

2017 - 2018

# ANNUAL REVIEW

Education changes lives.  
And families.  
And communities.



# WHO WE ARE + WHAT WE DO

## Helping young Australians reach their potential

Country Education Foundation of Australia (CEF) is a national not-for-profit organisation that assists young people living in rural and regional areas pursue their education and career goals.

We deliver small-scale grants and community support to school leavers so they can pursue further education and training. In doing so, we help to ensure all young Australians have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

A large proportion of the funds CEF distributes is raised from local communities; however, we also work closely with corporate and philanthropic partners, and more than 30 universities, to leverage and amplify the support we provide.

In addition to grants and scholarships, CEF also

produces unique student resources. The annual University Survival Guide and Scholarships Guide offer students and parents the tips, tools and guidance to traverse university and other further education.

## Community led

This year, CEF celebrated a quarter century of helping young Australians. Since we first opened our doors in Boorowa in 1993, we have expanded to include local foundations across NSW, and in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

This network of 43 local foundations lies at the heart of everything CEF does. Driven by teams of committed volunteers from education, business, agriculture and government, the foundations lead fundraising efforts and distribute funds to selected local students to help cover their study costs, including textbooks, tools, accommodation, travel and

other expenses.

This community-led model has a proven track record at successfully identifying students who warrant additional encouragement or who are most at risk of falling through the gaps.

## Changing lives

Young rural and regional Australians are as bright and ambitious as their peers living in metropolitan centres. However, when it comes to higher education and job opportunities many miss out because the financial, emotional and social obstacles of relocating to take up these opportunities are just too great.

Cost is one of the biggest barriers. The 2012 National Health Alliance report states: "Cost is a major inhibitor for people from rural areas seeking to obtain further education, especially for those in lower socioeconomic groups".

CEF helps overcome this obstacle by providing grants to cover education and training-related expenses.

But it's not just about money. For our recipients, knowing that their local CEF foundation and community believes in them and 'has their back' is an important psychological support; around 90 per cent of our students go on to complete the course or training for which they were funded.

The benefits of these outcomes should not be underestimated. Independent research shows that for every dollar invested in our work a return of \$3.10 is created in social value.

This shows that CEF and its partners are not only changing the lives of individual students, but also the lives of their families and communities – and in the process creating a better future for rural and regional Australia.

# OUR YEAR

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The past year has seen consolidation and growth of our capacity in the regional centre of Orange, expansion of our footprint in regional Australia, growth in the number of young people that we can help get a start in their post-school education and training, and the formation of a strong Sydney Friends Group made up of individuals with a passion for regional Australia and the education of young people who live within it. All in all, it's been a year of steady growth and seizing opportunities when they are presented.

Smaller philanthropic organisations such as ours face the continuous financial challenge to regenerate funds on an ongoing basis. In this regard we have seen a consolidation of our financial well-being.

It remains our ambition to develop a sustainable corpus of capital to see us through adverse times. This ambition has been transformed into a reality by a generous donor who desires to remain in the background and anonymous. As a direct result of this support we have been able to secure our own premises in Orange. The acquisition of our own office will enable us to substantially enhance our balance sheet capacity while providing great efficiencies to our operation. This generosity has also given us a strong sense of security concerning our own future and our ability to help young Australians progress into the workplace with a sound education behind them.

Our ability to impact the lives



**"It remains our ambition to develop a sustainable corpus of capital to see us through adverse times. This ambition has been transformed into a reality..."**

of young people across the country increased in 2018. Most notably the number of students supported has grown by 21 to 496, taking the total number of individuals that have benefited from direct grants from CEF to 4883 during our 25 years of operation. The dollar value of funds provided as grants to these students by our local foundations at a community level has risen by \$125,000 since last year, again demonstrating the importance of our hard working volunteers' and the power of the CEF model.

The year saw a gathering of 17 of our local foundations in Orange to share their experiences and discuss issues of concern to all of us. The overall and most compelling concern of all participants has been the enduring social effect of the drought conditions in Eastern Australia. We are all aware of the economic costs of a drought of this proportion, but the impact on the younger generations through reduced capacity of families to support the often expensive and challenging aspects of post-school education has been dramatic.

As one often experiences in times of challenge there are people and institutions who are sensitive to the issues and rise to the occasion. The drought conditions have given rise to a number of people emerging with a strong desire to assist and we are currently working with them to try and direct specific resources to the worst affected and most in-need areas. Like many aspects of the work we do with young people, this is another example of the incredibly rewarding experiences to be gained in the not-for-profit sector where such selfless commitment is a hallmark, and remarkable individuals emerge.

One such individual, and one of our longest and most fervent supporters over the years has been Fiona MacLachlan in South Australia. I'm very happy to be able to advise that she has agreed to accept our invitation to become our first South Australian Patron.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Wendy Cohen, will be touching on some of the growth we have seen in our impact, the continuing support of our education partners across the university sector and the emergence of an alumni who are now returning to

the organisation as adults to contribute as best they can by serving on committees or acting as mentors.

One such example of giving back has been the remarkable story of Chris Mercer, who as a recipient of the Country Education Foundation of Snowy Monaro went on to study theatre and now has a senior role with the Sydney Theatre Company. He is committed to assisting others to enjoy the same opportunities that he has enjoyed and has joined the newly formed Sydney Friends Group and has been active in helping organise a special fundraising event back stage at the latest STC production. With the next generation coming through it is a great encouragement to the sustainability of our work.

As in all successful not-for-profit organisations a committed management team is essential to success. We are indeed extraordinarily fortunate in having a group of directors and committees who work so passionately for our cause. This is exemplified so strongly in the management team that has assembled behind our CEO. To all of those my profound thanks.

**Nicholas Burton Taylor AM**  
Chairman

## OUR PATRONS

**"By supporting CEF you are supporting this generation of rural and regional youth. Their education, training and careers will be founded by your generosity and their ties to the country. Your help will help the continuation of country communities across Australia."**



*The Hon Tim Fischer AC*  
CEF Patron  
Former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia

**"I'm a great believer in country communities. With exceptional commitment and backing from Country Education Foundation, they work hard to support and encourage their young people to pursue the paths of their choice, at a crucial time in their lives. The outcomes are evident when you see the many and successful alumni. It is heartwarming."**



*Fiona MacLachlan OAM*  
CEF Patron (South Australia)

## OUR BOARD

Nick Burton Taylor AM (Chair)  
Julia Burton Taylor OAM (Secretary)  
David Smithers AM (Treasurer)  
Katie Walker  
Stuart Black AM  
Richard Rains  
Peita Burton Taylor (Appointed 2018)  
Oscar Oberg (Appointed 2018)



# OUR YEAR

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

For CEF, 2017-2018 has been another period of significant growth and the year has seen us provide assistance and opportunities for more school leavers than ever before. We've increased the total funds distributed by about \$125,000 and subsequently been able to raise the dollar value provided to each of the 496 students who successfully applied for assistance.

I'm also pleased to report that several significant capacity building projects, including the CEF Alumni Program, were initiated and are showing promising early results.

### Our impact continues to build

As CEF continues to deliver on its five-year strategic vision we've been able to map our increasing impact more clearly through the experiences and the stories of our students. Not only are we helping more students each year, but we are starting to have more meaningful conversations with them about the role CEF and our local foundations play in supporting their aspirations, validating their choices and helping them on their way post high school.

The individual stories of our students are a constant reminder of the value and effectiveness of our local foundations and the volunteers who drive them. As a result of their hard work and dedication we've seen an incredible increase of 17 per cent in funds raised at the community level just this past year. That figure has increased by 60 per cent over the past 10 years. Additionally, the average size of an individual grant given by the local foundations has increased by 54 per cent over the past decade.



### Getting to know our Alumni

As we embarked on our alumni project at the beginning of 2018, it became apparent that our greatest resource – the almost 5000 students we've supported over the past 25 years – were largely unknown to us on a deeper, more personal level.

This represented a challenge but also a wonderful opportunity to start engaging with them more directly, use their stories to tell ours, understand better our collective impact and build our relationships so that CEF's future might benefit from their desire to give back to rural and regional Australia in some way.

The most compelling story to come out of our first interactions with the CEF alumni is that an incredible 96 per cent tell us that the assistance CEF provided them was very important to their success. We also know that 92 per cent of our alumni have either completed or are on track to completing studies and 94 per cent have found employment in their chosen field.

### Our stories, your stories

With the alumni program developing well we were provided the opportunity, through the generosity of CEF board member David Smithers, to film three student stories.

The focus of these stories was CEF Alumni Ambassador Chris Mercer, 2017 McLean scholar Shannon Graham and the inspiring Ashley Nielsen from Forster. All three stories are captivating and uplifting and perfectly represent the purpose of CEF.

Their journeys are diverse with their own set of challenges but all three demonstrate the power of communities to enable young people through creating opportunities and options once they leave school.

### Better outcomes for country Australia

Our students, supporters, board, volunteers and office team have long known the value of education and the importance of creating a more level playing field in this space.

This year we have been much more involved in the broader discussion around better outcomes for rural and regional students as we develop our advocacy role. We made a strong submission to the federal government's Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education authored by Professor John Halsey, worked together with other like-minded organisations to promote the value of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) and more recently we have been focused on contributing to the drought response for all our affected communities.

### A clear purpose

The entire team at national office have grown into their individual roles well over the past year, each one achieving some important outcomes and milestones. We have one new recruit in Donna Roberts, who is our chief administration officer and go-to person for technology and office management. We are thrilled to have Donna as part of the team.

The Country Education Foundation Board has also experienced renewal, with two new directors coming on board in the past 12 months. Peita Burton Taylor and Oscar Oberg both represent a new and fresh perspective to the vision of CEF and I'm thrilled to be working alongside them.

### Our supporters, generous as ever

Once again this year, we were proud hosts to an array of friends, partners, supporters, alumni and recipients at our annual Friends Event at a cocktail gathering that allowed our guests to enjoy the renowned Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of NSW.

As always, our ability to continue to support young people in the country, and their communities, was enabled by our generous family of education partners, donors, philanthropic and corporate partners and sponsors – at both national office and local foundation level. Their support remains critical as we continue to operate without government funding.

Through the amazing vision and belief of one donor, we have been fortunate to be offered the opportunity to purchase our own building. This really does secure our

longevity as an organisation and pays tribute to the model of CEF that has been successfully impacting the lives of young people for over 25 years.

As we draw close to the completion of our second three-year funding cycle, I would like to pay tribute to our Principal Partner, Origin Foundation, and its wonderful team headed up by Sean Barrett. His faith and experience combined with his appreciation of the CEF structure and purpose has given us endless inspiration and counsel over the years. Our local foundations have enjoyed Origin Foundation's support for many years and the funding they've been provided has helped considerably their ability to operate and grow. A heartfelt thanks goes to all our supporters and a full list can be seen on page 10 of this report.

### To the future ...

Our solid financial position this year will ensure our ability to continue to deliver on our strategic objectives and invest energy into building our alumni program, as well as rolling out more services and resources for our local foundations.

I would like to thank our great office team for all their hard work and professionalism, the tireless volunteers who make CEF tick and the supportive board who empower us and guide us. I'm very excited for the next 12 months.

  
**Wendy Cohen**  
Chief Executive Officer

## VALUE OF OUR SUPPORT



**Country Education Foundation of Australia directs all of its funds and efforts to helping young people in rural and regional Australia to further their education and training.**

**Through the collective efforts of Country Education Foundation of Australia and our local foundations our support is valued at an average of \$4089 per young**

**person in 2018\*.**

**This support is made up of direct funds through community grants and national scholarships, resources and programs and advocacy which advances outcomes for students and trainees in rural and regional Australia.**

\*in 2018 we supported 496 young people

# FOUNDATION FOCUS

## 25 YEARS OF HARD WORK, DEDICATION AND GROWTH

CEF volunteers are the organisation's lifeblood. They are a constant source of inspiration but most importantly they are bona fide people in their communities: teachers, business leaders, local identities, passionate people from all walks of life who know their local area and are able to give validity to the young people in their region.

This is CEF's unusual position in the non-profit space; because of volunteer involvement it makes the organisation unique, valued and it means CEF can be sustainable and have a long-term impact.

This year, CEF's volunteers and committees have continued to outperform their previous years' fundraising capacities despite most local foundations feeling the effects of prolonged dry periods and drought; while also dealing with normal funding fatigue each rural and regional community faces.

They have also continued to support more rural and regional students than ever, awarding a total of 496 individual grants in 2018.

In our efforts to enhance support to CEF local foundations this year national office has worked hard to engage directly with volunteers through several forums, lunches and meetings.

- In September a forum for members of our South Australian and Central Australia committees was held in Adelaide. The event was also attended by students, education partners and supporters.

- Also in September a lunch meeting was held with four local foundations. Connecting with Griffith, West Wyalong, Edward River and Coleambally/Darlington Point committees enabled national office

to hear of some of the local foundations' successes and challenges.

- 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. Thirty-five people attended representing 17 of our local foundations from around the state. This forum was enabled by the generosity of The Raymond E Purves Foundation.

### OUR GROWING FOOTPRINT

#### 1993-1997

**Boorowa, NSW**

#### 1998- 2002

**Yass, NSW  
Cowra, NSW  
Gilgandra, NSW  
Goulburn, NSW  
Gulargambone, NSW  
Merriwa, NSW  
Snowy Monaro, NSW**

#### 2003 – 2007

**Namoi, NSW  
Harden, NSW  
Braidwood, NSW  
Coonamble, NSW  
Eudunda, SA  
Paroo, QLD  
Gunnedah, NSW**

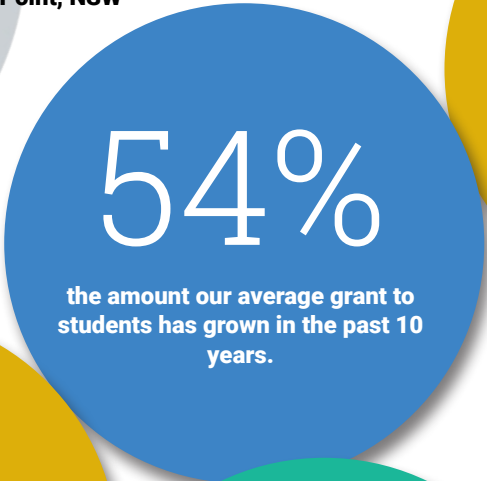
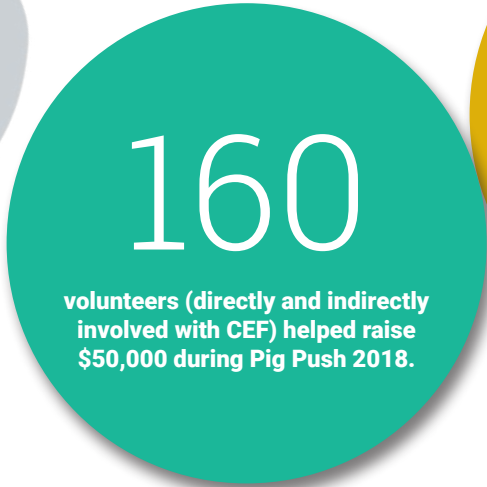
#### 2008 – 2012

**Balranald, NSW  
Clare, SA  
Torrens Valley, SA  
Cootamundra, NSW  
Moree, NSW  
Temora, NSW  
West Wyalong, NSW  
Edward River, NSW  
Kangaroo Island, SA  
Kimba, SA  
Clermont, QLD  
Maranoa, QLD  
Coleambally/Darlington Point, NSW  
Hastings, NSW  
Central Australia, NSW  
Great Lakes, NSW  
Griffith, NSW  
Kapunda, SA  
Orange, NSW  
Young, NSW  
Gwydir, NSW  
Macleay Valley, NSW  
Shoalhaven, NSW**

#### 2013 – 2017

**Blackall-Tambo, QLD  
Nyngan, NSW  
Canowindra, NSW  
Grenfell, NSW  
Walgett, NSW**

\*Currently active local foundations only



## HOW YOU CAN HELP CHANGE LIVES

- Consider a one-off donation or a regular financial contribution - to donate visit our website [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au)
- Consider volunteering on a CEF local foundation

- Your organisation may wish to sponsor or partner with us, or connect us to others within your networks
- Learn more about, and promote, our grants,

Scholarships Guide, University Survival Guide and student support resources by going to our website and clicking the *Students* tab

- [Consider a bequest](#)

- Purchase from our select merchandise range at [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au)
- Hold a fundraising event on our behalf

For further information on our organisation, or to discuss other ways you could work with CEF please call 1300 652 144, email [info@cef.org.au](mailto:info@cef.org.au) or explore [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au)

You can also keep in touch and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram





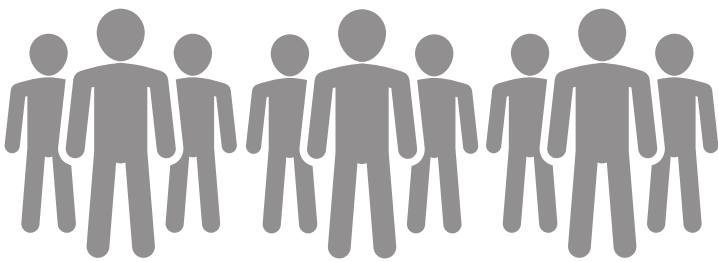
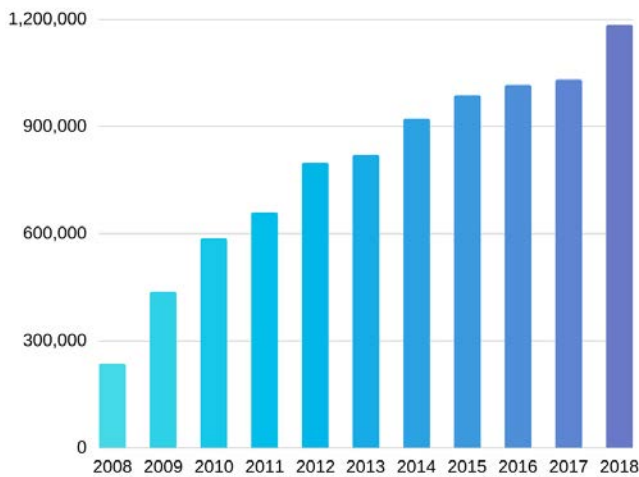
# REACH + IMPACT

Our success stories are continually evolving. Our strategic goals are geared to serve country youth affected by social and geographical isolation and financial disadvantage.



In 2017-2018, the Country Education Foundation network helped 496 students with \$1,184,141 in grants and scholarships.

That's an increase of 21 students, and more than \$150,000 in just one financial year.



\$9,369,772

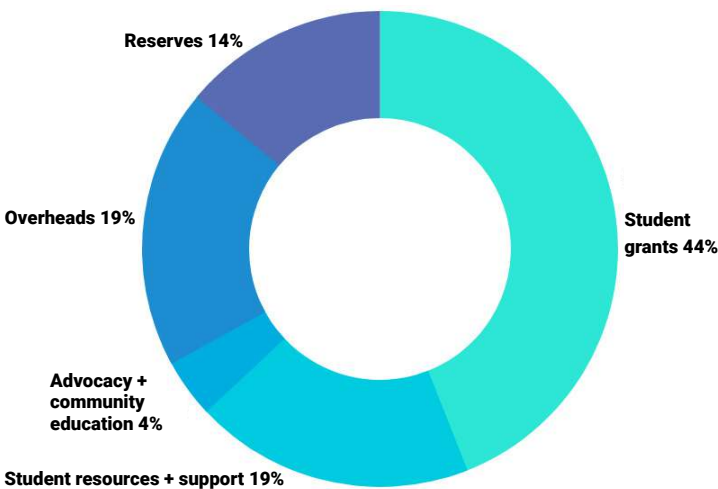
in financial support through

4883

individual grants and scholarships have been given since 1993.

In the past 10 years we have seen progressive and sustained growth. Year upon year CEF has awarded more dollar value to rural and regional students.

## USE OF TOTAL INCOME RAISED ACROSS THE CEF FAMILY



During the year (ended 30 June 2018) Country Education Foundation of Australia continued to raise funds for investment in the education of rural and regional students.

The collective fundraising efforts have seen support distributed to students through a network of more than 40 local foundations which are run by their many loyal volunteers.

The costs of operations have also been carefully managed throughout the year.

Overhead expenses across the family of organisations making up the Country Education Foundation have been restricted to 19 per cent of income.

# STUDENTS + ALUMNI

This year, CEF has worked hard to actively re-engage with 25 years' worth of rural and regional beneficiaries - our alumni. Not only are these recipients part of our history, but they also inform our future direction.

Phase two of the Alumni Program, which included an initial engagement campaign, was completed on June 30, 2018. As a result of phase two we have been able to capture and record 92 per cent of all CEF alumni records, and the engagement campaign has seen hundreds of these recipients re-engage with CEF.

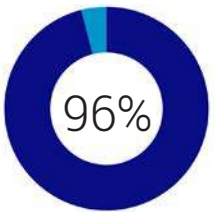
In June we announced the first CEF Alumni Ambassador, Chris Mercer. Chris received a local foundation grant from CEF Monaro in 2008. He completed his studies and is now Head of Production at Sydney Theatre Company.

In the year to come we plan to build on momentum by circulating a twice-yearly alumni newsletter, an annual alumni awards, networking events and a speaker series. These are all benefits our alumni said they would like to see when reconnecting with CEF.

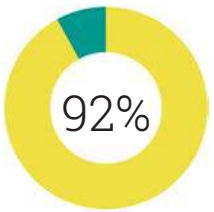
Our generous Alumni Program funders include:

- The Snow Foundation
- Origin Foundation
- The Vernon Foundation

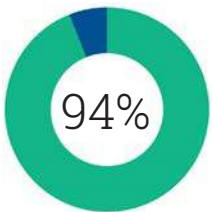
## WE KNOW WHAT WE DO WORKS



96% of our alumni tell us our assistance was very important in achieving their education and career aspirations



92% of our alumni have completed or are on track to complete their course of study



94% of graduating alumni have found employment in their chosen field

## Chris proves belief is a powerful force



Chris Mercer first came into contact with CEF as a recipient of Snowy Monaro foundation in 2005.

Despite receiving only a small monetary grant 13 years ago, he has never forgotten the impact of the encouragement and belief the local foundation imparted in him and is now actively giving back to help the next generation of young people. He has participated in this year's marketing videos, taken on the role as the inaugural Alumni Ambassador, and is active in promoting CEF.

Chris had the dream of working in the theatre without knowing how an 18-year-old from Cooma could follow that path. He achieved his goal.

## Personal ambition drives Sophie toward education success

Sophie Nelson has big ambitions, and with the help of CEF via the McLean Scholarship she is well on her way to achieving them.

Sophie is the 2018 recipient of the three-year scholarship, and is pursuing a medical degree.

She joins 11 other Broken Hill recipients of the McLean Scholarship.

Sophie said the scholarship is actively easing the financial pressure on her small family, especially her mother who works hard to provide for Sophie and her younger brother.

"Mum actually cried when I rang her at work to tell her. She just burst into tears," Sophie said.

"Even though there are a lot of other costs and expenses, accommodation is a really big thing. I know she was

stressed about it, and this money is a big chunk off my accommodation costs."

Sophie said she was encouraged to apply for the McLean Scholarship not only because of the money, but because the process considered more than just her academic results and financial situation, it also took into account her desire for an education and overall professional and personal ambitions.

"It was probably the most thought I'd put into any of the scholarships I applied for. I feel like this one was more about who I am, not just about my situation. Many of the other scholarships are impersonal, so I really liked showing who I am" Sophie said.

"The weight has been lifted off our shoulders, it's worth all the time I put into it."



# SUPPORTERS

In addition to the contribution our volunteer foundations receive from their communities, businesses and donors, Country Education Foundation of Australia received support from generous individuals as well as corporate, philanthropic and university partners in 2017-18.

## Corporate and Philanthropic

- Anonymous
- Audi Foundation (principal partner)
- Origin Foundation (principal partner)
- Burton Taylor PPF Foundation
- Millett Family Foundation
- The Vernon Foundation
- Forestry Corporation
- SC Maple-Brown
- The Snow Foundation
- Profield Foundation
- Wilson Asset Management
- SK&YY Cheung Family Foundation
- Christopher Smith
- CAGES Foundation
- Tim Fairfax
- Chris Roberts
- Gina and Christopher Grubb
- Daniel and Helen Gauchat
- The Raymond E Purves Foundation
- David Smithers
- James N Kirby Foundation
- The Loder Foundation
- McLean Foundation
- Findex Community Fund
- SELX

## Pro Bono

- Boyce Chartered Accountants
- Damian Scroope – Sydney Business Lawyers

## Education

- Australian Catholic University
- Australian National University
- Charles Sturt University
- Griffith University
- James Cook University
- Macquarie University
- Queensland University of Technology
- Southern Cross University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of Canberra
- The University of Newcastle
- University of South Australia
- St Andrew's College
- The University of Sydney
- University of Wollongong
- Western Sydney University

## WHY OUR PARTNERS SUPPORT US:



Support through educational scholarships is one of the objectives of our Foundation and we have been proud supporters of the Country Education Foundation for nearly 10 years. We love that scholarships provide opportunities for rural students to further their education - to follow their dreams and pursue successful careers.

**Georgina Byron, CEO,  
The Snow Foundation**



We believe in investing back into our communities at Boyce and have been privileged to do so with our charity partner the Country Education Foundation for the past 15 years. CEF cares about their communities, volunteers, recipients and partners, and this value is one that resonates deeply with us. The impact CEF has on young lives should not be underestimated. Through personal involvement with our local foundation I've seen first-hand the benefit that CEF provides to people in regional Australia.

**Jonathan Forrest, Director,  
Boyce Chartered Accountants**



# 2017-18 FINANCIALS CONDENSED

## COUNTRY EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA LTD

	2017-2018	2016-2017
<b>Funds we raised</b>		
Donations to program funding	1,453,000	1,296,000
Donation to build our future	472,000	
Fundraising events	78,000	157,000
Income from funds invested	33,000	29,000
Other income	107,000	97,000
	<b>2,143,000</b>	<b>1,579,000</b>
<b>What we spent</b>		
Distributed to regional foundations for students	858,000	734,000
Student resources	114,000	25,000
Other programs to support students	251,000	195,000
Advocacy and community education	80,000	107,000
Fundraising events	29,000	67,000
Fundraising, accounting and administration	304,000	354,000
Depreciation, amortisation	27,000	28,000
	<b>1,663,000</b>	<b>1,510,000</b>
Change in value of our investments	(11,000)	13,000
<b>Retained for ongoing initiatives</b>	<b>469,000</b>	<b>82,000</b>
<b>What we own</b>		
Cash	1,199,000	725,000
Investments	299,000	305,000
Other assets including intangibles	30,000	90,000
	<b>1,528,000</b>	<b>1,120,000</b>
<b>Sundry payables and provisions</b>	<b>330,000</b>	<b>391,000</b>
<b>Our net assets</b>	<b>1,198,000</b>	<b>729,000</b>

In addition to the income reported in the condensed financial report our network of 43 foundations individually raise money to support their local beneficiaries.

To read a copy of the Country Education of Australia's full audited financial statements visit [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au)





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ABN: 60 103 889 452

Country Education Foundation of Australia is a registered charity with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR1) status.