

## A.1 Introduction

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

As a community, which has shown commitment to assisting the career aspirations of the younger members of rural and regional Australia, I welcome you to the family of the Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEFA). I am confident that you, like many others, will find your involvement rewarding and worthy beyond your expectation.

CEFA is totally focused on regional and rural communities where, for various reasons, young people can find it more challenging to identify career opportunities and commence their post high school education and training goals. CEFA operates by uniting the community to offer a grant-making program which provides both financial assistance and community support to financially disadvantaged local students leaving high school and needing a helping hand to get started – local students who, without this support, may not be able to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Living outside of a major metropolitan centre in Australia imposes great difficulty, not only for our communities but in particular our younger people. In my own local community of Boorowa, on the south west slopes of New South Wales, we became concerned that the obstacles our younger people faced were increasingly leading them to lose heart and not bother trying.

The reality is that to shape a career and access further education after leaving high school, rural and regional youth often have to leave their home town and community, travel long distances and live elsewhere. These factors present significant challenges but as communities we can assist our young people to overcome them. Since we commenced in 1993, our aims have always been to try to encourage our young school leavers to widen their horizons and to show them that their community is supportive of them taking their education and skills development further.

At all times, we seek to be flexible and tailor our support to the individual needs of our young recipients and the communities in which they live.

This Policies and Procedures Manual is the result of input from many of our member Country Education Foundations (CEFs). It is a 'living' document and as the number of CEFs continues to expand, we welcome their input into its contents.

On behalf of the Country Education Foundation of Australia family we welcome you and look forward to supporting your local CEF's development and success.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Nick Burton Taylor".

Nick Burton Taylor AM  
Chairman  
Country Education Foundation of Australia

## A.2 The CEFA Story

In 1993, a group of individuals from a cross-section of the Boorowa community in New South Wales established the Boorowa Education Foundation.

The Foundation's purpose was to support and encourage school leavers within the Boorowa community to pursue their careers and study aspirations. The Boorowa Education Foundation set about raising funds which it could use to provide financial assistance to students who, without this assistance, may not have gone on to achieve their goals. Nick Burton Taylor, the inaugural Chairman of the Boorowa Education Foundation, said, *"It was a very powerful message we wanted to give our young people: their community was supportive of them taking the next step and we wanted to help minimise some of the stresses that may be involved in taking that step."*

In its first year, the Boorowa Education Foundation raised \$5,000 and provided 'community grants' to five students leaving high school to start their careers or continue with their studies.

It was not long before similar Country Education Foundations (CEFs) were operating in the surrounding towns of Yass, Cowra and Harden. Nick Burton Taylor recalls, *"Very early on it became evident that what we'd done in Boorowa had attracted interest in surrounding communities because their school leavers had similar needs. This ground swell of interest inspired us to design a very simple program that was adaptable to individual communities and in 2003 we set up the Country Education Foundation of Australia to act as an umbrella organisation to help communities get started and help sustain the resources and enthusiasm for continuing the work. We now have over 40 local CEFs located in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory, with increasing interest from other states."*

In communities where CEFs have been operating for some years, there is a real understanding and appreciation of their purpose and the results they achieve. Sarah Taylor, CEFA's Chief Executive Officer pointed out, *"The understanding of what we do, what we are about and what we are achieving in each local CEF community is rapidly increasing, as is the desire of new rural and regional communities to get involved."*

Jonathan Forrest from the Monaro Education Foundation commented on the need for local CEFs, *"Particularly for an area like ours where there is no university close by, it is critical because the students have costs that people in the metropolitan areas don't have if they are living at home and going to university, TAFE or to work. It's just that extra help and support to get them on their way. We're pretty reliant on the rural economy and tourism. A poor run of years, as we have had on the rural side of things or even a bad ski season can mean that parents can struggle in affording to send their kids off to gain further education and training."*

*"For us to be here to help facilitate students going on to further study and work opportunities makes a big difference. All of our students wouldn't have been able to afford to access the education or vocation of their choice if it wasn't for the help that our local CEF provided. Of everything we do, the most important thing is the community support. The financial support makes a big difference for the students but having the support of the community can be life changing,"* Jonathan said.

Sarah Taylor concluded, *"As communities, we are each responsible for our own future success, prosperity and sustainability. We need to ensure that we create and maintain a positive and supportive environment that shows our youth we believe in them and support them in achieving their hopes, dreams and aspirations. CEFA and our local CEFs are a powerful and proven way of achieving this."*



## A.3 Country Education Foundation Member Benefits

The following benefits will be provided to your local CEF subject to you meeting your obligations as outlined in section A.5 *An Education Foundation's Obligations to CEF*,

- Seed funding of up to \$5,000 will be provided over your first three years' of operation, matching your locally raised funds: a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$5,000 in the first year; 50 cents in the dollar up to \$3,000 in the second year; 25 cents in the dollar up to \$2,000 in the third year. ***Please note that seed funding for new CEF committee's is currently under review and an update will be provided shortly.***
- Assistance with establishment including how to set up and operate your local CEF and an official launch within your area attended by a CEF staff member (whenever possible) to promote your new CEF locally.
- Creation and management of governance-based requirements such as the CEF Constitution, CEFA Charter and CEFA Code of Conduct.
- Public Liability coverage for your CEF events.
- Connection to a network of like-minded communities where other member CEFs operate.
- Introduction to Education Partner organisations including universities which provide CEF grant recipients with additional benefits when attending these institutions; as well as other independent scholarship and grant-making organisations where appropriate.
- Availability of external grant and scholarship opportunities for your local students.
- Ongoing support and guidance to assist you in the operation of your local CEF including fundraising, donor proposals, resource development, etc.
- Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status providing tax deductibility for your donors.

## A.4 CEF Charter

### Grant Making Process and the Provision of Funds to Grant Recipients

- Subject to the rest of this charter, all decisions about grants will be made by the committee of local CEFs.
- If a committee member has a family member or close friend applying for a grant, they must absent themselves from the **entire** interview and process and any discussions relating to the allocation of funds for that year. The CEFA CEO must also be notified of the potential conflict of interest.
- Applicants must let their local CEF know if they have received or do receive any other grants or scholarships for their education/training.
- The opportunity to apply for a grant is open to all local students aged 16 - 25 years of age. Applications are to be assessed based on CEFA's standard national selection criteria.
- All local CEFs must select grant recipients based on the following criteria:
  - The applicant is in genuine and demonstrated need of financial assistance;
  - The applicant has a realistic goal;
  - The applicant has shown commitment to achieving their goals; and
  - The applicant is aged between 16 – 25 years.
- Each CEF committee then shortlists the applicants based on the above criteria and undertakes to interview the shortlist by way of an interview panel that consists of at least two members of the committee. Each CEF can have outside members of the community on the panel if needed.
- At each interview, the panel should give a brief overview of what the local CEF does and explain that it is their local CEF which provides the bulk of the funding for grants.
- The allocation and distribution of any funds by the CEF to recipients is to be agreed on by the committee at a committee meeting and be minuted.
- In exceptional circumstances, ad-hoc grants may be made based on a decision of the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer if it is not possible to convene a full meeting of the committee to make the decision.
- If available funds do not allow for the distribution of a grant to all qualifying applicants, first year students should take precedence.
- All previous grant recipients must reapply each year to their CEF should they require further financial assistance but they do not necessarily require a formal interview. Provision of their academic transcripts for the preceding 12 months and a committee discussion will suffice. If the committee is unsure about how to deal with a particular application, they should contact CEF.
- Grant recipients must provide an official receipt or invoice to the Treasurer for a pre-agreed expense or purchase before payment is to be made. This also includes any funds provided by CEF's Education Partners or other donor organisations that provide funds for grant recipients of a local CEF.



- Recipients receiving funds from a CEF Partnership (such as one of our Education Partners) must write a letter of appreciation to the relevant partner institution. This is crucial as the continuation of such partnerships is often influenced by such feedback from recipients.

## Reporting Requirements of Local CEFs to CEFA

- **Grant Activity Reporting** - All local CEFs are to report to CEF by 1 March each year with all grant recipient details and amounts for the forthcoming year. A grant report template is provided by CEF. The local committee takes responsibility for recipient information being complete and accurate. This information forms the basis for our Education Partner co-funding reports and CEFA's other reporting requirements. CEF must be subsequently notified immediately of any changes to grant recipient status throughout the year. For example, if students change degrees, or defer, etc
- **Financial Reporting** - All local CEFs are to report to CEF by providing their financial statements including their profit and loss and balance sheet for the previous financial year. An account report template is provided by CEF. This is to be done by beginning of August each year.
- **Annual Reporting to State Authority** - Within one month of their Annual General Meeting (AGM), all CEFs must file an annual statement with their relevant state or territory government department e.g. Office of Fair Trading. Each CEF must conduct their AGM within six months of the end of the financial year. CEF must also be notified of the date of the local CEF's AGM.

## New Committee Members

- New committee members on CEFs are to be given a copy of the full Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Within one month of the AGM of a CEF, the committee is to notify CEF of any new committee members from the previous 12 months and provide their contact details.

## Committee Meetings

- All committee meetings for local CEFs are to be conducted in line with CEF's most recent guidelines and in an open and consultative manner. This includes minutes being taken, keeping of an attendance record, tabling all correspondence, Treasurer's report, matters arising from minutes and general business. CEF is very happy to also provide the CEF with a national update for any local CEF committee meetings. If you would like to include this, then please give CEF one week's notice and we will provide a report.

## Insurance Cover for Local Education Foundations/Funds/Groups

- **Public Liability** - CEF has blanket Public Liability insurance policy that covers most of CEF's local CEFs' functions. Details of the specific insurance cover provided are available from CEF and should be circulated to all committee members to ensure no misunderstandings on specific cover. CEF requires all local CEFs to advise of any fundraising event at least one month prior to the event taking place to ensure the Underwriter is notified and cover, to the extent practically available, is in place. Our Public Liability cover does not cover events of an extreme nature such as a bike rallies, hot air ballooning, horse racing, etc. If unsure, please contact the CEF as our insurer may be able to arrange an individual event policy for you.

## Tax Deductibility

- Only funds given purely as a donation qualify for tax deductibility. It is possible for a portion of the value of an entry ticket to a function be treated as tax deductible. If goods or services have been received in exchange for a financial contribution (such as goods bought at auction, meal and beverage costs or raffle tickets), they do not qualify for tax deductibility. These rules are set by the ATO – it is imperative they are adhered to as failure to comply threatens our DGR status.



## A.5 Local CEF's Obligations to CEF

Local CEFs must satisfy the following obligations in order to comply with CEF's requirements.

- Agree with and support our mission: To foster the further education, career and personal development opportunities of rural youth, through community-based encouragement and financial assistance.
- Adopt CEF's Constitution which is focused on the younger members of our communities starting out in their careers and furthering their education and skills development.
- Commit to upholding the CEF Charter and Code of Conduct at all times.
- Only provide grants in one of two ways:
  - Pay the goods and services providers directly (university book shops, TAFE fees, tools of trade suppliers, work wear stores, etc)
  - Reimburse the student upon production of a valid receipt for a pre-agreed purchase (textbooks, course fees, accommodation, tools of trade, etc)
- Ensure each applicant's personal circumstances are kept in the strictest of confidence.
- Provide an Annual Grant Report to CEF by March deadline, reporting on your grant activities. The Grant Report template will be provided by CEFA prior to this date.
- Provide an Annual Financial Report to CEF by beginning of August, reporting on your CEF's financial activity for the previous financial year. The Financial Report template will be provided by CEF prior to this date.
- Take full responsibility for your CEF's funding during and after the first three years' of support from CEF. This includes development of a comprehensive long-term plan for fundraising, sponsorship and financial targets.
- Actively promote the work of your CEF in your community and in the local high schools.

## A.6 CEF Code of Conduct

### CEF Code of Conduct for CEF Committee Members

This Code of Conduct applies to all CEF committee members. It requires that CEF committee members act in accordance with the following terms:

- At all times behave in a way which upholds the values, integrity and reputation of CEFA and your local CEF.
- Maintain confidentiality surrounding information obtained from grant applicants and avoid unjustifiable discrimination with regard to provision of local grants.
- Manage potential, perceived or actual **conflicts of interest** via an open and structured process. Should a grant applicant be related or well-known to a committee member, that committee member will remove him or herself from the **entire** application and decision-making process for that year. The chairperson **must** also advise CEF of the potential conflict of interest and of any grants awarded to family and friends of committee members.
- Treat each member of the local CEF and CEF with respect and courtesy.
- Attend local meetings as regularly as possible, briefed and prepared.
- Commit to the following meeting rules of engagement:
  - Turn mobile phones off
  - Be on time
  - Advise the relevant person if unable to attend
  - Respect others and their opinions and allow one person to speak at a time
  - Follow an agreed agenda
  - Accept group decisions; don't return to 'closed agenda items' unless new subject matter is presented
- Commit to your respective role and responsibilities within the committee and actively participate.
- As a committee, engage and consult with CEF to ensure both parties operate mutually and effectively.
- Avoid inappropriate use of local CEF or CEF funding.

**Should any dispute arise regarding this Code, please seek confirmation and resolution from CEF.**



## A.7 Suggested Committee Profiles and Skills

### Profile of Committee Members and Skills Mix

- School Representatives (Careers Advisor, Teacher, Principal)
- Local Council Representatives
- Representatives from School Boards or P&Fs or Teachers (check that the Principal feels comfortable with the representative before inviting them on to the Committee)
- Local professionals such as solicitors, accountants and health care workers
- Local members of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) where applicable
- Include a broad cross-section of the community who are motivated and share the commitment to CEF's mission
- Members of like-minded community organisations, eg The Smith Family
- Equal representation of male and female members if possible

### Interview Panel

- Rotate the interview panel each year
- Male and female mix with communicative personalities
- Include a younger Committee member with whom applicants can relate
- There must be at least two committee members on the panel each year, however community members who are not on the committee can be invited to take a seat on the panel as well