



## Good ideas. Good people. Now what?

Webinar  
28 October 2014

CREATING INSPIRING  
RURAL LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT



## Today's Agenda

- Webinar Tips
- FRRR & CIRCLE
- The Into Our Hands story
- Key Takeaways
- Q&A

@AEMGartmann @LCarroll64 @RoseyCatherine  
@FRRR\_Oz #RuralLeadership



Alexandra Gartmann



Loretta Carroll



Catherine Marriott

2

Hi All –

I'm Alex Gartmann, CEO of FRRR and I'd like to welcome you to this webinar, "Good Ideas. Good People. Now What?"

That's me up in the top right hand corner.

I've been with the organisation for 3.5 years and I, like the rest of the FRRR team, are passionate about creating opportunities for rural, regional and remote communities to prosper.

In a minute I'll introduce Loretta Carroll, who will share her experiences in forming the Into Our Hands Foundation.


A bit later I will introduce Catherine Marriott from Influential Women. She will be reflecting on key takeaways from Loretta's experience and how they relate to the communities she's lived and worked in.

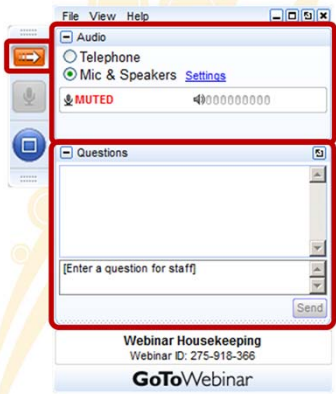
The three of us will chat for about 40 minutes, before we move into questions from our audience.

At the end of the webinar we'll ask that everyone spends 30 seconds answering a very short multiple choice evaluation survey, which will help us in delivering effective webinars in the future.

## Get Involved!

### Using the Webinar Control Panel





Open and hide the control panel by clicking on the **orange** arrow

Change your audio:

- Choose "Mic & Speakers" to use VoIP (your computer speakers)
- Choose "Telephone" and dial using the information provided
- Please mute yourself

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel – ask any time

**Please Note:**  
Today's presentation is being recorded.

Before we get going I thought I'd start with some technical tips. This is our first ever webinar so be warned, we have our training wheels on!

If you have any issues along the way, or you have any questions that you'd like us to answer, please send us a message, and we will try to help!

Simply type your question into the box in your control panel – one of our team is monitoring these as they come in.

Please do feel free to ask questions during the webinar. We may address them on the spot or save them till the end, depending on the flow – but we're certainly keen to hear from you and what your community is doing.

Please put your phone and computer on Mute so that you can hear us but we can't hear you – this should help alleviate the issue of you hearing any feedback on your line/via the computer.

And if you can tweet or facebook while we are chatting, please use the hashtag Rural Leadership.

Before we get going, just a little bit about FRRR and the CIRCLE Program:



FRRR was established in 2000

Our mission is to champion the economic and social strength of Australia's rural, regional and remote communities through partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy and governments.. We are fondly referred to as the philanthropic toothbrush – reaching into those hard-to-get-to places

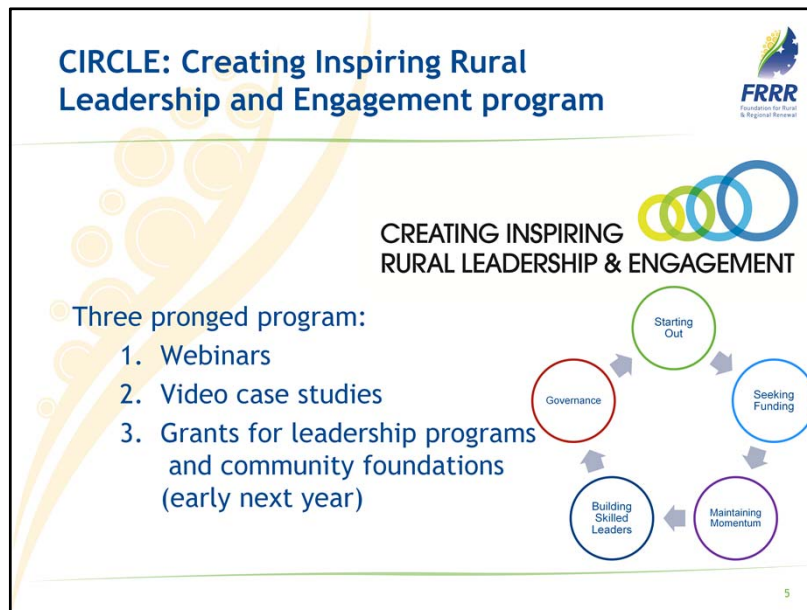
We have a particular focus on communities of fewer than 10,000 people.

While we operate nationally, most of us are based in Bendigo, Victoria

We work in three ways:

1. **Providing grants** to not-for-profit community organisations
2. **Lending our DGR status** to community organisations and holding funds on their behalf ; and
3. **Helping to build local capacity** (for example through Community Foundations) to find local solutions to local problems.

Since 2000, we have distributed more than \$51 million to communities across Australia and provided substantial capacity building support to community organisations



The CIRCLE program was launched earlier this month in partnership with the Deputy Prime Minister, Warren Truss.

It's one of 20 programs we run

Funded by the Federal Govt through Dept. of Infrastructure & Regional Development

Three pronged program:

1. Webinars – today is the first in a series of five
2. Video Case studies
3. Grants – for community foundations and leadership programs

This is our first webinar, so let's get on with it ...



Our guest is Loretta Carroll, who wears many, many hats in her community. Welcome Loretta and thanks so much for joining us today.

Loretta Carroll is a beef and sheep farmer from Mudgegonga.

She's on the Mudgegonga and District Landcare Executive. She's a member of the local CFA and Rosewhite and District Country Woman's Association on the Alpine Shires Resilience Committee and the CMA's Sustainable Ag Steering Committee.

Loretta is also Chair of the Into Our Hands Foundation, which formed in response to the 2009 Bushfires.

Into Our Hands is a community foundation that invests in projects and initiatives aimed at building the capacity, strength, cohesiveness and wellbeing of the many smaller communities within the Victorian Shires of Alpine, Indigo and Wangaratta, about 3 hours drive, north east of Melbourne, near the between New South Wales and Victoria.

We're going to hear Loretta's journey of how she and her fellow community members emerged from the devastation of the bushfire event, to form this group. She's going to outline what happened along the way and share some lessons for other communities, as we all seek to grow our own communities to achieve our goals.

It didn't happen overnight. It was a four year process to go from their first thought that something on an organised level would need to be pursued, to the group's establishment.

While the Into Our Hands story starts with the fires, there will be lessons for every community.



**So Loretta, we know that the 2009 Victorian bushfires were a catalyst in the group's formation.**

**Mudgegonga was one of the areas that was very badly affected. Tell us what it was like for you and what impact it had?**

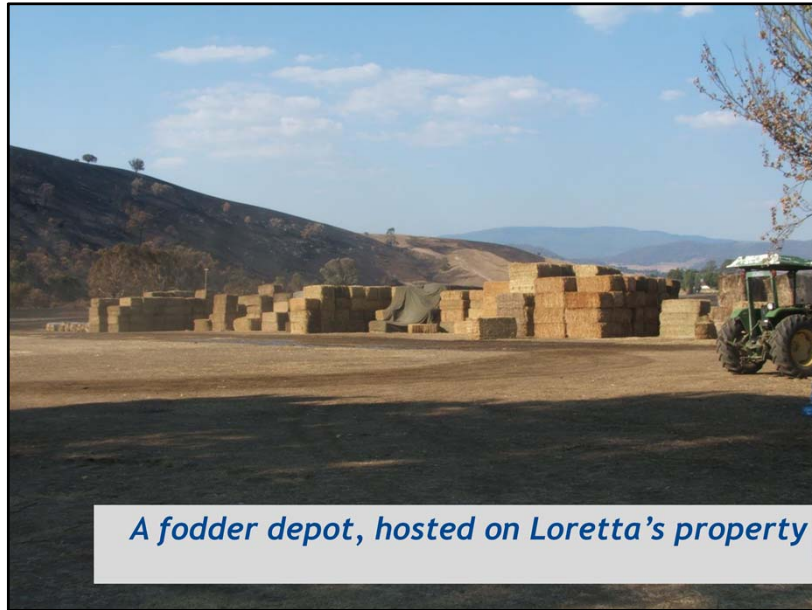
- There was devastation and the fire was completely out of our hands
- The enormity hit me at sunlight when I had to confront the loss of livestock and having to euthanase some of my cows.
- To make matters worse, I also learnt that my neighbours down the road had perished.
- That tragedy put things back into perspective for me
- Amongst all of this was the practicality of containing my cattle that had wandered onto a public road.
- Then those livestock had to be fed - which was going to be a challenge as I had lost all my fodder.
- Many people had similar experiences with some losing their homes and sheds as well
- The list goes on.



**It must have been very difficult. What happened during these first days after the fires?**

- In the immediate aftermath we were focused on our own personal recovery
- We were unaware of the broader impact of the fire - other community members being burnt out the following day –
- We couldn't see anything due to the thick smoke
- So we were just getting on with it as best we could
- The Hall committee swung into action managing the donated goods at the hall
- Community organisations like Rotary, Lions Club and SES provided food, water and other immediate assistance
- But because roads were closed we had to pull together to support each other
- The fire continued to burn for a week which put pressure on CFA, DSE and private units





**What sort of things were you doing together and how were you working together?**

- I was approached by the VFF to house a fodder depot
- Because we had an active Landcare group we had a membership list which we used to contact people
- And because I had the fodder depot, people came to me for stockfeed, but they also brought their problems – issues with fencing, with access, with simply communicating with one another, given the phones didn't work
- So a small group of us started talking to each other and tackling the most urgent issues
- Such as removal of dead stock, bringing in potable water etc.
- There was considerable anxiety amongst our community

**So community groups that were operating effectively became the natural go-to groups to get things happening.**



**Were you getting wider support, such as from agencies and authorities?**

- No, not really
- So we thought we better do something, as we weren't getting the support we needed
- We began by gathering facts – we called people, or emailed them, and asked them about livestock losses, building losses, how much fencing was burnt
- Where we could, we got information from community members about the value of lost production
- It wasn't all about problems though. We had some ideas for solutions, and for how things to work better.
- We produced an immediate impact report – just a few of us over drinks one evening - and that document was really important going forward.
- We took it to agencies and our local council, and we gave a presentation to the head of the recovery operation
- I guess it all started from there



**That initial report really was the catalyst for a lot of things. As I understand it, you used it as the basis for local groups to tackle some immediate issues.**

- There were several things that happened after that report...
  - Alpine Council employed a fire recovery officer to support the communities and also provided support for the fodder Depot
  - Recycling for Recovery funded program funded via CMA
  - and the MADBAG Blackberry Program funded through DEPI

**At what stage did you move from being separate groups working on specific projects, to coming together to look at something that integrated physical, social and economic recovery across the region in a more formal, long-term way?**

In 2011 I was approached by the Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund to sit on an advisory committee to assist in identifying the medium to long-term recovery needs and make recommendations on projects and proposals. This funding was the interest raised from the generous donations given after the fires.

- I set up an informal committee to assist me and help guide the consultation process
- VBAF and the Committee organised a forum which was professionally facilitated
- We invited residents from the fire affected communities, local council staff and councillors, as well as agencies such as Community Health, Primary Industries Environment Departments, Rural Financial Councillors, personnel from Vic Police, SES, Country Fire Authority and Red Cross
- We asked everyone to think broadly and think big picture
- We came up with a 13 page Forum Report, full of options
- The advisory committee then worked with their local communities to prioritise the ideas.

Key Takeaway



*Strong connections within and between communities are critical.*

*Strong networks with decision-makers and influencers are vital.*

12

#### KEY LEARNING:

**STRONG CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND BETWEEN COMMUNITIES ARE CRITICAL.**

**STRONG NETWORKS WITH DECISION MAKERS AND INFLUENCERS ARE VITAL**

From what you've told us so far Loretta, you were really focussing on the things that are so critical in building social capital – building strong connections, strong relationships – both within your own community, with and between neighbouring communities, and networking with agencies and decision makers.

<<INTRODUCE CATHERINE>>

Catherine Marriott is CEO of Influential Women. A former RIRDC Rural Woman of the Year, she's done a lot of work with rural, regional and remote communities across Australia and overseas, helping groups build connections.

Catherine, can you share an example of how another community built relationships and networks and used this to good effect...

Mingenew Irwin - WA

Landcare groups struggling

Building bridges, stronger, more viable. Came together in 1995 – time of decreasing funding

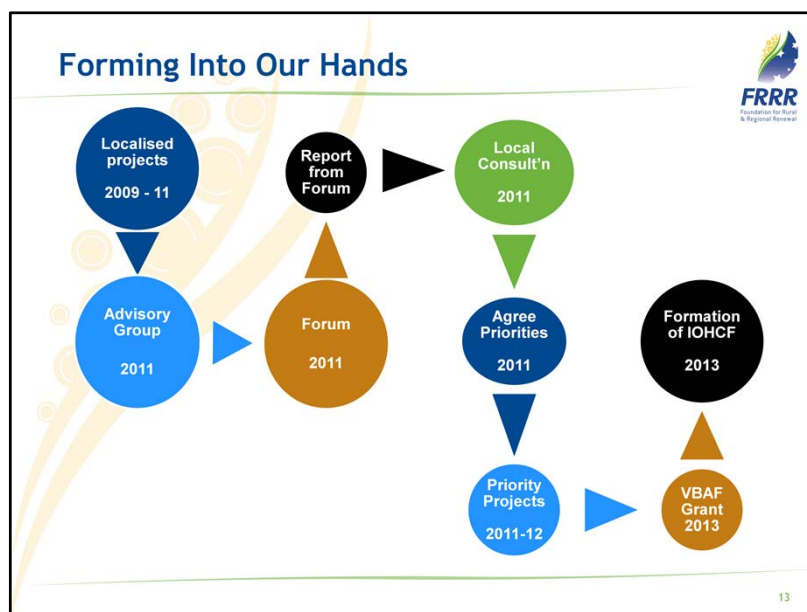
Applied for funding to do grants on behalf of the govt

Needed industry partnership

Political, industry, farming

Meet 4 times a year

Turn over \$1m in research, done great work



### Talk us through what happened next

- From the consultation came a list of 5 priorities
- The first being the establishment of a community foundation
- We knew this was going to take some time so in the mean time we set out to deliver 4 more immediate projects
  - 1. Water hubs – tanks, bores etc
  - 2. Whole of community Landscape
  - 3. Ladies facility in Dederang (change rooms, toilet facility, first aid room and a multi-purpose room for the community's women, including the netball team)
  - 4. A quilting project to assist connection between communities and to engage children.
- We formed working groups to take each of these forward – to develop plans and get quotes on the projects, before applying for funding to implement them.

**Interesting to note that you ran different types of projects which attracted different types of people .**

**The projects that you prioritised also gave people a range of different ways to become involved.**

**Some tackled practical things – like the water; others were more social; others all about the big picture.**





**We've talked about the fact that it took a while for Into Our Hands to get off the ground. Why was that?**

- Initially there was a lot happening ... people had their personal situation to focus on, their properties to get back up and running, or their businesses
- The consultation showed us that people were willing to pursue the Foundation, but we wanted to see some runs on the board first, and we had some urgent issues
- So by having those four projects, and getting people involved in doing things – whether it was the tanks, or the quilting project, or one of the others, it was building confidence
- Right from the start we've been very clear that this is a community initiative, so the community had to feel comfortable.
- So when we received the grant to set up Into Our Hands Foundation, we had a broad base of support across the community.

**And how do you ensure that you stay relevant to your community, that you retain that support?**

- It's all about communication
- We have a newsletter; we keep the website up to date
- Board members go to meetings and talk about what's happening
- We put things in the local paper
- We keep talking to people, asking for feedback, inviting input – for example we're doing a community survey right now



## **TAKEWAY MESSAGE**

**One of the key messages of today is that these things take time!  
Patience is key, as is persistence.**

### **Catherine, anything to add on this one?**

Lots of community examples just like this ... really resonates.

Ensure that you are persistent about right things

Patience is key - acknowledge some fast decision makers, some slower – open communication crucial

Timing – is it still relevant, is there still a need? Is this the right time?



**Successful projects take time but they also need people with different skills. What skills did you identify that you needed in your support group?**

- I don't know everyone across the affected areas, so I needed people who had good networks, and it was critical to have a broad range of experience and skills
- Original committee of 8 included
- Shire representatives from Alpine and Indigo,
- 4 farmers including myself - all of whom were on other committees
- 1 hobby farmer and TAFE lecturer
- A landcare co-ordinator
- I wanted a mix of people that reflected the community, so we wanted business people, and a couple of farmers
- We also tried to get a few younger people involved too
- They each played a different role ...

**So in summary, it was about a mix of Skills, Networks, and Geographies**





You've just identified that you needed a broad range of skills in your committee to make it as effective as it could be, but it's more than that, isn't it? I'd now like to turn specifically to the subject of leadership.

#### **AG shares FRRR Experiences with Leadership (2011 different response etc)**

You mentioned earlier that you ran some community training, which was all about leadership and governance.

**Why did you feel it was necessary to run a training program for your community, and not just the committee?**

- The 9 communities affected by the fires had not previously worked together or shared resources
  - Wanted to get more people involved and felt the training would both upskill and build self-confidence
  - Also practical, as lots of funding available, so wanted to prepare them for project planning and writing
  - A broader skill base was also important for succession planning and moving us beyond the traditional support base – beyond the usual suspects!
  - The training played a major role in linking and developing our networks.
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- We received an FRRR grant to run governance and community development training
  - We held 7 workshops which connected the Valleys and gave the participants the confidence to take on a role



**So you had about 35 people who completed the training ... what a great pool of talent for you to draw on!**

**What did the training teach you personally?**

- The value of canvassing your own community – recognise and leverage the huge amount of expertise.
- As I said earlier, the training helped us have a better understanding and awareness of the different types of personalities which highlighted the importance of encouraging the quieter people to engage in the conversation.

But in many ways it also helped us better understand the practical steps in establishing effective groups. Things like the importance of:

- Talking to people about an idea before the meeting – educate them, gauge interest
- Allowing robust discussion – it builds on the ideas and whilst in this forming stage it's important to have a non-blinkered approach
- Setting out the practical steps needed to get the job done.
- Regular meetings to review progress and ensure you are on track. And if you are unable to complete a goal or task ensure the team knows so it can either assist or be passed to another.
- Working as a team, if a problem arises use the team to solve it not the individuals.



## **TAKEWAY MESSAGE**

**It's critical to invest in leadership – and everyone has a role to play, not just leaders with titles.**

**There are many different types of leadership in community groups.**

**You have formal leaders such as chairpersons, but you also have the thought leaders who come up with great ideas, the quiet achiever leaders who lead by example in how they conduct themselves, and then you have leaders who can galvanise other community members with their persuasive prowess.**

**Catherine, any reflections .....**

Human capital in face of a crisis or change is all we have

Need to invest, esp in leadership

Brings self awareness, and combined with leadership, creates a more effective and happy working environment.

People want to be involved, rather than drag their heels.


People take ownership.

## Recapping the Lessons

- Strong connections & networks are critical
- Persistence plus patience plus timing = Success
- Invest in leadership...for more than just the usual suspects...because everyone has a role to play

**AND A FEW FINAL HOT TIPS:**

- Seek external advice
- Be flexible and open to change
- Ask difficult questions
- Make time to build relationships
- Accept there will be times of chaos!



20

**So we know what we need to do in growing our group and harnessing our people:**

- **Social capital building blocks within and across communities: Bond, Bridge and Network**
- **Remember that patience and persistence over time will win the day**
- **That if we invest in leadership we will have a stronger group of people to both call on and initiate projects on their own, that we must bring the rest of the community with us if we are to succeed, and that identifying key people with strengths in certain areas will help ensure that our group has the talents needed.**

**Loretta, any final advice for a community looking to harness a coalition of community members to deliver a local solution?**

Look externally – ask others for input

Be flexible and don't be offended when things don't play out the way you intended

Don't be afraid to ask the difficult questions and or having the difficult conversations

Try to get relationships going early. Take the time to have a coffee and get to know them as a person

Accept there will be times of chaos and many differing views



**Thank you Loretta, that's been very insightful.**

**We have some time for questions.**

Questions asked included:

- Most important communication channel immediately following the fires
- What topics were covered in the training workshops
- How Loretta managed tension between and within communities
- Key things to include in a leadership training program
- Who ran the training, and who funded it
- Was the training 7 1 day workshops in different locations, or a series of 7 sessions in one course
- How can you continue to support people post-leadership training
- The ideal committee / board size

## Additional resources



- [FRRR.org.au](http://FRRR.org.au)
- [IntoOurHandsFoundation.com](http://IntoOurHandsFoundation.com)
- [YouTube.com/FRRRAustralia](https://www.youtube.com/FRRRAustralia) - Good ideas. Good people. Now what? - The Newstead story
- [OurCommunity.org.au](http://OurCommunity.org.au)



22

You can also access additional resources by visiting:

- FRRR's website
- Our Community's website
- Into Our Hands Foundation website
- You might also like to watch our video case study of the Newstead community in Victoria who have been kicking goals since their community summit a few years ago.

## Save the date: WEBINAR 2: 1.30pm, 10 December



- **Patrick Moriarty**  
Director of Training & Development  
Our Community

- **Seeking Funding**

*Once you have an idea, and some  
people to help you take it forward,  
how can you fund it?  
What are the options?*





Thank you for joining us



*Please complete the short survey  
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webinar.*

*Your feedback will help make  
the next webinar even better ...*

