

## Grants available to support the mental health of rural Australians

### Grants up to \$20,000 available through the In a Good Place program

**7 July 2020:** Grants of up to \$20,000 are now available to not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) throughout rural, regional and remote Australia to support projects that improve and strengthen the mental health of their communities through the [In a Good Place \(IAGP\) program](#).

The IAGP program, now in its third year, is the centrepiece of a five-year partnership between the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) and CCI Giving. It is based on a shared belief in the value and importance of rural, regional and remote communities and a commitment to strengthening mental health and wellbeing within those communities.

A pool of \$200,000 is available for community-led projects that reduce social isolation, increase social participation and connectedness, and increase access to help for people within rural, regional and remote communities who are at risk of, or are experiencing, mental health issues.

Jeremy Yipp, Chief Risk Officer of CCI and Chair of CCI Giving, said initiatives that increase the resilience and social connectedness of rural communities not only have direct mental health benefits, but often also lead to improved mental wellbeing by increasing productivity, economic participation, and employment.

“We have seen so many projects funded through the In a Good Place program that have been a beacon of hope for those living in communities doing it tough. They have made a real difference to the resilience, social connectedness and mental wellbeing of rural Australia. Even just sharing experiences and knowing that you’re not alone is, in itself, powerful.

“We encourage community groups to put forward proposals for projects that will help to tackle the mental health challenges their community is facing, especially with the additional pressures encountered due to COVID-19,” said Mr Yipp.

Natalie Egleton, CEO of FRRR, said that COVID-19 has highlighted the impact that isolation can have on mental health and demonstrates why social connectedness, particularly during times of crisis, is so important for the mental wellbeing of those living in rural communities.

“Rural communities have been hit by drought, bushfires, floods and now the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. These events have a huge impact on the mental health of those living in these regions,” Ms Egleton said.

For people living in rural, regional and remote Australia, accessing mental health support is typically more complex than in metropolitan areas. This is due to a myriad of factors including a lack of mental health expertise within the community, the considerable travel time to reach mental health services and specialists and an overarching culture of self-reliance and fear of stigma.<sup>12</sup>

“Mental health in rural, regional and remote Australia is a complex issue. Overwhelmingly, there is a consistent need in these communities for better access to mental health services, as well as greater opportunities to strengthen social-connectedness and participation,” Ms Egleton explained.

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<sup>1</sup> National Mental Health Commission. Monitoring mental health and suicide prevention reform: National Report 2019. Sydney: NMHC; 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. People living in remote areas are less than half as likely to access a mental health service. Health case study. 2016. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3e67hIM>.

“It’s not just about those that have a mental health condition having access to clinical services, but also how we can support opportunities to promote mental wellbeing, through the likes of workshops or mental health first-aid training, or simply providing a safe place to chat to someone.”

“Each community is different; with different mental health concerns, needs and priorities. Our partnership with CCI Giving means that we can support community-led initiatives that are meaningful and will have the greatest impact on the mental wellness of those living in these rural communities,” said Ms Egleton.

Applications open on 7 July 2020. FRRR expects this will be a highly competitive program and so there is a two-stage application process. A brief project outline must be submitted no later than 7 August, and full applications for invited projects are due by 11 August 2020. More information is available on FRRR’s website - [www.frrr.org.au/in\\_a\\_good\\_place](http://www.frrr.org.au/in_a_good_place). Applicants can also call 1800 170 020.

## ENDS

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### About FRRR

The Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) was established in 2000 to support the renewal of rural, regional and remote communities in Australia through partnerships with the private sector, philanthropy and governments. Since inception, FRRR has managed the distribution of more than \$100 million in grants and provided substantial capacity building support to community organisations across the nation. To find out more about FRRR, visit [www.frrr.org.au](http://www.frrr.org.au).

### About CCI Giving

CCI Giving is a new kind of foundation for the Australian Catholic community from Catholic Church Insurance Limited (CCI). CCI is an organisation owned by the Catholic dioceses and religious institutes of Australia and is one of the oldest insurance companies in Australia. CCI Giving was set up with a \$10 million contribution from CCI in 2017 and will be a perpetual charitable foundation that is not reliant on public funding. CCI Giving is CCI’s latest way of extending support to make a difference across Australia and bring communities back together.