

Impact Fund

Giving together for lasting change



The Impact Fund is Australian Communities Foundation's flagship collective giving initiative, powered by people who believe that lasting change is something we create together.

The Fund unites donors at every stage of their journey around bold, community-led solutions to Australia's toughest challenges. By combining thoughtful grantmaking, shared learning, and coordinated action, the Fund helps transform individual generosity into collective influence – unlocking impact none of us could achieve alone.

Our vision for a thriving and inclusive Australia

We believe lasting change happens when philanthropy aligns with community leadership, shared values, and long-term thinking. Rather than funding within narrow issue silos, the Impact Fund takes a holistic approach, recognising that real change is interconnected and driven by people and movements working across systems.

We are working towards a thriving and inclusive Australia that:

- Acknowledges our whole history and is grounded in First Nations leadership
- Honours the strength that comes from our diversity
- Addresses the roots and continued impacts of the climate crisis
- Centres community leadership and strengthens community voice in tackling systemic issues
- Invests in social infrastructure as the foundation for a thriving democracy

The power of giving together SINCE 2017

\$11M+
FUNDS RAISED

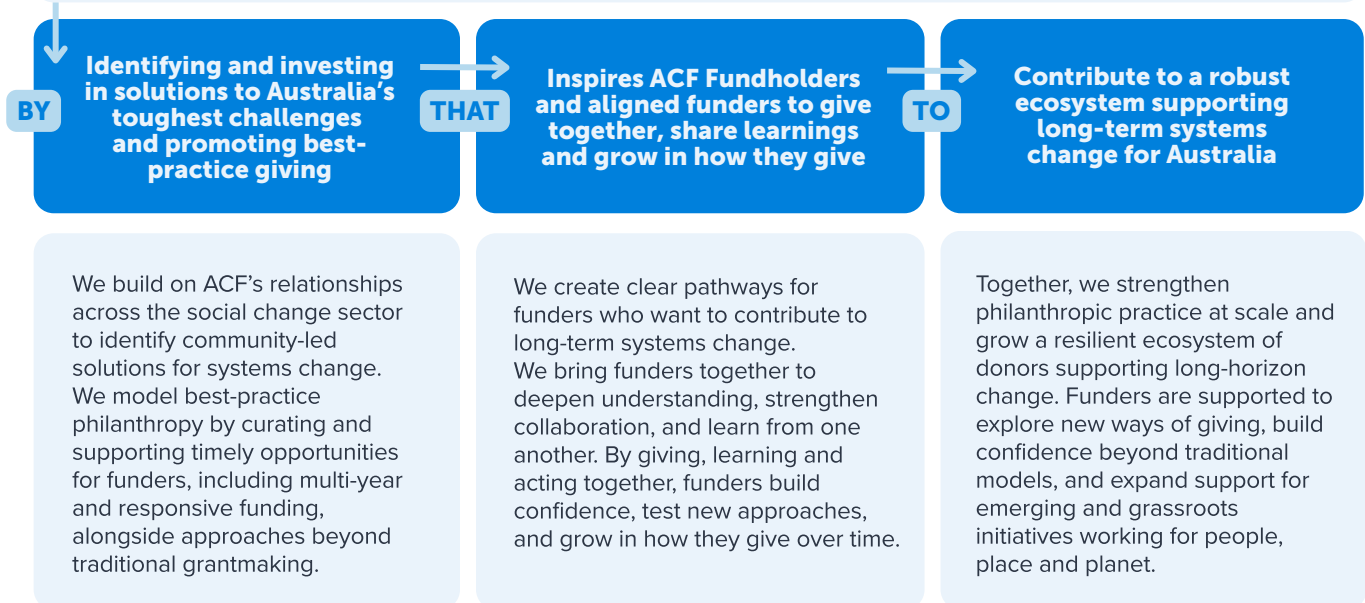
200+
FUNDERS GIVING
TOGETHER

20+
POSITIVE REFORMS
SUPPORTED

5x
FUNDING UNLOCKED

The Impact Fund's Theory of Change

The Impact Fund inspires best-practice collective giving that sustains the journey towards a thriving and inclusive Australia, by supporting communities and movements to lead lasting change.



How the Impact Fund enables change

Four interconnected enablers sit at the heart of the Impact Fund's work. Together, they create the conditions for deeper impact, and more confident, informed giving. Our refreshed vision for the Fund focuses on long-term sustainability – so it can continue to grow and enable meaningful change through these four levers.



Grantmaking

Annual Catalyst Grant

Each year, the Fund awards a multi-year flagship grant to an initiative addressing a challenge of national significance. This grant is designed to support long-term, systems-focused work and provide space for learning and shared insight.

Grantees receive flexible funding, complemented by co-designed evaluation and capacity-building support tailored to the organisation.

All organisations shortlisted for a Catalyst Grant receive \$5,000 in recognition of the time and effort involved in the application process.

Agile Grants

The Fund also makes smaller, flexible grants to support timely opportunities. These may respond to emerging challenges or back initiatives at a critical window, allowing the Impact Fund and its supporters to act quickly while staying aligned with the Fund's overarching vision.

The Impact Fund's grant decisions are informed by a **Community Advisory Group** of trusted community and sector partners. The group is refreshed annually to reflect the Fund's focus and members are compensated for their time and expertise.



Collective Giving

For each Catalyst and Agile Grant, Australian Communities Foundation invites contributions from Fundholders and aligned partners, amplifying the impact of its funding commitments. By giving together, we:

- **Pool resources** to support initiatives at a scale rarely possible alone
- **Deepen our understanding** of best-practice philanthropy alongside likeminded funders
- **Streamline our grantmaking** and reduce administrative burden for grant partners
- **Become part of a broader ecosystem** addressing systemic issues

Through the Impact Fund, Australian Communities Foundation also invests in building the capabilities of collective giving in Australia, including new opportunities for ACF Fundholders to give together.



Shared Learning

The Impact Fund creates opportunities for donors and partners to deepen their understanding of systems change, community-led solutions, and effective philanthropy through:

- **Learning sessions** and conversations
- **Storytelling and impact showcases** featuring funded partners
- **Open sharing of insights**, challenges, and lessons learned

These shared learning experiences help build confidence, connection, and a sense of collective purpose, supporting funders to engage in ways that are informed, thoughtful, and aligned with their values.



Advocacy and Infrastructure

Change rarely happens through funding alone. The Impact Fund supports impact beyond the grant by:

- **Amplifying voices** and messages of funded partners
- **Supporting connections** between organisations, funders, and networks
- **Reducing structural barriers** that limit access to funding

Through Australian Communities Foundation's infrastructure, the Fund can help channel resources to initiatives that may otherwise struggle to attract support – particularly grassroots or early-stage efforts – while keeping the focus on community leadership and long-term outcomes.

How you can be involved

The Impact Fund is designed to be inclusive and flexible, welcoming participation from funders with different interests, capacities, and levels of experience.

- **Support a Catalyst or Agile grant opportunity**
- **Join learning sessions and events**
- **Engage with funded partners and their work**
- **Invite others in your network to participate**
- **Contribute directly to the Impact Fund to support its long-term sustainability**

Who is the Impact Fund for?

The Impact Fund is for anyone who wants to contribute to meaningful change in Australia – whether you are new to structured giving or an experienced funder looking to deepen your impact. It brings together individuals, families, and organisations who share a commitment to best-practice philanthropy.

How is the annual focus of the Impact Fund decided?

Rather than working within fixed issue categories, the Impact Fund is guided by ACF's vision for a thriving and inclusive Australia. Funding priorities are shaped through community insight, sector knowledge, and ongoing learning, allowing the Fund to respond to timely issues of national significance.

How does the Impact Fund decide who to support?

Australian Communities Foundation assesses opportunities for systemic impact, timeliness, social justice, and evidence-informed, collaborative practice. Grant decisions are informed by a Community Advisory Group, ensuring funding is grounded in community insight and real-world expertise.

Do I need to be an expert in the issues the Fund supports?

No, the Impact Fund is designed so donors can participate with confidence at any stage of their learning journey. Shared learning opportunities and open conversations help build understanding over time, whatever your level of expertise.

What makes the Impact Fund different from giving on my own?

By giving through the Impact Fund, donors combine resources with others and support work at a scale that is difficult to achieve individually. The Fund also creates opportunities to engage beyond funding – through learning, networking, and collective action. Contributions can be acknowledged individually or made more discreetly under the Impact Fund, according to donor preference.

Get involved

Join a funding community committed to lasting change for a thriving and inclusive Australia.

Three ways to support

- **Impact Funder:** Support a specific Catalyst or Agile Grant
- **Impact Builder:** Give an untied donation to the grants pool
- **Impact Champion:** Great giving takes resources. Support the Impact Fund's core work and help ensure its long-term sustainability

Australian Communities Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports and enables smart, rewarding and effective giving.

Learn more:
communityfoundation.org.au

Contact our team to get involved: 03 9412 0412
or email grants@communityfoundation.org.au



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