

**EDUCATION
CHANGES LIVES.
AND FAMILIES.
AND COMMUNITIES.**

From the CEO's desk...



It goes without saying how much our lives have been turned on their head these last few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most particularly for our 665 CEF grant recipients who have adapted with the greatest perseverance and dedication.

We are all quickly realising that life goes on and have been working hard to continue supporting our students during the most difficult of times.

With the masses of information and reading material that is making its way in front of you, there are a few things that I'd love you to take away from reading this newsletter.

- Please don't miss reading of Abir's relief upon receiving his scholarship.
- The true impacts of COVID-19 for three of our students and how they are remaining positive.
- The generosity of our national scholarship providers.

We wish to thank you all for your enduring support.

Best wishes,

Juliet

Juliet Petersen
CEO

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CEF NATIONAL OFFICE OPENING

At the time of going to print in our last issue, we were busily getting ready for the official opening of our national office in Orange. The welcome rain didn't dampen our spirits and over seventy guests were entertained with music from the Orange High School stage band and canapes from the school's catering team. It is pretty safe to say that we are very proud of our new home and grateful for such a generous gift of belief in our work.



"For a small charity like ours, this is a wonderful position to provide the surety of our staff and the 456 volunteers who make up our organisation. We work together from the grassroots up to boost further education in the bush."

**Nick Burton Taylor AM,
Chairman**



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Meet Abir

In his first year of a Bachelor of Science at the University of Melbourne, with a focus on genetics, Abir Srivastava should be residing at St Hilda's college, but like students around the globe, he's back home and studying remotely in Alice Springs.



When asked for his first reaction on receiving the Mary Vernon – CEF Scholarship, Abir had a one-word answer; "Relief!"

"I just felt this huge relief that I had some financial support so I could go on and make the most of university and really focus on my studies."

Indian-born Abir moved to Australia with his family at the age of two. And while his parents have always supported him in every way possible, the prospect of moving across the country to study and reside at the University of Melbourne was always going to be an expensive dream that would put considerable financial pressure on the family.

And so it was cause for enormous relief and celebration when Abir discovered he would receive this generous scholarship of \$21k (over three years).

In the words of Chris Tudor, CEF Central Australia volunteer, "Abir is a talented, hardworking student with a true desire to make a difference in the community."

Working hard is something Abir has proven to be particularly good at. Even before commencing his Bachelor of Science, he had accrued an impressive track record

of academic excellence and community involvement.

Abir was only just getting settled in Melbourne when COVID-19 hit. In addition to college fees, he now had to buy flights home, part time jobs became suddenly impossible to secure and the expenses still rolled in.

"If I didn't have the scholarship, I'd be so stressed about trying to get work and finding other ways to support myself so I am not fully relying on my parents and feeling guilty."

"I had started looking for jobs pretty soon after I arrived in Melbourne, but around that time things started getting bad and nobody was hiring. Thanks to the scholarship, even if I didn't get a job straight away, I could still focus on studying."

So what have been the biggest challenges for Abir in moving from his tight-knit community in Alice Springs to college in Melbourne?

"Trying to reform connections. You are in a brand-new place; a totally different environment and it can be really overwhelming! I'm still trying to figure out where I fit in this new world. COVID-19 has made all of this so much more difficult."

CEF is all about the power that education has, to impact individuals, families and communities.

Abir is a strong believer of the 'rising tides lift all boats' theory. And his CEF and school community is living proof of that.

"The people you surround yourself with is your community. It can be your friendship group, your school peers and teachers or your neighbours. **And when good things happen to people in your community, it rubs off on everyone.**"

CEF provides far more than simply financial support. Abir explains, "I feel like I'm part of a real support network now and it means a lot. It is pretty important – especially in Alice Springs."

"I would like to come back to Alice Springs at some point and do some good work here because I owe it a lot."

2020 CEF National Scholarships

Each year CEF partners with generous individuals and organisations to provide national scholarships in addition to local grants. Local foundations identify and nominate recipients based on the scholarship criteria which can be geographically or discipline based.

This year, through our partnerships with the Audi Foundation, the McLean Foundation, the Eureka Benevolent Foundation, Andrew and Paula Liveris, the Zagora Foundation, the Vernon Foundation and the Loder Foundation, 18 students have received additional funds to the total value of \$117,000.

A number of these scholarships are for a three year tenure, making a significant difference to the start of further education for these students and bolstering their chances of success.

The Vernon Foundation is delighted to support the Central Australian scholarship initiative with the help and assistance of CEF. Abir is the inaugural awardee and a great role model."

John Charrington, The Vernon Foundation

Five minutes with...Chris

Chris Tudor AM is the Public Officer for CEF Central Australia. He has a very proactive, on the ground approach to promoting CEF grants with the aim of helping as many students as he can. We asked to take five minutes of his time to tell us just a little about himself;



From: Born in England and arrived in Australia at the age of two.

Lived: Broken Hill to Melbourne, then Alice Springs – fell in love with the Outback.

Worked: Became a teacher and was Headmaster of St Philip's Alice Springs for 30 years with the goal to teach in the country and ensure that young people living in isolation can access education.

Family: Proud Father and Grandfather.

COVID-19 and staying positive

Moving back home. Online learning. Part-time jobs lost. - a lot has changed since COVID-19 hit. We spoke to three students about how the outbreak has impacted their lives and how they are managing.



CECILY DUCKSBURY
HARDEN EDUCATION FUND &
AUDI FOUNDATION SCHOLAR

Cecily is studying nutrition and dietetics through the University of Wollongong and has been supported through her study every year since 2016 by the Harden Education Foundation. Now in her fourth year and working on her Deans Scholar thesis, 2020 was supposed to be full of practical placements across the country.

"Everything is going ok for now. I am in Young and three weeks into my first placement - as there are not a lot of COVID cases down here it is probably a safe place to be.

"So far, I know that my Tasmania placement has been made remote because of the long quarantine period. What is good news though is that they haven't cancelled the placement, instead I am just doing the projects they wanted me to do from home. Thankfully for the time being, no changes have been made to my July placements.

"In short, I am doing my best. I am doing lots of community-based projects for the hospital here and am really enjoying applying all that I have learnt. Plus, it's really nice to be at home with my family although, I do miss my pets in Wollongong a little!"

"I am not working at the moment because of a job stand down so I am just staying calm and focussed on university."



SEAN ROTHERY
EUREKA BENEVOLENT FOUNDATION
BROKEN HILL SCHOLAR

In late February, Sean moved from far west NSW to study a Bachelor of Business at the International College of Management Sydney (ICMS). A month later, when on a brief home visit, he received a message from the college that the campus and the accommodation had been shut down.

"I had only one weeks' worth of clothes and my laptop and was unable to travel back to Sydney to collect my things."

"Studying online rather than in the classroom impacts my motivation, commitment, and concentration.

"All the classes are three hours long with minimal breaks. That amount of time spent at the screen is a significantly different experience to being in an interactive classroom with physical activities - **but we must make the best of this situation and keep striving towards our goals.**

"My mum works for the Royal Flying Doctor Service which adds another level of necessary security and isolation for our family. If anyone contracts COVID-19, it could reach all the nurses in Broken Hill which is a serious issue, especially due to the elderly population of the town. It could also reach the more rural areas that she flies to for work."



FRANCESCA FENTON
CEF GENFELL RECIPIENT

Francesca is in her third and final year of her Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Dance at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in Perth. With the school closing temporarily, Francesca headed home to Grenfell.

"Studying dance is obviously a very collaborative and practically based course, so not physically being in the studio with my teachers and peers has had quite a significant impact on my studies."

"Already missing out on public performances has significantly impacted the course of my studies as I will no longer graduate by the end of the year."

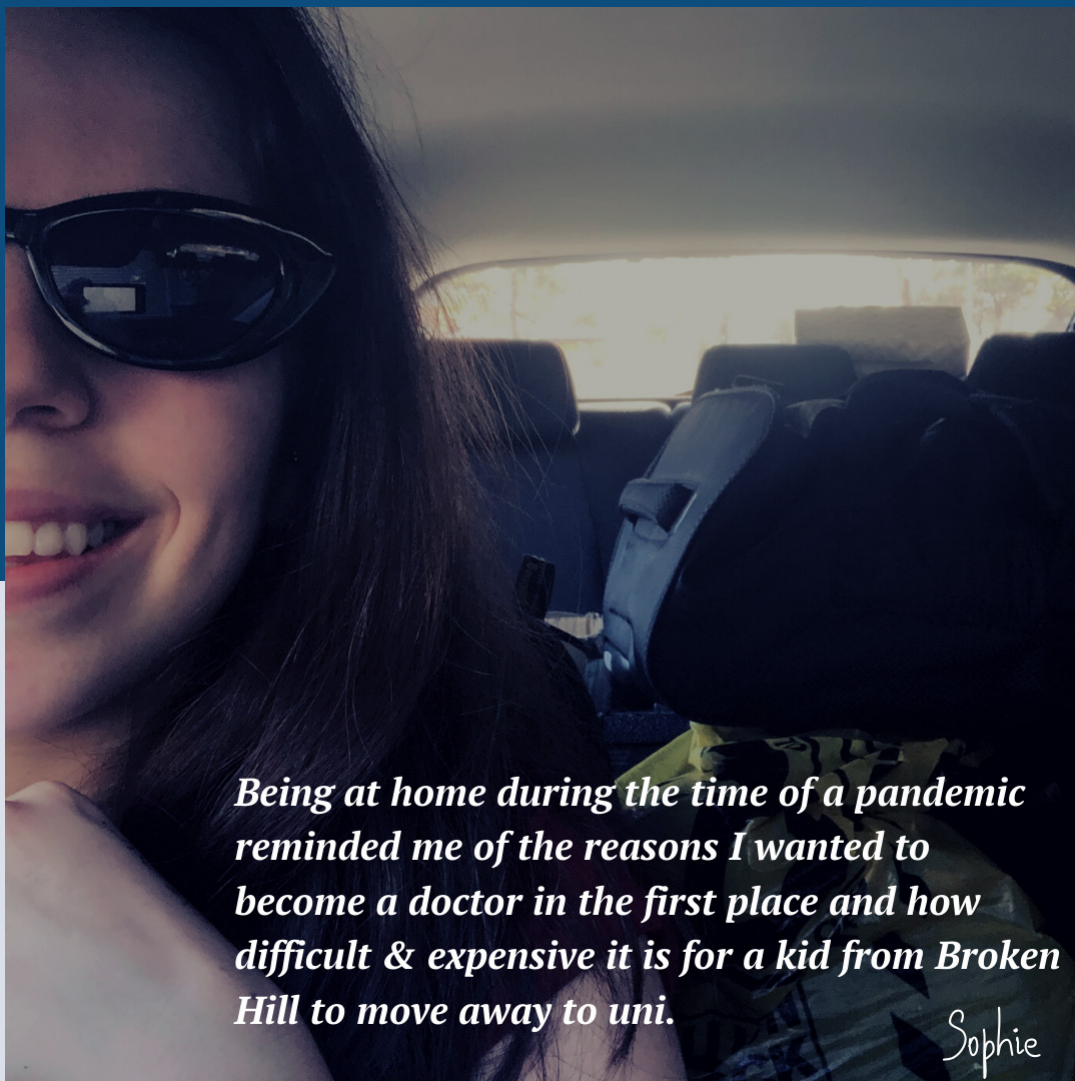
"For me, it's been really crucial that during this time I try and keep a regular routine. I do this to ensure that it's not such an immense adjustment mentally as well as fitness wise when I do return.

"Sometimes it's difficult for me to find any positives in the situation, however, I feel like I've really tried to use this time as an opportunity for self-reflection and understanding why this training and industry is so important to me.

"You really don't fully appreciate what you have until it's gone, and I've definitely experienced this, realising the incredible impact working closely with my peers and teachers has had on my learning."

Together we've helped over 6000 young adults continue their education and training.

In a time of uncertainty, your donation could make the world of difference.



Please donate to help more rural and regional youth continue their education and training

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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Weekly Monthly Annually Once off

I would like to donate

\$25 \$50 \$100 Own choice

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Name	<input type="text"/>
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Payment options

Cheque: Payable to Country Education Foundation of Australia

Bank Transfer: Country Education Foundation of Australia

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

Credit Card:

Name on card

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Please send me some information about leaving a gift in my will

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