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FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION**

**17 April 2018**

## **Federal review supports Country Education Foundation's vision for rural and regional students**

Recommendations from an independent review into regional, rural and remote education represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity for country students, the Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEF) said today.

CEF has welcomed [the final report](#) of the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education, led by Emeritus Professor Dr John Halsey. The report was released by the federal government on Friday.

Chief Executive Officer Wendy Cohen said the final report clearly articulated the problems facing regional, rural and remote students and offered realistic and achievable solutions.

"The report confirms what we've long known – that country kids face additional barriers when it comes to pursuing educational opportunities.

"It shows that access to education for country kids is an issue of basic equality that requires a national approach. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make a difference for country kids and we hope the government now pulls out all stops to implement the report's recommendations."

The report makes 11 recommendations, and identifies four priorities:

- establishing a national focus for regional, rural and remote education, training and research to enhance access, outcomes and opportunities
- focusing on research for successful learning and building young people's futures – school leadership, teaching, curriculum and assessment
- addressing the information communication and technology needs in regional, rural and remote locations, and
- focusing on the transitions into and out of school.

CEF was pleased to see much of its own submission to the Review reflected in the report, particularly the role of the community in supporting students' transition to further education.

"CEF believes the best support a young person can have is from their community," Ms Cohen said. "While financial help is part of this, often the confidence students get from knowing their community has their back has greater impact. The importance of grassroots programs like those offered by CEF that enable communities to support their own young people should not be underestimated."

Especially significant was the report's recommendation that transport and accommodation should be made more affordable for regional, rural and remote students.

“Any policy settings that make relocation more affordable for country students and their families should be actively pursued,” Ms Cohen said.

“For example, let’s make it a requirement that residential colleges guarantee places for students living more than 100 kilometres from campus. Public transport concessions for students travelling interstate should also be introduced and Youth Allowance rates for young people who have to live away from home should be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect the actual costs incurred.”

CEF also welcomed the report’s emphasis on greater philanthropic support for students. However, Ms Cohen said private donations should not replace government programs designed to close the gap in educational opportunities.

“Organisations like CEF perform a crucial role in facilitating philanthropic support for students in regional, rural and remote Australia. This work is vital but it should supplement not replace government initiatives such as the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), which aims to ensure that disadvantaged Australians, including those in the country, have equal access to university.

“We look forward to working more closely with the government on initiatives like HEPPP and individual donors to boost all forms of assistance to country students.”

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