



**REGIONAL  
AUSTRALIA  
INSTITUTE**

# ACTIVE FARMERS 2021 EVALUATION

**FINAL REPORT**

**May 2021**



## ABOUT THE REGIONAL AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE

Independent and informed by both research and ongoing dialogue with the community, the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) develops policy and advocates for change to build a stronger economy and better quality of life in regional Australia – for the benefit of all Australians. The RAI was established with support from the Australian Government.

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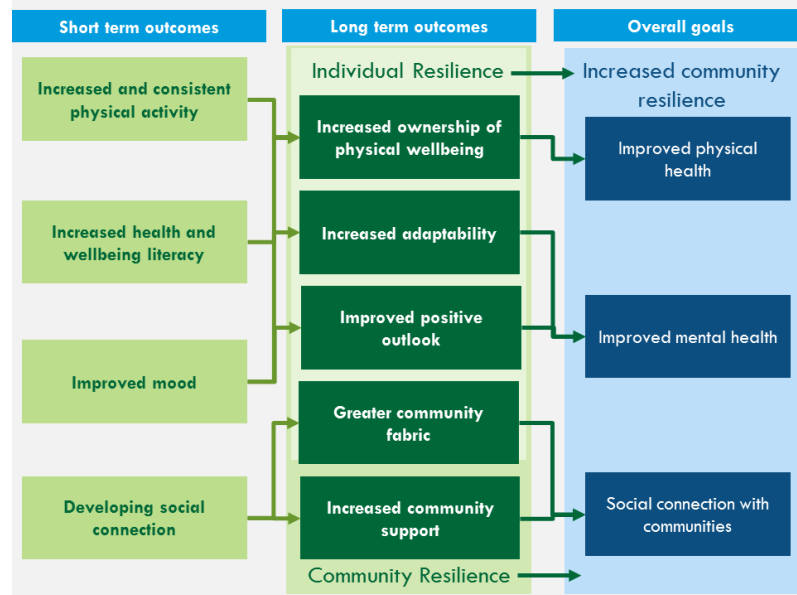
Further information can be found at [www.regionalaustralia.org.au](http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Active Farmers is a not-for-profit, public health charity with a mission to improve the physical and psycho-social wellbeing and community resilience of farming communities across Australia.

The Active Farmers 2021 Evaluation (the Evaluation) sought to understand the impacts of the Active Farmers program on its participants in terms of improved physical and mental wellbeing, social connection with communities, and overall community resilience. Noting the long-term nature of these impacts and the relatively short period of time Active Farmers has been operating, the Evaluation specifically focused on indicators that would point towards achievement of these long-term outcomes.



## DATA COLLECTION

### SURVEY

- 158 responses

### INTERVIEWS

- 9 Participants
- 4 Active Farmers Trainers

## KEY FINDINGS

The results of the Evaluation indicate that the Active Farmers program is successfully supporting its participants to increase their physical activity and subsequent fitness. Participants have indicated that the program positively impacts on their mental wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence. The program is a significant social connector in many of the communities it operates in, and acts as a catalyst for social fabric. This indicates that the program is supporting greater community resilience by drawing together the individuals it engages, who themselves exhibit greater social, physical and mental wellbeing.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE FARMERS

- 1. BRANDING AND MARKETING** – undertaking myth-busting in relation to who the Active Farmers program is for i.e. not just farmers, and supporting trainers to advertise the program more, to engage a greater number of people in the groups, particularly younger people and men.
- 2. GROUPS AND EVENTS AND THE COST** - further community consultation with regard to class types and costs, and how they may be impacting participation and retention, and support for trainers to organise more and diverse wellbeing events.
- 3. ENGAING MEN WITH ACTIVE FARMERS** - engaging more men in the groups, possibly through men-specific classes, or a standalone four-week introductory program for men that can be rolled out when needed in each group location.

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT ACTIVE FARMERS

Active Farmers is a not-for-profit organisation aimed at building stronger and more resilient farming communities. Established in 2015, they run regular group fitness classes and, health and wellbeing workshops and events in over 40 farming communities in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland. Events and workshops provided by Active Farmers include:

- Nutrition workshops
- Mindfulness workshops
- Calmer Farmer workshops
- Yoga
- Mental health first aid training
- 8 week challenges
- Spring into Spring Challenges
- Active Farmers Games
- Run for Resilience
- Ride for Resilience
- Active Farmers Fundraising Ball
- Active Farmers Summit Cocktail Party.

Active Farmers has approximately 700 to 1000 participants at any given time, and generally 75% of attendance is by women, and 25% by men (Active Farmers 2020).

## PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Active Farmers engaged the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) to undertake an evaluation of their current programs for the period 2018 to 2020.

The Active Farmers 2021 Evaluation (the Evaluation) provides an outcomes analysis of Active Farmers' programs, including fitness classes, fitness challenge programs and large scale community events.

The Evaluation examines whether Active Farmers' programs are achieving the following outcomes in the communities it provides its programs:

- Improved physical health
- Social connection within communities
- Improved mental health, and
- Increased community resilience.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### THEORY OF CHANGE

The following Theory of Change (see Figure 1) was developed to guide the Evaluation and its analysis. This Theory of Change was constructed around Active Farmers' mission to use physical exercise and social connection to improve mental health and to build stronger and more resilient rural communities. As such the overall goals for the Active Farmers Program were outlined as improved physical health and social connections with communities, resulting in improved mental health, which together all result in increased community resilience.

The concepts of resilience can be difficult to define, relating often to individual and overall community wellbeing and adaptability, noting that one does not necessarily lead to the other. Often the components that makeup individual and community resilience are interrelated, however it is also acknowledged that a group of resilient individuals does not make a resilient community. Research by Buikstra et al (2010) identified eleven community resilience themes:

1. Social networks and support

2. Positive outlook
3. Ability to learn from adversity
4. Early experience
5. Environment and lifestyle
6. Infrastructure and support services
7. Sense of purpose
8. Diverse and innovative economy
9. Embracing differences
10. Having beliefs, and
11. Leadership.

Maybery et al (2009) noted that resilience includes the concepts of optimism and self-esteem, wellbeing, adaptability, and external support. They also noted the need to sustained social connectedness and strong social networks. Mowbray et al (2007) identified the three key types of community resources for community resilience: social capital resources, institutional resources, and economic resources. These factors can assist communities as a whole to be more adaptable and manage economic, environmental and social risks.

Noting that Active Farmers is a program predominantly providing physical fitness activities and is not a mental health specific program, nor employs mental health practitioners, however indirectly the program is based on the improved mental wellbeing and mood through increased physical exercise and social networks. Similarly, Active Farmers does not contribute to all aspects of the aforementioned community resilience concepts, however is considered to contribute to aspects of individual resilience and community building. These attributes together can result in increased community resilience. As such, the Theory of Change was approached from the perspective that it should test for aspects of individual resilience (physical activity, self-esteem, optimism, health and wellbeing literacy, improved mood) that combined with social connection and community building, contribute to community resilience.

## DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation utilised two data collection tools, a survey and interviews, to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from Active Farmers participants and trainers. Initially it was intended that the evaluation would undertake two focus groups with participants, however there was limited interest in this option from participants and as such all participants who nominated were offered an interview.

### SURVEY

The purpose of the survey was to collect a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data, in line with the theory of change. The survey included 26 questions, which were mix of quantitative and qualitative questions, including a short set of demographic questions (Appendix A). The survey was developed in Survey Monkey and distributed to all Active Farmers participants (approximately 1,000 people), through Active Farmers' social media platforms and the groups' trainers. The response rate was anticipated to be between 10% and 20%, and 189 responses were received overall. Of these responses, 31 were removed due to incompleteness, and 158 responses were analysed.

### INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the interviews was to take an in-depth look at the experiences and understanding of the impacts for program participants and trainers. The interviews took a semi-structured approach and questions covered each theme of the Theory of Change (see Appendix B).

Participants were asked to self-nominate for an interview in the survey. Trainers were asked to contact the evaluator directly to express interest. All 59 participants who nominated for an interview or focus group were subsequently sent a survey link through which to submit their availability. Of this group, 13 chose to participate in an interview. Interviews were undertaken on Zoom and via phone.

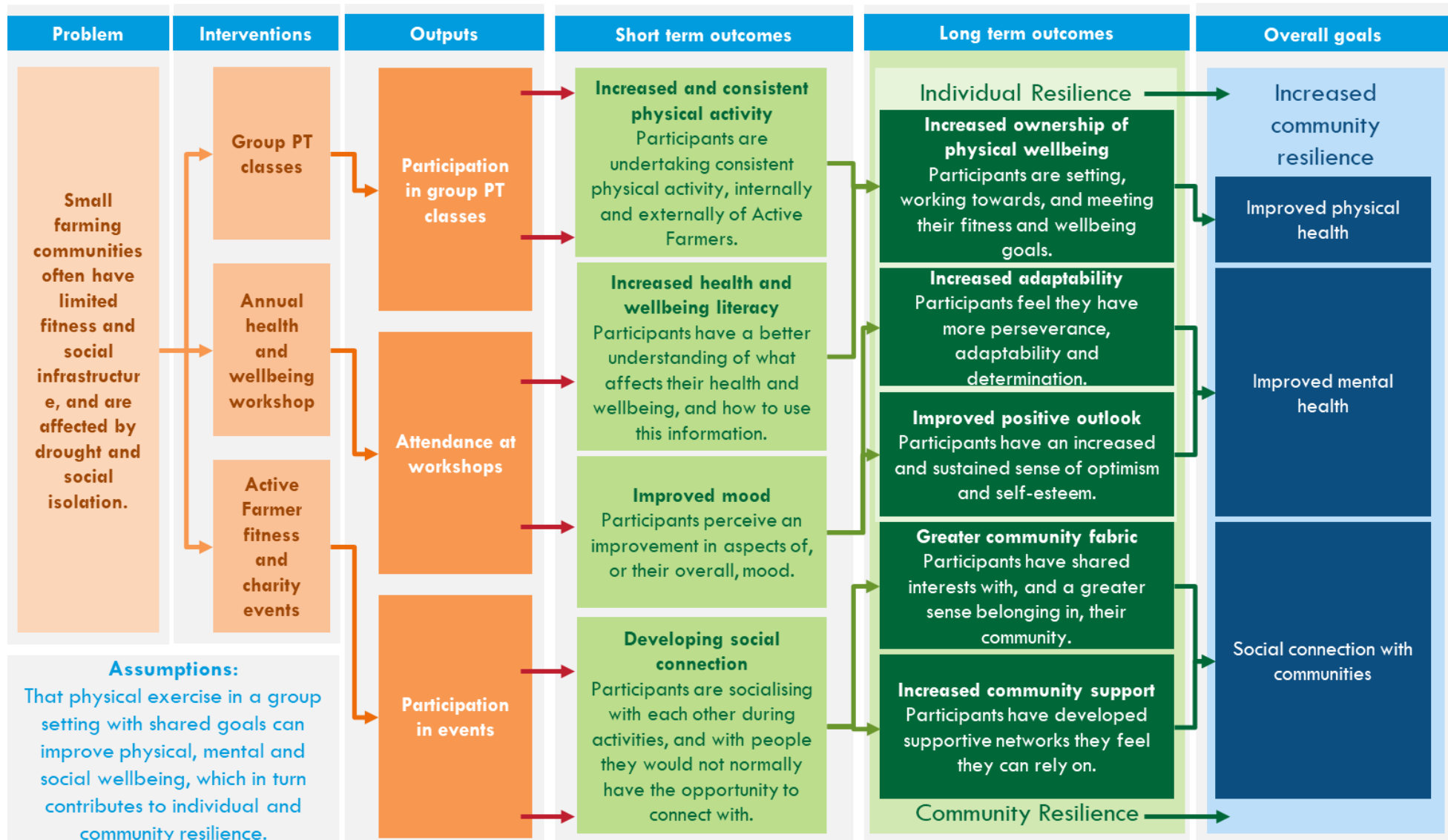


Figure 1 Active Farmers Evaluation Theory of Change



# RESULTS

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the survey responses analysed (n=158), 80.4% were completed by respondents who identify as female, and 19.6% as male. This reflects a similar gender split for Active Farmers group attendance – 75% female and 25% male.

The largest age group to complete the survey was 35-44 years (39.2%), and the smallest 65+ years (2.5%). More than 75% of the respondents are aged over 35 years.

Similarly, two interviews were undertaken with men, and 11 with women.

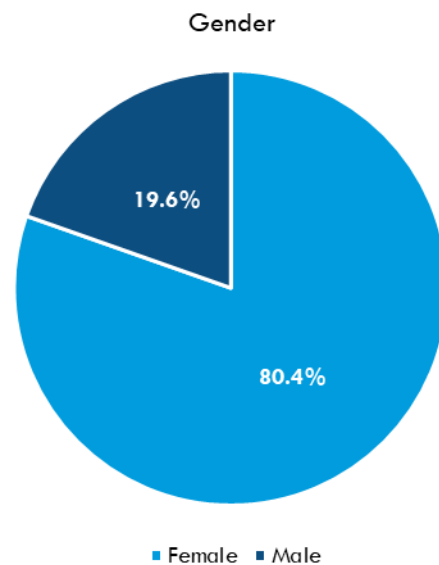


Figure 2 Survey Responses - Gender

Table 1 Survey responses - Age Groups

Age Groups	Count	Percentage
18-24	6	3.8%
25-34	31	19.6%
35-44	62	39.2%
45-54	34	21.5%
55-64	21	13.3%
65+	4	2.5%

## ENGAGEMENT WITH ACTIVE FARMERS

Of the 158 survey respondents, 89.2% are currently involved with Active Farmers as part of either a group or attended an event in the last 12 months. Approximately one third of respondents joined an Active Farmers group in 2019, and 87.3% of respondents are still attending an Active Farmers group since they joined. 75.9% of respondents are attending their Active Farmers groups at least weekly.

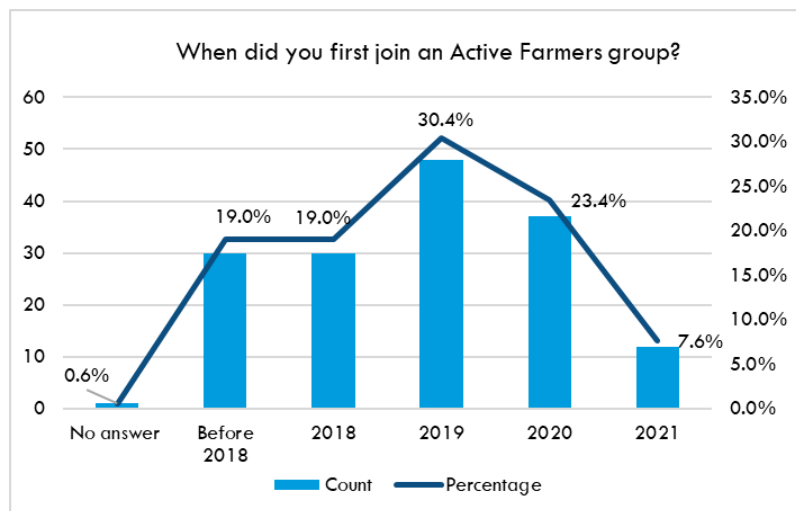


Figure 3 Survey Responses - Joining an Active Farmers group

Table 2 Survey Responses - Involvement with Active Farmers

Involvement with Active Farmers	Count	Percentage
Currently involved with Active Farmers as a part of a group, and/or attended a workshop or event in the last 12 months.	141	89.2%
Previously involved with Active Farmers as a part of a group, or attended a workshop or event more than 12 months ago.	17	10.8%

Table 3 Survey Responses - Attendance at Active Farmers Groups

Are you still attending an Active Farmers Group (including if you have had a break and re-joined)?	Count	Percentage
<b>No</b>	19	12.0%
<b>Yes</b>	138	87.3%
<b>No answer</b>	1	0.6%

Table 4 Survey Responses - Rate of Attendance at Active Farmers Groups

How often are you, or have you attended, an Active Farmers group?	Count	Percentage
<b>I have never attended a group training session</b>	1	0.6%
<b>Less than one session per month</b>	10	6.3%
<b>One to three sessions per month</b>	27	17.1%
<b>Weekly</b>	77	48.7%
<b>More than once per week</b>	43	27.2%

Active Farmers currently has the majority of its groups operating in New South Wales, as such the majority of respondents reported attending groups in this state. Only one survey respondent reported not attending an Active Farmers Group. The most attended events or workshops were *Spring into 2021 (February)* and the *8 Week Challenge August 2020*.

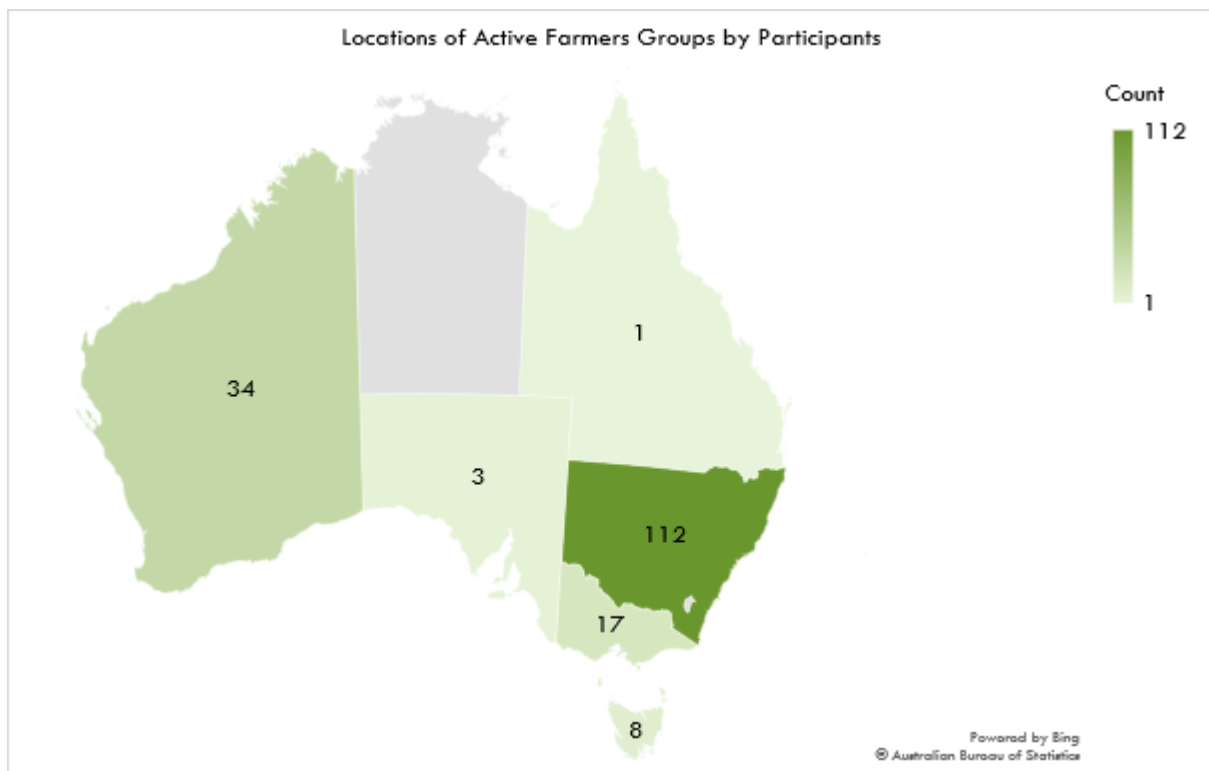


Figure 4 Survey Responses - Location of Active Farmers Groups

Table 5 Survey Responses - Location of Active Farmers Groups

State	Count
<b>NSW</b>	112
<b>WA</b>	34
<b>VIC</b>	17
<b>TAS</b>	8
<b>SA</b>	3
<b>QLD</b>	1
<b>Not attending a group</b>	1

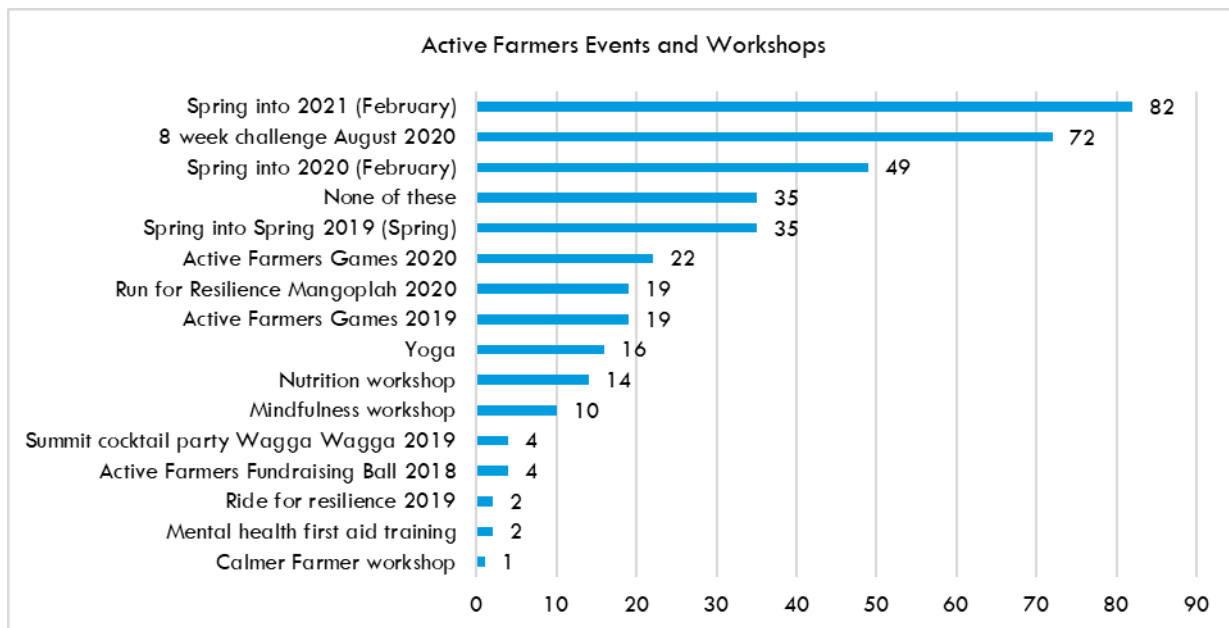


Figure 5 Survey Responses - Events and workshops participation

## PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Nearly three-quarters (73.4%) of respondents indicated that they are undertaking exercise outside of their Active Farmers groups and the events, and 56.9% have indicated that this level of exercise has increased since they started with Active Farmers. **Nearly 90% of respondents who had increased their levels of exercise felt that Active Farmers contributed to this increase, either partially or as the main contributor.** Nearly 80% of respondents have also made physical wellbeing or fitness changes, and nearly all of these respondents intend to maintain these changes.

Interviews with Active Farmers participants identified a range of impacts of Active Farmers on their physical wellbeing, including that Active Farmers:

- Helped them to regain their fitness and sustain it
- Helped them to create consistency in their exercise and embed routines (especially during winter)
- Helped them build a base fitness level that enables them to do other things
- Motivated them to exercise through its group setting and trainers
- Introduced them to new types of exercise such as yoga and Pilates, and
- Assisted them increase their physical fitness knowledge, or confirm the knowledge they already had.

Interviews with Active Farmers trainers highlighted that Active Farmers appeared to help participants to realise what they could do (physically), where they need to work on their fitness, and to build exercise habits. This impacts participants' day to day lives, as they think about their fitness and nutrition more, experience better health outcomes, and are achieving more.

Table 6 Survey Responses - Exercise external to Active Farmers

Are you undertaking any exercise outside of your Active Farmers group?	Count	Percentage
No	41	25.9%
Yes	116	73.4%
No answer	1	0.6%

Table 7 Survey Responses - Change in exercise

Has the amount of exercise you are doing outside of Active Farmers increased since you started attending a group?	Count	Percentage
No	50	43.1%
Yes	66	56.9%

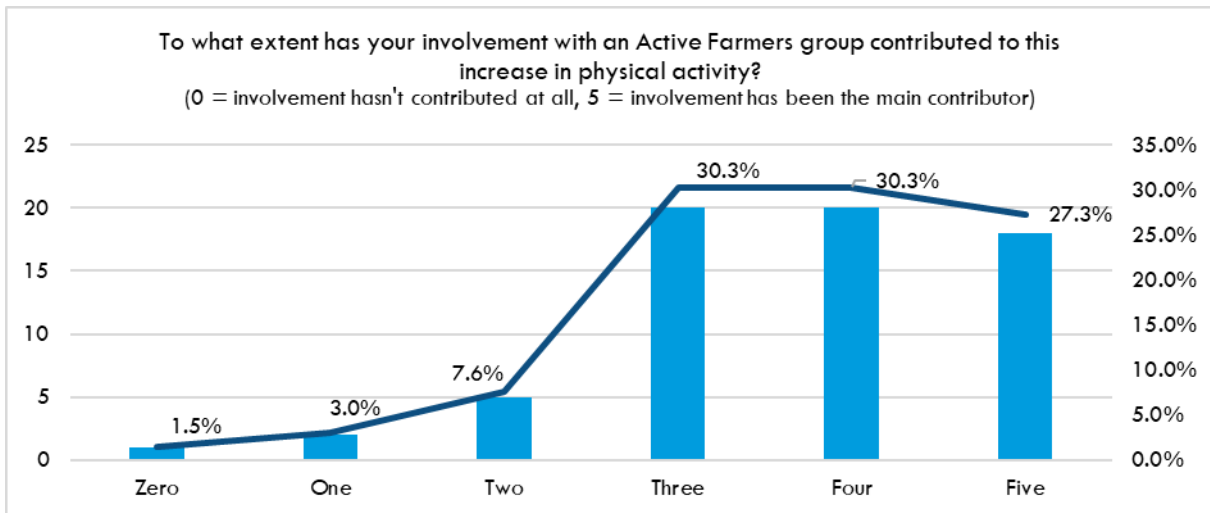


Figure 6 Survey Responses - Contribution of Active Farmers to increased physical activity

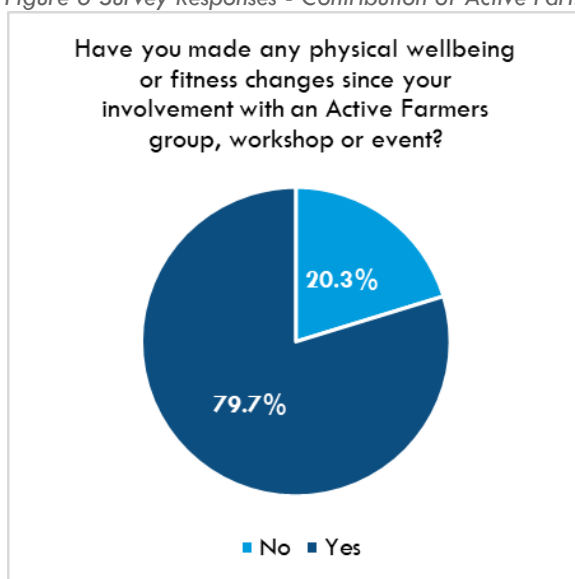


Figure 8 Survey Responses - Physical wellbeing and fitness changes

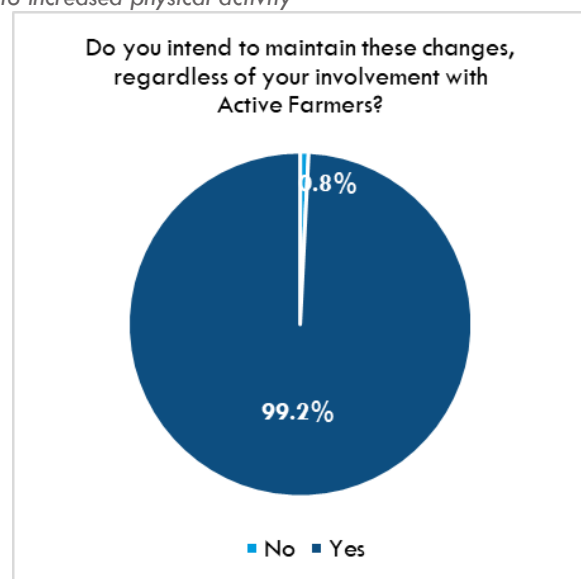


Figure 7 Survey Responses - Maintenance of changes

## MENTAL WELLBEING AND INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE

98.1% of respondents scored their mood at least a four out of five after attending an Active Farmers group or event, whilst 87.3% experienced an improvement in their general mood since participating in Active Farmers. The most common factors contributing to improvement in mood were regular physical activity, regular social connection, and taking time out.

In terms of influencing participants' feelings of perseverance, adaptability, determination, optimism, and/or self-esteem, a number of respondents highlighted a general improvement. They noted that their involvement with Active Farmers has helped to boost their self-esteem in relation to their fitness, strength and body image. Participants said they feel more motivated from the group and the results, and to a lesser extent they felt improvements in their sense of optimism and positivity.

**The impacts for participants on their day-to-day life include:**

- **Greater happiness, positivity and confidence**
- **More energy during the day (including to play with the kids)**
- **Finding work easier (whether physically or mentally), and**

- **Feeling more motivated.**

Interviews highlighted that participants experienced improvements in their mood after Active Farmers sessions and this subsequently set them up for their day, whether that is to cope with challenges and stress, or to feel energised for it. They identified that attending the Active Farmers helped them to feel that they are not the only ones experiencing their problems and that they are not alone. There was also a strong sense of achievement among participants.

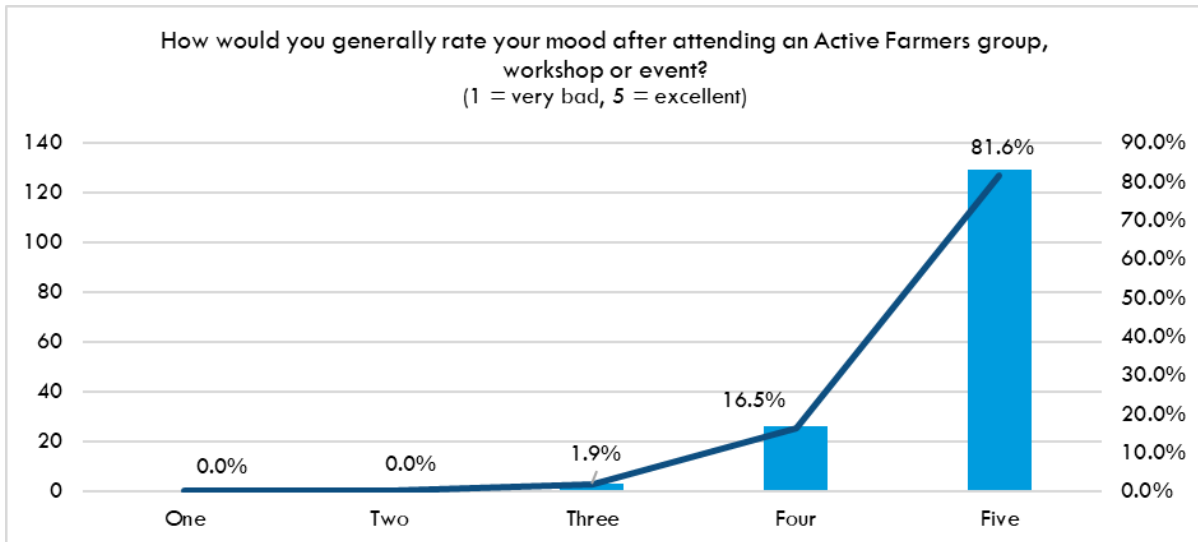


Figure 9 Survey Responses - Mood after Active farmers

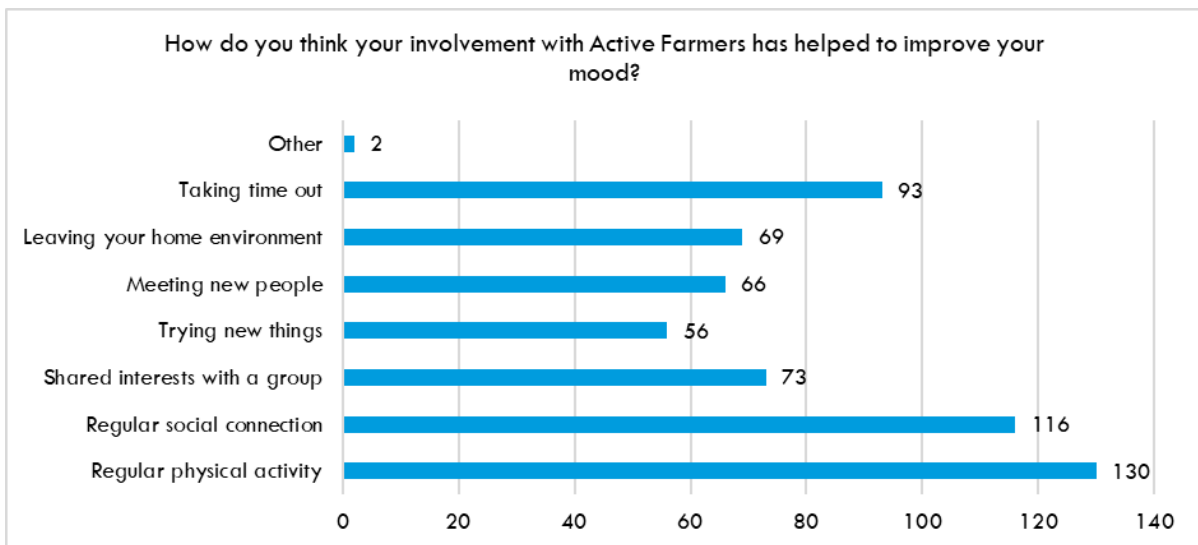


Figure 10 Survey Responses - Contribution of Active Farmers to changes in mood

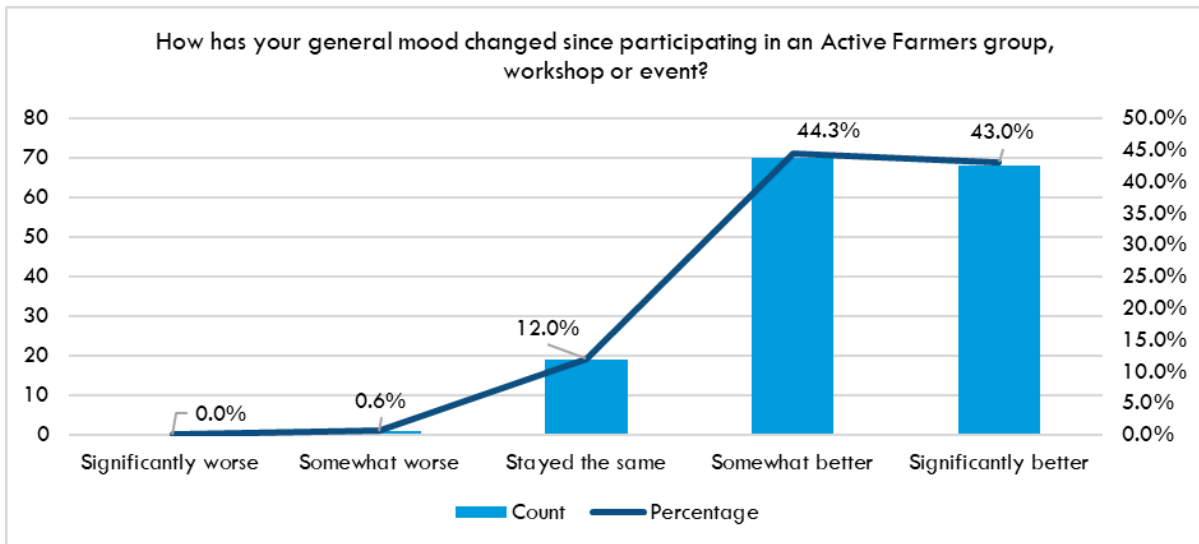


Figure 11 Survey Responses - General mood since participation in Active Farmers

## SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The majority (91.1%) of respondents indicated that they have had the opportunity to socialise with people they would not ordinarily be able to, and similarly 91.8% feel they have a greater sense of belonging through Active Farmers.

86.6% indicated that, to varying degrees, participation in Active Farmers has helped them build a better social network in their community. Whilst a number of respondents explained that they already had good social connections within their community, many also explained that they felt that Active Farmers provided them with the opportunity to meet new people, strengthen current relationships and to share interests with new and different people.

Some respondents indicated that the impacts of these relationships have included better communication within their community, more support among community members, being able to share common concerns, and relieving isolation.

Similarly, interviews with participants highlighted that the groups help people to make new friends and that there are ongoing interactions with other participants outside of the Active Farmers sessions, particularly between people who wouldn't ordinarily socialise with each other. ***This is resulting in playgroups and other social gatherings, which are beneficial for participants and their families. Active Farmers also offers the opportunity for people to train and socialise in their local communities, which keeps people local and is also an attractor for the area.*** Being a part of Active Farmers can make people feel they are a part of a bigger community, which extends beyond their current geographic community.

In their interviews, trainers too noted that the Active Farmers program has brought different groups together, including different age groups and fitness levels. They observed that some participants in their groups would not normally socialise with each other, but find they have common interest through the group, and this creates a sense of belonging and strengthens social networks. The groups also appear to build a sense of comradery between participants which results in them supporting and "egging" each other on.

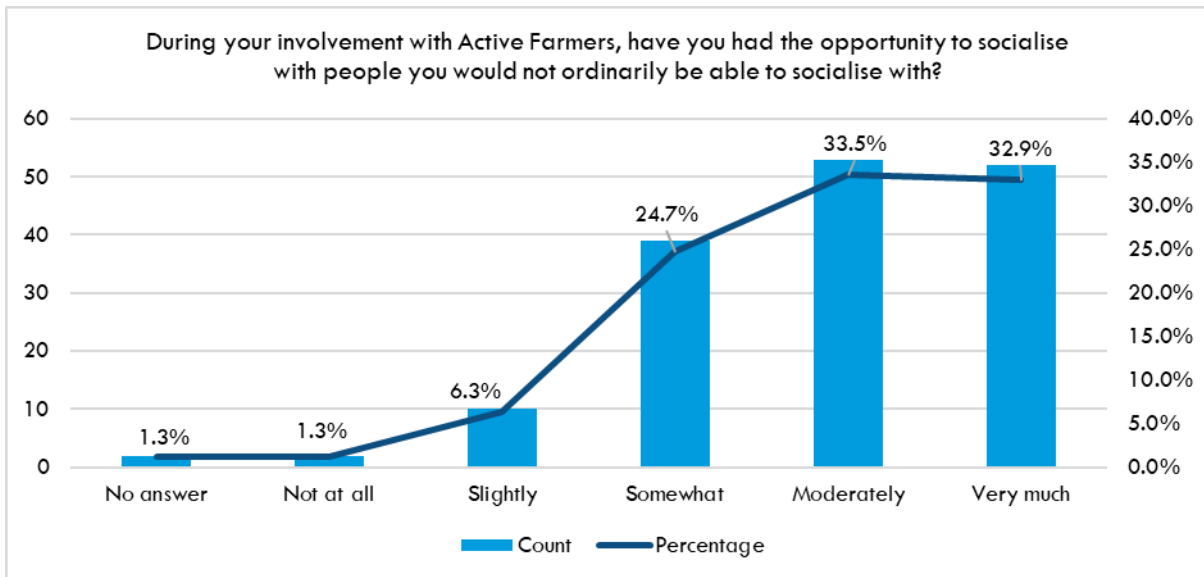


Figure 12 Survey Responses - Opportunity to socialise with new people

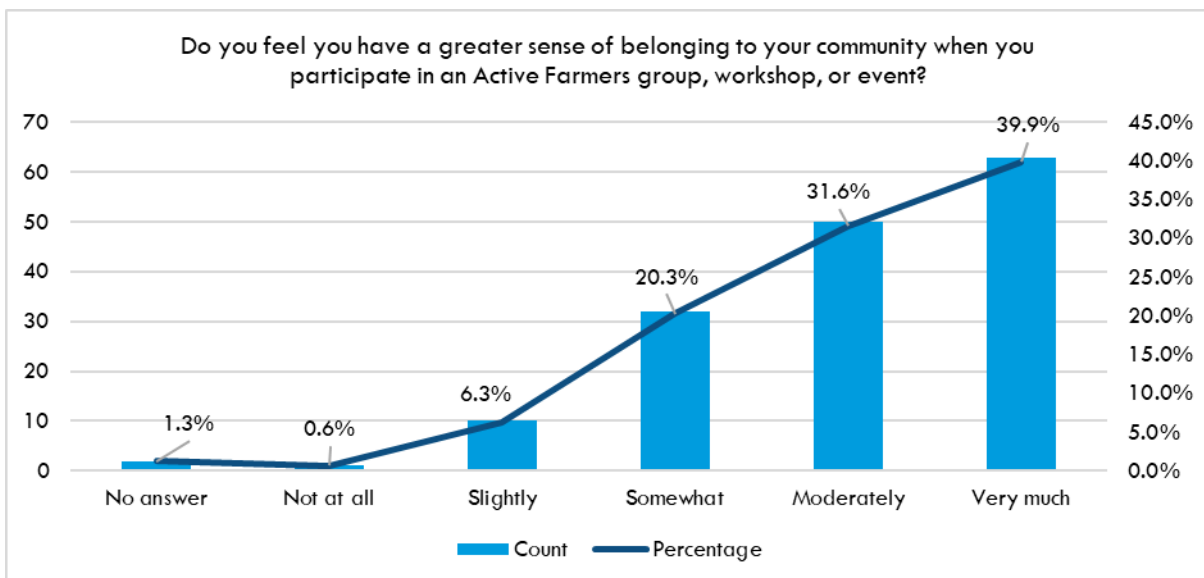


Figure 13 Survey Responses - Sense of belonging

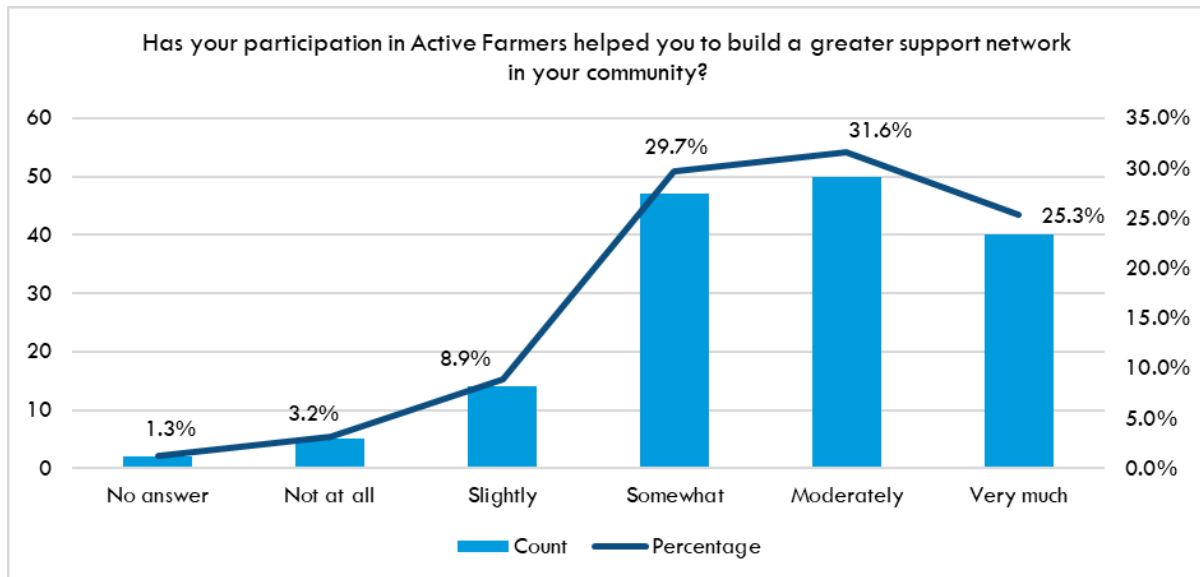


Figure 14 Survey Responses - Greater support network

## IMPROVING ACTIVE FARMERS

When asked to consider what their communities would be like without Active Farmers, both participants and trainers noted that for many communities there would be limited social and exercise opportunities and activities, particularly activities that don't involve the pub and alcohol. This would subsequently impact on health outcomes for people in the communities. People and communities would also not be able connect as much and would be more isolated and insular.

The qualitative data illustrates that for those who would like to see changes or improvement to the Active Farmers model, the most common change was more advertising to attract more participants, followed by more workshop and events, and more groups and sessions. A number of respondents also raised the name and branding of Active Farmers – noting that it might not appeal to people who are not farmers; the costs of the groups and possibility of offering promotion rates; and the need to engage more men in the program.



## DISCUSSION

The evaluation sort to test the impacts of the Active Farmers program on its participants, from the perspective of participants and trainers, against the intended short and long terms outcomes of the program. Noting that the evaluation is for the period 2018 to 2021, it was not intended for it to measure the success of the program in reaching its overall goals, but rather to identify whether it is achieving indicators for these goals. Overall, it is evident that Active Farmers has contributed to the resilience of many of the communities it works with, by improving the social fabric and connectedness of many of the communities it operates in. This subsequently leverages the reported improvements in physical and mental wellbeing of participants, as well as improvements in their self-esteem and sense of their ability to face adversity and to persevere. Participants identified that Active Farmers subsequently has positive impacts on their personal, social and work lives. However, these findings are tempered by the reported attendance numbers at many sessions, which whilst regular in nature, do not include large numbers of participants. This subsequently is reducing the reach of the Active Farmers program within its communities. However there also appears to be a desire among participants for Active Farmers to advertise more and engage more people in the groups.

### PHYSICAL WELLBEING

The results indicate that engagement with Active Farmers is resulting in participants *undertaking consistent physical activity, both internally and externally of its programs*. The evaluation identified that participants have increased and maintained their level of physical activity. For many participants the regular and group nature of the sessions has motivated them to either start exercising, or routinely keep exercising. Furthermore, for a number of communities, Active Farmers is only available option for physical exercise in the region, or the only option outside of sports such as rugby which is not necessarily suitable for the whole community. Both participants and trainers highlighted that Active Farmers helped participants realise what they could achieve, particularly once they started to see the changes for themselves and felt they had a base level of fitness.

Qualitative data indicated that some participants also feel they have greater capacity to manage their physical fitness and wellbeing, through greater knowledge about exercise from the classes, more nutrition knowledge, and introductions to other types of exercise they haven't tried before.

The vast majority of participants identified that they have made physical fitness and wellbeing changes and intend to maintain these changes, *indicating that they feel more energetic and are setting and working towards fitness and wellbeing goals*. Participants gave examples such as training for a half-ironman, completing their own personal training qualifications, and training for Active Farmers events such as the Run for Resilience. As such, it is evident that Active Farmers is contributing to both physical fitness and wellbeing improvements for participants, as well as their knowledge and capacity, even if they are only attending one class per week.

### MENTAL WELLBEING AND INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE

*Participants consistently noted the benefits of participating in the Active Farmers program for their day-to-day, and long term mood*. This was attributed strongly to not only undertaking regular physical exercise in the group but also to the opportunity to take time out of their normal routine and to meet up with other people. Participants identified that the groups gave people the opportunity to come together, train and share what they were going through, which often made them feel less alone.

As discussed above, the majority of participants are making wellbeing changes and seeking to maintain them, which speaks to their sense of perseverance and determination. Participants are more motivated and determined on a day-to-day basis, to exercise and improve, and to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Self-esteem was a common theme within the data – *participants highlighted that their self-esteem improved and stabilised* in relation to their capacity for exercise and fitness, their body image, and general confidence. It was evident that the changes in their confidence was an important benefit for participants and encouraged them to work towards their fitness goals, try new things, and interact with

new people. Optimism was, to a lesser extent, noted as a benefit – participants identified feeling more able to, for example, to face a stressful work environment or a bad day.

The notion of adaptability, as a reported on key concept of resilience, was not commonly raised in the Evaluation. However, participants feel that they have an improved sense of determination and confidence to try new things and manage the changes and ups-and-downs of their day-to-day lives, suggests that the Active Farmers program is contributing to their adaptability.

## SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The concept of Active Farmers as a social asset that provides opportunity for social connection and to strengthen relationships was consistently raised throughout the evaluation. While not relevant to all communities, *Active Farmers groups bring together not only people who share common interests, but also different groups in the community*, particularly different age groups. This increased participants' sense of belonging in their groups and community – for example, participants noted that they would look out for each other, if someone, unexpectedly, did not attend the group. This has given people a sense that they can rely on the people in their groups.

This strengthening of relationships has resulted in mums' groups, after-group coffee catch-ups, and other social and fitness activities. A number of participants also highlighted that as new residents of their respective communities, Active Farmers has helped them to meet people and settle in. The opportunity to socialise with other, like-minded people and share their problems makes participants feel less isolated and that they are not alone in these experiences. Some participants identified that this social connectedness had contributed to improvements in their mental wellbeing.

Active Farmers events have further helped the program to cement itself as one that brings people together for a common purpose, as much as for the exercise. Participants and trainers also highlighted that Active Farmers groups and events offered people a way to socialise in their communities where there are often few other choices, fulfilling a number of needs in many rural areas. It was further acknowledged that Active Farmers provided the opportunity to do this in an alcohol-free environment, which was often not common in rural community cohesion.

From a community perspective, it was noted that Active Farmers has also at times brought different communities together, as well as the people in them. One participant highlighted that it was important for participants and communities to come together to ensure that Active Farmers continued in their area, particularly when they had no other sporting options. *These are important aspects of community resilience and indicate that Active Farmers is creating or strengthening social fabrics* that could be utilised by communities to withstand disasters and develop their communities.

However, whilst those that do attend Active Farmers sessions, do regularly (75% of participants are attending at least weekly), a number of respondents noted that their classes would benefit from a greater number of participants. This would not only increase the reach of the benefits of the Active Farmers programs, in terms of physical, social and mental wellbeing, but also draw together a greater number of community members.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Overarching feedback for Active Farmers was that participants enjoy the program and its benefits and that it should keep doing what it is doing. However there are opportunities to leverage the current work and outcomes of the Active Farmers program to progress its impact for communities. Participants identified the community feel, social connectedness, group fitness and motivation, the instructors, and the workout routines and types of exercise as aspects of the program that they liked. Interviewees also noted that their communities would often not have other opportunities for group exercise in their area and the same level of social activity. In terms of where Active Farmers could improve - advertising, the number and types of groups and events, the cost, and the name and branding of the organisation, and the ability to engage men in the program were raised by respondents.

### 1. BRANDING AND MARKETING

The Evaluation has highlighted that Active Farmers' branding and marketing could be reviewed and augmented to increase engagement with the program.

Responses indicated that participants would like Active Farmers to advertise the program more, to engage a greater number of people in the groups, particularly younger people and men. Further, while the Active Farmers name and branding strongly speaks to the vision and purpose of the organisation, it was also seen by some respondents to be a barrier for people to get involved. Feedback suggests that Active Farmers can be seen as only a program for farmers, rather than the whole community. This is despite the large number of people from other professions involved in the program.

It is important for Active Farmers to consider its overall direction and target market in terms of how the organisation engages with the community. As such there may be a role for some myth-busting in the Active Farmers promotion and advertising about who the programs are for. Broader advertising suggestions included a greater social media presence, advertising in the local community, and promotion events. This could focus on local networks and groups such as corporate networks, parents' groups, and community and sporting clubs.

There could also be further reflection on whether the organisation should lean into its broader community impact and role in creating 'active communities', and consider re-branding in the future.

Noting these challenges, as well as the increasing number of groups involved with Active Farmers and the reliance on trainers to promote the program and events locally, there is an obvious need for further branding and marketing support in the Active Farmers team. This could be achieved through either the inclusion of a board member with the relevant skills and experience, or an additional staff member funded to coordinate engagement and events.

### 2. GROUPS AND EVENTS AND THE COST

Noting that the needs of each community will vary, a number of respondents requested not only more groups, session and events, but also the introduction of different types of exercise. The workshops and events appeared to be popular with participants, whilst more session times would allow more people to participate more often. Suggestions included more sessions per week, more community events, including inter-community events, and more yoga, pilates and meditation sessions. It is understood that each group is provided with \$500 to fund a workshop each year, however this is not always taken up.

Some respondents also raised the issue of the costs of the classes, and whether there could be lower rates as either a promotion or for all classes. Noting that Active Farmers relies on sponsorships and donations, as well as fees, the desire to provide more events and classes at an affordable rate is a complex issue for the organisation.

As such Active Farmers might benefit from undertaking further community consultation about class types and costs, and how they may be impacting participation and retention.

In terms of supporting trainers to organise more events with their current funding, as previously mentioned, an events coordination role would be beneficial. This role could also include responsibility for identifying health and wellbeing organisations that could provide event content for a number of groups in a region, and potentially complimentary sponsorship.

With regard to seeking funding for more events and groups, the evaluation highlighted that in some communities Active Farmers is the only option for group physical exercise. This important role should be further quantified and subsequently utilised to support applications to Government and other funding bodies. In particular, the potential value for money of funding an in-situ program such as Active Farmers, as opposed to the establishment of a new program, should be further investigated. One such connection to follow is with the Move It NQ program of the North Queensland Sports Foundation ([www.moveitnq.com.au](http://www.moveitnq.com.au)).

### 3. ENGAGING MEN WITH ACTIVE FARMERS

It is acknowledged that engaging more men in the Active Farmers program is an ongoing challenge and subsequent goal for the organisation. Both participants and trainers commented on the disparity, and suggestions included free classes for men, involving local sport clubs in Active Farmers, and having specific sessions for men. Men-only classes that have been held have been successful, however are reliant on the capacity of trainers to run extra sessions. Further engagement with and surveying of non-participants and trainers should be considered to identify barriers to participation with Active Farmers.

Noting the resource intensity of rolling out classes for specific groups, Active Farmers could consider a standalone four-week program aimed at engaging men in their local group. This program could be developed by the trainers collectively and implemented in each location as needed and when capacity permits. There may also be an opportunity to run this program as a broader men's health program, that includes associated wellbeing activities, and with support from relevant sponsors and health organisations in the region.

## REFERENCES

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# APPENDICES

## A. SURVEY QUESTIONS

1.	<p>Please select the option that best describes your involvement with Active Farmers:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Currently involved with Active Farmers as a part of a group, and/or attend a workshop or event in the last 12 months.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Previously involved with an Active Farmers as a part of a group, or attended a workshop or event more than 12 months ago.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never been involved with an Active Farmers group, workshop or event</p>
2.	<p>Please select the gender you identify with:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to identify</p>
3.	<p>Please select the category that includes your age:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Under 18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 18-24</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 25-34</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 35-44</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 55- 64</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 65 years and over</p>
4.	<p>Would you like to nominate to be involved in a 30 minute, online focus group to support this evaluation? The focus group will be an online discussion about your experiences from your involvement in Active Farmers, involving up to 10 past or current Active Farmer participants.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please add your email address</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
5.	<p>Would you like to nominate to be involved in a 30 minute, online interview to support this evaluation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please add your email address</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

6.	<p>Please select all of the Active Farmer events and workshops you have participated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition workshop</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness workshop</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calmer Farmer workshop</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yoga</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mental health first aid training</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 8 week challenge August 2020</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spring into Spring 2019 (Spring)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spring into 2020 (February)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spring into 2021 (February)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Active Farmers Games 2019</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Active Farmers Games 2020</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Run for Resilience Mangoplah 2020</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ride for resilience 2019</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Active Farmers Fundraising Ball 2018</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Summit cocktail party Wagga Wagga 2019</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> None of these</li> </ul>		
7.	<p>Please select all of the Active Farmers training group/s you are, or have been, involved with:</p> <p>NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adelong, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ariah Park, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book Book, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Burrumbuttock, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coleambally, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collector, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coonamble, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Crookwell, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dunedoo, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eugowra, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eurongilly, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goolagong, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grenfell, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hay, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illabo, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Jugiong, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ladysmith, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mangoplah, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mullaley, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pretty Pine, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quandialla, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stockinbingal, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talwood, NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tarcutta, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Temora, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tuena, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Vermont Hill, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wallendbeen, NSW</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Weengallon, NSW</li> </ul> <p>Western Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cranbrook, WA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gnowangerup, WA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hyden, WA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kellerberrin, WA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tambullup, WA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Williams, WA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nyabing, WA</li> </ul> <p>Tasmania</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Campbell Town, Tas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cressy, Tas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hagle, Tas</li> </ul> <p>Victoria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bridgewater, VIC</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wando Vale, Vic</li> </ul> <p>Queensland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hughendon, QLD</li> </ul>	<p>South Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appila, SA</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am not and have never been involved with a group, but I have attended other Active Farmer workshops and events</li> </ul>
8.	<p>When did you first join an Active Farmers Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Before 2018</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2018</li> </ul>		

	<input type="checkbox"/> 2019 <input type="checkbox"/> 2020 <input type="checkbox"/> 2021
9.	<p>Are you still attending an Active Farmers Group (including if you have had a break and re-joined):</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10.	<p>What do you like most about Active Farmers?</p>
11.	<p>How often are you, or have you attended, an Active Farmers group?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> I have never attended a group training session <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one session per month <input type="checkbox"/> One to three sessions per month <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> More than once per week
12.	<p>Are you undertaking any exercise outside of your Active Farmers group?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
13.	<p>Has the amount of exercise you are doing outside of Active Farmers increased since you started attending an Active Farmers group?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
14.	<p>Please indicate to what extent your involvement with an Active Farmers group has contributed to this increase in physical activity: (1 = not all, 5 = very much so)</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
15.	<p>Have you made any other physical wellbeing or fitness changes since your involvement with an Active Farmers group, workshop or event?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
16.	<p>Do you intend to maintain these changes, regardless of your involvement with Active Farmers?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
17.	<p>Please explain why not:</p>
18.	<p>How would you generally rate your mood after attending an Active Farmers group, workshop or event? (1 = low, 5 = high)</p> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2



	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
19.	<p>How has your general mood changed since participating in an Active Farmers group, workshop or event?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Significantly worse <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat worse <input type="checkbox"/> Stayed the same <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat better <input type="checkbox"/> Significantly better
20.	<p>How do you think your involvement with Active Farmers has helped to improve your mood? Please select all that apply:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular physical activity <input type="checkbox"/> Regular social connection <input type="checkbox"/> Shared interests with a group <input type="checkbox"/> Trying new things <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting new people <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving your home environment <input type="checkbox"/> Taking time out <input type="checkbox"/> Other <p>Please specify:</p>
21.	<p>How, if at all, has your participation in an Active Farmers group, workshop or event influenced your feelings of perseverance, adaptability, determination, optimism, and/or self-esteem? Please discuss:</p>
22.	<p>If your participation in Active Farmers has influenced your feelings of perseverance, adaptability, determination, optimism, and/or self-esteem, what has been the impact of these changes in your day-to-day life? Please discuss:</p>
23.	<p>During your involvement with Active Farmers, have you had the opportunity to socialise with people you would not ordinarily be able to socialise with?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> Very much
24.	<p>Do you feel you have a greater sense of belonging to your community when you participate in an Active Farmers group, workshop, or event?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> Very much
25.	<p>Has your participation in Active Farmers helped you to build a greater support network in your community?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all

	<input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> Very much
26.	Please explain your answer:

## B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### ACTIVE FARMERS PARTICIPANTS

1. Why did you get involved with Active Farmers?
2. How often are you/ have you attended your Active Farmers group
3. Has active farmers impacted your physical wellbeing, if so how?
  - a. Improved fitness
  - b. Sustained fitness
  - c. Why not?
4. Has active farmers classes and workshops improved your capacity to manage your physical wellbeing?
  - a. Better fitness knowledge
  - b. Better nutrition knowledge
  - c. Skills and knowledge to manage your physical wellbeing outside of classes?
5. How has Active Farmers, if at all, impacted your mood?
  - a. Day to day after classes
  - b. Long term
6. How has your participation in active farmers affected your sense of self esteem, perseverance, and optimism?
  - a. Do you feel these are sustained changes?
7. Thinking about what we have discussed, what about Active Farmers has contributed to these changes for you?
  - a. Do these changes affect your personal life, social life, work life?
8. Do you feel that Active Farmers has helped to strengthen your social networks?
  - a. Do you interact with people you would normally get to?
  - b. Do you feel you can rely on these people?
9. What do you feel the impact of Active Farmers has been on your community more broadly?
  - a. Social connection
  - b. Better physical wellbeing
  - c. Liveability
10. What would your community be like without active farmers?
11. What would you improve about Active Farmers?
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

### ACTIVE FARMERS TRAINERS

1. Why did you become involved with Active Farmers?
2. Can you describe your Active Farmers group, their general attendance, and responses to the classes?

3. What benefits do you think your classes, and Active Farmers more broadly, provides your community?
  - a. Do you think Active Farmers has increased your community's capability to improve their physical wellbeing?
  - b. What kind of improvements have you seen in your participants?
4. Do you feel Active Farmers has helped to strengthen social networks in your community?
5. Do you feel that Active Farmers has helped to bring different people and groups together in your community?
6. What do you think your community would be like without Active Farmers?
7. What would like to see Active Farmers do differently?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?