

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE

Friday 5 March 2025

**Portland Misses Out on IRCF Program but Gains
Renewed Community Momentum**

The Portland community has demonstrated strong collaboration and dedication through its involvement in the Investing in Rural Community Futures (IRCF) program with over 50 participants attending the February workshop, facilitated by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR). While Portland was not selected to progress into the full IRCF Victoria program, the process highlighted the deep commitment of local and regional non for-profit organisations to continue to strengthen community resilience.

The FRRR review panel acknowledged the collective effort to address local challenges, particularly the focus on **mental health and wellbeing, food security, and youth engagement** amongst others. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity to discuss shared priorities and concerns, reinforcing existing initiatives and sparking new ideas.

Jo Kemp from FRRR praised the dedication of the Portland community, "The wide support for the submission from local and regional organisations was a real testament to the community's commitment to making Portland a wonderful place to live."

"It was inspiring to see the collaborative effort to navigate local challenges and identify opportunities for future initiatives."

A key positive outcome from the process has been the reestablishment of the Glenelg Youth Network, which had been inactive for two years. The workshop created a space for meaningful discussions, leading to renewed momentum for youth engagement in the region.

Nicole Carr, Executive Officer of United Way Glenelg, speaking on behalf of the steering group, reflected on this achievement:

"While we may not have been selected for the full IRCF program, the process has strengthened our community connections and given us a solid foundation for future initiatives."

"Participants identified that the opportunity to collaborate as a large group on identified issues had been missing since Covid lockdown and they looked forward to continuing the opportunity to collaborate."

FRRR has expressed its appreciation for the community's involvement and will explore ways to support the resourcing of ideas and priorities identified during the EOI submission and workshop. Further discussions will take place in the coming weeks to determine potential opportunities for support.

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