

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

From the CEO's desk...



Hello everyone,

There is no denying the devastation with which this year begun. It's both heart-warming and remarkable when we consider what has followed in terms of

aid and charity for our fellow Australians.

We have opened our hearts and wallets to support families and communities on the long road that lies before them. This collective spirit is only too visible within our own CEF family. We have seen local foundations pledge their funds to ensure applications from other affected communities are supported; we have continued drought support from valued donors; and we are seeing the extraordinary

resilience and commitment of our volunteers; just like Pierre Gregor from Kangaroo Island, who you'll be reading about on page three.

What is most promising is the aspiration and determination our rural and regional students are showing in the face of such adversity. Student applications have increased almost 20 per cent this year.

It is the work of dedicated community members like Mark Morrison from Macleay Valley, that enables the confidence and dreams of incredible young rural and regional people. This is a fierce reminder not only of country resolve, but of the fragility of our young people's futures which depend so much on the generosity of others – of you.

We thank all our partners, supporters, volunteers and donors for the roles you play.

It is your support that enables CEF to support and strengthen country spirit, and create the true social impact you will read about in the following newsletter.

As I pen this introduction, we are preparing to show many of you our new 'home' in Orange, NSW at our office launch.

Foundations have been busy interviewing 2020 applicants and awarding grants. It's an exciting time for students and their support groups. For first-year university students, we have launched the 2020 CEF University Survival Guide.

May the change of season provide a suitable respite from the weather to bring benefit to you and yours.

Juliet Petersen

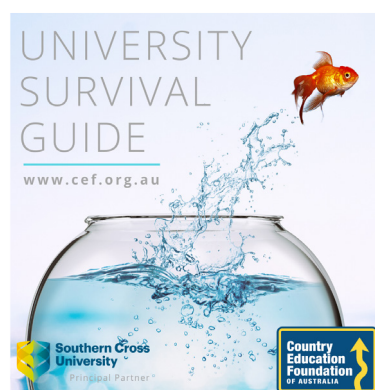
University Survival Guide opens eyes

CEF looks forward to improving rural and regional university student retention rates through the provision of free online resources in the 2020 CEF University Survival Guide.

The guide is made available thanks to the support of principal partner Southern Cross University.

CEF CEO Juliet Petersen is proud of its historical reception with first year students and their support networks, saying country students are serious about further education.

The guide is full of CEF alumni advice to first year university students to help them make the most of their valuable further education and the services available to support them on their education journey.



"Starting university is a challenge for anyone. But when you add leaving home for the first time after finishing high school, having to set up and manage multiple priorities and finding part-time work, it becomes a huge transition for many rural and regional students. That's

where our guide can assist by offering simple advice and tips from students who have been before them," Mrs Petersen said.

Southern Cross University Vice President of Engagement Ben Roche said the university was proud to support resources that helped rural and regional students successfully transition.

"Starting the journey to university can be both daunting and exhilarating, and this guide is a great tool to support students in making those first steps on a path to further learning and achievement," he said.

The guide is available on the CEF website at: www.cef.org.au/university-survival-guide.



CEF national office opening celebration

CEF national office in Orange, NSW was officially opened on Thursday, 5 March 2020.

The building was purchased thanks to a generous anonymous donation.

We look forward to sharing coverage of the event in our next edition.

CEF Principal Partners:



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New partnership helps Lochie get to Sydney

A new partnership established between CEF and Dunmore Lang College at Macquarie University has helped one regional student embark on their education journey.

CEF Namoi-supported student Lochie Russell is the first recipient of the new CEF-Dunmore Lang part accommodation scholarship.

Lochie is an 18-year-old from the small town of Narrabri NSW, who has recently made the big move to Sydney to study a Bachelor of Security Studies at Macquarie University.

Lochie is thankful for the support, which will help him with the transition to university.

"I have been worried about being separated from my family for the first time, as we have always been together. Narrabri is six hours



CEF Namoi-supported student Lochie Russell.

away from Sydney which will take a while for me to adapt to. I am also excited to meet new people, start my degree and see what opportunities that Macquarie University and college life can offer for me," he said.

"This accommodation scholarship

means a lot to me as I won't have to work for as many casual hours or need as much support from my parents to help pay for my accommodation. It made the move to Sydney much more affordable and less of a financial strain."

Dunmore Lang has strong engagement programmes for rural, regional and indigenous students which are generously supported by Macquarie University, donors, mentors and facilitators.

"The College has a strong rural and regional student base and is committed to providing opportunities for students from all backgrounds to live in College whilst completing their degrees," Dean of Students at Dunmore Lang, Liza Allen said.

"This year we have been able to offer a scholarship in partnership with Country Education Foundation to Lochie Russell and we are excited to welcome him to Dunmore Lang."

CEF presentations celebrate future successes

Worthwhile support for amazing students

CEF national was invited to attend award presentation ceremonies in Goulburn and Braidwood recently.

It was brilliant to see first hand how CEF impacts the lives of some amazing students and worthwhile communities.

Further, the commitment of CEF volunteers in their community is a beautiful thing. There are so many local businesses, individuals and organisations truly invested in helping the next generation achieve a further education. Thanks again!

**CEF Committee Liaison,
Lisa Carrick**



Drought, bushfires, floods in regional Australia

While a summer of bushfires has been followed up with recent rain and flooding – it's not enough to break the worst drought seen in country Australia.

In the three years to January 2020, approximately 33 per cent of Australia and 96 per cent of New South Wales had serious or severe rainfall deficiencies. In the most affected regions, rainfall over the past three years was around half the long-term average.

Since September 2019, the country has been battling the worst wildfires in decades, exacerbated by a prolonged drought and record temperatures. More than 44 million acres of bush and forest was burnt, at least 28 people died, and 89 homes were destroyed in the bushfires now known as 'black summer'.

CEF acknowledges the plight of bushfire-ravaged areas which fall within our footprint including the Shoalhaven, Braidwood, Kangaroo Island, Snowy Monaro, Great Lakes and Hastings communities.

It's times like these when we remember why we do what we do: to help those we can in times of need. CEF has reached out to assist our communities in ways



we can during these horrific events.

CEF Macleay Valley originally closed their grant applications at the end of November, but reopened applications as people were losing homes in their area.

Harden District Education Foundation and CEF Walgett have donated funds to Braidwood and District Education Foundation and Kangaroo Island Country Education Fund (KI CEF) to boost their giving capacity.

"We felt our community had been spared any damage from bushfires and would like to

provide financial assistance to other foundations. We hope that our donation will assist students in areas which had been severely affected by the recent bushfires," Harden's chair Charlotte Middleton said.

KI CEF committee member Pierre Gregor says while the media painted a bleak picture of bushfire devastation that included half of Kangaroo Island burning, the loss of two lives and 80 homes; there is still over 250 kms of stunning, untouched coastline and about 2400 sq. kms of unburnt island with accommodation providers, cellardoorers and farmgate

experiences waiting for trade.

Pierre chairs the KI CEF grants and fundraising sub-committees and the Kangaroo Island Food, Wine and Berry Association. He also sits on the Island's Recovery Committee.

"The peak period for tourism on the island is a distant memory. We're now experiencing cancellations for March and April and up until October. Businesses rely on this seasonal cashflow for the year ahead. That's still a direct impact of the fires that's going to be felt for a while," he said.

"With the little rain we have had, the native bush is already in regrowth and offers visitors a special experience in itself."

Almost half of the Island's residents are employed in either tourism or agriculture. Pierre said the tourism industry will bounce back, but it's the agricultural sector that will take a bit longer to recover.

"Community response is amazing in the way of everyone coming together to help each other and so was the mainland," he said.

"The significantly reduced cash flow makes the support provided by KI CEF even more important."

SROI project validates CEF impact and purpose

The opportunity

In 2016 Saul Brady received a grant from the Great Lakes Education Fund. In 2019, in his final year of study at the University of New South Wales, Saul reached out to CEF and offered to 'give back' through his position as a consulting director at 180 Degrees Consulting (180DC), the world's largest volunteer consultancy organisation. 180DC forms teams of highly capable university students to help non-profits and social enterprises with business challenges and problems.

The history

In 2011, Social Ventures Australia (SVA) conducted a Social Return on Investment (SROI) report for CEF and found for every \$1 invested there was a \$3.11 social return. CEF saw partnering with 180DC on an updated SROI project as a great opportunity to revisit this number and to validate our impact and purpose in the community.

What is SROI?

CEF founder and Chairman Nick Burton Taylor AM explains: "one of the key indicators for any not-for-profit organisation is the leverage it can gain from donated funds." SROI tells the story of how change is being created by an organisation and places a monetary value on that change when compared with the costs required to achieve it.

The result

After a three-month project including intensive data collection and project development, Saul and his team from 180DC had the result. For every \$1 invested in the work of CEF a social return of \$4.99 is generated. Mr Burton Taylor said: "to achieve a social benefits return of nearly five to one is testament to the simplicity of our model and the amazing work of our volunteers. Such a result provides us with a high level of confidence that every dollar raised is getting to where it is most needed."



Mark shines a way for education to create positive change in Macleay Valley

Macleay Vocational College (MVC) principal and a founding member of CEF Macleay Valley, Mark Morrison was awarded with an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the recent Australia Day Awards for his contribution to vocational education and community.

Mark's primary belief is that education fosters growth and change. Through his work in vocational education, he's seen positive changes within Macleay Valley family units that's led to a shift in community thinking and a drive towards aspiration.

Australian Story featured MVC last November, showcasing the unpredictable campus life and Mark's efforts to help students achieve.

Kempsey is a mix of disadvantaged backgrounds where violence, crime, alcohol abuse and drugs are norms that students have grown up with. Mark goes above and beyond to help his students break the cycle of generational unemployment. MVC students are often the first in family to get their Higher School Certificate.

Mark was a founding member of CEF Macleay Valley, which was an idea born from a local education forum.

"It was Terry Witchard who gave it a solid push to begin with and I was there to support him from the side. We're still in touch and I watch how CEF Macleay Valley supports students gain a further education," he said.

He is currently focused on inspiring MVC



Mark Morrison is a deserving OAM recipient for contribution to education and community.

students to be at a level where they can take the next step themselves and aspire to gain a further education.

"The unfortunate thing in life is we often get told what we're not good at from a very young age. We live in a competitive world where skills in a particular area are exemplified over others," he said.

Two main themes of Mark's work in Macleay Valley are 'belonging' and 'trust'. He aims to help students feel that they belong in their community and believes trust is vital in any relationship with students to ensure they're communicating on the same level.

"To teach kids, you need to think like kids. For students, a bad day should be when there have been lessons to learn. A good day should be celebrating an achievement," he says.

Mark and his family have called Macleay Valley home since moving there in 1992.

"I like life in country Australia because of the community values – its resilience, its strength. We have all come together to help those struggling with the bushfires in New South Wales, Queensland or Victoria no matter what area we come from, because we're country Australians and have the same values," he said.

"A community bands together in its understandings of each other. Achievements don't just belong to ourselves solely; they belong to something bigger for the community."

Humbled to be awarded an OAM, Mark said he accepts it on behalf of his community, especially the college's staff and students.

"I feel honoured to accept this award on behalf of my family, college and colleagues. I feel validated that people who don't think they are worthy of these awards, like me, are actually making a difference in the lives of others and working together for a positive change," he said.

"It hasn't changed me because I get energy from what I do. I'm not big on personal things for myself. My heartfelt passion comes from students' successes and attendance."

Please donate and help us get more rural and regional school leavers on their way to achieving their dreams

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

There are three easy ways to donate to CEF

Online: visit www.cef.org.au and click the **Donate** button

Phone: 1300 652 144

Mail: Country Education Foundation
PO Box 245, Orange NSW 2800

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\$25 \$50 \$100 Own choice

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BSB: 062-629 Account: 1009 0818 Reference: (YOUR NAME)

Credit Card:

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Expiry Date

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AND FAMILIES.
AND COMMUNITIES.

