

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

## From the CEO's desk...



Hello everyone,

As we move quickly towards the festive season, at times it feels difficult to be cheerful, with all that Mother Nature is throwing at us right now. It has been devastating to see the impact of bushfires in

already drought-affected communities within the CEF footprint.

However, here at CEF we always have something to celebrate and most recently it was the coming together of so many of our wonderful volunteers at the CEF National Committee Conference as well as our remarkable grant recipients at the inaugural CEF Alumni Awards evening. So much went into the planning and preparation for these two events and what fulfilling and worthwhile occasions they were.

In this newsletter we are delighted to introduce you to the people recognised at both events; the winners of our Katie Walker and Alumni Awards as well as our newest Board member,

Dougal Geddes. We also welcome two new fabulous staff to national office, Emma Burns and Lisa Carrick, which will allow for increased support to our volunteers, students and education partners.

Exciting news recently received is the updated figure for the Social Return On Investment (SROI) study carried out over recent months. For every \$1 invested in CEF, there is \$4.99 in social return. While we have known all along that what we do works, how fabulous it is to have the evidence and research with which to prove it. The study was carried out by 180 Degrees Consulting, a university based consultancy group, lead by one of our very own alumni, Saul Brady.

As we look to 2020, early in the new year we will be busy preparing to celebrate CEF's continued growth with the official opening of our national office on March 5, 2020. [Register your interest on the CEF website.](#)

Another commitment we are pleased to announce is the support from Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health at CSU for the establishment of new CEF committees within the Riverina, an area in which we've long wished to increase our presence.

As we lead into the Christmas break, our thoughts are with those so greatly affected by drought and bushfires - the impact for many is severe. Through the kindness and generosity of one anonymous donor, **all national donations received before Christmas will be matched**. So please act now and [Give the Gift of Education](#) this Christmas!

Until 2020,

*Julie Petersen*

**DID YOU KNOW? FOR EVERY \$1 YOU  
DONATE TO CEF, YOU PROVIDE \$4.99  
IN SOCIAL RETURN**

**\$1 = \$4.99**



\* 2019 Independent Study conducted by 180DC

**HAVE A  
MERRIER  
Christmas**

**HAVE TWICE THE IMPACT IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS  
WITH DONATIONS BEING DOUBLED UNTIL CHRISTMAS.  
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\* DONATIONS TO CEF NATIONAL

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CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

# Introducing Dougal Geddes to the CEF family

*With a passion for education that has evolved over time, newly appointed CEF Board Director Dougal Geddes considers CEF's grassroots model of 'pitching in to assist those needing help' as an example of good practice that can be applied across lots of areas for the benefit of local communities.*

If you meet Dougal Geddes, he'd politely introduce himself as a husband, Sydney city 'GP' lawyer of 40 years, father of three and grandfather of eight.

He's passionate about community and his involvement includes volunteering with Starlight Foundation and Sydney City Mission, together with being trustee of the Airmen's Foundation of Papua New Guinea.

The Airmen's Foundation of PNG was established by two servicemen (one American pilot, one Australian naval officer) who vowed to help the villages where they had been rescued during



**Newly appointed CEF Board Member Dougal Geddes**

World War II. The Foundation set up its first school in 1964 with 40 students and two teachers. Now, almost 650 students attend three schools in the West New Britain region. The grandchildren of the original students are now current students and the former students are now teachers!

"In the beginning they could not get the kids to come to school. Their parents, who had limited if any schooling, would keep them

home for labour during harvest and they did not understand the value of education. The classrooms are now full and bubbling as the current parents who are ex-pupils, realise the value of education and make sure their children attend. We have been able to hand over management of funds and the administration completely to local community. This is a wonderful achievement," said Dougal.

"We all have to be very patient with education goals and when assessing the effectiveness of charity, support, donations and learning opportunities. It's a long-term investment but there is no downside. You know you've been successful when those recipients come back and give of themselves and try to repay or return that support."

"In my opinion, education is the principal factor of difference between those who have and those who maybe have not. The only way we can change young people's lives is through education. You could give them all the money in the world, but if you are hoping to invest in lasting change and improvement, the only way to do that is by educating them."

Dougal hopes to facilitate and raise awareness of CEF's purpose in whatever way he can.

Welcome to the family Dougal!

## Valuable day for volunteers

*The fifth CEF national conference was held in Sydney on November 23, 2019. Themed 'Planning Today for Greater Impact Tomorrow', the conference focused on enabling our local foundation volunteers to work together to grow CEF's impact.*

The planning centered around leveraging the unique opportunities and challenges each local community faces in the current environment.

This conference was made possible by our generous partner Alinta Energy. Their sponsorship enabled 38 volunteers from 21 committees to attend. Four guest speakers shared research, expertise, tools and advice on education, partnerships, community engagement and public relations.

During themed roundtable discussions, volunteers exchanged experiences and know-how to address common issues committees face.

## 2019 Katie Walker Award recipients

*CEF's success is due to the genuine passion, long term generosity, community knowledge and influence of foundation volunteers. They ensure CEF maintains a positive profile and work to empower those in need.*

Katie Walker, Yass District Education Foundation and CEF board member, has been involved since the beginning and each year proudly presents the Katie Walker Outstanding Service Awards.

"Local foundations nominate a volunteer for consideration. Each year it is a difficult decision to select from all the remarkable nominees," Mrs Walker said.

The four recipients of this year's award were announced at the recent national conference.

Nic Carmody, a founding member of the Yass foundation and active committee member since inception only this year stepped down from an executive position. He has been instrumental in fundraising and promoting the foundation.



**Top L-R: Nic Carmody, Sam Flanery  
Bottom L-R: Jane McGrath, Pierre Gregor**

Sam Flanery from Harden District Education Fund said "Over the seventeen years I've been involved, the question has changed from what is university, to which university. That says it all about the impact we have in our town."

Jane McGrath of the Griffith foundation had a fellow committee member accept on her behalf. "I am honoured to receive the award. I'm just one of a small but very dedicated group of people that form CEF Griffith who are passionate about helping our local youth with their post-secondary education."

Pierre Gregor of Kangaroo Island Country Education

Fund was present to receive his award. "I'm humbled to receive this award. I am part of a small, passionate and dedicated team. Like them, I am rewarded in the knowledge that we are facilitating the realisation of further educational opportunities for a range of youth, some of whom, due to a variety of circumstances, may otherwise miss out."

Congratulations to all our nominees and winners.



# 2019 Alinta Energy Alumni Awards announced



CEF announced the winners of the 2019 Alinta Energy – CEF Alumni Awards at a wonderful inaugural presentation event held at The Grandstand, the University of Sydney campus on Saturday November 23, 2019.

From STEM through to social work, this year's awards recognised achievements from a broad cross section of vocations.

- » **CEF Alumnus of the Year**  
*Lee Constable (Harden)*
- » **CEF Community Champion**  
*Molly Dennis (Goulburn)*
- » **CEF Young Achiever**  
*Dr Grace Causer (Young)*
- » **CEF Rising Star**  
*Saul Brady (Great Lakes)*

An amazing 31 Alumni student nominations were received. Each recipient was proudly nominated by their local foundation, demonstrating CEF's ongoing student support and encouragement at a community level.



**CEF Alumni Ambassador Chris Mercer, Alumni Award winners Saul Brady, Grace Causer, Molly Dennis and School for Life Foundation CEO Annabelle Chauncy OAM**

CEF Acting CEO, Juliet Petersen is thrilled to see the CEF Alumni Awards grow so significantly in only its second year, with a wonderful turn out to the first awards presentation evening, which also doubled as a networking event for all members of the CEF family.

"The brilliant response to the Alumni Awards this year shows how passionate our volunteers are about access to education, the students they support and

how exceptional the youth of rural and regional Australia are," Mrs Petersen said.

Keynote speaker, School for Life Foundation Founder and CEO, Annabelle Chauncy OAM spoke with passion about her not-for-profit organisation in rural Uganda which builds schools and enables communities to help themselves and create their own opportunities.

Ms Chauncy's inspirational

and motivated presentation had young students and CEF volunteers alike captivated as she spoke about her passion for education. CEF is delighted she was able to entertain and inspire the evening's attendees.

The 2019 Alumni Awards were generously supported by CEF principal partner Alinta Energy and we will continue to work together to connect the next generation of leaders and create vibrant and thriving regional communities.

Alinta Energy Executive Director of Retail Markets, Jim Galvin, served on the Awards selection panel and said dedication to education was a standout feature in all nominated students.

"The quality of entrants was outstanding, and we want to congratulate not only the winners but all the nominees and CEF recipients. CEF plays such an important role in supporting country kids to further their education, so their success can underpin the thriving rural and regional communities of the future," Mr Galvin said.



## You're invited

Please join us for the official opening of the CEF National Office

**52 Hill Street**  
Orange, NSW

**5-7pm, Thursday March 5, 2020**

RSVP at  
[www.cef.org.au/national-office-opening](http://www.cef.org.au/national-office-opening)



# MERRIER Christmas



\* DONATIONS TO CEF NATIONAL

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You can also quickly and easily make a donation to Country Education Foundation by visiting [www.cef.org.au](http://www.cef.org.au) and clicking the Donate button on the home page or by phoning 1300 652 144.

CEF is a registered charity with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR1) status. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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 44 local education foundations operating throughout New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Since 1993 we've given more than 5000 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](http://www.cef.org.au) or phone us on 1300 652 144.