



Country Education Foundation of Australia
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Friday, 15 December 2017

Minister for Education and Training Simon Birmingham
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: Preserving HEPPP funding for rural and regional students

Dear Minister,

This week is an exciting and emotionally charged time for thousands of students around the country as they receive their Year 12 exam results and look to the possibilities of further education.

For those students who live in rural and regional Australia, there is an additional layer of anxiety and concern as they consider how they might cover the extra costs associated with leaving home to attend further study. In a time when we are all working toward closing the education participation gaps that exist between kids from the bush and their city cousins, programs such as HEPPP, which offers support to rural and regional students to attend university, have never been more important.

Since the introduction of HEPPP in 2010, Country Education Foundation (CEF) has delivered an additional \$1.46 million to thousands of financially disadvantaged young people to help them attend university.

HEPPP funding to rural and regional students through CEF university partnerships has a significant multiplier effect on the lives of young people and the communities they represent. For every dollar committed to supporting CEF grant recipients we realise a SROI of \$3.10, so we know that HEPPP funding is making a difference and driving lasting economic and social progress. We also know that the students we support are more likely to complete their studies.

More broadly, the affirmation from governments to the ideal that education is for all is signalled no more clearly than through programs such as HEPPP.

Students from rural, regional and remote Australia are some of the brightest, most enterprising and driven young people you will encounter. In many instances HEPPP has been the difference between these young people attending university or not.

Where you grew up or went to school should never be a barrier to participation in higher education. Improving higher education access and equity is a long-term challenge that requires long-term solutions. Effective programs like HEPPP should be preserved and improved.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Cohen".

Wendy Cohen
CEO