



2025 – 2026

Impact Report

**Growing Healthier
Communities**



The problem

Rural Australians face a significant and growing health disadvantage. The issue is not just physical, it spans mental health, access to services, and social isolation. This problem is real, urgent, and largely invisible to mainstream Australia.

- Rural towns have 55% fewer health professionals than metropolitan areas¹.
- The health-spend shortfall between urban and rural Australians was \$8.35 billion in 2023–24 - \$1,090 per person, per year².
- 45% of Australian farmers have experienced depression; 64% have experienced anxiety³.

¹ National Rural Health Alliance – Rural Health in Australia Snapshot 2025

² The Forgotten Health Spend report - National Rural Health Alliance – August 2025

³ The National Farmer Wellbeing Report 2023

**Every 10 days, a farmer in
Australia loses their life
to suicide.**

**The average suicide rate in farmers is almost
94% higher than non-farmers⁴.**

⁴ National Rural Health Alliance [web] - December 2021

A word from our people

Ben Wundersitz

FOUNDER

Fat Farmers started because a few of us needed to do something about our health and figured we'd do it together. We didn't set out to build a movement. We set out to show up on a Friday morning. Fast forward to today and that's still what it's about: showing up, and knowing someone will notice if you don't.

When I think about what we've built, it's not the numbers that come to mind first. It's the bloke who told me the gym session is the 'highlight of his week'. The farmer who hadn't exercised in years and now can't imagine stopping. The town that feels a little less isolated because there's somewhere to be, and people to be there with. We started small because that's all we had. We're growing because it works. And we'll keep going because the need is real, and rural Australians deserve better.



Dr Rodney Pearce AM

CHAIR

The rural health gap is one of the most significant and under-addressed equity issues in this country. The evidence is clear, the need is urgent, and the solutions have been slow to come.

What Fat Farmers has built is rare: a model that communities trust, that delivers real health outcomes, and that grows from within rather than being imposed from outside. In my forty years of medical practice, I have seen many programs designed to improve rural health. Few have achieved what this organisation has: genuine, lasting engagement from the people it serves. I am proud to chair an organisation that understands what rural Australians actually need. And I am confident that with the right support, the best of what Fat Farmers can do is still ahead of us.





Richard Sheppy

CEO

This past year has been one of the most significant in Fat Farmers' history. We welcomed Active Farmers into our family, launched our Mobile Health Hub, and grew to more than 80 groups across six states. None of it happened because of a top-down strategy. It happened because people in towns across Australia decided their community deserved better - and did something about it. That is what we are here to support.

We are at an inflection point. The foundation is strong, the model is proven, and the demand is growing faster than our capacity to meet it. The next chapter of Fat Farmers is about scaling what works - more groups, more health checks, more communities that no longer have to go without.

None of that is possible without the people and organisations who choose to invest in rural Australia. If you're reading this, you're already part of the story. Thank you for showing up with us.

Grown from purpose

VISION

Healthy, connected and thriving rural communities.

MISSION

To build healthier rural communities by connecting people through physical activity, delivering health services where they're needed most, and growing a national network that rural Australians trust as their own.

VALUES

Physical Activity

Movement as a simple, accessible way to improve health and bring people together.

Connection

Environments where people feel welcome, supported and able to connect with each other and with the support they need.

Community

Strong, connected communities that support long-term health, wellbeing and resilience.



Who we are

We started in 2012 when three farmers in Maitland, South Australia decided to go to the gym together. No program, no funding, no strategy, just three blokes who knew they needed to do better by their health and figured it was easier with company.

What began as a Friday morning habit became a community. That community became a movement.

Today, Fat Farmers operates more than 80 groups across six states, with over 1,600 active participants who show up every week. Not just for the physical activity, but for each other. And for the communities that can't wait for health services to come to them, our Mobile Health Hub travels to field days, shows and community events, bringing health checks directly to the people who need them most.

We are a registered charity, **supported by government, philanthropic foundations, corporate partners and committed individuals** who share our belief that rural Australians deserve the same access to health and community as everyone else.



Fat Farmers grows healthier rural communities by bringing people together through movement, connection and practical support.

Fat Farmers
Maitland founded

2012

First groups launched
around South Australia

2015

First interstate
group established

2022

The Hospital Research Foundation
becomes our Major Health Partner

2024

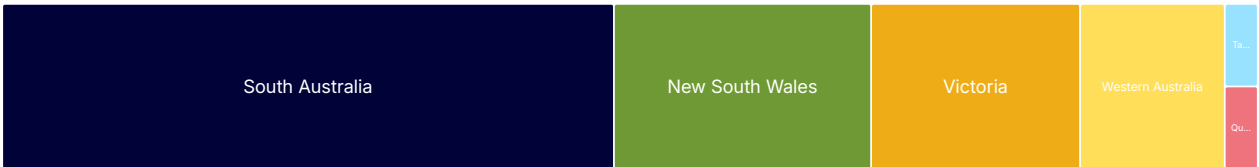
2026

Delivered +1,200 free
health checks over 23
days at 13 events
(as of August 2026)

2025

- Active Farmers integrated
- Ben Wundersitz awarded Overall Bush Champion & Ag Champion at Bush Summit
- 80+ groups nationally
- Mobile Health Hub launched
- DGR and Registered Charity Status gained

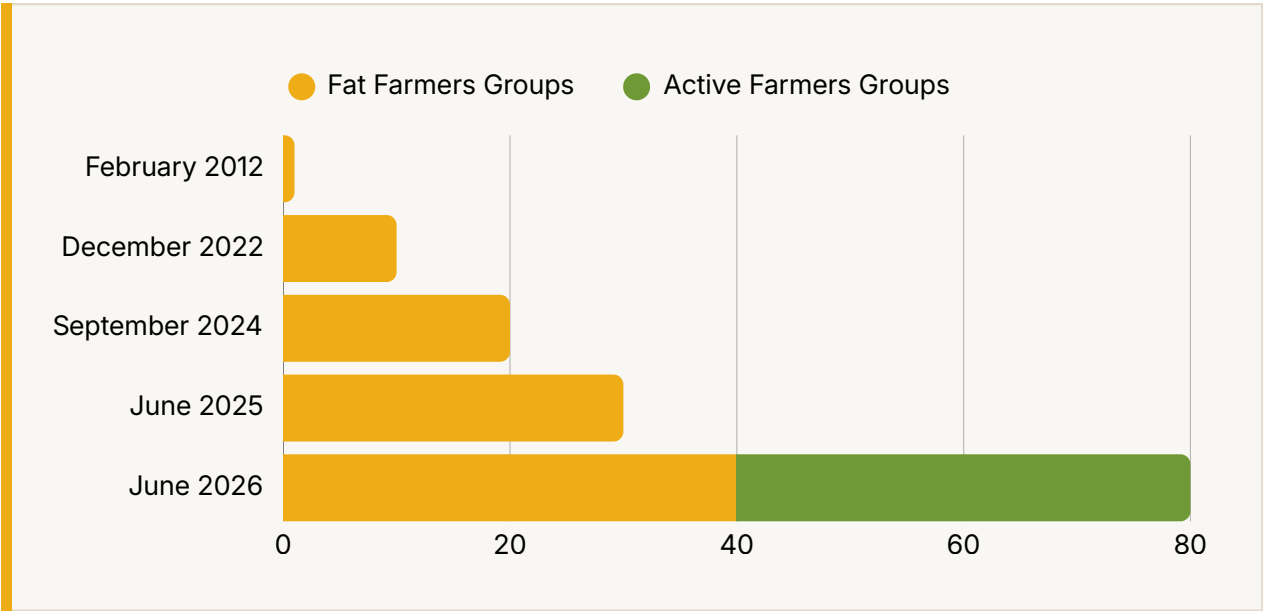
Community Presence



Adelaide, SA	Corryong, NSW	Kalannie, WA	Millicent, SA	Swifts Creek, VIC
Adelaide Run Club, SA	Crystal Brook, SA	Kapunda, SA	Minlaton, SA	Tambellup, WA
Appila, SA	Cummins, SA	Karoonda, SA	Minnipa, SA	Tintaldra, VIC
Ardrossan, SA	Donald, VIC	Kellerberrin, WA	Murray Bridge, SA	Torbay, WA
Avoca, VIC	Edithburgh, SA	Khancoban, WA	Murrayville, VIC	Trundle, NSW
Balaklava, SA	Freeling/Tanunda, SA	Kilcummin, QLD	Naracoorte, SA	Wallaroo, SA
Binalong, NSW	Garvoc, VIC	Kingston, SA	Nareen, VIC	Warracknabeal, VIC
Book Book, NSW	Geelong, VIC	Ladysmith, NSW	Ongerup, WA	Westonia, WA
Borden, NSW	Gnowangerup, WA	Lexton, VIC	Osborne, NSW	Whitton, NSW
Bordertown, SA	Greenethorpe, NSW	Loxton, SA	Padthaway, SA	Wilmington, SA
Boyup Brook, WA	Hagley, TAS	Lucindale, SA	Robe, SA	Wirrinya, NSW
Bugle Hut, SA	Harden, NSW	Maitland, SA	Robertstown, SA	Wisanger, SA
Burra, SA	Hillston, NSW	Mangoplah, NSW	Saddleworth, SA	Wudinna, SA
Clare, SA	Horsham, VIC	Mansfield, VIC	Stokes Bay, SA	Yenda, NSW
Cleve, SA	Illabo, NSW	Marcus Oldham, VIC	Strathalbyn, SA	
Collector, NSW	Kadina, SA	Meningie, SA	Streaky Bay, SA	

Correct as of 6 August 2026

Consistent growth over recent years has seen the Fat Farmers network expand into more communities across Australia. Support from our Major Health Partner, The Hospital Research Foundation, has been instrumental in enabling a Community Engagement Manager to be our 'boots-on-the-ground', developing and establishing new groups and strengthen existing connections.



What we do

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Most rural health initiatives arrive from the outside and leave when the funding ends.

Fat Farmers is different because it is grown within rural communities, not delivered to them.

That kind of trust takes years to grow. Sustaining it takes ongoing support.



Community Exercise Groups

At the heart of Fat Farmers are local exercise groups: small, regular, community-led gatherings where people show up, move together, and look out for each other. Groups meet weekly and are deliberately low-pressure and inclusive.

In 2025, the integration of Active Farmers into Fat Farmers grew the national network to 80+ groups across six states.

The format of our groups adapts to the community. Some are mostly men; others are mostly women. Some meet at gyms, some walk. Some are led by a community champion, others by a qualified trainer. What doesn't change is the culture. The continued growth of these groups relies on strong local leadership and the support that enables communities to establish and sustain them.

Mobile Health Hub

The Health Hub brings health access directly into rural communities. At field days, agricultural shows and community events it facilitates free health checks including skin cancer screenings, diabetes checks, heart health assessments, farmer-focused wellbeing assessments.

The model is simple: if rural Australians can't easily access the health system, we bring the health system to them, removing the barriers of distance, cost and discomfort that keep too many people from getting the care they need.

The reach of the Health Hub grows as partnerships and support allow. That growth depends on the organisations and individuals who champion rural health access.

Up and at 'em

A portion of the impact is delivered at Agri-focussed events too, hosting free Fun Runs/Walks. Not only is it great national exposure for the brand, it clearly showcases the benefits of physical activity and connection to national industry bodies - helping participants feel clearer and more energised for the day following their run/walk.

9

fun runs/walks
hosted

- 22 July, Adelaide (SA) - AWIT Conference
- 6 August, Adelaide (SA) - AWIA Conference
- 5 September, Adelaide (SA) - Bunge Conference
- 10 September, Adelaide (SA) - Nuffield Australia Conference
- 20 November, Adelaide (SA) - MLA Flagship Event
- 4 February, Adelaide (SA) - GRDC Conference
- 25 February, Adelaide (SA) - CNH Conference
- 25 February, Bendigo (Vic) - GRDC Conference
- 4 March, Wimmera (SA) - Wimmera Field Days



Australian Wine Industry
Technical Conference
& Trade Exhibition



AUSTRALIAN WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

BUNGE

Nuffield Australia



MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA



GRDC
GRAINS RESEARCH
& DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

CNH



Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference (AWITC)



Australian Women in Agriculture (AWIA) Conference



Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) Event



Case New Holland (CNH) Conference

Showing up

On a Tuesday morning in Balaklava, South Australia, a group of farmers and locals gather at the gym before the working day begins. A year ago, half of them had never set foot in a gym.

Today, one of them has doubled his strength in ten months. Another has lost weight, improved his diet, and, perhaps most importantly, has somewhere to be twice a week where someone will ask how he's going and actually wait for the answer.

This is what Fat Farmers does. Not just exercise. Connection. Accountability. A reason to show up, and people who notice when you don't.



80+

groups
nationally

1,600+

active participants

6

Australian
States



How our participants feel

"When I started, I suffered a lot of lower back pain which was due to many years farming and shearing. Since being involved with Active Farmers that pain has gone due to building up core and leg strength. Also the increase in overall flexibility has made every working day more efficient and enjoyable to get through. Plus the added bonus of better overall fitness and making new friends is really positive to my life."



ANDREW BRADSHAW
TAMBELLUP (WA)

"Fat Farmers is unlike any other fitness group - it's welcoming to anyone, regardless of age, gender, or fitness level. The benefits for both physical and mental health are incredible, and the sense of community makes it even more special."



JOE ROSS
ROBERTSTOWN (SA)

"Part of the strength of our group is everyone hangs around for at least a few minutes after, even if they can't make the coffee. They have conversations about all sorts which is really positive to hear and are actively encouraging other farmers."



CLAIRE CATFORD
BALAKLAVA (SA)



"Now, 20 kilos lighter, with the longest gap between back surgeries in my adult life, I enjoy a quality of life I celebrate every day. There is no doubt Active Farmers has changed my life for the better, and I will be eternally grateful. "

KATE O'KEEFFE
GNOWANGERUP (WA)

Hi Fat Farmers!

Just wanted to reach out and say my dad who is 73 years old and still farming has joined a fat farmers group in Strathalbyn for the last 6months and he is absolutely loving it! Looking fit and healthier and his mental health is great. So thanks so much for all you do for the farmers!

Kindest Regards



Testimonial

Since starting our once-a-week exercise program, I've noticed two big changes. First, I've got a whole lot more energy to tackle the long workdays that come with these dry farming conditions. Second, I've felt a much more positive mindset which makes the stress and constant decision making feel a bit more manageable. Honestly, I'd recommend a bit of movement to anyone working in agriculture. It makes a real difference.

Mark Ritchie Delatite Station
Merino sheep and Angus beef cattle

Empowered Scholarship Program

The Empowered Scholarship Program was established in 2021 through the vision and leadership of Hutcheon & Pearce, in partnership with Active Farmers and FIT College. Recognising the need to strengthen rural health and wellbeing services, Hutcheon & Pearce invested in creating a pathway for aspiring trainers from regional communities to gain nationally recognised qualifications and, in turn, give back to their own towns.



SINCE ITS INCEPTION:

- 28 recipients have successfully completed the Empowered Scholarship. That's 28 new groups starting in rural towns across Australia
- We have an exceptional 98% success rate in completion and passing
- A further 6 recipients are on track to graduate by December 2026

Sam Beavis

2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT
DONALD, VIC



"Active Farmers has enhanced the lives of guys in the Donald community that just spend far too much time on themselves in their own heads. We've given them an environment that doesn't involve alcohol, but a place where they can have a bit of fun with people, improve their health and catch up on a more casual basis rather than just working on the fields all by themselves all the time."

Trish Norrish

2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT
KOJONUP, WA



"Active Farmers is so much more than being active. It's about community, connection and having fun while staying mobile, keeping fit and getting out and about. We all know full well that people living in rural communities sometimes closet themselves in farm life and if we can provide a local opportunity for these people to come together and just have a bit of fun - then to me, that's a good job done."

Meeting you where you are



At the Keith Show in March 2026, the Fat Farmers Health Hub pulled up alongside the machinery displays and the livestock pavilions and opened its doors. Over three days, around 130 free health checks were delivered to community members. Checks that would otherwise have required a trip to the city, a wait of weeks, and money out of their pockets.

For many of the people who walked through that door, it was the first health check they had received in years. Some left with a referral. Some left with peace of mind. All of them left having been seen, by their community, and by a health system that finally came to them.

This is what the Health Hub is built for. Not a program that asks rural Australians to change their habits. A service that meets them where they are.

The Health Hub doesn't work alone, because it isn't fixed to a single form. At its most visible it is a purpose-built facility on the road, pulling up at shows and field days across rural Australia. But the model is bigger than the truck. It is a flexible framework that brings together expert health partners; skin cancer specialists, diabetes educators, mental health practitioners, deploying them in whatever way best serves the community. A tent at an agricultural event. A pop-up at a local gathering. A presence in a town that has never had one. The checks and services adapt to the people and the place, not the other way around.

The reach of the Health Hub grows as partnerships and support allow. That growth depends on the organisations and individuals who champion rural health access.



13

Events
attended

1,200+

Free health
checks
delivered.

23

Days of
testing

July 2025 - August 2026

Health Hub Partners

HEALTH HUB DELIVERY PARTNERS



International Centre for
Point-of-Care Testing



Rosemary Bryant AO
Research Centre



HEALTH HUB PARTNERS



The work Fat Farmers does in communities, at field days, and on the road is made possible by organisations that share our commitment to rural health and bring expertise, resources and genuine purpose to the communities we serve. We are proud to grow alongside partners who understand that investing in rural Australia means investing in the people who sustain it.



Catherine Hughes

CEO



"For Diabetes SA, we have the clinical expertise, the screening equipment, the educational tools and educational experience. Fat Farmers has the infrastructure and the community connections. Preventative health offers the essential funding to bring partners like us with complementary abilities together to provide wider reach and more successful outcomes for communities that need it."

Marion Eckert & Greg Sharplin

DIRECTOR &
RESEARCH & STRATEGY MANAGER



Rosemary Bryant AO
Research Centre

"Fat Farmers, through their Mobile Health Service, provide a critical health resource for people living in regional and rural South Australia, alongside a genuine commitment to supporting farming communities. Their service creates a valuable platform for a range of healthcare providers to deliver essential health checks in locations where access is often limited."



Cecilia Fitzgerald

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND
INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



"Fat Farmers' grassroots approach, strong ties within rural communities, and focus on improving health through connection and physical activity align closely with our vision."

We value the opportunity to work alongside an organisation that understands the realities of farming life and shares our commitment to creating lasting positive change across Australia's agricultural sector."

Partnerships that grow impact



Rural Australia is the market, the workforce, and the supply chain for many of Australia's leading agribusinesses and rural service providers. Our corporate partners understand that investing in the health of rural communities is investing in the people who sustain them.

Their support makes it possible for Fat Farmers to reach more communities, run more groups, and take the Health Hub further into rural Australia. Each partnership is built on a shared commitment to the people who grow our food, manage our land, and keep regional Australia running.

Fat Farmers is proud to work alongside organisations that understand the value of showing up, year after year, in towns that don't always make the news. That consistency is what builds trust, and trust is what makes the work possible.



Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Big Heart Breakfast

Major Health Partner

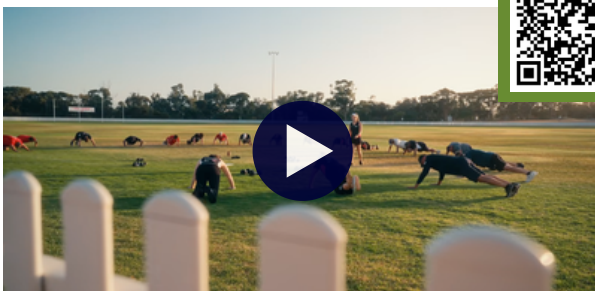


The Hospital Research
Foundation Group

In April, together with our Major Health Partner, The Hospital Research Foundation, we were proud to welcome 200 guests to our inaugural Big Heart Breakfast at the Royal Adelaide Showgrounds. It was a genuinely heartening morning, bringing together people who believe in our journey and who share our commitment to supporting farmers and rural communities - the big hearts of Australia.

The morning was expertly guided by Annabelle Homer, whose thoughtful and engaging facilitation helped create a warm and meaningful atmosphere. A highlight of the event was a candid fireside-style conversation between Co-Founder Ben Wundersitz and CEO Richard Sheppy. Sharing personal experiences and reflections, they provided valuable insight into the organisation's journey, purpose and the impact of its work, inspiring attendees to prioritise their own health and wellbeing.

The event also marked the premiere of two new videos, the Fat Farmers Impact Video and the Fat Farmers Health Hub Video, beautifully produced by Merlin. The videos captured the organisation's mission, achievements and the lasting impact of its programs in rural communities over the past decade, creating a powerful and emotional moment for many in attendance.



Fat Farmers Impact Video 2026



Fat Farmers Health Hub Video 2026





Grant funding in action

With the support of a grant from Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA) as part of its Drought Support Package, Fat Farmers strengthened its position across regional South Australia during 2025/26. The funding enabled targeted initiatives designed to improve the health and wellbeing of farmers and rural communities through increased participation in physical activity.

**DROUGHT
RESPONSE**



NEW GROUP CREATION

Fat Farmers identified communities and worked closely with local people to activate 13 new groups (target was 8). These groups were in the form of walking groups, gym groups and pilates sessions.

REINVIGORATING GROUPS

23 of our existing groups in SA were provided with a package designed to grow awareness and attendance. Events such as 'Come and Try Session with BBQ breakfast' or similar were encouraged, and positively received.



Fat Farmers Kapunda



Fat Farmers Balaklava (Come and Try/Family Day)



Fat Farmers Streaky Bay



Fat Farmers Naracoorte (Naracoorte Cave Run; includes other South East groups)



Fat Farmers Strathalbyn



Fat Farmers Padthaway

Working closely with Preventive Health SA, Fat Farmers delivered five community activation events across Barmera, Jamestown, Karoonda, Keith and Tailem Bend, combining physical activity, health screenings, wellbeing education and community engagement to strengthen local participation and connection.



Government of South Australia
Preventive Health SA



BARMERA, JUL 2025

63 screenings

The three-day event included a community education session with Brett Burton, mental health walk and talk followed by coffee, and 63 health screenings were delivered by Flinders University International Centre for Point-of-Care Testing.



JAMESTOWN, DEC 2025

51 screenings

The event took place at the Jamestown Christmas Pageant and marked the first outing of the Mobile Health Hub. Flinders University International Centre for Point-of-Care Testing delivered 51 health screenings.



KAROONDA, APR 2026

28 screenings

Delivered in partnership with Breakthrough Mental Health Research Foundation who ran a mental health clinic with Tom Jonas and the local football (AFL) club, and Diabetes SA who delivered 28 screenings.



KEITH, APR 2026

46 screenings

At the Revved-Up Keith Show, the Rosemary Bryant AO Research Centre delivered 46 skin check screenings. Tom Jonas later joined the Keith Football Club for a training session and stayed on for a presentation and discussion.



TAILEM BEND, MAY 2026

112 screenings

Collaboration with Rosemary Bryant AO Research Centre who delivered 49 skin checks, and Flinders University International Centre for Point-of-Care Testing who delivered 63 health check screenings; totalling 112 health screens.

Your support makes it possible

Fat Farmers is funded through a combination of government grants, corporate sponsorship, philanthropic giving, and individual donations. Every dollar is directed toward growing our programs and reaching more rural communities.



Scaling a community-led movement

What started with a common vision from our founders in SA and NSW is now 80+ groups across six states, with over 1,600 active participants and growing.

Built from the ground up, locally led.



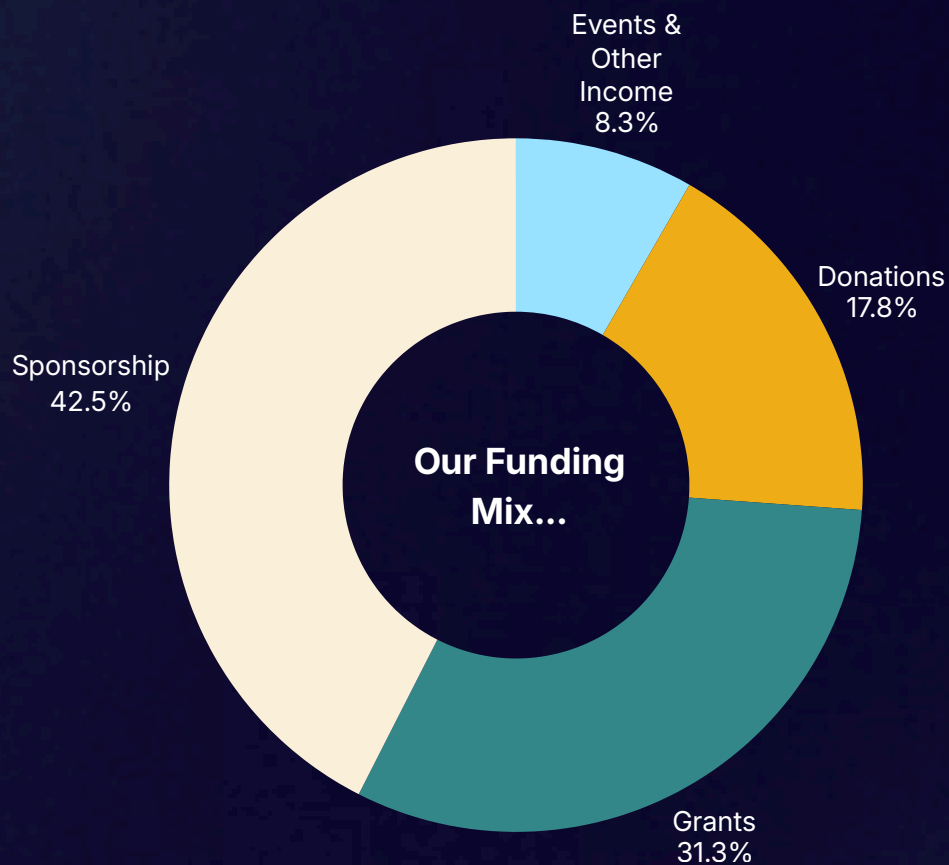
Reaching people other programs don't

Groups have started in towns with no gym, no allied health services, and no mental health support nearby. Proof that you don't need infrastructure to build a movement, just people willing to show up.

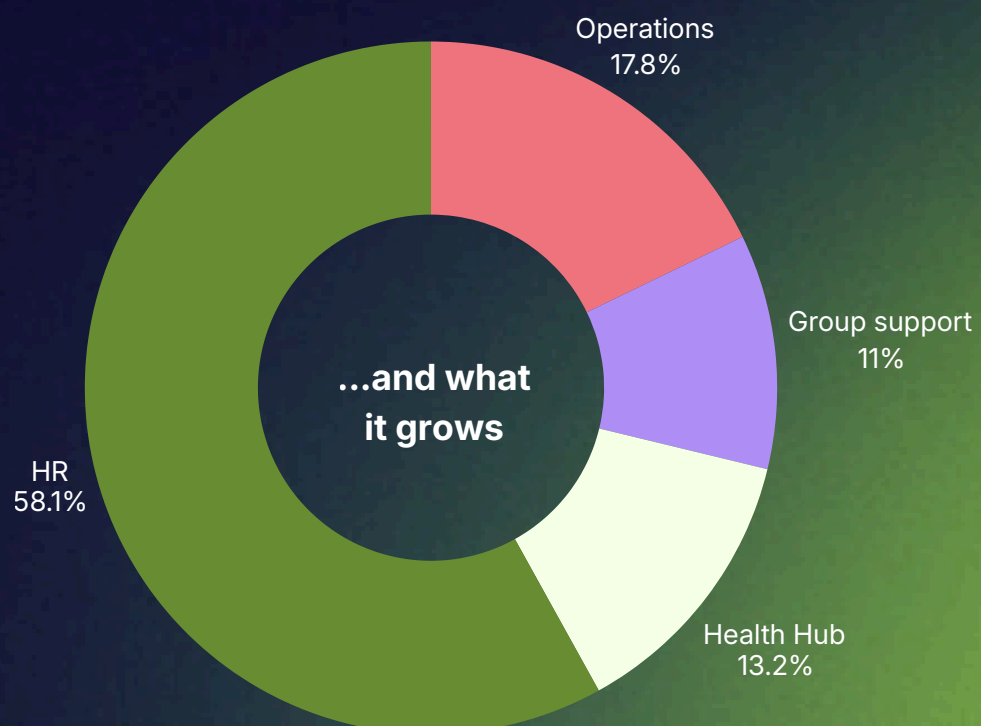


Building stronger, more resilient communities

Participants describe it as the highlight of their week. Not just a workout, but a part of their self-care toolkit. Many report improved strength, better diet, and better mental health within months, including people who'd never exercised before and have stayed engaged long after.



100% of the support we receive goes straight back into supporting rural communities.



Be part of it

Join a Group

You don't have to be a farmer. You don't have to be fit. You just have to show up. Find a Fat Farmers or Active Farmers group near you at www.fatfarmers.com



Start a Group

Can't find a group close to you? Start one! If you, or know of someone who would be a great fit - get in contact.

www.fatfarmers.com/start-a-new-community

Be a Scholarship Student

Win a scholarship position to study your Certificate III and IV in Fitness, and bring a new group to your local town.





\$150

will help fund a 'Come & Try' session for a rural or remote community.



\$1,000

will help fund health/wellbeing education/workshops in a community.



\$1,500

will help fund equipment for a community without a gym.



\$5,000

will fund a Fat Farmers/Active Farmers group for a year.



Donate

When you support Fat Farmers, you're investing in a person, in a town, in a community that is quietly doing it tough and quietly showing up anyway. Help us reach more of them.
www.fat-farmers.raiselysite.com/



Philanthropic Support

Fat Farmers has proven the model. Your investment helps us scale it, reaching more communities, running more groups, and taking the Health Hub further.

Partner with us

Rural Australia is your market, your workforce, and your supply chain. Partnering with Fat Farmers puts your brand at the centre of genuine community trust, built over years and felt in towns across six states.



The communities are ready. Come and grow with us.

Fat Farmers is a grassroots rural health initiative tackling the hidden health disadvantage in rural communities. We bring people together through community exercise, creating welcoming, accessible programs that grow connection and community, and nurture that foundation to deliver preventative health support directly to rural Australians. This model continues to grow as new communities, partners and supporters come on board.

We'd love to hear from you, whether you're ready to join a group, explore a partnership, or simply learn more about what we do.



Growing Healthier Communities

Registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.
Endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient. All donations are tax deductible.

Fat Farmers Limited is inclusive of Fat Farmers, Active Farmers and the Health Hub.

Corporate Information

Fat Farmers Limited
ABN 83 698 008 270

