

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-24



### CHRRUP

Advancing rural communities





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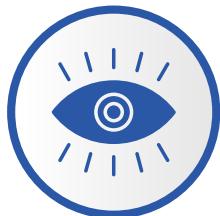
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# MISSION AND VISION

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CHRRUP is a not-for-profit organisation delivering a mix of linked products, services and programs that provide benefits from an individual business to a community and landscape level.



## VISION

Thriving, connected rural communities.



## MISSION

To connect people with resources that enhance agricultural enterprises.







# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

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The 2023-24 year has again seen CHRRUP continuing to connect people and resources to enhance agriculture enterprises. CHRRUP continues to be fully sustainable and innovative in its approach to meeting its mission through a strategy of delivering a mix of linked products, services and programs that provide benefits from an individual business to community and landscape level. The completion of a major overhaul of all Policy documentation and implementation has provided a valuable assurance of sound governance.

I am honoured to have served for my fifth year as CHRRUP's Chair. I joined "CHRRUP" on 6th June 2019 and in the five years since then, there have been many changes. Importantly, the spirit and the local support have continued to grow. TheCo-op, "CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGIONAL RESOURCES USE PLANNING CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED", changed its legal form to a company Limited by Guarantee ("CHRRUP Limited") and through that process, substantially reduced the number of Board members. The leadership changes during my term have included Simone Parker's promotion from Executive Office to Chief Executive Officer, and following her resignation, the appointment of a new leader, Nick von Alvensleben. Nick's departure due to health and family reasons led to further change which has seen Noella Powell appointed with the new title of General Manager. In this time, the services provided have fluctuated and our key clients and the key funding sources have undergone some variations.



These disruptions have led to a serious financial turnaround. The yet-to-be audited reports show a deficit of \$245K and reserves of \$171K. The year finished in a pre-sales marketing frenzy which is expected to show outcomes throughout the 2024-25 year. Several key events happened almost immediately after Noella commenced in May. Beef Week in Rockhampton is a major event each year – and a significant presence was made by CHRRUP in the week Noella started.

# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

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The office relocation and the establishment of our Egerton Street operation was at the critical implementation stage. Attendance and promotion of CHRRUP's products and services at GroWQ Innovation Expo in Longreach occurred very soon after that.

Major projects have contributed little to the bottom line while being central to the company's role. LEADAg has been a loss-leader but has a more positive financial future. Sales of the Safe Station and Smart Station products have been much lower than budget. Overall, the way forward is seen as sustainable with a dramatic cut in expenses (especially staff costs) and expected increase in grant funding for which positive indicators have been provided.

The key to CHRRUP is its amazing people. I, personally, and on behalf of CHRRUP, thank each and every one of you for your commitment and efforts. It is a great sign for the future that quality people keep turning up and contributing. For many, it is an important step in their career development and so, while it is a challenge to have a high staff turnover, it is very satisfying to see the values and knowledge from CHRRUP are adding to the region's value.

In addition to Noella replacing Nick, other changes in 2023-24 included a very smooth transition from one Meg (McCosker/ Tate) to another Meg (Bassingthwaigte) in the role of Agriculture Workforce Officer and having lead responsibility for LEADAg. Both have been outstanding contributors. Kate Crowe also assisted in this area. Dorothea Goetz had responsibility for Safe Station sales prior to leaving to focus on new family.

Kim Leo worked in administration and some of her workload was added to Rebecca Newland's support role prior to Bec finding other options. Keeley Monaghan contributed to the transition of offices before finding her preferred role elsewhere and, since then, Sarah Chicalas became Noella's first appointment as Business Support Officer. Zach Moore has contributed to CHRRUP in several areas over several years including his expertise in mapping prior to being called back to the family property.

Ed Wood has increasingly focused on his fishing life during the final wind-down of the Girl Power project and his part-time role.

# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The changes continue to increase diversity in geography (with staff now based from Longreach to Yeppoon and the Board spread from Townsville to Brisbane) while decreasing diversity in gender (with Blake, Zach and Ed being replaced by females).

Three external providers also made a huge difference to CHRRUP's continuance. Fiona Gretton has kept the financial records for many years and her efforts deserve recognition. Sharon Brown has been an enormous help in the delivery of quality reporting to the Drought Minister in regard to Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Project. Bronwyn Roberts provided valuable contributions to Safe Station and to establishing an improved process for its marketing.

We gratefully acknowledge the major contributions from the following entities. Federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for the funding and guidelines for Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes Project and associated work.

Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) which provided

- a. ongoing support for the role of the Agricultural Workforce Officer (AWO),
- b. associated deliverables which have continued to be very useful to a wide range of businesses, and considerable support for LEADAg through the Rural Jobs Initiative Committee.

Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) which, through collaboration with CHRRUP, has delivered amazingly good value for property holders purchasing Safe Station and Smart Station products.



The Desert Uplands Committee for the final arrangements in relation to the Girl Power project.

The ongoing need for change has led to great innovation including ground-breaking product and service delivery. Headlining these was the successful launch of a fully sponsored LEADAg Plus program (many thanks to RESQ+).

# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

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LEADAg is the stand-out success in terms of products. This has included the successful launch of fully sponsored LEADAg Plus program. The successful completion of LEADAg Youth 2023 has complemented it. Both programs have built on the initial program and show there is a huge unmet need for developing awareness and basic introduction to the complexities of the agricultural sector. A lack of workplace safety processes is one of the greatest risks in any business and Safe Station has made, and is continuing to make, important contributions to farm safety.

The completion of the GIRL Power project (Desert Upland Committee project with CHRRUP as a deliverer) was a major achievement. Outstanding results have been achieved (and documented) in the Future Drought Fund's Drought Resilient Soils and Landscape Project. While this initial program is nearing completion, there is hope that the success will generate further investment in this critical area for the region's farming and grazing requirements.

I would like to acknowledge all members of CHRRUP Limited. Membership is a key component of the corporate structure, and we continue to seek personnel, especially previous Board members and staff, to spend a few hours per year in this role. I would also like to make special mention of external members, Board, and staff who have contributed through our Working Groups.

I acknowledge the many contributions from the Board Members of CHRRUP Limited and give thanks to Carmel Marshall, Blake Repine, Samantha Cobb, Kerryn Piggott, Cherie Holland and Jane Oorschot. I will especially miss the contributions from Blake (who resigned with effect from the 2023 AGM on 16th November) and Carmel (who resigned with effect from the 15th February).

Gone but not forgotten! I would also like to express my great delight to welcome Christine Rolfe back to the Board (with effect from 1st July so strictly for next year's report – but it is an important post-close event!)



**IAN DANIELS**

INDEPENDANT CHAIR

# REPORT FROM THE GM

Stepping into CHRRUP on May 1st 2024, it's been a whirlwind couple of months. I am fortunate to have started just before the 2024 LEADAg season, and thoroughly enjoyed playing a small part in the delivery of each LEADAg week in Longreach, Tambo and Emerald.

The program is a wonderful example of CHRRUP's ability to fill significant gaps in our central and western Queensland agricultural industry, by providing essential experience for new agricultural workforce entrants.

As a program brimming with options and potential, there is huge opportunity for CHRRUP to evolve LEADAg in 2024-25 to increase its impact and viability. My sincere thanks to the many mentors and contributors across the region that make LEADAg not only possible, but authentic and awesome!



2023/24 saw some key projects come to a close and I'd like to particularly thank Dr Sharon Brown and Ed Wood for their dedication to delivering projects which not only met our objectives but delivered real value to landholders.

Notably, CHRRUP's Drought resilient soils & landscapes project (Funded by the Future Drought Fund) came to a successful close at the end of the financial year. All project participants achieved landscape and/or production improvements on their properties as the result of landscape rehydration and other changes implemented during the course of the project. In addition to workshop participants, project insights were shared with over 23,000 people through CHRRUP's social media!

# REPORT FROM THE GM

Considerable time and effort has been invested in grant applications in 2023/24, as is the business of profit for purpose organisations! We look forward to these applications yielding in 2024/25 and delivering new projects and initiatives that provide community and public benefit.

Developing and delivering robust and meaningful grant funded projects would not be possible without the support of partners and collaborators like the Desert Uplands Committee, GroWQ, Central Highlands Development Corporation, Central Queensland University, Department of Agriculture and many others. We thank all collaborators, from 2023/24 and beyond.

CHRRUP has a long history of fostering powerful collaborations which plays a role in improving the strength of the communities we work in and the agricultural industry. In 2024/25 we aim to grow our network, strengthen relationships and ultimately work more effectively with community and industry across central and western Queensland.

On the commercial front, as we commence a recruitment process for a Business Development Lead, we look forward to boosting our capacity to provide Safe and Smart Station more widely in Australia in 2024/25, and enhancing the quality of support to existing customers.

As we prepare to welcome a new team member, we sincerely thank all CHRRUP employees who have made a valuable contribution to the organisation in 2023/24, I look forward to working with current and incoming staff to make 2024/25 a productive and impactful year.

## NOELLA POWELL

GENERAL MANAGER



# OUR WORK

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To achieve our vision, CHRRUP delivers a mix of linked products, services and programs that provide benefits from an individual business to a community and landscape level under three pillars- Safe Station, Smart Station and Greener Pastures.



**Our work under the Greener Pastures pillar delivers landscape and community benefits through partnerships and investment from relevant stakeholders.**

## HIGHLIGHTS

### FUTURE DROUGHT FUND PROJECT

As the successful grant recipient for a Future Drought Fund Program – Drought Resilient Soils and Landscapes, CHRRUP has been actively delivering this project to demonstrate that implementing relatively low-cost interventions and changes in grazing practices can rehydrate grazing landscapes, improve soil, water, and biodiversity assets, and remediate existing erosion.

Five demonstration properties in the Desert Uplands bioregion participated in the design, implementation, and evaluation of on ground works and grazing practices with recognised industry experts.

The project is scheduled for completion in September 2024 with a final report, property-specific case studies and videos being prepared to disseminate the learnings far and wide.



# OUR WORK

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## **AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE OFFICER**

CHRRUP continues to be a host for the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network. CHRRUP hosts the Agriculture Workforce Officer for the Central Highlands and Central West who supports the Government's objective of driving industry growth and rural jobs growth by providing agribusinesses with a broad range of advice and guidance on workforce attraction, recruitment, and development. This program has also supported the development of the LEADAg initiative outlined on page 13.

**Subcontracting to the Desert Uplands committee, CHRRUP worked with landholders on two projects.**

## **ECOGRAZEN**

- The focus of Ecograzan was to increase silvopastoralists knowledge and offer options and support over 70 weeks to assist businesses to:
- Improve ground cover, soil carbon, grass health, pasture ecologies and their diversity.
- Involved landholders undertook forage budgeting and created a property plan, where they identified areas of improvement on the property.
- Knowledge gained during the project was shared with other landholders in the region through workshops.

## **GIRL POWER**

- The focus of GIRL Power was to provide rangeland beef producers with specific tools to improve herd reproduction, with a focus on heifer calving rates.
- Working with three Producer Demonstration Sites and a core producer group of 9 other beef businesses, data was collected and changes implemented between 2020 and 2024 to investigate the best ways of improving conception and re-conception rates.
- The project took place over relatively good seasons, and the businesses involved did see an improvement in heifer reproductive performance. For the businesses involved the focus on heifer management also resulted in enhanced reproductive performance of the whole herd.
- The project also inspired participating businesses to employ heifer management plans; at the commencement of the project 10% of the participants had a heifer management plan, at the end of the project 75% of the participants had created a heifer management plan.

# OUR WORK

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## KEY OUTCOMES IN 2023-24



**101**  
Businesses provided with  
the Safe Station system  
(since launch)



**885**  
Students engaged in ag education  
events (presentations and careers  
night)



**7**  
Industry events attended



**\$219,707**  
Of new funding acquired



**19**  
Farming businesses  
directly involved in greener  
pastures projects



**36**  
On-farm employees completed  
rural and remote first aid course  
(in collaboration with GroWQ)



Safe Station is CHRRUP's fully individualised safety management system that provides agricultural businesses with a practical approach to meeting workplace health and safety obligations.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Safe Station has been continuing to progress this year, with new and existing customers adopting their tailored safety system to help ensure business compliance, and that their farming families come home happy, safe and well every day.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023-24



102  
New Safe Station  
App Users



28  
Companies Actively using  
Safe Station App



6  
New Safe Stations  
deliveries



## SMART STATION SUMMARY

Smart Station was originally launched as a simple yet strategic solution to agricultural business management. One of the key components of Smart Station is the mapping feature, with two stand alone property maps delivered in November 2023. CHRRUP continues to research, seek stakeholder feedback and redevelop the Smart Station package, with consideration to the key needs of our clients and customers.

# LEADAG

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## BACKGROUND

LEADAg is a CHRRUP initiative which provides introductory agricultural skilling and exposure in regional Queensland. It stands for Leading, Educating, and Developing the next generation of the agricultural workforce. Originating in 2021, LEADAg is modelled on the highly successful Hay Inc. program in New South Wales and has been tailored to address the workforce issues identified by industry in regional Queensland. LEADAg attends to the demand for opportunities for young people to understand agricultural pathways, gain skills and enter the workforce, supporting the region's ability to attract and retain young people. Although fortunate to receive grants in the past, CHRRUP strives to secure a sustainable funding arrangement to enable this program to continue bringing young people into the industry and supporting the local agricultural workforce. If an organisation you're involved with would be interested in supporting this initiative through sponsorship, please contact CHRRUP staff.

In July 2021, a working group was formed with members from industry, education, employment, and community to progress a training initiative specific to agriculture that involved industry mentors. The working group were instrumental in providing an industry perspective on what training and skills were required. They continue to inform the program and training outcomes, undertake student selection, and identify or volunteer as industry mentors.

At the close of 2023, LEADAg returned to the Central Highlands for the third and final week of its first full program. Since then, the 2023 cohort have proactively accessed networks built with mentors during their LEADAg experience and of those graduating from high school, many have gained employment in the agricultural industry. The 2023 alumni can be found droving across Queensland, studying Agricultural Technology and Management, working as station hands near Windorah or on a broadacre farm in WA, just to name a few.

## 2024 LEADAG PROGRAMS

2024 saw CHRRUP deliver two LEADAg programs, the existing program, LEADAg Youth, aimed at high school students aged 15 to 17, as well as a new program catering for the over-18 demographic, LEADAg Plus. The programs are designed to expose young people to a wide variety of commodities and career pathways in agriculture as well as giving them some producer-lead, hands-on training in primary production operations. All hosts and mentors share their expertise and knowledge with the participants, and opportunities arise to build networks between potential employers and employees, ultimately building the agricultural workforce.

LEADAg Youth welcomed 12 participants from all over Queensland and even one participant from Victoria. Seven days of the two-week program took place in the Central Highlands in July, this will be followed by seven days in the Longreach area in September. Throughout the program, participants will visit thirteen properties and local businesses and interact with over 30 mentors in total (local agribusiness and property owners, managers and employees). The 2024 program was generously sponsored by the Queensland Agricultural Workforce Network (QAWN), an initiative of the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and The Local Buying Foundation. An alumnus of 34 participants has grown from the three successful LEADAg Youth programs, many of whom are working or studying in the industry as well as seeking further work experience while at school and sharing their experiences with their communities. The demand for agricultural exposure, networking and training is clear, with over 200 high school students applying to attend LEADAg Youth over three years of the program.

LEADAg Plus was piloted with a small group of five young adults from Atherton Tablelands, Hughenden (formerly SA), Muttaburra (formerly Vic), Brisbane and as far away as Leopold in Victoria. A five-day block was run in Longreach in June and will be followed by another in Tambo in August. Participants will be welcomed onto nine different properties and able to learn from over 20 mentors in total (agribusiness and property owners, managers and employees) in a diverse range of commodities and skills. The inaugural LEADAg Plus program was fully funded by RESQ Plus, the employment service provider for central west and southwest Queensland, and their corresponding funding partner the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), who administers the Community Development Program (CDP), with the aim to support job seekers in remote Australia to build skills, address barriers to employment and contribute to their communities through activities and training.

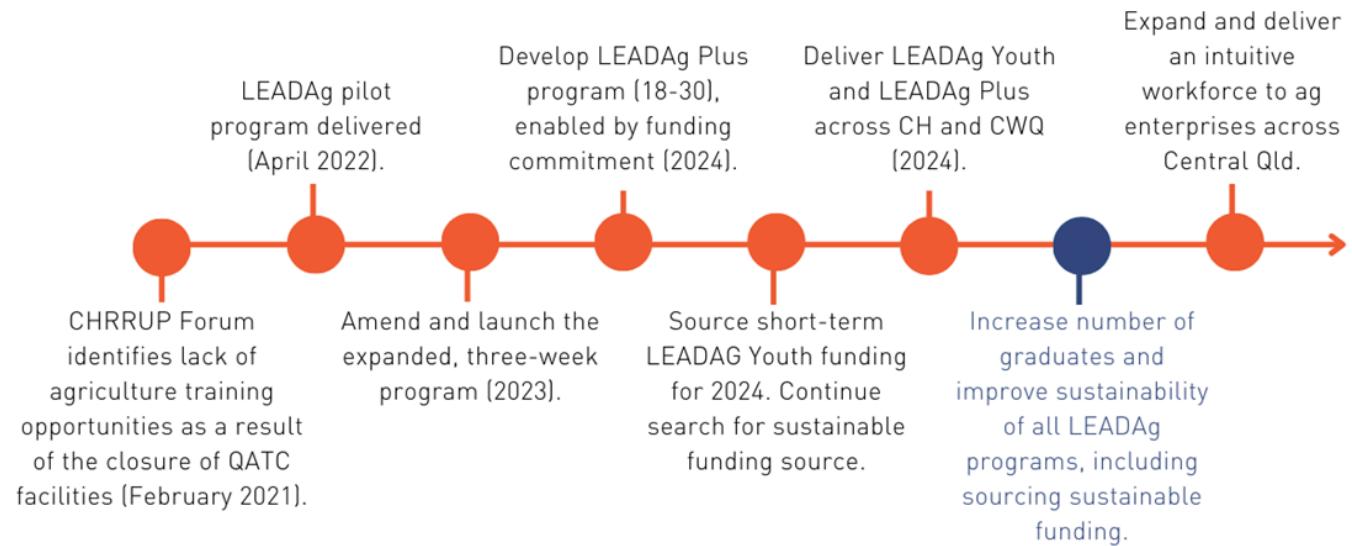


## TOPICS COVERED INCLUDED:

- Rural & remote first aid
- Wool harvesting
- Biosecurity (animal disease & weeds)
- Cotton supply chain processes
- Pasture management
- Livestock breeding & genetics
- Working dogs for livestock handling
- Cropping production & management
- Precision agriculture
- AgTech & innovation – robotics, water management & livestock management
- Horsemanship
- Small and large livestock handling
- Livestock supply chain processes
- Small motor maintenance
- Welding
- Chainsaw use
- Fencing
- UTV operation
- Workplace personality management
- Team building activities
- Career pathway conversations



## LEADAG TIMELINE:



To find out more about the LEADAg programs, please visit the CHRRUP website: <https://www.chrrup.org/leadag>

# FINANCIALS

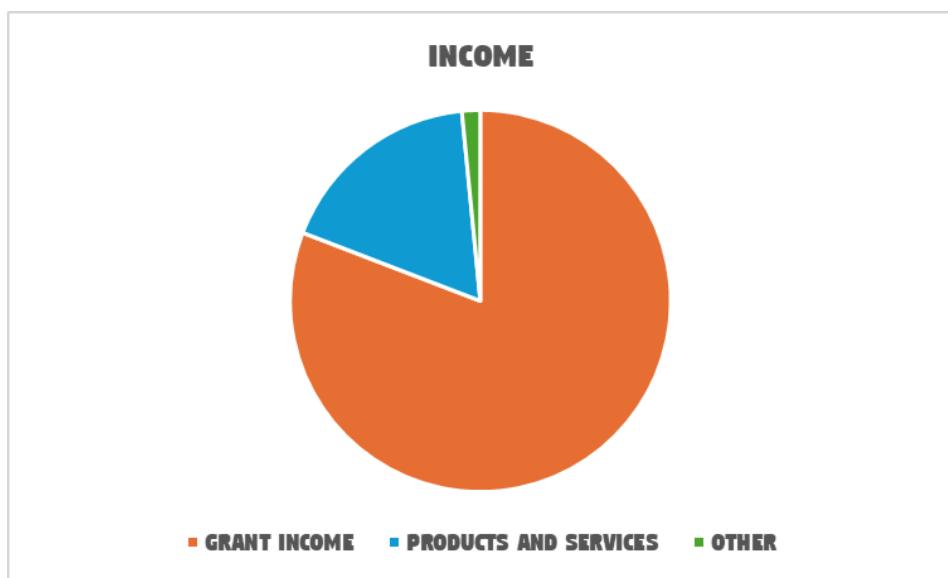
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In 2023/24 our income was \$837,182\*

\$675,759 Grant income from project partners

\$147,378 Provision of products and services

\$13,045 Other income

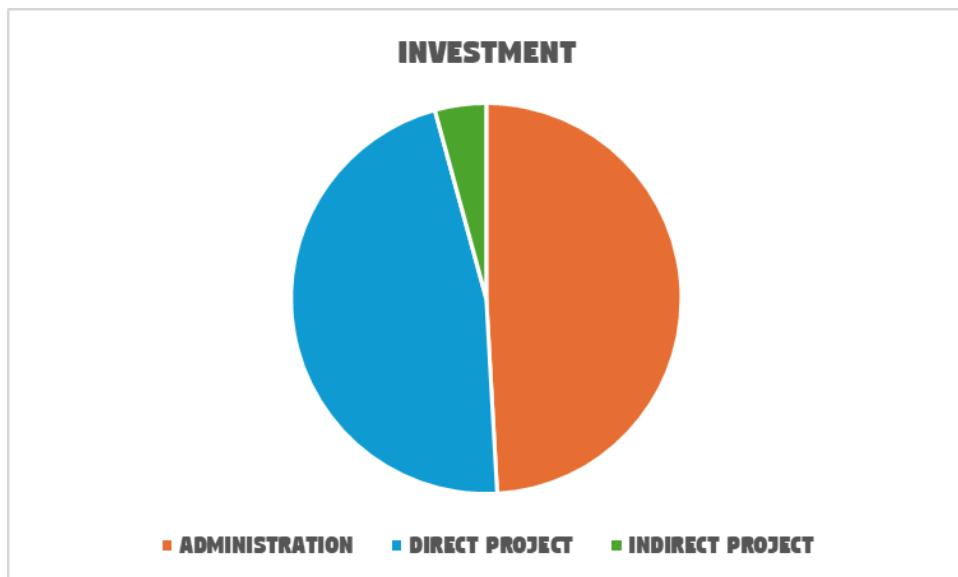


In 2023/24 we invested \$965,779\*

\$474,314 Administration

\$450,453 Direct project delivery

\$41,012 Indirect project delivery



\*2023/24 CHRRUP Audited Financial Statement

# OUR BOARD & TEAM

DIRECTOR	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND				NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED				APPOINTMENT/RESIGNATION DATES IN 2023/2024
Ian Daniels (Chairman)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Carmel Marshall	✓	✓							Resigned 11th January 2024
Blake Repine	✓				✓				Resigned 15th November 2023
Samantha Cobb	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kerryn Piggott	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Cherie Holland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Jane Oorschot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

## OUR TEAM



**NOELLA POWELL**  
GENERAL MANAGER



**MEG BASSINGTHWAIGTHE**  
AGRICULTURE WORKFORCE  
OFFICER



**SARAH CHICALAS**  
BUSINESS SUPPORT  
OFFICER



**LISA FERGUSON**  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
LEAD



**ED WOOD**  
PROJECT  
OFFICER (CASUAL)

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHRRUP Limited would like to acknowledge our program partners in 2023-24. Without their support we would not be able to have as significant an impact on achieving our vision of thriving, connected rural communities.



# THANK YOU & CONTACT DETAILS

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Thank you for your interest in, and support of CHRRUP in 2023/2024. To stay up to date with the latest developments at CHRRUP, follow us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and subscribe to our monthly newsletter via our website.



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