



Australian  
**Rural Leadership**  
Foundation




2023-24 ANNUAL  
REPORT



We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Lands where we meet, work, and live. We recognise the enduring spiritual connection, and we honour the sacredness of the Land.

We pay our respects to the Elders past, present, and future and the deep-seated wisdom they hold. We solemnly remind ourselves that this Land has always been and will always be Aboriginal Land.

A photograph of a man with long dreadlocks and a beard, wearing a dark jacket, performing a smoking ceremony. He is kneeling on the ground, holding a bundle of sticks and a large, glowing fire. Thick white smoke rises from the fire, partially obscuring his face. The background is a blurred natural setting with green grass and trees. A large, semi-transparent orange shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

Matthew Simms from Djiriba Waagura during a smoking ceremony on the Australian Rural Leadership Program 31.

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Foundation Limited**

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## ABOUT ARLF

**Since 1992, the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation has stood as the cornerstone for leadership development in rural Australia. Leveraging a robust alumni network and partnerships with mission-aligned organisations, we deliver bespoke, evidence-based programs that empower individuals to tackle the unique challenges and opportunities in rural, regional and remote communities.**

Our programs are not just courses but catalysts – designed to ignite behavioural intelligence and foster enduring, collaborative networks that extend beyond the program's end.

We owe much of our work's success to First Nations Australians, whose generosity in sharing their land and wisdom has enriched our programs. Committed to truth-telling and reconciliation, we strive to create a harmonious future for all.

Our approach is holistic and inclusive. We believe that leadership can be nurtured regardless of age, background or geography. We encourage participants to share knowledge, engage in robust dialogue, and challenge the status quo, all with the aim of achieving lasting social, environmental and economic impacts.



### VISION

Thriving rural, regional and remote communities.

### PURPOSE

To develop and exercise leadership for positive impact.

### APPROACH

We develop leadership so people act beyond themselves, work with others, and facilitate change. We do this by offering participants challenging, hands-on learning experiences and the opportunity for reflection.

### VALUES

- » **Respect** and engage with First Nation's cultural knowledge.
- » **Engage** with a diversity of views, perceptions, backgrounds and cultures.
- » **Challenge** entrenched ideas.
- » **Foster** collaboration and act beyond self.
- » **Pursue** lifelong learning.



Australian Rural Leadership Program Course 31 during their first session.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

### Strategic priorities we report on

Our strategic priorities serve as the foundation of everything we do. These priorities guide our efforts to foster leadership across rural, regional and remote Australia, and ensure we're making a meaningful impact.

Here's what each of our strategic priorities means for ARLF's work and the communities and industries we serve:



#### Extend high-quality leadership development opportunities for more people in more places

Our goal is to ensure that leadership opportunities reach the people, communities, industries and sectors across the country that need them most. This means expanding our programs to include participants from diverse demographics, ensuring we reflect the full range of experiences, perspectives and voices that make up rural, regional and remote Australia. By focusing on areas and groups that have historically been underserved, we aim to equip the next generation of leaders with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive and create lasting impact in their communities.



#### Collaborate with purpose-aligned organisations, investors and people

Collaboration is at the heart of effective leadership. We are committed to partnering with organisations, investors and individuals who share our vision for a thriving rural, regional and remote Australia. By working with those who are purpose-aligned, we can pool resources, knowledge and networks to create a greater collective impact and deliver more sustainable leadership outcomes.



#### Activate leadership networks to facilitate change in organisations, sectors and communities

The strength of our work lies in the leadership networks we build. These networks are a powerful tool for driving change within organisations, sectors and communities. Through such networks, we aim to empower leaders to collaborate, share knowledge and take collective action on the challenges and opportunities they face. Together, we can amplify the impact of leadership and create lasting change.





**Ensure the ARLF is capable and sustainable**

Sustainability is key to ensuring that we can continue to deliver high-quality leadership development into the future. We are focused on building a strong, capable organisation that is well positioned to grow and adapt in a changing world. This involves prudent financial management, investing in our team, and continuously improving our processes to ensure the ARLF remains resilient and effective in achieving its mission.



**Contribute to the creation of knowledge to improve the practice of leadership development**

As leaders in the field of leadership development, it is our responsibility to contribute to the body of knowledge that informs and enhances best practices. We are committed to research, evaluation and innovation that not only improves our own programs but also benefits the broader leadership development community. By sharing our insights and learning from others, we can collectively elevate the practice of leadership development across Australia.



**Understand our impact in more depth**

To ensure we're making a meaningful difference, it's essential that we understand our impact at a deeper level. This means continuously evaluating the outcomes of our programs, listening to feedback from participants, and measuring the long-term effects of our work on individuals, organisations and communities. With this understanding, we can refine our approaches, maximise our effectiveness, and ensure that we're creating real, positive change.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

**This year has been one of consolidation for the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF). We strengthened our capabilities, stimulated leadership into action across more places, embraced new technology through our podcast and internal systems, and led industry in cross-collaboration and leadership summits. These efforts reaffirm our mission and demonstrate our ability to adapt and thrive. Our commitment to developing and exercising leadership for positive impact remains steadfast as we embrace new opportunities and realities.**

At the heart of our work is the belief that thriving rural, regional, and remote communities are built through leadership that is collaborative, inclusive, and resilient. As we continue to evolve, we draw strength from our vision and values, ensuring that we provide our core leadership programs and additional offerings to reach rural, regional and remote Australians when needed.

### Walking in two worlds

The year began with difficult and important conversations about the Voice referendum. While people held differing views, we remain steadfast in our commitment to creating a safe and respectful space for facilitating even the most difficult conversations in rural, regional and remote communities. Our ability to facilitate these discussions across diverse perspectives is what sets us apart.

Holding space for conversations has to be balanced with our commitment to reconciliation and respecting First Nations knowledge. With 17% of our alumni identifying as First Nations people, we respect calls for self-determination and the need to honour First Nations cultures and knowledge systems. Respecting these values is and will continue to be central to ARLF's leadership programs. There is so much to be gained from First Nations wisdom, particularly in understanding what it truly means to walk in two worlds — balancing tradition with contemporary challenges. This dual perspective enriches leadership by offering deeper insights into community, connection and resilience. We recognise and will always share the value this perspective offers, not only for First Nations people but for all who seek to lead with authenticity and inclusivity.

### Rural Leadership Unearthed

In December 2023, we launched the Rural Leadership Unearthed podcast, expanding our efforts to amplify voices from across rural, regional and remote Australia. With six episodes already published, the podcast explores leadership challenges and opportunities in rural communities, further connecting us with a wider audience. We look forward to continuing this journey of sharing real-world leadership experiences through the podcast.

### Leadership Summit – a first in Australia

One of this year's standout moments was our participation in the Leadership Summit held in Launceston from 24 to 26 March. This event marked a critical turning point for leadership development in Australia, bringing together leadership academics and practitioners from across the country for the first time in a meaningful dialogue about the current and future state of leadership development.

The overarching goal of the summit was to enhance leadership development practice by bridging the divide between theory and practice. Despite the valuable contributions from both academic and practitioner spheres, it became clear that the leadership development sector in Australia remains fragmented. A large group of private sector practitioners, particularly those working within corporate Australia, were notably absent. While this highlights a gap in the sector, it also presents a valuable opportunity for growth and collaboration. We are determined to seize this opportunity, fostering partnerships to strengthen leadership practice nationally.

The ARLF sent a strong contingent of team members to contribute to the summit, including our Director of Learning, Andrea Hogg, who played an integral role in the event's working group and will lead the development of the 2025 Leadership Summit in Canberra. Our involvement underscored our commitment to shaping the future of leadership development in rural, regional and remote Australia, particularly as we continue to push for collective and inclusive leadership practices.



One of the key takeaways from the summit was the growing consensus that leadership is increasingly seen as a collective act, rather than the traditional “hero” model of individual leadership. This shift aligns closely with ARLF’s approach, which emphasises the development of behavioural intelligence not just for individual growth, but to foster collaborative social change. Whether it’s at the community, sectoral, or national level, leadership must focus on collective adaptation to tackle the complex challenges facing rural, regional and remote Australia.

### Cross-sectoral collaboration for leadership action

The Creative Industries Leadership Action Initiative emerged as a highlight in our efforts to foster innovative leadership across regional Australia. This initiative, a collaboration between ARLF and Regional Arts Australia (RAA), brought together leaders from diverse sectors to explore the creative industries’ role in addressing pressing regional challenges.

Through focus groups and a national gathering, participants developed actionable strategies for integrating creativity into regional development—covering key areas like climate adaptation, economic recovery and cultural sustainability.

The Leadership Action Initiative (LAI) product, which was central to this collaboration, represents a new, adaptive approach to tackling complex challenges. Traditional methods, such as working within existing structures, hiring consultants or holding town hall meetings, often fall short when it comes to navigating the intricate issues communities face. The LAI offers a fresh, collaborative process in which diverse groups work together to test assumptions, find solutions, and drive real progress. As the demand for innovative, community-based solutions grows, the LAI will increasingly meet this market need by offering a tailored approach for resolving conflicts and showing the benefits of active leadership.

### Leaning into contemporary challenges

The Shape Your Energy Future (ShEF) program, delivered in partnership with the Queensland Conservation Council (QCC) and funded by Boundless Earth, played a pivotal role in fostering leadership related to sustainability in rural, regional and remote communities. This initiative provided 21 participants from the Western Downs and South Burnett areas with the opportunity to engage in critical conversations about the energy transition. By bringing together individuals with diverse perspectives, the program helped them explore opportunities for their communities’ future amidst significant regional change.

One standout outcome of the project was a successful \$400,000 grant awarded to the *Shaping Western Downs Energy Future* initiative. This will support ongoing efforts to help communities manage the impacts and opportunities of renewable energy. It represents a strong return on the \$350,000 grant from Boundless Earth that supported the program.

The ShEF program underscores our capacity to lead community-driven responses to complex issues. Through facilitated dialogue, we continue to support regions in navigating these transitions and fostering informed, community-led solutions. The demand for the program has sparked interest in other regions, including Central Queensland. There is great potential to scale or replicate the model. In planning future iterations of the program, we will focus on optimising the funding model, aligning with other stakeholders, and responding to the specific needs of the communities involved.

## Maintaining and renewing existing partnerships

We continued to strengthen partnerships in sectors such as agriculture, government and education to expand the ARLF's reach and deepen our impact. We have seen new partnership projects around energy transition with Boundless Earth and the Queensland Conservation Council, and with Women for Election to support those interested in political office in the Torres Strait Islands. Our work alongside the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) is a highlight, as it extends our activity across multiple programs delivered in regions across the country.

The Leading Australian Resilient Communities program culminated in a gathering and celebration in Canberra in July 2023. It brought together alumni representatives from each of the 10 regions across the country, who showed the individual and collective energy, impact and outstanding contributions of this group.

Special thanks to our collaborators Regional Australia Institute, Leadership WA, Leaders Institute of SA, Tasmanian Leaders and Leadership Victoria whom all made special contributions to this initiative.

## Australian Rural Leadership Program

The Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP) underwent a series of refinements this year to better meet the evolving needs of our participants and stakeholders. These changes – well received by participants – reflected our ongoing commitment to offering transformational leadership development experiences. This program remains central to ARLF's mission, even as we develop the suite of shorter, more flexible formats. A notable collaboration was with Valley Outdoors and Djiriba Waagura, which significantly enhanced the inclusivity and learning outcomes of the program. Additionally, ARLP saw an increase in open scholarships, while maintaining strong engagement with industry partners. Key milestones for the ARLP included the graduation of 28 participants from Course 29 in September, the continued progress of 29 participants in Course 30, and the commencement of 30 new participants in June 2024.

## Milparanga Leadership Program

The Milparanga Leadership Program, supported by our ongoing partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), secured renewed funding for a further two years. This program is pivotal in developing First Nations leadership across Australia. In November 2023, 16 participants graduated from the Milparanga Emerging Leadership Program. In early 2024, 15 participants completed the Milparanga Established Leadership Program.

## TRAIL Emerging Leaders Program

In March 2024, 16 participants from sectors including agriculture, telecommunications and education joined the TRAIL Emerging Leaders Program. This program, designed to challenge and inspire emerging leaders, kicked off with an immersive experience in Canberra, featuring visits to key institutions and a meeting with the Governor General. ARLF Fellows led the participants in sessions on personality assessment (DiSC profiling), values-based leadership and advocacy.

With 94% of participants recommending the program, TRAIL continues to nurture confident, adaptable leaders who are equipped to make a real impact in their communities. We are deeply grateful to our funders for their generous support, which ensures the continued success of this vital program.

## Australian Agribusiness Leadership Program (AALP)

In April and May 2024, the AALP brought together 29 participants from key organisations, including NBNC Co, Nufarm, Australian Eggs and Nutrien Ag Solutions. The program featured a blend of immersive outdoor experiences and real-world applications. It started in Canberra and ended in Orange. A highlight of the program was the "wicked challenge" where participants worked together to tackle complex issues facing the agribusiness sector. It called for innovative thinking and strategic leadership.

The AALP is the only program of its kind in the country – one that brings together a diversity of leaders from across the agribusiness supply chain in a shared experience and tackling cross-sector challenges. The need for the outcomes of the AALP have never been greater with the agriculture sector in Australia in an increasingly complex environment.



### A skills-based board

This year saw a number of changes to our governance. Both Sylvia Admans and Robert Dulhunty stepped down from the board after years of dedicated service. Their contributions have been invaluable. We extend our heartfelt thanks for their leadership and commitment to the ARLF’s mission.

We were excited to welcome Niall Blair, Mena Waller and Sally Branson Dalwood to the board.

While Niall Blair was a NSW Parliamentarian and Government minister, Mena Waller brings experience with First Nations communities, and Sally Branson Dalwood has expertise in crisis management. Their fuller biographical details appear in the board report.

We farewelled Jackie Huggins as a patron in May 2024 and patronage for David Hurley also ended. We thank both for their commitment and valued support to the ARLF.

### Matching skills with ambitions

Strategically, ARLF experienced significant consolidation this year. After a period of growth, we shifted our focus toward ensuring that our size and structure support impactful outcomes without overextending our capacity. This consolidation allowed us to bring in the necessary skills and experience to align with our ambitions for rural, regional and remote Australia, while also ensuring we meet the increasing demands of larger-scale projects. We thank those working with us, in particular staff and our associates, for their passionate and dedicated work towards achieving these goals.

Moving forward, we remain committed to strengthening our project management methodologies and enhancing our financial and evaluation reporting. We understand the importance of accountability, particularly in honouring funding contracts and delivering on the expectations of our funders. Our deliberate approach to refining our organisational skills matrix ensures that we have the right capabilities in place to manage complex projects and provide thorough, transparent reporting. This process of skill-building and operational refinement will continue in the coming years as we solidify our position and expand our capacity to deliver high-impact outcomes.

### Pushing “counterculture” in a competitive market

Looking forward, as we see societal trends shift towards shorter, more personalised learning, we remain committed to a countercultural approach—offering long-form, immersive leadership programs that prioritise depth over brevity. In a hyperconnected world where we are constantly busy and always “on”, this approach becomes even more important. While micro-learning and shorter experiences remain important, we will continue to focus on providing time for reflection, experimentation, and genuine growth. If we lose the space for deep, in-person experiences, what is left? Leadership development requires a sustained commitment to self-awareness and collective action, and ARLF’s programs, like the ARLP, are designed to ensure that this depth continues to thrive, despite the pressures of a fast-paced world.



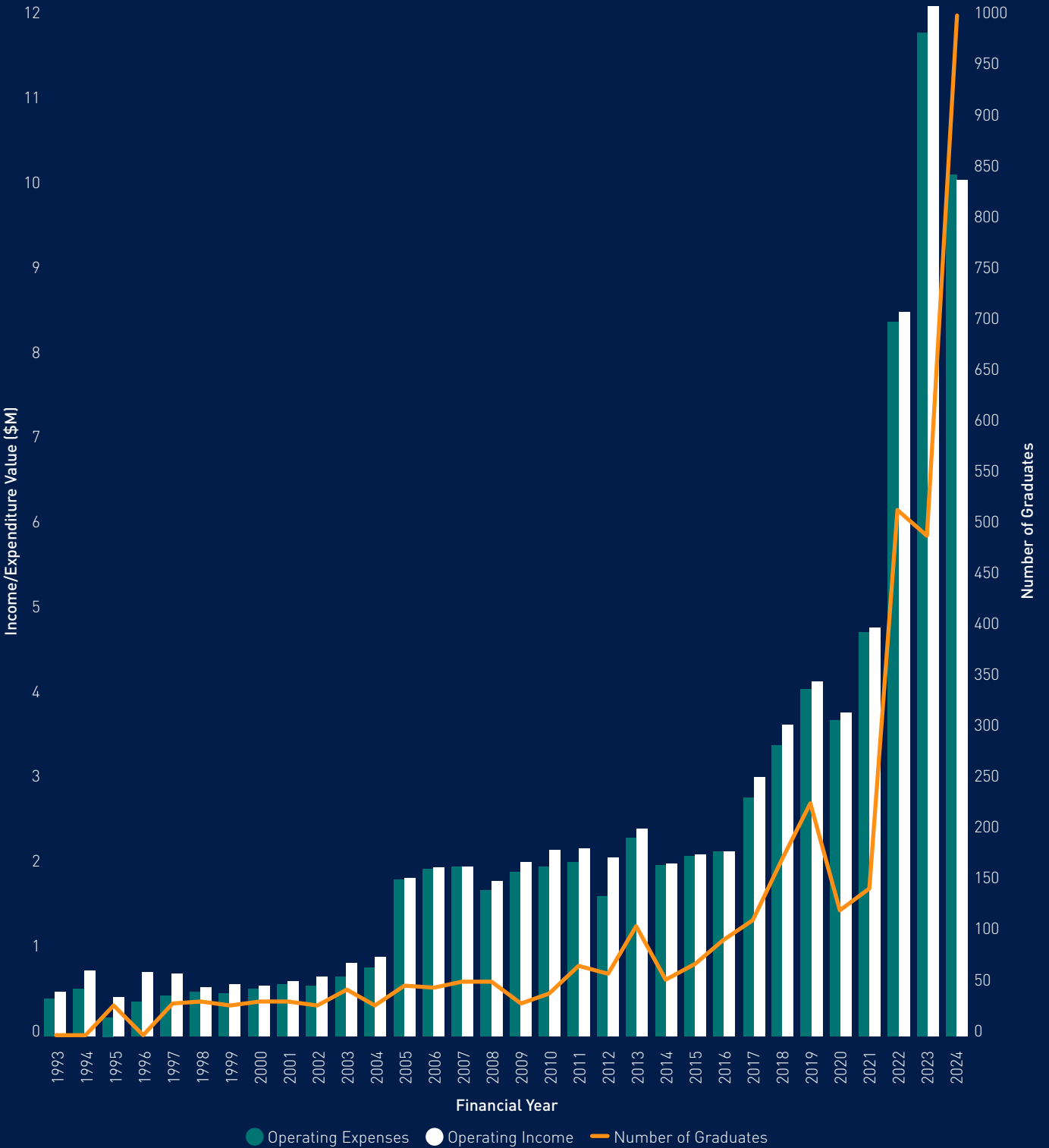
**Rick Sawers**  
Chair



**Matt Linnegar**  
Chief Executive

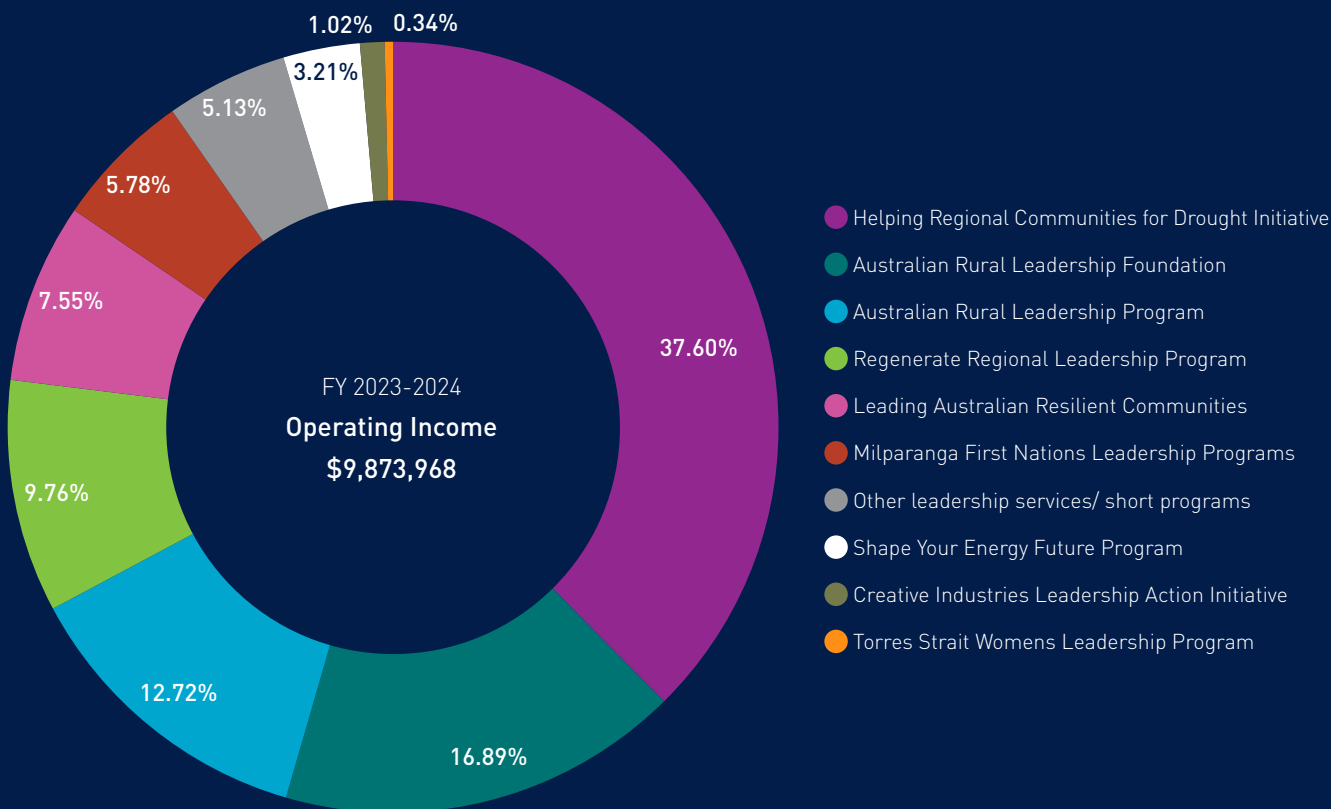
# FINANCIAL YEAR IN REVIEW

## Operating income, expenditure and number of graduates

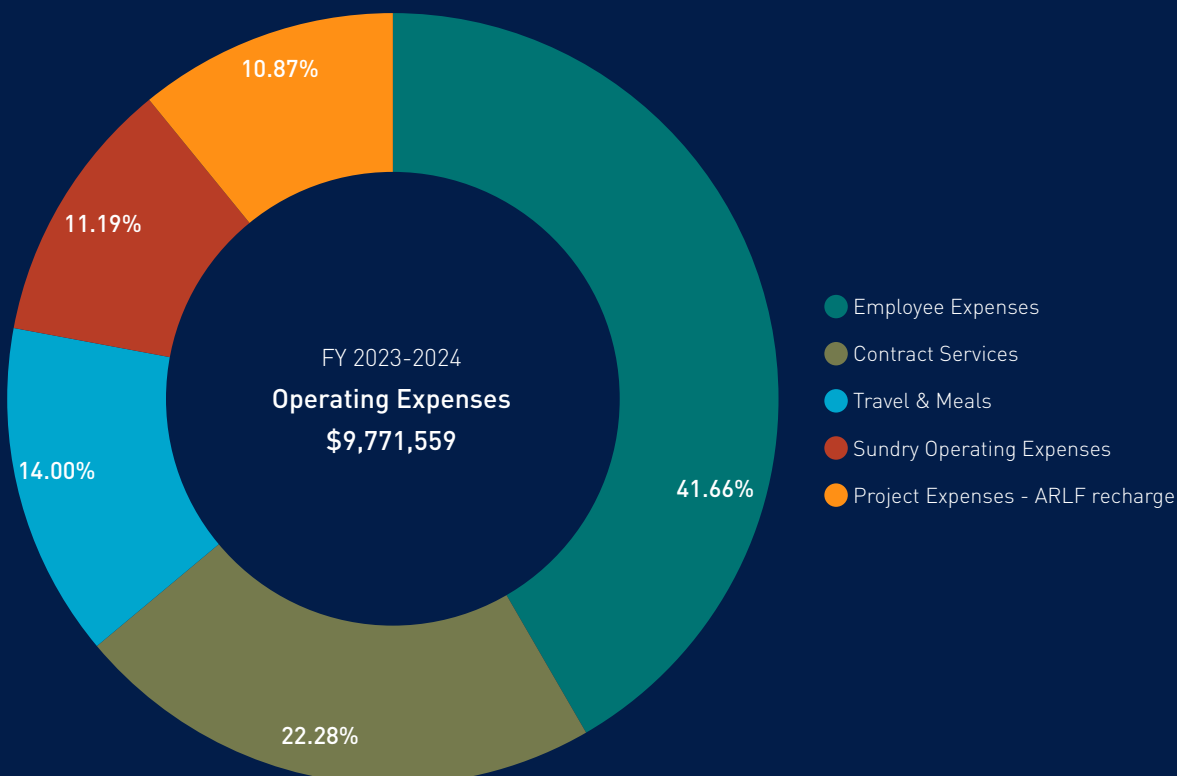




Income breakdown



Expense breakdown



# Leadership development for more people in more places

## Participant footprint

	Australian Agribusiness Leadership Program
	Australian Rural Leadership Program
	Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative
	Leading Australian Resilient Communities
	Milparanga
	National Mentoring Program
	Regenerate Regional Leadership Program
	Shape Your Energy Future
	TRAIL Emerging Leaders Program

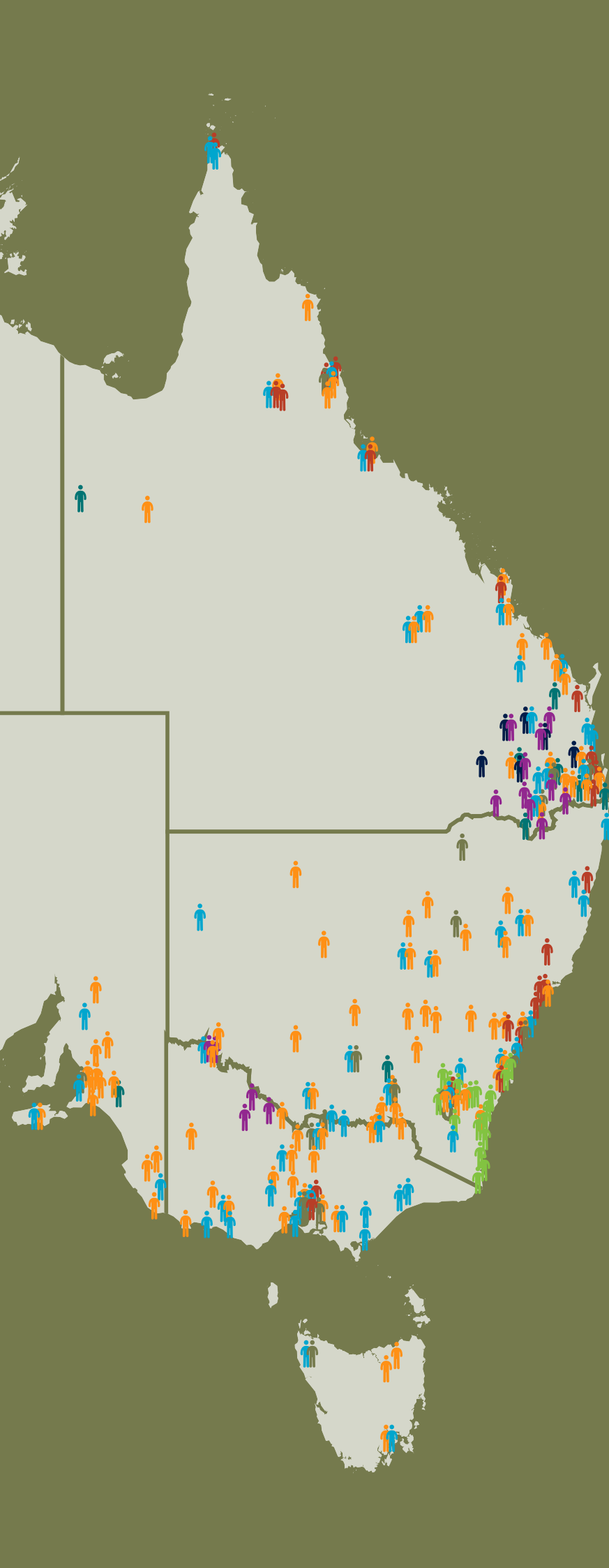
## Alumni lifetime metrics since 1992

2,984  
program alumni

172  
leadership  
program  
cohorts

16%  
identify as  
Aboriginal or  
Torres Strait  
Islander





### Annual metrics at a glance

**61**  
programs &  
workshops  
delivered

**16**  
leadership  
program  
cohorts

**2**  
mentoring  
program  
cohorts

**42**  
workshops

**472**  
leadership  
program  
participants

**338**  
new alumni

**617**  
workshop  
participants

**44**  
leadership  
action initiative  
participants

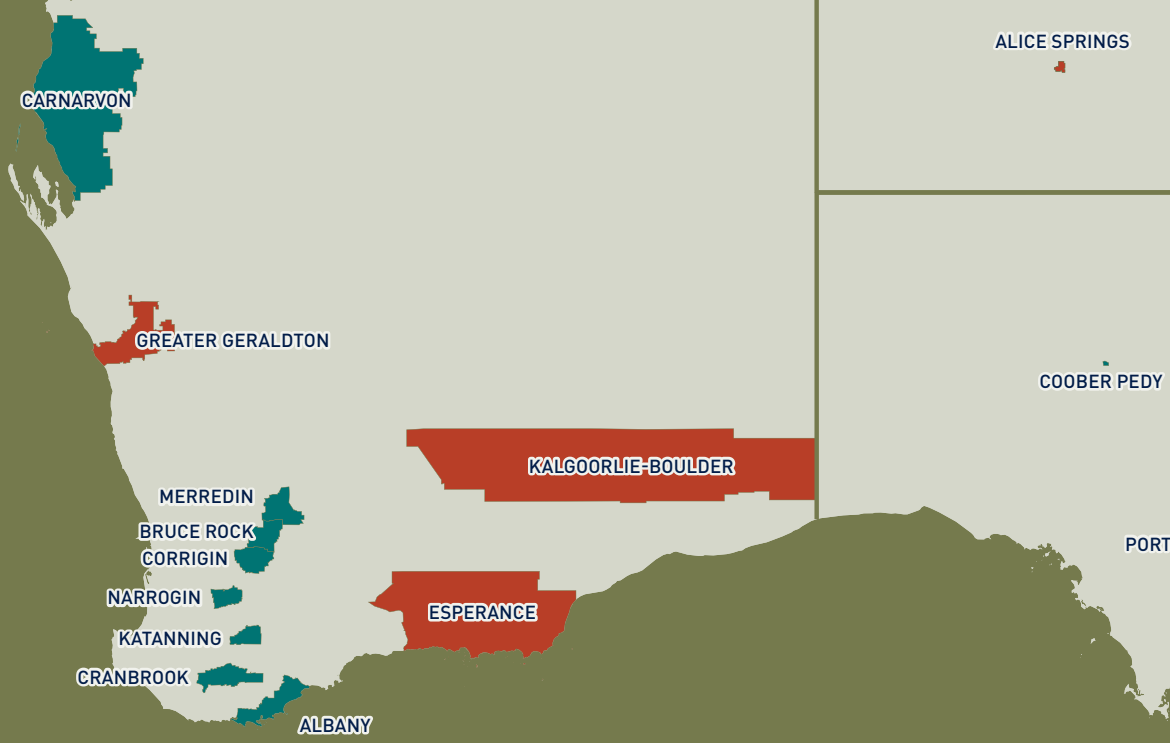
**69%**  
female

**23%**  
male

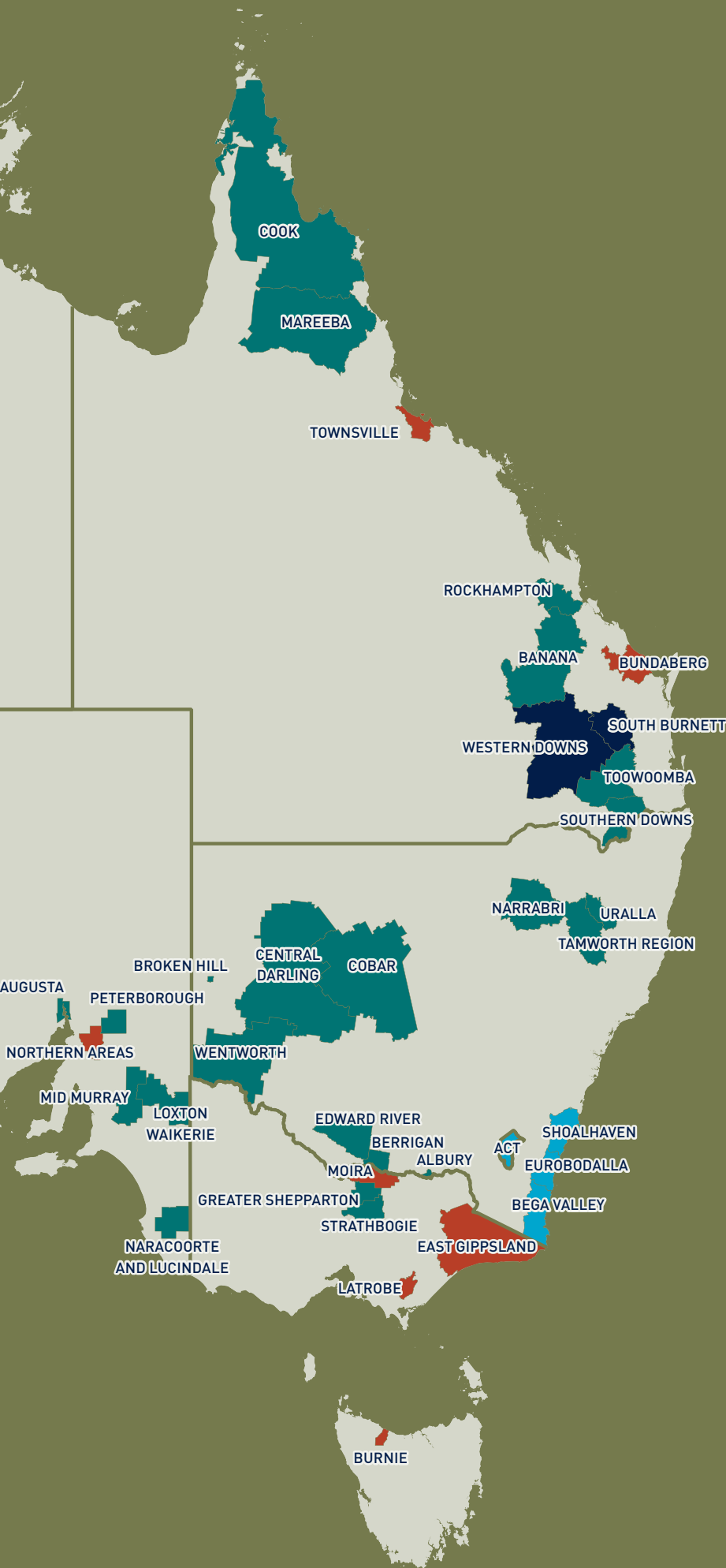
**1%**  
other gender  
identities

**8%**  
identify as  
Aboriginal or  
Torres Strait  
Islander

# Leadership development for more people in more places



- Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative
- Leading Australian Resilient Communities
- Regenerate Regional Leadership Program
- Shape Your Energy Future



In 2023-24, we delivered four programs as part of our place-based portfolio, reaching communities across the country. Building on our ongoing resilience and disaster preparedness efforts through the Future Drought Fund's programs, the Leading Australian Resilient Communities and Regenerate Regional Leadership Programs, we also partnered with Queensland communities navigating energy transition. Together, these initiatives reflect our commitment to equipping local leaders with the tools and networks needed to foster resilience and lead change where it matters.



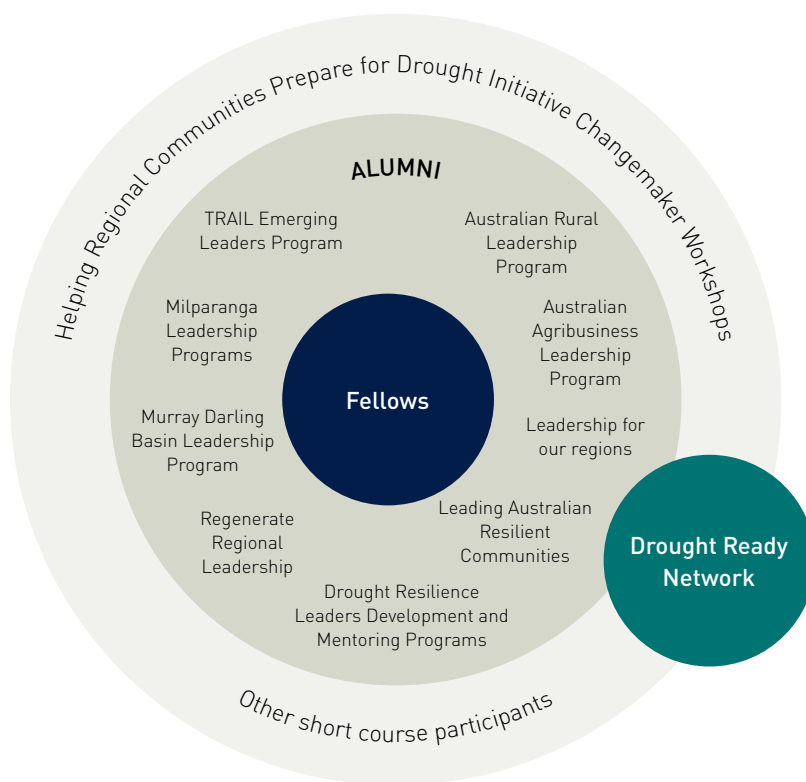
## ACTIVATING LEADERSHIP NETWORKS

In 1996, after the second ARLP cohort graduated, the ARLF network was established. Since then, it has grown to nearly 3,000 members thanks to the introduction of new programs and continued support for our leadership courses. The network now extends beyond leadership program alumni to include participants from workshops, allowing ARLF to broaden its reach and impact across rural, regional, and remote Australia.

As we continue to build and strengthen his network, we focus on pillars: providing support, connecting people, promoting leadership development, driving action, and celebrating achievements.

These participants help us measure and share the impact of leadership development, fuelling growth and fostering collaboration across industries and regions. By engaging a diverse range of people, we empower people from diverse backgrounds to tackle Australia's complex challenges and take an active part in change that supports positive outcomes for their communities.

We couldn't do this without our incredible facilitators and associates, who deliver best-practice experiential learning. The on the ground learning experiences not only inspire participants long after the program or workshop but also build the foundation for lifelong learning, collaboration, and a vision beyond individual goals, fostering lasting desire to influence change for the greater good.



## Network engagement

17

virtual events for cohorts

6 July 2023 ARLP 14
11 July 2023 First Nations alumni
19 July 2023 ARLP 16
26 July 2023 ARLP 28
2 November 2023 LARC alumni
29 November 2023 ARLP 1
7 February 2024 ARLP 28
14 February 2024 TRAIL 2022
21 February 2024 AALP 2022
6 March 2024 Regenerate Nambucca Valley
22 March 2024 ARLP 22
17 April 2024 TRAIL 2023
1 May 2024 Health sector graduates
8 May 2024 AALP 2019
22 May 2024 AALP 2021
28 May 2024 AgVic funded graduates
5 June 2024 DAFF funded graduates

17

face-to-face events

1 August 2023 LARC national alumni event
7 August 2023 Melbourne
20 November 2023 Perth
12 February 2024 Finley
13 February 2024 Esperance
16 February 2024 Dookie
19 February 2024 Port Augusta
23 February 2024 Townsville
26 February 2024 Shoalhaven
26 February 2024 Perth
28 February 2024 Bega Valley
26 March 2024 Launceston
4 April 2024 Darwin
22 April 2024 Kapunda
30 April 2024 Townsville
19 June 2024 Alice Springs
27 June 2024 Perth

6

webinars

19 July 2023 Voice to Parliament First Nations alumni consultations
11 August 2023 Voice to Parliament First Nations alumni consultations
4 September 2023 Voice to Parliament conversation – Alumni network
28 September 2023 LARC alumni - When Everyone Leads – Kansas Leadership Centre
6 June 2024 LARC alumni – Beyond Usual Suspects
19 June 2024 LARC alumni - Trauma Informed Leadership



Our associates



Briony Arnold



Stephen Brown



Russell Fisher



Tom Henderson



Catherine Marriott



Susan Benedyka



Steve Colman



Ananth Gopal



Alana Johnson



Clare Moss



Leith Bouilly



Richard Dent



Scott Gorringe



Craig Jones



Adam Smith



Elizabeth Brennan



Michelle Deshong



Karim Haddad



Tanya Lehmann



Jen Wressell



## CASE STUDY

## LOCAL LEADERS COME TOGETHER TO HELP SHAPE SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND'S ENERGY FUTURE

### Change is in the air for Southern Queensland as it transitions to a major renewables zone.

With the Queensland Government setting an ambitious target of 80 percent of the state's energy supply to come from renewables by 2035, the region is projected to generate up to 12,200 megawatts of new renewable energy.

As local energy generation transitions to solar farms and wind turbines, the region's landscapes, economies and communities will also be transformed.

But how will communities within the Southern Queensland Renewable Energy Zone be impacted? And how can balance be found between competing priorities? These were just some of the big questions that were discussed at Shape Your Energy Future (ShEF), a place-based leadership program funded by Boundless Earth and facilitated by the ARLF and Queensland Conservation Council.

Designed to drive community-led responses towards local issues, the program held in early 2024 supported people living in the Western Downs and South Burnett to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the renewable energy sector. To do this, participants from agriculture, local government, environmental groups, not-for-profit organisations and the energy sector all came together for a five-day leadership program followed by six weeks of virtual learning and a one-day public forum where project groups presented their ideas to the public.

### "We're not so different after all"

Participant Adrian Story wears many hats. The Dalby-based landholder is a grazier, but he's also an agriculture construction consultant with a background working in both renewables and gas. It's this unique combination of experience and interests that made him a worthy candidate to join the ShEF program.

"If you want the true definition of sustainability, go and look at a generational family farm. A few generations might do a few things wrong, but overall they can't afford to do things wrong if they want to pass it on to the next generation. To me, that's sustainability at its core," he says.

Adrian shares that the program enabled him and other participants to mull over some of the challenges the renewable energy sector faces. One of those issues is waste. Adrian believes that the wind and solar sectors can't quite call themselves truly renewable if the materials used to create the infrastructure are destined to end up in landfill. He's now working on a project aimed at investigating options for recycling solar panels once they reach the end of their life.



Another hot topic among participants was how to counter incorrect information and wrong assumptions being shared within the community. He shares that when renewable energy developers come knocking, it's hard for landholders to make sound decisions amid the confusing and conflicting information that makes its way around town.

"You've got to get the message across to farmers and landholders where they'll see it. And it's not Facebook. It's usually the regional newspapers and local community groups and organisations. We need to share information and knowledge on the ground, in places where farmers will find it," says Adrian.

With many regional communities across Australia being earmarked for renewable energy development, Adrian believes there's much to be learned from other regions that are undergoing or have undergone similar changes.

"Shape Your Energy Future is a very valuable program. It needs to be rolled out in more locations across the country, especially in places like Gladstone, Biloela and Hughenden. I just think there's so many people out there that need more information, because there's still so many unknowns when it comes to renewables. Somehow, we need to share our knowledge further," he says.

After spending a week together and numerous online sessions with other participants, Adrian's main takeaway is that he's got more in common with others than he realised.

"I was amazed by the diversity of people that participated in Shape Your Energy Future. Bringing everyone together in the same room for five days showed me that we're not so different after all."

## COLLABORATING WITH PURPOSE-ALIGNED ORGANISATIONS, INVESTORS AND PEOPLE

### Partnerships and collaborations in the past financial year

Over the past year, the ARLF has continued to build and strengthen partnerships with a variety of organisations, both locally and nationally. These collaborations have enhanced our ability to support rural, regional and remote communities, adding value to local organisations and expanding the reach of our programs, such as the Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative (HRCPI) and Leading Australian Resilient Communities (LARC).

Key Partnerships:

- » **Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR):** The ARLF worked closely with FRRR on two key initiatives—the *Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative* and the *Regenerate Regional Leadership Programs*. These collaborations have been pivotal in preparing communities for future challenges while fostering strong leadership in rural, regional and remote areas.
- » **Regional Arts Australia:** This partnership represented a new model of collaboration, wherein the ARLF aligned with a purpose-aligned organisation, and acted as a facilitator to support important conversations. The Creative Industries Leadership Action Initiative showcased how ARLF can work with partners and a sector to tackle and make progress on issues and opportunities with the diverse voices of regions and industries.

### National Engagement

In addition to local partnerships, the ARLF has succeeded in playing a part in national discussions, bringing leadership to the forefront of critical issues. Our team has contributed to forums such as the *National Climate Risk Assessment*, facilitated the *Regional Tech Hub* Roundtable on connectivity literacy, and engaged in conversations with key stakeholders to influence government policy.

These engagements ensure that the voice of rural, regional and remote communities is included in shaping Australia's future.

- » **Regional Tech Hub:** As part of this federal government initiative, the ARLF facilitated a session on improving connectivity literacy for rural Australians, bringing together industry leaders, government agencies and community groups. Our deep connection to rural, regional and remote Australia positioned us as a trusted facilitator for these important conversations.
- » **National Climate Risk Assessment:** The ARLF participated in workshops addressing climate risk assessment. We collaborated with the Australian Climate Service and other stakeholders to identify priority risks for Australia. This involvement highlights our ongoing commitment to addressing national issues through a leadership lens.

### Continuing and new funding support

While government funding continues to play a vital role, the ARLF is also proud of its enduring partnerships with corporate, philanthropic and industry supporters. These partners are essential to sustaining our national programs, and we look forward to deepening our collaboration to support industries and unlock new opportunities for regions.

### Looking Ahead

Our partnerships and networks remain a core part of the ARLF's strategy. We aim to continue aligning with purpose-driven organisations that share our vision for leadership in rural, regional and remote Australia. By fostering connections, facilitating conversations and contributing to national policy discussions, we will ensure that leadership in rural Australia is well-supported and continues to thrive.



**Philippa Woodhill**  
Partnerships Director

## Scholarship funding partners

### Agriculture Victoria (VIC Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions)

ARLP 29  
ARLP 31

### Agriculture Victoria Research

ARLP 29

### AgriFutures

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31  
AALP 2024  
TRAIL 2024

### ANZ Bank

AALP 2024

### Auctions Plus

ARLP 29

### Australian Eggs Limited

TRAIL 2024  
AALP 2024

### Australian Food and Fibre (AFF)

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Australian Live Export Council

TRAIL 2024

### Australian Lot Feeders Association

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31  
TRAIL 2024

### Australian Meat Processor Corporation Ltd

AALP 2024  
ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### Australian Rail Track Corporation

ARLP 30

### Australian Wool Innovation Ltd

ARLP 30

### Consolidated Pastoral Company

AALP 2024

### Cooperative Bulk Handling Ltd (CBH Group)

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31  
TRAIL 2024

### Cotton Australia Limited

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
TRAIL 2024

### Cotton Research and Development Corporation

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31  
TRAIL 2024

### Dairy Australia Limited

ARLP 30

### Fisheries Research and Development Corporation

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Fletcher International Export Pty Ltd

ARLP 31  
AALP 2024

### Gardiner Dairy Foundation

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Grains Research and Development Corporation

ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Growers' Advisory Council

ARLP 29

### H V McKay Charitable Trust

ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd

AALP 2024

### John B. Foundation

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### Kalyx Australia

AALP 2024

### Meat and Livestock Australia

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### Melons Australia

TRAIL 2024

### Murtupuni Centre for Rural and Remote Health Mt Isa

TRAIL 2024

### National Indigenous Australians Agency

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### NBNCo

TRAIL 2024  
AALP 2024

### New Edge Microbials

ARLP 30

### NSW Government Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

ARLP 30

### Nufarm Australia Limited

AALP 2024

### Nutrien Ag Solutions

AALP 2024

### Paraway Pastoral Co.

ARLP 29

### People First Bank Foundation (Weis Community Fund)

ARLP 31

### Prime Super

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Suncorp

AALP 2024

### Syngenta

AALP 2024

### Telstra Corporation

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

### The John B. Foundation

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

### Thyne Reid Foundation

ARLP 31

*continued over page >*



### Scholarship funding partners *(continued)*

**Tim Fairfax Family Foundation**

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30  
ARLP 31

**Torres Strait Regional Authority**

ARLP 29  
ARLP 30

**WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development**

ARLP 29

**Westpac Banking Corporation**

AALP 2024

**Whyalla Beef Pty Ltd**

TRAIL 2024

**Wilmot Cattle Company**

ARLP 29

**Woolworths Limited**

ARLP 30  
ARLP 31  
AALP 2024

**Yalari**

Milparanga 11 Emerging Leadership Program 2023

### Program funding and delivery partners

	FUNDING PARTNER	DELIVERY PARTNER
<b>Creative Industries Leadership Action Initiative</b>	Jibb Foundation	Regional Arts Australia
<b>Shape Your Energy Future</b>	Boundless Earth	Queensland Conservation Council
<b>Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative</b>	Australian Government Future Drought Fund	Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal National Farmers Federation Local community organisations in program regions
<b>Leading Australian Resilient Communities Program</b>	Australian Government Building Resilient Regional Leaders Initiative (Pilot)	Regional Australia Institute Leaders Institute of South Australia Leadership Victoria Leadership WA Tasmanian Leaders Australian Resilience Centre
<b>Regenerate Shoalhaven</b>	Australian Government Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program	Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal
<b>Regenerate Bega Valley</b>	Australian Government Investing in Rural Community Futures Bega Extension Grant	Bega Valley Shire Council, Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal
<b>Milparanga</b>	National Indigenous Australians Agency Yalari	

## SAFE SPACES FOR ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS SYSTEMIC CHANGE

**Above all, Sharna Willie is a proud Nunukul and Barada Kabalbarra woman. This fact has shaped her experiences, her personality, the way she experiences the world, and the way the world perceives her. Early in her career, Sharna participated in the Milparanga Emerging Leadership Program. And her experience laid the groundwork for her work with First Nations young people.**

Sharna grew up on Darumbul Country (Rockhampton), and moved to Kombumerri Country (Gold Coast) to attend Griffith University. She chose Griffith because it offered the program Sharna had her heart set on: a Social Science degree with a specific focus on Social Justice and Environmental Sustainability.

### The power of safety

Sharna participated in the Milparanga Emerging Leadership Program in 2018. The program, which is designed to support emerging leaders from First Nations communities, helps participants develop essential leadership skills, engage in culturally significant learning, and enhance their capacity to lead effectively in their respective communities. It emphasises cultural safety, personal development, and the ability to influence and drive community initiatives.

With fond memories of the two sessions (held in Perth and Canberra,) was the sense of cultural safety she felt. “It helped me understand the impact a sense of community can have, even after just a short time” she said. “I remember we were having yarns about our history and we all felt a lot of strength from that”.

An enthusiastic speaker, Sharna found it very powerful to practise that skill “in a safe place, with people I felt safe with—it makes a huge difference,” she says.

### Education across cultures

Sharna has spent much of her career working with First Nations young people. As a Program Manager for the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), Sharna helped Indigenous students build a bridge between high school and university.

When she was an Indigenous Liaison Officer in Rockhampton public schools, Sharna worked hard to create culturally safe spaces. This included advocating for students, building cultural capability among staff, and running NAIDOC Week events.

“Being part of the westernised school system is hard for the kids. It wasn’t designed for them and they’re often made to feel uncomfortable.” Importantly, “the way [the system] was built and the way it’s run can conflict with our culture. And I saw myself as someone else who was there to advocate for them”.

Sharna created a lunchroom for the students: “there was food there if they needed it. I had one Year Seven boy who came every lunchtime because it was the only place he felt relaxed”.

### Safety starts at the policy level

From Sharna’s perspective, having access to an Indigenous Liaison Officer is essential for many First Nations kids. Essentially, the experience hammered home what she already knew: “the system is a barrier for our kids,” she says.

Even though it’s clearly helpful for the students, Sharna emphasises that “having an Indigenous Liaison Officer is not mandatory and it’s not well-paid. There are policies there but their execution is left up to individual teachers.”

Crucially, “it’s the laws, policies, and how they’re implemented that form the basis of progressive, systematic change.”

### Seeds of change

The Milparanga Emerging Leadership Program helped Sharna recognise the need for systemic change. “Right now I’m still at the stage where I’m still trying to figure out what I’m doing. I know I want a career where I’m always making an impact on my community, my mob.”

“When I reflect on my career, the fact I’m an Aboriginal woman in the world is the common thread. I understand where my people have come from and how their history impacts the way they are. Now, as a Social Scientist, I’ve learnt to understand society and how society interacts with the people who live here.”

“I work with kids and teens because they’re our next generation. I want to use my knowledge to create systemic change, whilst giving back to my community and mob,” she says.

Bolstered by her knowledge, networks, and the space-holding techniques she learned on the Milparanga Emerging Leadership Program, Sharna’s creating culturally safe, welcoming spaces for First Nations young people—and sowing the seeds of systemic change for Indigenous people.

CASE STUDY

## AALP HELPED REANNAN UNDERSTAND THE GIFT OF FEEDBACK

Having spent her childhood balancing time between her family’s Pittsworth farm and her various sporting commitments, Reannan Schultz has received a lot of feedback over the years. But it wasn’t until she participated in the Australian Agribusiness Leadership Program (AALP) that she realised the transformative power of considerate, constructive feedback. And it’s this insight that has changed the way she interacts with her colleagues—as well as how she sees herself.



Reannan is a Business Development Manager at Nufarm Australia and she was thrilled to be selected to experience AALP 2024. AALP helps current and emerging agribusiness leaders hone their practical leadership skills across agricultural contexts. With a focus on innovation, sustainability, and strategic thinking, participants face a range of challenges in a safe environment. The program focuses heavily on inner development and, while it was uncomfortable at times, Reannan describes her AALP experience as “phenomenal.”

### Comfort zone? I don’t know her

The AALP challenges participants both physically and mentally. Over the course of two weeks, Reannan found herself:

- » Embracing the role of day leader and actively providing feedback to others
- » Engaging in group problem-solving activities, where she truly saw the value of listening to different perspectives
- » Recognising her leadership signature—uplifting those who are less likely to speak up

“The biggest thing I gained is my bolstered confidence. I’m much more comfortable speaking up and presenting my ideas.” Before AALP, Reannan was reluctant to share unless she had a fully formed solution ready to go. She was challenged by the notion that voicing her idea may not be considered valuable.

With time and space for self-reflection, Reannan realised—when it came to openly sharing her ideas, it was her own interpretation of feedback that was getting in her way.

“Growing up playing sports, feedback was essential, however I would internalise feedback as an inherently negative thing.” It was only following participation in the AALP Reannan now understands that feedback is in fact a gift.

### The power of self awareness

In addition to long walks and tricky team challenges, the AALP’s reflective learning model includes a lot of internal work and self reflection. At first, Reannan struggled to find the purpose in dedicating time for deep reflection, but it ended up being the most powerful part of her course. Through this reflection, Reannan developed a deeper understanding of her own leadership style and her impact on others. “The effect it had on me was so profound. Now I know it’s important to strive and reflect, but to always start with self.”

These days, Reannan’s approach has changed. “I’ll definitely sit back and listen, but if I have something to contribute, I won’t let that moment pass”. In particular, she was inspired watching great ideas develop from seemingly insignificant triggers. “I see the importance of having a diversity of thought in problem solving...the program taught me that the smallest fragment of an idea can turn out to be one of the building blocks of a solution.”

Since completing the AALP, Reannan feels more self aware. She’s more open-minded and has a new understanding of the role of leadership. “Leadership is not about me... it’s about making the people around me feel comfortable having their voices heard”.

## Nufarm's sponsorship pays dividends

Reannan was one of three Nufarm Australia team members sponsored to attend AALP this year. The organisation has sponsored scholarships AALP sponsorships since 2019, and as Nufarm's Commercial General Manager, Peter O'Keeffe sees the benefits firsthand. Over his 20 years at Nufarm, Peter has come across hundreds of development programs. But the AALP stands out.

"People talk about this program forever," he says. "Everyone says it's the best thing they've ever done". Peter has seen many AALP participants unlock new confidence "because they understand themselves better. It's like they say to themselves 'you know what? I actually am capable of leading'".

At first, Peter saw the AALP as more suitable for marketing and sales leaders. But after Nufarm started gifting sponsorships to their retail partners, his understanding of the program widened. "I used to think AALP was specifically for 'business' people, but now I see it's just as beneficial for 'people' people across organisations".

Not only that, Peter has noticed a direct impact within Nufarm, with participants returning from the program more equipped to take on responsibility and drive sustainable, innovative ideas.

"AALP is ideal for emerging leaders as well as those who are already in leadership positions. I've seen huge progress in everyone who has gone through the program. They're much more active in discussions, development, and have a broader perspective. They're more comfortable and confident in speaking up after they've rolled out of the program".

## The confidence to grow

Reannan's time in the AALP helped her reframe the worth of her ideas and experience. Not only that, she's got a new understanding of what it means to lead. "Previously I thought leadership meant the person was in a managerial position. But now I know you don't need to be managing people to be a leader". Reannan is bolstered by the knowledge and network she found in the AALP, but it's more than that. She's moving through life and work with more self-compassion, a sense of calm in a fast-paced world, and a deep confidence in her ability to learn and grow.



Reannan (second from right) and fellow AALP 2024 participants, Molong NSW.



## BUILDING CAPABILITY THROUGH SYSTEMS

**As we continue to grow the ARLF’s delivery footprint and leadership development activities, the corporate services team has collaborated with internal and external stakeholders to review and improve our financial, stakeholder management and project management systems.**

The underlying principle was to exploit our growth to embed increased technical, commercial and people-centered systems and processes, and skills, across the organisation.

We moved the team onto a single project management system early in the financial year, allowing for the smooth delivery of leadership programs and events.

The new customer management system has significantly increased our capability and capacity in the management of our business development pipeline, marketing campaigns, data management and leadership program participant management. It has been effective in supporting our data management and security.

In tandem we have matured our cybersecurity framework to support ARLF to mitigate cyber risks.

To maintain a thriving and healthy working culture, with the majority of our workforce working remotely, we have instigated a series of face-to-face and online initiatives that help build our teams.



**Lockie McDonald**  
*Corporate Services  
Director*

Alumni catch up in  
Boydton.



CASE STUDY

# REFLECTING ON LEADERSHIP ON LARAPINTA: A JOURNEY OF GIVING BACK AND INSPIRING OTHERS

Funds raised:  
**\$53,418**

Fundraising activity:  
**Hiking the Larapinta**

**The Leadership on Larapinta Fundraising Walk, which took place in May 2024, stands as a powerful reminder of how one person’s vision can inspire a movement.**

For Donna Digby, an alum of the Australian Rural Leadership Program 27, this walk was more than a physical challenge; it was one of three impactful goals she set for herself after receiving a scholarship to participate in the program. Through this initiative, Donna sought to give back, honour her late husband Matt’s legacy, and strengthen the alumni community.

Donna’s journey on the Larapinta Trail began as an idea that she and Matt had discussed at length. As an experienced outdoor educator and leader, Matt believed that connecting fundraising efforts to nature was a perfect fit. After Matt’s sudden passing, Donna chose to continue with the walk, driven by his mantra, “Your word is your worth.”

Looking back, the walk achieved much more than its \$50,000 fundraising goal—it united ARLF alumni, drew in support from across rural and regional Australia, and left a lasting impact on those involved. Alumni from various ARLF cohorts laced up their boots, ready to tackle the 100 km trek in Central Australia, raising funds for scholarships to support a future Central Australian leader.

But beyond the funds raised, this event became a platform for connection and reflection. The trail itself symbolised the leadership journey: sometimes clear, sometimes uncertain, but always requiring persistence and a forward momentum.



The walk also provided an opportunity to immerse in First Nations culture, guided by Benji Kenny and his team at 100% Finke River Culture and Adventure, fostering an even deeper connection to the land and leadership.

For Donna, the fundraiser was not only about honouring her own scholarship journey but also about creating a lasting impact for others. The success of the Leadership on Larapinta Fundraising Walk serves as an inspiring example for the broader ARLF community. Donna’s vision has paved the way for others to follow.





## ENSURING WE ARE CAPABLE AND SUSTAINABLE

**Thanks in no small part to the dedicated fundraising efforts of two community fundraisers, this past 12 months has seen an unprecedented increase in first time donors. We welcome our new donors and thank them for their support.**

Many were introduced to the ARLF through the Leadership on Larapinta Fundraising Walk, a community fundraising initiative of ARLF Fellow Donna Digby. Others donated to the Country Roads Cycle Tour, a 1,350-kilometer fundraising bike ride from Canberra to Brisbane, undertaken by ARLF Honorary Fellow, Graham Smith.

In recognition of the impact of our programs, US based foundation Global Giving boosted its past investment in the Regenerate Regional Leadership Programs through a philanthropic gift in support of bushfire recovery and resilience.

Long-time ARLF benefactor, the John B. Foundation renewed its support for a further five years for an annual ARLP John B. Innovation in Agriculture Scholarship. While a grant from the Jibb Foundation, together with a philanthropic gift from Tim Fairfax AC, saw the design and delivery of the ARLF's first Leadership Action Initiative (LAI) in partnership with Regional Arts Australia.

With a focus on the creative industries, the LAI was one of two projects this year funded entirely by philanthropy. The other, the Shape Your Energy Future Program, held in the Western Downs and South Burnett region in Queensland, was funded by Boundless Earth. We are hoping to take this successful place-based program to other regional communities experiencing the impacts of energy transition.

Continued philanthropic support for ARLP scholarships has built the leadership capability of no less than 12 participants over 2023-2024. Thanks to the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, John B. Foundation, Thyne Reid Foundation, H V McKay Charitable Trust and People First Bank Foundation (Weis Community Fund) for funding these critically needed scholarships. And to the donors to our bi-annual fundraising appeals. This past year your donations co-funded two ARLP31 scholarships.



**Vivienne Johnson**  
Philanthropy Manager

Tim and Gina Fairfax with ARLP 31 participants Kalair McArthur (R) and Nicole Walsh (L).



## Thank you to donors

The ARLF is one of more than 60,000 registered charities in Australia, all making a significant contribution to our nation and its people in pursuit of their vision and mission. We are very grateful to the following people and organisations who, among the many, many worthy charities, chose to support the ARLF in 2023-2024.

Sylvia Admans	Richard Evison	Stacey Lugsdin	Barbara June Saint
Cecily Andersen	Tim Fairfax AC	Lukina Lukin	Martha Saw
Lisa Anderson	Steven Fawns	Katrina Lynn	Richard Sawers
Julie Andrezza	Tim Ferraro	Kym Macfarlane	Tracey Scanlan
Debbie Bailey	Josh Fielding	Kaye Maguire	Anne Schmidt
Robyn Baker	Melissa Fletcher	John Maher	Anthony Schneiders
Carly Baker-Burnham	Ann Foley	Judith Mapleson	Holger Schulz
Katherine Balding	Ailsa Fox OAM	William Martin	Rajan Sharma
Benedict Barlow	Cathryn Geiger	Anne-Marie Maschio	Ross Sharrock
Raquel Bartmanovich	Helen Gladman	Sarah Matthee	Karen Sheldon
Gary Bastin	Gemma Gordon	Annette McCarthy	Annette Simpson
Graeme Baynes	Kerry Graf	Melinda McCrohon	Michelle Smallman
Elizabeth Beavis	Allison Gray	Adam McLachlan	Graham Smith
Lorrah Berg	Tanya Greenwood	Jody McMiles	Aimee Snowden
Niall Blair	Katrina Grundon	Jonathan McNeill	Jennifer Stanton
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Michelle Burchett	Doug Humann AM	Catriona Murray	Angela Timbs
Cherisse Buzzacott	Troy Johnson	Petra Niclasen	Alister Trier
Yayes Cafe	Vivienne Johnson	Martin Nixon	Katie Unipan
John Carey	Marg Johnson	Matt Norton	Ashleigh Van Der Linde
Anna Carr	Natasha Johnston	Clair O'Brien	Daniel Walker
Sally Clayton	Amanda Jones	Nina O'Brien	Mena Waller
Andrea Clifford	Sallie Jones	Clarice O'Leary	Ian Wallis
Rod Cohen	Jennie Keioskie	Margo O'Malley	Dionne Walsh
Max Craigie	Ilse Kiessling	Lorinda Otto	Kirrilee Warr
Catherine Cummins	Ross Kingsland	Jordan Phillips	Cathy White
Merna Curnow	Edwin Kosgey	Libby Prell	Richard Williams
Jillian D'Urso	Kimberley Kunde	Geoff Prior	Jacqueline Wilson-Smith
Claire Dawson	Kim Lane	Steve Provins	Katherine Winchester
Claire Delahunty	Valerie Lang	Ruth Redfern	Kathy Wockner
Jenny Dettrick	Tanya Lehmann	Debbie Reeves	Philippa Woodhill
Anneise Dolphin	Peter Lewus	Sean Rice	Jane Worner
Andrew Drysdale	Clive Liebmann	Daniel Robb	Brett Wright
Alexander Dunn	Matt Linnegar	Ed Roberts	Qiuyan Wu
David Eldridge	Michael Lloyd	D Robinson	
Kate Ettlin	Michele Luey	Penny Rush	



## CASE STUDY

## TRAIL PROGRAM RESETS AND RE-ENERGISES YOUNG FEEDLOT LEADER

**Abby Brooker laughs recalling her expectations that the 2024 TRAIL program was going to make its 16 participants “starving and a little bit angry”. She knew the reputation of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation programs for taking participants outside their comfort zone, and expected to be tested while immersed in the bushland of Namadji National Park.**

What followed was in fact seven transformative days in a distraction-free setting perfect for learning and connection with other emerging rural leaders.

“My cohort clicked so quickly, it was like we’d known each other for years,” Abby says. “It was supportive and open and a great place to share things.”

Abby is a young-gun of the feedlot industry; passionate about her role as the livestock breeding manager at Whyalla Feedlot in Texas, Queensland. Growing up on her family’s cattle property in Casino, NSW, she knew she wanted a career in agriculture, but didn’t know what that would look like.

After studying Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of New England, she saw a job opening for a trainee manager with NH Foods’ Whyalla Feedlot and jumped into the first of a succession of roles where no two days have ever been the same.

Indeed, Abby squeezes in a phone call about her TRAIL experience in the middle of a work trip to King Island, Tasmania, where the feedlot has an internal breeder herd. While her job means regular travel and an absorbing palette of artificial insemination, preg testing cows and weaning calves, it is also highly demanding. Abby works a ten-days-on, four-days-off roster, and lives on-site. The relatively isolated population of Texas is about 800, and the social opportunities – especially for a young person – are limited.

“Burnout is a massive thing, as you don’t really stop. It’s big hours and big shifts. You go home, have dinner, go to bed, then get up and go again. You don’t always take enough time to look after yourself.” Abby says.



### Shared challenges

Through her diverse TRAIL cohort – from industries including cotton, grain, horticulture, poultry, exports and health – Abby realised there were common issues across the board. Burnout was one of them, along with a shortage of skilled workers and the issue of social license.

“A major thing I took away from TRAIL is the need to take some time for oneself, whether in a day or a week ... You can’t perform for your team if you’re not caring for yourself. Being cranky and tired means you’re not able to give 100% for the people you’re leading.”

Abby is just 26 but has consistently managed teams in her four years with Whyalla Feedlot. Leadership is not something she’s consciously sought, so much as something that has followed her from school and sporting contexts into the workforce.

“I think I’m quite empathetic and listen and understand where people are coming from. I’m respectful. I make sure everyone knows what they need to do ... I won’t ask someone to do something that I’m not willing to do myself.”

She learned from the “maturity and experience” in her TRAIL cohort, while imparting her insights as a young person in agriculture.

“I learned I need to back myself and have a bit more confidence. I learned to trust that what I’m thinking is worth saying.” Abby says.

## The gift of switching off

Throughout the TRAIL program, which involves a five-day outdoors component, and two days in a residential setting, Abby was keen to spend time in nature and learn what others were experiencing in their industries. But the program's impact was more profound than expected.

Just prior to starting TRAIL, Abby experienced a complicated end to a long-term relationship, which destabilised almost every aspect of her life.

"I was lost and torn on just how I was going to get through it, I was really struggling," she says.

"TRAIL was an opportunity to hand over my phone and go bush with a lovely supportive group of people and 'switch off'. It helped me completely change my head space and remotivate me."

Through this well-timed "fresh start", Abby found space to reevaluate what matters to her and what values are most important. She returned to work in a vastly improved headspace.

## Committed to a future in feedlotting

While public perception of feedlots is an ongoing issue, Abby's discussions about social license with her TRAIL cohort reinforced the importance of advocacy and sharing information about her industry.

"Feedlots cop a lot of scrutiny, but my experience has shown me that our quality assurance standards and systems mean everything is structured to get it right. We're in the process of expanding to about 75,000 head, and we have to keep track of the history and wellbeing of every single animal in that space."

And while there are perennial challenges around work-life balance, Abby is right where she wants to be.

"I've found my passion in the livestock breeding role. I love seeing the calves growing out and the AI results; getting a good preg test rate and seeing animals happy and healthy and calm and easy to handle. I get to follow each animal through its life."

There is a good balance of women among the 100-strong team working at Whyalla, and Abby has found the industry welcoming and supportive. She was moved to receive the backing of her employer to take part in TRAIL.

"People are often sponsored on TRAIL by their industry, but having my work directly sponsor me to do the program was amazing," Abby says.

"I'm so grateful, and I was pretty shocked by that investment in me. It's quite humbling."

From TRAIL, she has taken a renewed determination to keep learning in her job and provide opportunities for her team to do the same.

"You can't expect to go forward if you don't learn things well first."

And in just seven days she has gained life-long connections.

"Being a part of this group of 16 people makes you think about the bigger picture. That network is something I take with me. Without that, you don't go as far, and you never know when you might need to call on some of that knowledge."



## CONTRIBUTING TO THE CREATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE THE PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

When the opportunity arose late in 2023 to be part of the organising committee for the inaugural Leadership Summit in 2024, the response from ARLF team members was an obvious “yes please”.

It was an excellent time to engage in deeper and broader conversations between leadership development practitioners and academic scholars. The aim was to forge meaningful connections and collaborations between those studying leadership and those actively working to develop leadership capability at the individual, organisational, community, regional and national levels.

Thus, we found ourselves contributing to the design of the summit, which was initiated and hosted by Tasmanian Leaders, the National Leadership Network, and the University of Tasmania. As nominated hosts of the event in 2025, the ARLF and the Australian National University (ANU) sent delegates as part of the organising committee.

The Leadership Summit was attended by 80 delegates who participated in workshops, presentations and discussions on topics such as leadership and identity, gender inequality in leadership, political and ideological polarisation, the evaluation of leadership development programs, the notion of leadership for the common good, the persistence of “zombie” leadership—outdated leadership notions that refuse to die—the implications of AI for leadership, and future forecasts for leadership development.

Held at the University of Tasmania campus in Launceston, the summit brought together a diverse array of passionate individuals, all contributing to the strengthening of the sector. They were curious about how to create collaborative partnerships, facilitate action research, promote diversity in leadership and establish knowledge exchange centres.

ARLF and ANU will host the next Leadership Summit in March 2025 in Canberra. We look forward to building on the momentum of this year’s event.



### Leadership Summit 2024 attendees

- » Matt Linnegar, Chief Executive
- » Andrea Hogg, Director of Learning
- » Andrew Bryant and Simone Carroll-Germech, Learning Managers
- » Dr Werner Vogels, Manager Evaluation and Insights
- » Zelda Chambers, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement Officer
- » Benny Callaghan and Tanya Lehmann, ARLF Associates
- » Plus ARLF facilitators

As a result of the summit, several attendees collaborated to produce the white paper *From Divergence to Convergence: Integrating Research and Practice in Australian Leadership Development*. This paper explores the key differences and commonalities between leadership researchers and practitioners, aiming to bridge the gap between the two. While the leadership industry continues to grow, the white paper highlights the ongoing debate over what leadership truly is and how best to develop it. It calls for greater collaboration, offering insights on how inclusive diversity, systems thinking and interdisciplinary approaches can shape the future of leadership development in Australia and beyond. We encourage readers to explore this paper to gain a deeper understanding of how research and practice can work together to meet the leadership challenges of the 21st century.



Scan to view the white paper



**Andrea Hogg**  
Learning Director



CASE STUDY

# GRAHAM SMITH'S COUNTRY ROADS CYCLE TOUR

Funds raised:

**\$7,506**

Fundraising activity:

**Cycling from Brisbane to Canberra**

A warm and enthusiastic welcome awaited Graham Smith as he completed his 1,350 km fundraising cycle tour from Canberra to Brisbane. Friends and former colleagues gathered near the iconic 'BRISBANE' sign at Southbank to cheer him on as he pedaled to the finish line, marking the end of his incredible journey.

The celebration, filled with smiles, noise, and a well-deserved pizza lunch, was a fitting tribute to Graham's achievement—not just for completing the ride but for raising crucial funds for an ARLF scholarship.

Graham, a former ARLF staff member, embarked on the ambitious cycle tour to help raise \$6,000 towards an ARLF scholarship, to support emerging leaders in rural, regional, and remote Australia. Thanks to the generous support of donors, including a significant last-minute contribution, Graham successfully surpassed his fundraising goal.

His journey took him through towns close to his heart, including Orange and Tamworth, where he visited family and friends and met with ARLF alumni. Along the way, Graham reflected on the physical and emotional challenge of the tour and the meaningful connections he made with communities across New South Wales and Queensland.



"This ride was about more than just reaching Brisbane," Graham said. "It was about helping to ensure that future rural leaders have the opportunities and support they need to thrive. I'm proud to have played a part in raising these funds for ARLF scholarships."

After a well-earned rest and a trip to the bike shop to pack up his trusted cycle companion, Graham expressed his gratitude to everyone who followed his journey and donated to the cause. He also noted that the ride was a personal milestone as part of his goal to cycle to every Australian state capital before turning 70.

With the funds raised from his ride, Graham has helped pave the way for future leaders to benefit from ARLF's leadership development programs, ensuring that rural, regional, and remote communities continue to thrive.





## OUR BOARD

### Current board members



#### Richard (Rick) Sawers

Rick joined the ARLF Board of Directors in March 2016. Rick has over 45 years of experience as a senior executive with several large Australian listed corporations. He has extensive experience working in international locations in financial services, markets, trade, strategy and risk management.

In addition, Rick is an experienced company director and is currently chair of Fund2Market Pty Ltd (trading as Banjo Loans) and a member of the ARC of the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, past roles include board chair and chair of key sub-committees, contributing high standards of corporate governance and extensive strategy formulation and execution experience.

Rick has held roles as Executive Chair of Great Western Bancorporation (USA), Chair of the Australian Financial Markets Association, Deputy Chair of Export Finance Australia (formerly EFIC), and Executive Director of Clydesdale Bank PLC, (now Virgin Money UK).

Rick is from Alexandra, Victoria, and now resides in Melbourne.



#### Marjorie (Margaux) Beauchamp FAICD

Margaux Beauchamp is a seasoned corporate, capital and value advisor with more than 30 years of experience. Her particular expertise is in advising on food and agribusiness divestments, acquisitions, IPOs, takeovers, and takeover defence mandates. Margaux leads BDO Brisbane's Food and Agribusiness Sector Group.

Margaux is a Chair, CPC Group Holdings Pty Ltd, an Australian-managed, UK-owned Agrifood business that owns and operates a portfolio of 9 cattle stations and two feedlots in Indonesia; and Benfer Holdings Pty Ltd, the holding company for Darwalla group of companies. Darwalla is Queensland's largest chicken producer and owns 50% of the chicken processor Golden Cockerel. She is a former non-executive director of Mulgowie Fresh Pty Ltd, a large Australian horticultural company with operations in South-East Queensland, North Queensland, Gippsland Victoria, and Northern New South Wales and the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority. She was raised on a cattle station in Far Western Queensland and maintains a private investment in the beef industry, spending considerable time each year in regional Australia.

Margaux holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Economics (Honours) from the University of New England and a Master of Commerce from the University of Queensland. She is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand.



#### Melissa Fletcher

Melissa is a Kamilaroi woman from Moree, now residing in Dubbo in New South Wales, and a graduate of Course 18 of the ARLP.

Melissa is the Chief Executive Officer of Fletcher International Exports, one of Australia's largest processors and exporters of lamb and sheep meat products, and fully integrated private Australian Agribusiness. Melissa is the owner of a small business, Smoked Garage in Brisbane, the Aboriginal Company Fletchers Big Boomerang Logistics in Dubbo and also part owner of Native Secrets of Dubbo.

Melissa currently serves as the Chair, Australian Meat Processor Corporation and has previously served as a Director of the Albany Port Authority, General Manager of Fletcher International, Western Australia and as an Indigenous Liaison at St Patricks Senior College in Mackay, Queensland.



### John Maher

Presently John serves as Chair of North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCo) and Chair of Palisade's Regional Livestock Exchanges (RLX). He is a Director on the Boards of GrainCorp, GO.FARM Australia and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. He is also a Senior Adviser to private equity firm, BGH Capital.

Previous roles include long-term Managing Director and Chief Executive of the ASX listed rural services company, Ruralco Holdings Ltd (ASX: RHL) for nine years, Senior Group Executive at Wesfarmers Ltd (ASX: WES) for 10 years and AWB Ltd (ASX: AWB) for two years where he led the Landmark (now Nutrien) business. More recently John was Group CEO of the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC).

John is a strong advocate for Australian agribusiness, international agricultural trade and regional and remote communities. He was awarded Sydney University's Alumni Outstanding Achievement Award for services to these causes. He continues to contribute as a director for a number of organisations, including Autism Awareness Australia.

He has an honours degree in Agricultural Science from Sydney University, an MBA from Australian Graduate School of Management (University of NSW), completed the Advanced Management Program at INSEAD Business School in France, studied global agribusiness at Harvard Business School, is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.



### Mena Waller

Mena grew up in Central Queensland and has cultural connections to Walman Yawuru People in north-west Kimberly, Western Australia. She now resides in Sunshine Coast and is the Queensland Director of 54 reasons, Australia's leading child rights organisation making an impact by working with kids and their carers to develop, be safe, connected and heard.

Mena has worked remotely in First Nation communities, across state-wide health policy and programs, and in national practice development. She brings a passion for people-centred, sustainable and collaborative approaches to systems change.

Mena is an alum of Milparanga and Course 26 of the ARLP. She holds qualifications in business and communications, community development and education.

## New board members



### The Hon. Niall Blair

The Hon. Niall Blair is an ESG specialist with more than 25 years' experience across government and the private sector, specialising in risk management, food and fibre production systems, circular economy solutions and sustainability.

Niall Blair is an accomplished chairperson and non-executive director with demonstrated financial accountability and corporate governance experience and a strong background in workplace safety, quality and environmental management systems development and auditing and currently serves on the boards of Cotton Regional Development Corporation (CRDC), NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT), Marine BioProducts CRC and Murrumbidgee Irrigation.

Prior to this, Niall was Professor of Food Sustainability at Charles Sturt University. He was a senior member of the NSW Parliament for nine years and served as NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Water, Forestry, Lands, Trade and Industry, and as Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

Niall holds a Masters of Occupational Health and Safety and a Bachelor of Horticultural Science, is an Adjunct Professor at Charles Sturt University and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company of Directors.



**Sally Branson Dalwood**

With over 24 years of diverse experience in diplomatic, military, government, political, not-for-profit, and corporate sectors, Sally Branson Dalwood is a seasoned public affairs specialist and brings this lens to the ARLF.

Sally grew up on a mixed family farm at Colbinabbin, in central Victoria, and has an enduring connection to the community. She worked in rural and regional community development at the beginning of her career, and a signifying element of her political career was focused on rural and regional advocacy. Sally was a graduate of Course 13 ARLP.

Sally excels in reputation and crisis management, leadership planning and strategy, overseeing public affairs programs for significant scale and geopolitical projects. Her expertise includes managing crises for renowned Australian and international brands and high-profile individuals. She also runs a consulting business that supports organisations in effective corporate relations. Sally is a regular media contributor.

**Retired board members**



**Sylvia Admans**

Sylvia has over 40 years' professional experience, working across government, and not-for-profit and commercial sectors. Her most recent 20 years was spent in the philanthropic sector where she was CEO of the R E Ross Trust and CEO of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), where she established the Foundation in Bendigo, Victoria. Across both these roles she has made a significant contribution to place-based and community philanthropy.

Sylvia hails from Yetman in northern NSW, is a qualified Librarian, a graduate of the ARLP, a Fellow of the ARLF, a Churchill Fellow and holds a Diploma from the Institute of Company Directors. She has been a director of the Inner North Community Foundation and lives with her partner David in Victoria.

Sylvia Joined the Board in 2019 and retired in May of 2024.



**Robert (Rob) Dulhunty**

Rob Dulhunty joined the Board in November 2015. He brought extensive experience in regional leadership. Since 2011, Rob has been Chair of Landcare New South Wales and is Manager at Nant Pastoral Co Pty Ltd. Rob's Landcare roots extend back to his roles as Vice-Chairman and a founding member of Landcare NSW from 2006 to 2011. He is also a member of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Ministerial Roundtable, in an advisory role to the Minister for the Environment.

Rob retired from the Board in November 2023.

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited (ARLF) present their report for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.

### Principal activities

During the 2024 financial year, the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation focused on developing and delivering leadership programs and facilitating place-based initiatives that support leadership practice in regional, rural, and remote Australia. These initiatives included:

- » Australian Rural Leadership Program
- » Milparanga Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Programs, including:
  - Milparanga Emerging
  - Milparanga Established
- » TRAIL Emerging Leaders Program
- » Australian Agribusiness Leadership Program
- » Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative, which encompasses the National Mentoring Program and the Uralla Leadership Action Initiative
- » Leading Australian Resilient Communities
- » Regenerate Regional Leadership Programs
- » Shape Your Energy Future
- » Creative Industries Leadership Action Initiative
- » Tailored client-specific leadership programs for various groups and industries
- » Ongoing engagement and support of the ARLF's leadership network, which includes graduates and members

In addition, we continued to invest significant resources to foster, initiate, and demonstrate leadership in action. This includes supporting local cohorts of alumni and participants as they collaborate to address regional issues. As a result of government funded program, "Building Resilient Regional Leaders Initiative" concluding as of June 2023, the annual program income in FY24 was reduced in comparison FY23 which also reduced the expenditures respectively. This result was in line with the approved ARLF budget.

### Strategic plan

The ARLF Strategic Plan 2022-2025 was developed in early 2020 and was reviewed in 2022 to provide direction for the organisation for the period 2022-2025.

#### Vision

Thriving rural, regional and remote communities.

#### Purpose

Develop and exercise leadership for positive impact.

#### Approach

We develop leadership so people act beyond themselves, work with others, and facilitate change. We do this by offering participants challenging, hands-on learning experiences and the opportunity for reflection.

### Strategic priorities

ARLF's Strategic Plan provides direction by outlining immediate, short-term and future priorities. The strategic priorities in the ARLF Strategic Plan 2022-2025 are:

- » Extend high quality leadership development opportunities for more people in more places.
- » Collaborate with purpose-aligned organisations, investors and people.
- » Activate leadership networks to facilitate change in organisations, sectors and communities.
- » Ensure the ARLF is capable and sustainable.
- » Contribute to the creation of knowledge to improve the practice of leadership development.
- » Understand our impact in more depth.

Inherent in all strategic priorities is our work with ARLF network of our alumni. ARLF has commenced a review of its strategic priorities and opportunities to inform our strategic plan for 2026 and beyond.



## Information on directors

During the 2023-24 financial year the following people served on the board:

### Continuing

- » **Mr Richard (Rick) Sawers** GAICD, Harvard PMD  
*Chair of Board of Directors*  
Joined 4 March 2016 – appointed as Chair 17 November 2022
- » **Ms Melissa Fletcher** FARLF  
Joined 17 November 2017
- » **Ms Marjorie (Margaux) Beauchamp** BAgEc (Hons) MCom CA FAICD  
*Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee*  
Joined 9 August 2019)

### Appointed or re-elected

- » **The Hon Niall Blair** Masters of Occupational Health and Safety (Newcastle University), Bachelor of Horticultural Science (WSU), Adjunct Professor at Charles Sturt University, GAICD  
Joined 29 February 2024
- » **Ms Sally Dalwood** FARLF  
Joined 28 February 2024
- » **Mr John Maher** BAgSc (Hons) MBA GAICD  
*Chair of Nominations and Remuneration Committee*  
Joined 8 March 2023
- » **Ms Mena Waller** BBus ProfComm, GradCert Ed (Leadership), DipCommDev, FARLF

### Retired

- Joined 8 March 2023
- » **Ms Sylvia Admans** BA Dip.Lib Grad Dip Executive Management FARLF GAICD  
Joined 10 May 2019, retired 21 May 2024
- » **Mr Robert Dulhunty**  
Joined 18 November 2015, retired 14 November 2023

The ARLF seeks to maintain a board that is of an appropriate size that collectively has the skills, commitment and knowledge to enable it to discharge its duties effectively and to add value.

During the year, the ARLF held six board meetings, four Audit and Risk Committee meetings, four Nominations and Remuneration Committee meetings.

## Director's benefits

During or since the financial year, no director of the ARLF has received, or become entitled to receive, a benefit (other than potential or perceived benefit as disclosed in note 14 (c) related party transactions) by reason of a contract made by the ARLF with the director, or with a firm of which a director is a member or with an entity in which a director has a substantial interest.

## Indemnification and insurance of directors and officers

During the financial year, the ARLF has paid premiums insuring all the directors and officers of the ARLF against costs incurred in defending proceedings for conduct involving a contravention of sections 182 or 183 of the Corporations Act 2001, as permitted by section 199B of the Corporations Act 2001. The total amount of the insurance contract premiums paid was \$7,987 (2023: \$9,041) excluding GST.

Director	Board Meetings*	Board Strategy Day	Audit and Risk Committee *	Nominations Committee *
Sylvia Admans	5 (6)	1 (1)	-	3 (4)
Marjorie (Margaux) Beauchamp	6 (6)	1 (1)	4 (4)	-
The Hon Niall Blair	1 (1)	-	-	1 (1)
Sally Dalwood	2 (2)	1 (1)	-	-
Robert Dulhunty	2 (2)	-	-	2 (2)
Melissa Fletcher	6 (6)	1 (1)	-	2 (4)
John Maher	4 (6)	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (4)
Richard Sawers	6 (6)	1 (1)	3 (3)	-
Mena Waller	5 (6)	1 (1)	3 (4)	1 (2)

Board meetings (x6): Aug 23, Nov 23, Dec 23, Feb 24 (i), Feb 24(ii), May 24

Board Strategy (x1): Feb 24

ARC meetings (x4): July 23, Oct 23, Feb 24, May 24

NRC meetings (x4): July 23, Nov 23, Feb 24, May 24

## Workplace health and safety regulations

ARLF's operations are subject to various workplace health and safety regulations under both Commonwealth and State legislation. The Board believes that ARLF has adequate systems in place for the management of its workplace health and safety requirements and is not aware of any breaches of those requirements as they apply to ARLF.

## Culture

Directors are committed to upholding a culture of diversity and inclusion, to challenging entrenched ideas and approaches, to foster collaboration and to influence change for positive impact.

## Changes in the state of affairs

There were no other significant changes during the reporting period in the state of the affairs of the ARLF, other than those disclosed in this report and the accounts.

## Expanding leadership opportunities

This year, the ARLF continued to extend its reach and impact by delivering more leadership opportunities in more regional locations across Australia. In collaboration with our project partner after completing Phase One, our team pivoted to deliver Phase Two—The Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative. This ambitious project expanded our footprint to 35 regions across the country and is projected to conclude in August 2025.

## New initiatives

In collaboration with project partner Regional Arts Australia and ARLF Associate, we launched the Creative Industries Leadership Action Initiative – a process of convening a series of conversations leading to a national gathering of our Alumni who are key regional, rural and remote industry leaders to challenge and test their assumptions with creative industries leaders.

As part of phase 2 of Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative we also delivered the Euralla Leadership Action Initiative. This involved convening local stakeholders to facilitate a conversation focused on energy transition in their region.

Through a partnership we developed and delivered Shaping Energy Futures (ShEF) designed to drive community-led responses towards local issues, the program held in early 2024 supported people living in Queensland's, Western Downs and South Burnett to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the renewable energy sector. To do this, participants from agriculture, local government, environmental groups, not-for-profit organisations and the energy sector all came together for the program.

## Team and partnerships

The significant increase in the volume of leadership opportunities and impact was made possible through a strong network of partnerships and the diligent implementation of project management methodologies within the ARLF. We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated partners and the ARLF team for their tireless efforts in making this possible.

There were no other significant changes in the affairs of the ARLF during this reporting period, aside from the advancements and projects detailed in this report and in our financial accounts.

## Subsequent events

The Directors are not aware of any other matter or circumstance since the end of the financial year that have significantly affected the ARLF's affairs.

## Operating results

The surplus for the financial year was \$102,409 (2023: \$320,309 surplus).

## Future developments and results

The future focus of the ARLF is to continue to deliver high quality leadership opportunities for more people in more places while also ensuring the organisation is capable and sustainable. The ARLF will continue to position itself to work towards these priorities as the next three years will see the ARLF, with multiple delivery partners and associates, deliver leadership activities across rural, regional and remote Australia.

## Company details

The ARLF is a public company limited by guarantee. If the ARLF is wound up, the constitution states that each member and each member who ceased to be a member in the preceding year is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the ARLF. At 30 June 2023, the number of members was 938 (2023: 912).

## Auditor independence

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 is set out immediately after this report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



**Mr Rick Sawers**  
Chair

## Directors Declaration

In the Directors' opinion:

- » the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- » the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Foundation's financial position as at 30 June 2023 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- » there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Foundation will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



**Mr Rick Sawers**

*Chair*

Date: 10 October 2024



**RSM Australia Partners**

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**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION**

As lead auditor for the audit of the financial report of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- (i) the auditor independence requirements of the *Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

**RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS**

**Ged Stenhouse**  
Partner

Canberra, ACT  
Dated: 10 October 2024

**THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD**  
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

To the Members of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial report of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of financial position, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policies, and the declaration by those charged with governance.

In our opinion, the financial report of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

**Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Other Information**

Those charged with governance are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

**THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD****AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING**

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In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report**

The Directors of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards- Simplified Disclosures and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act)* and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: [http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'RSM'.

**RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ged Stenhouse'.

**Ged Stenhouse**  
Partner

Canberra, ACT  
Dated: 10 October 2024

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
Revenue and other income	2	8,787,854	12,081,032
Operating costs		(3,958,380)	(6,961,827)
Staffing costs		(3,980,350)	(4,218,651)
Core administrative costs		(637,399)	(476,053)
Lease interest expense		(1,866)	(3,430)
Depreciation and amortisation		(107,450)	(108,762)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>102,409</b>	<b>312,309</b>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Surplus attributable to members of the Foundation</b>		<b>102,409</b>	<b>312,309</b>

*The above statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Statement of financial position**  
**As at 30 June 2024**

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	8,534,448	8,721,959
Trade and other receivables	4	391,277	269,712
Investments	5	2,060,000	2,060,200
Other current assets	6	170,364	170,018
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>11,156,089</b>	<b>11,221,889</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Plant and equipment	7	58,082	69,538
Right-of-use assets	8	111,047	36,227
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>169,129</b>	<b>105,765</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>11,325,218</b>	<b>11,327,654</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Payables	9	449,199	417,749
Provisions	10	285,575	265,375
Unearned revenue	11	6,564,644	8,040,683
Lease liabilities	12	37,068	38,001
Other liabilities	13	8,685	8,685
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>7,345,171</b>	<b>8,770,493</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Provisions	10	42,368	28,852
Unearned revenue	11	1,738,191	506,217
Lease liabilities	12	74,987	-
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,855,546</b>	<b>535,069</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>9,200,717</b>	<b>9,305,562</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>2,124,501</b>	<b>2,022,092</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves		2,124,501	2,022,092
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>2,124,501</b>	<b>2,022,092</b>

*The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*



**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Statement of changes in equity**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	Commitments Reserve <sup>1</sup> \$	General Reserve <sup>2</sup> \$	Development Funds Reserve <sup>3</sup> \$	Endowment Funds Reserve <sup>4</sup> \$	Retained Surplus \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2023</b>	840,000	420,000	335,170	114,613	-	1,709,783
<b>Comprehensive income</b>						
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	-	-	-	-	312,309	312,309
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	-	-	-	-	312,309	312,309
<b>Other transfers</b>						
Transfers to reserves from Retained Surplus	-	312,309	312,309			624,618
Transfers (to)/ from reserves	(20,000)	42,000	(22,000)	-	(312,309)	-
<b>Total other transfers</b>	(20,000)	42,000	290,309	-	(312,309)	624,618
<b>Balance at 30 June 2023</b>	<b>820,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>625,479</b>	<b>114,613</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,022,092</b>
<b>Comprehensive income</b>						
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	-	-	-	-	102,409	102,409
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	-	-	-	-	102,409	102,409
<b>Other transfers</b>						
Transfers to reserves from Retained Surplus		102,409			(102,409)	
<b>Total other transfers</b>	-	102,409	-	-	(102,409)	
<b>Balance at 30 June 2024</b>	<b>820,000</b>	<b>564,409</b>	<b>625,479</b>	<b>114,613</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,124,501</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Commitments Reserve represents the estimated funds to complete courses in progress and other contractual obligations entered into by the Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> The General Reserve represents the estimated funds necessary to cover closure costs including staff entitlements should the Foundation need to cease operations.

<sup>3</sup> The Development Funds Reserve represents the balance of members' funds available for discretionary activities of the Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> The Endowment Funds Reserve represents donations received from fellows, board, staff and other donors to fund ARLF scholarships.

*The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Statement of cash flows**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	Note	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Course fees and sponsorships received		9,143,100	13,352,941
Interest received		178,159	44,956
Other receipts		20,805	181,795
Payments for operations and conduct of courses		(9,431,153)	(13,048,076)
Lease interest paid		(1,866)	(3,430)
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>	<b>16</b>	<u>(90,955)</u>	<u>528,186</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchases of furniture and equipment		(23,301)	(17,956)
Proceeds from/ (payments for) term deposits		200	(200,000)
<b>Net cash generated from/(used in) investing activities</b>		<u>(23,101)</u>	<u>(217,956)</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities paid		(73,459)	(69,008)
<b>Net cash used in financing activities</b>		<u>(73,459)</u>	<u>(69,008)</u>
Net movement in cash and cash equivalents		(187,511)	241,222
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		8,721,959	8,480,737
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year</b>	<b>3</b>	<u><b>8,534,448</b></u>	<u><b>8,721,959</b></u>

*The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes*

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

**Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies**

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

**a. New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted**

The Foundation has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

**b. Basis of preparation**

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures of the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. The foundation is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

Australian Accounting Standards set out accounting policies that the AASB has concluded would result in financial statements containing relevant and reliable information about transactions, events and conditions. Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise. The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

**c. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions**

The Directors evaluate estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial report based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates and judgements assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the Foundation.

*Key judgement – Deferral of revenue and revenue recognition*

i) Australian Rural Leadership Program

Payments made prior to the commencement of a course and course scholarships are deferred and recognised as income received in advance when received. On commencement of a course, outstanding scholarships are recognised as course receivables and unearned revenue. Revenue is then recognised progressively as course expenses are incurred over the completion of each course. Judgement has been exercised in considering the impacts that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had, or may have, on the Foundation based on known information. This consideration extends to the measurement of progress of course completions for revenue recognition purpose.

ii) Short Courses

Payments made prior to the commencement of a course and course scholarships are deferred and recognised as income received in advance when received. On commencement of a course, outstanding fees are recognised as course receivables and unearned revenue. Revenue is then recognised progressively as course expenses are incurred over the completion of each course.

iii) Grant Revenue

Grants are recognised as revenue in the year received or receivable to the extent of expenditure during the year for the purpose of the grant. Grant monies that have been received or are receivable but have not been expended at balance date, including interest thereon where required under the terms of the grant, are recognised as Unexpended grants in unearned revenue.

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

**Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)**

**d. Comparative figures**

Where necessary, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation in these financial statements.

**e. Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and other similar taxes**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

**f. Income tax**

As the company is a charitable institution in terms of subsection 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Note 2: Revenue and other income</b>		
<i>Revenue from contracts with customers:</i>		
Course revenue	8,414,698	11,589,194
Network membership fees and events	158,032	250,735
<i>Income from other sources</i>		
Donations and sponsorships	11,399	171,082
Interest	194,319	59,308
Sundry income	9,406	10,713
	<b><u>8,787,854</u></b>	<b><u>12,081,032</u></b>

**Accounting policy**

*Revenue from contracts with customers*

Revenue is recognised at an amount that reflects the consideration to which the Foundation is expected to be entitled in exchange for transferring goods or services to a customer. For each contract with a customer, the Foundation: identifies the contract with a customer; identifies the performance obligations in the contract; determines the transaction price which takes into account estimates of variable consideration and the time value of money; allocates the transaction price to the separate performance obligations on the basis of the relative stand-alone selling price of each distinct good or service to be delivered; and recognises revenue when or as each performance obligation is satisfied in a manner that depicts the transfer to the customer of the goods or services promised.

For the course revenue the Foundation applies the input method of measuring progress for each performance obligation satisfied over time. Consequently, course revenue is progressively recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income as follows: (i) for course costs, revenue is recognised for direct course costs incurred in respect of sessions; and (ii) for the contribution to core administrative costs, progressively over the term of the course (including the selection period prior to the commencement of a course) in accordance with the stage of completion of each course.

Network membership fees are recognised when billed which is generally in four instalments over the term of a course.



**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

Network events income and expenses are recognised as revenue and expense when the event is held.

Other income

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to financial assets. Reciprocal grants contain specific conditions and enforceable obligations on the use of those funds are recognised as and when the Foundation satisfies its performance obligations stated within the grant agreements. A contract liability is recognised for unspent grant funds for which a refund obligation exists in relation to the funding period. General grants that do not impose specific performance obligations on the Foundation are recognised as income when the Foundation obtains control of those funds, which is usually on receipt. All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 3: Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash on hand and at bank	<u>8,534,448</u>	<u>8,721,959</u>

**Accounting policy**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and in banks, in deposits at call and investments in money market instruments convertible to cash within 45 days.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 4: Trade and other receivables</b>		
Trade receivables	375,864	250,036
Provision for bad debts	(3,350)	(1,300)
Interest Receivable	16,158	20,976
Accrued income	2,605	-
	<u><u>391,277</u></u>	<u><u>269,712</u></u>

Current receivables are receivable within 30 days. \$17,100 of receivables were overdue by 90 days or more under approved payment plans or other arrangements (2023: \$8,400). All receivables have been assessed for impairment and \$3,350 has been recognised as allowance for impairment at 30 June 2024 (2023: \$1,300).

**Accounting policy**

Trade and other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any provision for impairment. Receivables expected to be settled within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets with all other receivables being classified as non-current assets.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 5: Investments</b>		
Fixed term deposits	<u>2,060,000</u>	<u>2,060,200</u>

**Accounting policy**

Financial assets are initially measured at fair value on trade date, which includes transaction costs, when the related contractual rights or obligations exist. All financial assets are classified as 'financial assets at amortised cost' and are recognised at amortised cost.

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 6: Other current assets</b>		
Prepaid ARLP and short course costs	61,910	73,928
Prepaid insurance	33,292	34,419
Prepaid other expenses	75,162	61,671
	<u>170,364</u>	<u>170,018</u>

Prepaid Course Costs

Direct course costs incurred prior to the commencement of a course are recognised as prepaid course costs (other current assets).

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 7: Plant and equipment</b>		
Furniture, plant and equipment – at cost	252,486	229,185
Accumulated depreciation	(194,404)	(159,647)
	<u>58,082</u>	<u>69,538</u>

(a) Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current and previous financial years

	<b>Furniture, plant and equipment</b>
Opening Balance	69,538
Additions	23,301
Depreciation	(34,757)
Closing Balance	<u>58,082</u>

**Accounting Policy**

Each class of plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by the Foundation to ensure it is not in excess of the remaining service potential of these assets.

Depreciation is charged at the following rates:

Furniture, plant and equipment	5 - 10 years
Computer hardware and software	3 - 4 years

Impairment

At each reporting date, the Foundation reviews the carrying values of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. As a not-for-profit entity, value in use for the Foundation, according to AASB 136 Impairment of Assets, is depreciated replacement cost. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income. No impairment indicators were present at 30 June 2024.

**Note 8: Right-of-use assets**

Right-of-use assets at cost	147,508	144,930
Accumulated amortisation	(36,461)	(108,703)
	<u>111,047</u>	<u>36,227</u>

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

(a) Movements in carrying amounts for right-of-use assets between the beginning and the end of the current financial year: **ROU Assets**

Opening balance	36,227
Additions	147,513
Amortisation expense	<u>(72,693)</u>
Closing Balance	<u><u>111,047</u></u>

**Accounting Policy**

At inception of a contract, the entity assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is considered to contain a lease if it allows the entity the right to control the use of an identified asset over a period of time in return for consideration. Where a contract or arrangement contains a lease, the entity recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the commencement date of the lease.

A right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, which is the present value of the future lease payments adjusted for any lease payments made at or before the commencement date, plus any make-good obligations. Lease assets are depreciated using the straight line method over the shorter of their useful life and the lease term. Periodic adjustments are made for any re-measurements of the lease liabilities and for impairment losses.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 9: Payables</b>		
Unsecured liabilities:		
Creditors and accrued expenses	432,230	416,449
GST payable	<u>16,969</u>	<u>1,300</u>
	<u><b>449,199</b></u>	<u><b>417,749</b></u>

**Accounting Policy**

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Foundation prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 10: Provisions</b>		
CURRENT		
Employee benefits: annual leave	197,772	189,915
Employee benefits: long service leave	<u>87,803</u>	<u>75,460</u>
Total Current Provisions	<u><b>285,575</b></u>	<u><b>265,375</b></u>
NON-CURRENT		
Employee benefits: long service leave	<u>42,368</u>	<u>28,852</u>
Total Non-Current Provisions	<u><b>42,368</b></u>	<u><b>28,852</b></u>

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
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**Accounting Policy**

Short-term employee benefits

Provision is made for the Foundation's obligation for short-term employee benefits. Short-term employee benefits are benefits (other than termination benefits) that are expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service, including wages, salaries and sick leave. Short-term employee benefits are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled.

The Foundation's obligations for short-term employee benefits such as wages, salaries and sick leave are recognised as a part of current trade and other payables in the statement of financial position.

Other long-term employee benefits

The Foundation classifies employees' long service leave and annual leave entitlements as other long-term employee benefits as they are not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Provision is made for the Foundation's obligation for other long-term employee benefits, which are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures, and are discounted at rates determined by reference to market yields at the end of the reporting period on government bonds that have maturity dates that approximate the terms of the obligations. Upon the remeasurement of obligations for other long-term employee benefits, the net change in the obligations is recognised in profit or loss classified under employee benefits expense.

Retirement benefit obligations

Defined contribution superannuation benefits

All employees of the Foundation receive defined contribution superannuation entitlements, for which the Foundation pays the fixed superannuation guarantee contribution (currently 10% of the employee's average ordinary salary) to the employee's superannuation fund of choice. All contributions in respect of employee's defined contributions entitlements are recognised as an expense when they become payable. The Foundation's obligation with respect to employees' defined contribution entitlements is limited to its obligation for any unpaid superannuation guarantee contributions at the end of the reporting period. All obligations for unpaid superannuation guarantee contributions are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled and are presented as current liabilities in the Foundation's statement of financial position.

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 11: Unearned revenue</b>		
CURRENT		
Core Course revenue	366,755	1,647,092
DRLP Revenue	6,077,663	5,237,767
Other grants and short courses	120,226	1,155,824
Total current unearned revenue	<u>6,564,644</u>	<u>8,040,683</u>
NON-CURRENT		
Core Course revenue	1,738,191	506,217
Total non-current unearned revenue	<u>1,738,191</u>	<u>506,217</u>

**Accounting Policy**

Unearned revenue - Courses

Prior to the commencement of a course, course scholarships are deferred and recognised as income received in advance when received. On commencement of a course, outstanding scholarships are recognised as course receivables and unearned revenue when invoiced. Course scholarships are generally invoiced on commencement of the course however in some instances scholarships are progressively invoiced in instalments over the term of the course.

Contract liability for Course Make-Up Costs

A contract liability is recognised by transfer from course unearned revenue to contract liabilities for course make-ups for the estimated direct course costs associated with a missed session where a participant is unable to attend a course session and is eligible to attend a future course session in order to complete the course curriculum.



**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 12: Lease liabilities</b>		
CURRENT		
Lease liabilities	37,068	38,001
Total current lease liabilities	<b>37,068</b>	<b>38,001</b>
NON-CURRENT		
Lease liabilities	74,987	-
Total non-current lease liabilities	<b>74,987</b>	-

**Accounting Policy**

Lease liabilities are initially measured at the present value of future minimum lease payments, discounted using the entity's incremental borrowing rate if the rate implicit in the lease cannot be readily determined, and are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate. Minimum lease payments include fixed payments, amounts expected to be paid under a residual value guarantee, the exercise price of purchase options for which the Foundation is reasonably certain to exercise and incorporate the entity's expectations of lease extension options.

The lease liability is remeasured when there are changes in future lease payments arising from a change in rates, index or lease terms from exercising an extension or termination option. A corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the lease assets.

The entity's leases relate primarily to the office premises.

Short term leases (lease term of 12 months or less) and leases of low value assets (\$10,000 or less) are recognised as incurred as an expense in the statement comprehensive income. The amount expensed in the statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income in relation to short-term and low-value leases was \$1,866 (2023: \$3,430).

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 13: Other Current Liabilities</b>		
Program Participant's Welfare Fund	8,685	8,685
	<b>8,685</b>	<b>8,685</b>

The Participant's Welfare Fund has been established to provide financial assistance to those participants of the Foundation's programs who have difficulty in meeting some of the financial costs of the program.

**Note 14: Related Party Disclosures**

**(a) Details of Key Management Personnel**

Names and positions held of key management personnel in office at any time during the financial year are:

*(i) Directors of Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited*

Mr R Sawers (Chairperson)	Ms S Dalwood
Ms Margaux Beauchamp	Mr J Maher
Mr Hon. Niall Blair	Mrs M Waller
Ms M Fletcher	

*(ii) Executives*

Mr M Linnegar (CE)	Ms P Woodhill
Mr L McDonald	
Ms A Hogg	

<b>(b) Total Compensation</b>	<b>1,036,337</b>	<b>947,596</b>
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**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

**(c) Transactions with Director related entities**

Name of entity	Current year transactions and balances (including GST)
Australian Meat Processer Corporation (1)	Scholarships revenue - ARLP Course 31 (\$60,500) Scholarship revenue (Agribusiness) - (\$41,250)
Consolidated Pastoral Company (2)	Scholarship revenue - Agribusiness - (\$14,850) Scholarship revenue - Int'l Agribusiness - (\$17,600)
Fletcher International Exports (3)	Scholarship revenue - ARLP Course 31 - (\$60,500)
Cotton Research and Development Corporation (4)	Scholarship revenue - TRAIL (\$10,450)
Telstra Corporation Limited (5)	Scholarship revenue - Int'l Agribusiness - (\$10,000) Telstra National Regional Advisory Council Project - (\$63,250)

<sup>1</sup> Related entity of Ms Melissa Fletcher - Chairman

<sup>2</sup> Related entity of Ms Margaux Beauchamp - Non Executive Director

<sup>3</sup> Related entity of Ms Melissa Fletcher - Chairman

<sup>4</sup> Related entity Of Mr Niall Blair - Non Executive Director

<sup>5</sup> Related entity Of Mr Matthew Linnagar - Chief Executive Officer

**Note 15: Commitments**

The Foundation is committed to the following expenditure in respect of a contractual commitments receivable or payable.

	2024 \$ Receivable	2024 \$ Payable	2024 \$ Receivable/ (Payable)
Within one year:			
ARLP	-	-	-
Short courses	192,533	-	192,533
Other	-	-	-
	<b>192,533</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>192,533</b>
Within 1-5 years:	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Total for 2024	<b>192,533</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>192,533</b>

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**30 June 2024**

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 16: Cash flow information</b>		
<b><i>Reconciliation of net cash from operating activities to net surplus</i></b>		
Surplus (deficit) for the year	102,409	312,309
Non-cash flows in operating surplus:		
Depreciation and amortisation	107,450	108,762
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	(121,567)	235,426
(Increase)/Decrease in other current assets	(346)	122,642
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	31,448	(610,589)
Increase/(Decrease) in unearned revenue	(244,065)	344,066
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	33,716	15,570
Net cash received from operating activities	<u>(90,955)</u>	<u>528,186</u>

**Note 17: Financial Risk Management**

The Foundation's principal financial instruments comprise cash at bank, receivables, investments and accounts payable. These financial instruments arise from the operations of the Foundation.

The carrying amount for each category of financial instruments, measured in accordance with AASB 9 as detailed in the accounting policies to these financial statements, are as follows:

Financial assets at amortised cost		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,534,448	8,721,959
Fixed term deposits	2,060,000	2,060,200
Receivables	391,277	269,712
Total Financial Assets	<u>10,985,725</u>	<u>11,051,871</u>
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities at amortised cost		
Payables excluding GST payable	432,230	416,449
Total Financial Liabilities	<u>432,230</u>	<u>416,449</u>

**Note 18: Subsequent Events**

The Directors are not aware of any other matter or circumstance that has arisen since the balance date that has significantly affected the state of affairs of the Foundation.

**Note 19: Company details**

The Foundation is a public company limited by guarantee. If the Foundation is wound up, the constitution states that each member and each member who ceased to be a member in the preceding year is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstanding's and obligations of the Foundation. At 30 June 2024 the number of members was 923 (2023: 912).

The registered office and principal place of business of the company is: 1st Floor, Forest Industries House, 24 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600.

Australian Rural Leadership Foundation Limited  
Notes to the financial statements  
30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Note 20: Remuneration of auditors</b>		
During the financial year the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by RSM Australia Partners:		
Audit of the financial statements	15,475	14,375
Compilation of financial statements	1,725	1,725
Audit of grant acquittals	3,000	2,500
	<u>20,200</u>	<u>18,600</u>



Australian  
**Rural Leadership**  
Foundation

**Australian Rural Leadership Foundation**

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