

Rural Education Program Project Locations





Rural Education Program

Second Report

2004-2006

Introduction

The Rural Education Program (REP) seeks to ensure that quality education remains accessible to children in rural and remote communities regardless of weather and financial adversity. Through collaboration with local agencies and sponsored partnerships with individuals and corporations, the REP will be able to extend the educational resources and individualised learning support that rural students need and deserve.

FRRR is proud to both support and administer this vital program.

Ian Sinclair,
Chairman FRRR

The Rural Education Program has been founded by
John and Janet Calvert - Jones
Tim and Gina Fairfax
Baillieu and Sarah Myer

The Rural Education Program is a program of
The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
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BENDIGO VIC 3552
www.frrr.org.au



*Front cover picture: Cairns School of Distance Education QLD, Georgetown Group
Project Stories: G. Barlow*

Rural Education Program

Financial Information

(1 July 2004 to 30 June 2006)

Income

Donations Received	\$ 487,768
Other Income	<u>\$ 253,855</u>
Total	<u>\$ 741,623</u>

Expenditure

Grants *	\$ 854,875
Expenses **	<u>\$ 80,014</u>
Total	<u>\$ 934,889</u>

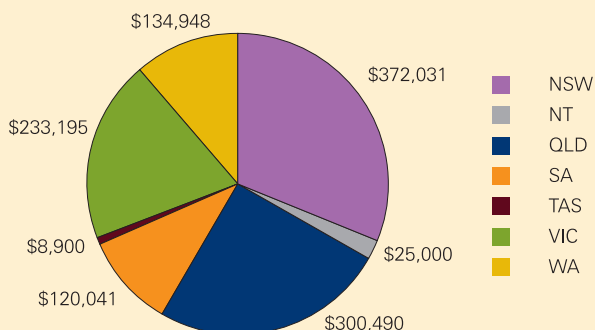
Value of Program at 30 June 2006*** \$ 103,522

* Includes Grants Rec'd Interest & Refunds

** 98 Grants have been funded or committed in this period

*** Includes costs of Consultants and Administration, These costs are met by Founding Donors contributions

Since inception Rural Education Program has granted a total of \$1,194,605, the chart below shows grants by State and Territory



Keeping the Meat Frozen and the Beds Laundered (QLD)

Bollon District Children's Residence -

Grant \$4,672

Therese Sevil has two kids, but from Monday to Friday her family expands to seven, when five other children from properties around Bollon, seven hours west of Brisbane, come and stay with her at the Bollon District Children's Residence. They live too far from town (population about 300) to travel daily to primary school so they stay in town at the residence to be near school mid-week. The residence is their second home. "We have weekly fees and we rely heavily on funding from the Department of Education but any upgrades and maintenance comes from grants," says Therese, who also lives on a property, but works as the residence house mother. "I did seven years of

(teaching) distance education and it's very lonely trying to teach your own children, and I wanted my kids to socialise so we stay here during the week." With FRRR/REP funds, the residence bought a new dryer, computer, frypan, microwave oven and a freezer. "Having the dryer means I can launder the kids' bedding quickly during wet weather," Therese says.

FRRR/REP's grant has helped maintain an important residence for isolated children. Providing them with whitegoods and a computer, means they can have a home away home while they're attending school.

The Rural Education Program has been funded by

Funding Donors:-

John and Janet Calvert-Jones
Tim and Gina Fairfax
Baillieu and Sarah Myer

Other contributing donors were:-

Mr & Mrs J. Anderson
Mr & Mrs M. Bethwaite
Calvert-Jones Foundation
Department of Education, Science and Training
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
Tim Fairfax Family Foundation

Mrs Neilma Gantner
Jianguo Pty Ltd
Jumbuck Pastoral Pty Ltd
Juniper Networks Foundation Fund
Dr Murray Lake
Mr & Mrs RL Maple – Brown
Sarah & Baillieu Myer Family Foundation
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC DBE
Sidney Myer Fund
Sidney & Fiona Myer Family Foundation
The Pratt Foundation
Thyne Reid Foundation

Founding Donors Report

The drought, which was the trigger for the establishment of the Rural Education Program of FRRR in January 2000, has extended throughout most of Australia over the two years covered by this report. The back cover map shows that at June, 2006 it has now extended to much of Australia. Consequently, more and more children in rural and remote areas have had their education, life and sporting activities seriously affected. Pastoral properties, rural communities and families and the nation are suffering a very high financial burden.

This report - our second - summarises what we have done over the past two years working through local agencies and organisations, together with special partnerships and individuals, we have assisted in extending educational resources and given support to many rural and remote students in need. It has been a busy two years.

I would like to thank my fellow Founding Donors, John and Janet Calvert-Jones, Tim and Gina Fairfax and Sarah Myer for their commitment, dedication to the task, and the time they have given to it, both at the eight meetings held during that period and the extensive field trips between meetings. Their advice, knowledge and experience have been invaluable.



We would like to thank also the dedicated team at FRRR led by CEO Sylvia Admans, who have all worked so hard in the administration of the Program, and our Education Officer, Helen Morris, for her good advice, particularly in initiating and reacting to applications. Also, we thank the group of like-minded foundations, funds, companies and individuals who are listed in this report, as they share our vision and have joined with us in ensuring that students in rural and remote communities have a "fair go".

The Founding Donors are eager to do more and have now committed further funds. This is a year by year commitment and is reviewed annually. We hope our lead will be supported by further funding commitments from our present donors and attract new ones in partnership with us. There is much to be done in this often neglected sector of our society.

Baillieu Myer AC

For the Founding Donors September, 2006

Encouraging Mallee Kids To Tell Their Stories (VIC/SA)

Mallee Health Service – Grant \$4,161

In 10 years or so, don't be surprised to hear of one or two young film directors emerging from the Mallee outback across Victoria and South Australia. It's just possible they will have cut their teeth in the film-making game, using cameras and software, funded by FRRR/REP.

Pinnaroo youth worker Alison Walker wanted equipment so students in the predominantly broadacre cropping region could learn how to make films "to tell their own stories". "You hear the kids saying all the time, this place is a hole and that they just want to get out of here but when you see some of the films they produced, you can see their affection for the place. They are proud of their environment and of their friendships."

A \$4,161 grant paid for a mini digital video camera, tripod, microphone, a computer and editing software which students from around Murrayville, Pinnaroo, Lameroo and Karoonda used to learn to make films. With help from Adelaide film makers Jennifer Lyons-Reid and Carl Kuddell, they made films about things Mallee kids do, another was a spoof on a news report of a chicken massacre and another was filmed at the Karoonda Pioneer Park and featured a talking train.

Kade Richardson, 18, used the equipment to make a film in the sand hills he and his friends played in as they grew up. Now living in Adelaide, he says having the right equipment was really important. "There's not a lot you can do without the editing program. I still use it when I go back there."

Pinnaroo-born Alison, 32, who returned there four years ago to work for the Mallee Health Service, says the kids were so savvy with the equipment that they taught the adults, including parents and herself, a lot. Wannabe young film makers can borrow the equipment from her any time, she says. "Other members of the community can negotiate its use."

Equipment supplied to Mallee students along the South Australian/Victorian border, gave them a chance to learn skills and encouraged self-expression. The equipment remains available to the region's students through the Mallee Health Service at the Pinnaroo Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.



Shading a Hot Playground (NSW)

Yetman Public School

Parents and Citizens - Grant \$4,800

Drought and changing times are stealing families from the farming community of Yetman, 100km south-east of Goondiwindi on the NSW/Queensland border. That leaves fewer families to raise funds for school projects like providing a shaded area for the school's 30 kids. "Lining up in 45-degree heat in the sun wasn't much fun and when it rained, which isn't all that often lately, there was nowhere for the kids to play," says P&C treasurer Elizabeth

Nicholls. "With FRRR/REP funds, we've built a sheltered area and it's just fantastic. We are so appreciative because it's just getting so hard to raise funds. The less people we have here, the harder it is. We are looking at putting in some markings for handball and hopscotch for the little ones to play there."

Equipping a Kindergarten (VIC)

Undera Kindergarten - Grant \$2,200

"We fundraise like crazy," says mother of three, Jo Backway, echoing the story of parents involved with kindergartens and pre-schools everywhere. Jo is the treasurer of the Undera kindergarten in north central Victoria, where notes to parents, teachers' notes and other bits and pieces often had to be driven to Mooropna, 15 minutes away, to be photocopied. That's no longer the case after FRRR/REP funds helped buy a photocopier for the kindergarten, which it will share with a community group.

Small grants like these help the people in and around this town of 20 dwellings to remain self sufficient.



Bringing the Arts to Isolated Children (QLD) Yaraka Parents & Citizens Association - Grant \$5,000



It's a long way to go to learn how to sculpt, make prints, draw cartoons and make other creative works but when you live at Jericho in outback Queensland the rare opportunity to do so shortens the 350km trip to class. About 100 children from eight one-teacher schools in central Queensland and from outback stations travelled to Isisford, about 120km west of Blackall, for a week-long arts class. FRRR/REP funds helped bring artists out to the town of Isisford where the locals opened their homes to the visitors. Children camped in the shire hall and learnt how to make masks and kites. The 'arty-party' created friendships that thrive despite distance.

"This is vitally important to children in remote communities," one parent commented.

FRRR/REP liked this project because it encouraged communities to work together for their benefit and introduced isolated children to lots of new skills.

Teaching Kids to Write (NSW)

Arts OutWest Inc

(Small School Literacy Project) - Grant \$6,000

Zombies, lonely needles in a haystack falling in love and Ferrari-driving grandmas were just a few of the characters to emerge in the stories of children from central west NSW after workshops with children's author Paul Stafford. Paul, of Bathurst, travelled out to the Corinella, Caragabal, Bedgerabong and Eugowra schools near Forbes where he engaged the kids by asking them about the TV shows and films they watched. From there the kids learnt about plot, settings, and characters, worked out group story plans and away they went, writing stories and conjuring up scripts for their school plays. "They almost never get authors out there or artists of any kind," says Paul who writes comedy horror for reluctant readers. "For the boys there was a bit of male mentoring as well, because most of the schools are staffed by female teachers and for boys living in the bush, blokey things are shooting 'roos and driving tractors and definitely not writing stories."

Children's book illustrator Steve Summerton added illustrations and the stories were posted on the website www.pantsonfire.com.au under a special section called FaRRRRout!

"Paul Stafford's visit to Bedgerabong inspired the students to want to write," Bedgerabong Public School principal Paul Faulkner says. "His modern and realistic

approach to writing enabled the students to create exciting and relevant scripts which they willingly turned into plays for our annual presentation night- a real treat."

Getting kids to see the connection between TV shows and films and the fact that somebody had written them was a key goal of this literacy project among small isolated schools in western central NSW. It provided kids with a rare opportunity to meet an author and realise that writing can be fun and is a way to make a living.



Rural Education Program Grants 2004-2006

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Arts Outwest Inc	Forbes Parkes Lachlan Small Schools Literacy Project	NSW	6,000
Baimbridge College	Standing Tall	VIC	25,000
Bairnsdale Secondary College	Specialist Digital English Classroom	VIC	23,000
Bairnsdale Secondary College	Evaluation of Specialist Digital English Classroom	VIC	1,900
Balmoral High School	Music Equipment	VIC	7,500
Barmah Kindergarten & Occasional Child Care Inc	Library	VIC	4,514
Berry Street Victoria	Seymour Community Based VCAL	VIC	9,470
Blackthorn College P & F Association	Tiered Seating	QLD	4,000
Bollon District Childrens Resident Comm	Upgrade Computer, Purchase Freezer & Dryer	QLD	4,247
Boort Secondary College	Instrumental Music Program	VIC	21,880
Branxholme - Wallacedale Comm School	Cultural Excursion Melbourne	VIC	3,000
Bright Adult Education Inc.	Words on Wheels: Adult Literacy	VIC	25,000
Burnett Head State School P & C Assoc.	Going Green	QLD	1,000
Cairns School of Distance Education	Skilling Home Tutors	QLD	5,900
Cairns School of Distance Education	Cyclone Monica	QLD	15,000
Carnarvon School of the Air (CSOTA)	Canberra Camp 2005	WA	4,000
Centacare Wilcannia - Forbes	CGEA - for Narromine Youth	NSW	20,000
Charles Sturt University	Research Project: Impact of Drought on Secondary Education Access in Rural & Remote Areas	NSW	90,909
Charleville & District Community Support Association	Kids in Biz	QLD	1,636
Charleville School of Distance Ed P & C	Accommodation for Home Tutors Development Training	QLD	9,000
Charlton & District Preschool	Central Deborah Gold Mine Trip	VIC	805
Charlton College	Instrumental Music	VIC	5,000
CHILD - The Association for Childhood Language & Related Disorders	Operation - TALK (Talking & Learning for Kids)	QLD	8,000
Circular Head Rural Health Services Inc	HIPPY - Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters	TAS	5,000
Cleve Area School	Improved Facilities for Distance Education	SA	5,000
Contact Incorporated	2006 School Packs	NSW	30,000
Contact Incorporated	Expanded School Packs Program 2006	NSW	24,200
Coolgardie Primary School	Bushfood Garden	WA	4,000
Coolgardie Primary School	Breakfast Club	WA	6,428

Smoothing Administration

At Kinder (NSW)

Forbes Pre-School Kindergarten -

Grant \$3,829

Every kindergarten committee know what it takes to keep the kinder notices to parents rolling out when they're needed. The kindergarten in the farming town of Forbes, which has 110 children, bought a photocopier with FRRR/REP funds

"It's freed up more staff time and that means they can spend more time with the children," says parent Sally Duff. The kindergarten shares the photocopier with the Forbes Community Toy Library and it's a godsend for the fundraising committee, Sally says.

FRRR/REP was keen to support this project which would benefit many voluntary groups simultaneously.



Giving Indigenous Trainees a Home (WA)

Wunan Foundation - Grant \$20,000

Wunan House is a hostel for young indigenous people completing traineeships and apprenticeships in Kununurra in northern WA. Run by a foundation, it aims to provide a stable environment for kids chasing their dreams to become plumbers, boilermakers, broadcasters, business administrators and health workers. While they carry out their training, they can come home to good meals and a quiet environment, free from the distractions of less stable environments. Some cannot afford the standard boarding fees so the FRRR/REP grant helps. It helped pay for boarding scholarships ranging from \$1500 up to \$4000 for eight trainees and apprentices. The Wunan Foundation says that, with a steady home environment, the kids are more productive at work. "This, in turn, encourages local employers to develop better perceptions or to correct misconceptions about indigenous trainees," a spokesman says. "Having more trainees here has enhanced the atmosphere at Wunan House and helped residents develop better peer support networks."



FRRR/REP supports this project to help young indigenous people realise their potential.

Rural Education Program Grants 2004-2006

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Coomealla High School	Notebooks to Borrow	NSW	5,000
Coonamble & District Education Foundation	2005 Scholarship Fund	NSW	5,000
Cora Barclay Centre Inc.	Remote Access for Geographically Isolated Deaf Children	SA	9,730
Corinella P & C Association	Corinella Community Gets Away	NSW	5,000
Cowell Area School	Seasons for Growth	SA	5,000
Croppa Creek P & C Association	Upgrade School Library	NSW	3,000
Deloraine High School	Improving Students Self Esteem & Confidence through Sport	TAS	3,900
Djarragun College	Bringing the World to the Bush through Books	QLD	25,000
Dungog Information & Neighbourhood Service Inc	Dungog Community Garden Eco Fun Day	NSW	3,000
Eastern Eyre Rural Counselling Service	Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Relief	SA	5,000
Eden Creek - Fairymount Preschool	Storage & Shade	NSW	6,569
Forbes Pre-School Kindergarten Co-Op	Photocopier	NSW	3,481
Glenrowan Primary School	History Inter Generational Memory Quilt	VIC	2,295
Hedland Primary Hub	Specialist Music Teacher	WA	25,000
Henty Public School	Music For All	NSW	5,000
Isolated Children's Parents' Association Inc WA	Parents as Partners in Distance Education: Supporting Home Tutors	WA	10,000
Isolated Childrens Parents Association Qld Inc - St George Branch	Photocopier for State Conference Events	QLD	5,258
Katanning Primary School P & C Assoc.	Yr 6 & 7 Camp - Commonwealth Games	WA	5,000
Kunghur Community Preschool	Refurbishment	NSW	2,500
Life Education Murraylands/South East Region	Replacement of Projector in Life Education Van	SA	3,550
Longreach Kindergarten Association Inc	Fresh Air Upgrade	QLD	5,000
Longreach School of Distance Ed P&C	Back to Basics Home Tutor Workshop	QLD	5,950
Mallee Health Service Inc	Directing the Hero Within	SA	4,161
Melrose Primary School	125th Year Outdoor Area	SA	10,000
Mt Warning Community Preschool	Early Childhood Service	NSW	1,000
Murilla Community Centre	Innovative Ways to Improve Students Achievements	QLD	5,000
Myall Park Botanic Garden Limited	Save a Species	QLD	5,000
Naracoorte High School	Preserving the Past - A School & Community Partnership	SA	5,000
Narrabri Public School	Guided Readers Make Great Readers Project	NSW	20,000
Nathalia Secondary College	Outdoor Education Equipment	VIC	8,000
North Queensland Public Education Assoc.	Rural & Remote ICTs	QLD	12,000
North Queensland Public Education Assoc.	Rural & Remote ICTs Phase 2	QLD	10,000

Rural Education Program Grants 2004-2006

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Nulsen Primary School	Nulsen Community Circle	WA	5,000
Nyah District Primary School	Sales for Shades	VIC	5,935
Our Lady of Mount Carmel School	Early Childhood Revitalisation	WA	6,199
Peek-a-Doo Primary P & C Association	The Renovation of the Peek a Doo Schools Shade Shelter	QLD	3,464
Port Lincoln Primary School	Through My Eyes	SA	5,000
Proston State School P-10	PREP: Preparing Youth for the Future	QLD	15,000
Quambone Public School Council	Music @ The Marshs	NSW	3,200
Renmark High School	"Spice Up" Your Education	SA	2,000
REVISE - WA	Flyer to Assist in Recruiting Volunteers	WA	1,100
Rotary Club of Bega Inc	HSC Resources for Bega Valley Students	NSW	6,000
Royal Agricultural Society of NSW	City & Country School Link	NSW	4,000
S.I.D.E. WA	Support A Parent	WA	15,600
South West Music Inc	Musical Instruments for Community Use	NSW	7,500
St Ignatius Parish School	Keep us Safe & Let us Grow	NSW	5,000
St John's Silkwood	Literacy	QLD	5,000
St Johns Catholic PS - Cobar	Promote Literacy	NSW	5,200
St Patrick's School Parents & Friends Assoc	Playground Development - Stage 2	QLD	5,770
Streaky Bay Area School	Improved Outcomes Through Video Conferencing	SA	5,000
Swifts Creek Secondary College	Student Fitness	VIC	2,000
Thargomindah State School	ICT Enhancement	QLD	4,912
Tongala Primary School	Tutors	VIC	1,680
Tumby Bay Skills Centre Inc.	Training & Tourism	SA	15,000
Tumby Bay Area School	Equipping the Skills Centre	SA	5,000
UCA Frontier Services	2005 School Packs	NSW	15,550
Undera Kindergarten Inc	Photocopier	VIC	2,000
Urban Camp Melbourne Co-Operative	Country Victoria Project	VIC	10,943
Urban Rural Links Inc	Urban Rural Links - School Links	VIC	10,000
Volunteers for Isolated Students Education	VISE Angels	NSW/QLD	20,000
Wallumbilla State P-10 School	Developing Engineering Skills in Rural Students	QLD	3,299
Weethalle Public School	Books for the Bush	NSW	2,500
Wentworth District Preschool Playcentre Inc	Excursions & TV/DVD/VCR	NSW	2,440
Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee (ACC)	Empowering Rural Students to Make Successful Transitions	WA	13,000
Wongan Hills Telecentre	Wongan Hills Community Education Partnership	WA	10,000
Wunan Foundation	Scholarships for Wunan House	WA	20,000
Yaraka State School P&C Association	Cluster Art Camp	QLD	5,000
Yetman P&C Association	Shelter Area	NSW	4,800
Total			\$854,875

Providing Training and Work for Teenagers (WA)

Wongan Hills Telecentre -

Grant \$11,000

Distance and isolation often combined to spell an early end to school and an early start to unemployment for many young people in the wheatbelt town of Wongan Hills, two hours north-east of Perth. Then the school leaving age was lifted from 15 to 17 years. The local school only went to Year 10 level. The community took action. They formed the Wongan Hills Community Education training and retraining project to offer support to kids to help them complete traineeships. The project employed a co-ordinator who began to establish mentors and ways to help the students through the maze of agencies and forms that often beleaguered them. Then they encouraged local businesses to provide training. The project has encouraged 11 kids to return to study or training. They attend school three days a week and work two days a week. Last year all Year 10 students from the local school went on to further study or training. "This is about offering life-changing opportunities for local 15-19-year-olds who can now gain access to education and training locally," project manager Kathie Meldrum says. "We had families leaving the area because the older members of the family were going into later years at high school and couldn't stay but we are able to keep them here now."

Spin-offs from this project include involving local employers in a dream to enhance the self-esteem and future of the district's young people which FRRR/REP applauds.



Dr Murray Lake (Chair Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council, and Deputy Chair Rural Education Forum of Australia), Marianne Hasson (Chair WHCEP), Hon Ljiljana Ravlich (Minister for Education and Training), Kathie Meldrum (WHCEP Co-ordinator).

Recreating A Place For Learning and Hope (QLD)

St John's School Parents
and Friends Association,
Silkwood -

Grant \$5,000

Parents are dubbing it a miracle but when Cyclone Larry pummelled far north Queensland in March 2006, the only rooms at St John's Primary School in Silkwood that remained largely undamaged were the newly renovated library and one classroom. Renovated partly with funds from FRRR/REP and with others raised by the school's parents and friends association, the library became a symbol of hope and renewal after a long downturn in the surrounding sugar cane industry. New chairs, shelving and white boards for learning were installed. Association secretary Angelique Taifalos says the school's 63 children don't have access to other libraries because of their distance from the region's townships. Silkwood is 27km south of Innisfail. Angelique says FRRR/REP's support was vital at a time of despair and spurred the community into action. "It stimulated other families to help at the school with working bees and other fundraisers. Knowing that there are entities outside our small community interested in our plight and prepared to help us in troubled times has given hope to our families."

Providing funds to this school gave families the inspiration to help themselves. This is a significant achievement.



Helping Outback Kids Overcome Communication Difficulties (QLD)

Children with Severe Speech and Language Difficulties

Outreach Program - Grant \$8,000

This is really a new frontier," says Debbie Winther, about workshops for teachers and parents of outback children who can't always make sense of the world through words and language. "That's because often these children's problems aren't identified because our funded services don't reach out to these places." Debbie is the outreach co-ordinator with Children for Severe Speech and Language Disorders. The Brisbane based organisation, with REP's help, ran workshops and training programs for parents, teachers, teachers' aides and allied health professionals at Charleville. The workshops were specifically for those working with outback children.

"Kids who live out in the rural areas, often have to travel three to four hours for services," Debbie says. "They often don't have contact with other children so that makes it difficult for their parents to identify that they may have a problem. We've had children of average intelligence presenting not with an intellectual problem but the difficulties they have with speech and understanding really restricts their ability to socialise, perform in the

classroom and enjoy active learning. The workshops gave them and their parents tools for overcoming this."

FRRR/REP helped fund the two-day workshop for teachers and their aides plus a four-day workshop for outback parents and kids.

FRRR/REP supported this project because it believes outback kids deserve care to ensure they learn despite their isolation.

Helping a Community

Help Itself (NSW)

Coonamble and District Education Foundation Scholarships -

Grant \$5,000

This foundation, in the farming town of Coonamble (population 3000) was established in 2003 to raise funds locally to invest in its own young people. Already it has handed out about 27 scholarships to students and apprentices. Its dream is that, once trained, the youngsters might one day return to the place that nurtured and encouraged them. "It's by no mean a requirement," says foundation chairperson, Ginny Taylor, "We really just want to encourage them. We are 2.5 hours north-west of Dubbo and while there are some courses that can be done through TAFE at the local school, the students generally have to go away for their education. For many of them this is just too hard and they don't go."

The scholarships fund books, tuition, accommodation and range from \$200 to \$2000.

This year they were awarded to kids striving for careers in panel beating, hairdressing, exercise science, mechanics, teaching, butchery, occupational therapy, police force, accountancy, social science, veterinary science and horse massage.

When a community shows it wants to help its own people by contributing from their own pockets, FRRR/REP feels assured its funds will be well used. In this case, they are helping to encourage education among kids who need a little support to leave home for university or for trade apprenticeships.



Coonamble and District Education Foundation
Left to right - back row: Jake Lane, Simon Mulholland, Matt Johnson, Emma Haycock, Hayden Page, Ben Pawley
Front row: Erica Lane, Courtney Cleary, Ashley Holland, Rachelle McMahon, Kimberley Miller

Shading Pre-Schoolers (NSW)

Eden Creek/Fairymount

Combined Pre-School - Grant \$6,569

Around Kyogle in NSW, low-income families have battled to keep their pre-school open. A fire in the local plywood factory, which closed it down, cut employment and was a harsh blow for the predominantly small farms area which has also become popular for alternative lifestylers. The Fairymount Pre-school at Kyogle had already amalgamated with the Eden Creek Pre-School, 20km west, but as hard times hit, the combined management committee was also forced to relinquish its director for a lower-paid supervisor. The FRRR/REP grant which funded shading and a storage shed at the Kyogle base was well-timed. "It just made such a huge difference to everyone's morale," says supervisor Anne Christie. "We'd almost got to a point where we had to close down, although we have negotiated some emergency funding."

The shed houses play equipment and the shaded area includes a cool place for the children to play. About 30 families have children, aged up to six years, enrolled at the pre-school's two centres.

The FRRR/REP grant encouraged this combined pre-school to keep on so it can provide pre-school education for isolated low-income families.



Giving Outback Kids Camp Time (NSW)

Corinella Public School Parents and Citizens Association - Grant \$5,000

Three years into being drought declared, the farming families around the one-resident town of Corinella, 60km south-west of Forbes, felt it was important for their children to get out and have fun. The school, with 29 children from the surrounding broadacre cropping and sheep and cattle farms, is a paddock in the middle of nowhere. With the help of the FRRR/REP, children from the senior classes travelled by bus and train to Sydney for a sport and recreation camp. Over five days, they visited the Conservatorium of Music, Darling Harbour and met the NSW Premier Morris Iemma. Infant classes took their overnight trip to the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo and the Wellington Caves.

"We applied for the funding because of the drought and for the kids to get away and enjoy themselves and to do something the parents might not otherwise have been able to afford," says Parents and Citizens Association former president Jenny Shephard.

Alice Scott, in Year Six, was delighted. "It was an excursion I'll never forget," Alice says. "We did lots of things but the space is not big enough!"

FRRR/REP saw these camps as a nurturing way of expanding educational opportunities for outback children.



Beating Isolation (QLD)

Cairns School of Distance

Education -

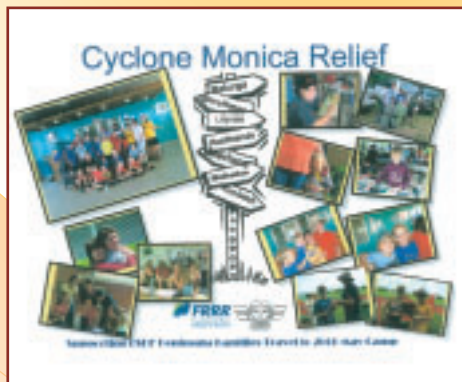
Grant \$15,000

The prospects for joining in the annual school camp weren't looking good for Grade Fiver, Clay MacLean. Cyclone Monica had dumped metres of rain, his family was landlocked on their cattle property near Coen 800km north of Cairns and "Mum and Dad said I'd have to miss out". For a kid who learns over the phone and by internet through the Cairns School of Distance Education, the annual May camp in or near Cairns is a highlight. About 190 kids who live on fishing vessels and isolated properties attend each year along with their home tutors - usually their mums. Clay was looking forward to catching up with his best friend Lane Taylor who also lives on an isolated property, about 500km away. Then along came Cyclone Monica. "Up here the wet usually comes in from Christmas to March and we have the camp in May when it's dry so the families can drive out," school principal Richard Huelin explains.

"In April Cyclone Monica came along and flooded 100,000 sq km to a level never seen before, properties were landlocked, houses were inundated and cattle were swept out to sea. It was just too terrible. We decided we'd fly about 15 of the children who were flooded in, some with their mums and dads down to the camp."

Clay was so grateful for the FRRR/REP funds that paid for the flights he wrote a big thank you note. "I flew out on my own with Qantas from Weipa, met up with Lane and went to camp. We had the best time canoeing, swimming, fishing, learning circus tricks and art. Then we went to Cairns for sports day and I won age champion. I'm the only kid on our station so it was really good to get with some kids for the week. I had a heap of fun."

FRRR/REP's grant flew isolated families to Cairns for an important educational event that they would otherwise have missed. The trip helped families get through a difficult time when their isolated properties were flooded.



Giving Young School Leavers A Chance (VIC)

Bright Adult Education Inc Words on Wheels Adult Literacy -

Grant \$27,500

Four years ago, Beau Sinclair was battling to read, speak and understand English. Today the 19-year-old is establishing his own radio station online and wants to start a website creation company. In the meantime he's finishing a traineeship in Internet Technology at Bright P12 College. Beau's story, like so many other kids who have difficulty learning language and maths, could have been so different. He says a Words on Wheels literacy project, funded by FRRR/REP and run by Bright Adult Education Inc, helped him graduate with a Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) in Literacy and Numeracy. Beau was one of 13 students to take part in Words on Wheels. Eight graduated. The students studied film and multimedia and their first film, a documentary called Square Pegs, won a regional film festival award.

Project officer Louisa Vale says that around Bright in north-eastern Victoria, if kids don't fit in at school, there are few other educational opportunities. "The nearest TAFE is 150km away. We've been working

with young people and literacy and numeracy for some time but we felt we needed to expand and formalise this work. The project is still going strong. Certainly FRRR/REP funding worked for us as seeding funding. Thanks to their support, we have established a great program with important outcomes for school leavers and young people no longer fully participating in their community."

FRRR/REP supported this project because it offers young people in a remote rural area a viable educational alternative.



Opening the World to Outback Kids (WA)

Katanning Primary School

(Melbourne Camp Commonwealth Games) -

Grant \$5,000



The roar of a packed city stadium is the stuff of dreams and television for many kids living in outback Australia, especially when that stadium is hosting a Commonwealth Games event on the other side of a very big country. But the children, teachers and parents at Katanning Primary School made their dream come true.

Thirty-two children from Years Six and Seven plus 11 adults flew to Melbourne to attend the 2006 games. They also saw the show *The Lion King*, went ice-skating and visited The Melbourne Zoo, Cook's Cottage, the markets and the Melbourne Aquarium.

With FRRR/REP's grant, parents' fundraising and donations from the community, the school raised \$25,000, cutting the cost of the trip for each child from \$1200 to \$670.

Deputy Principal Chris Altus says it was a profoundly binding experience for the multicultural school in this farming town, 300km south west of Perth.

About half the school's 260 students are indigenous, and many others are from Afghanistan, China and Liberia, their families drawn to the area by work at a local abattoir, Chris says. There are also many second generation Malays.

"We are a very multicultural and low socio-economic school and we wanted to give the children the opportunity to view a world wide sporting event and cultural events. We wanted to give the children a chance to spend a significant amount of time together to form friendships and to appreciate the cultures in our schools.

"It worked and to watch the children's faces as they went on their first plane trip, and watched *The Lion King* and games events was an experience I will never forget."

FRRR/REP liked the chance to support a country school's idea of building friendships among students of mixed races.