

Seaton Foundation

Annual Giving & Impact Snapshot



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Supporting community-led change across the Northern Rivers

This is Seaton Foundation's first Annual Giving & Impact Snapshot. It shares what Seaton Foundation has contributed through its giving, what that support has helped make possible, and how we are strengthening the way we fund, learn and work with others.

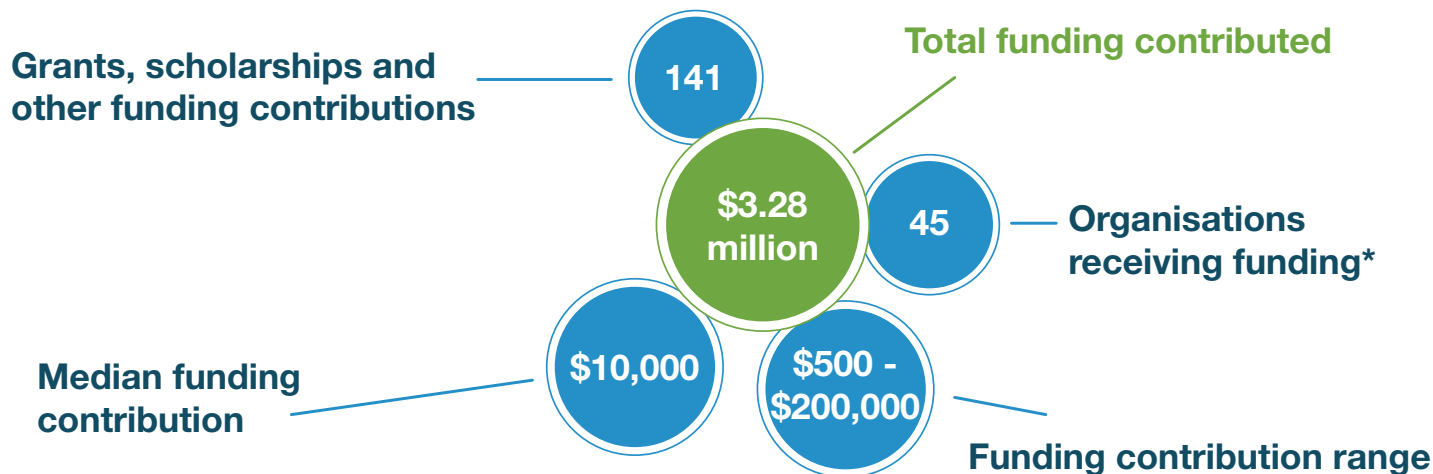
Seaton Foundation works alongside local not-for-profit organisations, community leaders and partners across the Northern Rivers. These are the people and organisations closest to the work, who understand the needs and opportunities in their communities and turn resources and local knowledge into action, creating outcomes that matter to their communities.

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Note: Figures in this Snapshot cover grantmaking to 30 June 2025, the reporting cut-off adopted for this inaugural Snapshot.

Giving Snapshot FY2015-FY2025



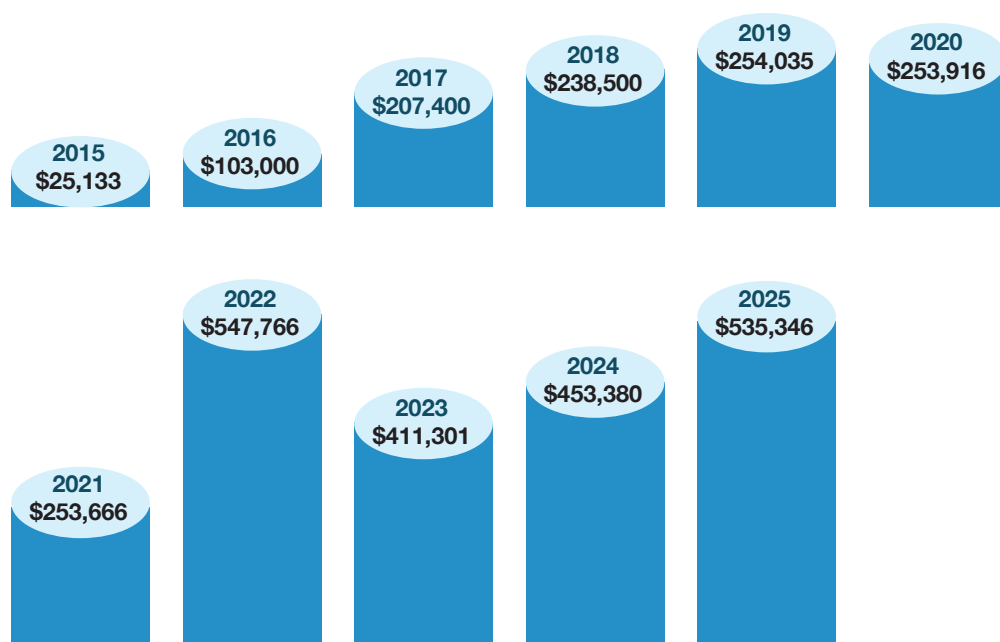
* Excludes scholarships and related funding.

Since making its first grants in 2015, Seaton Foundation has contributed more than \$3.28 million through 141 grants, scholarships and other funding contributions.

The numbers matter, but they are only part of the story. Over that period, the Foundation's giving has grown in both scale and breadth, from a smaller number of deep early commitments into a broader pattern of support. Seaton Foundation has worked with more organisations, across more focus areas and in more varied ways, including support that extends beyond grants, while continuing to stand alongside organisations whose work takes time to build and sustain.

This evolution reflects what Seaton Foundation has learned through practice: that community needs change, and that the organisations responding to them are best served by funders who are responsive and able to support work that may not fit neatly into conventional funding models.

Annual Giving FY2015-FY2025 – how giving has changed over time



Responding to community needs

Seaton Foundation's Focus Areas are where it prioritises its giving. They are best understood as guideposts, reflecting the reality that community needs rarely sit neatly within one category. The Foundation remains responsive to urgent needs, emerging opportunities and work that aligns with its mission and values.

While giving has remained strongest in Youth & Education Equity and Health, Wellbeing & Dignity, over the decade Seaton Foundation has broadened its giving across a wider range of needs.

Giving by focus area

Focus Area	Funding 2015 - 2025	Share of Total Giving
Youth & Education Equity	\$1.47 million	44.7%
Health, Wellbeing & Dignity	\$1.18 million	36.1%
Animal Welfare & Wildlife Support	\$291,515	8.9%
Disaster Response	\$147,967	4.5%
Scholarships and Related Funding	\$108,775	3.3%
Environment & Cultural Heritage	\$51,000	1.6%

Excludes Sector & strategic support. Percentages are calculated against total giving. Historical giving has been mapped to Seaton Foundation's current Focus Areas for consistency.

Building trusted relationships

Between FY2015 and FY2025, Seaton Foundation provided funding to 45 organisations for projects and initiatives across the Northern Rivers.

These organisations work across a wide range of needs, from youth mental health, literacy and family wellbeing to animal welfare, disaster response, health services, homelessness, environmental care and community support.

Sustained support is an important part of Seaton Foundation's approach. Eighteen organisations have received funding more than once, and 15 have been funded across more than one financial year.

Scholarships

Scholarships help individuals and groups access opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach. Seaton Foundation works through trusted partners and pathways, including The Lord's Taverners Northern NSW, which supports young people to participate in sport.

Across the decade, Seaton Foundation contributed \$108,775 through 17 scholarships and scholarship-related funding contributions.



Becoming a Better Enabler

Seaton Foundation is strengthening its approach to grantmaking through clearer processes, more flexible funding and support that goes beyond money.

The Foundation's FY26–FY28 Strategic Plan sets out a roadmap for this work. It outlines how the Foundation works, how it learns and improves, and how it contributes to community-led change.

Working through trust

Seaton Foundation's grantmaking approach is relational, practical and grounded in trust. It is founded on the principle that community organisations are closest to the work and best placed to understand what is needed to achieve the outcomes they seek for people, animals, places and communities. Seaton Foundation's role is to listen, resource and support — not to direct.

Making funding easier to navigate and report on

Seaton Foundation has strengthened and clarified its grant pathways so organisations can better understand what funding is available, where their initiative may fit and what process to expect.

The pathways are designed to balance structure with flexibility: allowing the Foundation to respond to urgent and emerging needs, and creating opportunities for new ideas, priority focus areas and longer-term funding relationships.

Seaton Foundation is committed to providing support beyond funding. Most recently, this has included access to specialist advice to help grant recipients work through particular challenges or opportunities, with the Foundation continuing to develop this kind of support.

Reporting is also evolving to be proportionate, practical and useful: enough to support accountability and learning without asking organisations to produce information that is not needed or used.

As these updated pathways and processes become established, Seaton Foundation will be able to draw on richer information from grant recipients about activities, outcomes, learning and what support is most useful.

Grant pathways

Always Open:

For time-sensitive initiatives responding to new or emerging needs, unexpected events, crises or disasters.

New Approaches:

For new ideas, pilots, feasibility work and other innovative approaches within the Foundation's Focus Areas.

Strategic Focus:

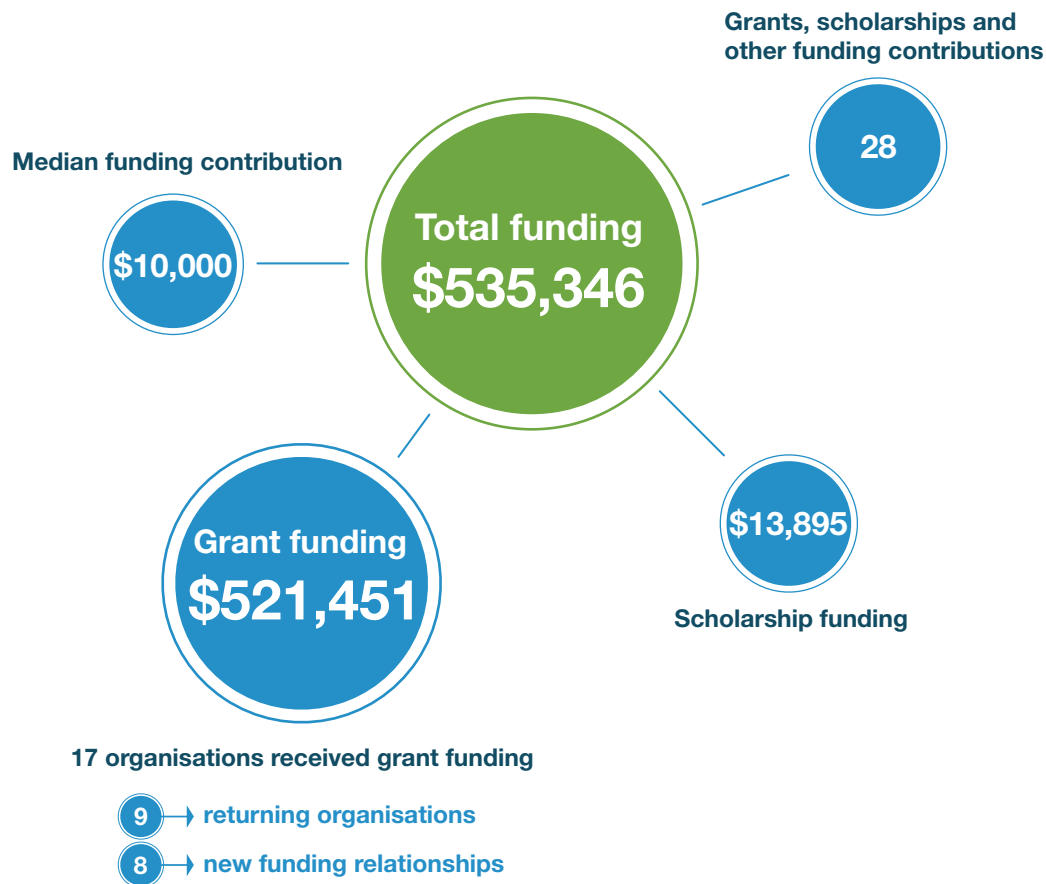
For initiatives that provide a clear, considered response to community needs in an identified focus or priority area.

Multi-year Partnerships:

Partnerships developed through established relationships with organisations the Foundation has previously funded and worked with.



A Year in Focus – FY2025



FY2025 was the busiest year in the period covered by this Snapshot, with the highest number of funding contributions and the second-highest total value of giving.

The year also marked the Foundation's tenth anniversary. Through its 10 x 10 Grants, Seaton Foundation awarded ten grants of \$10,000, totalling \$100,000, recognising organisations working across the Northern Rivers. Nine of the ten recipients had received Seaton Foundation funding previously, while one was a new funding relationship.

FY2025 also continued the Foundation's mix of sustained relationships and openness to new organisations.



Giving By Focus Area FY2025

Focus Area	FY 2025 Total Funding	Share of Total Giving	Recipients - Alphabetical
Health, Wellbeing & Dignity	\$244,451	45.7%	Ballina Refugee Resettlement and Welcome; Byron Bay Community Benefit Fund; Lighthouse Laundry Services; NextSense; Orange Sky Australia; Our Kids; Sprung Integrated Dance; Story Dogs
Youth & Education Equity	\$115,000	21.5%	Human Nature; The Lord's Taverners Northern NSW
Animal Welfare & Wildlife Support	\$50,000	9.3%	Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital; Northern Rivers Animal Services
Disaster Response	\$45,000	8.4%	Marine Rescue Ballina; Wardell Core
Environment & Cultural Heritage	\$45,000	8.4%	Positive Change For Marine Life
Sector & Strategic support	\$22,000	4.1%	Evolve Network; Northern Rivers Community Foundation
Scholarships and Related Funding	\$13,895	2.6%	Dance Integrated Australia; Human Nature; Northern Rivers Football Academy; The Lord's Taverners Northern NSW



Grants At Work

Seaton Foundation thanks all grant recipients and partners for the work they continue to do across the Northern Rivers.

The following stories offer a closer look at a small number of organisations and initiatives supported by Seaton Foundation during FY2025. They are not the whole story of the Foundation's giving, but they help bring some of that work to life.

Each organisation, project and initiative works in its own context, with its own people and purpose. Together, these efforts contribute to the broader change communities are working towards across the Northern Rivers.



Photo supplied by Human Nature. For privacy, the photograph is posed and features a model.

In Australia, one in five young people aged 11 to 17 report high or very high levels of psychological distress. Yet services are often designed either for young people with early or mild needs, or for those experiencing acute crisis. Between these sits a gap in service provision commonly described as the ‘missing middle’, leaving many young people unable to access support that meets their needs.

Human Nature is a nationally accredited youth mental health service based in Ballina, providing free, long-term support to 14- to 18-year-olds across the Far North Coast of NSW. It was established to help address this gap. Human

Nature’s approach is shaped by the insight that when a young person does not engage with mental health support, the difficulty is often attributed to the young person, when it may instead lie in the environment in which that support is offered. Formal clinical settings can be intimidating, and for someone carrying trauma they can close down the relationship before it begins. Human Nature changes the setting. Its therapists apply clinical expertise where a young person feels safe: at home, in a local café, and wherever possible outdoors. Human Nature describes this as meeting them where they are. This lowers stress and helps build an effective therapeutic relationship.

In 2025, an independent evaluation by Charles Sturt University’s Rural Health Research Institute examined the program’s outcomes. It found significant improvements in overall wellbeing and across all seven wellbeing domains measured,

including self-esteem, feelings and emotions, and engagement with school, work and relationships. The improvements held across diverse participant groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and young people from disadvantaged communities. The evaluators concluded that Human Nature offers a credible alternative to clinical settings for young people who cannot engage with conventional services and identified it as a model worth scaling.

Human Nature is now using that evidence to make the case for government investment: the larger, longer-term funding it needs to reach more of the young people who currently fall through the gap.

Seaton Foundation’s involvement goes back to the organisation’s early development. A decade ago, the Foundation funded Human Nature’s early Recre8 expeditions, and it has continued to support the organisation’s work in the years since. That support continued through 2024–2025, including multi-year funding for Human Nature’s Elev8 program.

Elev8 — The Next Step

Elev8, which Human Nature launched in 2020 with Seaton Foundation’s support, was created in response to what young people said they needed: a way to stay connected, and to keep building skills and confidence alongside peers who understood their experience.

Five years on, Elev8 works as a step-down pathway from one-to-one therapy, a place to maintain connection and belonging through group activities, camps and skill-building. Some participants now sit on a Youth Leadership Team that helps shape Human Nature’s programs, developing confidence and leadership as they do.

Most recently, Human Nature expanded the program to provide employment support using Orygen’s evidence-based Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, helping young people pursue employment goals alongside their mental health recovery.





Photo supplied by Our Kids.

Around 50,000 children are cared for through the Northern Rivers health system each year. The region's special care nurseries alone care for around a third of local babies. When the right equipment is not available locally, children and young people may need to be transferred to larger hospitals, often Sydney or the Gold Coast, for care that could be delivered closer to home.

Our Kids exists to close that gap, raising awareness and purchasing paediatric medical equipment for local hospitals including Lismore Base Hospital, Tweed Hospital and Grafton Base Hospital, as well as surrounding hospitals across the Northern Rivers. Its support reaches across maternity, paediatric, mental health and emergency services.

The stakes are rarely only medical. Keeping care local keeps families together and eases the emotional and financial weight of a child's illness. As Rebekka Battista, Fundraising Coordinator for Our Kids, says, "Everyone is affected when families are separated for medical care."

Seaton Foundation has supported Our Kids for several years, beginning with a CTG machine used to monitor the health of babies and mothers. Since then, it has funded equipment including a Humidicrib, phototherapy lights and phototherapy Biliblankets. This phototherapy equipment is used to treat newborn jaundice. When babies discharged from the Special Care Nursery cannot be readmitted to it, the children's ward needs its own means of treating jaundice. These portable lights can be moved to where they are needed, rather than fixed to one ward, and allow babies to be treated while in their mother's embrace and during breastfeeding.

Most recently, a 10 x 10 Grant contributed to the purchase of an ICON retinal imaging camera for premature babies who are at higher risk of serious vision loss. Until now, these babies have travelled to the Gold Coast for imaging, one recently from as far as Grafton. The new camera, portable and supported by the Gold Coast clinical team, will help keep that care in the region.

For Our Kids, the equipment is a means, not an end. What it enables is care delivered close to home, families kept together, and children treated in the region rather than sent to the city.



Photo supplied by Story Dogs.

Literacy results across Australian schools have been largely static for more than a decade, and classroom teachers are stretched. Children who need extra reading support — perhaps because English is an additional language, because reading has not yet clicked, or because home circumstances make it harder — can struggle to get the one-on-one time that helps most.

Janine Sigley, Managing Director and co-founder, describes Story Dogs as flipping the traditional approach to remedial reading on its head.

A trained volunteer and their dog (a Dog Team) visit a school each week for approximately two hours. During each visit, the Dog Team leads five 20-minute, one-on-one reading sessions with children chosen by the classroom teacher. These same children then continue weekly sessions for at least two school terms or the whole year. The child reads to the dog at their own pace in a relaxed, non-judgmental environment. Because the dog does not judge, children can relax and enjoy the experience. By participating in Story Dogs, children feel special rather than singled out, helping to remove the stigma often associated with needing additional reading support.

An evaluation of Story Dogs, drawing on surveys of parents, teachers and volunteers, shows that children who take part strengthen their reading and literacy skills. But the strongest change reported through Story Dogs is often in confidence and self-belief. That change flows through to how children engage with school, their attendance, and their social relationships.

Story Dogs also creates positive outcomes for its volunteers, many of them older people, who find purpose, connection and a meaningful way to contribute to their community alongside a dog who, by every account, enjoys the work as much as anyone.

Seaton Foundation has supported Story Dogs over several years, contributing to a cumulative reach of around 160 children and 28,000 reading sessions. Its FY2025 grant funded five Dog Teams across the Tweed Coast and Byron areas — at Brunswick Heads, Byron Community, The Pocket, Tweed Heads and Bangalow public schools — reaching more children in the region with the weekly one-on-one reading time the program is built on.

Northern Rivers Animal Services

Animal Welfare & Wildlife Support



Photo supplied by Northern Rivers Animal Services.

Each year in the Northern Rivers, hundreds of dogs and cats are lost, abandoned or surrendered. In 2024, Northern Rivers Animal Services took in 155 surrendered dogs and 139 surrendered cats, each one needing food, veterinary care, safety and the chance of a new home.

Established in Ballina in 2001, NRAS is a community-based charity that rescues, rehabilitates and rehomes companion animals across the region. Much of the work is carried out by volunteers, foster carers, two op shops and a local community that continues to support the organisation.

Animal rescue is visible when a dog or cat is adopted. Less visible is the infrastructure that makes that outcome possible: trained staff, capable volunteers, administration systems, shelter coordination, veterinary care and preventive work that reduces the number of unwanted litters entering the system.

Seaton Foundation has been a long-term supporter of NRAS, providing funding for education and training, as well as administrative capacity. This support has helped NRAS strengthen its operations and the capability of staff and volunteers and, as Jo Parker, NRAS President, says, 'future-proof our facilities'.

In FY2025, Seaton Foundation supported the employment of a part-time Assistant Shelter Manager. NRAS was also one of the recipients of Seaton Foundation's 10 x 10 Grants, which NRAS directed to its Subsidised Desexing Scheme.

The scheme helps people experiencing financial hardship to desex their companion animals, reducing the risk of unwanted pregnancies and litters. Through the scheme, 72 dogs and 46 cats were desexed.

For NRAS, rescue, shelter support and desexing all sit at the practical heart of animal welfare. Together, they mean animals that come into care can be looked after safely while they wait for new homes; more owners can take preventive action before unwanted litters are born; and the volunteers and staff behind the work have more of the support they need to keep going.



Looking Ahead

This Snapshot marks a starting point for more consistent annual reporting. Future Snapshots will build from this baseline, drawing on richer information from grant recipients and partners as Seaton Foundation continues to strengthen its grantmaking and support beyond funding.

The Foundation will also continue to develop its role in the Northern Rivers philanthropic ecosystem: building values-aligned relationships with other funders and partners, contributing to shared learning, and looking for opportunities to connect resources with community-led work.

Seaton Foundation's current Strategic Plan sets out four levers for impact that describe how the Foundation works and how it intends to keep improving:

How We Work - the values, relationships and culture that shape our partnerships

What We Do - the tools, resources and mechanisms we use to support change

What We Learn and Improve - how we reflect, adapt and improve over time

How We Support Systemic Change - the systems and conditions we influence to support lasting community impact.

Together, these describe Seaton Foundation's role: to resource and support community-led work, strengthen the conditions that help it succeed, and keep improving not only what the Foundation funds, but how it gives, learns and works alongside others.

