

Community Participation

LEP23-024-4-004

Knitting with Resilience

Southern New England Landcare Ltd



Fostering creativity, community support, and resilience

The issue

We identified a lack of community engagement and support networks in rural areas where isolation can negatively impact mental well-being. Engagement with creative activities helps to enrich lives of regional Australians and creates stronger, healthier and more cohesive communities. 86% of people living in regional Australia recognize the positive impacts that the creative arts have on their lives and communities. 7 in 10 people are like to attend artistic events and workshops in regional Australia. Limited opportunities for people to connect and share experiences made it clear that accessible activities fostering social interaction and creativity were needed. This prompted us to develop initiatives to address these gaps, strengthen community ties and broaden activities in the Walcha community.

The solution

The FRRR Small Networks grant identified the need to support communities to prepare, recover, rebuild and thrive after drought and other natural disasters. The *Knitting with Resilience* workshop focused on creativity and resilience with facilitator Sam Longmore from Ohh Bulldust. Sam was injured in a car accident in 2013 and shares her personal story of resilience through workshops focused on arm knitting, a technique she developed after losing the use of her right arm. The workshop aimed to create inclusive, engaging spaces where participants could connect, share experiences, and build supportive relationships.

The impact

The workshops successfully brought together people from various backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and mutual support. Participants reported feeling more connected, creative, and resilient, with many expressing interest in future events. The workshops also provided a safe space for sharing personal experiences and building new friendships, which is crucial in combating social isolation in rural areas. The positive feedback and high attendance demonstrated the value of these initiatives in promoting mental well-being and strengthening community ties.

Learnings

- The workshop format was effective in creating a welcoming space for social interaction and creativity.
- Partnering with a facilitator with a personal story of resilience resonated strongly with participants.
- Positive feedback and new membership applications showed strong community interest and engagement.
- Limited capacity meant that not all interested participants could attend, suggesting a need for more frequent or larger-scale events.



Key facts

- 86% of regional Australians recognize the positive impact of creative arts on their lives and communities with 7 in 10 people likely to attend artistic events and workshops.
- 74% of participants were first-time attendees at a Southern New England Landcare event.
- Five new membership applications were received following the event.

Project Partners

