

Transforming the lives of rural and regional youth through education, training and careers.

From the CEO's desk...

With the end of financial year behind us we've been able to paint a clear picture of our value to students for 2016/2017. It's wonderful to see that CEF continues to increase its financial support to more and more students across Australia – this year 475 students were provided funds for higher education and training in excess of \$1 million.



While we've been hard at work helping more students, local foundations and volunteers, we've also been developing our capacity internally via extensive strategic work and some spring cleaning of our website.

As I write this we are putting the finishing touches on the new website designed for improved functionality, ease of access and extra, more relevant resources and information.

The latest addition to the website is our new Strategy 2022 document which will provide you with an insight into our vision for the next five years. Sustainability is the key objective and all efforts are focussed on this to ensure CEF can continue to influence great outcomes for even more students in the long term.

Another feature of the website is our 2018 Scholarships Guide. Just launched, it provides school leavers with a myriad of options to help fund their higher education or training beyond CEF grants.

We know from our education partners that many of the scholarships they offer are undersubscribed - so spread the word, get those applications in. We've done the leg work and made it that little bit easier for country kids to fund their ambition.

In this newsletter you'll hear more from some of our fabulous alumni and volunteer committees and in particular a

wonderful story about some high school students getting a taste of uni life via the Swinburne Open Day.

One of our most committed and loyal volunteers from the Macleay Valley CEF is Terry Witchard. He worked tirelessly alongside our own Juliet Petersen to make sure his community's students attending the open day were engaged and inspired to think about life beyond school, and potentially studying at one of Victoria's premier universities.

Before I sign off I'd like to acknowledge some significant and much-valued support from various long-standing supporters of CEF.

In the past several months we've been able to confirm important funding for various projects, committee operation and scholarships from The Snow Foundation, Raymond E Purves Foundation, the McLean Foundation and the James N Kirby Foundation – thank you to all. We very much appreciate that you continue to validate CEF's work and understand the importance of education for all.

I'd also like to thank our principal partner, Origin Foundation, for making CEF's inclusion possible at the recent forum - CCA's *Creating the Australia We Want* held in Melbourne. Delegates representing our most prolific education charities, research centres and NGOs discussed initiatives and ideas to promote equal opportunity in education - CEF had a seat at that table, and it was a valuable conversation.

Enjoy this newsletter, and the warmer spring weather!

Until next time,

Making a difference

Seeking to improve the educational outcomes of young people in country Australia, the Commonwealth Government is currently conducting an independent review into regional, rural and remote education.

Announcing the review, the Education Minister Simon Birmingham stated that "we must drive and better set policy to encourage ambition among our country students". Led by Emeritus Professor John Halsey, the review process is looking for new ideas and approaches from community stakeholders.

With its experience and knowledge in this space, the Country Education Foundation has welcomed the opportunity to contribute its voice to the development of new policy.

Recommendations in our submission focus on the transition of young people in the country to further study, training and work opportunities. We also address the provision of programmes, networks and resources which raise aspirations and provide advice about how to realise it. We have highlighted the additional barriers to achievement created by distance and provide some possible solutions.

Isolation and the time and costs of travel often make it harder for young people in the country to take up new opportunities. It is in Australia's national interest that the intelligence, creativity and energy of young people be given the fullest opportunity to shine. Growth and renewal in our communities require the skills and knowledge that education provides. When combined with imagination and the confidence to try, new ideas and innovation can change the world.

*CEF's IRRRRE submission was written by Bathurst boy and recent graduate **Daniel McKay**. Daniel is employed as CEF's research officer until he begins post-graduate studies at Cambridge, in England.*

Country kids fly in for Swinburne experience

At the end of July, CEF took six country kids to Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne for its open day. This was the first time in a few years that CEF has been able to undertake this sort of trip – and only possible due to Swinburne's generous funding for this excursion.

The six students – from Kempsey and Yass – took up the offer after their local foundations contacted their high schools.

The four boys and two girls were engaged, enthusiastic and motivated by what Swinburne displayed. The students had a wide variety of interests – from psychology to linguistics, science to game development. Each student was able to check course offerings at the Hawthorn campus, along with the on-campus accommodation.

While at Swinburne current CEF recipient Kiernan Moore was able to meet up with us and chat to the students, telling them about life at uni. Thank you Kiernan for making the time to see us, we wish you continued success! Kiernan is from Kempsey and in his first year of study at Swinburne.

CEF national office would also like to send a big thank you to Terry Witchard of Macleay Valley CEF for the time and effort he took in co-ordinating this trip, your efforts are appreciated.

Feedback from the Year 12 students was positive, and CEF is pleased the students felt the experience was so worthwhile.

To read more about the kids' experiences and what they thought of the excursion go to cef.org.au/blog



Local Foundation stories

Emotional connections drive mission in the Riverina

At only five years old, Griffith Country Education Foundation is making its mark with the youth in its community. It has awarded a total of \$75,000 to 78 students since being established in 2012 by a Griffith City Council working party.

One of the founding committee members, Jane McGrath, knows what it's like to put kids through university and the strains it can have on the student living away from home for the first time, and the household they come from.

"It's important to me because I know what it was like when my three (children received help), it was really beneficial for them," Jane said.

Jane's oldest children received help from the Freemasons. Griffith CEF helped Jane's third child.

For Jane, CEF's value is in staying connected with recipients and letting them know Griffith CEF "has their back".

She works hard to maintain contact with Griffith CEF's recipients, both present and past.

"I text the kids quite often to see how they are going and they will reply. They often shoot me a random email to just tell me what they are up to," Jane said.

"They touch base and let me know what they are doing or I contact them and just catch up."

She said some of the recipients embrace the mentorship and advice Griffith CEF can offer them.

"I think it's really important for these kids to have a connection. They might just



"I think it's really important for these kids to have a connection."

send me a text and ask 'what do you think I should do about this?' and it will be something to do with uni. I tell them to talk to their student advisors or your RA, stuff like that. They just don't want their parents to be worried," Jane explains.

Through these connections Griffith CEF has welcomed new members into their committee fold - a CEF alumnus now working back in the town attends meetings when she can and helps organise fundraising events; while a grandmother

saw how CEF helped her grand-daughter and decided to join the committee.

"[CEF is so valuable] at taking the pressure off the students. If it means we can help them pay their rent for half a term, that saves them," Jane said.

"It also saves them having to commit to a lot of work while they are studying. A lot of them are in self-catered accommodation, they have got to do everything themselves as it is, they have to have a job, and have to study – it's just really hard. It's wonderful to be able to help them."

Jane said she chooses to distance herself from the scholarship awarding process, leaving the decisions to other members of the committee.

"I stay well away from that because I get a little bit emotional – I know it sounds stupid," Jane laughed.

"Deciding who to give the money to when you've only got X-number of dollars is the hardest thing."

"Everybody has a valid reason, it costs a lot of money to be educated."

DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

For more information about how to join one of our 43 our local foundation committees and where they are located www.cef.org.au

"For people who might like to or might be thinking about joining a committee, we at Griffith CEF suggest for them to get involved, it's really rewarding." - JANE McGRATH

Eureka! Broken Hill brothers make most of huge opportunities

Broken Hill brothers – Alex and Clayton Rowbotham – are well on their way to achieving their dreams and making the most of the opportunities offered to them.

The brothers are close – they live together, travel home together and even study the same course at La Trobe’s Mildura campus. The future primary school teachers also share a passion for helping others.

“Teaching is the first real occupation all children are exposed to besides their parents’ and caregivers’ occupations – teaching is a profession that can have a forever-lasting impact on someone,” 21-year-old Alex explained on his reason for wanting to become a teacher.

“Teachers are not simply ‘teachers’, they have the power to model and shape a student’s life, as it may be the only real role model a child may have.”

For 20-year-old first year student Clayton, this inspiration is alive and well and is impacting on his everyday life at university for the first time.

“The environment that university creates, it has been amazing to be surrounded by like-minded people who have similar ambitions to mine,” he said.

Both boys were awarded the Eureka Benevolent Foundation scholarship that is administered by CEF. The \$10,000 award is for first-year students from the Broken Hill region.

For them, the funds have allowed a significant financial burden to be taken off their small family, and allowed them to embrace independence, adulthood, study and university with freedom and a sense of confidence.

“Receiving this scholarship has allowed me to have confidence in myself and my abilities. CEF believes that I can achieve the goals I have set for myself – the support means more people have faith and confidence that I will do well which is reassuring and motivating,” Clayton said.

For Alex his scholarship alleviated not only the burdens of financial pressures but the fear it can have over a student out of home.

“It allowed me to settle into university comfortably, I could focus on my studies and come to terms with living away from home,” he said.

“I was able to establish myself with things



“CEF believes that I can achieve the goals I have set for myself – the support means more people have faith and confidence that I will do well which is reassuring and motivating.”
Clayton Rowbotham

like a fridge, washing machine and bed – the rest of the money was divided between rent and fuel, and textbooks and materials for my course.”

“Without the funds I don’t think I would have enjoyed my uni experience as much, and I feel my results would have been a lot different too. The extra pressure I would have faced trying to look for work would have been overwhelming.”

The Rowbotham brothers aren’t shy in hiding the fact that CEF has helped them with their confidence, and ability to ask for help.

Since using his Eureka-CEF funds Alex has

also been awarded another grant by the Chances for Children program that will help him keep his dream of becoming a teacher alive.

“The Country Education Foundation helps regional students access opportunity to further education – who without financial assistance, myself included, may not have had the privilege to further their education,” Alex said.

“The funds truly help individuals get their foot in the door.”

“CEF means I can obtain a degree and do something that I love.”

Clayton backs his brother’s view of CEF’s value and work.

“Without the funds I don’t think I would have enjoyed my uni experience as much, and ... my results would have been a lot different too. The extra pressure I would have faced trying to look for work would have been overwhelming.”

Alex Rowbotham

“CEF helps regional students immensely. It allows us with ambitions and dreams to undertake their desired studies, with both social and financial support,” he said.

“It allows regional students to realize that they can achieve their educational objectives regardless of their geographical isolation or financial difficulties. It also allows us to see the confidence others have in us,” Clayton said.

WANT TO READ MORE?
To read more of our CEF alumni profiles go to our website www.cef.org.au.

A STORY THAT ENDS IN A NOBEL PRIZE COULD BEGIN IN A ONE-TEACHER SCHOOL



Don't let a young person's postcode hold them back.

When you donate to CEF you invest in the future of young people in rural and regional Australia, and their communities. Every dollar you donate to CEF goes to helping overcome the unique financial, social and geographical obstacles facing school leavers living in the country.

As a small charity we battle each year to meet the growing challenge of closing the participation gap between country students and their city cousins. We hope you'll join to take on this challenge together.

Support CEF and you'll be helping change the lives of many ambitious and talented young people who otherwise might not have the chance to study at all.

The power of ambition is transformative, and we need your help to keep country kids' dreams alive. Please donate to the Country Education Foundation so you help more rural and regional young Australians access further education, training and jobs.

Thank you for helping us get more rural and regional school leavers on their way to achieving their dreams.

Please complete this form and mail to:
Country Education Foundation,
PO Box 245, Orange NSW 2800.

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I would like to donate

\$25 \$50 \$100

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Payment Details:

By Cheque: Please make your cheque payable to the Country Education Foundation of Australia.

Bank Transfer: Please make your payment directly to the following account:
Country Education Foundation of Australia

BSB: 062-629 Account: 1009 0818 Reference: (YOUR NAME)

By Credit Card:

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Signature

Please send my tax receipt to: my email or my postal address

Please add me to the CEF mailing list (your details will never be shared with a third party).

You can also quickly and easily make a donation to the Country Education Foundation by visiting www.cef.org.au and clicking the Donate Now button on the home page or by phoning 1300 652 144. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

The Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEF) is a national not-for-profit organisation assisting rural and regional students to pursue their higher education, training and career goals. With your help we provide financial grants, scholarships, mentoring and support.

The CEF family is proud to have over 40 local education foundation committees operating throughout New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Since 1993 we've given almost 4,000 grants to young people across Australia. CEF has helped apprentices buy their toolkits, funded laptops and textbooks for TAFE students and helped remote students travel to capital cities to study at university. Our support services also include an annual University Survival Guide, a Scholarship Guide and student mentor programs.

To find out more about our life-changing work please visit www.cef.org.au or phone us on 1300 652 144

