

RURAL AID
IMPACT REPORT
2024
2025



Of droughts and flooding rains

This year, those words have felt particularly relevant.

Some farming families are facing dry conditions, which has meant stretching limited feed and holding off on sowing. Others are cleaning up after floods, dealing with damaged infrastructure and disrupted routines. It's a reminder that while farming is full of rewards, it's also shaped by the unpredictability of the weather and the many other challenges that come with life on the land.

At Rural Aid, we've been on the ground for both. Whether it's delivering hay and water, offering financial assistance, or checking in with a wellbeing call, our focus remains on practical help that makes a difference.

We also support communities through longer-term recovery and development, helping towns build local capacity, strengthen relationships, and prepare for a stronger, more connected future.

Despite the tough conditions, there are still good days. Crops have come through better than expected in some areas. A decent patch of rain has lifted spirits in others. And across regions, communities are pulling together, organising local events, sharing resources, and looking out for each other. These moments matter. They don't cancel out the challenges, but they show the strength and determination that continues quietly, day in and day out. Our role is to stand alongside farming families, through the highs and the lows.

DELIVERED MORE THAN

\$6_M

IN SUPPORT TO FARMERS & RURAL COMMUNITIES



MISSION & VISION

Mission

To provide economic and empathic assistance to rural communities impacted by natural disaster by partnering with key stakeholders to deliver meaningful outcomes.

Vision

Farming and rural communities are safeguarded to ensure their sustainability before, during and after natural disasters.



REACH & DEMAND

We're seeing an increase in farmers proactively reaching out for assistance. Demand for our support has risen over the financial year.

1,485
FARMING FAMILIES

increase in new farmer registrations In comparison to FY24

driven by a

60% increase from farmers located in SA & VIC

SA & VIC

Rural Aid is there for the long term: supporting new farmers every day, while continuing to assist those who joined a decade ago. These results show not just growth in demand but trust. Farmers are reaching out earlier and more often.



of farmers accessed more than one type of assistance

of farmers supported in FY25 registered before 2020



NOW REGISTERED WITH RURAL AID



Rural aid is an amazing support to farmers not only in times that are tough but at other times as well.

We are not a large farm in any sense of the word, but I am fifth generation, so living on the land is very important to me and my family and my future generations.

FARMER



DISASTER ASSISTANCE

NUMBER OF HAY BALES DELIVERED TO FARMERS

WATER TANK DELIVERIES TO FARMING FAMILIES

DRINKING WATER DELIVERIES TO FARMING FAMILIES

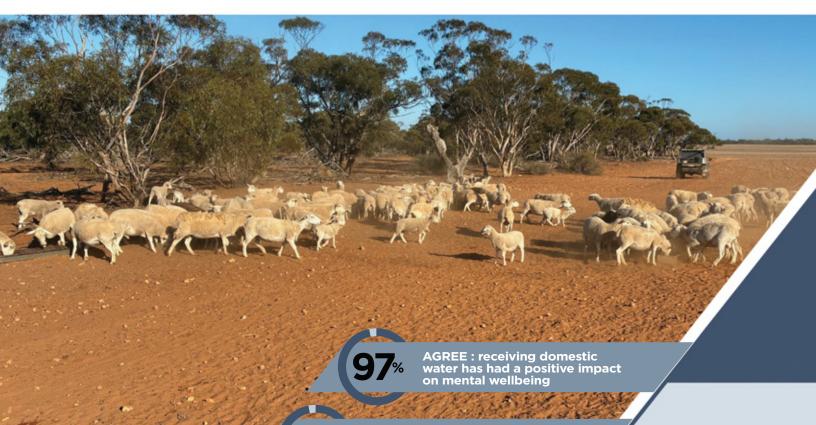
FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER HOURS



These aren't just figures. It's hay off the truck, water in a tank that means a shower and clothes can be washed, a bill paid that provides relief. They're volunteers lending a hand, and recovery events that bring hope back to the farm.



Having a water tank that is bigger and not damaged has allowed the household to drink and use water without concerns.

We no longer have to drive to town to do our washing at the caravan park.

FARMER | QLD

AGREE: Receiving the tank improved their household's ability to access better quality household water.



DISASTER ASSISTANCE





The water delivery has probably had the biggest impact of any drought support, mental health support and programs offered. Our domestic water tanks have not been full at our house for the entire 10 years I've lived on the farm.

I'd taken to putting off checking them because the anxiety was quite overwhelming.

The ease of putting in a water request was surprising. Also, it was organised without any additional burden for our family.

Thank you so much.

FARMER | SA

You gave us so much more than a week's worth of work (Farm Recovery Event).

Farming is isolating, but you made us feel connected and a part of a greater community, and that we are not alone.

FARMER | VIC

the wider community.

AGREE: The hay from Rural Aid has assisted in reducing their financial stress.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

During FY25, our Mental Health & Wellbeing team supported;

1,900 COUNSELLING SESSIONS

FARMERS ACCESSED BRIEF INTERVENTIONS ensuring timely and practical assistance was available

89%

OF FARMERS REPORTED A POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING, demonstrating the effectiveness of our approach

More farmers are reaching out for support, especially in towns where our counsellors are part of the community. They're having regular catch-ups with locals, sharing casual chats at the bakery, and quick hellos at the servo, everyday moments that how in some areas, the stigma around seeking help is easing.

Because our counsellors live and work in the communities they support, they build genuine trust, understand the realities of rural life, and offer timely, familiar support. Being trusted and local also means that when a crisis happens, we're already there, ready to help. For many farmers, it's this local, long-term connection that makes all the difference.

FARMER

counsellor

I really appreciated

that they came to me,

on property. It just made

me feel more comfortable

course I reached out to the

so when I had issues again, of

COMMUNITY EVENTS
ATTENDED



186

FARMERS & RURAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS SUPPORTED



165

Our counsellors went where farmers needed them most. They walked paddocks.

Sat at kitchen tables. Answered calls.

Because one conversation with the right person at the right time can change everything.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mustering Growth

Rural Rural Aid's Mustering Growth program, developed in partnership with Monash University, supports children's wellbeing by improving resilience and coping skills. The program has received positive feedback from teachers and schools across regional and rural Australia.

Positive feedback from teachers & schools, notes an IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL AWARENESS & ABILITY TO REGULATE FEELINGS

Parents reported noticeable increases in their children's confidence and communication skills at home.

Several schools that previously participated have invited us back, noting the positive changes within their communities and expressing a desire to make the program a regular part of their wellbeing strategy.



YEAR 5 STUDENT

It helped me talk about my feelings without getting scared or upset.

YEAR 4 STUDENT

SHOOLS ATTENDED

STUDENTS REACHED



170



Students were calmer and more connected with each other by the end of the sessions, even in a week. Longer term, it's changed the tone in our classroom.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Dry

Another sundrenched morning the sun it shines so bright I stand on the verandah and stare out at the blight Where once there stood a garden and pasture grown with care The dry has claimed it all I see nothing there.

The cattle stand staring pleading hunger in their eyes
The hayshed stands empty the dams have all gone dry
Most stock have been sold off some withered up and died
The rest struggle to live on beneath this cloudless sky

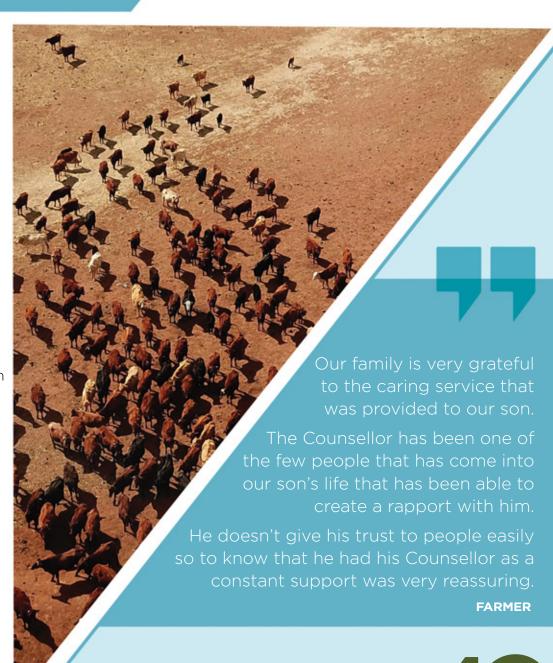
There's rain up in the north I hear the people chorus It may travel south we know not what's before us If only we could share I hear some hopefuls sigh Have rain in equal measure rather than so bloody dry.

I've thought about the lonely path some men and women have taken When all hope is forgotten, where all is sadly forsaken The gun it was ready leaning up against the shed wall The letter sadly written "I'm no use to you at all". But my family still need me there is hope still in their hearts I couldn't do it to them, we've never been apart The dogs well know my struggle they stand here by my side Faithful and steadfast doing all to make things right.

I come home into the kitchen spent and broken I there stand Mumbling words heartbroken and then I feel her hand She holds me close and sweetly she knows I feel cursed But she loves me so completely in spite of all my worst.

There are those who offer help to all, succour for those in drought Rural Aid and the like they'll help a farmer out We only need to reach out acknowledge all our pain One day at a time my friends we'll wait to feel the rain.

FARMER | NSW



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Rural Aid's Our Towns program commenced in 2019 and offered 10 drought-affected towns the opportunity to access community development support, from Community Opportunity Workshops to volunteer labour and project funding.

This financial year saw the five-year program draw to a close and many inspiring projects come to completion.

Barraba's town promotion initiative involving tourism advertisements and merchandise.

Cunnamulla's showground upgrades including laying automatic irrigation, kitchen upgrades, and restoring grassed areas.

Monto's town makeover project involving the renovation of mainstreet building and new public art.

Lockington's new Lockington-Kotta rail trail walking track along with upgrades to local walking paths and boardwalks.

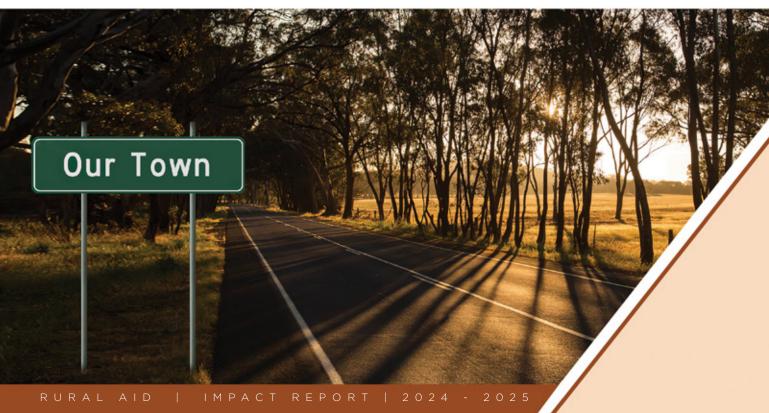
Projects such as these do more than upgrade community facilities. They encourage local people to come together to build thriving, self-reliant communities that feel empowered to shape their own futures.

These projects foster resilience and hope.

There's no single approach that fits every rural town.

But there is listening. Walking the streets. Sharing a meal.

Taking the time to build trust and working with locals to bring their own ideas to life, in their own time, and in their own way. That's how we support meaningful, sustainable change in rural communities.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Building community resilience doesn't happen overnight. Rural Aid supported these towns during 2025.



CLARENCE TOWN | DUNGOG | PATERSON | STROUD | VACY

ARAMAC | BLACKALL | CLERMONT | ISISFORD | TAMBO

Stand-Alone Community Opportunity Workshops WA: BRIDGETOWN | GREENBUSHES

NSW: WHITTON | YANCO

SA: WILLIAM CREEK

ATTENDANCES AT WORKSHOPS & COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:

IN RURAL TOWNS

RESPONDENTS: feel more connected to their community

RESPONDENTS: feel more hopeful about the future of their community

RESPONDENTS: feel more empowered to create change in their community

RESPONDENTS: feel more able to identify the assets & opportunities in their town



CASE STUDY: LOCKINGTON VIC



In the northern Victorian town of Lockington, Rural Aid's Community Development Program has helped bring a long-held vision to life.

For years, locals had imagined converting a disused section of the old Bendigo-Echuca railway line into a rail trail for walkers and cyclists. Thanks to \$100,000 in funding through Rural Aid's Our Towns initiative, and with the hard work of the Lockington community, the Lockington-Kotta Rail Trail has now been built.

After years of negotiations and approvals with various levels of government, one major barrier was still stalling progress: two irrigation channels divided the trail. But when a local farmer and business heard about his community's rail trail dreams, he decided to step in. By contributing more than 405 hours of voluntary labour and machinery use, valued at over \$69,000, two bridges were constructed and the trail was reconnected.

The project has strengthened community pride, created a space for people to connect with nature and with each other, and inspired new ideas including an annual fun run, picnic spots, a frisbee golf course, and a venue for outdoor events. Lockington's potential for locals and tourists alike is now growing, and the social and economic benefits are being felt.

The belief in our town by Rural Aid reinforced our pride and commitment.

Thank you so much for having faith in our town and local community.

OUR TOWNS PARTICIPANT | VIC

It is a story of the connection and care shared between farmers and rural communities, and a reminder that their futures are deeply intertwined.



