

YOU *Thrive*
VICTORIA

A legacy of Helen Macpherson Smith

NON
US

Annual Report

Expanding our impact for young
rural Victorians



This has been a **very exciting year** for Youthrive!

In 2025,



Thanks to you!

We distributed out

14 university scholarships!

& 35

rural chance scholarships

That's over

\$740,000

dollars donated to rural education

We've **partnered** with & alongside:

11

local organisations across all of rural Victoria



Across 2025, **Branch Out Mentoring** was presented to

61

schools, and over

562 students

Students like Xander!

“ The growth in **BRANCH Out** PEER TO PEER MENTORING

including expanding into many more rural areas of Victoria, has been a wonderful

team effort ”

- Andrew, CEO

We ran

3 

residential programs with

of our **17**

alumni volunteers

Together, we hosted up to

62

Participants to foster and develop rural connection

in **2025**

A Message From Our **BOARD CHAIR & CEO**

The purpose of You thrive Victoria is to equip rural students pursuing further education with the capacity to lead and strengthen their communities which has been successful in 2025.

What does a successful year look like and how was it achieved? The infographic opposite highlights the support that has been provided to hundreds of rural students, together with the significant partnerships that have been fostered. The growth across our scholarships program, group and individual mentoring, and leadership development in recent years is significant.

Our success comes from several specific groups:

- Our young people motivate everyone through their ideas, energy, enthusiasm and commitment to guide and support others, including the Board.
- Our staff led by Andrew McGuckian, Charlie Bracey, Nicole Thomas and Anita Kane have encouraged our young people to achieve significant growth in themselves, our programs and our reputation.
- Our financial supporters are core to our being and without them nothing would be possible. Their contributions are motivating and sustaining.
- Our Board is diverse in experience, skills and geography providing expert governance, guiding alignment in our services, support for our staff to ensure our purpose is achieved.

You thrive Victoria have been blessed by the financial support we receive for our programs with a number of our supporters involved for many years to ensure our growth and success. Their commitment has led to new financial supporters in local communities, philanthropic entities and individuals. Thanks to all our supporters established and new.

In working to achieve our purpose we have the opportunity to support, develop, lead, and be led by rural and regional young people who choose to be part of You thrive Victoria. We have enjoyed a very successful year motivated by their commitment to be their best selves. The future of our country is in good hands.



“Our ambition is to provide access to our services in all regional and rural secondary schools, to lessen the hurdles faced by their young people to successfully complete their secondary education and transition to further studies. Our work in 2025 has progressed this ambition significantly.”

Table of Contents

01	Front Page
02	Infographic
03	A Message From the Board Chair & CEO
04	Table of Contents
05	Together We've Made a Difference
06	Branch Out Mentoring
07	Branch Out Mentoring Partnerships
08	Scholarships
09	The Thread of Your Impact
10	Working Across Victoria
11	Working Across Victoria
12	Rural Chances Scholarship Recipients
13	University Scholarship Recipients
14	Dream Seeds
15	Our Alumni
16	Building Rural Leaders
17	Our Directors
18	Financial Report
19	Thank You
20	Acknowledgement of Country

Together, we've made a difference.

Our New Strategic Direction

2025 saw a mid-term review of the Youthrives Strategic Plan. This resulted in a strong confirmation that we are heading in the right direction towards achieving our strategic objectives. Since the review some refinements have been made to key strategic statements including adding a statement of beliefs.

Our Purpose & Beliefs

The Purpose of Youthrives Victoria is to equip rural students pursuing further education with the capacity to lead and strengthen their communities.

At Youthrives Victoria we believe in:

Collaborating with our partners, donors, communities, and alumni to provide programs for young rural Victorians, so rural communities will thrive through their skilled, resilient, and engaged young people.

Investing in and celebrating young rural people so that, when empowered, they will have a long-term positive influence in their communities.

“ The Purpose of Youthrives Victoria is to equip rural students pursuing further education with the capacity to lead and strengthen their communities. ”

Youthrives Scholarships

Through the financial commitment of our numerous supporters, 2025 has seen Youthrives Victoria award a record number of University and Rural Chances Vocational scholarships. The chance to build partnerships with scholarship funders, formed out of a shared vision, is a key to the growth of our scholarships programs.

We continue to work alongside organisations, communities and individuals to help facilitate their aspirations to support young rural students.

Branch Out Mentoring

A further demonstration of how working in collaboration brings great results is the significant growth of Branch Out Mentoring in 2025. The Youthrives team have worked hard to align local support agency partnerships, philanthropic funding, school engagement and staff capacity to ensure success and sustainability.



Our Founding Organisation: The Helen Macpherson Smith Foundation

Established as the Macpherson Smith Rural Foundation in 2008, The Rural Foundation trading as Youthrives Victoria has grown into a strong and vibrant for purpose entity.

The initial Helen Macpherson Smith Trust Capital and Future Leaders Scholarship endowments have been the catalyst to building the organisation that exists today. All of which is only possible through the wonderful partnerships that exist with funders, delivery partners, schools and alumni.

Youthrive's impact starts with **BRANCH OUT MENTORING**

The Branch Out Mentoring program provides peer-led workshops, facilitated by our Rural Engagement Coordinators (RECs), for rural Year 12 students to build life skills, knowledge, and confidence as they prepare for the transition beyond secondary school.

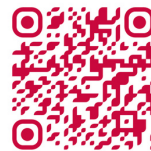
The program is grounded in three key elements: it has been co-developed by young people, delivered through a peer-to-peer model, and addresses topics not typically covered within the school curriculum, ensuring learning is practical, relevant, and responsive to students' real-world needs. In this exciting first year of expansion, Branch Out Mentoring focused on building strong partnerships with local community organisations to ensure our RECs had meaningful, place-based support. These partnerships provide more than just a local presence, they bring trusted relationships, community knowledge, and established connections with schools, enabling us to begin our work with schools more quickly and effectively.

For Claudia Cox, REC with North Central LLEN, partnering with Youthrive felt like "a natural alignment, two organisations grounded in the same values, with young people at the centre of everything they do."

Having already built strong relationships with schools and students across the region meant that rolling out Branch Out Mentoring was seamless and incredibly rewarding. Through the program, RECs have supported students to explore what life after school could look like, answering practical questions about real life -- from money and gap years to moving out of home -- all while helping them build confidence for the next chapter.

As REC Marnie reflected, the year was "full of new opportunities, teaching me a range of valuable new skills while allowing me to visit new places within my community and develop relationships with schools and students. It felt like I was able to make a real difference for our young people while continuing to work locally and being supported by both organisations through their collaborative networks."

**Scan the QR Code to
Hear From Fletcher!**



"... So in the middle of 12, we had a staff member from Youthrive come to Beaufort Secondary to talk to us about Youthrive, the programmes, the scholarships and the mentoring. I was told Youthrive go to many schools around Victoria and I was really inspired by what Youthrive brings, so it really caught my attention and I really wanted to take that next step. Youthrive was one of the first that came to me as an opportunity.

In year 12, I was really determined to go to university, but I just wasn't sure on how I'd get there. So when I found out that I received the Youthrive Scholarship, I was blown away. I realised I could fulfil my dream.

Youthrive has provided not only the wrap-around care, it's provided the support, the connections, the friendships, the leadership and so much more.

**... If it wasn't for Youthrive, I don't know what
my next chapter would have looked like ... "**



Thanks to Our Branch Out Mentoring Partners

We are grateful for the strong partnerships that make this work possible. Our collaborations with North Central LLEN and Shepparton Lighthouse Project were particularly impactful. Both organisations brought experienced local staff ideally suited to the REC roles, helping to strengthen regional capacity, create larger and more sustainable positions, and provide greater job security for those team members.

We also deeply appreciate the support of South West LLEN, Central Grampians LLEN and Southern Grampians LLEN, who worked closely alongside our RECs to help deliver strong local impact. Meanwhile, South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN successfully established a pilot of the program in Gippsland, expanding Branch Out Mentoring into the region for the first time. We are excited to continue growing our presence in Gippsland in 2026.

By the end of the year, ten dedicated community partners were ready to hit the ground running with us. Together, these collaborations have deepened our reach, strengthened school relationships, and helped deliver meaningful outcomes for young people across rural and regional Victoria.

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project
of Shepparton

North Central LLEN
of Charlton

South West LLEN
of Warrnambool

Central Goldfields LLEN
of Bendigo

Swan Hill City Council
of Swan Hill

Central Grampians LLEN
of Ararat

Southern Grampians LLEN
of Hamilton

South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN
of Leongatha

North East TRACKS LLEN
of Wangaratta

Tomorrow Today Benalla
of Benalla

Bringing Digital Wellbeing to the Classroom

BOM x CTRL Your Scroll Partnership



During our July summit, we met Xavier Chalkley from Ctrl Your Scroll. His workshop for our Alumni, designed to equip them with the knowledge and tools to use digital devices safely and effectively, was inspiring. Immediately, we knew that we wanted to do more with them. From this connection, an exciting partnership developed, strengthening our commitment to supporting young people as they transition from secondary school.

Our newly co-developed Branch Out Mentoring (BOM) module focuses on digital wellbeing, social media literacy, and healthy online habits; all skills that are increasingly essential for students preparing for life beyond school. These skills are particularly important for rural students relocating for further study or work, who may be leaving behind their community and support networks.

The Ctrl Your Scroll team will work closely with our Rural Engagement Coordinators to train them to facilitate the session, enhancing their skills as facilitators and drawing on their own lived experience to help the content resonate with students.



Youthrive's impact continues with **OUR SCHOLARSHIPS**

In 2025 Youthrive Victoria awarded 35 Rural Chances Vocational Scholarships, 13 University Scholarships along with one John and Mary Moore University Scholarship. We have seen a successful 12 months within our scholar cohort transitioning from high school to what's next which has been evident through the engagement within our post-secondary mentoring, January Leadership Camp, Rural Summit and Alumni events.

All 2025 awarded University Scholars have successfully progressed into their second year studies. This brings our cohort of scholars in 2025 to a total of 65.



WHY NEEDS BASED SCHOLARSHIPS?

Youthrive Victoria knows that young rural people face hurdles, but this shouldn't mean they can never access further education and the ability build their own dreams. Many scholarships are awarded purely on academic ability, however we believe this is also limiting young rural people's options at achieving their full potential.

We are fortunate enough through the financial assistance and trust of our supporters to be able to offer a scholarship program to the people that really need a helping hand to achieve their best.



WHAT IS YOUTHRIVE'S WRAP-AROUND CARE?

Our signature wrap around care involves regular check-ins and monitoring of scholars progress throughout the duration of their scholarships (one or three years).

This gives the young people we support the best opportunity at succeeding after high school.

We are also able to link them in with other peers through our post secondary mentoring and our leadership and development programs, like January Camp, Summit and other activities.



Scan the QR Code to Hear From Lea!



"... So I was very ecstatic that I did get the funds to be to help me to be able to actually start my journey into medicine because of my condition and because my parents were also refugees ... And so they did struggle financially for a while because it is hard when you migrate to another country. They had to learn English and meet new friends ... And, of course, then they had me and my brothers - it took a toll on us too because we heard all their stories.

The scholarship has provided me with the money so that I can pay off my uni degree and pay for resources and technology and anything that I need to be able to do my best in uni ...

... Youthrive really do have a really strong focus on regional Victorians and they provide that support to those who really need it, not just out of merit, but by actual need."

The Thread of Your Impact

The Chris and Marli Tilley Scholarship

Established in 2015, the Chris and Marli Tilley Scholarship honours the legacy of local Stawell residents Chris and Marli Tilley, whose lives were deeply connected to their community and shaped by a strong belief in the power of education.

The Tilley family raised their children in Stawell and were active contributors to the life of the town. Their love for the region and their commitment to supporting young people continue through this scholarship, which helps local students pursue tertiary education and build the skills needed to shape their futures.

The scholarship has been strengthened in recent years through the generosity of additional supporters, including a significant contribution from Dr Andrew and Sue Cunningham. Designed specifically for Stawell Secondary College school leavers, the program supports young people facing financial disadvantage or other barriers to higher education. Through financial assistance, mentoring and Youthrive Victoria's Wrap-Around Care program, students are supported not only to access university study but to thrive throughout their educational journey.

At its heart, the scholarship represents a community investing in its own future. By supporting young people to realise their potential, they may return with the skills, knowledge and leadership needed to strengthen the communities that first supported them.



The 2025 Scholarship Recipient

Tayla grew up in Pomonal and graduated from Stawell Secondary College, where she quickly became a leader in her local community. A dedicated student, Tayla's love of science has earned her several awards, but just as importantly, Tayla has deeply engaged with her local community through netball and the Pomonal CFA.

Tayla shared: "Moving to Melbourne and starting uni was exciting but also pretty overwhelming, and knowing I had that support took a lot of pressure off. It's helped ease the financial stress of living away from home, which means I can focus more on my studies and getting involved at uni instead of constantly worrying about money."

... It's also really special to know that someone believes in me and is willing to invest in my future, that reassurance has given me more confidence during such a big transition."



Tayla began a Bachelor of Biomedical Science at Deakin University, with hopes of one day bringing her skills back home to the Grampians region and giving back to the community that has supported her.

mildura

YOUThrive
VICTORIA

Working across Victoria.

swan hill

horsham

charlton

shepparton

bendigo

ararat

kyneton

alexandra

ballarat

hamilton

warrnambool

colac

 Scholars

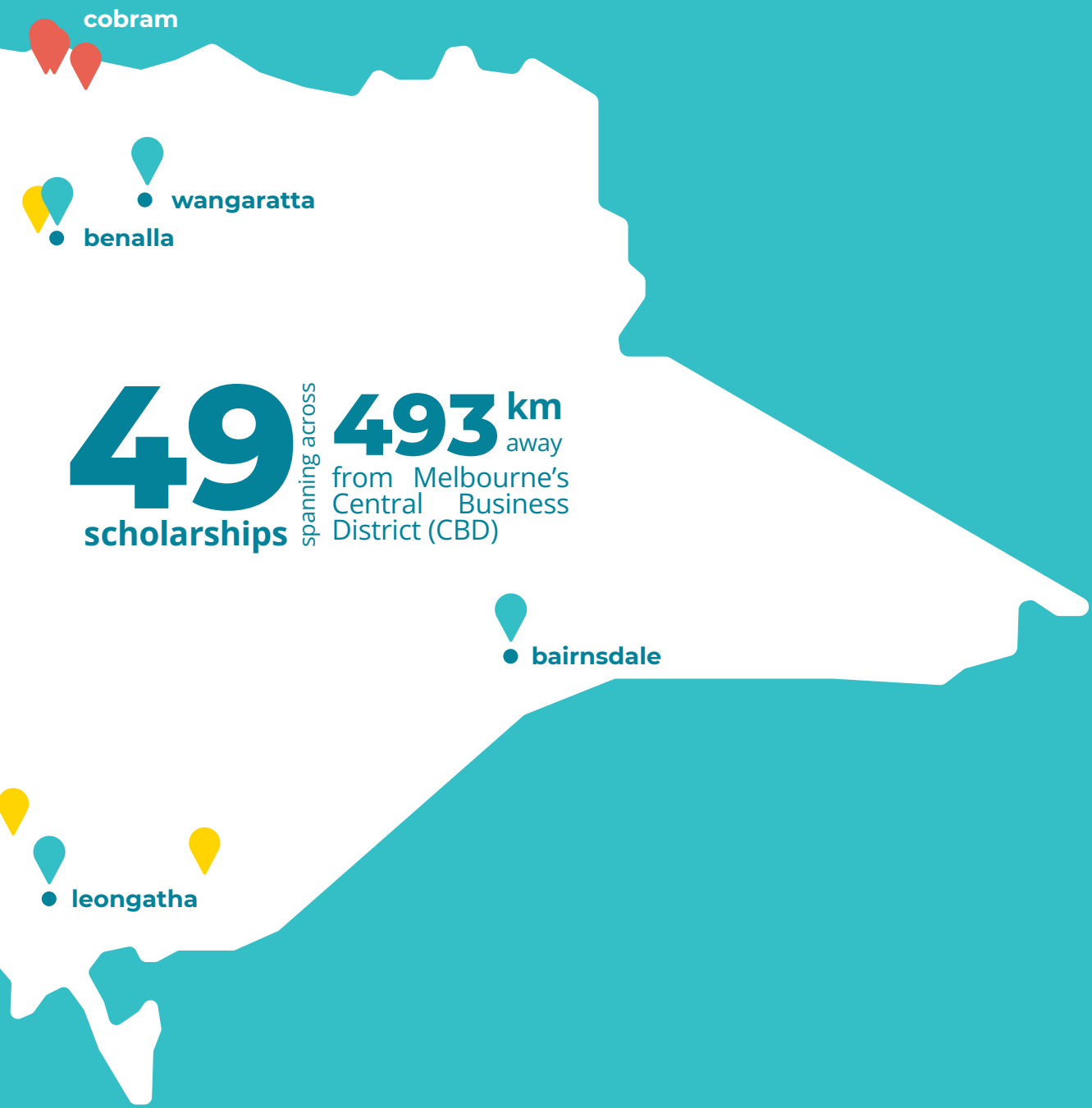
 Partners

 Schools We've Worked With

Strong rural communities grow when their young people are supported to thrive and pursue their dreams; because when young people feel ambitious and capable, they're far more likely to give back locally. Early engagement makes all the difference in building long-term regional resilience.

Many young rural people face additional challenges as they transition post-secondary education. They may confront reduced access to local services, greater transport barriers, limited access to wellbeing support and they often need to relocate far from home for study or work.

Youthrive's commitment to supporting young rural people, no matter where they live or study can be seen below. Youthrive partners with local communities seeking to bring equity and opportunity to all young rural Victorians.



The 2025 You thrive

RURAL CHANCES

SUPPORTERS & RECIPIENTS

Campbell Edwards Trust

Braia Denton of Nyah West
studying a Certificate III in Individual Support
Murray ACE Inc., Swan Hill

Dean Dryburgh of Deep Lead
studying a Certificate III in Light Vehicle
Mechanical Technology at SkillInvest

Tegan Gross of Horsham
studying a Certificate III in Animal Care
at The Gordon, Geelong

Mason Hocking of Dingee
studying a Certificate III Agricultural Diesel
Mechanic at Wagga TAFE

Ryan Holster of Lancefield
studying a Certificate III Patisserie
at William Angliss, Melbourne

Jonathan McAsey of Bamawm
studying a Certificate III Mechanical Engineering
at Bendigo TAFE

Cooper McDougall of Stawell
studying a Certificate III Building & Construction
at Longerenong Agricultural College

Sonny Warren of Stawell
studying a Certificate III Engineering Fabrication
at Federation University, Horsham

Lara Wright of Colac
studying a Diploma in Musical Theatre
at Transit Dance, Brunswick

Jackson Zagame of Charlton
studying a Certificate III in Engineering
Fabrication
at Bendigo TAFE

Carmel and Michael Hutchinson

Shyann Wilson of Raywood
studying a Certificate III Community Services &
Certificate III in Childcare at Bendigo TAFE

Christine Milton Foundation

Ellie Foley of Hamilton
studying an Apprenticeship in Hairdressing
at South-West TAFE, Warrnambool

Genevieve Sellers of Dartmoor
Completing VCE
at South-West TAFE, Portland

Community Bank: Creswick and District Financial Services

Jacob de Kort of Clunes
studying an Advanced Diploma in Building
Surveying at Federation University, Ballarat

Gall Family Foundation

Rachel Hassett of Caramut
studying a Certificate III in Animal Studies
at The Gordon, Geelong

Joyca Trust

Brylie Allender of Huntly
studying a Certificate IV Allied Health Assistance
at Bendigo TAFE

Jada Bover of Echuca
studying a Certificate III Locksmithing
at Melbourne Polytechnic

Ethan Coe of Swan Hill
studying a Certificate III of Sports Turf Management
at Melbourne Polytechnic

Henry Hemley of Glenorchy
studying a Certificate III in Agricultural Diesel Mechanic
at SuniTAFE, Swan Hill

Nicholas Mason of Moyston
studying a Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician
at Federation University, Ballarat

Libby Norman of Wedderburn
studying a Certificate III of Early Childhood Education
at Bendigo TAFE

Indi O'Brien of Lake Boga
studying a Certificate III Agriculture
at Longerenong Agricultural College

Ashleigh O'Doherty of Malmsbury
studying a Certificate IV Community Services
at Bendigo TAFE

Verity Rafter of Dumosa
studying a Certificate IV Allied Health Assistance
at The Gordon, Geelong

Tee ku Shee of Bendigo
studying a Diploma of Rural Health
at La Trobe, Bendigo

Kyamba Foundation

Noah Clarke of Yarrawonga
studying a Bachelor of Business
at Swinburn Hawthorn

Rory Lister of Echuca
studying a Certificate IV Community Services
at Go TAFE, Shepparton

Olivia Newton of Cobram
studying a Diploma Nursing (EN)
at Go TAFE, Shepparton

Lane Foundation

Sienna Chivell of Cobden
studying a Certificate III in Individual Support Care
at South West TAFE, Colac

Thomas O'Toole Foundation

Rhianna Kavanagh of Warrnambool
studying a Diploma of Nursing
at South West TAFE, Warrnambool

The Daylesford Foundation

Dylan Gledhill of Daylesford studying a Certificate III in Fabrication at Federation University, Ballarat

Bella Hardy at Trentham studying a Certificate IV in Agriculture at Federation University, Ballarat

Jando Breen of Daylesford studying a Certificate III in Horticulture & Certificate III in Conservation & Ecosystem Management at Federation University, Ballarat

Lewis Sheehan of Coomoora studying a Bachelor of Graphic Design at RMIT, mELBOURNE

Raylene Warner of Shepherds Flat studying Carpentry

The 2025 You thrive

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS & RECIPIENTS

Andrew Barling

Lea Bursac of Strathfieldsaye studying a Bachelor of Biomedical Science (Medical) at Latrobe University

Community Bank: Creswick and District Financial Services

Isabella Davies of Creswick studying a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at Australian Catholic University, Ballarat

Gidleigh Foundation

Fletcher Holz of Amphitheatre studying a Bachelor of Sport, Physical & Outdoor Education at Federation University, Mount Helen

Tillie Mclean of Ballarat studying a Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Paramedicine at Australian Catholic University, Ballarat

Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

Ali Ehsani of Mildura studying a Bachelor of Health Science at Monash University, Caulfield

Paul & Susan DeAraugo

Khoa Do of Maryborough studying a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) & a Bachelor of Science at Monash University, Clayton

PPT Glenyis McIvor Estate

Jae Knobben of Mildura studying a Biomedical Science (Medical) at La Trobe, Bendigo

The Anderson Partnership

Jaidyn Scott of Horsham studying a Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Psychological Studies at Victoria University, Footscray

The Daylesford Foundation

Matilda Cassidy of Blackwood studying Bachelor of Criminology & Bachelor of Psychological science at Deakin University, Waurn Ponds

Stella Foulds of Hepburn studying Occupational Therapy at Deakin University, Warrnambool

You thrive Victoria

Mohammad Ehsani of Mildura studying a Bachelor of Pharmacy at Latrobe, Bendigo

John & Mary Moore

Molly Fredericks of Soldiers Hill studying a Bachelor of Arts - International Relations at Melbourne University

The Chris and Marli Tilley Scholarship

Tayla Field of Pomonal studying a Bachelor of Biomedical Science at Deakin, Burwood

Jane Anderson, Glen Fortune, Lynda Evans, Ken Pollock, Lyndal and Gary McClure, Rob and Faye Cordy, David and Robyn Pierce

Safhira Rowe of Avoca studying a Bachelor of Engineering (Computer and Network) Honours & Bachelor of Computer Science at RMIT, Melbourne



DREAM SEEDS®

THANK YOU

A trip to Swan Hill in December 2025 marked the end of an era for Youthrive Victoria's Dream Seeds program.

Created by alumni ten years ago, Dream Seeds was a response to research and the personal experiences of alumni that indicated some young rural Victorians faced barriers to education, aspiration and participation. Alumni set about creating a program that engaged post-secondary school students from rural Victoria to deliver a workshop for Grade 5 & 6 primary school students, aimed at building aspiration, resilience and connections and support transition to Year 7.

With the new strategic realignment, Youthrive has refined our focus towards supporting secondary school leavers, which means we're stepping back from coordinating primary school engagement through Dream Seeds and allowing other partner organisations their hand at running the program.

Since its inception, Dream Seeds has been delivered in

100+ across rural victoria, to **2,880** Grade 5 & 6 kids

79 amazing volunteers, many of them are Youthrive Alumni!

Without the support of youth volunteers, Dream Seeds would not have existed. A very special thank you to alumni and others who took up the call to volunteer as a Dream Seeds presenter. The positive influence and wonderful contribution each of you made to kids growing up in a rural community and their aspirational thinking at such an important stage of their young lives is to be commended. The program was able to have the reach and success it did because of you.

Thank you also to our partner organisations in regional hubs, North Central LLEN, Central Grampians LLEN and Tomorrow Today for your support in linking with schools in your patch of Victoria.



JUST A FEW OF OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

“ I absolutely loved my experience at Dream Seeds. It gave me such a meaningful opportunity to make a difference in young people's lives, particularly in rural Victorian communities like the one I grew up in. I know firsthand how powerful positive role models can be, so being able to give back in that way was incredibly special. ”

Bella Davies
Dream Seeds workshop volunteer



CAMPFIRE AT NARMBOOL DURING SUMMIT



KHOA BOWLING AT BAREFOOT BOWLS



SNOW AT HOWMAN'S GAP!



YEAR PICNIC <3

Our Alumni.



ING AT THE AN BALL



OW

2025 was another active and successful year for the Youthrive Victoria alumni community. The Alumni Committee organised numerous social events aimed at building new connections and strengthening existing ones, alongside professional development workshops and study sessions during university exam periods.

What was most impressive, however, was the way our alumni took the initiative to build this community themselves. Impromptu dinners were organised after our social events, group chats were created within regional hubs to coordinate local catch-ups, and trivia and games nights were spontaneously arranged at events such as the Howmans Gap trip.

With so many regional and rural Victorians moving away from their local communities after high school, it is incredibly important for these young people to establish new support networks. In 2025, Youthrive witnessed these communities forming in real time. Countless lifelong friendships were created, and the support networks for alumni transitioning into life after high school have never been stronger. By providing consistent opportunities for connection, leadership, and shared experience, Youthrive has played a vital role in creating the environment where these networks can grow and thrive.

2025 was a resounding success for Youthrive's alumni, and with record sign-ups for the first alumni social event of 2026, we are entering the new year with incredible momentum.

Andrew Pritchard
Youthrive Alumni President



BAREFOOT BOWLING (+ TRIVIA)



TRIVIA VICTORY!!!



Youthrive's impact continues with **BUILDING RURAL LEADERS**

Throughout the year, Youthrive alumni came together across three key gatherings that strengthened leadership skills, wellbeing, and community connections among young rural people.

January Young Leaders Camp

On the 19th of January, the Youthrive Alumni Program Manager, Bella Sheahan, and a team of 10 coaches welcomed 31 participants to the Anglesea YMCA Discovery Camp for the 2025 January Leadership Program.

Throughout the camp, activities were designed to both challenge and upskill participants while fostering meaningful connection. Beyond the workshops and activities, one of the most valuable outcomes was the opportunity for young people from rural communities to build relationships with like-minded peers and become part of a broader support network.

Bella reflected, "I was very nervous in the lead up to camp as you can plan so much but at the end of the day it's only a plan and there are things we can't predict. My nerves eased almost instantly as the participants arrived. They were such an amazing bunch of young people, and I was confident they were going to engage in the program fully. I believe the camp was a huge success!"

95% of camp participants reported improved leadership skills and personal capabilities such as resilience and wellbeing management, while over 90% felt more confident in their potential to contribute positively to their communities.



Solange



Bella

The July Summit

The Youthrive Rural Summit, held at the historic Narmbool property on Wadawurrung Country, brought alumni together for four days of inspiration, learning and collaboration.

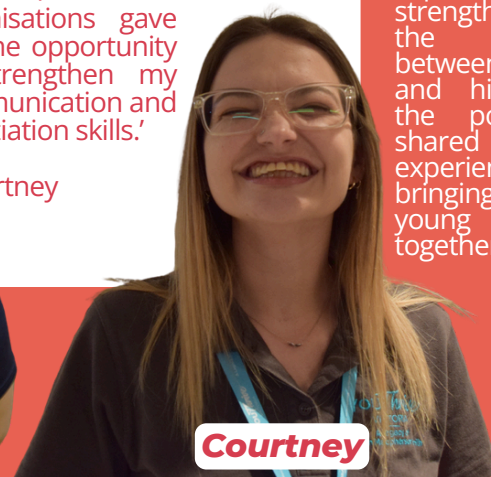
Participants engaged with guest speakers and skill-building workshops focused on aspiration, resilience and leadership development.

Alumni also played an active role in shaping the program; delivering workshops, supporting event logistics, and fostering a strong sense of peer leadership and community. The Summit provided a valuable opportunity for experienced and emerging alumni to connect, share knowledge, and build lasting networks.

"The summit was a great example of Youthrive Alumni coming together and building friendships. It was really lovely to see older alumni engaging with newer alumni and making future plans to catch up, hang out and stay connected. The sense of "togetherness" was consistent throughout the entire summit and was absolutely amazing.

Coordinating with external presenters and organisations gave me the opportunity to strengthen my communication and negotiation skills.'

- Courtney



Courtney

The Howmans Gap Trip

Back in June, the Howmans Gap Discovery Camp generously hosted Youthrive Alumni at their alpine lodge free of charge. With some last minute rallying from the Youthrive team, sixteen alumni gathered for a truly unforgettable long weekend.

With little on the schedule, it was a retreat focused on relaxing, reconnecting, and strengthening the friendships that underpin the Youthrive Alumni rural leadership network. There were shocking betrayals during Werewolf, wholesome evening sing-alongs, and plenty of fun had over table tennis, trivia, pool, and comedy routines. These informal moments created space for alumni from across rural communities to share experiences, swap ideas, and build the kind of trust and camaraderie that supports emerging leaders long after the weekend ends. The group even managed to sneak in some time for collaborative brainstorming.

One thing that can't be forgotten was the snow. The group was blessed with near-constant snowfall which was, for better or for worse, perfect conditions for making snowballs. However, the highlight was the afternoon spent at Falls Creek where participants tobogganed, skied and snowboarded to their heart's content. This was an experience that strengthened the bonds between alumni and highlighted the power of shared experiences in bringing rural young people together.



Charlie

Youthrive's Board of DIRECTORS



Chairman of the Board
Bruce Anderson is a highly experienced business advisor working with CEO's and their teams to optimise their performance. He is a community builder having held a variety of roles in organisations to create a better world.



Director of the Board
Bernie Lloyd is a non-executive Director and has served the Youthrive Board for over eight years. She is the former Chair of Bank First (formerly VTMB) and moved into corporate governance after 30 years.



Director of the Board
Mandy Hutchinson is the Chief Executive Officer of Bendigo Community Health Services, leading a workforce of over 290 staff and overseeing a budget of more than \$39 million. She brings extensive experience in her community work.



Director of the Board
Lisa McKenzie OAM is a Shepparton based founder and change leader committed to improving equity and accessibility. Lisa co-founded and became the inaugural EO of the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project in 2014.



Director of the Board
Bob Yeates is the Managing Director of East Gippsland Newspapers, has served 24 years on the Victorian Country Press Association board. He is involved in local community organisations, including Rotary and Toastmasters.



Director of the Board
Jeremy Dixon has been involved in sport administration and coaching for local academies, schools, and clubs and has helped create and deliver mentoring and leadership programs for local youth.



Associate Director
Cassandra Roberts is a first-in-family university graduate and one of Youthrive's first scholars, Cassandra is the Assistant Director of Clinical Operations with the Department of Veterans' Affairs.



Associate Director
Jessie Newton is a UX designer at Prosper Digital, is passionate about creative problem solving and adventure. With deep ties to her rural hometown, she has been actively involved in Youthrive Victoria.



Associate Director
Dirk Stickland became an Associate Director at the start of 2025. Working as a teacher in Ballarat, he brings a first-hand understanding of the secondary education system. Dirk has been an active Youthrive alumni.

FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY

Income & Expenditure	18m to 13/12/25	23/24 FY
Revenue	3,786,811	1,178,335
Expenditures	- 2,507,105	- 1,191,222
Outcome	1,279,706	- 12,887
Assets & Liabilities		
Current Assets	1,733,035	1,135,792
Non-Current Assets	9,393,514	7,770,718
Total Assets	11,126,549	8,906,510
Current Liabilities	742,505	309,327
Non-Current Liabilities	481,172	200,500
Total Liabilities	1,223,677	509,827
Net Assets	9,902,872	8,396,683
Equity		
Retained Earnings	2,687,489	1,259,365
Capital Endowment	5,000,000	5,000,000
Financial Assets Reserve	805,102	610,119
Scholarships Reserve	1,410,281	1,527,199
Total Equity	9,902,872	8,396,683

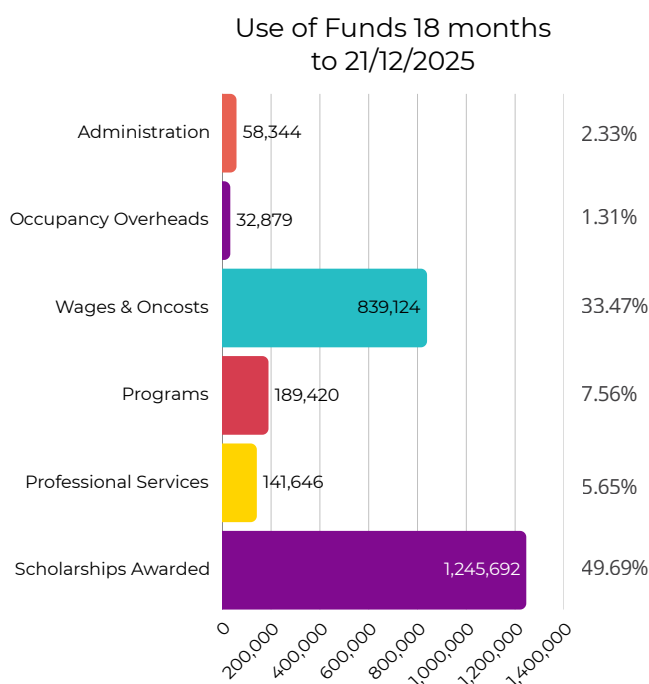
Since the previous annual report, The Rural Foundation Ltd. has transitioned from financial year to calendar year reporting. This was done to improve alignment with the operational environment centered around schools and tertiary institutions. With ACNC approval the current audit is for the 18 months to 31/12/2025, hence the financial summary provided is for this period.

The financial position of The Rural Foundation Ltd. remains very sound with significant new philanthropic support for both operational needs and scholarship funding. This has enabled expansion in the number of scholarships granted, along with increased program delivery.

2025 saw The Rural Foundation named as a beneficiary of the Warren Mills Estate. The reported revenue includes bequest funds of \$1.7M. This very generous bequest will be applied to establish a new University scholarship program in memory of the donor.

At the end of 2025 The Foundation held Net Assets of \$9,902,872 with Gross Revenue for the 18 months of \$3,786,811 comprising 67.8% from donations and grants and 32.2% from investments (interest, dividends and distributions) and other fee income.

The Rural Foundation Ltd thanks JBWere for their professional management of our investments. We also thank Allin-Accounting for their accounting services and CountPro Audit for preparing the financial accounts and undertaking the audit.



Thank you!

We are very appreciative of all the support provided by donors, granters, pro-bono supporters and volunteers. With your assistance, we were able to continue all of our programs and expand our efforts.

Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

Our Founder

We were founded in 2008 by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and endowed with a generous Establishment Grant and Scholarship Fund. We thank the Trust for ongoing support.

OUR 2025 SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

Program & Scholarship Donors

A L Lane Foundation
Andrew Barling
Book Club #1
Burke Britton Financial Partners
Campbell Edwards Trust
Carmel and Michael Hutchinson
Central Goldfields Group
Christine Milton Foundation
Community Bank Creswick and District
Dennis Orton Foundation Pty Ltd
Estate of Warren F Mills
Gall Family Foundation
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Maryann and Friends Group
Neville and Julie Dunn
Paul DeAraugo
PPT Glenyis McIvor Estate
Robyn and David Pierce
The Anderson Partnership
The Daylesford Foundation
Thomas O'Toole Foundation
Tilley Family Trust
William Buckland Foundation

2025 Program Partners

Central Grampians LLEN Ararat
Mentorloop
North Central LLEN Charlton
Parliament of Victoria
Swan Hill Rural City Council
Tomorrow Today Benalla
YMCA Camps Victoria

Our Volunteers

Amelia Hunt	John Nghiem
Andrew Cobden	Julia Hunt
Andrew Pritchard	Kady Paton
Angelina Mason	Kathleen Rae Robinson
Angelica Watson	Katherine Wagner
Angus Clark	Kayla Humphrey
Ariel Ratcliff	Lacie Pridan
Alyssa Orlando	Lateisha Adams
Brady Cronin	Lydia Reiske
Carole Boundy	Mia Begley
Caterina Reiske	Mia Mulheron
Charlie Farrell	Michaela Humphries
Cheryl DeZilwa	Molly Davies
Dirk Stickland	Noah Tanzen
Eliza O'Sullivan	Peter Tilley
Erika Bicket	Safhira Rowe
Fletcher Holz	Sam McColl
Isabella Davies	Solange Ntigonza
Jacob Dunne	Yawovi Assimadi

2025 Alumni Committee

Amelia Hunt	Jacob Dunne
Andrew Pritchard	Kayla Humphrey
Angus Clark	Solange Ntigonza
Charlie Farrell	Stacey Barbagallo
Dirk Stickland	

Youthrive Victoria Staff Team

Andrew McGuckian	Jacob Dunne
Anita Kane	Jaymee-Lin Ellis
Annabella Sheahan	Kayla Humphrey
Charlotte Bracey	Lacie Pridan
Chantel Cousins	Marnie Owen
Claudia Cox	Mia Mulheron
Courtney Bright-Casey	Nicole Thomas
Donna Cullen	Paige Pickering
Fletcher Holz	Stephanie Hartshorn

Acknowledgement of Country

Youthrive Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we are based, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples.

We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our scholars, partners and donors live, learn and work.

We thank the Traditional Custodians for their enduring care of Country and honour the continuing culture, strength and knowledge of the First Nations People.