

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

## From the CEO's desk...

This really is the best time of year to work at the Country Education Foundation. It is the time we host several important events such as our Sydney Friends Event bringing together many of our donors, partners and supporters to celebrate the work we do. One of our most enduring partners, Origin Foundation, attended the event and inside this newsletter we shine the light on this transformative collaboration which has spanned six years.



It's also the time we take Percy for a run between Orange and Boorowa. Held in early April, the 2018 Pig Push raised more than \$50,000 for the Boorowa committee and CEF. The week-long event saw more than 150 volunteers take turns pushing Percy home to Boorowa. We have had interest from other local foundations in pushing Percy across their own region next year. Please be in touch if you'd like to discuss this more.

The Pig Push coincided with a very successful NSW forum where more than 30 delegates from local foundations across NSW travelled to Orange for an insightful and helpful series of discussions around community engagement, education pathways and fundraising. The Raymond E Purves Foundation has been a long-time supporter of our local foundations and funded the gathering. The CEF board also attended the forum. It was wonderful to have them there to support us and meet many of our volunteers.

Speaking of the board, I'm very pleased to announce the appointment of two new directors, Peita Burton Taylor and Oscar Oberg. Both come with great energy and enthusiasm and a focus on nurturing the

next generation of donors and partners. Peita and Oscar are both country born and bred and have a real passion and commitment to CEF's purpose. I very much look forward to working with them.

In April I was invited to attend a round-table discussion on higher education participation and inclusion hosted by the Group of Eight – the eight 'sandstone' universities across the country. It was gratifying to be included in the discussion which aims to solve some of the equity issues facing disadvantaged students – including rural and regional – who aspire to study at our oldest and most prestigious institutions. Representatives of the Go8 unis acknowledged there needed to be improvements in their approach to equity and participation, agreeing that a whole-of-sector approach was needed and that partnerships with community organisations was the way forward. I look forward to some positive outcomes for country kids as a result of these discussions.

Finally, the #1 reason this is the best time of the year at CEF, we are seeing the fruits of our collective labour as we receive the grant reports from our local foundations. These reports show our impact and bring to us a whole new group of young students who successfully applied for grants. One such student from last year, Ash Nielsen, is the focus of our student profile this newsletter. I urge you to read her story. She is truly inspirational.

Until next time,

Wendy Cohen  
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**Nick Burton  
Taylor, CEF  
Chairman**

## A chance to say thanks

Just recently we were proud hosts to an array of friends, partners, supporters, alumni and grant recipients at our annual Friends Event. This year at the Art Gallery of NSW we hosted an evening cocktail gathering that allowed our guests to also enjoy the renowned Archibald Prize.

We proudly unveiled a new series of student story videos to our guests. The three videos tell the story of CEF through the eyes of our beneficiaries and alumni. We'd like to thank Chris Mercer, Shannon Graham and Ashley Nielsen for sharing your experiences with us. These videos are now on our website and you're very welcome to view and share them.

The annual gathering is a chance for us to thank our contributors and supporters who are key to transforming the lives of our recipients and furthering the education of so many more young country Australians.

It is also a chance for us to spread the word about some of our recipients' successes, meet faces we talk to often and have a meaningful conversation about CEF's vision and passion for helping young people.

The day was made possible through the generosity of our donors, CEF board and event partners. We would like to thank The Art Gallery of NSW for hosting us.

[www.cef.org.au/student-stories](http://www.cef.org.au/student-stories)



# Partnership promotes equity in education

With a shared belief that long-term impact and life-changing opportunities stem from education, the CEF and Origin Foundation partnership was established in 2012.

Head of the Origin Foundation, Sean Barrett has a long history of leadership within the not-for-profit sector and says the partnership with the Country Education Foundation is important in tackling inequality in education for young people living in the country.

"We have worked with CEF for six years because, in our experience, they are tackling the issues - isolation, achievement and educational disparity - successfully at the local level," Mr Barrett said.

"It is a testament to the CEF model that the vast majority of recipients complete their courses."

The philanthropic Origin Foundation was funded and founded by Origin Energy in 2010. Their focus on education has already provided support for tens of thousands of Australian children.

As well as funding rural and regional students to pursue their educational potential, the Origin Foundation has enabled significant project work within CEF, including the Alumni Project - essential for CEF to build a sustainable giving program - while reconnecting with 25 years' worth of beneficiaries and alumni. They have also encouraged collaboration with like organisations that enables CEF to have a louder voice, advocating for young country people.

Young people like Laura Taylor, who knows first-hand about the struggles that country



**Head of Origin Foundation Sean Barrett (far right) with CEF alumni (from left) Sophie Nelson, Chris Mercer, Jelisa Apps and Ashley Nielsen at the Friends' Event in May.**

kids can face, including the expense of leaving home for tertiary education.

Laura is currently in her third year of her Bachelor of Engineering/Science degree at the Australian National University in Canberra and is originally from the Shoalhaven in NSW. Despite being one of the only women in her engineering course, Laura is determined to create a bright future for herself and make her supporters proud.

Origin's employees are furthering the foundation's work in the wider community by volunteering their time and skills to help the Origin Foundation's partners, and the young people they support.

"Last year Origin volunteers supported more than 2000 children through their work in the classroom. Many of those schools were in regional, rural and remote communities," Mr Barrett said.

As well as helping country kids get a better

deal when it comes to education, the Origin Foundation works to encourage more girls to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), supports Indigenous students to achieve in education, and is helping build a stronger community sector through professional training and development for non-profits.

"Education is the key to breaking the cycle of disadvantage," says Mr Barrett, "and we believe CEF is doing an outstanding job in providing opportunities for young people in regional Australia to pursue their educational and career ambitions."

For more information about our partnership with the Origin Foundation go to our website [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au).

To find out how the Origin Foundation is helping prepare young people for the future, their latest annual review at [www.originfoundation.com.au](http://www.originfoundation.com.au) is now available.

## Friends Event 2018

On a cool autumn evening more than 110 of our supporters converged on the Art Gallery of NSW to celebrate and mark CEF's 25 year anniversary, as well as its bright future.



**Sue Maple Brown and Helen Gauchat.**



**Kirsten Ross, Hugh Burton Taylor and Karen Wilson.**



**Amit Thapa and David Smithers.**



## Career in education: hardship won't hold Ashley back

For 22-year-old Ashley Nielsen the two years of grant support totalling \$5500 from Great Lakes Education Fund, a CEF local foundation, means she can eat, buy for text books and pay rent.

"I ended up in hospital my first year at uni because I wasn't eating, because I couldn't afford to buy food."

Her local foundation has also given her one thing she's never had at home, stability.

"I haven't had a whole lot of stability in my life. It's nice just to know that if I am struggling with money, like rent, that I know they have my back and they are there. It's kind of like my little family that I didn't have."

"(To the local foundation) I can say I have placement coming up



Ashley Nielsen

and I don't have any professional attire for my prac teaching, can we talk about different ways we use this money to do that? It's just nice to have the support."

Growing up, Ashley had a tough home life. Her mother battled mental illness; and addiction, neglect and violence were the norm for her and her brothers. She experienced hunger, homelessness and grief. But throughout all the darkness and pain, she knew she loved school and learning.

"I loved my teachers. Because I did have so much going on at home, to then be able to go to the school and say this is what is happening at home and have someone to talk to about it made me feel safe," Ashley said.

Those teachers inspired her to become a teacher herself. Ashley is now in her third year of study at the University of Newcastle. In a few years she will be a primary school teacher and hopes to return to a regional area, like where she grew up.

Ashley is insightful, positive and open.

She says she refuses to deny her past, and wants to show her brothers and others in tough situations, that education and learning is the way to a better life.

"For a long time I was ashamed of my upbringing and I look back on my primary years and I was embarrassed," Ashley said.

"I was the kid in the classroom with the dirty shoes and socks. That's a part of my life. I think now it's important to recognise that and go, yeah OK this is where I come from."

"There are so many kids in school that are still going through that. To know that they can go from that and to uni, it's so important. If I can help just one person that's been through something similar, that's what I am about."

Ashley has recently shared more of her story, and how the Country Education Foundation helped her with her dream of attending university, through our Student Story videos. To watch Ashley's story go to [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au)

## NSW forum focuses on local foundation issues, networks



**In March CEF national office hosted a forum for NSW local foundations and their committee members. Three guest speakers spoke at the forum on a variety of topics including community engagement.**

In early March CEF hosted a NSW forum in Orange. Titled 'Communities in Focus' this forum continued our commitment to supporting and working with CEF local foundations and their committees.

This forum was enabled by the generosity of The Raymond E Purves Foundation.

Seventeen of our 32 NSW committees were represented at the event where we heard from three guest speakers.

It was important for us to hear from our CEF volunteers. We received constructive feedback and it was a wonderful networking event for our local foundations – many who know of each other, but do not have a chance to connect often.

Our volunteers were able to exchange experiences and know-how and suggest solutions for some more common challenges committees face.

Following the forum, we took discussions to a new location for a more relaxed networking opportunity, with special guest Percy of the Pig Push coming along. The 2018 Pig Push departed Orange the next day for his trip home to Boorowa.

Pig Push founders and organisers Justin and Richie Fleming from Boorowa CEF also shared some insights into the management of their major fundraising event.

We would like to thank everyone who attended. We are now in planning for a similar forum to be held on a national scale sometime in 2019.

# OPEN THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY THIS END OF FINANCIAL YEAR

Chris saw an open door and, with our help walked through to a career in theatre.

Now we need your support to keep more country kids' dreams of an education alive.

Please donate to the Country Education Foundation so you help more rural and regional young Australians access further education, training and jobs.

To watch Chris' story go to [www.cef.org.au/student-stories](http://www.cef.org.au/student-stories)

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

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
Email	<input type="text"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>

I would like to donate

\$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐

(nominate your donation amount)



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:**

Name on card

Card number

Expiry Date

CCV

Visa

MasterCard

AMEX

Signature

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

☐ Please add me to the CEF postal mailing list

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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](http://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 more than 4000 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](http://www.cef.org.au) or phone us on 1300 652 144