

Hayley Webster BVSc MA



I believe the FRRR funding has had a huge impact on our community. It has enabled us to keep the momentum going within the then newly developed “Monto Graziers Group”, which was critical in timing and effect. We are now seeing increased interest and enthusiasm in using Regenerative Farming techniques and other BMP management strategies, and a building passion for learning and sharing within the group.

Since the funding we have run two workshops with DAF, a grass program and a “Billy Tea Day”, both had unprecedented attendance, with the GRASS workshop fully booked with 20 businesses and the Billy Tea Day hosting 36 Local Graziers. What I’m most excited about however is the fact that many of these people were new to attending our events and are keen to continue being active participants in both learning and application of new practices.

In the coming year we have attained funding from NRRP to continue this momentum and we will be cementing the knowledge and interest developed in the FRRR workshops by continuing to work with John Moore and creating an action group for Regenerative Agriculture. Our producers have taken on initiation and continuation of this group with several proactive producers already implementing strategies like multi-species pastures and hosting on farm days to share experiences and see what it looks like in real life.

On top of the enthusiasm and ongoing implementation of sustainable practices, which has been seen as a response to the work done under FRRR funding there is an important social impact which is far harder to define. What I can say however is that the atmosphere at events and the willingness of participants to ask questions and actively participate in discussions has markedly changed over the last 10 years that I have worked in this field in the Monto Community. The FRRR funding has undoubtedly contributed to keeping this action and enthusiasm going.

Regarding emotional resilience, and social support, again the results are hard to define however I have had multiple people thank me for “creating” the community and I do know that at the last event we had at least 3 people attend who are currently experiencing mental health issues, the sister of one of them wrote to me to say that he had “very much enjoyed the day and that he felt valued and enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere in the open air”. I have also had people ask me to specifically invite other people in the community who they know need some community support, presumably because they believe that is what is received at these days. Many of these people do come, which I believe is a testament to the group that they feel safe enough to attend even when they are feeling vulnerable, and I’m sure it makes a difference.

I hope this helps, I really feel like the impact we are having is valuable and long lived. It has taken a lot of years and funding from different avenues to achieve these results but the FRRR funding was definitely a turning point in the group and I feel like we have finally got the momentum to get significant on the ground action (implementation) happening with our group.

If there is anything else I can do to help with feedback let me know.

Regards
Hayley