



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

From the CEO's desk...



And just like that, the cold weather is here and bringing you this CEF Winter Newsletter is a welcome relief while we are busy keeping the mice out of our winter woolies here in Orange. As always, it's full of good news stories and photos. Young people like Chelsea and Oscar who are already winning thanks to the CEF Extra scholarships they've received from MH Premium Farms and Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand (CA ANZ). Their stories and so many other blogs you can read on our website, are the reassurance that we're on the right track in the way we support our rural and regional communities through education.

And if you ever wonder about what it is that makes the CEF story so successful, be sure to read the article by our Nicole, that shows undeniably the power of community.

We have just published our [2020 annual review](#) which you can find on the website. The facts and figures could not be more compelling for the work we do.

As we come to the end of the financial year for many, please consider donating to our cause. You can see for yourself just how important our work is and the difference we are making in the lives of so many Australians, work which couldn't be done without your generosity.

Best wishes,

Juliet

Juliet Petersen, CEO



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Education Foundations Unite

We are excited to announce a new 3 year partnership with Waratah Education Foundation (WEF).



WEF is an independent charity dedicated to supporting educational opportunities for youth in Australia. Like CEF, the foundation believes education is the fuel for progress in every community and society, and is a way to create a better future.



L to R: CEF's Nicole Wright & Juliet Petersen with Geraldine Campbell, WEF CEO

The partnership will provide matched funding scholarships up to the value of \$30,000 annually to students from NSW local foundations. Additionally, the partnership will provide ongoing funding for the CEF 'Make it Possible' Rural and Regional Inspiration Hub, which was successfully launched mid 2020.

WEF CEO, Geraldine Campbell says "Our vision is an Australia where every child has the opportunity to realise their academic potential and in providing the matched funding to CEF, this will give those students that extra support they need to achieve their life goals.

"The 'Make it Possible' Inspiration Hub aligns with our mission to support programs that pursue, promote and improve education outcomes for all children in Australia. And the hub will do just that, it is especially important for regional youth to know what options and resources are available and to help them make informed decisions on their further educational choices."

In late May, CEF hosted a meet and greet morning tea in Sydney with WEF representatives, committee members and students who have received funding via this partnership in 2021.

Chelsea the Pick of the Crop

Chelsea Stevenson from Bingara, NSW is the recipient of our new MH Premium Farms-CEF Scholarship.

Chelsea has big dreams and is taking on a Bachelor of Agriculture at the University of New England. As well as receiving a local grant from CEF Gwydir, so impressive is her determination to succeed, she has also been awarded our newest scholarship.



MH Premium Farms (MHPF) is providing the scholarship (up to four years) to a student aspiring to pursue a career in agriculture. Not only offering financial support, the scholarship also provides the opportunity for Chelsea to undertake the 12 weeks of practical work experience required by her course at one of MHPF's properties.

Ed Dunn, MHPF Director & CEO says Chelsea's application stood out. "Our goal was to find a smart young person with the drive to succeed. Despite some early life setbacks, Chelsea demonstrated to us that she has a strong work ethic and desire to achieve her goals."

Read more of Chelsea's story on our blog at www.cef.org.au

"Uni seemed just a dream and almost impossible to get there financially. This has changed my life." Chelsea Stevenson

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The Power of Community

a reflection on why the CEF model works

Imagine this...

For years, all you can see is dirt and dust. Not a drop of water in sight, animals dying, jobs lost, not sure how you will pay the bills. Then, ravaging bushfires rip through your town, leaving a wake of smoke, charcoal and ruins. Just as the clean-up starts, the world goes into lockdown. An unthinkable pandemic that puts everything on hold, not a person in sight. But, bad things happen in threes, right? No. Just as doors start to open and you pick up where you left off, cleaning up after the devastation of fire and praying for rain, the rain comes. Boy, does it come. Flooding that happens once in 100 years destroying homes and communities.

This is reality for many of our CEF rural and regional communities. And yet, they persevere. Despite the personal hardships our volunteers face, they commit to help each other and their students, always. This is what is so special about these communities and people and is what **makes the unique CEF community-based model so successful**.

For regional students, often the financial, emotional and social obstacles are just too great for them to undertake post-school education, perhaps never more so than now. We believe in equal access to education irrespective of background, circumstances or location. And we know that our volunteers are best positioned to work toward achieving this. CEF has provided support to **almost 7,000 students and more than \$12.6 million in funding** since the first local foundation was established in Boorowa, NSW in 1993 when again drought was devastating, youth were disengaged from education and unemployment rates were at a high.

“CEF is for the country, by the country and run by people in the country who have an excellent understanding of the challenges young people face when pursuing further education opportunities.”

*Raymond, grant recipient and CEF volunteer
Coonamble and District Education Foundation*

No matter the decade or the postcode, it is inevitable that rural and regional Australia faces trials and tribulations that metropolitan areas cannot begin to comprehend. This is why the CEF model makes so much sense. Today, the **CEF family is comprised of 44 regional volunteer-run local foundations, with more than 415 members** across five states and territories. All of them have been challenged at one time or another, often in the most frightening and confronting of ways. It is these experiences that see them determined to support their youth to see them achieve great things, and makes CEF dedicated to supporting them.



“Thank you to the whole team at CEF Australia for all the support you give to those of us running the local foundations: it really is a team effort and we couldn't do it without you!”

*Sophie, Chair
Shoalhaven Education Fund*

EMPOWERMENT, ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT. This is the function of the CEF national office. Every regional community is different, they all have their own ‘personality’. We know we can't dictate how they can best support their youth. Our role is to help our volunteers, to be there for them so they can focus on making a difference where they live, and how they know best.

There is no substitute for the intimate knowledge our people have when it comes to making the biggest impact for their youth. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation and are crucial to the success of our model. In fact, the founders of CEF so strongly believe in our regional people and the importance of their ‘on the ground’ knowledge, that when CEF national was established in 2003, it was not created as a governing body. From the beginning every local CEF foundation is registered as their own incorporated association, and we are members of them, and are proud of the work they do.

RESILIENCE, DEDICATION AND PASSION. Not only do our local foundations support and strengthen their own youth and communities, when the chips are down, they will support each other. In the wake of the 2020 summer bushfires, CEF Walgett and Harden District Education Foundation (HDEF) decided to donate some of their funds to the CEF Braidwood & District and Kangaroo Island foundations.

It is times like this that our belief in the power of local communities is validated. Last year, CEF ran a matched giving campaign, recent circumstances and the pandemic would make raising funds in their communities difficult. With a little support, the result was astounding. **A 26% increase in local funds raised compared to the same period for 2019.**

Despite the challenges, CEF volunteers remained steadfast and reliable. They contributed an incredible **21,580 hours of work** to the organisation in 2020. They support their students with commitment, doing anything they can to ensure the success of their youth. It is this dedication that sees:

- 93% of students saying the support of their local CEF is important to them
- 83% telling us they have a great or excellent relationship with volunteers
- 92% of students or alumni having completed or on track to complete their studies
- 94% of alumni having found employment in their chosen field

“I could not be more fortunate to have the foundation of Coleambally. The local members go above and beyond for all of us providing immense support not only through financial means, but also through their guidance and mentorship.”

*Mark, grant recipient
CEF Coleambally/Darlington Point*

IMAGINE THIS. The dust is finally settling, the grass begins to turn green and the animals are feeding again. You can go into town and visit the local shop without the smell of charred timber and give a friendly handshake without fear. The road is repaired, and the waters have subsided. Good things come to those who wait, right? No. They come to those who work, remain strong and believe in and help those around them. During the good and the bad, our volunteers support their youth, driven by shared experiences only they can understand and a resilience that is only truly seen in regional and rural communities, creating impact that no one else can.

**THEY change lives.
And families.
And communities.**

*Nicole Wright
CEF Fundraising & Engagement*



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We thank our longstanding supporter Origin Energy Foundation for inviting us to write this piece and for publishing an edited version on their Knowledge Hub.

Opals and CEF Pay Dividends for Oscar

Oscar Cheal from Lightning Ridge is the worthy recipient of the inaugural Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ)-CEF Scholarship



DIFFERENCE MAKERS™

Oscar was encouraged to get in touch with CEF Walgett by his older brother Rory, who also received support from the local foundation and had such a wonderful experience with them.

CEF Walgett and the CEF national office were so taken with Oscar's dedication, determination and talent, that not only did he receive a local grant from CEF Walgett, he was also awarded a St Andrews- CEF accommodation scholarship and is now the inaugural recipient of our CA ANZ-CEF Scholarship.

For Oscar, the scholarship is not just about the financial support. He says even in the short time since he was awarded the scholarship it has opened up a plethora of opportunities for him in the accounting and business world saying "I have already met individuals who have excelled in the accounting industry and who are willing to help me with the start of my career."

Currently in his 2nd year of a Bachelor of Business, majoring in accounting management and economics at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Oscar loves his study, especially the challenging accounting subjects that will allow him to seek work in this industry one day.

Pamela Lee, FCA - CA ANZ says "Oscar was the perfect choice as the first recipient of the CA ANZ-CEF scholarship. He is a young man with a very clear vision for his future. He demonstrates strong leadership skills with humility and his values and integrity will hold him in good stead."

Oscar has been financially independent from his parents, supporting himself since the day he left school and works several jobs to keep his head above water. Along with mining opals, he is a boarding supervisor, rugby and cricket coach at Knox Grammar School and also undertook labouring work over the summer for GrainCorp at the silos.

Oscar says like most country kids, one of the biggest challenges he faced in the transition to university was learning to manage his finances, particularly as a young person from the bush. He acknowledges that balancing all his obligations, and engaging in university life can often feel 'quite overwhelming and full-on'. And this is why the scholarships Oscar received are so very important to him.

Although happy with his 2020 final semester marks of 2 distinctions and 2 credits amidst the challenges of COVID and online learning, he is adamant that his aim is to achieve a distinction average going forward.

We have no doubt that Oscar will succeed and will be a great ambassador for CEF. His gratitude for his family, the support he is receiving from CEF and for the opportunities he has been afforded is not only clear when you speak with him, but also from the incredible smile that spreads across his face. [Read more.](#)



Oscar (L) with his brother Rory and their father in the opal fields.



A morning tea with Oscar and representatives from CEF and CA ANZ.

"I'm just a country kid trying to have a go in the city and would love all the help I can get."

Oscar Cheal

CEF boys at Beef Week 2021

In early May, CEF supported two students from Cunnamulla QLD, to attend Beef Week 2021 in Rockhampton.

The opportunity for Tom and Lachie was made possible through the support of CEF Australia, CEF Paroo, Beef Australia and Angus Barrett Saddlery & Leather Goods.



Both studying agribusiness, Tom is in his 1st year at Marcus Oldham College and Lachie in his 3rd year studying at the University of Queensland. The boys' described the opportunity as 'amazing' and we hope their first-hand experience of the beef industry will allow them to make new connections, opening doors into their chosen careers. [Read more.](#)

Rural Health Support Continues

Charles Sturt University (CSU) through the Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) has again proudly partnered with CEF. In 2021 the partnership will see 28 students undertaking health related courses at CSU receive additional financial support for their studies.



Cody Logan from CEF Orange & Districts says "The funds that CEF and Three Rivers provide are crucial to my studies. They allow me to cut back on work and focus on my degree. It will be the driving force in relation to me achieving my goals."

The primary focus for the UDRH is to improve the recruitment of medical, dental, nursing and allied health professionals in rural and remote Australia. Having partnered with CEF since late 2018, we are excited to announce that UDRH has committed to continue funding into 2022.

EDUCATION

SAVES
lives



CONNECTS
families



BUILDS
communities



There is no doubt that students from rural, regional and remote areas face unique and often significant challenges in undertaking, aspiring to and accessing education.

Make a tax time donation to help make their education goals reality

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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