



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

From the CEO's desk...

Here we are again - the lead up to the holidays - it's a great time of the year. It's time to take stock of all the wonderful achievements of 2018 and celebrate the good news stories we've been able to bring to you about our students, our volunteers and our amazing partners and supporters. It's also time to focus on the year ahead and plans for our growth and increasing our impact on the lives of young people in rural and regional Australia.



I'm thrilled to report that, as a result of the Thyne Reid Foundation's vision and commitment to rural and regional Australia and the young people that are its future, a major relief package has been announced for our most drought-affected local foundations. Over the next three years the partnership will inject much-needed

funds directly into the communities facing enormous challenges as a result of the protracted drought. I'd like to thank the Thyne Reid Foundation for this extraordinary support of CEF and the communities we serve. We are very excited to collaborate with the Foundation and map the stories of students overcoming hardship on the road to success.

Our 2018 Annual Review has just been published and it is full of information about how Country Education Foundation and our local foundations are helping more students than ever before. You can read about the year in review by going to www.cef.org.au/reports

Since the end of the financial year we've welcomed even more new education partners including The University of Sydney, La Trobe University (Vic) and Flinders University (SA). We've established a new local foundation in Broken Hill and we are just moments away from announcing some exciting new funding and principal partner relationships. Most notably we have some great student stories emerging and I look forward to sharing those over the coming months.

One of the greatest challenges facing country Australia right now is the drought - the worst in living memory. We've heard from the communities we work with and we know they are hurting and will be for some time. The severity of the drought and its impact on students and their families has been recognised by our steadfast supporter and friend - the Thyne Reid Foundation.

The Thyne Reid Foundation's exceptional contribution is just one example of the overwhelming support CEF receives every year from our donors, supporters and partners. I'd like to thank you all for your continued investment in young Australians who well and truly deserve every opportunity that we, together, help them seize. Your generosity is the only reason we can continue our work. As our 25th year draws to a close, I look forward to chatting with you again next year when we look to the next quarter of a century of helping country students on their way to a very bright future.

All the best and my most heartfelt season's greetings.

Wendy Cohen
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A partnership that keeps giving

As we come to the end of our second three-year funding cycle we would like to pay tribute to our Principal Partner, Origin Foundation, and its wonderful team headed up by Sean Barrett.

Sean's 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.



Most recently, Origin partnered with us to bring you the first ever Origin Foundation CEF Alumni Awards. You can read more about our inspiring award winners on page 3 of this newsletter.

On behalf of the CEF family of volunteers, alumni and staff, thank you Origin Foundation, it's been an amazing journey, one which has been transformative not only for us in head office but for the thousands of students you've helped achieve great things over the past six years. We now look to the future which I'm sure, in some way, shape or form, sees Origin Foundation an important part of the continuing CEF story.

Chris Mercer, our alumni ambassador, was able to thank Origin Foundation personally during the first in a series of unique behind-the-scenes tours and performances of Sydney Theatre Company plays. Chris hosted the event at the Opera House in October and we are planning more for next year.

Acknowledging Origin's support of our alumni program, Chris was able to shine a light on the concept of giving back beautifully through this event. Thanks to Chris for organising the event and the STC for its generous donation of tickets and personnel to ensure the event was a success.

CEF Principal Partners:



'It's rewarding knowing you are making a difference'

Volunteers are CEF's lifeblood. They are a constant source of enthusiasm, but most importantly they are stalwarts 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 power to the young people in their region.

Their dedication and hard work gives CEF a unique position in the non-profit space; because our volunteer involvement means CEF can be sustainable and have a lasting impact on our regions.

That's why this year we are proud to announce three Katie Walker Outstanding Service Award recipients – Ken Martin of Coleambally/Darlington Point, John Trist of Edward River and Chen Gaul of Hastings.

The peer-nominated award recognises the pivotal role each person has played within their own local foundation.

Namesake of the award and CEF board member, Katie Walker of Yass CEF, has been involved from the early days and said this annual award is just a small thank you the board and national office can offer its hundreds of volunteers.

"This award acknowledges committee members who have given countless hours on a voluntary basis over the years for the benefit of the youth in their community," Mrs Walker said.

"I have been involved with the Country Education Foundation for more than 20 years and during this time I have seen the organisation grow from the first foundation, Boorowa, to over 40 today. This growth would not have been possible without the local committees and volunteers who are the backbone of CEF. Their knowledge and commitment ensures CEF can provide the most deserving students a helping hand to achieve their goals."



John Trist
Edward River

CEF partnerships and committee liaison Juliet Petersen said: "Our volunteers are our greatest strength. CEF acknowledges all our committee members for their commitment to improving the lives of the young people within their district. The Katie Walker award is a formal recognition of these three particular volunteers who have demonstrated outstanding service in 2018".

This year's award recipients all agreed they were humbled to be nominated, because they don't do it for themselves but for their community's young people.

"It goes without saying receiving the Katie Walker Outstanding Service Award is a very pleasant surprise and I am really chuffed to be nominated. We don't serve on these committees for personal gain, it is more about trying to help someone less fortunate than ourselves and the students we assist are very deserving," John Trist shared.

He said the most rewarding part of his 11 years with Edward River CEF has been seeing young country students succeed.

"The interview process is a real eye opener. The students prepare themselves well and are full of hope and enthusiasm venturing out into the next phase of their lives in a challenging new environment. For many it is



Ken Martin
Coleambally/Darlington Point

the first time they will have been away from their families. We get to see these students graduate, and we now have qualified nurses, teachers, commercial pilots, engineers and veterinary surgeons among those we have helped," John said.

"Some of these students we assist come off farms where they have experienced prolonged periods of drought, so their parents have been doing it extremely tough. The students become quite emotional when they describe how much a scholarship will mean to them as their parents have very little cash flow. In most cases both parents are working just to keep food on the table. It is very rewarding knowing that you are making a difference."

For Ken Martin, of Coleambally/Darlington Point CEF, his eight years as treasurer has been a commitment he has enjoyed.

"It has been a highly rewarding experience and I have been honoured to be a member of our grant selection panel on a number of occasions. Considering applications and then being involved in the interview process highlights the talents, ambitions and desires that our young people possess," Ken shared.

"From our little township in



Chen Gaul
Hastings

NSW, our grant recipients have gone on to become nurses, teachers, a landscape gardener, mechanical engineer, remedial massage therapist, doctor, commercial pilot and one has almost completed her Bachelor of Psychology to highlight just a few.

"My time with our local foundation has been truly rewarding. I thoroughly recommend the Country Education Foundation to anyone looking to become involved in their local community."

Chen Gaul, of the Hastings local foundation, said her role as treasurer for the past four years has allowed her to connect with local business owners and sponsors and share how influential CEF's impact on young lives can be.

"CEF is about the local people supporting the local youth. Our community's generosity goes a long way in making a difference in many young students lives," Chen said.

"The most rewarding thing with being involved in the work of CEF is hearing from our student grant recipients and learning how our support had changed their lives and enabled them to achieve the goals that would have otherwise been impossible".

Top achieving alumni recognised for first time

“Do the hard thing. Be persistent, and remember ‘natural talent’ doesn’t define success, determination does”: this is the advice Origin Foundation CEF Alumnus of the Year, Dr Ceridwen Boel, gives to young country students unsure about what to do after school. With a degree and PhD in subjects that many people can’t even pronounce, Ceridwen is the perfect choice for the inaugural Alumnus of the Year award. Ceridwen says she is “very proud to be among peers of such high calibre and absolutely honoured to have been chosen for the award”.

Since receiving a grant from the Yass CEF local foundation in 2008, Ceridwen has completed a Bachelor of Archaeological Practice (Hons) and Doctor of Philosophy (Evolutionary Biology/Palaeoanthropology).

She now works as a researcher for the University of New South Wales and is a member of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage. Her focus is now on research, but she still participates in archaeological digs, and last year was back in Yass for an excavation.

“Reconnecting with CEF was, for me, a powerful reminder of where I’d come from and just how much I have achieved over the last 11 years – and how much I have to give back,” Ceridwen shares.

Ceridwen’s story is just one of thousands CEF has influenced. This year, following the Alumni Program phase two completion, CEF is proud to acknowledge and re-engage with the country-raised students who are a part of our story. One way we are doing this is through the Origin Foundation Alumni Awards. Ceridwen is one of four winners announced.

Jacob Dennis of Walgett followed his passion, put his dedication into overdrive and has a very bright future ahead. Jacob said he is excited to be named the inaugural recipient of the CEF Rising Star Alumni Award. A proud Gamilaraay man, Jacob received a CEF Walgett grant in 2017 after overcoming many hurdles. Since then he has proved that perseverance is the key to success.

Origin Foundation CEF Alumni Award Winners
 Each recipient was nominated by local foundation members.

Origin Foundation CEF Alumnus of the Year - Ceridwen Boel, Yass

Origin Foundation CEF Community Alumni Champion - Crystal Stewart, Torrens Valley (now a member of Kangaroo Island)

Origin Foundation CEF Young Achiever - Jessica Verwey, Griffith

Origin Foundation CEF Rising Star - Jacob Dennis, Walgett



Dr Ceridwen Boel



Jacob Dennis



Crystal Stewart



Dr Jessica Verwey

“I feel an unshakeable responsibility to lift my community in any way I can.”

With a powerful connection to the land and his home community, Jacob, is now living with family in Canberra. When explaining his goal to one day move home to Walgett to share his experience and knowledge, he says he feels “an unshakeable responsibility to lift my community up in any way I can”.

Jacob said, “when people from rural areas leave to pursue higher education there is often a longing for home and a disconnect that people feel over time.” He knows from experience that when CEF provides assistance and touches base, it is a reminder that you have community support. That’s often enough to give an extra push to follow your career path.

Another is Origin Foundation CEF Community Alumni Champion Crystal Stewart who said she was humbled to be nominated and it was especially meaningful for her considering how much CEF has played a role in her education. Crystal received assistance from CEF’s Torrens Valley local foundation in 2010 to pursue her degree in education.

“Past recipients of CEF grants should really consider reconnecting with CEF somehow. I’ve really enjoyed working alongside the dedicated members of the Kangaroo Island foundation and have gained new insight into what goes into selecting and supporting students to achieve their goals,” Crystal said.

Last, but not least, Dr Jessica Verwey has been named the Origin Foundation CEF Young Achiever award winner. Jessica, a Griffith CEF grant recipient, moved away to study vet science in Wagga, but in 2019 has plans to return to Griffith with her fiancé and an array of animals.

While studying Jessica won the 2017 Veterinary Science Medal, and is the first vet science student ever to be awarded the prestigious Charles Sturt University Medal. Since graduating in mid-2017 with first class honours in her Bachelor of Veterinary Science/Bachelor of Veterinary Biology degree, Jessica has a published academic article under her belt. She has spent time working in Young, NSW and most recently teaching back at CSU.

She encourages young students to follow their dreams and to seek support from organisations like CEF. “I think it’s important that we support CEF and demonstrate to the next generation of students going through that, with support, country students really can achieve anything!”

Inaugural alumni ambassador Chris Mercer sums it up perfectly: “It is extraordinary to see the meaningful impact of Country Education Foundation alumni. Impact that is being felt in regional Australia and across the world”.

For each winner’s full profile, and more student stories, go to www.cef.org.au/blog



GIVE THE GIFT OF EDUCATION AND BELIEF THIS CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SEASON

"I found the courage to apply after realising it's OK to want help and ask for it. Many students believe they don't deserve help, but after going through the application process it made me realise everyone must start somewhere, and a little help goes a long way."

Brittnee, CEF grant recipient, Hastings 2018

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CEF is a registered charity with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR1) status. 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 more than 40 local education foundation committees operating throughout New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Since 1993 we've given more than 4800 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 Scholarships Guide and student mentor programs.

To find out more about our life-changing work please visit www.cef.org.au or phone us on 1300 652 144