

**Established 1965**

**Patron: His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales**

*Supporting young people in the bush whose educational opportunities  
are limited due to isolation and economic circumstances.*

It is with great pleasure that the Director's present this 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report to our supporters, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

This year has again been focussed on providing bursaries to assist with secondary school boarding fees, and scholarships for undergraduates at Charles Sturt University at the Bathurst and Wagga Wagga. Currently our bursary and equipment grant support for TAFE students moving towards apprenticeships while still at school with the Thu-to-TAFE program, has been limited due to ongoing changes in the TAFE sector.

Our scholars have again had a 100% student success rate which confirms our rigorous assessment and selection processes which ensures tremendous satisfaction for our valued donors.

We pay tribute to all our donors and supporters and the students who have responded so well and who have expressed their gratitude throughout the duration of their courses.

We are also very appreciative of the support provided to the BCEF by all members of the Board and its Committees for their time, interest and energy.

BCEF has maintained its commitments to bush children some of whom are beneficiaries of support that covers up to three years. Performance reviews conducted in conjunction with boarding schools has reinforced our empirical belief that students are achieving in learning, sport, socialisation and commitment to community.

In addition it is also pleasing to report that we continue to receive donations and sponsorship from corporate organisations, foundations and trusts, in addition to the wonderful commitment of individual "Friends of BCEF" who have provided huge support for many years.

We continually assess the need for BCEF to *provide support for young people in the bush*. Our assessment continues to confirm that while the number of young people we support varies each year in absolute numbers between schools, TAFE and universities our contribution ensures positive educational outcomes for a significant number of young people and their families.

Recent discussions with the Board of the Isolated Children's Parents Association of NSW Inc (ICPA) provided clear evidence of hardship for many families in maintaining their children at country boarding schools and Charles Sturt University due to the continuing legacy of drought, recent floods, low commodity prices and escalating boarding fees.

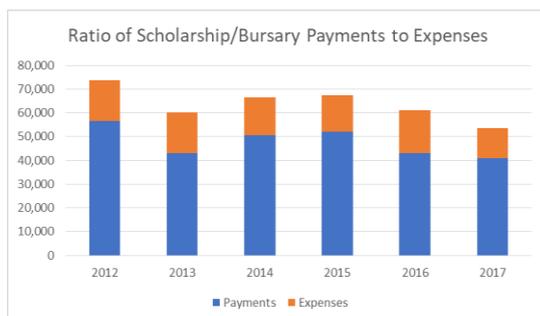


This hardship in the bush is likely to be reflected in 2018 by significant increases in applications for secondary bursaries due to the lack of rainfall in most of NSW during 2017.



### Finance, Administration & Investment Committee

The year has been one of significant improvement in our financial position. This has been achieved through generous support from our existing donors and new donors coming on-stream, careful management of costs and revenues and improving returns following changes to our investment policy as shown in the chart below.



### Education, Scholarships & Bursaries Report

The Foundation maintained the value of Secondary Boarding Bursaries at \$1,000 for 2017. In February, thirty three students applied for bursaries to support their school boarding fees. Twenty four were successful based on family income and assets, geographical isolation from schools and other exceptional circumstances.

Reports on the students' performances from the nine schools they attend have all been favourable about their academic progress and their contribution to sporting and community activities. The Foundation has regular contact with each school to ensure that we are helping the students who most need assistance.

Our "Thru-to-TAFE" program is currently under review to match our funding with NSW Government directions and requirements.

Regular meetings have been held with the Isolated Children's Parents Association of NSW. There are many educational issues that affect our students that this group have raised with State and Federal governments through their large network of branches throughout the state. Our meetings share valuable information.

Our support for Scholarships at Charles Sturt University this year is at the highest point ever with 5 scholars attending CSU. Unfortunately in 2018 this level of support will be reduced to 3 scholarships due to the completion of the wonderful support provided through family bequests from the Gaudry and Pockley families. All of our scholarship recipients achieved very high academic levels last year with a grade point average of 5.75 or above out of 7.0.

Bursaries were awarded at the following schools throughout New South Wales.

- ✚ Calrossy Anglican School, Tamworth
- ✚ Farrer Agricultural High School, Calala
- ✚ Kildare Catholic College, Wagga Wagga
- ✚ Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange
- ✚ PLC, Armidale
- ✚ Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes
- ✚ The Scots School, Bathurst
- ✚ The Armidale School, Armidale
- ✚ Yanco Agricultural High School, Yanco

The performance of our 24 bursary holders was assessed in the areas of Academic Performance, Sport Participation (individual

or team), School Extra Curricula Activities and Community Involvement.

Rating	Academic	Sport	Extra-Curricular	Community
Exemplary	1	1	2	1
Above Average	8	10	11	6
Average	13	7	5	9
Below Average	1	5	5	7
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0

No student was reported as being unsatisfactory in any area. The majority of students were rated as Above Average or Exemplary in all four assessment areas. Academically over 90% of students were assessed as performing at an average or above level.

A wide range of sporting activities including Rugby, Tennis, Swimming, Cross Country and Judo were enjoyed by the students.

Similarly, participation in Extra Curricula and Community activities covered a diverse area of interests, e.g. School Band, Tournament of the Minds, Sheep and Cattle Show Stock, Show Judging and Agricultural Competitions. Many students represented their schools in these areas in the wider community.

All students received positive comments from school staff for effort, motivation, school spirit and working to the best of their ability.

Since 2007 the Foundation has awarded scholarships tenable at any one of the five campuses of Charles Sturt University, located in the major regional centres of Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga and Albury/Wodonga.

Scholarships are valued at \$3,000 per year or \$9,000 over a three year period. To date, the Foundation has supported 12 students, with five currently studying in the areas of Communication (Advertising and Marketing), Medical Science and Agricultural Business Management. It is expected that scholarship

winners will use their professional skills in rural areas following graduation.

### Marketing, Fundraising & Partnership Committee

The committee has had a learning process throughout the year as to what works and what doesn't when it comes to fundraising. Today, time constraints and the number of competing charitable events leads us to the opinion that caring for our individual benefactors on a personalised basis and reaching out to corporates and grant organisations has greater success and respect. To this end, a planned family fundraising day at Tobruk Station (an outback experience in Maroota) was cancelled due to lack of numbers.

During the last year we have been through a process to redesign our logo, stationery, business cards to give a new, fresh feel to the Bush Children's Education Foundation 'brand'. We are very grateful for the support Nick Abram and North Design has given us with this process.

Early in 2017 a successful submission put to the Thyne Reid Foundation for a grant, has provided us with funds to support secondary bursaries in 2017 and 2018.

Opportunities have arisen during the year to become a philanthropic partner to a number of organisations both in regional NSW and Sydney. These partnerships are being strengthened on an ongoing basis.

We really appreciate the support provided to the BCEF in good times and bad so that our work always matches the special needs of young people in the bush.



Richard Dougan  
Chairman

## Foundation Details

### Patron

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### Directors

Richard Dougan - Chairman, BA, CMC, FIMC, Dip PM, MAICD.

Rod Cowdroy – Deputy Chairman, BBus

John McRae, Treasurer, BA, MCom, FCPA, FCA, AICD, JP

Hon Duncan Gay – Director, MLC

Andrew Heaven – Director, Public Officer, BA CFP, JP

Margaret Malone – Director and Chair Education, Bursaries & Scholarships Committee, BA, MEd Admin

Gerald Naughton – Director, BCA (Vic), FCA, SF Fin, GAICD

Jenetta Russell – Director and Chair Fundraising, Marketing & Partnerships Committee, GAICD

### Secretary

Isabel Heaven

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