



Impact Report



FINANCIAL YEARS

2021

TO

2024

macdochfoundation.org



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PHOTOGRAPHY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our friend Charlie Maslin for the use of his beautiful landscape imagery in this report. Follow his work on Instagram @charliemaslin

Thank you to our partners for supplying program imagery.

Macdoch Foundation acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.





Alasdair MacLeod

I'm delighted to be bringing you this introduction to the first Impact Report for the Macdoch Foundation, which seeks to outline the work we've done since Prue and I founded the Foundation in late 2019.

The impetus for the Foundation emerged from my direct experience with a family farm that was devastated by the drought that affected much of Eastern Australia in the years 2005/06. At the time, we were keen to demonstrate how a livestock operation like ours could keep pushing production, without sufficient regard to what was happening to the landscape. The result was an economic and environmental disaster and I became determined to discover how to do this better.

Along the way, I came to understand the precarious position nature and many of our farmers and agricultural communities are in due to an increasingly changing climate. We have to find better approaches to ensure that farm businesses stay viable, landscapes are protected, and rural communities are more effectively supported to deal with change.

It has been a great privilege to be able to establish the Macdoch Foundation to explore how philanthropic funding can be deployed to address these issues.

I'm extremely proud of the work we have done to date, and the growing team we have set up under the leadership of our experienced and energetic CEO, Michelle Gortan. I am also very grateful to our Board of Directors who have supported the Foundation in so many ways.

It's been exciting learning more about the impressive work of the non-profits in our sectors of interest and getting to know the inspiring and committed leaders who run the organisations with great tenacity. Understanding the role of and opportunity for philanthropy has also been a wonderful experience, and I look forward to continuing my learning journey.

I hope you enjoy this exploration of our first years of activity.



Michelle Gortan

It's been a humbling experience for me to look back on the Foundation's first three years of work. Starting with a blank sheet of paper, Prue, Alasdair and I developed the strategy in fits and bursts in the office, across borders and over Zoom.

Looking back on the projects and programs that we've supported fills me with gratitude and respect: to the MacLeods for giving me the opportunity to lead their family foundation, and to the people and organisations we've supported in the short time we've been operating for their expertise and commitment.

There has never been a more critical time for philanthropy to work to transform agriculture and the food system. It is essential for human health, environmental sustainability, rural economic development, food security, and resilience to climate change.

By investing in initiatives that promote sustainability in agriculture, improve access to nutritious food, and address systemic inequalities, philanthropy can contribute to building a more equitable, resilient and sustainable food system for everyone.

This report comes at an inflection point for the Foundation. We're at the beginning of a refreshed three-year strategy, about to implement our new mission-aligned investment strategy and deploy our catalytic impact investment sleeve, and our team is growing. So, the time is right to reflect on our work to date. I'm grateful to the Board and my wonderful team for their support to make this happen, and I look forward to working with them as we enter the next phase for the Macdoch Foundation.



About Us

Established in late 2019, the Macdoch Foundation is the Australian philanthropic foundation of Prue and Alasdair MacLeod.



Our purpose is to build the resilience of people and the planet. We invest in bold interventions and work with partners across disciplines and sectors to tackle systemic challenges across our three focus areas: agriculture and food systems; climate change solutions; and healthy communities, and where possible, the intersection of all three.



OUR APPROACH



Bold Interventions

We seek ambitious, exponential change. We make bold interventions, intending to go beyond change-as-usual. Our interventions are targeted, solutions-focused, and underpinned by a sense of optimism about the future.



Leadership

We seek to lead and influence. We seek to be thought-leaders where possible, and not shy away from problems that appear too hard to solve. We aim to fill critical gaps in the system and inspire innovation.



Collaboration

We seek 'outsized' impact. We work with partners in Australia and internationally, across disciplines and sectors, to catalyse action or impact at scale. We bring our independence and integrity to bear on all our work.



Learning

We have a culture of learning. We listen deeply. Our approach is to be courageous, iterative, generous and humble. We prize the wisdom and culture of Indigenous peoples, and recognise their rightful place on the lands in which we live and work.

We work in Australia and the US to learn, share and generate momentum for the conservation of landscapes and climate change solutions, with people at the heart.

Highlights

Over the last few years, in the spirit of learning and exploration, we've attempted to address a number of challenges across agriculture, climate change and rural communities using both systems and program-based approaches.

The issues in these sectors are complex and interconnected, and where possible, we've sought to address root causes by funding organisations proposing innovative and unique solutions. Where we've felt there are gaps that can unlock opportunities or chip away at barriers, we've initiated projects and built the teams to deliver them, optimising philanthropy's unique capabilities to deliver breakthrough solutions in the public interest.

Particular highlights include our emergent work in First Nations' agriculture, our natural capital programs and initiatives, and our ongoing efforts at the Conference of the Parties (COP), which have been activities designed to raise the profile of agriculture and food systems in the climate and nature agendas for Australia, domestically and internationally.

What follows is a sample of the FY21-FY24 initiatives we've funded since the Foundation was established.

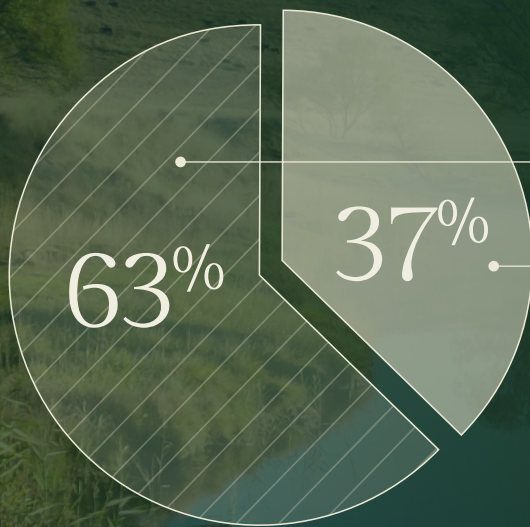


Amount granted

\$39.5M+

Grants made

79



Funds distributed

Australian program: **53** grantsUS /Global program: **26** grants

49



Partners supported

Funded by Program Area

49%

Agriculture &
Food Systems

37%

Climate Change
Solutions

12%

Healthy
Communities

1.5%

Sector
Development

0.5%

Other
Grants

Strategic Projects account for 13% of our total funding

An aerial photograph of a lush green field with several cows grazing. The cows are scattered across the field, with some in the foreground and others further back. The field is a vibrant green, and the cows have various patterns, including black and white spots and solid brown. The overall scene is peaceful and pastoral.

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Agriculture & Food Systems

A holistic, integrated approach to agriculture and food systems is critical to limiting warming to 1.5°C by 2050.

We invest in programs and organisations that support nature and people working together as critical business partners in agriculture.

We also recognise First Nations peoples as our original and best stewards of nature, and are committed to creating economic opportunities within the food and agriculture sectors for First Nations communities.

We aim to create long-term food security by promoting diverse, resilient, ethical food and fibre supply chains, and support the production of and access to fresh, nutritious whole foods.

By doing this, we seek to reduce the sectors' emissions footprint and contribute to the effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We also support the ecosystems vital to agricultural productivity and profitability, the communities that depend on agriculture, as well as human health and nutrition.



STRATEGIC FUNDING AREAS



Resilient Food & Fibre Systems

- Capacity building, research and education to improve food systems and agriculture.
 - Transparent and ethical food supply chains and the systems that finance it.
-



Valuing Natural Capital

- Mainstream 'natural capital' through research, education and training.
 - Grow the understanding of the climate / nature nexus.
-



First Nations' Excellence & Opportunity

- Invest in First Nations peoples as our original and best stewards of nature.
- Support First Nations economic opportunities in food and agriculture.



Core Funding

Soil is the foundation of all life on earth. Yet soil degradation around Australia poses a significant threat – not only to farm productivity and profitability, but also to the nation’s food security, water, ecological health and climate regulation.

Soils For Life is an Australian non-profit dedicated to helping farmers to regenerate soils – for resilient businesses, landscapes and communities.

With core funding support from the Macdoch Foundation, the organisation has been instrumental in putting soil on the national agenda and fostering a growing movement of farmers around Australia and the world to adopt farming methods that improve soil health and bring life back to the land.

With more than 50 world-leading case studies uncovering the benefits of soil regeneration, Soils For Life is empowering the next wave of Australian farmers with the knowledge, skills and social infrastructure they need to lead a national effort to rebuild and restore Australia’s precious soils and landscapes.



Taskforce on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures

Core Funding

Nature plays a vital role in the global economy, with over half the world's GDP moderately or heavily reliant on it. Yet many businesses, financial institutions and economies fail to adequately incorporate nature in their decision-making processes.

There is growing evidence that this poses risks to organisations which are being exacerbated by a changing climate and environmental degradation.

The Taskforce for Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) is a global initiative that seeks to develop a framework for organisations to report and manage their dependencies and impacts on nature.

The TNFD aims to improve transparency and encourage organisations to integrate these risks and opportunities into their decision-making, investment decisions and risk management.

We were delighted to join the TNFD Stewardship Council as funders in 2022. Our particular interest is in understanding the framework's application to agriculture and land use, and we were pleased to contribute expertise from within our team to the development of TNFD's *Sector Guidance – Food and Agriculture*.



Noongar Land Enterprise Group

Core Funding

The Noongar Land Enterprise Group (NLE) is a non-profit, Aboriginal-led grower group based in Western Australia's Southwest Region (Noongar Boodja). It is the first Aboriginal grower group in Australia.

NLE's vision is to be the leading Aboriginal organisation that develops commercially viable Noongar land-based enterprises that look after country and facilitate economic, social and cultural growth for Noongar people. Since its inception in 2017, NLE has been committed to creating culturally appropriate, commercially sustainable land enterprises to heal country, reconnect people to country and provide social benefits to the community through Indigenous employment and economic empowerment.

With the support of multi-year funding from the Macdoch Foundation, NLE is establishing itself as a leading model for Indigenous land management practices and is well on its way towards becoming a self-sufficient organisation through the success of its enterprises.

Climate Change Solutions

Our work to date has focused on public engagement efforts to foster dialogue about climate change and economic transition.

Through this, we hope to accelerate action to address these challenges more effectively and optimistically.

We see the potential for public engagement to unite people across lines of difference, bridging divides and building social cohesion. We also seek to amplify the voices and capacity of overlooked or left-behind communities to ensure our transition is inclusive and equitable.



STRATEGIC FUNDING AREAS



Climate Citizenship

- Public engagement and narrative-shifting.
- Connect Australia to the international community.



Climate Economy

- Accelerate decarbonisation pathways for food and land use.
- Community-led initiatives that aim to transition rural communities.



Resilience & Adaptation

- Community leadership capacity and entrepreneurship.
- Acceleration of adaptation strategies for agriculture.
- Understand the growing impacts of climate change on rural life.



Public engagement on climate

Climate Outreach, Multicultural Leadership Initiative & Cricket for Climate – Program & Core Funding

In 2022, the Macdoch Foundation partnered with UK-based non-profit Climate Outreach, which is dedicated to increasing public engagement and understanding of climate change.

Climate Outreach specialises in research, communication strategies, and practical tools to help individuals, communities, and organisations effectively communicate about climate change and motivate action amongst diverse and difficult-to-reach audiences.

In May 2024, Climate Outreach, together with Australian partners Multicultural Leadership Initiative and Cricket for Climate, launched a three-year public engagement program at Climate Action Week in Sydney.

This strategic partnership seeks to ensure public discussion and action on climate are accelerated and accessible for everyday Australians by equipping 'climate ambassadors' with research and tailored messages that resonate with key audiences and their values. Ambassadors will be trusted community members who can positively engage their audiences — multicultural and First Nations leaders, people in sport, community leaders, and more.

This initiative, underpinned by new social science research commissioned by Climate Outreach, will include developing a communications toolkit and identifying and training new ambassadors to engage multicultural, and rural and regional communities in new ways.

COP28 represented a significant moment for agriculture and food systems with the endorsement of the *UN Declaration of Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action* by over 150 countries including Australia.



COP28

Food Systems Pavilion

Addressing climate change demands bold, concerted efforts across all sectors. Food systems and agriculture contribute to emissions and are crucial loci for change. They also hold immense potential for mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The COP is a cornerstone event for global climate action. Since 2021, we have been involved in advancing an agenda around sustainable food systems and agriculture, both at COP26 in Glasgow, and COP27 in Egypt.

At COP28 in Dubai, we embarked on a mission to underscore the pivotal role of food systems in the fight against climate change through our events at the Food Systems Pavilion with our partners IKEA Foundation and the Global Alliance for the Future of Food.

COP28 represented a significant moment for agriculture and food systems, with the endorsement of the *UN Declaration of Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action* by over 150 countries including Australia.

Our day at the Food System Pavilion, which focused on agroecology and regenerative agriculture, was a collaborative platform for a diverse group of stakeholders. It included policymakers, scientists, farmers, entrepreneurs, and civil society who came together for panel sessions to spotlight challenges, discuss holistic solutions, and advocate for placing producers at the heart of decision-making in relation to climate action.

A photograph of three children in a garden setting. The child in the center wears a yellow shirt and a white bucket hat with a green pattern. The child on the left wears a leopard print hat and a light blue shirt. The child on the right wears a black baseball cap and a white shirt. They are all smiling and holding small green seedlings. The background is a chain-link fence.

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Healthy Communities

Our funding in this area addresses the diverse and evolving needs of rural and regional communities.

Our interventions target critical needs like mental health services, economic opportunities, healthy and sustainable natural resources, and building leadership capacity. Together, these work to build overall wellbeing, resilience and prosperity of communities, particularly those most exposed to the growing impacts of climate change.



STRATEGIC FUNDING AREAS



Economic Pathways

- Rural education, training and employment opportunities.
- Initiatives that build community cohesion, inclusion and a sense of belonging.



Mental Health

- Prevention and reducing barriers to seeking help.
- Improve access to support and treatment in rural communities.



Future Land Stewards

- Grow environmental stewardship and foster connection to nature, agriculture and healthy, whole foods.



This Is A Conversation Starter (TIACS)

Don't Keep It Under Your Hat – Campaign Support

In 2015, carpenter Daniel Allen experienced the profound loss of his best friend to suicide. The tragedy forged an unbreakable bond between Daniel and his then apprentice Ed Ross, and inspired the creation of This Is A Conversation Starter (TIACS) a non-profit providing free phone and text counselling services to Australia's blue-collar community.

We approached TIACS to help us address the growing mental health crisis amongst farmers and rural Australians, which prompted the launch of the *Don't Keep it Under Your Hat* campaign in early 2024.

The campaign encourages farmers and rural Australians to prioritise their mental wellbeing, and recognises the unique nature of the challenges they face.

TIACS delivers mental health outreach work designed in collaboration with farmers to improve its capacity for providing relatable support to rural communities.

The service eliminates the physical and financial barriers that too often stop people, particularly those living in remote areas, from accessing mental health services.

Since its inception in 2020, TIACS has helped over 18,000 people across Australia improve their mental wellbeing.

SAKGF empowers educators across Australia with the inspiration, resources and support to deliver pleasurable food education to children and young people.



Stephanie Alexander
Kitchen Garden Foundation

The Kitchen Garden Program – Program Funding

Recognising that so few children and young people were consuming the recommended amount of vegetables, renowned Australian cook and food writer Stephanie Alexander set up the Kitchen Garden Foundation (SAKGF) in 2004 to support younger generations to form positive food habits for life.

SAKGF empowers educators across Australia with the inspiration, resources and support to deliver pleasurable food education to children and young people.

The Foundation currently supports more than 1,000 schools and early childhood settings, has directly benefited more than 100,000 children and facilitated 3 million kitchen garden experiences.

However, there's still a high degree of unmet need. One of the biggest challenges to starting a kitchen garden program is a lack of funding.

To date, Macdoch Foundation has provided the funds to support 10 schools across Australia with grants to begin their kitchen garden programs.

SAKGF is working towards its goal to have more than a million young people benefiting from their programs over the next 20 years.

Strategic Initiatives



Farming for the Future

Seeded by the Foundation in 2021, Farming for the Future (FftF) is a once-in-a-generation, world-leading research project being undertaken in collaboration with Australian farmers and farm advisers, and supported by a multidisciplinary research team of scientists and economists.

FftF seeks to understand and quantify the nature of the relationship between natural capital and farm business performance; and provide the data and tools that will lead to a more financially prosperous, climate-resilient, and environmentally positive agriculture sector in Australia.

The scale of the research is designed to deliver robust findings and compelling evidence that will:

→ Empower farmers to make changes benefiting both their business and the environment;

→ Enable the system around farmers to support and incentivise farmer investment in natural capital, in an equitable way; and

→ Support policymakers to incentivise farm management that preserves nature and addresses climate change.

To date, the research program has collected data from 130 livestock businesses in Australia, representing the largest study of on-farm natural capital in the world.

The findings show a positive link between natural capital and farm business performance, profitability, and resilience to both climate and market shocks.

These insights will provide guidance to understand how agriculture can adapt in a warming world, and ultimately help to build a more financially prosperous, climate-resilient, and environmentally positive agriculture sector for Australia.



HERD Fellowship Program

In 2023, we established the Australian HERD Fellowship Program to provide an international professional development opportunity to Australian farmers, graziers, land stewards and food systems leaders.

In the Fellowship's inaugural year, we offered one full scholarship to an Australian early-career regenerative farmer, grazer or land steward, to attend the Quivira Coalition's REGENERATE Conference in the United States. Guy Ritani, Creative Director at PermaQueer, was our inaugural Fellow.

The annual event brings together professionals from across the world to exchange knowledge, foster community and explore innovative practices.

This experience offers an opportunity to learn from leaders in the field, build relationships with peers and mentors in the USA, find support for their work, and bring fresh perspectives on the future of agriculture.

Initiated by the Quivira Coalition, Holistic Management International and the American Grassfed Association, the HERD Fellowship embodies a collaborative effort to empower the next generation of regenerative farmers and food systems leaders.

Through the Australian scholarship, the Macdoch Foundation is committed to investing in the professional development of emerging agricultural and food systems leaders while cultivating a community dedicated to driving positive change in the sector.

Our US Program

Macdoch Foundation has been funding in the US since early 2022, where our work aims to:

- Support the leadership and innovation of people and organisations that share our commitment to transforming the food system; and
- Participate in global fora and funding networks to increase our impact and influence, and benefit from the learning and collaboration opportunities they provide.

The US regenerative agriculture and food systems non-profit sector is vibrant, innovative, and dedicated to promoting systems that prioritise soil health, biodiversity, climate and community resilience, and rural economic development.

Our partners focus on various interventions, such as providing farmers with technical assistance, market-building, research, strategic communications, regenerative finance, and improving equity and access for marginalised and underrepresented producers.

We actively engage in global fora like COP and NYC Climate Week (UNGA), and as members of International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP), Funders for Regenerative Agriculture (FORA) and the Global Alliance for the Future of Food.

These platforms allow us to share best practices, learn from others, develop collaborative strategies to address the complex global challenges in agriculture and food systems and ensure that the Australian perspectives are represented.

We actively engage in global fora like COP and NYC Climate Week (UNGA), and as members of International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP), Funders for Regenerative Agriculture (FORA) and the Global Alliance for the Future of Food.



White Buffalo Land Trust

Core Funding

White Buffalo Land Trust (WBLT) is a global hub for nature-positive land stewardship, education, training and enterprise development based on California's Central Coast.

WBLT is committed to addressing the climate, biodiversity, public health and food security challenges the world faces today through land stewardship and the reimagining of food systems.

Supported by a three-year grant that funds the role of Director of Land Stewardship, WBLT leads the charge in introducing regenerative agriculture practices across its ecological sites.

In 2021, WBLT acquired the 1000-acre Jalama Canyon Ranch, serving as a living laboratory of reimagined agriculture principles. WBLT showcases diverse climate-appropriate cropping systems, livestock management practices, and diverse and viable enterprises, focusing on carbon sequestration, drought and flood resilience, and soil health.

Through training and consulting programs, WBLT has improved 112,244 acres of land, trained 144 farmers and ranchers, and built a community of 12,286 individuals committed to nature-positive practices.



Fibershed

California Cotton and Climate Coalition – Program Funding

Fibershed's goal is to build transparency between wearers, end-users and the ecosystems on which they depend. Supported by Macdoch Foundation, *California Cotton and Climate Coalition* (C4) addresses the education gap between the textile industry and the working lands on which it depends for material sourcing.

C4 seeks to transform the traditional approach to sourcing durable goods and textile manufacture into one that generates market incentives for improved ecological outcomes, such as increased soil organic matter and water-holding capacity, by bringing brands and producers together. This is achieved through animal integration, reduced synthetic inputs, cover cropping, and minimal tillage.

The C4 work program consists of coordinated science and supply chain education-focused stakeholder meetings, farm tours, mill visits and the opportunity to learn how to design a textile from the ground up.

Brands that have participated and co-invested in the program so far are Outerknown, Coyuchi, Nike, Mate the Label, Circular Systems, Reformation, Imperial Yarn, and Trace.

Our Partners

We extend our deepest thanks to our valued partners for their commitment to building the resilience of people and the planet.

The Macdoch Foundation was established in late 2019 and began grant-making in 2021. The list below represents the diverse range of organisations we have partnered with, and includes partners from Australia and the US, as well as emergency relief grants made during COVID.

Accounting for Nature	Food Connect Foundation	Odanata Foundation/ Changemakers
Adelaide Fringe	Food System 6	Open Food Foundation
Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network	Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal	Outback Academy Australia
Australian Holistic Management Co-operative	Funders For Regenerative Agriculture (FORA)/ Regenerative Agriculture Foundation	Pie Ranch
Australian Museum	Good Meat Project	Potlikker Capital
Australians for Indigenous Constitution Recognition	Harlem Grown	Sober in the Country
BackTrack	International Funders for Indigenous People (IFIP)	Soils for Life
BlazeAid	Multiplier/Kitchen Table Advisors	St Vincent's Curran Foundation
Bula'bula Arts Aboriginal Corporation	La Trobe University, Research Centre for Future Landscapes	Sustainable Table
Byron Bay Community Benefit Fund	Lifeline Australia	Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)
Climate Outreach	Meridian Institute/Global Alliance for the Future of Food	The Nature Conservancy
Climateworks Centre	Multicultural Leadership Initiative (MLI)	The Next Economy
Cool.Org	North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems (NĀTIFS)	This Is A Conversation Starter (TIACS)
Cricket for Climate	Native Foodways	Tree-Range Farms Inc/ Regenerative Agriculture Alliance
Documentary Australia/ Rachel's Farm	Noongar Land Enterprise Group	White Buffalo Land Trust
Environmental Justice Australia		Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre
Fibershed		Women's Community Shelters
Filmmakers Collaborative/ Sacred Cow		World Resources Institute

Our People

OUR BOARD



Alasdair MacLeod
Chairman



Fiona Sinclair
Director



Stephen Hall
Director



Emma Jenkin
Director

OUR TEAM



Michelle Gortan
CEO



Dr Sue Ogilvy
Farming for the Future
Program Director



Sally Garis
Program Manager



Claire Cornu
Grants & Administration
Manager



Erin Kreiss
Company Secretary
and Head of Finance



Louise Cliff
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