



FREEMASONS
FOUNDATION VICTORIA

ANNUAL REPORT
2023-2024

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES,
ENDURING IMPACT



OUR VISION

To contribute to a stronger and healthier Victoria through thoughtful and purposeful charitable support and community involvement.



OUR MISSION

To invest in programs and initiatives that are expected to provide stronger and healthier communities and by supporting individuals through access to education.



THANK YOU

Thank you to all the individuals and Masonic Lodges who have contributed financial support during the year and to Freemasons Victoria for ongoing support.

Freemasons Foundation Victoria acknowledges Aboriginal Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pays respect to their culture and Elders past, present and emerging.

Cover image: Part of a mural that was developed by students from the Portland Secondary College Re-engagement Program in collaboration with local artists. This project is one of many that FFV and the Portland Freemasons have supported to enhance students' learning, opportunities, and connection to community.

Table of contents

Grand Master and Chairman Messages	4
Our Impact	5
Governance	6
Members and Directors	7
Method of Support	8
Masonic Grants	9
Sub-Fund Grants	20
Education	22
Community Grants	29
Disaster Relief	39
188g Bequest Society	40
Financial Summary	42
Become Involved	43



A Word from the UGLV Grand Master

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Annual Report of Freemasons Foundation Victoria (FFV). During the year, the Foundation reached a significant milestone - distributing \$20 million into the Victorian community. This remarkable achievement highlights the incredible generosity of our Freemasons and supporters, whose contributions have enabled us to continue our work in fostering positive change across Victoria.

At the AGM in November 2023, Garry James was appointed the Chairman of FFV, and I congratulate and thank him for taking up this role. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and commitment of all our Board members, each of whom give their time freely and in a spirit of generosity to oversee the Foundation's work.

Our impact partnerships have continued to grow this year. Notably, we are proud to support Cancer Council Victoria in their new campaign to raise awareness of the importance of regular cervical screening, a crucial step in reducing the incidence of cervical cancer in our community. These partnerships, alongside our other initiatives, reflect the Foundation's dedication to improving the health and well-being of all Victorians.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all our members and supporters. Together, we will continue to uphold the values of Freemasonry and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around us.

MWBro. Anthony Bucca
UGLV Grand Master



Chairman's Message

In November, I was appointed Chairman of FFV and I thank the Members of the Company for appointing me to this role. I would also like to thank and congratulate our past Chairman, Rodney Lavin JP, for his tireless work both during his tenure and in his continuing role on the Board, as well as welcoming Susan Timbs and Christian Wood as Directors.

In March, I proudly announced that since November 2014, FFV had granted \$20 million towards charitable projects and supporting the youth of Victoria with their education goals. I'm grateful for the generosity of past and present Freemasons and supporters, whose contributions have enabled us to "improve the lives and opportunities of Victorians." I also acknowledge and thank all the staff and volunteers in the organisations that we have supported. Each time we are privileged to visit their projects, I am impressed by the wonderful work that is done to assist those in need.

In this year's Community Grants program, we awarded \$803,604 through 29 grants to not-for-profit organisations across Victoria. These grants reflect FFV's ongoing dedication to fostering positive change in our priority focus areas. I am inspired by the dedication and diversity of this year's cohort of recipients, and I encourage you to learn more about their incredible work in the pages of this report.

I also thank and acknowledge the work many Lodges and Freemasons undertake within their local community by identifying local projects to support. Together, our combined grants this year totalled almost \$1 million.

Finally, my sincere thanks to Neil Cripps and Theresa Mangion for their contributions during the year, as well as all the volunteers and my fellow Directors for their support and contributions.

Garry James
Chairman, Freemasons Foundation Victoria

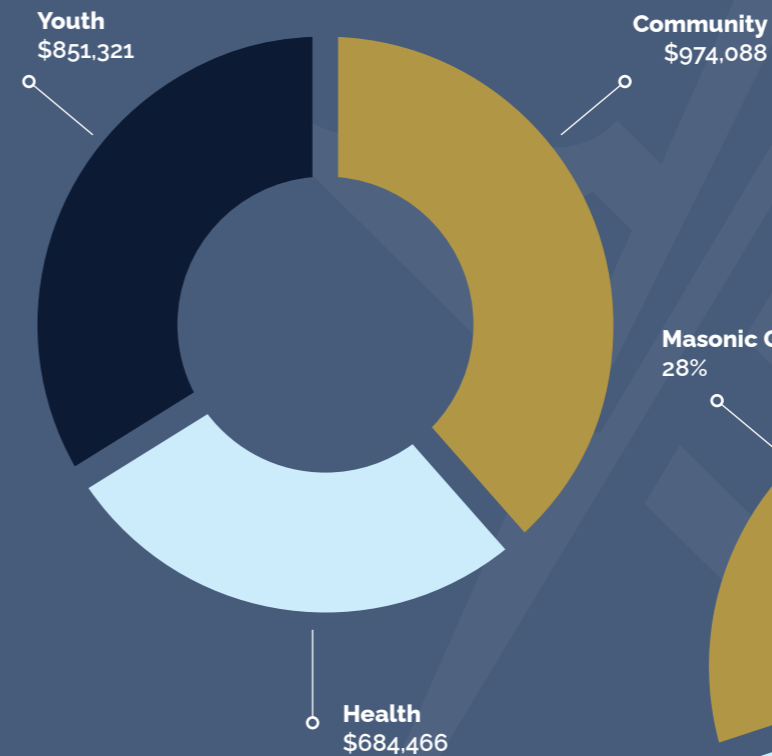
Our Impact

FFV is the charitable arm of Victorian Freemasonry. Thanks to the gifts of Victorian Freemasons, past and present, public donors and our careful investment of funds, since November 2014 FFV has contributed \$21.3 million to the Victorian community. We remain focused on improving the lives and opportunities of Victorians by supporting organisations engaged in health & medical research, community development, youth development, Indigenous programs and disaster & emergency relief. In addition, we continue to support the youth of Victoria to achieve their educational goals through our education programs.

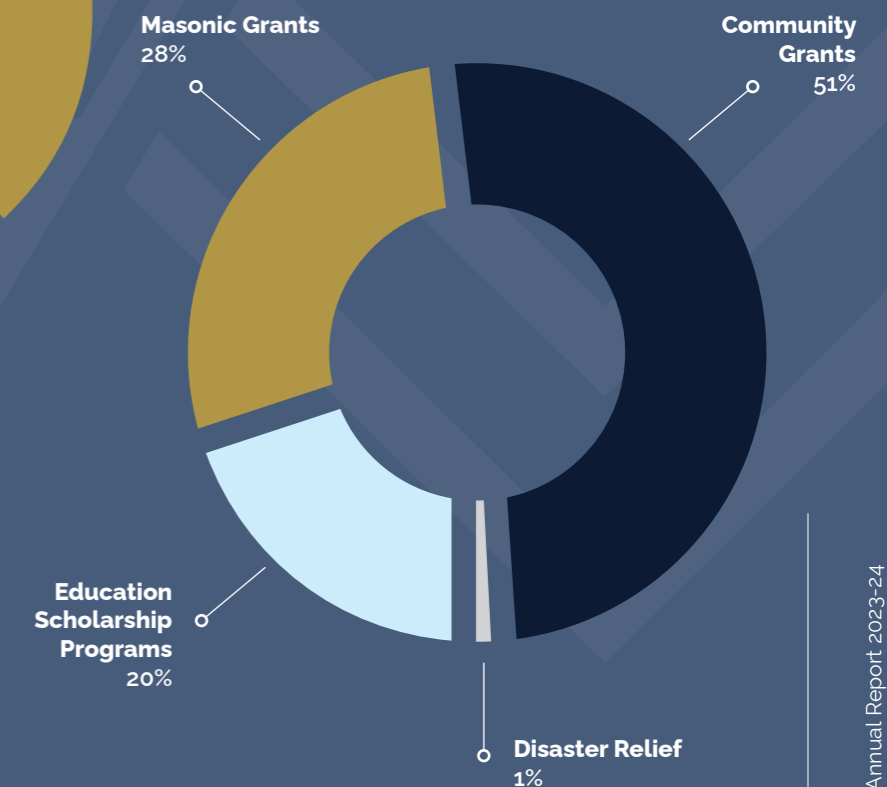
\$2,509,875

Total funding awarded
in 2023-24

Distribution via Focus Area



Distribution via Grant Program



Governance

The Board of FFV, in its role as Trustee for The Freemasons Public Charitable Foundation (FPCF) and Freemasons Benevolent Fund (FBF), is committed to high standards of corporate governance and implementing policies and procedures which reflect these standards.

To maintain these high standards of corporate governance, the Board:

- > properly identifies, discloses and manages any conflicts of interest,
- > acts honestly, in good faith and in the best interest of FPCF or FBF,
- > uses care and diligence in fulfilling their functions, and
- > does not take improper advantage of their position.

Organisational Structure

FFV Members are senior Freemasons and include the Freemasons Victoria Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Immediate Past Grand Master. The role of the Members includes the appointment of the Directors for a specific term. There must be five directors who are Freemasons before a non-Freemason director may be appointed.

MEMBERS

Anthony Bucca	Member since June 2020
Peter Henshall	Member since March 2023
Richard Elkington OAM	Member - April 2018 to June 2024
Garry Runge OAM	Member since June 2024

DIRECTORS

Garry James - Chairman	Chairman since November 2023 Director since November 2018
Matthew Schofield – Deputy Chairman	Director since May 2023
Rodney Lavin JP	Director since November 2018
Philip Mayers AM	Director since November 2016
Xavier Murtagh	Director since November 2020
John Patterson	Director since November 2018
Christian Wood	Appointed November 2023
Susan Timbs	Appointed November 2023

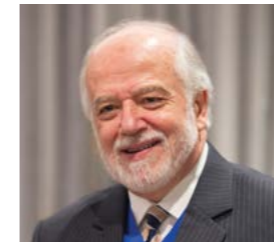
STAFF

Neil Cripps	Executive Officer and Company Secretary since November 2016
Theresa Mangion	Grant & Communications Officer since July 2023

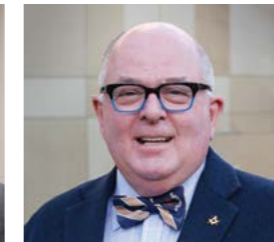
Our volunteers:

- > Michael Halls - Bequest Working Party
- > Sue Benedykt - 1889 Bequest Patron
- > Bob Jones - 1889 Bequest Patron
- > Geoffrey Thompson - Bequest Working Party
- > Myles King OAM - Bequest Working Party
- > Belinda Trembath - Bequest Working Party
- > Rosemary Evans - Bequest Working Party
- > Ashley Melnacic - Board Observer

Members



Anthony Bucca



Richard Elkington OAM



Peter Henshall



Garry Runge OAM

Directors



Garry James
Chairman



Matthew Schofield
Deputy Chairman



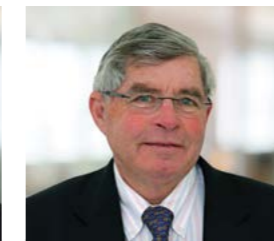
Rodney Lavin JP
Director



Philip Mayers AM
Director



Xavier Murtagh
Director



John Patterson
Director



Christian Wood
Director



Susan Timbs
Director

Staff



Neil Cripps
Executive Officer



Theresa Mangion
Grant & Communications Officer

Method of Support

Our programs are designed to be able to fund a diverse range of programs and initiatives and to benefit current and future generations. It is thanks to our generous donors that FFV is able to continue to deliver this support and celebrate the impacts of our grants and partnerships.

If you appreciate the work of FFV, you can make a contribution to either of our Funds. Those who would like to leave a legacy in their name can leave a bequest to FFV and become a member of the 1889 Bequest Society.

Healthy Communities

FFV Masonic Grants

This is the cornerstone of our philanthropic giving. Masonic Orders can apply to FFV on behalf of their local nominated charity to support worthwhile projects.

FFV Community Grants

ACNC registered charities can apply directly to FFV to support a specific project or part of a project, program or initiatives in our funding areas.

Major Impact Grants

Multi-year partnerships with charities who operate in Victoria to support a specific project that align with our chosen focus areas.

Disaster Relief

Established in January 2020, this program supports recovery, reconstruction and prevention projects for communities impacted by disasters.

Benevolence

The provision of relief to current and former members of Freemasons Victoria and their dependants who are in financial need or require other support which cannot be provided by Government or other agencies.

Education

FFV Lodge Education

FFV supports Victorian Craft Lodges with their local community scholarships, bursaries and awards for primary, secondary and tertiary students.

Higher Education Scholarships

Partnering with Victorian Tertiary Institutions, FFV funds several scholarships. These scholarships are managed by the Tertiary provider and granted annually.

Secondary & Tertiary

Available annually to secondary students and first year tertiary students, scholarship applications are assessed on the student's results, financial need or difficulties and school and community activities.

Tertiary Support

Providing support to tertiary students undertaking their first tertiary course who require financial assistance with their studies.



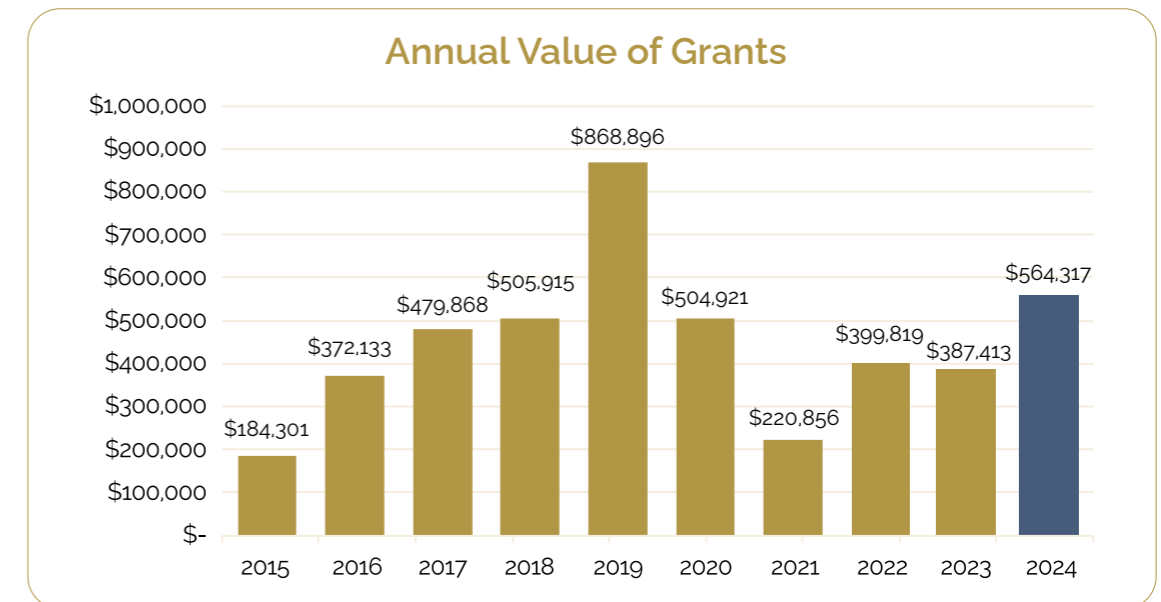
Masonic Grants

In 2023-24, we distributed \$564,317 supporting Masonic charitable projects, an increase of \$176,904 on 2022-23 funding.

The 2023-24 distribution includes \$45,000 that the Grand Master of United Grand Lodge of Victoria has chosen to support. Any distribution is subject to the charities meeting FFV's eligibility guidelines and the Chairman of FFV agreeing to the request.

In addition to FFV's distribution, local Freemasons contributed over \$223,000 supporting these projects.

102 Grants totalling
\$564,317



Since 2014,
918 Masonic Grants made
with a value of
\$4.5 Million

Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee
Lifeline Remote Phone Hub Mildura
\$2,500
Grand Master's Discretion

Dementia Australia Victoria Division
Supporting medical research project: Protein phosphatase 2A methylation as a therapeutic target in Alzheimer's disease
\$5,000
Grand Master's Discretion

Hope Bereavement Care
Hope Support After Suicide
\$5,000
Grand Master's Discretion

Melbourne Legacy
Support families who have lost a veteran
\$5,000
Grand Master's Discretion

Melbourne City Mission
Build youth housing and support young people experiencing homelessness
\$10,000
Grand Master's Discretion

Uniting Wodonga
Food relief for people in need
\$7,500
Grand Master's Discretion

Banksia Gardens Community Services
Motor vehicle
\$10,000
Grand Master's Discretion

Melbourne City Mission
Build youth housing and support young people experiencing homelessness
\$2,500
First Grand Principal of Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Victoria

Melbourne City Mission
Build youth housing and support young people experiencing homelessness
\$2,500
Grand Master of United Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons

Very Special Kids
Respite and end-of-life care at Very Special Kids Hospice
\$10,150
Chairman

1st Kialla Scouts Group
Outdoor camping equipment
\$1,000
Lodge Eshcol

1st North Shepparton Scout Group
Enclosed trailer for transporting camping equipment
\$4,000
Lodge Eshcol

39th Australian Infantry Battalion Association
Arthur Grassby Foundation Kokoda Trek 2024
\$11,000
Gippsland Lakes Lodge, Bairnsdale Daylight Lodge, Mitchell River Lodge, Union of North Gippsland Lodge, Orbost Lodge

Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre Trust Fund
Computer & external hard disk
\$2,100
Lodge Belvoir

Ambulance Victoria - Whittlesea Branch
Vacuum mattresses
\$3,142
Whittlesea Lodge

Anglesea Community House
Food Link emergency food relief
\$4,000
Lodge of the Great Ocean Road

Anglican Parish Council
Gannawarra Memorial Toy Run
\$6,250
Cohuna Lodge

Ararat Mens Shed
Defibrillator and equipment
\$5,000
United Ararat Lodge

Australian Stroke Alliance Contrast injector for Stroke Ambulance
\$30,000
Lodge of Concentration, Lodge of Welcome

Australian Stroke Alliance
High resolution video camera for Stroke Ambulance
\$10,000
Cranbourne Lodge

Bairnsdale Neighbourhood House
Support local food pantry
\$1,600
Mitchell River Lodge

Banksia Gardens Community Services
Motor vehicle
\$19,800
Williamstown Lodge, Doutta Gala Lodge, Sunshine Wisdom Lodge, Melton Lodge, Kensington Lodge, Glenroy Lodge, Werribee Enterprise Lodge, Altona Lodge, Djwarra Lodge, Robbie Burns Lodge, Williamstown Masonic Centre

Banksia Gardens Community Services
Community Pantry
\$10,000
Western Masonic Centre Named Sub-Fund

Baranduda CFA
Supply and installation of breathing apparatus cylinders
\$700
Lodge Belvoir

Beit Rafael Benevolent Institution
Expanding medical transport
\$4,000
Lodge Fraternal

Benalla P-12 College
Kokoda Trail Expedition 2024
\$8,000
Marangan Lodge

Berry Street Victoria
Support for family violence prevention project in Ballarat
\$500
Guiding Star Lodge

C Care
Support for meal program
\$1,000
Mount Scopus & Collegians Lodge

Cabrini Health
Bowel cancer research and awareness program
\$500
Lodge Fraternal

Cancer Council Victoria
Community education for bowel cancer screening program in Victoria
\$2,570
Lodge of the Golden Fleece

Childrens Cancer Institute Australia
Brain cancer in children research project
\$2,000
Burgundy Ladies Association

City of Traralgon Band
Musical instruments
\$800
Argyle Lodge and Traralgon Lodge

Community Support Frankston
Emergency relief for families in need
\$4,000
Lodge of Honour

Cottage By The Sea
Take a Break program for children affected by fires
\$8,000
Ivanhoe Lodge

Dementia Australia Victoria Division
Supporting medical research project: Protein phosphatase 2A methylation as a therapeutic target in Alzheimer's disease
\$20,000
Williamstown Lodge, Sunshine Wisdom Lodge, Werribee Enterprises Lodge

Diamond Valley Community Support
Support emergency relief program
\$8,000
Greensborough Chapter

Diamond Valley Foodshare
Replacement of fridge
\$3,202
The Lord Northcote

Dimboola Early Learning Centre
Sand pit diggers
\$262
Dimboola Lodge

Eastern Palliative Care
Equipment for home support
\$5,000
Blackburn United Lodge

Eastern Palliative Care
Palliative care equipment
\$3,520
Blackburn United Lodge

Explore Youth and Family Therapy
Sailing On - Bush Adventure Therapy program
\$5,000
Keysborough St Andrews Daylight

For Change Co Ltd
Hospitality training programs for youth homeless
\$10,000
Melbourne St Clair Reunion

Friend in Me
Safe and sensory space for children
\$1,500
St Andrews in the South

Gather My Lodge Project
Power tools, equipment and protective gear
\$3,000
Brighton District Lodge

Geelong Food Relief Centre
Support emergency food relief program
\$14,000
Geelong Lodge of Unity & Prudence on behalf of Bellarine District Lodges

Geelong Jazz Club
Train young musicians the art of playing jazz
\$2,000
Lodge of the Great Ocean Road

Heywood Secondary College
Student welfare fund
\$800
Portland Lodge of Victoria

Heywood Secondary College
Standing Tall mentoring program
\$4,000
Portland Lodge of Victoria

Hilldene CFA
Upgrade facilities
\$2,000
The Seymour Lodge

Hope Bereavement Care
Support bereaved counselling service
\$2,000
St Andrews in the South

Horses for Hope
Subsidised sessions for people in need
\$4,000
Lodge Eshcol

Hotham Mission

Education support, food relief and other general support to young people and their families in North Melbourne and surrounding areas
\$10,000
 North Melbourne Lodge

Interchange Outer East

Sibling Support Program
\$21,500
 Lodge of Good Companions, Monash Lodge, Lodge of Rapport, Canterbury Lodge

Joseph's Corner

Support counselling service
\$1,500
 SEAVIC Lodge

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

Research project: Move the needle for T1D
\$1,000
 Footscray St. John's Lodge

Lifeline Central Victoria and Mallee

Lifeline Remote Phone Hub Mildura
\$5,000
 The United Memorial & Merbein Lodge.

Local Schools

Local school breakfast program
\$3,500
 Gippsland Lakes Lodge, Bairnsdale Daylight Lodge, Union Lodge of North Gippsland and Mitchell River Lodge

Mallee Accommodation & Support Program

Youth mentoring program
\$1,000
 Mildura Lodge

Maryborough Scouts

Scouting Jamboree
\$2,000
 Maryborough Lodge, St George Lodge, Avoca Lodge, Trentham Lodge, Talbot Lodge, Maryborough Mark, Major Mitchell Council, Gladstone Ark Mariners, Birdwood Royal Arch Chapter

Melbourne City Mission

Build youth housing and support young people experiencing homelessness
\$10,000
 Ivanhoe Lodge

Melbourne Legacy

Support families who have lost a veteran
\$10,000
 Lodge Amalthea and Lodge of the Golden Fleece

Melbourne Legacy

Case Manager De-Brief
\$20,000
 The Army Lodge, Victorian Naval and Military Lodge, United Service Lodge, Lodge of the Golden Fleece, Lodge Liberation, Lodge of Devotion, Lodge of Honour, Lodge Observance, The United Memorial & Merbein Lodge

Mental Health Safety Net

Suicide prevention education
\$4,000
 Baxter Lodge

Mildura Legacy Club Inc

Servicing of air conditioners and supply of firewood
\$1,800
 The United Memorial & Merbein Lodge

Monash Health Foundation

Chairs for Casey Special Care Nursery
\$7,900
 Argyle Lodge and Morwell Lodge

Monash-Waverley Community Information and Support

Food vouchers for people in need
\$4,000
 Canterbury Lodge

Motor Neurone Disease Victoria

Assistive technology to support people with MND, their carers and families
\$1,500
 Lodge of Rapport

National Council of Jewish Women Victoria

Support Connect program
\$4,450
 Lodge Fraternal, King David Lodge

National Stroke Foundation

StrokeSafe Community Education Project (Victoria)
\$3,500
 Lodge of the Golden Fleece

NextSense

Cochlear bears
\$600
 Lodge of Concentration

Order of St Lazarus Victorian Commandery Charitable Trust

Support CBD breakfast program
\$5,000
 The Lodge of Evolution

Paynesville RSL

Sinclair Scholarship - Kokoda Trek
\$5,000
 Sir John Quick Lodge, Campaspe Valley Lodge

Plenty Valley Regional Rovers

Leadership training
\$7,000
 Albert Victor Lodge

Portland District Hospital

Hospital ward beds
\$17,200
 Portland Lodge of Victoria

Portland Secondary College

Student welfare fund
\$800
 Portland Lodge of Victoria

Portland Secondary College Youth Re-Engagement Program

\$4,000
 Portland Lodge of Victoria

Queenscliffe Maritime Museum

Tools to assist with the repair and maintenance of exhibits
\$3,200
 Cosmopolitan Lodge

Ronald McDonald House Charities VicTas

Pet Therapy program
\$8,000
 Gregorios Lodge

Royal South Street Society

Support annual Ballarat Festival of Schools Instrument Music and Vocal Competition
\$10,000
 St Johns Lodge

Saltbush

Heating cooling project
\$4,068
 Middle Park Lodge

Seaview House Residential Care Inc.

Kitchen equipment
\$1,000
 Portland Lodge of Victoria

Seymour College

Furniture for sensory room
\$556
 The Seymour Lodge

Springvale Benevolent Society

Purchase of emergency material aid relief in the form of food, food vouchers, medication and other household necessities
\$8,000
 The Spring Vale Lodge

St Kilda Mums

Recirculation of essential items to families in need
\$750
 The Lodge of Welcome

Stawell District Hospital Ladies Auxiliary

Purchase of a Difficult Airway trainer
\$4,104
 Marnoo Lodge

Sunraysia Gang Show

Support 2024 production
\$300
 Mildura Lodge

The Think Pink Foundation

Wigs for breast cancer patients
\$13,892
 Lodge of the Golden Rule and Monash Gully District

The Think Pink Foundation

Supporting Bokes program
\$5,000
 Middle Park Lodge

The Think Pink Foundation

Support services to those affected by breast cancer diagnosis
\$5,000
 SEAVIC Lodge

Torquay Food Aid Inc

Support food relief service
\$4,000
 Lodge of the Great Ocean Road

Trentham CFA

Upgrade facilities
\$5,000
 Trentham Lodge

United Minds Community Services

Assist people to access mental health support.
\$8,000
 Antient York Lodge

Uniting Wodonga

Food relief for people in need
\$7,500
 Lodge Belvoir

Uniting Ballarat

Winter Warmth 2023
\$1,000
 Sturt-Buninyong United Lodge

Uniting Ballarat

Winter Warmth 2024
\$1,000
 Sturt-Buninyong United Lodge

Very Special Kids

Respite care for terminally ill children
\$3,500
 Monash Lodge

Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation

Hospital and emergency care support
\$750
 Keysborough Lodge

Wangaratta RSL

Bob Iskov Kokoda Scholarship
\$1,500
 Wangaratta Lodge of St John

Wave Care

Navigating Adolescence: Empowering Parents for Teen Success
\$7,200
 Lodge Bharat

Whittlesea Ministries

Solar panels and battery to reduce energy costs
\$6,351
 Whittlesea Lodge

Whittlesea SES Lithium Battery Installation

Solar PV system
\$13,000
 Gregorios Lodge, Melbourne St Clair Reunion Lodge

Wodonga All Abilities Football Program

Support all abilities football team
\$1,000
 Wodonga Lodge

Food parcels for 1,000 families

Community development



Springvale Benevolent Society is a volunteer group that provide crisis care to those in need, primarily in the form of food parcels, which are prepared and delivered by volunteers.

This was the fourth year that The Spring Vale Lodge selected Springvale Benevolent Society as its chosen charity. Funds are raised through monthly events, raffles and member contributions. Just prior to the busy Christmas period, The Spring Vale Lodge, with support from a FFV Masonic Grant, donated \$10,000 to the Society to provide aid for more than 1,000 families.

With plans to provide more hands-on support with members volunteering to delivering parcels, this is a partnership that is making a difference.

“ We appreciate the support from the Freemasons Foundation. Without them we wouldn't have been able to give the whole \$10,000.”

Expanded respite care for kids

Health

Since opening doors in September 2023, Very Special Kids hospice has been ramping up and expanding its resources and services, with an expanded Allied Health Team, new Child Life Therapist and a very busy physiotherapist, thanks to the popularity of the hydrotherapy pool.

Since January 2024, 800 Victorian families received vital services, including:

- **674 nights** of respite were provided to children and young people with a life-limiting condition at the Sister Margaret Noone Hospice
- **40 Families** made use of the free onsite accommodation to stay close to their children for a total of **207 nights**
- **42 Road to Respite journeys** were provided to children and young people to and from VSK and their homes

Monash Lodge and FFV supported the modern facility to provide this important care with a \$7,000 donation.



Top: Earlier in the year, FFV was invited to tour the new facility. Bottom: Monash Lodge Presentation.

Equipment enhances cancer care at Wellness Centre

Health

Over the past 10 years, Lodge Belvoir, with FFV's support, has donated to many worthy causes in the local area, including the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre, Belvoir Special School, Albury Wodonga Eisteddfod, Baranduda Fire Brigade, and Uniting Care Wodonga.

The Wellness Centre at the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre is a purpose-built facility that serves a catchment area of more than 250,000 people. It provides exceptional cancer care through a collaborative effort between public and private healthcare providers.

Lodge Belvoir has supported the centre for several years, including purchasing iPads; to maintain connections between patients and loved ones and facilitate telehealth appointments with specialists, providing a computer and external backup to support the Centre's operations and purchased a barbecue and associated equipment for social programs.

Ben Engel, Wellness Centre Coordinator, said

“The BBQ is utilised at least once a month, offering a warm and informal setting where patients and carers can meet over a meal. This environment fosters connections, allowing individuals to find support and build friendships with others facing similar challenges.”

“The ongoing benefits of these donations underscore the significant impact of Lodge Belvoir's support on the wellbeing of patients and carers,” Ben said.



Each year, Lodge Belvoir in Wodonga hosts an Charity Night where scholarships and various community donations are presented. Jack Harvey, Lodge Belvoir's Secretary says it's a bit of extra work to coordinate the event and present all their donations on one night, but it makes a celebration out of it and ultimately, it's about caring for the community in which they live.

“We do it because we are Freemasons. We want the community to be a better place for everyone to live, it doesn't matter which walk of life you come from.”

Fundraising efforts, like weekly sausage sizzles, have helped establish strong community connections. Jack said they've been running sausage sizzles since 2012 and over the years, with assistance of FFV grants, have put around \$150,000 back into the community, to schools, emergency organisations, Scouts and other local charities.

“One of the beautiful things about this lodge in particular is that the members care for each other and for the community as well.”



Applying art to re-engagement program for Portland youth

Youth development

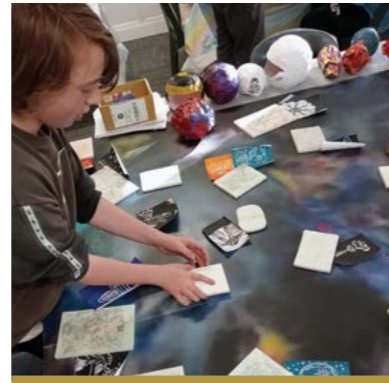


For more than seven years, the Portland Secondary College Re-Engagement (RE) Program has received support from FFV and the Portland Lodge of Victoria. Situated in South Portland, this satellite campus provides a crucial lifeline for students who have disengaged from mainstream education due to challenges such as trauma, mental health issues, anxiety and neurodivergence.

Since 2011, the program has educated more than 200 young people, helping them transition to further education, training, or employment. With a focus on applied learning, the program runs a junior and senior class for three hours each day, aiming to improve literacy, numeracy and social skills.

In Term 2 2024, the RE Program launched a mural project, facilitated by local artists Vicki Reynolds and Chris Webb. Meeting with students every Friday morning, the artists and students bonded over 11 weeks, while creating space-themed art using pencil drawings, paper mâché and block printing. The collaboration not only produced stunning art but also significantly enhanced the students' social interactions, both with each other and the wider community.

Portland Lodge's Lionel Shelton has observed these positive changes firsthand, noting that the program has helped students build confidence and develop stronger social connections.



Melbourne's Second Stroke Ambulance

Health



The Stroke Ambulance is a purpose-built vehicle equipped with a CT scanner and staffed by Paramedics who are trained to diagnose whether a stroke is caused by a blockage or a bleed. This enables the patient to receive the correct treatment before permanent damage to the brain occurs. The aim is to diagnose and treat the patient within the 'Golden Hour', the time between when the first symptoms occur and when the effect of the stroke causes irreparable damage.

When Melbourne's second Stroke Ambulance (MSU-2) was in development, there was a need for funding to purchase various pieces of necessary equipment.

Lodge Liberation's Neil Nyholm brought the project to the attention of his Lodge following a symposium hosted by the Weary Dunlop Medical Research Foundation, where Professor Geoffrey Donnan discussed the effectiveness of the Melbourne Stroke Ambulance in early stroke detection.

Funding from the Cavaliers Grand Lodge Ceremonial Team and Scottish Rite, local Lodges and FFV enabled a total donation of \$40,000 towards the purchase, installation and calibration of a Contrast Injector in MSU-2 which was commissioned in April 2024. This is a vital piece of equipment and used to inject dye into the patient, while undergoing the CT scan.

The addition of a contrast injector to MSU-2 will enable paramedics to accurately determine the cause of a stroke within the crucial golden hour, thereby facilitating timely and appropriate treatment. This capability is clinically proven to save lives and significantly reduce the risk of long-term physical and cognitive impairment.

A further donation of \$20,000 in June 2024 enabled the purchase of a high-resolution video camera for MSU-2, enabling stroke specialists to remain at the hospital while monitoring patients and guiding ambulance staff in real-time. This remote monitoring

“What better way could we pay tribute to our much loved and respected Past Grand Master, than to provide a piece of equipment, which has the potential to save the lives of those who otherwise might find themselves in a similar situation to that which caused Vaughan's demise.”

capability ensures that stroke victims receive the best possible care enroute to the hospital, ultimately saving more lives and improving recovery rates.

One Freemason, Ron Evans, rallied up support for the project by sharing his personal experience at Lodge visits and encouraged members to join his Cans for Scans container recycling scheme.

A plaque in the Ambulance will honour the late MWBro. Vaughan Werner, Past Grand Master, who passed away following a massive stroke while he and his wife, Beverley, were returning from a Lodge meeting in Shepparton on 12th of December 2019.



L-R Kerrie Fletchers, Garry James, Neil Nyholm, Bill Stevenson, Prof. Geoffrey Donnan AO and Robyn Cousens.



Setting the stage for the Royal South Street Society Ballarat Eisteddfod

Community development

While it might be a mouthful, the Royal South Street Society (RSSS) Ballarat Eisteddfod is the oldest and longest-running eisteddfod in the country and has seen more than a million aspiring artists—singers, dancers, orators, writers, musicians and composers—grace its stage.

The full season of events for the Eisteddfod runs from June to the end of October and covers 11 different disciplines, from debating, speech and drama, pianoforte, vocal sections, the Chopin celebration, all abilities performing arts, choral competitions, schools' instrumental music, dance and calisthenics.

The impact of Freemasons' support over the years

Since 2016, FFV has provided annual grants of \$8,000 and in 2017, a Community Grant of \$9,500. In 2024, with support from a Masonic Grant, Freemasons from the Ballarat area are supporting the Freemasons Festival of Schools Instrumental Music - a combined discipline of schools' music, bands and instrumental solos, and The Freemasons Vocal Competition - with a range of sections from Pop to Stage and Screen sections, Ballads to Opera, and substantial prize money.

It's believed that Freemasons have likely been involved with the RSSS Eisteddfod since its inception in 1891, as donors, committee members, fundraisers and volunteers. This informal commitment has continued throughout the years and recently, Freemasons have assumed roles in security, backstage, marshalling, MC and presentation duties

and other tasks as required. In fact, local Freemasons Lodges contributions through volunteer hours has averaged between \$5,000 and \$6,000 per year!

Judy-Ann Quilliam, RSSS Business and Marketing Manager, emphasises the invaluable support from local Freemasons. "We have volunteers from the local lodges who are just invaluable support to us. They come along - they may be ushers, some of them love to get backstage with the curtains, helping us with stage management. The Freemasons are probably one of our most prominent organisations that we have a formal partnership with around sponsorship and volunteers."



Ron Fleming, Eisteddfod Freemasons Coordinator, says there is a strong feeling of satisfaction being part of a team and providing opportunities for students to showcase their extensive musical talents.



"Music and song are important parts of our lodge meetings. The charitable gift of our time in providing an ongoing opportunity for competition at Royal South Street is a worthwhile use of that time".

Establishing skills for life

The impact of the Eisteddfod on the local community is profound.

"We've been running now for 133 years, and it's had a massive impact on our cultural history. Over that time, we've seen many performers come through and establish professional careers in the performing arts. But not only that, many people call on those skills in their careers throughout life. From an impact on the community, we have so many participants who've had the courage to stand up and speak, to step onto the stage and perform, to say yes to opportunities. Our alumni are everywhere" Judy-Ann says. Many of these alumni are notable, including Dame Nellie Melba, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Joan Kirner, Andrew Olle, Alfred Deakin and Anthony Callea.

The Eisteddfod also significantly boosts the region's tourism and economy, contributing over \$14 million annually pre-COVID. With FFV's support, the Eisteddfod platform plays an essential role in the transformative journey of performers, allowing them to receive constructive feedback, refine their skills, boost their confidence and unlock their full potential.



Sub-Fund Grants

Named Sub-Funds allow FFV to preserve a donation or bequest to provide gifts to chosen charities or cause areas in years to come. The initial investment is grown via donations and pooled fund investment returns and granting can begin once the balance reaches \$11,000 (from an initial donation of \$2,000 or more).

This year \$75,400 was distributed, (\$51,150 in 2022-23) to benefit local students and support causes that matter to Lodge members and donors.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Anonymous Sub-Fund > \$6,000 > Epworth Medical Foundation > Nursing Scholarship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ray Millar Sub-Fund > \$8,000 > Epworth Medical Foundation > Nursing Scholarship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tarra Masonic Lodge Sub-Fund > \$200 > Yarram Secondary College > 2 Awards |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Anonymous Sub-Fund > \$5,000 > The Venny > Cubbies Productive Food Garden | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > SEAVIC Lodge Sub-Fund > \$1,500 > The Think Pink Foundation > Support services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tresco Chisel United Lodge Sub-Fund > \$2,000 > Swan Hill Lodge's Jodie Sharam Knox Tertiary Scholarships |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Friends of Epworth Sub-Fund > \$37,300 > Epworth Medical Foundation > EJ Whitten Prostate Cancer Research Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > SEAVIC Lodge Sub-Fund > \$900 > Josephs' Corner > Support services for families living with drug and alcohol addiction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Western Masonic Centre Sub-Fund > \$5,000 > Banksia Gardens Community Services > Community Pantry |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Kerang Lodge Sub-Fund > \$7,000 > Kerang District Health > Nursing Scholarship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tarra Masonic Lodge Sub-Fund > \$500 > Yarram Eisteddfod > Program support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Western Masonic Centre Sub-Fund > \$2,000 > Banksia Gardens Community Services > Motor vehicle |



Handing over the keys to Banksia Gardens Community Services new car.

The Cubbies Productive Food Garden

Revitalising the garden for community benefit

The Cubbies garden is an initiative aimed at creating a sustainable permaculture plot adjacent to the Atherton Public Housing Estate in Fitzroy. The project addresses food insecurity, while providing educational opportunities and life skills to local children and young people. It was supported by a grant from a Sub-Fund that was created by a substantial donation to FFV.

The Venny is a free communal backyard and safe space for children, as well as a provider of support services. The Venny delivers approximately 400 free healthy meals and snacks weekly to children at its Kensington site. The produce for these meals is sourced from donations and their own garden.

The neglected garden required significant attention to be productive again. The Venny applied to FFV to establish a permaculture garden to produce fresh fruits and vegetables.

Cultivating skills and connections

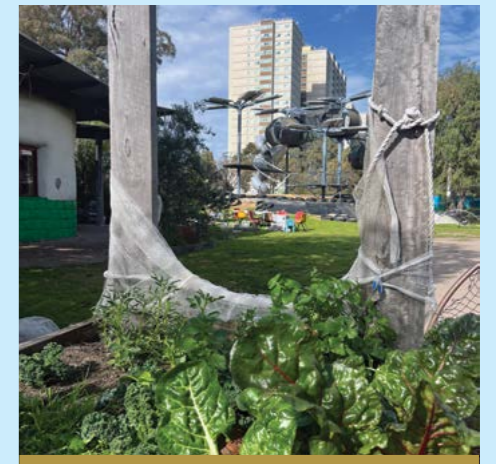
The existing garden beds were revamped and upgraded, ensuring they were productive and capable of supporting the new permaculture system. A closed-loop waste system, including compost bays and worm farms, was implemented to convert food waste into compost and worm juice.

Like all of The Venny's activities, the project involves a volunteer maintenance team to maintain the garden, supporting community connections. Food is used in a number of The Venny's programs and surplus is made available to the community.

Addressing food insecurity without stigma

The project has made significant strides, with garden beds refilled with fresh soil and new plants and new compost bays from Very Edible Gardens. Herbs and vegetables were planted and the first round ready for harvest in August 2024. Fruit trees are in the pipeline and the team is developing a seedling growing and planting schedule and recruiting more volunteers from the community. The produce grown on-site is used to provide healthy meals for children and young people during play sessions and for the Family Dinner Night program – a key opportunity for recruiting some parent volunteers!

Support for this project ensures the garden's long-term sustainability and growth, and aims to address food insecurity without stigma.



Education

Our scholarships reward students for their academic potential and personal accomplishments. They also assist students experiencing financial or personal hardship.

FFV supports students via:

- > supporting Victorian Craft Lodges local scholarship programs
- > scholarships for secondary and tertiary students
- > scholarships at Victorian tertiary institutions

Education Support

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES

482 Students

TOTAL VALUE

\$499,526

Lodge program beneficiaries: **344 students**

Lodge program value: **\$108,526**

FFV scholarship beneficiaries: **126 students**

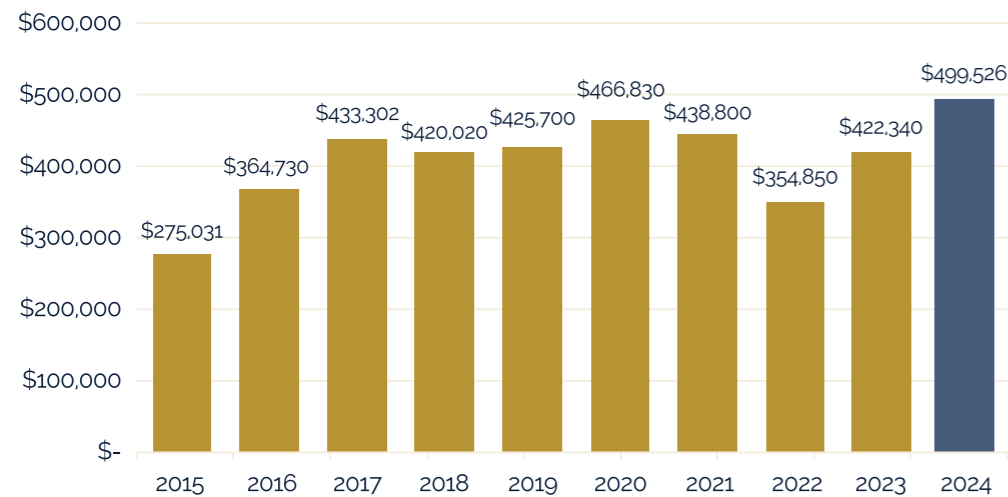
FFV scholarship value: **\$325,000**

Higher education scholarships: **12 students**

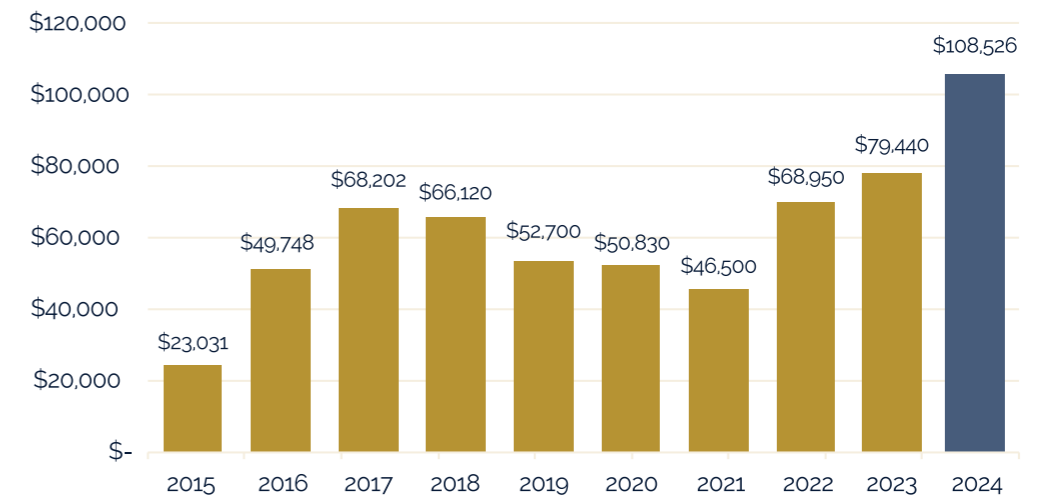
Higher education value: **\$66,000**

\$4,101,129 distributed since November 2014.

Total Education



Lodge Education Program



Swan Hill Lodge Scholarships Presentation

Lodge Education



Central Goldfields Scholarship Presentation

FFV supports Victorian Craft Lodges with their local scholarship and award programs to encourage and support students to continue on their education pathway. Scholarships are awarded on academic achievement or financial need.

In addition to the \$108,526 contributed by FFV, Lodges contributed \$47,077 to this program.

All Nations Lodge
\$200
2 awards
Clunes Primary

Allara Lodge
\$900
6 awards
Boneo Primary
Dromana Primary
Eastbourne Primary
Rosebud Primary
Rye Primary
Tootgarook Primary

Avoca
\$1,500
2 awards
Highview College
Maryborough Education Centre

Beechworth Lodge of St John
\$1,000
3 awards
Beechworth College

Benambra Lodge
\$2,400
6 awards
St Michael's College
Tallangatta College
Tallangatta Primary

Bogong Lodge
\$800
1 award
Beechworth Secondary

Cosmopolitan Lodge
\$1,400
28 awards
Barwon Heads Primary
Clifton Springs Primary
Drysdale Primary
Leopold Primary
Ocean Grove Primary
Our Lady Star of the Sea
Point Lonsdale Primary
Portarlington Primary
Queenscliff Primary
St Aloysius Primary
St Leonards Primary
St Thomas Primary
Surfside Primary
Wallington Primary

**Gippsland Lakes Lodge,
Bairnsdale Daylight Lodge,
Mitchell River Lodge, Union
Lodge of North Gippsland, Orbost
Lodge**
\$30,000
58 awards

Bairnsdale Primary
Bairnsdale Secondary
Bairnsdale West Primary
Bruthen Primary
Buchan Primary
Cann River P-12 College
Clifton Creek Primary
Eagle Point Primary
Lakes Entrance Primary
Lakes Entrance Secondary
Lindenow Primary
Lindenow South Primary
Lucknow Primary
Mallacoota P-12 College
Marlo Primary
Metung Primary
Newmerella Primary
Nicholson Primary
Nungurner Primary
Orbost North Primary
Orbost Primary
Orbost Secondary
Paynesville Primary
St Brendans Primary
St Josephs Primary
Swan Reach Primary
Tambo Upper Primary
Toorloo Arm Primary

Golden & Corinthian Lodge
\$4,500
32 awards
Local Bendigo region primary and secondary schools

Guiding Star Lodge
\$1,250
10 awards
Sebastopol Primary
Ballarat Grammar

Ivanhoe Lodge
\$10,000
27 awards
Briar Hill Primary
Eltham East Primary
Ivanhoe Primary
Marysville Primary
Middle Kinglake Primary
Rosanna Primary
Sacred Heart Primary
St Catherine's Primary
St John's Primary
St Pius X Primary
Strathewen Primary
Watsonia Heights Primary
Yea High School

**Keysborough St Andrews
Daylight Lodge**
\$400
4 awards
Mordiallic Beach Primary
Mentone Primary School

Lara Lodge
\$700
7 awards
Lara Secondary

Leura Lodge
\$1,250
13 awards
Camperdown P-12 College
Cobden Technical School
Derrinallum P-12 College
Lismore Primary

Lodge Belvoir
\$3,950
8 awards
Albury/Wodonga
Catholic College Wodonga
Wodonga Middle Years College
Wodonga Senior Secondary

Lodge of Concentration
\$1,000
8 awards
Norwood Secondary

Lodge of the Great Ocean Road
\$2,200
16 awards
Aireys Inlet Primary
Anglesea Primary
Bellbrae Primary
Lisieux Catholic Primary
Lorne P-12 College
St Therese Catholic Primary
Torquay Coast Primary
Torquay College

Lodge of Unity
\$750
1 award
Bright P-12 College

Mitchell River Lodge
\$3,000
2 awards
Bairnsdale Secondary

Peace and Loyalty Lodge
\$5,000
26 awards
Rowville Secondary

Portland Lodge
\$1,250
9 awards
Heywood & District Secondary
Portland Secondary

Rosebank Lodge
\$750
3 awards
Beeac Primary

Rupertswood-Numurkah Lodge
\$1,500
1 award
Numurkah Secondary

Rutherglen Lodge
\$500
4 awards
Rutherglen High

Southern Cross Lodge
\$500
2 awards
Maldon Primary

Sturt-Buninyong United Lodge
\$576
2 awards
Mt Clear College

Swan Hill Lodge
\$17,000
4 awards
Tertiary Awards

Talbot Lodge
\$300
2 awards
Talbot Primary

Talbot Lodge
\$2,700
18 awards
Amphitheatre Primary
Avoca Primary
Bealiba Primary
Carisbrook Primary
Clunes Primary
Dunolly Primary
Inglewood Primary
Maryborough Education Centre
Moonambel Primary
Natte Yallock Primary
Newstead Primary
St Augustine's Primary
Talbot Primary
Tarnagulla State Primary
Timor Primary
Wedderburn Primary
Yandoit Primary

Mildura Lodge
\$250
1 award
Irymple Secondary

Mordialloc Lodge Of Charity
\$2,000
4 awards
Keysborough Gardens Primary

Mornington Lodge
\$3,000
2 awards
Mornington Secondary

**The United Memorial & Merbein
Lodge**
\$2,500
16 awards
Merbein P-10 College
Ouyen P-12 College
Red Cliffs Secondary

Warrnambool
\$2,000
4 awards
Brauer College
Emmanuel College
Merri River School
Warrnambool College

Zetland Lodge
\$1,500
12 awards
Kyneton Primary
Langley Primary
Malmsbury Primary
Our Lady of the Rosary
Redesdale Primary
Tylden Primary



Carisbrook Lodge Scholarship Presentation

FFV Scholarships

Our Secondary and Tertiary Scholarship programs open in December every year, with Victorian students able to apply directly for a scholarship.

When reviewing applications, we consider academic performance, financial need, challenges faced by students, school activities and community contribution. Our aim is to support those who may not have a resilient life structure, as well as those who are striving to achieve excellence and become the leaders of tomorrow.

Tertiary Support Scholarships are also available to assist students who are undertaking their first tertiary course at University or TAFE and require financial support with their studies.

	Awarded	Value
Secondary Scholarships	78	\$71,000
Tertiary Scholarships	41	\$210,000
Ongoing Tertiary Scholarships	5	\$40,000
Tertiary Support Scholarships	2	\$4,000
	126	\$325,000

FFV hosted two Scholarships Presentation evenings this year, bringing together supporters and recipients alike.

The presentations offer a chance for the students and their families to gather and celebrate their achievements, dedication and potential, and peek into Freemasonry, with a tour of a Lodge room, providing insight into Freemasonry's rich heritage.



Higher Education Scholarships

FFV has agreements with 10 Victorian Tertiary Institutions in Victoria.

Originally established to assist students studying an agricultural course, these scholarships have expanded to include the majority of Victorian Universities. The aim of these scholarships is to assist students in need with their tertiary costs.

Australian Catholic University	Deakin University	Federation University	
La Trobe University	Longerenong College	Marcus Oldham College	
Monash University (3 scholarships)	RMIT	Swinburne University	Victoria University

Community Grants

FFV continues its commitment to empowering communities and addressing social inequalities through its annual Community Grants program.

In 2023-24, FFV awarded \$803,604 in grants to not-for-profit organisations for projects in Victoria. These grants are more than just financial contributions—they represent a shared vision for a more inclusive, equitable and thriving society.

A further five grants totalling \$435,000 was paid during the year relating to multi-year funding agreements.

29 Grants totalling \$803,604

Jennifer Grech's Journey to Midwifery



Jennifer Grech's path to becoming a healthcare professional has been shaped by a determination to help others, and critical support from FFV through the VU Achievement Scholarship.

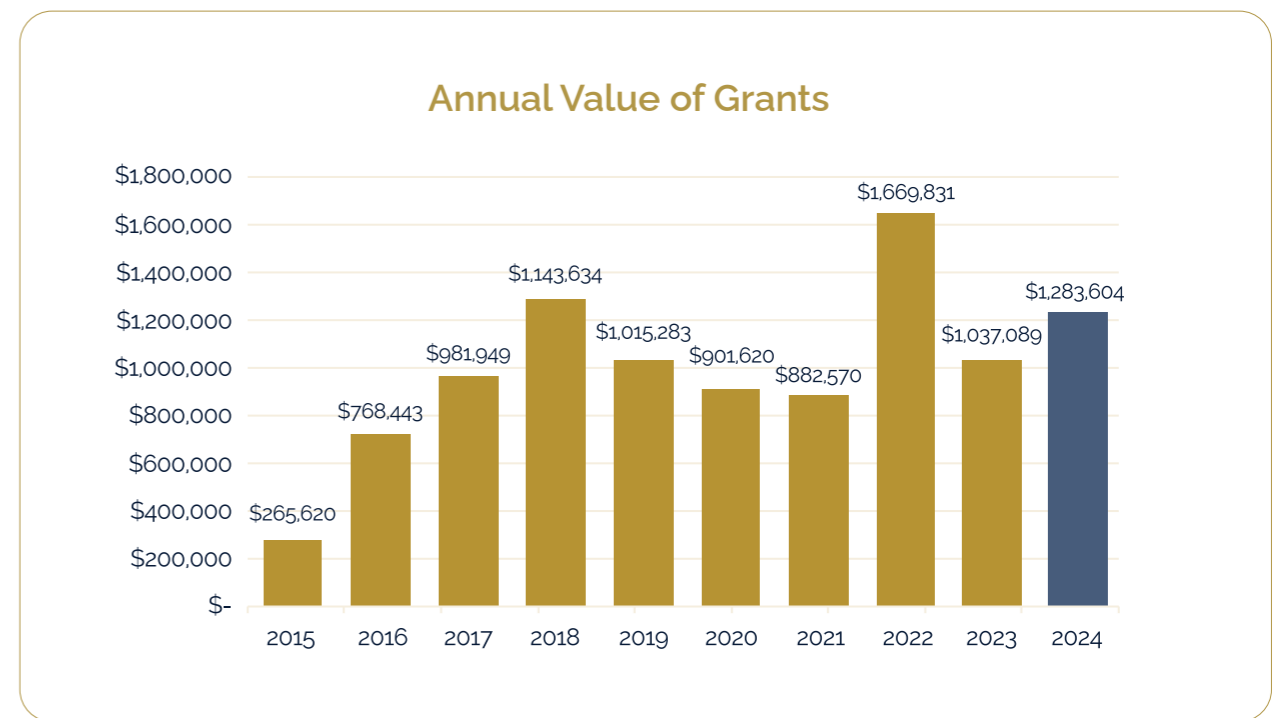
Growing up in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Jennifer's community inspired her dedication to social care. The surprise news of her scholarship success arrived on her graduation day—a life-changing moment that Jennifer describes as "a one-in-a-million opportunity." This support not only lightened the financial load but allowed Jennifer to focus on her studies fully.

After enrolling in a Bachelor of Nursing in 2020, Jennifer's passion soon led her to transfer to the Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery. Thanks to the scholarship, Jennifer was able to complete her placements at Western Health and the Royal Women's Hospital without needing a casual job to make ends meet. These placements brought meaningful experiences, from supporting new parents to witnessing the transformative first moments of parenthood, reaffirming her dedication to her field.

As Jennifer nears graduation, she is focused on her ambition to provide continuity of care for mothers through personalised midwifery. She hopes to expand support for mothers, ensuring they have access to specialised care throughout pregnancy and beyond. Reflecting on her journey, Jennifer says, "I am super grateful to those who make this possible. Without the scholarship, my family's financial situation would have been completely different."

This story is an example of how scholarships helps driven students like Jennifer access quality education and hands-on experience, and turn challenges into opportunities that will shape countless lives.

Since 2014, 232 Cumulative investment via Community Grants \$8,912,554



Anglicare Victoria
\$30,000
 Buldau Yioohgen - Aboriginal cultural connectedness project for young people in Victoria

Banksia Gardens Community Services
\$50,000
 After-School Program

Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia Limited
\$50,000
 Supportive friends mentoring

Chelsea Community Support Service
\$8,000
 Fair Start School Support Program

Dungala Kaiela Foundation
\$43,500
 Algabonyah Driver Mentor Program

Epworth Medical Foundation
\$50,000
 The CONFIRM Project: a better way to manage low grade prostate cancer

Hope Bereavement Care
\$50,000
 Hope Support After Suicide

Hope Bereavement Care
\$32,000
 Hope for the Future: Philanthropy Sustainability Project

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
\$30,000
 Regional Tour 2024

MHSN Australia
\$15,000
 Suicide prevention education

Oceania Indigenous House of Commerce
\$20,000
 Oceania Digital X Pathways Program

RizeUp Limited
\$44,160
 Children's Trauma Recovery Packs - Sleeping safely after domestic and family violence

Ronald McDonald House Charities VicTas
\$29,016
 Early Years Empowerment Pilot Project

Rosebud West Community Hub
\$5,000
 Display freezer for community access to frozen meals

RULE Prostate Cancer (Australian Prostate Centre)
\$50,000
 ProFIT: Exercise medicine for men with prostate cancer

SALT Sport and Life Training
\$15,000
 Empowering SALT to transform Australian culture through sport

SALT Sport and Life Training
\$15,000
 Champions of Change- Creating a Level Playing Field for Women and Girls

Shepparton Foodshare
\$50,000
 Foodshare Food Rescue Truck

Spinal Research Institute
\$48,600
 Engage and Collaborate Phase 2: a program for a healthier and stronger SCI community

Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.
\$30,000
 Empowering Futures: Expanding Youth Mentorship and Support in Southern Grampians Shire

The Pyjama Foundation
\$25,000
 Love of Learning Program Victoria

The Queen's Fund Limited and Trustee for The Queen's Fund
\$9,600
 Laptop Refurbishment for Single Women and their Children

The Think Pink Foundation
\$15,000
 Fundraiser Project

The Think Pink Foundation
\$26,510
 Living Centre Physical Therapies Program

United Minds Community Services
\$10,000
 Extended Community Access Initiative

Very Special Kids
\$21,361
 Very Special Youth Program Extension

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
\$30,000
 Traditional Owner Cultural Mentoring Program for Youth

Waminda Inc
\$20,857
 Our Community-Eating Well, Living Well

Wombat Housing Support Services
\$25,000
 D.I.Y. - Developing Independence Your Way

Waminda community links up to nourish and connect



Tackling food insecurity and social isolation

Waminda Community House in Benalla strives to support the wellbeing of all Benalla residents. A recent initiative led by Benalla Health, Benalla Rural City Council and Tomorrow Today Foundation identified challenges relating to vulnerable populations, including low-income families, people with disabilities and older individuals struggling with food insecurity and social isolation.

Waminda was awarded a Community Grant from FFV in December 2023 to enable it to run the Link Up program (formerly Our Community - Eating Well, Living Well program), with a focus on nutritious meals, cooking education and social connection to build a healthier, more connected community.

Sharing meals and art

The Link Up program, held every Wednesday, has quickly become a vibrant and essential part of the Waminda community. From 10am to 11am, participants gather for a low-cost community meal/morning tea (just \$2), fostering a sense of connection and belonging. Following morning tea, a Creative Art group has emerged, where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together to develop new skills and form meaningful friendships. One of their recent projects involved creating Red Shoe art pieces, which will be exhibited in Tatura to raise awareness about Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD).

In addition to these creative pursuits, the program has hosted three community lunches. They are also running cooking classes for parents and kids on how to prepare nutritious meals on a budget and create healthy lunchboxes for children. These classes empower participants with essential life skills, helping them make healthier food choices and manage their food budgets more effectively.

Overcoming holes in the program

The program has not been without its challenges. In June 2024, the Waminda Community House site was shut down due to significant termite damage, rendering the building unsafe. This unexpected closure disrupted the program's operations, particularly the cooking classes, which had to be put on hold until a suitable alternative kitchen space could be found.

Despite the setback, the program has continued to operate out of a nearby residential house. The team has shown resilience and adaptability, ensuring that the weekly morning teas and community lunches continue.





Positive growth through Grampians mentoring program

Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. (STiH) is a transformative, school-based mentoring program in the Southern Grampians Shire, designed to empower students from Years 3 to 12 by offering positive guidance, support and encouragement to help them realise their full potential.

The program accepts referrals for students in need, particularly those for whom traditional school engagement strategies have been exhausted. There are 16 formal school partners in the program.

Routine support and positive guidance

Each student in the program is paired with a carefully screened and trained mentor. These mentors, who come from diverse backgrounds within the Southern Grampians Shire, meet with their mentees for one hour each week. The activities during these sessions vary and include:

- Volunteering together
- Playing sports, such as table tennis, basketball, handball
- Playing board games, card games, or chess,
- Arts and crafts
- Cooking and sharing hot lunches, learning how to make ice-cream or smoothies
- Learning new skills such as knitting and woodwork.

The program helps students develop a healthy connection to school and take full advantage of educational opportunities. The relationships forged between mentors and mentees often last well beyond the minimum 12-month commitment, sometimes extending for many years.

The community behind it

Mentors come from the of Southern Grampian Shire community and are diverse, from hospital staff to members of the police force. STiH recently counted 72% employed individuals, 27% retirees and 1% job seekers – debunking the myth that their volunteers had to be retirees!

In December 2023, FFV granted \$30,000 to STiH under the "Empowering Futures: Expanding Youth Mentorship and Support in Southern Grampians Shire" initiative.

"This grant from FFV is more than just financial assistance; it's given us hope, it's a vote of confidence in the transformative work we do...It is a direct result of this support from FFV, that STiH can open our doors wider, welcome more eager young minds and continue fostering growth, resilience and empowerment among our students."

Dee Barrera, Program Manager.



The funding extended program capacity to reach all schools in the Southern Grampians Shire and enhanced resources and engagement with schools, stakeholders and community. STiH partnered with experts in topics like LGBTQIA+ issues, youth mental health, youth development and sexual health to provide additional resources for mentors and mentees, ensuring students receive comprehensive guidance and support on emerging needs and challenges.

In 2023, STiH was honoured as one of six finalists in the Volunteering Partnerships category of the Volunteering Victoria 2023 Volunteer Awards. With the backing of organisations like FFV, Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. can help students unlock their full potential and continue to provide mentorship that has a profound impact on young lives.

“It makes a tremendous difference to both the mentor and the mentee. That's what happened to me. I find it very rewarding having a young friend. It is very simple, just be there. I think that's what makes a difference. It shows that you believe in that person. That's all you must do - be there, turn up and be interested in that young person. I get so much from it myself. I love doing it. I am amazed at the response I get from the student because I do so little. I just have to be there for my student. It is just one hour of my week, yet I get such big rewards.”

Mentor, Judy Trompf.



“Mentoring changed my life! Before (Standing Tall), I didn't have much confidence, I kept to myself. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life, I hated being at school. My mentor listened to me, she encouraged me to chase my dreams and supported me in achieving some of my goals, including helping me gain my first job. My mentor showed me that I could be whatever I wanted to be. I now have confidence in myself and I have a plan for my future.”

Student.



Empowering First Nations digital entrepreneurship

The Oceania Digital X Pathways Program is a two-week intensive online initiative designed to empower Indigenous Australians with foundational digital skills, giving them the tools to explore entrepreneurship or digital employment. The program aims to bridge the digital divide and address social inequality by delivering a culturally sensitive curriculum designed by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. This offers participants a unique pathway to enter the digital marketplace, turning their passions into sustainable online businesses or influential platforms.

Aboriginal Victorians face significant barriers to economic participation, largely due to limited access to quality education and training that is culturally adapted for Indigenous people. There is a growing interest among Aboriginal people to establish businesses as a means to achieve economic independence and contribute to the economy. The challenge is to provide these aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and support necessary to succeed in the digital age.

FFV supported the Oceania Digital X Pathways Program with a Community Grant of \$20,000 to help them meet this challenge. This donation provided \$97,500 worth of products and services for 13 program participants.

The participants in the course had a range of reasons for joining – four had start-up businesses, five were already business owners, two worked in the creative arts and two were looking for a secondary income. They learnt foundational knowledge in e-commerce, digital marketing, sales growth, content creation, social media, branding, IP protection and AI automation, gaining tools and resources to make informed decisions about venturing into small business ownership.

But the program goes beyond mere skill acquisition, incorporating mindset modules and featuring daily inspirational talks from successful Indigenous entrepreneurs. This approach not only equips participants with technical skills but also empowers them to overcome limiting beliefs and embrace their potential as digital entrepreneurs.

Throughout the program, participants receive guidance from an ecosystem of 15 national partners, ensuring ongoing mentorship and support. This holistic approach helps participants to refine their entrepreneurial journeys and navigate the complexities of the digital landscape.

“Any Vic Mob, or anyone that knows any Vic Mob, these pathway courses are game changing! Jump on and register, easy to follow, very interactive and will give you so much confidence and knowledge to move forward with your current or future entrepreneurship endeavours.”

Renae Hunt (on LinkedIn)

By closing the digital gap, the program enables Indigenous Australians to engage in digital entrepreneurial activities, leading to an increase in Indigenous-owned online businesses, social media profiles and digital portfolios. As participants gain confidence and skills, their stories of success and challenges will inspire others in the community, contributing to a ripple effect of digital literacy and economic empowerment.

The program also plays a crucial role in increasing Indigenous representation in the digital space. As participants emerge as role models and digital champions, they will inspire future generations of Indigenous entrepreneurs and contribute to a broader narrative of cultural empowerment and innovation.

“ Learning to work smarter, not harder. These skills will help in your job and business long term, especially with the keen and eager support network/team available. ”

Participant feedback

“ It's ignited excitement to see what new flare I can add to my position to continue to help and support my community. ”

Participant feedback

Welcome to Banksia Garden's After-School Program



L - R - FFV Chairman Garry James, Banksia Gardens CEO Gina Dougall, FFV EO Neil Cripps

Addressing educational disadvantage in Southern Hume

Since its inception in 1979, Banksia Gardens Community Services (BGCS) has been dedicated to serving low-income residents of the Public Housing Estate adjacent to its centre, as well as disadvantaged individuals and communities in Broadmeadows and across Hume in Melbourne's north.

In Southern Hume where BGCS is located, unemployment rates are four to five times the national average, and disadvantage is concentrated. Within the community, many children struggle at school due to trauma associated with such things as fleeing war and civil unrest, living in refugee camps and witnessing or experiencing domestic violence. Many of the local and regional children and young people are from migrant and refugee backgrounds and are new arrivals.

A safe and supportive environment for learning

The After-School Program supports this cohort. Children attending the After-School Program are not able to afford private tuition and children with parents who have little or no English rely on BGCS to help them with their homework and their literacy.

Held Tuesday to Friday during school terms, most sessions take place at Banksia in Broadmeadows and one session is delivered online for local and regional children. It's a welcoming, inclusive environment, where children and young people from diverse cultural backgrounds can receive support with their learning and social-emotional development, in a fun and positive environment. Activities include literacy learning for primary students, arts and crafts, soccer, boxing, Muay Thai and gardening and nature-based learning.

Some of the key highlights from the year:

- Significant investment was made in literacy learning resources for primary-school-aged students and in a targeted maths database that aligns with the Victorian curriculum.
- 195 students were registered including more than 90 new registrations, with an average of 90 students attending each week across all programs.
- 35 volunteers supported the programs. Processes for supporting and managing placement students and volunteers have been improved to provide a more meaningful experience.

Celebrating success and community impact

The After-School Program won the OSHLSP of the Year Award at the Centre for Multicultural Youth 2023 My Education Awards, recognising the program as the best learning initiative for school-aged children and young people in metropolitan Melbourne.

The program's holistic approach benefits not only the child participants, but also parents, tutors and the wider community.

A parent group also runs during the sessions, offering a support network and assistance with accessing services, work, learning and school communication. This provides a chance to integrate into the community and develop English language skills, especially for newly arrived families. Volunteer tutors, many who are local residents from diverse backgrounds, gain skills and confidence, enhancing their employment prospects.

BGCS CEO, Gina Dougall, was guest speaker at the 2024 Annual 1889 Bequest Society lunch and she painted this picture of the after-school program:

“If you were to come to Banksia Gardens Community Services in Broadmeadows on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday at 3pm you would see about 90 kids. Some would be playing soccer with Melbourne Victory coaches. Some would be doing arts and crafts activities. In one room you would see a large group of African mums laughing and sharing stories as they wait for their kids. In large classrooms, many children would be working with volunteer tutors. Every child who attends the study program is also given healthy food, fruit, other snacks and a drink. It is always lively and busy and in great demand.”

The program's success is evident in the increased confidence and engagement levels of the children and young people. Families feel relaxed and safe attending the program, which often serves as a stepping stone to other Banksia activities.

Sleeping safely is the start to childrens' stable future

Domestic and family violence is the primary reason women and children are forced to leave their homes in Australia. But often, the fear of 'sleeping rough' and being forced to live in poverty can delay victims leaving or even keep them from leaving a violent relationship. The consequences of such violence are severe, especially for children, who can suffer from lifelong trauma, mental health issues and poor educational outcomes. For these families, finding safe, secure and appropriate housing is essential to begin the recovery process and build a stable future.

RizeUp is a community-driven organisation committed to supporting families affected by domestic and family violence with a core program that is designed to provide this much-needed stability.

Providing stability through the RizeUp Homes program

RizeUp receives some limited information about the family members interests and choose items for their home, from living room furniture to kitchen essentials, pantry items, laundry and cleaning supplies, comfort and décor items. Once delivered, RizeUp volunteers arrive and construct bed frames and dining tables, make the beds, display toys, books, school supplies and leave a pamper pack for Mum. An empty rental is transformed into a cosy, welcoming home.



“ My youngest son is forever thanking “the strangers who helped us”. One of the best things is seeing the kids' faces again. There is a spring in their step with both getting themselves up for school unassisted today. Something that hasn't happened in many months. ”

Letting the family focus on recovery and staying safe

It takes immense courage to leave a domestic violence situation, but women can often be forced to return, maybe several times, because they left with nothing.

A fully furnished home lets the family focus on recovery from the trauma, spending their limited finances on other necessities, rather than worrying about kids sleeping on floorboards, or missing their toys and going to a new school tired and distressed. It helps children and young people regain a sense of security, allowing them to attend school, engage with their community and begin healing from their trauma.

In 2023, FFV's Community Grants program supported RizeUp's Trauma Recovery Packs, which include essential items to help children feel safe and comfortable, contributing to their overall sense of security. This support enabled 80 children's bed packs and 15 baby's cot packs to be delivered to Victorian children who have been impacted by domestic and family violence. All up, 165 women, children and babies benefited from the funding. Seeing their children sleeping safely and comfortably relieves the pressure on women and reduces the likelihood of them returning to the violence for fear of facing poverty or homelessness.

Empowering volunteers with lived experience

The profound difference this service makes extends beyond the families it helps, to the individuals that volunteer. Many of the more than 1,000 volunteers at Rize-Up have been impacted by trauma and received past RizeUp support themselves. They report improved mental health and connection from giving back via the volunteering work. This in turn develops a network of trauma-informed advocates in the community. By providing safe housing and trauma recovery resources, RizeUp is helping to break the cycle of violence, ensuring that victim-survivors have the opportunity to build a safer, more secure future.



The CONFIRM Project: A new approach to managing low-grade prostate cancer

The CONFIRM Project is a clinical trial run by the E.J. Whitten Prostate Cancer Research Centre at Epworth Freemasons, led by Chief Investigator Prof Nathan Lawrentschuk. This project aims to improve the management of low-grade prostate cancer, offering a less invasive and more accurate method to identify and monitor the disease.

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers in men. Current methods for managing low-risk prostate cancers are not always effective, sometimes missing aggressive cancer areas that need treatment.

The new technique being tested, PSMA-PET/CT - which combine Positron Emission Tomography (PET) with computerised tomography (CT) - offers a less invasive alternative to annual biopsies and MRIs, providing a clearer and more accurate picture of the cancer.

If these new scans can better detect prostate cancer compared to traditional methods, this could reduce the need for multiple invasive procedures and help ensure that only patients with truly low-risk cancer remain on active surveillance.

FFV supported the project with a Community Grant of \$50,000. This grant supports the cost of PSMA-PET/CT scans for 200 participants throughout the clinical trial.

The CONFIRM Trial is the first time that MRI and Biopsy is being compared to PSMA PET/CT and there is worldwide interest. Early findings were presented at Conferences in Australia, Europe and the United States, to great interest, and published one of the World's leading urology journals - BJU International in October 2023.

By adopting PSMA-PET/CT, the CONFIRM Project aims to reduce the number of men experiencing cancer progression due to missed high-grade disease, ultimately saving lives and improving health outcomes for those with prostate cancer.

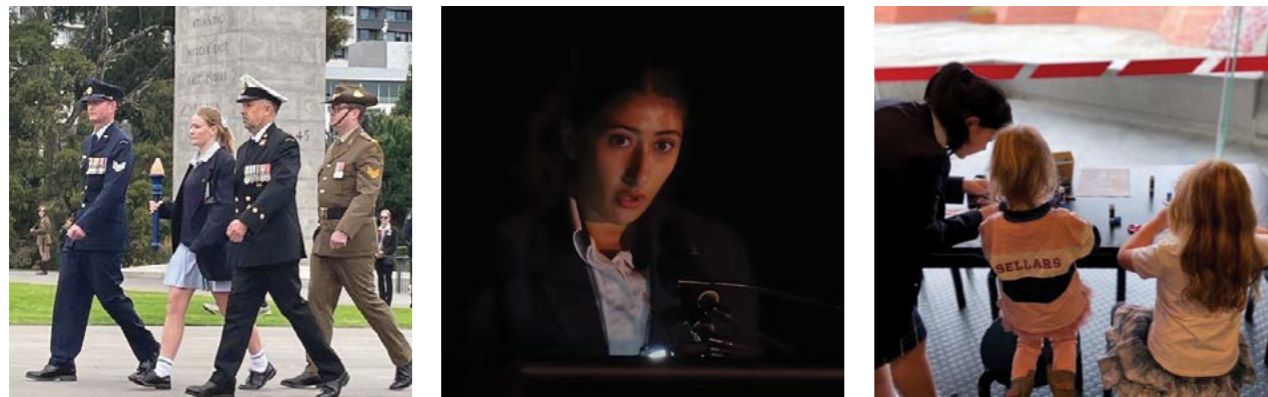


Impact Partnerships

We believe healthy communities are a vital cornerstone of our society. FFV makes multi-year impact grants to substantial, meaningful projects that have the potential to make significant positive impacts to vulnerable Victorians. These are a one-off grant over a specified number of years covering areas of Health/Medical Research, Education, Community Support and Indigenous Programs.

Impact Grants:

- **Cancer Council Victoria**, \$250,000 –3rd instalment of funding for the Eliminate Cervical Cancer Fund.
- **Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation**, \$45,000 –2nd instalment of funding to support Blue Ribbon Day.
- **Shrine of Remembrance**, \$15,000 –1st instalment of funding for the Young Ambassador Program.
- **Entertainment Assist**, \$75,000 - 2nd instalment of funding for their prevention based program for entertainment workers.
- **Monash Health Foundation**, \$50,000 – 1st instalment to support genomics program at Monash Children's Hospital.



The Shrine of Remembrance Young Ambassadors, 2023



Disaster Relief

Our Disaster Relief Fund was established in January 2020. It has been pivotal in providing emergency relief funding and ongoing support to both disaster-affected Freemasons and community organisations in hard-hit areas of Victoria. A key consideration in directing the funding is that it has a direct and immediate impact on those affected by disasters.

In 2023-24, FFV distributed \$22,000

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project
Emergency Relief

\$20,000

Benevolence
Freemason impacted by 2024 fires

\$2,000



FFV supported the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project food relief program in response to the community's ongoing flood recovery needs.

1889 Bequest Society



“ I poured all my energy, dedication, service and love into making it a grassroots organisation where local people came and felt they belonged and could get help.

Gina Dougall,
CEO Banksia Gardens
Community Services

”

On Friday 1st March, FFV hosted a lunch for members of the 1889 Bequest Society. Guest speaker Gina Dougall, CEO Banksia Gardens Community Services, spoke about giving and being in service to others, and her journey building the organisation over the past 22 years. As part of the formalities, ten new members were welcomed into the 1889 Bequest Society and FFV Chairman Garry James announced that since November 2014, the Foundation has granted \$20 million towards charitable projects.



\$20 Million

Granted to improving the lives and opportunities of Victorians since November 2014



Financial Summary

As at June 2024, FFV had \$62.3M (\$58.9M June 2023) of funds under management which is administered by JBWere. For the 12 months ending 30 June, the total portfolio return was 9.78%

One of the key responsibilities of the Board is the monitoring of the investment activities via a robust Investment Policy with the objectives including to:

- Invest in a manner that provides a level of return to fund the mission, objectives and purpose of the Foundation, its outgoings and build a legacy for the future; and
- Manage risk through prudent financial management and diversification.

To obtain a copy of the full financial reports for the year, please visit our website www.freemasonsfoundation.org

	The Freemasons Public Charitable Foundation		Freemasons Benevolent Fund		Total	
	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23
Investment Income	972,039	889,783	2,071,864	1,910,620	3,043,903	2,800,403
Other Income	47,970	304,179	59,361	184,895	107,331	489,074
Funds Distributed	(863,560)	(813,475)	(1,646,315)	(1,511,980)	(2,509,875)	(2,325,455)
Operating Expenses	(169,449)	(142,292)	(565,228)	(471,757)	(734,677)	(614,049)
Net Surplus/ (Loss)	(13,000)	238,195	(80,318)	111,778	(93,318)	349,973
Net Assets	20,620,398	19,602,361	43,156,816	41,009,999	63,777,214	60,612,360



Become Involved



Create your own legacy



You are invited to consider creating your own legacy. It is simple to achieve

It's good practice to update your Will every five years. This can be done by adding a codicil to your existing Will or writing a new Will. A new Will can be written online using the Safewill platform.

Be part of something great

FFV has partnered with Safewill as a trusted online Will platform and through this partnerships we offer 50% off the cost of an online Will.



Whether you leave a bequest as your legacy, or contribute a gift now, it will be carefully managed to ensure robust investment returns.

Should you create a Named Sub-Fund, the sum you have given will be preserved with your name in perpetuity. Once a year the income from your Named Sub-Fund will be given to the nominated cause, to support what matters to you.

In the FY 2023-24, Freemasons have chosen to support a nurse scholarship at their local hospital, a student scholarship at their local school and a gift to support emergency relief projects.

Tax Deductible Donations

Donations over \$2 to The Freemasons Public Charitable Foundation are tax deductible. To donate, please visit www.freemasonsfoundation.org or call (03) 8535 4780.



Freemasons Foundation Victoria

Improving the lives and opportunities of Victorians

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