

A message from the Director . . .



Jocellin Jansson
Executive Director

March is always an exciting time for CEFA as this is when all of our communities report in with information on the grants they have given for 2008. This year, together we have provided 152 grants totalling \$151,605. When adding to this the funds contributed by our Education Partners, the total stands at just over \$225,000. As always, it is interesting to see the diversity of vocations and further study being undertaken by our recipients. Pursuits range from Jillaroods, Radiography, Bachelor of Production at NIDA, Property Valuation, Plumbing, Agriculture and Music, just to name a few. Greatly increasing our Education Partnerships over the last 12 months has provided an additional helping hand to many of our recipients. With a recent report from the Centre for Rural Social research at CSU estimating the annual living costs of a young person studying away from home at between \$15,000 and \$20,000, plus re-location and start up costs of between \$3,000 to \$6,000, our Education Partnerships are a vital part of providing assistance to our recipients who are undertaking tertiary (TAFE or Uni) study.

The Real Cost For Rural Students to Access Tertiary Education

Along with those from low SES backgrounds, people from rural and isolated backgrounds remain the most under-represented groups at university (in many cases, rural and isolated areas are also defined as low SES so there is significant overlap between these groups and the educational disadvantages they experience). Participation rates for rural and isolated students have continued to gradually decrease over the last decade .

Most rural students need to relocate from their family home in order to study at university. The recent report from the Centre for Rural Social research at CSU estimates the annual living costs of a young person studying away from home at between \$15,000 and \$20,000, plus re-location and start up costs of between \$3,000 to \$6,000. This is a significant cost that urban families do not have to bear and which most rural families cannot afford. Students must then work very long hours while studying to support themselves or families make considerable financial sacrifices, including high levels of debt.

Many rural students are ineligible for Youth Allowance due to the tightness of eligibility criteria. The income threshold for the dependent rate is far too low for regional families, many of whom are deemed to be asset rich, despite the significant additional expenses rural families face in accessing education opportunities.

While the Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarships have been a useful initiative to assist relocation costs, they only go a small way to redress the large additional costs that regional families face. As these scholarships are allocated on similar financial grounds to Youth Allowance, students who fail to qualify for Youth Allowance are rarely eligible for these scholarships either. There is an increasing tendency for students to defer offers in order to earn sufficient income to qualify for the Independent rate of Youth Allowance and/or to save funds to support themselves.

(The above information was compiled by University of South Australia from research conducted by Naomi Godden (2007) and Universities Australia (2006))

Welcome and Thank You...

In the last month we have started two new Education Foundation communities, Dirranbandi (QLD) and Balranald (NSW). The new Balranald Country Education Foundation was made possible by a donation from The Raymond E Purves Foundation. We are excited to have also received funding for two more new communities; Hay (NSW) from the Burrabogie Pastoral Company and Deniliquin (NSW) from FS Falkiner & Sons. A big thank you to these generous supporters.



Dirranbandi Education Group Committee



Balranald Education Fund Committee

We look forward to working with these two new communities and helping to make their local education foundations a great success.

Number Crunch...

With our communities having just reported on grants given to students for 2008, we are pleased to share with you the results;

Total value of grants given in 2008 = \$151,605
Total number of grants given in 2008 = 152
Coupled with the \$73,800 that came from our Education Partners, the total value of the grants given in 2008 was \$225,405.

In 2008, our grants are broken up as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Degree | 70% |
| Certificate/Diploma | 22% |
| Vocation/Apprenticeship | 8% |
| Total | 100% |

Since CEFA's commencement in 1993:
Total value of grants given = \$ 712,673
Total number of grants given = 807
The average grant given is \$1,000, but typically ranges from \$500 to \$3,000

Supporting our youth

Youth Allowance—Austudy... Missing The Mark For Rural Youth

When thinking about the financial challenges rural students face in trying to access tertiary study, the facts make it easy to understand why the challenge is too great for many. In 2007 the number of students deferring their university offers reached record levels. Universities Australia conducted a study into Student Finances in 2006 and made the following recommendations to the federal government, yet nothing has changed;

-Removal of the assessable income component for all scholarships and bursaries regardless of their funding source;

-A reduction in the age of independence for Youth Allowance from the current 25 years to 18 in order that university students will not be assessed on the basis of their parents' income and assets. Noting that section 1067A (4) of the *Social Security Act 1991* states that 'A person is independent if the person is at least 25 years old. This age will be progressively reduced over time.'

Deborah Tranter (Senior Project Officer – Equity) at the University of South Australia said 'It is still very difficult for students to meet eligibility criteria for Youth Allowance/Austudy, especially the category of Independence. University Australia's (UA) Survey stats indicate only 35% of students receive any assistance from Austudy/YA'.

Deborah went on to make the following three observations about levels of youth allowances and how it missing the mark;

-For those students who are eligible, Youth Allowance/Austudy is totally inadequate to meet students living expenses, especially if living independently. The Independent level of Youth Allowance is actually 20% below the deemed poverty line.

-Students need to work an increasing number of paid hours to meet basic living requirements. Stats from UA survey suggest over 70% of full-time students are also in paid employment and the average number of hours worked is 14.8 hours a week, with many working considerably more hours.

-The increasing reliance on paid work then affects students' engagement with study (40% indicate paid work adversely affects their study) and is making required practicum work increasingly difficult to organise. Students can't afford to take blocks of time away from paid work to undertake required practicum eg Health Sciences, Teaching. Students reluctant to take practicum experiences in rural/regional areas, esp those from rural areas who may be more interested in returning to country – but they're often the most reliant on paid work.

(The above information was compiled by Uni SA from research conducted by Universities Australia in 2006)

Julia Gillard has made repeated strong comments about the need for Social Inclusion to be put at the forefront of the Rudd government's agenda. A key part of what Ms Gillard sees as Social Inclusion is education and making it more accessible to those who are marginalised. In a recent speech at the University of NSW by our Executive Director, Ms Gillard spoke of her concern for such issues as 1 in 7 Australian children are growing up in a household where no adult works.

Education lies at the heart of solving this and many of the challenges we face as a country and we truly hope that Mr Rudd and Ms Gillard will give this issue the attention it deserves.

The Search is Over

Finally after a great deal of searching, we have found a 'local champion' in Moree who is in the process of establishing an education foundation for local youth. We are grateful Jo Horton, Careers Advisor from the Moree Secondary College for her commitment to seeing this happen and chairing the committee. Also to Paul Fischer from Boyce Chartered Accountants in Moree who will provide the treasury and secretarial support. Thank you once again to the Boyce Accounting group for being such a great partner to CEFA.

NSW Rural Careers Cross Road Conference

Parkes played host to many rural Careers Advisers, Local Careers Partners (LCPs) and tertiary education providers this month. The Country Education Foundation was showcased at the event proving an ideal forum for raising awareness and interest from prospective new education foundation communities.

It was great to see so many Careers Advisers and LCPs from our local education foundation communities including Goulburn, Narrabri, Braidwood, Moree, Gilgandra, Boorowa, Broken Hill, Mudgee, Wee Waa, Upper Hunter



CEFA Communities . . .

New South Wales—Ardlethan, Balranald, Boorowa, Braidwood, Broken Hill, Cessnock, Coonamble, Cowra, Gilgandra, Goulburn, Gulargambone, Harden, Junee, Merriwa, Monaro, Mudgee, Mullaley, Narrabri, Upper Hunter, Wee Waa, Yass, Young
Queensland—Dirranbandi, Paroo
South Australia—Birdwood, Coober Pedy, Eudunda, Kangaroo Island, Kimba, Wool Wine and Wheat (Clare)

Our Mission

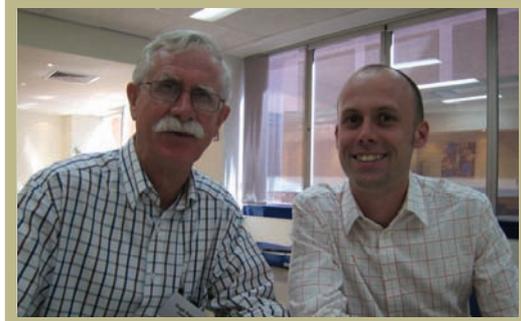
To foster the further education, career and personal development opportunities of rural youth, through community based encouragement and financial assistance.

2008 CEFA Conference

March saw quite a few of our committee members from around the country meet in Sydney to share information, discuss issues relating to youth and education in their communities and gain some new strategies and ideas to take back home. Equally important was the opportunity to celebrate together the great work these generous volunteers do in their community.



Jemima Buckman-2007 National Aspiring Leaders Summit, and Nick Burton Taylor Chairman of CEFA



Hugh Barrett-Narrabri, and Ben Callaghan-Outward Bound



Katie Walker-Yass and CEFA Board, and Ian Mackey-Mullaley



Annette Cameron-Birdwood, and Ginny Taylor-Coonamble



Duncan McIntyre-Upper Hunter, and Hugh Barrett-Narrabri



Warwick Souter-Kanagroo Island, Barb Manion-Boorowa, Julia Burton Taylor-CEFA Board



Emily Berman-CEFA, Katie Walker-Yass and CEFA Board, Anne Maslin-Monaro



Jono Forrest-Monaro, Malcolm Bartholomaeus-Wool Wine and Wheat, Nick Burton Taylor-CEFA Board

Sharing their Dreams