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“The Mirboo North & District Community Foundation will enhance the social and economic strength in our community, encourage philanthropy and grow our legacy through good stewardship and strong effective partnerships.”
In 2007/08 the difficult decision was made to sell the community-owned Mirboo North Community Care aged facility and service. The funds from the sale were invested in the Mirboo North & District Community Foundation for the long term benefit of the community.

The Foundation focuses on those townships that were previously served by the Bush Nursing Hospital: Allambee, Boolarra, Darlimurla, Delburn, Dumbalk, Hallston, Mirboo, Mirboo North, Thorpdale and Yinnar.

The Foundation is proud to support and cultivate stronger local communities by:

- Providing grants to organisations and community groups for local projects that build capacity and pride within the community.
- Prudent investment and stewardship of the funds to ensure a permanent and growing resource for the community.
- Being an honest broker with no agenda other than what is best for the community.
- Assisting as an enabler, facilitating organisations and/or projects particularly with respect to specific issues or local needs and priorities.
- Partnering and collaborating with other organisations. Whilst not ‘service providers’, the Foundation brings its capacity as a locally embedded flexible organisation with excellent linkages, funding dollars and the potential for leveraging its contribution.
- Building social capital by encouraging and assisting individuals and organisations to become philanthropists.
- Investing in local people and programs and projects to ensure long term community wellbeing.
Part of a Global Philanthropic Movement

Welcome to the 100 year anniversary of community foundations around the world!

Community foundations are independent, place-based, community-owned philanthropic vehicles. They exist to create a financial asset for public benefit in a specific geographic location, such as a town, city or region. By their nature, community foundations are characterised by being community-owned and driven, grassroots organisations which are highly responsive to local conditions and opportunities.

Having local people involved as donors, advisors and volunteers generates strong community ownership and accountability, and creates valuable local knowledge.

The first Australian Community Foundation, the Melbourne Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation was created 90 years ago. Since then the community philanthropy sector in Australia has burgeoned – there are now at least 57 organisations identifying themselves as community foundations or geographic sub-funds of community foundations. For more information on Australian Community Foundations visit:

australiancommunityphilanthropy.org.au

Community Grants Program

The Foundation launched a community grants program in 2010. Over the following four years the program distributed over $335,000 to local projects addressing a wide range of local issues.
Sometimes, we take the simple things in life for granted. Mobility issues, which are a concern for many of our senior citizens, can lead to social isolation and lack of independence.

Not being able to get out and about and connect with others can have a significant impact on our mental and physical health and wellbeing. The Mirboo North RSL Sub-branch has been providing the community of Mirboo North and surrounds with a community bus for more than 18 years. The addition of an electronic step, with a grant of $2,145 has enabled this important asset to be fully utilised by those in our community with mobility issues.

“The Mirboo North RSL Sub-Branch, in December 2011, was the recipient of a generous grant for the purchase and installation of an electronically operated retractable step for the newly acquired RSL community bus.

This step has proved to be invaluable for the safe and confident movement in and out of the bus by passengers, particularly older members of the Mirboo North community who use the bus.”

Peter Fraser
Secretary of Mirboo North RSL
Dumbalk Hall Kitchen Renovation

The Mirboo North & District Community Foundation awarded a grant of $5,000 and together with South Gippsland Shire Council, provided funding for the kitchen renovation so that it could meet the standards to be registered to sell food.

Fittingly a plaque in the hall reads:

‘This kitchen is dedicated to the women who had the foresight to form a committee to serve and enrich our community.’

“As a 100 per cent voluntary organisation, the Dumbalk Hall Committee is made up of a group of dedicated individuals who are united by their belief in the power of community.

The hall is the heart of Dumbalk and a place where the community comes to celebrate, remember, play and eat.

A vibrant community must be able to strengthen and grow. There needs to be new opportunities to build skills, share and learn and an appropriate space in which to do this.”

Elaine Snell
President Dumbalk Hall Committee
As a rural community the Mirboo North District is reliant on the dedicated volunteers of the CFA who respond to bushfires. A most important aspect for the control of bushfires is the coordination of the various firefighting units.

The Foundation provided funds of $1,544 for the purchase of Mobile Incident Command and Control Boards that will potentially reduce the impact of bushfires, improve safety for our community and enable our CFA firefighters to identify where the most critical areas of bushfires are burning.
Community assets like the Walter J Tuck Reserve play a vital role in building resilience and sustainability in our community.

The Reserve is an important community hub in Mirboo North that provides a place where people can come together to support one another, play together, learn and socialise.

The Foundation’s grant of $5,000 for a sound system and projector will enable the Reserve to better meet the diverse needs of the community groups, sporting clubs and individuals that use the facility.
Community Partnerships

The Foundation is an inaugural member of the Mirboo North Community Planning group which together with the South Gippsland Shire Council is developing a Mirboo North Community Plan for the future. All relevant community organisations and sectors are represented in the group and in-depth community consultation is ongoing.

The group is currently working on a number of specific projects that were identified in consultation with the community as priority needs for Mirboo North and district.

Each project has a separate project team to develop strategy and manage implementation.

This is a great example of community organisations and individuals working together for the long term sustainability and improvement of the community. The outcome will be a relevant, achievable and sustainable community plan to be implemented in consultation with the community and the South Gippsland Shire Council.
Where We’ve Helped

Community Grants Program
Other Grants and Funding
Sponsorships

Total Funding 2010 - 2014
$335,771

Funding Recipients 2010 - 2014

Yinnar Fiddlehead Festival
Boolarra & District Youth Theatre
Boolarra Memorial Park
Dumbalk Hall Committee
Dumbalk Progress Association
Narracan Primary School
Mirboo Recreation Reserve
Mirboo Group CFA
Thorpdale Kindergarten
Mirboo North Aged Care (Friends)
Friends of Lyrebird Walk
Mirboo North Artygras
Mirboo Country Development Inc.
Mirboo North Community Energy Hub
Mirboo North Kindergarten

Mirboo North Child Care Centre
Mirboo North Community Shed
Mirboo North Historical Society
Mirboo North Newspaper
Mirboo North Pony Club
Walter J Tuck Reserve
Mirboo North RSL
Mirboo North Secondary College - Get Real
Mirboo North Secondary College - Community Breakout
Mirboo North Primary School
St Mary’s Anglican Church
South Coast PCP, MNSC, GPA
YMCA Ballarat - Mirboo North Child Care Centre
Uniting Care Gippsland
When Mirboo North’s child care facilities were threatened with closure in 2013 the Foundation took a leading role in the community partnership that formed to identify a solution to the issue.

The Foundation provided new equipment funding of $10,000 and significant support resources to assist recovery. The Foundation worked closely with the South Gippsland Shire and the new operators of the centre, YMCA Ballarat, to ensure the continued operation of the service.

“...This is the beauty of a community-based foundation. It was able to respond quickly to an obvious community need. It is a credit to all concerned that the families of Mirboo North have had ongoing access to childcare this year.”

Councillor James Fawcett
Mayor of South Gippsland Shire Council
Back to School Program

The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal's (FRRR) annual "Back to School" program of $50 vouchers to support students and families has been operating since 2005. In that time the program has distributed some $5 million to over 92,000 children across Australia. The Foundation joined the program in 2012 and is continuing to actively support families and students who require assistance for some of the basic school needs.

The vouchers have been distributed to schools in Mirboo North, Boolarra and Thorpdale.

Back To School is a practical, positive program that makes a real difference to the lives of children.

The provision of school supplies through Back To School has been of significant benefit to students in the Mirboo North District, improving their confidence and self esteem.

“I felt a bit like Santa Claus when I was passing them out. Some of the reactions I received were extremely heart-warming.

One parent said " You will never know how much of a difference this will make to us" 

Leanne Emond
Principal, Boolarra Primary School
The formation of this fund has been made possible through a generous donation from the former Mirboo North Community Support Co-operative. The Foundation is very grateful to past members and Board of the Co-op for entrusting these funds for the long term benefit of the community.

Educational Support of $17,000 was provided to eight local students in the initial 2013 awards.

A fund has also been formed to assist VCAL students at the Mirboo North Secondary College.

Financial hardship is one of the biggest barriers rural students face when enrolling in post-compulsory education such as TAFE or university. Mirboo North & District Foundation’s Educational Support Fund assists young-adult and mature students with relocation expenses, study set-up costs, and scholarships.

Educational Support Fund

An Investment in our Future

Kate Buxton
Chair, Mirboo North & District Community Foundation

“I’m one week into my university course and already your scholarship has come in handy. I am thoroughly enjoying my subjects and already have made an exciting new purchase, my first very own stethoscope.”

Kate Riley
Studying for a double degree of Bachelor of Nursing Practice and Bachelor of Midwifery at Federation University, Churchill

“"The beneficiaries of the skills and training this group of students will receive over the next few years are ultimately us, our community and in fact our society. That’s the real purpose of the Education Support Fund; it is an investment for the future.”

Kate Buxton
Chair, Mirboo North & District Community Foundation
Year 9 Community Breakout Program

The Mirboo North Secondary College’s award winning and innovative Community Breakout Year 9 Program aims to address the lack of connectedness experienced by many students by engaging them in a learning experience that goes beyond the academic curriculum. Based on the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the students are empowered to explore their potential through physical, personal learning and community based activities.

The Foundation has provided grants of $10,000 for this program that helps prepare our youth for their future lives.

“We firmly believe that having stronger links with the community plays an integral part in each student’s ability to feel not only connected to the school but the wider community.”

Karen Lanyon
Principal, Mirboo North Secondary College

Examples of programs that we offer include Landcare, Community Service and Water Watch.”
Celebrating the Arts and our Community

Arty Gras

Over the Mother’s Day weekend in May, Mirboo North transforms itself into the artistic capital of Gippsland.

The annual Mirboo North Art Show and Arty Gras festival reflect the combined talents of more than 100 exhibiting artists, musicians, dancers and performance artists in a weekend-long celebration of the arts.

This cultural extravaganza is supported by more than 80 volunteers, 60 community organisations and local businesses – not to mention the 500 or so people who participate in the street parade. More than 3,000 visitors are attracted to these iconic events each year.

The Mirboo North Art Show is a significant fundraiser for the Mirboo North Primary School and the Foundation is proud to be a sponsor of both the Mirboo North Arty Gras and the Art Show, having provided $14,000 to these events since 2011.

Fiddlehead Festival - Yinnar

Participation in group music-making is beneficial to the wellbeing of individuals and communities. It helps people to deal with stress and uncertainty. It encourages young people to participate in activities that otherwise may not be accessible to them and gives them self esteem.

The Fiddlehead Festival is a family day of hands-on music-making, a staged concert and traditional country fair. It features special children’s, youth and beginners, music workshops and a schools program.

A feature of the Fiddlehead Festival is a free, fun and inspiring Acoustic Youth program led by skilled local music facilitators.

The Festival is now in its second successful year of celebrating community resilience by recognising the amazing strength and creativity that prevails in our communities throughout times of hardship and uncertainty.
The Foundation supported a feasibility study with a grant of $20,000 for the Mirboo North Community Energy Hub project team to determine how to improve energy efficiencies for individuals, farmers and businesses with the intention of reducing energy usage and costs and improving our local environment through reduced reliance on non-renewable energy sources.

This project assessed the potential for creating an Energy Hub, an efficient and environmentally friendly and commercially sound community-owned energy service.

The significant potential long term benefits of an Energy Hub are reductions in energy costs, increased local employment and improved environmental outcomes.

The Foundation has also provided funding of $5,000 for practical community workshops on how to achieve energy savings and efficiencies.
How You Can Help to Make Your Local Community Stronger

One of the greatest satisfactions people can experience is giving and helping others, improving the lives of those less fortunate and ensuring their communities remain viable.

Many rural and regional communities are exploring new ways to respond to local issues in areas such as physical and mental health, education and the environment. The Mirboo North & District Community Foundation was formed in January 2010 as a community-based philanthropic organisation committed to enhancing the social and economic strength in our community by providing funding support for locally based projects and working in partnership with other organisations in response to identified need. We believe that by working together our community has a bright and sustainable future.

“If you want to be happy, help people, because you are the one who gets the help.”

The Dali Lama

“I want to see other people benefitting from what my husband and I have worked and saved for. This gives me a real sense of joy.”

Elva Shepherd
Acorn Foundation, New Zealand
Any donations made to the Foundation are held in trust and managed by a local member-appointed Board of "responsible persons" as defined by the ATO. Funds are prudently managed for the long term benefit of the community.

The Foundation would be delighted to talk to individuals, not-for-profit organisations, philanthropists and governments at all levels to discuss how we can work together to improve the social and economic strength and sustainability of the Mirboo North and district community.

Participate in the activities of the Foundation as a member, advisor or volunteer.

Make a donation to the Foundation through a bequest, direct donation, or a named fund for a specific cause.

You can help us make a difference.
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