



GROWING PURPOSE

July 2025

The Bunya Fund Impact Report 2023–24

Prepared by Professor Emmanuel Josserand

Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS, Sydney

Ecole de Management Leonard de Vinci, Paris

Business Science Institute, Wiltz, Luxembourg



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bunya Fund was established by the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM), the apex body for co-operatives in Australia, to support the next generation of impact co-operatives. The fund had its first iteration in 2022–23, and has had its second iteration from July 2023 to June 2024. It is supported by three funders: Australian Unity, Bank Australia and CBH Group. They committed a total of \$137,500 per year for a period of three years. A Fund Committee was constituted in 2022 for the three-year period, composed of one representative from each funder, the BCCM CEO, the Fund Manager appointed by BCCM and an independent academic (Prof Emmanuel Josserand).

The 2022–23 round funded ten recipients with grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$17,000 and covering diverse industries: bHive Bendigo (sharing economy), Cohousing Australia and Co-operation Housing (cohousing), Coota District Co-op (retail), Earthworker Construction Cooperative (construction), Eyre Peninsula Cooperative Bulk Handling (EPCBH, agribusiness), Kingdom Community Life Care (care), The Northern Australia Aboriginal Kakadu Plum Alliance (agribusiness), Quairading Farmers Co-operative (retail) and The Pack Music Co-operative (music streaming).

In contrast, the 2023–24 round was more focussed, with six emerging co-ops selected and grants ranging from \$9,075 to \$24,905. The round two recipients were: Broomehill Village Co-op (town centre rejuvenation), Cohousing Australia and Co-operation Housing (already laureate of round one, co-housing), ORICcoop (sustainable farming), SHACC (Artist co-op) and SuppHorticulture (Disability employment and urban farming).

Each recipient has a clearly defined theory of change that rests on a clear contribution to its members. The recipients this year illustrate the potential of the co-operative model to generate change by bringing different categories of stakeholders together. Indeed, each recipient has a specific model tailored to their community of stakeholders: Community stakeholders (Broomehill Village Co-op), Housing groups or co-operatives (Cohousing Australia and co-operation Housing), multi-stakeholders (ORICoop) and professional or workers (SHACC and SuppHorticulture).

While having clear projects with a defined theory of change and potentially a strong impact, these co-ops, because they are still small structures, don't have systematic impact measurement in place. However, it is possible to anticipate the recipients' potential impact by analysing their potential contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) – See Table 1. To do so we have regrouped the UNSDGs into three broad categories: Foundational/economic, social and environmental. All projects contribute to the three broad categories. In particular, through their role in relation to the foundational and economic UNSDGs, the recipients clearly contribute to filling significant market and structural gaps in our society. The contribution of the project cut across social aims and has a strong focus on climate action in terms of their environmental impact.

Importantly, the impact of the fund is derived from two key factors. First, for the majority of co-operatives supported, the fund intervenes at an early stage when resources are scarce. In doing so it can accelerate the delivery of impact. Second, the fund has supported projects that were either replicable or scalable. Three projects are local initiatives that pioneer a model that can be replicated nationally. One project has a State level focus, while the two remaining projects have a national coverage, with even some international implications for ORICoop.

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for the creation of the Bunya Fund is grounded in the fact that Cooperatives and mutuals help create an economy and society that work in the interests of the widest number of people by sharing ownership and business rewards. We need more co-operatives to build a more inclusive economy in Australia.

The co-operative movement has established The Bunya Fund, a co-operative development fund, to grow the next generation of co-operatives and mutuals (and support bold new initiatives from more established co-operatives and mutuals). The Bunya Fund was created following a consultation with industry as part of a broader study on innovation for the co-operative, the CoopConnect study. The CoopConnect study was conducted in collaboration between the BCCM and Professor Josserand and his research team.

The Bunya Fund funds education, training, advisory and mentoring (as well as supporting infrastructure essential to start-ups) to help co-operatives and mutuals take on challenging economic, social, cultural and environmental problems in Australian communities and to thrive. Successful applicants receive support valued between \$5,000 and \$25,000.

This ground-breaking fund is the first of its kind in Australia. The BCCM launched The Bunya Fund in June 2022 and ran its first round of funding applications in September 2022. The second application round was conducted in April 2023, leading to the selection of six successful applicants for the 2023–24 financial year.

OVERALL IMPACT

In this section, we provide an overview of the diversity of the co-operative models in use in this cohort and the overall impact of the fund.

Diverse co-operative models to generate change

Core to the capacity of the Bunya fund recipients is their capacity to leverage the co-operative model by implementing it in a way that will best serve their members. Each co-op is unique and brings together an ensemble of stakeholders with a specific theory of change that allow to generate impact. While each change project is unique – and described in the individual sections of the report, it is useful to underline here the diversity at play.

Broomehill Village Co-op brings together individual users and businesses to rejuvenate the town centre. The initial project focuses on the town hotel but also extends to other town infrastructure and community activities. The theory for change rests on a trickle-down effect where the renovation of town infrastructure will lead to further local development.

The two housing co-operatives (Cohousing Australia and Co-operation Housing) share a common objective: to support individuals, groups, or housing co-operatives in implementing member-managed housing facilities. Both organisations generate change and impact by empowering their members to create secure and sustainable housing solutions.

ORICoop brings together three main groups of stakeholders: organic and biodynamic producers, eaters, investors and aligned specialists. By bringing these four groups together the co-operative orchestrates an innovative ecosystem aiming at building a resilient and sustainable food system in Australia.

SHACC and SuppHorticulture both bring together workers and/or professionals to develop a collective project that has a positive impact not only on the members but also on the broader community. SHACC’s theory for change focuses on securing living and working spaces for artists and creatives, enabling them to contribute to the cultural, economic and social value to the community. SuppHorticulture brings together trained horticulturists to create an inclusive workplace for people with intellectual disability. In doing so it enables the operations of a market garden and food plant nursery that generates social and economic impact for the broader community.

Economic, social and environmental impact

The Bunya Fund recipients cover an impressive range of areas of impact. We will use the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) to facilitate a holistic understanding of the cumulative impact of the fund. We have organised the UNSDGs into three broad categories: Foundational/Economic, Social and Environmental (see Figure 1). The foundational and economic goals represent structural and innovative contributions to creating economic value and impact. The social and environmental impact goals provide an exhaustive description of areas of impact.

Figure 1: The 16 UNSDGs



All projects have a clearly expressed model of value creation for their members that constitutes the foundation of their impact.

Table 1 presents the areas of impact for each recipient based on the UNSDGs. All projects make a strong contribution to the foundational/economic UNSDGs. Unsurprisingly, they differ in their emphasis on

specific social and environmental goals. All projects strongly contribute to the social goals, with three or four such goals associated with each of the 2023–24 recipients. This confirms the strong potential observed in the previous round for the co-operative and mutual business model to deliver on its promise of promoting. There is a clear focus on climate action, with five projects out of six impacting UNSDG 13. There is a broader variation between recipients regarding other environmental goals, with a range of one to three UNSDG for each emerging co-op.

Table 1: Projects and their areas of impact

	Broomehill Village Co-op	Cohousing Australia	Co-operation Housing	ORICoop	SHACC	SuppHorticulture
FOUNDATIONAL/ECONOMIC						
9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure	X	X	X	X		
11 – Sustainable cities and communities	X	X	X		X	X
12 – Responsible consumption and production	X	X	X	X		X
17 – Partnerships for the goals	X	X	X	X	X	
SOCIAL						
1 – No poverty		X	X		X	
2 – Zero hunger						X
3 – Good health and wellbeing	X	X	X	X	X	
4 – Quality education	X			X	X	X
5 – Gender equality		X				
8 – Decent work and economic growth	X			X	X	X
10 – Reduced inequalities		X	X			X
16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions						
ENVIRONMENTAL						
6 – Clean water and sanitation			X			
7 – Affordable and clean energy			X			
13 – Climate action	X	X	X	X		X
14 – Life below water				X		
15 – Life on land		X		X	X	X

Figure 2 presents the number of recipients that contribute to each of the UNSDGs and as such paint a picture of the key areas of impact of the fund as a whole. This provides an overview of the impressive scope of impact of this first cohort of recipients.

The projects are truly innovative, providing support and infrastructure to their communities of members. It is remarkable that five out of six recipients contribute to building sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption or production and partnerships for the goal. In the same vein, four out of six recipients contribute to industry, innovation and infrastructure. Through their role in relation to the foundational/economic UNSDGs the recipients contribute to filling essential market gaps in our society.

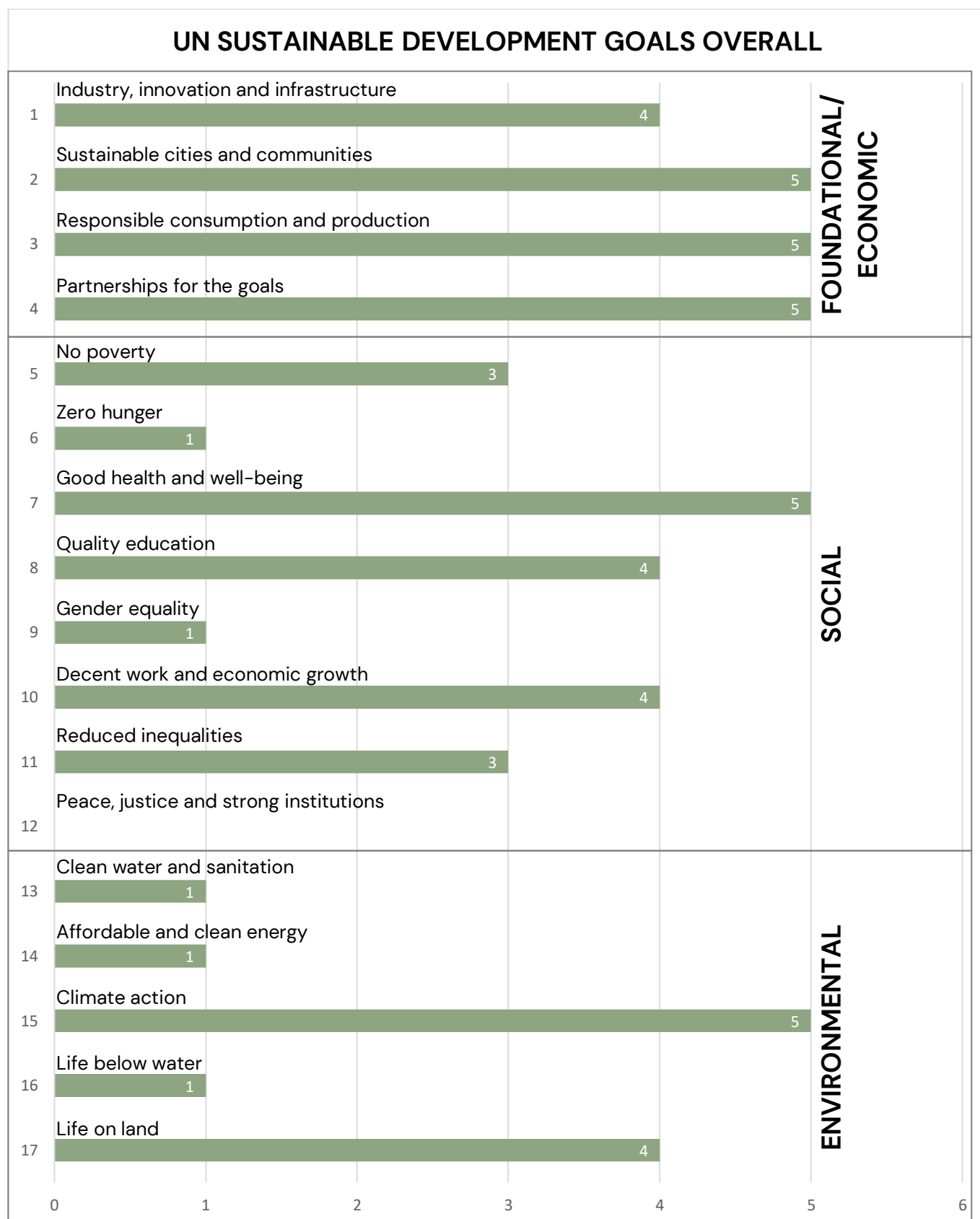
The social impact of the fund is focused on good health and well-being (five recipients), which is aligned with last's year's profile. Quality education and Decent work and economic growth follow closely with three recipients each. Gender and equality as well as, unsurprisingly peace, justice and strong institutions as well as zero hunger are less represented.

The environmental impact of the fund concerns mainly climate action (five recipients), but also life on land (four recipients).

While it was possible to provide a picture of the areas of impact of the Bunya Fund by reporting how the recipients were contributing or planning to contribute to the UNSDGs, it was not possible to measure impact in a quantitative manner. A first reason for this is the fact that the fund targets start-ups and growing co-operatives that have not yet been able to measure their impact or to plan how they will be able to do so.

Because of the importance of the question of impact measurement for the recipients, the funders, and the sector in general, it seems that it would be essential to be able to measure it precisely. However, it seems unrealistic to expect emerging and resource poor co-ops to be able to conduct such an endeavour without support. It was also noted by participants that the impact of the fund was likely to occur after the period of funding, meaning that impact measurement should be conducted over an extended period. It would thus be very beneficial for the participants and for the funders to put in place an ongoing impact measurement initiative. This would contribute to providing a clear indication of the return on investment for the funders, support decision making, help recipients to demonstrate their impact and constitute a precious source of data for the sector.

Figure 2: Overall impact of the fund



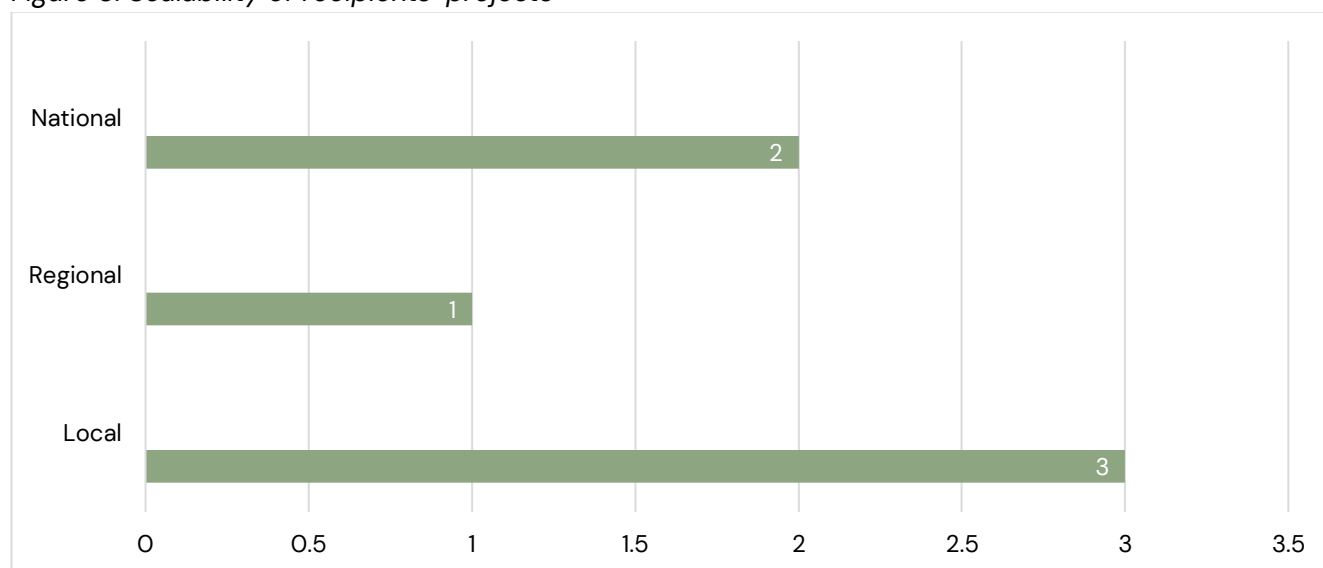
Solving big issues at scale

Another way to assess the potential impact of the Bunya Fund is through assessing the potential of the projects of its recipients. The critical question for that purpose is whether these projects are scalable and whether the recipients have expressed an intent to scale. Figure 3 provides an overview of the scalability of the 2022–23 recipients. It distinguishes local projects that affect a specific town or community, regional projects that cover a broader region or a specific State (for instance Western Australia for Co-operation Housing) and national/global projects that can be fully scalable.

This year's cohort includes three projects with a local ambition: Broomehill Village Co-op, SHACC and SuppHorticulture. While having a local focus, these three projects clearly constitute innovative initiatives that can be replicated in other locations, a possibility clearly envisioned by the three recipients.

Co-operation housing has a regional scope with a focus on Western Australia. The last two projects – Cohousing Australia and ORICoop – are positioned for national impact. Cohousing Australia is already supporting projects across States, while ORICoop has national coverage.

Figure 3: Scalability of recipients' projects



Important to note is that many of these co-operatives are at an early stage of their development. This means that the grants provided have a significant impact on their growth. This cannot be achieved when injecting the relatively modest funds available into more mature co-operatives. Therefore, it is essential that any communication about the Bunya Fund be as broad as possible and include various media and other events, such as those that exist for all start-ups. Ideally, the Bunya Fund should be able to trigger new co-operative initiatives to contribute even more to the vitality of the co-operative movement.

THE PROCESS

Applications were selected following a strict process managed by the BCCM and assessed by The Bunya Fund committee. The committee has been constituted through consultation between the initial founding donors of the fund and the BCCM.

The Bunya Fund committee is composed of:

- one representative from each of the four round one funders (i.e., Australian Unity, Bank Australia and CBH Group)
- BCCM CEO Melina Morrisson
- an independent academic (Professor Emmanuel Josserand)

Application process

A call for applications was communicated broadly by the BCCM through its newsletter, social media and website. Potential applicants were guided through the process by the BCCM fund manager regarding eligibility, selection criteria and any questions regarding the application and selection process.

Eligibility for the fund was based on six criteria:

- the organisation is fit and proper to receive funding (high level of ethical practice)
- clear organisational purpose and objectives
- strong current or prospective economic, social, cultural and environmental impact within their communities
- business viability (or pathway to viability)
- basic business documentation (annual report, business plan, financials)
- a strong foundation of member/community support and engagement

While the fund is intended for co-operatives and mutuals, enterprises that were not co-operative or mutual at the moment of application but planned to convert could also apply.

All applicants were to apply by the indicated deadline. The application included the following elements:

- eligibility
- social, economic, cultural and environmental purposes
- summary of value for members
- documentation of impact or prospective impact
- advice or training needs
- funding requirements

Additional documentation: impact reports or assessments, annual reports or equivalent, financial statements, business plans, members and community endorsements.

Selection process

The fund manager conducted an initial screening of applications to confirm eligibility. Each committee member assessed each application independently before the committee meeting for decisions on selected organisations and resource allocations.

The selection criteria were as follows:

- innovativeness
- value creation for members
- potential for impact
- likelihood of receiving funds from other sources
- balance of supported projects across co-operative types and industries

The funding requests and allocations were as follows:

Total requested	\$124,166
Available funds	\$105,930

Extra support was also provided to successful applicants, including:

- commercial/marketing support via promotion of Fund recipients.
- in-kind or subsidised legal, tax and investment advice.
- opportunity for support for applications for other grants in collaboration with BCCM.
- free participation in BCCM foundational education and courses.
- co-operatives and Mutuals Strategic Development Program (CMSDP) for WA participants to participate in
- customised impact measurement workshop available to all recipients.
- BCCM Associate Membership

The outcome of the selection process was as follows.

Name	Allocation
Broomehill Village Co-op	\$24,805
Cohousing Australia	\$9,075
Co-operation Housing	\$15,828
ORICoop	\$16,500
SHACC	\$17,930
SuppHorticulture	\$21,792

The Bunya Fund received \$25k from CBH on the proviso that grain grower regions would benefit. \$15k was allocated (from the first round of funding) to an educational program in conjunction with CBH available to any other WA co-operative (from 18 to 21 March 2024, four free workshops were held in various locations across regional Western Australia to promote the co-operative model). Supported by

The Bunya Fund of the BCCM and CBH Group, these workshops were facilitated by Peter Kenyon of the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. They focused on utilising the co-operative model to preserve and enhance local services and facilities in areas such as retail, community hubs and care. Some applications for round three were generated from this process. Also, a comprehensive co-op development manual was produced and is now freely available to the public (supported by The Bunya Fund and CBH).

Reporting

All recipients were asked to report on their use of the funds received, the impact of the funding and any variation on the use of funds. The main questions of the reporting exercise were as follows:

- **What is the problem that you want to solve?**
- **How does the activity of your Co-op contribute to solving this problem? What is your theory for change?**
- **How do you create value for your members?**
- **Why is it important to be a co-op to solve this problem and create value for your members?**
- **How has the funded project helped you increase your capability to create change and more value for your members or the community? Please be as specific as possible on the direct contribution of the funded project.**
- **Did you contribute to the following UNSDG? If yes, can you explain how.**

Feedback from the recipients

The process put in place by the fund was very well received by the participants, with all underlying key strengths that included:

- simplicity of and support through the application process
- quality of the BCCM support and openness of the team
- flexibility of the type of fund uses, to adapt to different needs
- flexibility in fund usage when adjustments were needed
- strong impact because the fund covers critical unfunded aspects of their development

Key suggestions for the next round included:

- organise a structured initial meeting with the recipients to scope the project once the funding decision has been taken
- introduce the possibility to cover project management costs from the recipient organisation
- broadcast broadly the models developed through the fund to trigger replication initiatives
- introduce a possibility to roll out funding to the following year in case of unpredictable delays

THE RECIPIENTS

In this section, we present the six recipients of the 2023–24 edition of the Bunya Fund, their strategy for value creation and impact, and the reported impact of the fund on their projects.

Broomehill Village Co-op

Broomehill Village Co-op is a registered co-operative whose membership is composed of 70 individuals and 24 businesses. Its purpose is to: "Maintain infrastructure to provide and encourage the provision of hospitality, accommodation, retail and/or commercial business services in the Village of Broomehill. To provide financial support to the local community education, craft, health, sporting and welfare organisations incorporated or unincorporated and to charitable organisations within Broomehill and the surrounding districts." The Broomehill Village Co-op has so far focused on revitalising the iconic Broomehill Imperial Hotel and fostering community engagement through projects like a community crop initiative. The support from the Bunya fund has been used to conduct compliance reports and a building and business plan.



"The importance of this initiative to the growth and prosperity of our community, and the Great Southern region can't be over-emphasised"

**Anthony Middleton, CEO, Shire of Broomehill
Tambellup**

Value for members

The Broomehill Village Co-op offers significant value to its members by fostering a strong sense of community and shared purpose through two main impactful projects. The co-op's primary project is the revitalisation of the Broomehill Imperial Hotel, which serves as a social and cultural hub, providing quality meals, accommodation and social facilities. This project not only preserves a historic building but also boosts local economic activity by creating jobs and supporting local businesses.

The co-op has also initiated a community crop program, where local farmers and businesses collaborate to grow crops, generating significant revenue to fund the hotel's renovation and other community projects. Additionally, the co-op plans to offer training and employment opportunities, particularly for young community members, in areas such as cleaning, bar staff and barista skills.

The co-op also explores future projects, including managing the local post office and caravan park, which align with the hotel's operations and further benefit the community. Through these initiatives, the co-op

enhances the quality of life for its members, supports local economic growth and strengthens community bonds.

Structuring the Broomehill Village Co-op as a cooperative is essential for the success of their projects. This structure ensures community members have a direct stake, fostering ownership and collective responsibility. By operating as a co-op, the organisation can prioritise local needs, ensuring benefits like job creation and social facilities are shared among members. The cooperative model also facilitates community engagement and collaboration, crucial for initiatives like the community crop program. Additionally, being a co-op has helped the organisation attract significant funding and endorsements. They raised \$376,000 from the community and received a grant from the State Government's Regional Economic Development Grants Program. Support from local businesses and organisations, such as CBH, WAMMCO and McIntosh & Son, further bolsters their efforts, ensuring sustainable development and enhancing Broomehill's well-being.

Theory for change, replicability and scalability

The theory of change for the Broomehill Village Co-op revolves around revitalising the Broomehill Imperial Hotel to serve as a catalyst for community and economic development. By restoring this historic building, the co-op aims to create a social and cultural hub that provides essential services, generates employment and supports local businesses. The co-op's initiatives, such as the community crop and training programs, are designed to foster community engagement, skill development and economic resilience. Through these efforts, the co-op seeks to enhance the quality of life for its members, preserve local heritage and ensure sustainable growth and prosperity for the Broomehill community.

The ultimate goal is to build a self-sustaining enterprise that drives long-term social, economic and cultural benefits. The co-operative generates a strong impact that remains essentially local. While scalability is limited, there is a significant potential for replicability and the lesson learnt through this project in other communities.

Economic value

The co-op contributes to four UNSDGs in relation to facilitating change and generating economic impact.



Renovation of the Broomehill Imperial Hotel and other planned revitalisation projects in town constitute significant infrastructure redevelopments. These improvements ensure the town infrastructure can serve the community effectively, driving innovation and economic growth in the region.



The activities of the co-op contribute to making Broomehill a more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable community. The hotel serves as a social and cultural hub, enhancing residents' quality of life and fostering community spirit. Maintaining and improving local infrastructure ensures Broomehill remains vibrant and attractive.



Promoting local and sustainable consumption contributes to the long-term health of the environment and the community. Initiatives like the community crop encourage sustainable agricultural practices and responsible production. These efforts ensure resources are used efficiently and sustainably, minimising environmental impact



Collaborating with local businesses, government entities and community organisations helps achieve the co-op's objectives, fostering partnerships for sustainable development. Building strong partnerships ensures a more coordinated and effective approach to community development.

Social impact

The co-op contributes to three major areas of social impact.



Providing quality meals and social facilities contributes to the well-being of members and the broader community. The hotel will offer a space for social interaction and community events, promoting mental and social health.



Training programs and employment opportunities, particularly for young community members, support lifelong learning and skill development. These initiatives, if implemented, will equip individuals with valuable skills for future employment, enhancing their career prospects. The co-op's education and training planned activities can contribute to the overall development and empowerment of the community.



By revitalising the Broomehill Imperial Hotel, the co-op stimulates economic activity and provides employment opportunities for the community. The co-op will create jobs and support local businesses, promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. This initiative helps stabilise the local economy and improve residents' financial well-being

Environmental impact

The co-op contributes to one area of environmental impact.



While not a primary focus, sustainable practices and community initiatives contribute to climate action efforts. Promoting responsible local consumption and supporting local agriculture helps mitigate environmental impact. These efforts, though indirect, play a role in the broader fight against climate change and environmental degradation.

Impact of funding

The funds obtained through The Bunya Fund have been crucial in advancing the revitalisation of the Broomehill Imperial Hotel. These funds have been used to address significant compliance and building service requirements, ensuring the hotel meets modern safety and accessibility standards. Specifically, the grant has supported the engagement of architects, engineers and contractors to conduct necessary assessments. This includes compliance work for fire safety, equitable access and structural integrity. The funding has also facilitated the development of a comprehensive building and business plan, which is essential for attracting further investment and support. More specifically, the planning and consulting work undertaken with the support of the Bunya fund was subsequently used to submit an application for a large regional grant. The cooperative was just granted \$150k of matching funds to be spent on stage one of the Hotel accommodation and main building upgrades.

The Broomehill Village Co-op does consider the impact of its projects, particularly in terms of social, economic and community benefits. They have received written support from various local organisations and businesses, which indicates a level of community endorsement and recognition of their positive impact. However, they don't yet have a formal system or metrics for measuring their impact.



Cohousing Australia

Cohousing Australia is a registered co-operative that advocates and supports cohousing projects in urban areas. Its members are individuals and community groups – forming or established cohousing groups. The mission of Cohousing Australia is: “to create and expand the sector network and conditions necessary to make cohousing an option for all interested.” Their vision is “for a cohousing community in every suburb and town.” While cohousing can take various forms, the cooperative model is a prominent one. The funds received through the Bunya Fund are supporting CoHousing Australia in developing model rules and frameworks for collaborative housing projects, including hybrid ownership models.



“We believe that cohousing can solve several challenges we face in society, including social isolation and loneliness, environmental and resource pressures, and the failure of the market to provide housing on an equitable basis.”

David Alonso Love, President, Sydney Cohousing Inc.

Value for members

Most members live in a cohousing community, are forming groups to develop cohousing projects or are allies of such members. Cohousing projects are created and run by their residents, creating sustainable and affordable housing. Each household has a self-contained private home and access to shared community space. Residents come together to manage their community and get involved in shared activities.

Cohousing Australia works with communities, government agencies and industries to create the conditions for citizen-led housing collectives to emerge and support them through all phases of cohousing projects: planning, design, delivery and operation. Core services to members are delivered through knowledge sharing and resources to support the formation, delivery and management of cohousing. More broadly, members benefit from general advocacy by the co-operative in favour of cohousing in urban areas. The purpose is to “position the residents at the centre of housing provision; enabling citizens to collectively create housing that provides a place of safety and security”.

Cohousing Australia has developed several key projects aimed at promoting collaborative and sustainable housing solutions. They have been involved in a hybrid ownership model in Melbourne, where 30 per cent of the dwellings are strata-titled, 30 per cent are owned by the cooperative and 30 per cent are intended to be owned by a community housing provider or government. Additionally, they have worked on a smaller co-op housing model, which involves subdividing a large house or suburban lot into multiple household units, targeting groups such as intergenerational families and friends. Cohousing Australia has also conducted feasibility studies for cooperative housing pilot projects in Sydney and Melbourne, supporting emerging cohousing communities. Previously, as part of its advocacy and

knowledge-sharing effort, they conducted a project mapping collaborative housing in Australia; this provides a visualisation of existing and in-creation communities with a description of each community.

Operating as a co-op is crucial for Cohousing Australia because it aligns with its mission of fostering community-led, resident-driven housing solutions. The cooperative structure ensures that all members have a voice in decision-making, promoting inclusivity and shared responsibility, which are essential for creating sustainable, affordable and socially cohesive housing communities. This model also facilitates the pooling of resources and collective action, enabling more effective and equitable solutions to housing challenges.

Theory for change, replicability and scalability

The theory of change for Cohousing Australia focuses on empowering residents to take control of their housing solutions through collaborative and cooperative models. By developing a framework of model rules and contracts tailored to specific needs, Cohousing Australia aims to provide practical, scalable solutions for various community housing projects. These efforts are designed to foster social, environmental and economic sustainability, ultimately expanding housing options and improving affordability. Through these initiatives, Cohousing Australia seeks to empower communities to create secure, socially connected and environmentally sustainable housing solutions.

Cohousing Australia contributes to the diffusion of the co-operative business model in its sector. Its activity has a strong leverage effect, organising knowledge and resource exchanges between groups. The co-operative is already operating in two states and, while there are some local peculiarities, the type of support that it can bring to projects is highly generalisable and scalable to the national level. This is well captured in a national vision. Its mission contributes to the foundation of a new economic base for more sustainable housing.

Economic value

The co-op contributes to four UNSDGs in relation to facilitating change and generating economic impact.



By organising knowledge and resource sharing between groups and conducting specific analysis and research, Cohousing Australia contributes to innovative models of housing that can help solve the current housing crisis in the country.



The focus on urban areas aims at offering solutions to the housing crisis where it is the most problematic. Affordability is a key issue and one that the gentrification of all major cities in Australia has amplified. Beyond social impact, many cohousing projects also come with high ecological standards.



The cohousing model implies a level of resource sharing that contributes to fewer resources being used for the initial infrastructure and an optimal use of the resources required. As such, by supporting the generalisation of cohousing projects, the co-operative can potentially enable more responsible modes of production and consumption.



Resource sharing and collaboration are core to the approach of a resource/platform co-operative. Cohousing Australia has already successfully created partnerships between several projects and communities, which is at the heart of its approach. Such a model is scalable and can lead to the level of collaboration needed for a solid contribution to solving the housing crisis in Australia.

Social impact



One of the critical social impacts of cohousing is housing affordability, achieved through two avenues. The first is resource sharing between houses for the initial build or to run the facilities. Second, the model is not-for-profit and protected from speculation, leading to long-term affordability. Once a home is included, it will likely remain affordable.



The community dimension is essential to all cohousing projects. This is achieved by shared space and shared facility management, creating a sense of belonging. Added to housing safety, which reduces stress, this can substantially benefit members' health and well-being.



Cohousing using cooperative tenure provides housing security for at-risk groups by ensuring long-term affordability, democratic control and a supportive community environment where residents are both tenants and members. This model is particularly suited to and sought after by older women and single-parent households, who often face housing instability and deeply value connection, mutual aid and a sense of belonging.



Lack of housing and affordability is both a cause and effect of inequalities in Australian society. Cohousing Australia can reduce this primary driver of social inequalities by supporting new housing affordability and access models. A vital contribution of the model to reducing inequality is that it also brings security of tenure, thus removing the threat of poverty and stress in the long term.

Environmental impact



While the first objective of Cohousing Australia is social, it also has the potential to generate a positive environmental impact. This is first because it contributes to resource sharing, thus limiting the extractive impact of housing – for instance, by allowing sufficient scale for environmentally positive investments (i.e., batteries, recycling, etc.). Second, many of the cohousing projects come with a community focus that integrates an improvement of the environmental performance of the built environment and food-productive landscapes that benefit the life on land objective.

Impact of funding

The funds were utilised to develop a cooperative housing legal model with guidance, focusing on practical application. Examples for projects where this could apply included a hybrid model in Melbourne, combining private ownership, cooperative dwellings and community housing, and a

Castlemaine project subdividing a large house into multiple units for intergenerational living. Legal and financial barriers were addressed by developing model rules and contracts, with legal assistance to refine cooperative structures. The impact of the Bunya Fund extends beyond individual projects. It has enabled Cohousing Australia to engage in more structured conversations with stakeholders, showcase innovative housing models and advocate for policy integration.

Cohousing Australia assesses their impact through a combination of qualitative considerations. While these approaches indicate a strong commitment to impactful outcomes, they haven't yet developed more specific metrics or KPIs to quantitatively track their progress and success.



Cohousing Australia

Co-operation Housing

Co-operation Housing is a not-for-profit mutual. Its objective is to support and grow the housing co-operative sector in Western Australia; it is the only registered community housing provider in the state that specialises in housing co-operatives. Its mission statement is: “representing and growing co-operative housing as a way of building empowered and sustainable communities”. The funds received were used to support the establishment of a Community Land Trust in view to developing mixed tenure affordable housing.



“The proposal by Co-operation housing delivers a critically needed solution that blends coops and CLT’s in a hybrid method that will deliver lasting ongoing benefit to the community at large.”

Anthony Rizzacasa, Northpoint Property Group

Value for members

Co-operation Housing essentially operates as a secondary co-op (i.e., an in-effect co-operative of co-operatives). Its members are housing co-ops: ARCH (eight co-located homes for seniors), First Fremantle (14 inter-generational dwellings), Kyloring Housing Co-operative (dwellings for over 55s), Subi-Leederville (six inter-generational dwellings) and Tapper Street Mews (11-unit retirement village).

Co-operation Housing brings value to its members by providing services under a delegated management model. Services provided include tenancy and property management, project and development management and governance. It also collaborates with developers, financiers, local governments and other stakeholders to co-create strategic opportunities that will grow the co-operative housing sector. Finally, the co-operative is also an active advocate, notably through education activities and events that benefit co-operative housing in general and specific projects.

Theory for change, replicability and scalability

The overall theory of change for the co-op focuses on empowering communities to create sustainable and inclusive housing solutions. By providing resources, guidance and support, the co-op enables individuals and groups to establish and manage their own housing cooperatives. This approach fosters community engagement and participation, ensuring that housing solutions are tailored to the needs of residents. Additionally, it emphasizes environmental sustainability by adopting clean energy solutions and sustainable building practices. The co-op seeks to create a replicable model that can be adopted by other communities, amplifying its impact and contributing to broader social and environmental goals.

Co-operation Housing contributes to the diffusion of the co-operative housing model by providing extensive support from project inception to daily management. Operating as a secondary organisation allows for resource and knowledge sharing between members. It already has a strong footprint in Western Australia and a clear strategy supports its growth. While there is no objective to scale beyond Western Australia, the knowledge accumulated can support replicability in other jurisdictions. The model also has a strong potential for growth within Western Australia.

Economic value

The co-op contributes to the four goals in relation to facilitating change and generating economic impact.



By operating as a secondary co-operative and providing support to its members, Co-operation Housing supports the development of innovative models of housing that can help solve the current housing crisis.



Co-operation Housing supports co-operatives that bring together communities with specific demographic characteristics and needs, with a key objective of providing affordable housing and quality community life for these groups. As such it contributes to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities.



As mentioned in the case of Cohousing Australia, the cohousing model allows for resource sharing that supports sustainable consumption, contributing to fewer resources being used for the initial infrastructure and an optimal use of the resources required. As such, by supporting the generalisation of cohousing projects, the co-operative can potentially favour more responsible modes of production and consumption.



Core to the approach of a secondary co-operative is a collaboration between members but also between members and other actors. Co-operation Housing has already successfully catalysed collaboration between sectors when supporting the development of its members.

Social impact



One of the critical social impacts is housing affordability achieved through two avenues. First is resource sharing between houses for the initial build or to run the facilities. Second, the model is not-for-profit and protected from speculation, leading to long-term affordability. Once a home is included, it will likely remain affordable.



The community dimension is essential to all cohousing projects. This is achieved by shared space and shared facility management, creating a sense of belonging. Added to housing safety with a negative effect on stress, this can substantially benefit members' health and well-being. Co-operative Housing also facilitates projects that support the health and well-being of specific groups such as seniors or NDIS participants.



Lack of housing and affordability is both a cause and effect of inequalities. By supporting new housing affordability and access models, Co-operative Housing can

contribute to reducing this primary driver of social inequalities. A vital contribution of the model to reducing inequality is that it also brings security of tenure, thus removing the threat of poverty and stress in the long term. Finally, the projects support often-vulnerable groups such as seniors.

Environmental impact



Sustainability is at the heart of the mission of Co-operative Housing. While the focus is on the social dimension of sustainability, the environmental one is also important. This translates into a contribution to education and communication events, and at the very core of the project into ongoing and establishing activities (cf the example of Kyloring Housing Co-operative below).

Impact of funding

The Bunya Fund was utilised for a project aimed at establishing a Community Land Trust (CLT) co-operative. The funds were allocated to convert the template CLT constitution into co-op rules, apply for incorporation, obtain written legal advice on key questions, confirm lending terms with financial institutions and manage the project.

The impact of this funding will be significant, enabling the creation of a comprehensive guide and legal framework that supports the establishment of new housing co-operatives. This will facilitate greater community engagement by providing a clear and accessible pathway for communities to develop their own housing solutions. The resources developed will be invaluable for future co-op projects, offering templates and guidance that simplify the incorporation process and ensure legal compliance.

The co-op measures its impact through a combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics. Currently, they track the number of downloads of their resources and monitor engagement on social media platforms, such as likes, shares and comments, to gauge the reach and popularity of their initiatives. They also observe the number of donations received as an indicator of the value and support for their resources. In the future, the co-op plans to implement key performance indicators (KPIs) to systematically measure their impact, including metrics related to the number of new housing co-operatives established, the sustainability and inclusivity of these projects, and the overall improvement in community engagement and development. Additionally, they consider feedback from stakeholders and participants to continuously refine and enhance their programs and resources.



Co-operation Housing

ORICoop

The Organic and Regenerative Investment Co-operative (ORICoop) is a registered co-operative in Victoria, Australia, with a diverse membership that includes over 285 members, including organic and biodynamic producers, eaters, investors and aligned businesses. ORICoop mission is to “facilitate investment in supply chain solutions, provide education and knowledge pathways to members, and sustainable growth opportunities across the organic, biodynamic, regenerative, food and agriculture industries”. The objective behind ORICoop’s application to The Bunya Fund was to support the development and expansion of their ORCA (Organic Regenerative Capital Alliance) project, which includes tailored infrastructure, a two-way marketplace and brand expansion in the organic grain sector.



“The focus of the project and outcomes are forward thinking in providing investment opportunities into a

Value for members

ORICoop members includes a range of organic and biodynamic producers, growing grains, dairy, meat, fruit, vegetables products across Australia. The Cooperative membership also includes eaters, investors and aligned businesses who are committed to supporting sustainable and regenerative farming practices. ORICoop membership fosters a strong community of like-minded individuals and enterprises, all working together to enhance the organic and regenerative agriculture sector in Australia. Through their active participation, members contribute to the co-operative's mission of increasing and preserving certified organic farmland, supporting local communities and promoting excellence in regenerative land stewardship practices.

ORICoop brings value to its members by enabling investment opportunities in organic and regenerative farmland and business assets, and fostering a diverse network of producer members. They enhance market access for organic products, offer business advisory services and support infrastructure development for shorter supply chains. Additionally, ORICoop promotes transparency and sustainability through eco-credits and a traceability platform, all aimed at building a more resilient and sustainable food system that benefits both members and the broader community.

Theory for change, replicability and scalability

The Co-operative aims to create long-term positive impacts by investing in sustainable agriculture, providing education and capacity building, fostering community collaboration and developing efficient supply chains. Their theory of change is based on the belief that sustainable and regenerative farming

practices enhances environmental stewardship, economic viability and community well-being. This approach supports a resilient food system that benefits farmers, consumers and the environment.

While they are a registered Cooperative in Victoria, their initiatives and support extend nationally increasing the amount and productivity of organically and regeneratively managed land throughout the country. As such, the model is scalable, including to address an increasing demand globally for cleaner food and a healthier environment. The co-operative structure allows for flexible growth, as it incorporates new members, projects and investments over time as determined by the ORICoop Board. ORICoop's initiatives, such as the ORCA project and eco-credits, can be adapted and expanded to different regions and agricultural contexts, making it suitable for broader implementation. The growing global interest in organic and regenerative agriculture and sustainable food provides opportunities for ORICoop to collaborate with international partners, share knowledge and potentially expand its model to other countries.

Economic value

ORICoop contributes to three of the UNSDGs in relation to facilitating change and generating economic impact.



ORICoop invests in the development of sustainable agricultural infrastructure and innovative farming practices. This includes supporting projects that shorten supply chains, enhance soil health, improve water conservation and increase biodiversity through regenerative farming techniques. They have also designed the eco-credits, incentivising farmers to adopt practices that sequester carbon and improve ecosystem services.



Encouraging responsible production, the Co-op supports organic and regenerative farming practices that minimise environmental impact. ORICoop works to provide more direct and short supply chains through improved infrastructure and localisation of food production. They help farmers transition to organic methods, which avoid the use of toxic chemicals and promote sustainable resource use. Additionally, ORICoop's eco-credit system rewards farmers for improving soil health, biodiversity and overall sustainability.



Fostering partnerships between farmers, investors, consumers and other stakeholders, ORICoop has a collaborative network that supports sustainable development. They work with like-minded organisations and co-operatives to enhance the organic and regenerative farming sector and builds a more resilient food system. These partnerships are crucial for scaling their impact and achieving shared sustainability goals.

Social impact



ORICoop promotes good health and well-being by supporting the production of organic food, which is free from harmful chemicals and pesticides. This contributes to healthier diets and reduces the risk of health issues related to chemical exposure and poor food choices. By fostering a food system that prioritizes health and

sustainability, ORICoop helps improve the overall well-being of both producers and consumers.



Through their member network and educational forums in best practices for organic farming, ORICoop enhances the skills and knowledge of farmers and communities. This focus on education supports sustainable agricultural development and empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their farming practices. By investing in education, ORICoop helps build a knowledgeable and skilled workforce dedicated to advancing organic and regenerative agriculture.



Through investment in organic farmland and business assets and the creation of sustainable agricultural jobs, ORICoop fosters economic growth and provides decent work opportunities. They enhance the profitability and sustainability of farming enterprises by offering business advisory services and capacity-building programs. ORICoop's support helps farmers improve their business operations, access new markets and increase their profitability. By promoting fair labor practices and ensuring that workers in the organic farming sector have safe and decent working conditions, ORICoop contributes to the overall economic well-being of rural communities.

Environmental impact



ORICoop actively contributes to climate action by promoting organic and regenerative farming practices that enhance soil health, sequester carbon and increase biodiversity. Their support for organic agriculture reduces greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. Additionally, ORICoop's eco-credit system incentivises farmers to adopt practices that mitigate climate change and improve resilience to its impacts.



The Co-op contributes to life below water by promoting organic farming practices that significantly reduce water pollution. By avoiding synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, ORICoop significantly reduces the amount of harmful chemicals entering waterways, which protects aquatic ecosystems and maintains water quality. Their support for regenerative agriculture also enhances soil health, reducing runoff and erosion that can lead to sedimentation in rivers and oceans.



By preserving and enhancing organic and regenerative farmland, ORICoop supports biodiversity and ecosystem health. They work with farmers to implement practices that protect soil, water and wildlife, contributing to the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems. ORICoop's initiatives help maintain healthy landscapes and promote sustainable land use.

Impact of funding

The ORCA (Organic Regenerative Capital Alliance) project by ORICoop is designed to build capacity for tailored infrastructure, create a two-way marketplace and expand the brand across the organic grain sector. The project aims to support organic and regenerative producers by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to enhance their operations and market reach. The capital raised for the ORCA project was set at \$2 million, to be achieved in two phases. This funding will help develop key infrastructure, including processing, storage and supply chain establishment, which are critical for the growth and sustainability of organic farming and direct supply chains.

The Bunya Fund grant was used to support several key activities within the ORCA project. Business and advisory services were provided and allocated for management and investment advisory services related to infrastructure, processing, storage and supply chain establishment. The funds also contributed towards the creation of a shared registry service for smaller investment co-operatives. Business support for producers to help them integrate the importance and value of the cooperative structure. This funding also supported the expansion of their business enterprises within the cooperative brand and capacity through the ORCA project. Finally, a small amount was allocated for the development of key board members.

The impact of these activities funded by The Bunya Fund includes enhanced operational efficiency, improved market access and increased capacity for organic and regenerative producers. By investing in infrastructure and advisory services, ORICoop helps its members achieve better productivity and sustainability, ultimately contributing to the growth of the organic farming sector in Australia.

The co-op has put in place sophisticated measurements for their Eco-Credit system. This system involves detailed on-farm validation completed annually, which assesses various aspects of farm and environmental health. The validation process includes soil tests to verify carbon increase, biodiversity quality assessments, tree planting verification and ecological reports on birds, insects and wildlife. These measures ensure transparency and traceability of the carbon credits generated by organic and regenerative producers. Additionally, Eco-Credits are independently verified. This comprehensive approach allows ORICoop to provide credible and measurable outcomes related to carbon drawdown, soil health, water efficiency and biodiversity improvements.





SHACC

SHACC (Sustainable Housing for Artists and Creatives) is a not-for-profit, non-distributing affordable housing rental co-operative in White Gum Valley, a suburb of Fremantle, Western Australia. Its membership comprises practising professional artists and creatives. SHACC's mission is to "help Fremantle be a place where artists can live and thrive, now and into the future".



"SHACC has evolved into an important creative hub and resource for the local community in Fremantle and its network of artists and creatives."

Hon. Dr. Brad Pettit MLC, Member for South Metropolitan

Value for members

SHACC's membership consists of practicing professional artists and creatives who are committed to the cooperative's values and principles. Members are required to contribute voluntary hours of work, participate in governance and engage in community activities, fostering a strong sense of ownership and inclusion.

SHACC operates two creative spaces, CoLab 1 and CoLab 2, which are used for exhibiting artwork, performances, theatre and community workshops. These spaces are available for hire at affordable rates, supporting both SHACC members and the wider artistic community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, SHACC members developed a guerrilla garden, which has evolved into a community project called "Nannine Common." This garden features fruit trees and native vegetation, promoting food security and sustainability.

SHACC is part of the White Gum Valley sustainable development and has received One Planet Living accreditation. The cooperative uses renewable energy sources, including solar panels and batteries, to reduce greenhouse emissions and costs. SHACC regularly hosts workshops and exhibitions, providing members with opportunities to showcase their work, learn new skills and engage with the community. These events also draw in artists and creatives from across Perth and beyond. SHACC places a strong emphasis on governance and member participation. Members receive training in cooperative governance, conflict resolution and other relevant skills, ensuring effective management and a supportive community environment.

These activities and projects not only support the professional and personal development of SHACC members but also contribute to the cultural and social fabric of Fremantle, reinforcing the city's identity as a hub for artists and creatives. Being a co-operative is crucial for SHACC because it ensures that the organisation operates based on shared values and principles, such as democratic member control, economic participation and concern for the community. This structure fosters a strong sense of ownership and inclusion among members, enabling them to collaboratively manage their housing and workspaces while maintaining affordability and stability, which are essential for artists and creatives to thrive.

Theory for change, replicability and scalability

SHACC's theory of change is centred on providing secure, affordable housing and workspaces for artists and creatives, which enables them to live and work in Fremantle despite rising costs. By ensuring stable housing, SHACC reduces the stress associated with housing instability, allowing members to focus on their creative practices and contribute to the cultural, economic and social value of the community.

SHACC expressly includes in its objective to connect with other areas and replicate the model, providing a clear indication that the model, if not locally scalable, can be replicated at national level.

Economic value

SHACC's action contributes to three UNSDGs in relation to change facilitation and generating economic impact.



SHACC maintains affordable housing and promotes sustainable living practices, ensuring Fremantle remains a vibrant and inclusive community for artists. The

cooperative's model supports sustainable urban development by providing secure housing for creatives. Its project involves replicating its housing cooperative model in other locations. This organisational approach promotes sustainable urban development by ensuring affordable housing for artists and creatives, thereby maintaining the cultural and social fabric of the community.



SHACC collaborates with local councils and other stakeholders to develop green spaces and community gardens. These partnerships enhance the cooperative's ability to create sustainable and inclusive community projects, demonstrating the importance of collaboration in achieving sustainable development goals.

Social impact



SHACC contributes to reducing poverty by providing affordable housing for artists and creatives, preventing financial instability and possibly homelessness among its members. This secure housing allows members to focus on their creative work without the burden of high living costs.



SHACC enhances members' well-being by offering secure housing and a supportive community, which reduces stress and promotes mental health. The cooperative living arrangement fosters social interaction and mutual support, contributing to overall health.



SHACC provides informal education and skill development through workshops, governance training and community events, fostering lifelong learning among its members. These educational activities help members improve their professional skills and personal development.



SHACC supports artists' economic activities by providing affordable workspaces and opportunities for exhibiting and selling their work. This includes a gallery and a collaborative space used for exhibitions and workshops. These opportunities help artists sustain their livelihoods and contribute to the economy.

Environmental impact



By implementing sustainable practices and reducing their carbon footprint, SHACC actively engages in climate action. Their use of renewable energy sources and participation in sustainability initiatives, such as the One Planet Living accreditation, demonstrate their commitment to combating climate change.



SHACC contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems through their community gardening projects. Their "guerrilla" garden is now morphing into a wider community project to create 'Nannine Common', a community garden, with fruit trees and native vegetation, promoting biodiversity and sustainable land use.

Impact of funding

The evolution of SHACC in the early 2010s was formed around the possibility of the tenant members purchasing the property in 2026, subject to the landlord, Housing Choices Australia (a community housing provider, CHP), wishing to sell the property. The objective of SHACC's application for Bunya funding was to secure legal, financial and business advice to facilitate the transfer of ownership of their housing complex from the current landlord to SHACC, ensuring that the dwellings and workspaces remain a housing cooperative for artists and creatives in perpetuity. The funds were allocated for several phases, including legal advice to identify and examine ownership options, financial advice to develop fundraising strategies, business case development to navigate legal and financial options and securing funding for the ownership transfer.

As part of the project, SHACC also engaged more deeply with other rental social housing cooperatives in the greater Fremantle region. The other rental housing co-operatives functioned as both landlord and tenants of their own housing. This meant that members were required to undertake all the activities (including maintenance issues) associated with being a landlord, finance management, tenant selection and rent collection, tenant management, meeting the housing authority's record keeping and compliance, while concurrently being tenants in their own dwellings. This model requires considerable skill and knowledge of the residents as well as absorbing substantial member resident time.

SHACC did not have to deal with the maintenance, financial issues or reporting issues undertaken by the CHP. This freed time to undertake the valuable aspects of being a housing co-operative for artists and creatives, such as gallery exhibitions, regular community events (e.g., a 'long table dinners', annual Halloween night and circus performances), inducting and mentoring new members and undertaking special projects to enhance the quality of life within the co-operative, for example the establishment of a community garden on vacant land adjacent to SHACC. As the project evolved, SHACC members came to appreciate that they were in a privileged position as the tenants of a benign CHP.

Concurrently, the project faced challenges and delays, notably uncertainties about the landlord's plans, impacting its progress. The landlord has informed SHACC of their intention not to sell by 2026. As a result a new project agreement will be drafted that could include an option to purchase by 2031. The new agreement will benefit from the Bunya funded project, ensuring the co-operative is in the best position to negotiate and can use the knowledge gained for the project to plan for 2031. Importantly, this project has helped SHACC develop a replicable model for other artist housing cooperatives, promoting sustainable urban development and community engagement in other locations. This could help other housing co-operatives from the social housing model to one that may integrate more direct models of ownership.

Recommendations from the project are that rental housing co-operatives explore strategies to outsource the burden of property management and reporting to an external entity to undertake these functions. This model could be similar to the strata sector where strata owners contract a suite of duties to a strata manager.

In an ideal world, it would be valuable to have a second-tier co-operative undertake this function on behalf of rental housing co-operatives. In Western Australia, Co-operation Housing, the peak body for housing co-operatives in this state, could be the equivalent to a 'strata manager' for a fee for all the housing co-operatives. This then would leave the time and emotional space to concentrate of all the benefits of housing co-operatives to tenant members and the local community.

SHACC does not have a formalised impact measurement system in place. However, they have captured some data through grant acquittals and have expressed interest in developing more structured impact measurement processes. They are considering introducing an annual well-being survey of members linked to national well-being measurements. Additionally, their potential partnership with Act Belong Commit could help them capture mental health and community well-being data, which would contribute to a more systematic approach to measuring their impact.



SuppHorticulture

SuppHorticulture Co-operative, founded in 2023, is a worker cooperative consisting of **specialised** disability support workers, focusing on providing vocational skills and inclusive employment in horticulture. Their purpose is “to provide individuals, who may not previously have had access, the opportunity to learn vocational skills in horticulture. It will also provide opportunities for horticultural workplace participation for this systemically marginalised cohort.” In doing so, the co-operative also enables the operation of Caring Farms Co-op and its market garden and food plant nursery.



“Council particularly recognises the enterprise’s contribution to our community; not only through the quality produce it offers, but also in its efforts to create a safe and inclusive environment for those living with a disability to learn new skills, and develop confidence, in the vocation of their choice.”

Kath Brackett, Director Community Wellbeing, Banyule City Council

Value for members

The co-operative creates value for its members by offering a supportive and inclusive workplace, access to shared resources, financial and administrative support, community and collaboration opportunities, professional development and collective marketing efforts. This structure not only enhances the members' skills and work experience but also fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support, contributing to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community.

SuppHorticulture Co-operative currently enables several impactful projects that are conducted through the Caring Farms Co-op, including the expansion of the nursery operations. The nursery operations have seen significant growth since the foundation, achieving gross sales of \$54,269 and the production of 590 trays of seedlings for peri-urban farms between April 2022 and April 2023. They are also developing their market garden, having secured a new 5-year lease for additional land and have established produce outlets with local businesses and restaurants, while continuing to donate fresh produce to a local food relief program. Additionally, the cooperative is involved in worm farming, diverting over a tonne of food scraps from landfills and creating a micro-business for one of their supported team members. They have hosted numerous farm tours for various community groups, disability support organisations and educational institutions, showcasing their unique model of disability inclusion.

The cooperative is transitioning to a new formal structure by forming two new cooperatives, SuppHorticulture Co-op and Caring Farms Co-op; where SuppHorticulture will keep the disability support activities, while Caring Farms Co-op will cover the urban farming activities. This division allows each cooperative to specialise and operate more efficiently, addressing the specific needs of their members and the community. Altogether, the cooperative model fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among members.

Theory for change, replicability and scalability

The theory of change for the SuppHorticulture Co-operative and Caring Farms Co-Op is centred on creating an inclusive and supportive environment where individuals with intellectual disabilities can gain vocational skills and meaningful employment in horticulture. Through these efforts, the co-operatives aim to address the systemic marginalisation of people with intellectual disabilities by providing them opportunities to participate in the workforce, develop skills and achieve personal and professional growth.

The ultimate goal is to create a replicable model that can be adopted in other settings, promoting inclusive employment and sustainable practices across various industries. The economic model is original and can be used as a template not only in the horticulture business but also in other industries.

In the new configuration, SuppHorticulture still directly contributes to the Caring Farms Co-op, and as such, we have consolidated the impact across both activities.

Economic impact

The Co-operative contributes to two of the UNSDG in relation to facilitating change and generating economic impact.



SuppHorticulture Co-operative contributes to sustainable cities and communities by operating an urban farm that serves as a community hub for food growing and education. This urban farm provides fresh, locally grown produce with minimal food miles and engages the community through tours, volunteer programs and educational initiatives. By integrating sustainable farming practices within an urban setting, the cooperative promotes awareness and understanding of sustainable agriculture and fosters a sense of community involvement and responsibility.



The cooperative emphasises environmentally and socially responsible consumption and production by adhering to organic and regenerative agriculture practices, diverting food scraps from landfills and promoting the integration of people with intellectual disability. Additionally, they support a sustainable food system that prioritises ethical, social and environmental considerations by producing and selling seedlings and fresh produce locally.

Social impact



SuppHorticulture contributes to zero hunger by producing a significant amount of food and donating a portion of it to a local food relief program. This initiative helps provide fresh, nutritious food to those in need, addressing food insecurity in the community.



SuppHorticulture provides specialised horticultural training and on-the-job education for individuals with intellectual disabilities who might not have access to traditional educational opportunities. This training helps them develop valuable skills and increases their employability in the horticulture sector.



The co-operative supports decent work and economic growth by creating a supportive workplace that offers fair employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities who are often marginalised in the workforce. This approach helps reduce inequalities in the labour market and promotes inclusive economic growth. The co-operative model ensures that all members have equal voting and decision-making rights regardless of their abilities.

Environmental impact



SupHorticulture contributes to climate action by using organic and regenerative agriculture practices, which help reduce environmental impact and promote sustainability. These practices include minimizing inputs compared to conventional agriculture and focusing on soil health and biodiversity. By operating as an urban farm, they also reduce food miles, further decreasing their carbon footprint.



The cooperative supports life on land through their efforts in native revegetation and creating wildlife corridors on their farm. These activities help restore and protect local ecosystems, enhance biodiversity and provide habitats for various species. Their commitment to best-practice horticulture, sustainable farming methods and diverting food scraps from landfills further contributes to the health and resilience of terrestrial ecosystems.

Impact of funding

The funds were used to consult with experts and develop best practice rules and policies for the cooperative, including working with lawyers to draft the constitution and employment contracts. This ensured a solid legal foundation for the cooperative. Additionally, the funds were allocated to build essential infrastructure such as an irrigation system and worm farm stands, which were crucial for the farm's operations and adaptability to meet current needs. These improvements have strengthened the cooperative's structure, improved its operational efficiency and formalised its process to support replication of the model.

SupHorticulture doesn't have specific tools or frameworks for measuring their impact; they, however, do document their activities and outcomes through internal reports, social media updates and external features such as a segment on Gardening Australia.



Eyre Peninsula Cooperative Bulk Handling (EPCBH)

Thank you to our round two Funders



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Are you interested in being a funder of The Bunya Fund?

Contact the BCCM to arrange a meeting with Melina Morrison, CEO BCCM and learn more about becoming a funder of The Bunya Fund.

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