairndale  
Ballarat  
Bass  
Bears Lagoon  
Benalla  
Bendigo  
Birchip  
Bonshaw  
Caramut

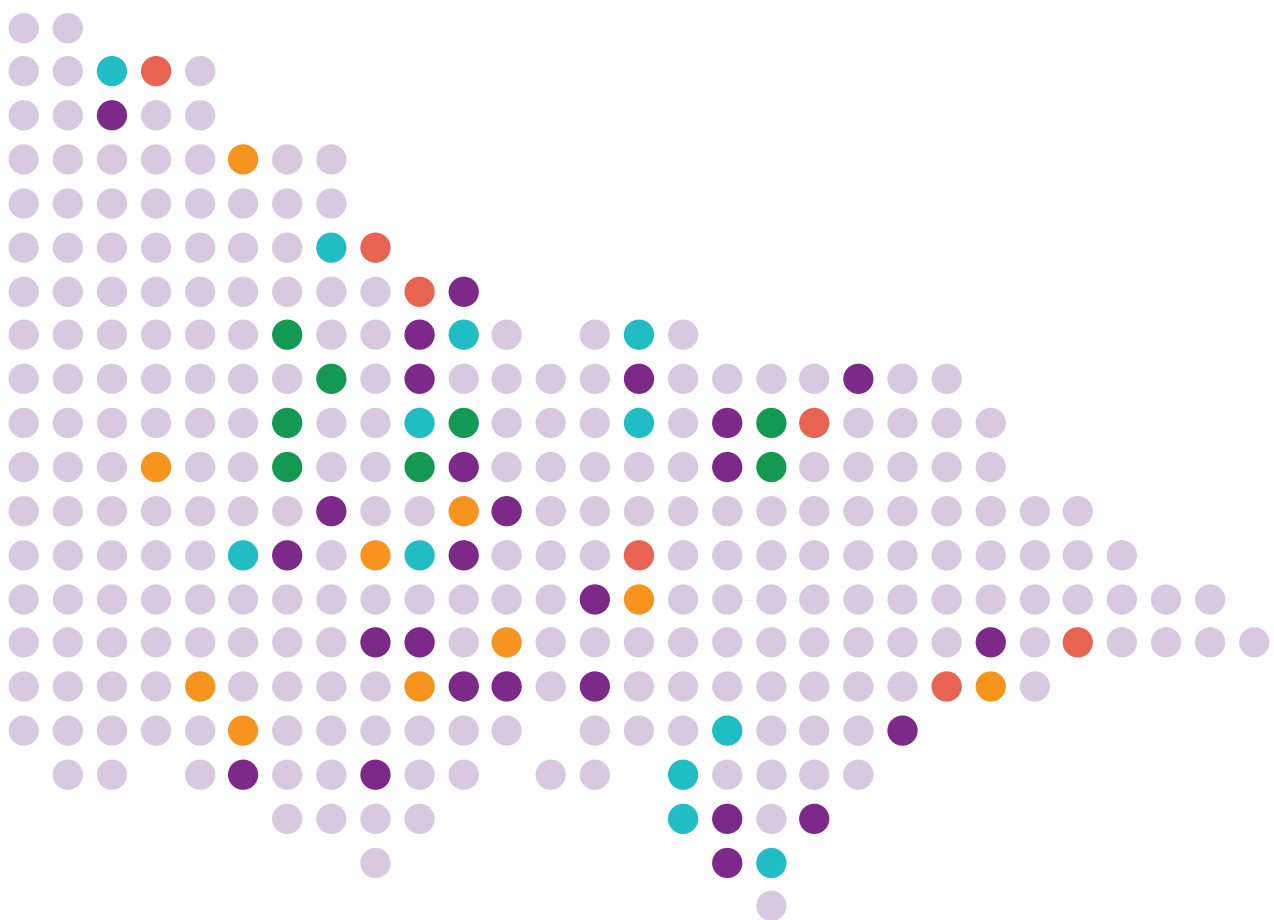
Charlton  
Cohuna  
Colac  
Corowa  
Creswick  
Darley  
Devon North  
Dingee  
Donald  
Elaine

Elliminyt  
Glenrowan  
Horsham  
Inglewood  
Katunga  
Kerang  
Kilmore  
Korumburra  
Leigh Creek  
Leitchville

Marnoo  
Maryborough  
Mildura  
Moama  
Morrisons  
Mortlake  
Mount Helen  
Myrree  
Navarre  
Newstead

Numurkah  
Robinvale  
Sale  
Scarsdale  
Shepparton  
Smythes Creek  
Smythesdale  
Stawell  
Swan Hill  
Wangaratta

Warragul  
Whitfield  
Wodonga  
Wonthaggi  
Wycheproof  
Yanakie  
Yea



**Map showing activities across Victoria**

- Leadership program participants
- University and Rural Chances scholars
- Dream Seeds® workshops
- Rural Youth Network engagement
- Branch Out Mentoring



# OUR IMPACT IN 2022

**8 ALUMNI EVENTS** IN 2022

INCLUDING  
10 YEAR CELEBRATION

**145 ALUMNI**  
ENGAGED  
IN-PERSON

**7 YOUTHRIVE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Scholarships*



**14 RURAL  
CHANCES**

**VOCATIONAL  
SCHOLARSHIPS**

**17 MENTORING  
PAIRS**

**37 MENTORING  
GROUP  
PARTICIPANTS**



**8 PARTNER  
SCHOOLS**

IN BRANCH OUT MENTORING

**376 STUDENTS  
REACHED**

**35 Leadership**

**PROGRAM** FROM  
PARTICIPANTS **30.**  
+ 19 COACHES TOWNS

## DREAM SEEDS 2021-2022



**343**

Student  
Participants



**20**

Alumni  
Trained as  
Coaches



**14**

Schools  
Visited



**6 RURAL YOUTH  
NETWORK**  
ENGAGEMENT LEADERS

**8 EVENTS CONDUCTED  
ACROSS VICTORIA**

**573 RURAL + REGIONAL  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
CONNECTED**

# OUR DIRECTORS



**Bruce Anderson**

Chair Appointed Nov 2018  
Director Appointed Nov 2016



**Ross McPherson AM**

Director  
Appointed November 2015



**Bernadette Lloyd**

Director  
Appointed July 2017



**Timothy Weight**

Director  
Appointed February 2020  
Deceased 28th Dec 2021

Bruce is a highly experienced business leader who has successfully combined his 20+ years in senior executive roles at ASX and global companies with a broad contribution within the community sector. He is a community builder having held a variety of roles in organisations to create a better world. Bruce is most passionate and experienced in supporting secondary school students successfully transition to university then work and develop their leadership capabilities. Bruce is currently Chairman of Our Schools Advisory Group, Chairman and Council Member of Wesley Church UCA Congregation, and a Trustee of the Anglesea SLSC Foundation. Bruce is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and an Alumnus of the Williamson Community Leadership Program.

Ross McPherson is Executive Chairman of the McPherson Media Group, a fifth-generation family Newsmedia business which started with the Shepparton News in 1888; it now includes numerous newspapers, magazines, printing events and internet businesses. He joined the family business after practicing commercial law, having graduated from Melbourne and London Universities. Among numerous industry, local and philanthropic involvements, Ross chairs the Goulburn Valley Health Foundation, is a member of the Committee for Greater Shepparton, a past director of SPC Ardmona Ltd and Treasurer and past president of the 8000-member International Newsmedia Association. He is a trustee of several charitable trusts.

Bernie Lloyd is the Chair of Bank First (formerly VTMB) and moved into corporate governance after 30 years in education in Victoria with the final 16 years in leadership positions. She understands the interdependence between schools and their communities and how high levels of trust enable productivity. She taught at her country high school for 20 years where she facilitated learning experiences for her students which gave them the capacity to enrich their own communities as well as preparing them for the world beyond their rural locale. Her leadership expertise resides in long term strategic planning, building capacity in teams and sustaining and expanding growth in organisations. She facilitates Principal workshops in Victoria and Queensland with emphasis on school governance and ethical and performance cultures which sustain and empower.

Tim Weight grew up in Melbourne and studied Agricultural Science at Melbourne University. Over the years Tim's career shifted from living and working on the land to being instrumental in its development. Tim was a Director on the Board of the local TAFE Institute; and moved to working within the business of Vocational Education and Training as Executive Director Strategic Engagement at TAFE Gippsland.

Tim's employment and non-executive director roles have provided a broad experience within agribusiness, property development and feasibility assessment, regional economic development, corporate management, strategy, and governance. Tim had extensive experience as an Executive and Non-Executive Director on boards of public and private companies, private syndications, government and not-for-profit organisations.





**Amanda Hutchinson**

Director  
Appointed March 2022



**Nick Young**

Associate Director  
Appointed September 2019



**Jacob Chacko**

Associate Director  
Appointed September 2019



**Peter Hunt**

Company Secretary  
Appointed November 2016

Mandy Hutchinson joined our Board in early 2022 adding a breadth of experience from a variety of leadership roles in her professional life and community commitments in Cohuna and North-western Victoria. Mandy is the CEO at the Northern District Community Health. Within her role, Mandy delivers services including allied health, nursing, community support, counselling, health promotion and primary care across multiple rural local government areas. Previously, Mandy was Director of Community Services at Gannawarra Shire Council where her leadership portfolio included Community Care Services, Children and Youth Services, Community Health, Communications and Community Engagement and Libraries, Arts and Culture. Mandy is passionate about creating a resilient, inclusive, and dynamic culture that celebrates success, innovation, and hard work.

Nick has completed his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Law (Honours) at Monash University and is a Rhodes Scholar. He received a MSRF (Youthrive) Scholarship in 2015, and while at university, was an Excellence Scholar and Senior Research Assistant to the Dean of the Monash Law School. Nick grew up in Warrnambool and cares greatly about access to education, particularly for rural people. He has volunteered as a teacher in Timor-Leste and India and with UN Youth Australia. He was instrumental in creating and piloting the Youthrive Victoria Branch Out mentoring program to encourage and empower regional Victorian high school students to access further education.

Jacob is a Senior Ministerial Advisor in the Victorian Government. A 2012 MSRF / Youthrive Scholar, Jacob completed a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Law at Monash University where he was a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Ancora Imparo Student Leadership program. As a migrant to Australia, Jacob moved to Benalla with his family and remains deeply connected to that place. As one of the early participants of the Youthrive program, Jacob has witnessed the organisation grow and has been involved in its various programs. Jacob is passionate about rural policy and believes Youthrive Victoria plays a significant role in promoting regional and remote life in all its diversity.

Peter grew up in country NSW (Gunnedah) attending boarding school in Sydney. He has accounting qualifications and an MBA and has worked in the retail, aged care, and education sectors. In 1995 Peter took on the role of Business Manager at Ballarat Grammar until his retirement in August 2018. During his time at Grammar, he was Company Secretary (School) and Director / Company Secretary (BGS Educational Services and the Grammar Foundation). He retains the latter roles in his 'retirement' and brings these passions and skills to Youthrive Victoria. He is a Fellow of Australian Institute of Accountants, Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and a Member of Australian Institute of Management (retired).



# FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY

Summary of Results	2021/2022	2020/2021
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Revenue	813,611	800,830
Expenditure	-711,206	-679,689
Surplus	102,405	121,141
<b>Assets and Liabilities</b>		
Current Assets	1,376,525	1,182,569
Non-Current Assets	6,458,490	7,265,426
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>7,835,015</b>	<b>8,447,995</b>
Current Liabilities	332,694	168,707
Non-Current Liabilities	132,475	123,469
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>465,169</b>	<b>292,176</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>7,369,846</b>	<b>8,155,819</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Earnings	1,249,453	1,169,249
Capital Endowment and Settlement Sum	5,000,000	5,000,000
Financial Assets Reserve	-280,294	-540,160
Scholarships Reserve	1,400,687	1,446,410
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>7,369,846</b>	<b>8,155,819</b>

This concise financial report is derived from and consistent with the audited statutory financial statements of the Foundation.

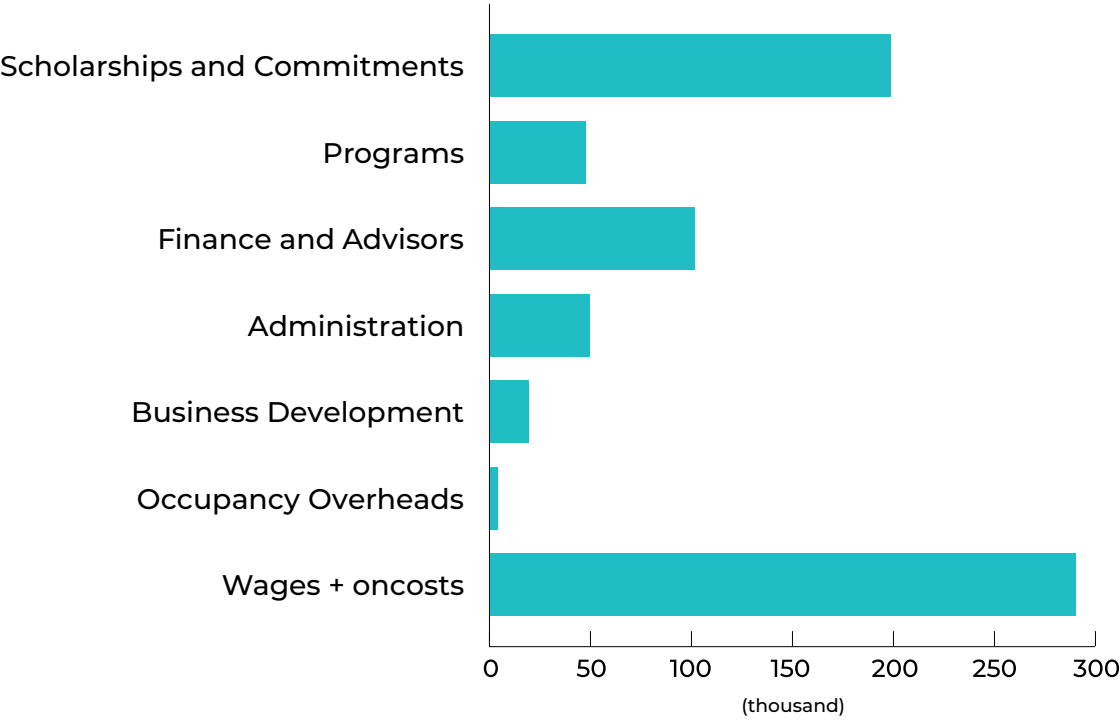


The Rural Foundation Ltd, at Balance Date, held Net Assets of \$7,369,846 with Gross Revenue of \$813,611 comprising 45.13% from donations and grants and 54.87% from investments (interest, dividends, and distributions).

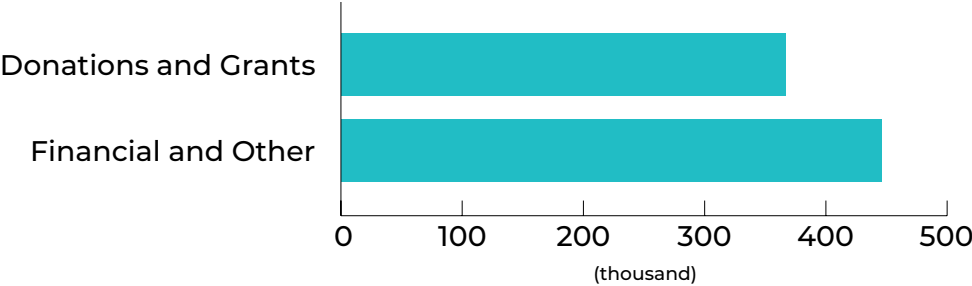
Expenditure for the financial year increased slightly to \$711,206 reflecting the number of scholarships awarded to young rural Victorians in recent years, and other activities returning to normal after Covid-19 restrictions.

The Rural Foundation Ltd thanks JBWere for their professional management of our investments. We also thank Allin-Accounting for their accounting services and CountPro Audit for preparing the financial accounts and undertaking the annual audit.

**Use of Funds in 2021/2022**



**Source of Funds in 2021/2022**



# THANK YOU

We are very appreciative of all the support provided by donors, granters, pro bono supporters and volunteers. Covid-19 affected our capacity to run events, but we were pleased to be able to keep all the programs operating.



Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

## Our Founder

We were founded in 2008 by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and endowed with a generous Establishment Grant and Scholarship Fund. We thank the Trust for their support.

The Rural Foundation Ltd is a registered charity and actively seeks support for all its programs. Donations to the Scholarship Fund are tax-deductible. For more information visit [youthrivevictoria.org.au/donate](https://youthrivevictoria.org.au/donate)

## Our 2022 Supporters

Many individual donors  
Bennelong Foundation  
Book Group #1 Scholarship  
Collier Charitable Fund  
Chris and Marli Tilley family  
Deloitte Foundation  
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Engage! Grant  
Edith M & William Wilson Charity Trust managed by Equity Trustees  
Freemasons Foundation Victoria  
H&L Hecht Trust managed by Perpetual  
Joyca Trust  
Kyamba Foundation  
Pierce Armstrong Foundation  
The Anderson Partnership  
The Glenys McIvor Charitable Trust  
The Ross Trust  
William Angliss Charitable Fund  
VicHealth – Big Connect Grant

## Our 2022 Partners

Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE)  
Cresfest Music Festival, Creswick  
Dorothy Irene Ellis Thomas Trust  
Mirboo North and District Community Foundation  
North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NC LLEN)  
Rural City of Wangaratta  
Sovereign Hill Museums Association - Narmbool





### **2021 Alumni Committee**

Sam McColl- President  
Maddy Merzvinskis - Vice President  
Madelief Johnston – Secretary  
Maggie Sessions – Treasurer  
Anna Findlay  
Jorgie Thompson

### **2022 Alumni Committee**

Sophie Fontaine - Co- President  
Escher Russell – Co-President  
Aidan Goode  
Amy Zuell  
Charlotte Robinson  
Kitty Robinson

### **Dream Seeds® Participating schools 2020/2021**

Kerang PS (Online)  
Kerang South PS (Online)  
Inglewood Primary School  
Pyramid Hill College  
St Patrick's Pyramid Hill Charlton College  
St Joseph's Charlton  
Wycheproof P-12 College St Arnaud PS  
St Joseph's PS  
Kerang Cohuna Consolidated PS  
Kerang PS  
Kerang South PS  
Koondrook PS  
Murabit PS

### **Dream Seeds® Committee 2021/2022**

Jayne Fendyk  
Brady Cronin  
Brayden Crutchfield  
Michaela Humphries  
Harry Stannard  
Caroline Sutton

### **Leadership Program Coaches**

#### **July 2021**

Escher Russell  
Michaela Humphries  
Hannah Humphries  
Madelief Johnston  
Zachary Miesen  
Sophie Fontaine  
Mason Barry  
Finn Poxon  
Thomas Pollard  
Keeley Sheehan  
Ella Jacobsen

#### **January 2022**

Michaela Humphries  
Escher Russell  
Zachary Miesen  
Amanda Fontaine  
Aidan Goode  
Henry Zhang  
Madelief Johnston  
Andrew Pilgrim  
Evana Miesen  
Stephanie Hartshorn

### **Mentors**

Youthrive Victoria thanks all volunteer mentors who have participated this year. Our mentees are grateful for the support of their mentors. Sharing experiences, providing support, and mentoring throughout the pandemic was especially important for helping people stay connected. Mentoring provides a unique opportunity for mentees to learn and develop while being supported as they transition through various stages of life; from school to university, training, or work and beyond.



A legacy of Helen Macpherson Smith



Youthrive Victoria supports rural businesses and sustainable printing practices. This annual report was produced using carbon neutral digital printing.

#### AUDITORS

CountPro Audit

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[www.ryn.org.au](http://www.ryn.org.au)