



# YEC CASE-STUDY: CREATING EFFECTIVE FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023 [Action4Agriculture](#) launched [Young Environmental Champions](#) to support young people to be critical and creative thinkers, confident communicators and collaborators and prepared for green jobs of the future opportunities.

The success of this and other programs, such as [Action4Youth](#), hinges on effective partnerships with a range of stakeholders. The ensuing challenges and opportunities are summarised in the booklet "[Mastering Multi-stakeholder Projects](#)".

From this we identified three keys to effective funding partnerships:

1. Treat the funding partnership as a **relationship**.
2. Bring **relationship capital** by identifying team members who can strengthen and value add to the partnership.
3. Be **proactive** and co-create a project neither the delivery nor funding partner could achieve alone.

These three keys were exemplified in the Young Environmental Champions program by the underpinning funding body Department of Regional NSW through the [Office for Regional Youth \(ORY\)](#) and supporting partner [Hunter Local Land Services](#).

*YEC is a place-based program and for it to be effective it needs place-based knowledge. This is where ORY shines,"*  
*Action4Agriculture director Lynne Strong says.*

*"ORY has place-based centres, which means they know the wants and needs of participants, they know the "doers" in their region and can advise on the right people to bring to the table. They are also cognisant of the challenges and barriers in the*

*region and recognise the need to be flexible and support you to turn challenges into opportunities. They check in regularly and take feedback back to government to help tweak the process and ensure best outcomes for all involved."*

ORY project officer Varan Sureshan concurs.

*In order to deliver the best outcomes for youth in each region it is important to have place-based teams. This enables us to understand local community needs and challenges, to engage local community stakeholders, to source local knowledge and to introduce suitable programs from new providers."*

These benefits are reflected in underpinning Action4Agriculture collaborative project values, of which YEC was a part:

- A. To build sustainable relationships between all key stakeholders and service providers in the region that will last well beyond the grant period.
- B. To target areas of high need and assist service providers to connect and deliver services into new or existing communities.
- C. To identify the need and deliver new and unique children and youth wellbeing projects in regional areas of high vulnerability and high need.
- D. To acquire knowledge about innovative programs that may be available for the development of youth wellbeing directly and indirectly.
- E. To assist with reference and connectivity to other local on-ground service providers for potential collaboration.



Hunter Local Land Services is another partner that has worked with Action4Agriculture across multiple programs and brings strength to each one through locally based school engagement officer Jane Lloyd-Jones.

*As school engagement officer, I really enjoy interacting with and helping school students to learn in a fun, engaging way. I enjoy the close working relationship I have with a number of our partners, including local and state government, Landcare and not for profit organisations such as Action4Agriculture,"*  
Jane says.

Hunter Land Services provides financial support to Action4Agriculture programs but making the partnership successful comes down to the relationship developed over the years with Jane.

*Jane has a deep understanding of her community and its culture, which allows us to tailor our programs to meet the needs of that community. She has wonderful, trusted networks and is the reason we have so many good relationships in the Hunter,"*  
Lynne says.

Both the Office for Regional Youth and Hunter Local Land Services understand the value of proactive relationships that identify and harness local talent to create effective funding models.

*Alone we are smart, but together we can be brilliant."*



## CREATING EFFECTIVE FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WELLBEING RECOVERY INITIATIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

The Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW), through the Office for Regional Youth (ORY) offered the grants program: Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery Initiative (CYPWRI).

The program targeted NSW regional areas and formed the basis of Action4Agriculture's Young Environmental Champions Program.

#### DELIVERY MODEL

A unique two-step grant application process was used to promote early engagement with government and support applicants with planning their projects.

The first step invited applicants to provide an outline of their project. ORY Project officers then arranged first contact meetings and successful preliminary applicants proceeded to the next level to submit a complete application. Unsuccessful applicants were directed to other suitable programs (if available).

The next stage involved a full application, with Project Officer assistance, with complete project description and targeted questions that met merit criteria with costs, benefits and delivery details.

#### DELIVERY METHODS/BENEFITS

- A.** To identify new and unique children and youth wellbeing projects in regional areas of high vulnerability and high need, and assist service providers to connect and deliver services into new or existing communities.
- B.** To acquire knowledge about innovative programs that may be available for the development of youth wellbeing directly and indirectly.
- C.** To assist with reference, connectivity and collaboration between local on-ground service providers.
- D.** To provide finer clarity of grant program objectives to ensure programs delivered better outcomes for the youth communities.

- E.** To provide feedback, at an early stage, to increase the number of applications that meet program criteria.
- F.** To ensure higher volumes of complying applications, resulting in higher levels of approvals of the grant.

In order to deliver the best outcomes, place-based Youth Community Coordinators and Project Officer teams were recruited in the relevant regions. This enabled:

- Understanding of the local community needs.
- Appreciation of their challenges.
- Engagement with the local community and all local stakeholders.
- Introduction of appropriate/suitable new programs from new providers.
- Provision and input of local knowledge.

#### COLLABORATION MODEL

Assistance to applicants and service providers included:

##### 1. During initial and application period:

- Encouraging applications only from those deemed suitable for Department of Regional NSW grant funding schemes.
- Discussion of initial proposals for compliance and merit and, if deemed suitable, provision of recommendations and critical commentary to enable modification or fine tuning of grant proposals.
- Provision of clear and suitable instructions on full application requirements.
- Connection of external providers to local knowledge and local contacts.
- Recommendation of other available programs if applications deemed unsuitable.
- Revision and commentary of full applications.
- Assistance in collating of all relevant documentation before final submission.



##### 2. During contracting period:

- Assistance with correct completion of funding deed
- Provision of required supporting documents.
- Follow-up on any outstanding issues with Grant Management Office.
- Follow-up on funds delivery for timely funding.
- Assistance with queries relating to the funding deed and contractual matters.

##### 3. During project delivery period and at end of project:

- Assistance with monitoring and record keeping matters for compliance.
- Attention to time extension requests.
- Handling and securing permissions for scope change identification.
- Assistance with progress reporting.
- Attendance at critical events and interaction with the community, providers and recipients.
- Assistance with final acquittal reporting.

