

NFPs getting stronger across the region, thanks to South Coast Futures program

FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal) and Snow Foundation yesterday revealed the positive impact that the South Coast Futures program they support is having on the region's community sector, as the multi-year program rapidly gains momentum.

The program aims to strengthen the capacity, sustainability and collective impact of grassroots not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) and empower local leaders to advocate for systems-level change. It does this through a combination of grants, capacity building support, networking events, workshops, conferences and storytelling to share examples of good practice and amplify community voices.

The program hosted the first networking event for regional NFP leaders in March, when 42 NFP leaders from across the region came together in Mollymook to connect, reflect and imagine what stronger, more resilient communities could look like, and to decide how systems change might be approached collaboratively.

Carolyn Ardler, FRRR's South Coast Futures Program Manager, says work is already underway on a range of initiatives related to health and wellbeing, social isolation and connection, and discussions have also identified a strong interest in collaborating around youth and youth leadership.

"We've already awarded eight grants, totalling nearly \$90,000. Several of these are what we call quick-response grants, which have enabled organisations to take action on time-sensitive opportunities. For example, we supported Shoalhaven Walking Together Alliance to organise an event on 26 January. This community event helped to boost cultural understanding and acknowledge colonial history, truth-telling and celebrate resilience across the region," Ms Ardler said.

"Other funding has gone toward projects including co-designing a community garden and the governance structure around its management; backing a film that will tell the story of the Booderee National Park Handback; and designing local vocational pathways.

We're also proudly supporting **Southcoast Health and Sustainability Alliance (SHASA) to employ a coordinator to continue the Eurobodalla Bushfire and Heatwave Haven**, among other projects."

SHASA have been funded \$45,000 for a Coordinator, to build local capacity and strengthen networks to enhance community preparedness and resilience during extreme weather events in Eurobodalla.

SHASA President Kathryn Maxwell said "The Haven Coordinator will be the conduit between SHASA's volunteers and the Haven volunteers, ensuring that resources meet the needs of the Havens. During extreme weather events the Haven Coordinator will engage with each Haven to determine their hours of operational so that SHASA can share these details with the community via the media and social media. They will also identify what other assistance they require from SHASA.

The Haven Coordinator will work with the SHASA Communications Team to increase public awareness of the health risks associated with heat and smoke and the existing of the havens as a resources available to the community. They will also assist with developing operational plans for the Havens."



Dr Michael Holland MP, Graham Brown, ESC GM Mark Ferguson, Tricia Pye, SHASA President Kathryn Maxwell and Pastor Julie Brown at the opening of the Heat Haven at Southlands Church Moruya in 2025.

Ms Ardler also explains that insights from the first leaders' session, as well as from subsequent discussions over recent months, are now feeding into the design of a Regional Roadmap.

"This roadmap will reflect what community members and local leaders have agreed as the priority focus areas of this program over the coming three years. It will set out the key themes, areas of opportunities and what needs to change. The roadmap will be shared with community for review and feedback in the coming weeks to ensure it has the backing of the community," Ms Ardler said.

View the list of grant recipients and their projects on [FRRR's website](#).

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