



RURAL AID
IMPACT REPORT
2024
2025



GOLDEN AFTERNOON RAINBOW | APRIL 2025 : SOUTH AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

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

\$6M

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.

100% increase in new farmer registrations
in comparison to FY24

driven by a

60% increase from farmers located in
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.



1,485
FARMING FAMILIES

SUPPORTED IN FY25

28% of farmers accessed more than
one type of assistance

33% of farmers supported in FY25
registered before 2020



MORE
THAN

18,000
FARMERS

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

MORE THAN

9,400



WATER TANK DELIVERIES
TO FARMING FAMILIES

170

DRINKING WATER DELIVERIES
TO FARMING FAMILIES

MORE THAN

11.5m
LITRES



FAMILIES SUPPORTED
BY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

MORE THAN

530



VOLUNTEERS



145

AT 35 FARMS

VOLUNTEER HOURS



5,500

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

97%

AGREE : receiving domestic water has had a positive impact on mental wellbeing

97%

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

95%

AGREE : The assistance from volunteers at Farm Recovery Events made them feel cared for and supported by the wider community.

89%

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



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



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.

FARMERS & RURAL COMMUNITY
MEMBERS SUPPORTED



186

COMMUNITY EVENTS
ATTENDED



165



I really appreciated that they came to me, on property. It just made me feel more comfortable so when I had issues again, of course I reached out to the counsellor

FARMER

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.



Mastering Growth

Rural Rural Aid's Mastering 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.

65%

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.



I used to get angry and not know why. Now I stop and use my colours to figure it out.

YEAR 5 STUDENT

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

YEAR 4 STUDENT

**SCHOOLS
ATTENDED**

9

**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



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



Our family is very grateful to the caring service that was provided to our son.

The Counsellor has been one of the few people that has come into our son's life that has been able to create a rapport with him.

He doesn't give his trust to people easily so to know that he had his Counsellor as a constant support was very reassuring.

FARMER

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.



5 **Central Western | QLD**
Community Builders
Community Opportunity Workshops:

ARAMAC | BLACKALL | CLERMONT | ISISFORD | TAMBO



5 **Upper Hunter | NSW**
Community Builders
Community Opportunity Workshops:

CLARENCE TOWN | DUNGOG | PATERSON | STROUD | VACY



5 **Stand-Alone**
Community Opportunity Workshops

WA : BRIDGETOWN | GREENBUSHES
NSW : WHITTON | YANCO
SA : WILLIAM CREEK

ATTENDANCES AT WORKSHOPS
& COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:



1161
IN RURAL TOWNS

87%

RESPONDENTS:
feel more connected
to their community

88%

RESPONDENTS:
feel more hopeful about
the future of their community

86%

RESPONDENTS:
feel more empowered to create
change in their community

90%

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.

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



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



We can't control the seasons,
but we can choose how we show up for one another.

This year, with your support, we stood
beside farming families through it all,
and we'll keep doing it,
no matter what comes next.



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