



**Education  
Changes lives.  
And families.  
And communities.**

**From the CEO's desk...**



In this Summer newsletter we share the joy and success of CEF events recently held in Canberra.

The National Committee Conference and the 2022 Audi Foundation - CEF Alumni Awards gave all those who attended a chance to reconnect, to realise the important work we do and recognise the wonderful opportunities we are creating for our rural and regional youth.

However, it was difficult to stay joyous for long when our neighbouring communities were decimated from floods. So devastating was their impact that once again, entire homes and livelihoods were lost.

Yet in the same breath we are reminded of exactly what makes our rural and regional communities so special. In an instant, overwhelming gestures of support emerged. It is these extraordinary acts of individuals and their coming together that exemplifies who and what we are.

So I take this opportunity to thank everyone who gives, and who serves in their community. No matter how big or small that gesture, your contributions are making a difference.

*Juliet*

Juliet Petersen, CEO

**Reconnect. Recognise. Realise.**

After a false start last year thanks to the pandemic, we were excited to hold our volunteer national conference on the 22nd October at the Vibe Hotel in Canberra. The day was packed with information and ideas creating a wonderful feeling of collaboration in the room. It was also a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the incredible volunteers we have - those who work passionately, tirelessly and without ask of recognition or reward to support our rural and regional youth.



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52 Hill Street, Orange NSW 2800  
 PO Box 245, Orange NSW 2800  
 1300 652 144 | [info@cef.org.au](mailto:info@cef.org.au)



# Great Vibes as Alumni Award Winners Announced

Supported by:  
**Audi** Foundation

After two years of online events due to the pandemic, we were excited to announce the winners of the 2022 Audi Foundation – CEF Alumni Awards at the Vibe Hotel Canberra on Saturday 22nd October. The excitement to celebrate the achievements of regional youth was clear with 55 nominations and more than 140 people in attendance.

CEF Alumni Program Manager Emma Burns says the response to this year's event was overwhelming. *"We are humbled that the opportunity we provide to recognise our past and present recipients has been so well received. Volunteers, nominees, family and friends were so excited to attend, we had to close RSVPs to the event. This response shows just how valued our rural and regional youth are by our communities."*

This year's recipients have been supported by CEF local foundations from across the country, and represent the best of our regional youth pursuing education and careers across a range of industries, from trades to teaching and psychological science. This highlights the breadth of post-school educational endeavours and the contributions our young people make to our communities.

CEF have partnered with the Audi Foundation since their establishment in 2017, supporting rural and regional youth to access post-school education. They are thrilled to have the foundation sponsoring the Alumni Awards as they celebrate five years of operations.

Chairman of Audi Foundation, Paul Sansom is a true advocate for the work of CEF: *"The real, tangible results we see through our work with CEF, made it an easy decision to support the wonderful work of Country Education Foundation. Having seen the incredible achievements of tonight's winners and the passion they inspire in their communities, we are proud to support CEF and the alumni awards."*



## Congratulations to all our winners and nominees!



**Alumnus of the Year**  
Elise Prior, Kapunda



**Community Alumni Champion**  
Katie Jayne O'Brien, Braidwood



**Young Achiever**  
James Anderson, Grenfell



**Rising Star**  
Ayisha Fearnside, Kangaroo Island



**Joint Launching Star**  
Corrin Paepke, Kangaroo Island



**Joint Launching Star**  
Jayden Reid, Central Australia

# Excellent Elise Shines and Inspires

**“I am the first in my family to graduate from university. I appreciate my unique position of privilege, considering that many people never get the opportunity to acquire tertiary education. I endeavour to use the full power of my education to make a difference in the world.”**

She is unquestionably community-minded and caring, with a myriad of volunteering and support roles to her name, and has an enviable intellect.

Elise Prior has an incredible list of academic achievements under her belt, on their own making her the perfect choice for the 2022 Audi Foundation – CEF Alumnus of the Year title, but there is more to her story.

At just thirteen, she contracted a chronic illness that affects almost every aspect of her functioning - immune system, cognitive function, muscles, joints and more. Since school, she has approached education and her life with tenacity, not allowing illness to stop her from pursuing her goals.



**“I would like to thank Kapunda High School Centenary Foundation chairperson Barry Vogt, secretary Anne Hornsey, former treasurer Clyde Hazel, and former Kapunda High School principal Kristen Masters for providing extra support during my time at university. ”**

She completed year 12 over two years and then went on to university, moving away from home to what she describes as a *‘tiny apartment’* in Adelaide’s central business district. Elise explains that for her the move was not only necessitated by geography, but by her condition: *“The long commute to university from my family home would have been unmanageable.”*

She says support from the Kapunda High School Centenary Foundation and CEF not only helped with paying for her little apartment, but with travel costs for her Mum to assist with the daily tasks she struggled with, just as she had done since Elise became

unwell more than a decade ago.

Elise was surprised by how quickly she adjusted to her new living arrangements, but like many regional students who relocate, still experienced homesickness, saying, *“I even used Google Street View to digitally ‘return’ home and take a ‘walk’ down my dirt road!”*

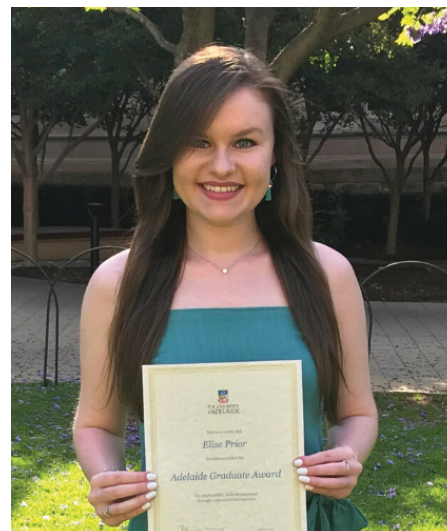
Living in the city centre and near the university meant Elise could focus her limited energies on study and be involved in campus life – and she made the most of this, as she always manages to do.

**“Resilience and perseverance were essential for me, along with the physical and emotional support of my mum and my fiancé.”**

Along with her stellar academic results, she was incredibly involved with university activities and determined to support and improve the experiences of other students - not surprising given her aptitude and passion for psychology.

She was an Academic Tutor/Mentor for Wirrlu Yarlou Aboriginal Education, a Peer Assisted Study Sessions Leader, a Student Ambassador, and a Peer Mentor. She served as a student representative on various academic committees, and was the Vice-President and Secretary of the Psychology Students’ Association as well as the Adelaide University Rural Health Alliance Psychology Representative. This commitment to others saw her nominated for the 2018 Vice-Chancellor’s Student Volunteer of the Year Award.

As a young country woman who longs for that dirt road to home, adores a sunset, and seeks out the opportunity to help others, Elise says she was honoured to be able to use her education to assist ACT for Ag last year, an organisation that aims to improve the wellbeing and resilience of farmers, farming families, and rural communities.



She explains, *“I developed accessible, evidence-based online and print resources and tools to build the psychological flexibility of rural communities. I also contributed to designing and delivering interactive wellbeing workshops to rural Australians.”* She says the experience with ACT for Ag was *“incredibly fulfilling, and allowed me to foster my passion for combining psychology with public health.”*

**“Combining study demands with the management of my chronic illness was incredibly challenging, but I was determined to achieve, and I aspired to undertake tertiary study.”**

She is starting her career in a flexible and inclusive workplace that will support her and provide opportunities to learn and flourish, as a Data Analyst at the Australian Bureau of Statistics, within the Graduate Development Program. *“It has been exciting to enter the public sector and assist governments, businesses, and communities in making evidence-based decisions for the betterment of Australian society!”*

Elise reminds us all that we can achieve our dreams with courage and perseverance... and a little help if we are willing to ask for and accept it, no matter what we face. Most importantly, she shows us that nothing can diminish the intelligence, kindness and abilities we possess - that even when dealing with the most difficult of circumstances, those wonderful qualities can and will shine if we let them.



# Give the gift of education this Christmas!



As the sun sets on 2022, we thank you for helping us support more rural and regional youth than ever.

## 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](http://www.cef.org.au) and click the **Donate** button

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CHANGES LIVES.  
AND FAMILIES.  
AND COMMUNITIES.



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