



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Rural and regional students hit road to Swinburne**

The Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEF) is proud to announce eight high school students from Northern and Southern NSW will be attending Swinburne Open Day on July 30.

The aim is to expose rural and regional students to some of their tertiary education options. This experience will also give them a taste of what life at Swinburne would be like.

This year, as one of CEF's newest education partners, Swinburne generously pledged significant funds to boost financial support for CEF's rural and regional students. Part of this funding is being used to host this excursion to Swinburne. CEF staff and volunteers will travel with the high school students to the campus.

"Swinburne is pleased to continue our partnership with the Country Education Foundation and the excellent work they do to assist disadvantaged kids from rural and regional Australia to go to university and fulfil their potential and goals," said Anthony Gartner, Swinburne's manager of Student Equity and AccessAbility Service.

"We have a strong commitment to providing students from a wide variety of backgrounds including rural and regional Australia with the opportunity to study at university, and we are aware of the barriers rural and regional kids face compared to their city counterparts."

Since beginning a partnership with Swinburne six CEF grant recipients have enrolled at the Melbourne campus. CEF and Swinburne hopes this experience will open rural and regional youths' minds to studying at Swinburne and boost the confidence of the future university students who will be moving away from home and their support networks for the first time.

Each year CEF's 43 local foundations work to raise funds, awareness and support their youth in the hopes rural and regional students can gain the same opportunities as their city counterparts. This work is invaluable in closing the education and opportunity gap.

The local foundations' work is then supported by education and corporate partnerships, as CEF receives no government support and is a not-for-profit organization.

"Our education partners provide such wonderful support to our cause, and students' futures. Our education partners build on our mission to close the education gap that exists between our rural and regional students, and this cannot be under estimated," Wendy Cohen, CEF CEO, said.

This year CEF has helped 475 students begin their education, training and career journeys across the country. This support has totalled more than \$1 million with thanks to our education partners, community-based committees and corporate sponsors.

A recent survey by CEF found community scholarship recipients have an 87 per cent completion rate compared to the national average of 67 per cent.

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