



FY26

MACDOCH
FOUNDATION

Macdoch Foundation *Impact Report*



macdochfoundation.org

Message from the Chairman



Alasdair MacLeod
Chairman

The forces reshaping our world are no longer unfolding in isolation. Climate instability, competing pressures on land, the energy transition and the burden of diet-related disease are interconnected. Together, they demand a more resilient, equitable and sustainable approach to the systems that provide our food and fibre.

I see both the urgency of these challenges and the practical opportunities before us. The disruption of the Strait of Hormuz has exposed the dependence of global food production on fossil fuels. This is not only for energy and transport, but also for synthetic agricultural inputs, particularly nitrogen fertilisers. It has reinforced the systemic risks embedded in the current model of reliance, while strengthening the case for the transition that is underway.

At Macdoch Foundation, we are attempting to accelerate that transition. Philanthropy can take risks, support new ideas, strengthen movements

and maintain pressure for reform when political or commercial momentum falters. Together with our partners, we must hold the line by continuing to invest in long-term change.

I draw confidence from the farmers, researchers, advocates, entrepreneurs and communities demonstrating that productive, profitable and healthy alternatives are possible. First Nations peoples and communities bring knowledge, leadership and enduring approaches to caring for Country that are central to this work.

I thank my fellow directors and the Macdoch Foundation team under the inspirational leadership of our CEO, Michelle Gortan, for their commitment, judgement and contribution throughout the past year. A special welcome and thanks to the many new partners that joined us in FY26 and who you can read about in this Impact Report.

Message from the CEO



Michelle Gortan
Chief Executive Officer

Food security has moved rapidly to the centre of public debate. Across the world, communities are confronting the fragility of the systems that produce, distribute and shape access to food. Encouragingly, the conversation is also broadening. We're seeing growing attention on issues such as institutional food procurement, ultra-processed foods, local food systems, supply-chain infrastructure, agroecology and regenerative agriculture, and corporate influence. These priorities are emerging across all three regions in which we fund – Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States – reflecting a growing appetite for change.

Our partners have risen to the moment, and it's been wonderful to see their expertise, advocacy and practical work elevated. The increase in discussions about food security and food-systems policy is also promising.

We've invested in convening partners across disciplines to strengthen relationships, build collective influence and create new opportunities for collaboration.

Agrifood systems offer philanthropy a powerful point of connection across human health, nature, climate, economic resilience and community wellbeing yet they remain relatively underfunded. This year, part of our focus has been on demonstrating how these systems intersect with philanthropy's priorities while creating and funding practical opportunities for shared learning, co-funding and collective impact.

I am deeply grateful to our Chairman and board, our team, our colleagues and our remarkable partners, including the new partners introduced in this report, for their contribution this year. There is much more to do, and we're excited to do it together.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work and pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and future.



FY26

Funding Snapshot

Total Funding in FY26:

\$14.3M

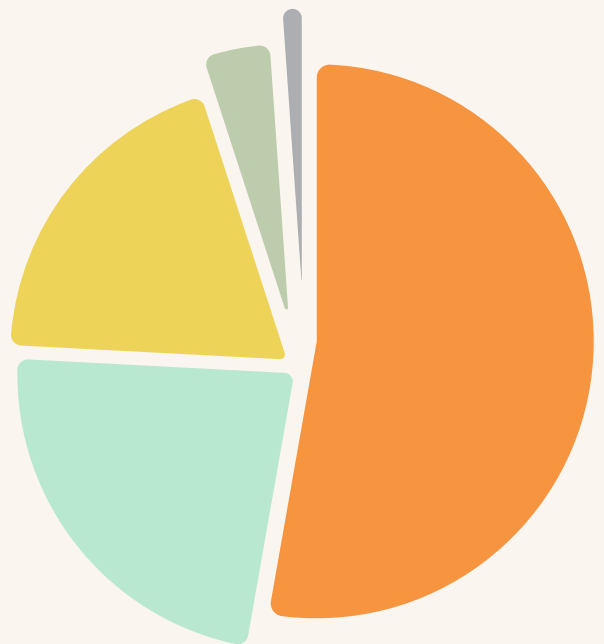
Macdoch Foundation-led strategic initiatives account for **11%** of our total funding

Number of grants made in FY26:

73

BY PROGRAM AREA:

	Nature-Positive Agrifood Systems	\$7.6M (53%)
	Climate-Related Transitions	\$3.2M (23%)
	Healthy Communities	\$2.8M (19%)
	Sector & Market Development	\$590k (4%)
	Other Grants	\$60k (1%)



Total partners supported since inception:

86

Total funding granted since inception:

\$57.7M



Nature-Positive Agrifood Systems

We support approaches that restore nature, strengthen regenerative and lower-input agriculture, invest in First Nations stewardship, and improve the viability of small to medium-scale farmers.



Food and farming systems around the world are being reshaped by converging pressures. Concerns about food security, renewed debates about the need for comprehensive food strategies, competing uses for agricultural agricultural land, and the vulnerability of long supply chains are vying for attention.

Political and business support for nature and climate initiatives is weakening in some countries, even as the need to build resilient, locally sourced food systems becomes more urgent. Against this backdrop, Macdoch Foundation supports approaches that restore nature, strengthen regenerative and lower-input agriculture, amplify First Nations knowledge, and improve the viability of small to medium-scale farmers.

Ensuring access to meat processing for small to medium-sized livestock producers has emerged as one of the most important and timely areas of our work under this strategic pillar. This often-overlooked part of the food system is critical for the viability of small to medium-scale farmers, the resilience of local supply chains and Australia's domestic food security. Through our partnership with **Agroecology and Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA)**, we are

supporting advocacy to drive practical reform. We also commissioned *Fragility to Resilience: Local Meat Processing in Australia at a Crossroads* to provide a clear evidence base for the size and scale of the issue. Drawing on surveys of more than 450 producers, processors, butchers and restaurateurs, the report identifies key barriers across the sector and highlights practical priorities for action.

Finding alternative routes to market is vital in an economy where large corporate players dominate the landscape. We extended our partnership with **Open Food Network**, whose technology platform makes it easier for local producers to reach customers, share information and collaborate. This creates viable pathways for regenerative farmers to prosper while keeping more value in local food economies. We also partnered with First Nations-led **Normanby Aboriginal Corporation (NAC)**, through social enterprise incubator **Esparg Ventures**, to test an innovative solution to the feral cattle problem in Queensland's Cape York. Under the label *Bush Beef*, NAC is testing the commercial potential of capturing and processing feral cattle to produce organic beef products ranging from meat pies to premium beef for high-end restaurants.

Regenerative farming practices and First Nations knowledge are at the centre of a holistic model of care at **SevGen**. It operates *Galeru Farm* and the *Deadly Espresso Café* on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, where it offers mentoring, training and employment opportunities, and produces and markets native ingredients as retail products. We've also partnered with **Native Foodways** to grow the native bush foods sector by building consumer awareness, strengthening markets and supporting First Nations producers with the goal of increasing both demand for and supply of bush foods.

Beemurra Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) is an Aboriginal-owned and female-operated cattle backgrounding operation based in the Western Australian wheatbelt. Our support for BAC, facilitated through **Noongar Land Enterprise Group**, enabled an uplift in its business planning capabilities, supporting its growth.

Strengthening
agriculture
and food
systems
requires
changes to
how we farm
and consume.

The **Integrity Soils CREATE** scholarship is also an important step in promoting First Nations agroecological leadership. This year's recipient, Madonna Thomson, has deepened her understanding of regenerative farming practices, complementing her Indigenous knowledge to shape how she works with farmers on Country.

We've expanded our work in natural capital by funding the establishment of **Value Australia**, the Australian hub of **Capitals Coalition**. This organisation works with government, industry and community to promote the incorporation of natural, social, human and produced capital into business decision-making.

Capitals Coalition's work complements our flagship initiative, **Farming for the Future**, a research program designed to help farmers and their advisors incorporate natural capital into farm business decision-making. We are extending our support for this program as it transitions to **La Trobe University**.

In the United States, we've partnered with two organisations strengthening the knowledge base for regenerative food and fibre systems. The **Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)** is producing a series of papers intended to help climate and agriculture decision-makers move beyond narrow emissions accounting and consider the broader risks, costs and political economy of the current food and farming system. Our grant to **Ecdysis Foundation** assists the ongoing growth of its research program, the *1000 Farms* project, which examines the complex connections between ecological, economic, nutritional, social and human health aspects of agriculture through farmer-centric science.

Strengthening agriculture and food systems requires changes to both the way we farm and how society understands the value of food. To that end, we have supported the **Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming** in New York's Hudson Valley. Its *Farmers Markets and Beyond* project reviews farm-to-retail practices and pilots strategies to evolve market channels that support the sustainability of smaller regenerative and organic farms.



While regenerative food and farming is attracting growing attention, the natural fibres sector remains comparatively underserved. Addressing this gap is critical, with around 70 per cent of global fibre production consisting of oil-based synthetics. We have provided funding to **Fibers Fund**, whose model is designed to address the mismatch between conventional finance and the realities of fibre supply chains through integrated capital.

In the UK, where we commenced our grantmaking program in earnest this year, we funded the **Sustainable Food Trust (SFT)**. Over 12 years, SFT has established itself as a trusted and independent voice in food systems change. We also supported **Food, Farming and Countryside Commission** to develop the *Net Gain or Net Drain?* report, which offers a critical assessment of food corporations' claims about job-creation, investment and growth, and identifies valuable processes for shifting the narrative.



Climate-Related Transitions

We back community leadership, advocacy and participation to ensure that policy and investment decision-making spaces are shaped by the needs, knowledge and aspirations of the farmers and land stewards on the frontline of climate-related transitions.

Rural and regional communities are navigating a challenging new normal. Politically and emotionally charged economic transitions are taking their toll, driven in part by the polarisation that surrounds climate change and the necessity of shifting to a lower-carbon economy.

Farmers and First Nations communities are on the frontline, facing more severe weather, rising costs, and pressures on land and water, while decisions about their futures are often made without their input.

In response to these challenges, we back community leadership, advocacy and participation to ensure that policy and investment decision-making spaces are shaped by the needs, knowledge and aspirations of the farmers and land stewards on the frontline of climate-related transitions.

Philanthropy can work to make these transitions fairer by supporting community leadership to design appropriate solutions and participate in policy and investment decision-making spaces. Through our sustained engagement in global fora such as COP,

we're working to ensure that frontline local communities are positioned to shape responses to global challenges.

Our partnerships under this strategic pillar acknowledge these transition-related complexities while creating the tools for change. **More in Common** is a global organisation with a mission to understand the social, cultural and political forces driving people apart, identifying common ground to foster cooperation on shared societal challenges. Its first project in Australia focuses on farmers, generating insights that promote a future for agriculture shaped by the values, hopes and lived realities of producers and farmers.

We've also funded **Common Threads**, a newly established First Nations-led advocacy organisation that boosts the power of First Nations voices on issues including climate justice and land rights. Our partnership originated as part of the preparation for Australia's formal role in COP31. We are delighted that CEO Larissa Baldwin-Roberts has recently been named as the *Co-Chair of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change*.



Mobilising and amplifying local voices has been a theme across our grantmaking in FY26, exemplified by our partnership with **Farmers for Climate Action (FCA)**. FCA delivers the **Frontline Voices Program (FVP)** – a group of farmer advocates-in-training who are committed to advancing nature-positive farming in Australia and internationally. They've been developing their skills to become confident spokespeople who advocate for the perspectives and interests of farmers. **Ambition Loop** and **Australian Progress** are important supporting partners of the FVP, providing training on campaigning, messaging and the COP process, respectively. We're proud to see farmer

Sally Higgins, one of the eleven leaders in the FVP, appointed as the *Presidency Youth Climate Champion* for COP31.

As a Foundation, we once again participated in *New York Climate Week*, working with colleagues to embed consideration of agriculture and food systems more deeply in climate conversations. This year, we engaged in *London Climate Action Week* for the first time, partnering with **The Economist** on the *Future of Food* event. We also collaborated with the **Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures** and **Goals House** to host a session on managing nature risks and opportunities in agrifood supply chains.



The Economist, *Future of Food* event

A photograph of a woman and two young boys in a greenhouse. The woman, on the right, is wearing a striped bucket hat and a light-colored sleeveless top, smiling as she holds a head of lettuce. The two boys, on the left, are wearing red and black polo shirts and baseball caps; one is also wearing glasses. They are all looking at the lettuce. In the foreground, there is a black tray filled with various green leafy vegetables. The background shows the structure of the greenhouse with translucent panels.

Healthy Communities

We support farmer wellbeing, strengthen public understanding of the importance of healthy whole foods, and build citizen engagement in food to positively shape health, livelihoods, culture, the environment and local economies.



This Is a Conversation Starter (TIACS)

Healthy communities depend on food systems that sustain both those who produce food and those who consume it. Like many in the community, farmers are experiencing declining mental health and growing financial and social pressures.

Diet-related illness and the overconsumption of ultra-processed foods continue to burden families and health systems. Under this strategic pillar, we support farmer wellbeing, strengthen public understanding of the importance of healthy whole foods, and build citizen engagement in food to positively shape health, livelihoods, culture, the environment and local economies.

Our partners develop programs that provide education and access to healthy foods for young people. **Food Ladder** is a national organisation that supplies user-friendly greenhouse systems to schools alongside digital resources that connect with the school curriculum. So far, more than 50 climate-controlled greenhouses have been established, allowing students at schools across Australia to grow healthy, nutritious food. We've also partnered with **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation**, which introduces thousands of primary school children to growing their own

fresh fruit and vegetables, shaping the next generation's understanding and appreciation for healthy foods.

In the UK, we're working with a coalition of philanthropic and not-for-profit organisations to deliver **The School Food Project**, a national initiative backing schools to deliver high quality food in line with the UK Government's new standards for school meals. The program will offer in-person and online training, support, resources and events to help schools transform school food within budget, improve food education, and serve delicious and nutritious meals.

Australian public institutions currently spend more than \$2 billion on food each year. While these decisions have an enormous impact on food production and diets, to date, there has been no mapping of institutional food procurement. To address this gap, we commissioned **Food Connect Foundation** and **Good Food Purchasing Australia** to develop *Transforming the Public Plate*. This report analyses current procurement practices, identifies reform opportunities, and provides a roadmap for leveraging public procurement to deliver healthier, fairer and more sustainable food systems.

Building public understanding of food systems is critical to driving change. Through our support of **The Conversation's** *Food Futures* series, we are working to bring food systems issues into mainstream public debate. This not-for-profit media platform engages academics and journalists to produce accessible, evidence-based stories to grow awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing Australia's food system.

Changing how we think and talk about food is integral to the work of **Addi Road**, a community organisation in Sydney's Inner West that works across food justice, human rights, community development and the arts. We are pleased to support it to grow its advocacy efforts and bring the voices and lived experiences of communities experiencing food insecurity to the forefront of public conversations about our food system.

Healthy communities are built on strong relationships, social connection and mutual support.



sHedway

Healthy communities are built on strong relationships, social connection and mutual support. In farming communities, where people often face unique social, financial and environmental pressures, investing in mental health and community resilience is especially important. We've continued to support **This Is a Conversation Starter (TIACS)** to expand its reach across the agricultural sector, enabling more farmers and agricultural workers to access its free counselling services when they need it. This year, we partnered with **sHedway**, an organisation that works to normalise conversations about mental health in the shearing shed. Its programs help the shearing community build resilience and support each other in difficult times.



We close this report with deep gratitude to all our partners, both new and established, whose tireless work, leadership and resolve continue to advance agrifood systems that are good for people and the planet.

As agriculture and food become increasingly central to local and global conversations, we look to the year ahead with optimism, confidence and appreciation for the many people and organisations who have dedicated themselves to this work over many years.

Our Board

Alasdair MacLeod (Chairman)
Stephen Hall • Fiona Sinclair
Emma Jenkin

Our Team

Michelle Gortan (CEO) • Sally Garis
Claire Cornu • Rebekah Thwaites • Erin Kreiss
Karin Chan • Louise Cliff • Judith Nguyen
Lisette Belalcazar • Swati Sharma

Our FY26 Partners

Addi Road

Adelaide Fringe

Agroecology & Food
Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA)

Ambition Loop

Australian Environmental
Grantmakers Network (AEGN)

Australian Museum

Australian Progress

Beemurra Aboriginal
Corporation

Bula'bula Arts Aboriginal
Corporation

Common Threads

CREATE (Integrity Soils)

Cricket For Climate

Da Byw

Ecdysis Foundation

Environmental Funders Network

Environmental Justice Australia

Farmers for Climate Action

Fibers Fund

Fibershed

First Hand Solutions
Aboriginal Corporation

Food Connect Foundation

Food Ladder

Food, Farming and
Countryside Commission

Foundation for Rural and
Regional Renewal (FRRR)

Funders for Regenerative
Agriculture (FORA)

Global Alliance for the
Future of Food

Glynwood Center for Regional
Food and Farming

Good Meat Project

Institute for Agriculture
& Trade Policy (IATP)

International Funders for
Indigenous People (IFIP)

Kitchen Table Advisors

La Trobe University

More in Common

Mulloon Institute

Multicultural Leadership
Initiative

NATIFS (North American
Traditional Indigenous
Food Systems)

Native Foodways

Noongar Land Enterprise Group

Normanby Aboriginal
Corporation (Esparq Ventures)

ODI

Open Food Network

Philanthropy Australia

Pie Ranch

Potlikker Capital

Powerhouse Museum

Rural Climate Partnership

Sefa

SevGen

sHedway

Soils For Life

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen
Garden Foundation

Sustainable Food Trust

Sustainable Table

Taskforce for Nature-related
Financial Disclosures (TNFD)

The Conversation

The Next Economy

The Redford Center

The University of Sydney

This Is A Conversation
Starter (TIACS)

Value Australia
(Capitals Coalition)

White Buffalo Land Trust

World Benchmarking Alliance

World Resources Institute

A special thanks to Australian
Impact Investments (Aii),
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Julia Limb, Kaizen, Nous Group
and The Growth Drivers.

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Cover image: Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming