



**BCEF**

**Bush Children's Education  
Foundation of NSW**

**Under the patronage of His Excellency  
General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retired) Governor of NSW  
Authority to fundraise for charitable purposes under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991**

# Bush Children's Education Foundation of NSW Inc.

## Strategic Plan 2016-2021

### Our Vision

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

## Our Vision

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

## Our Mission

- ✚ To build a sustainable funding base to support our education delivery requirements.
- ✚ Ensure fair and equitable allocation of support to those identified as needing our help.
- ✚ Work with other organisations in the bush to assist our delivery of support.
- ✚ To maintain on-going contemporary support of young people in the bush.

## Our Strategic Objectives

- ✚ Significantly increase our total revenue and support.
- ✚ Maximise the number of appropriate bursary applications for support and assess their suitability equitably.
- ✚ Engage with organisations which can assist in identifying needs, requirements and priorities and enable solutions.
- ✚ Monitor and assess current and future trends in all aspects of BCEF operations and activities.
- ✚ Continually improve the direction, management and support of BCEF.

## Strategic Plan 2016-2021

This plan has been developed through consultation and workshop programs with Directors and members of the educational and parent community of New South Wales.

The Vision, Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives developed for BCEF through this process will provide overall direction and development for Directors, staff and stakeholders for the period 2016-2021.

The Foundation offers four types of support for young people who are living in outback areas of New South Wales.

1. Secondary Boarding Bursaries, to assist with the costs of student boarding accommodation to cover the gap in State and Federal Funding.
2. Thru-to-Uni Scholarships for Students who are seeking to enter Tertiary Study.
3. Thru-to-TAFE Bursaries for Students studying a TAFE course for trade or HSC.
4. University Scholarships for isolated HSC achievers where their goal is the attainment of a profession which would subsequently benefit remote or isolated communities.

## BCEF Background

The BCEF celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2015 with a function held at Government House, Sydney hosted by Our Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of NSW and Mrs Hurley and many of our long term supporters. At this function a booklet "Helping out in the Bush" celebrating 50 years of BCEF education support for bush children was launched.

In 1965, Dr Charles Huxtable, then serving with the Royal Flying Doctor Service at Broken Hill, initiated the establishment of the Bush Children's Education Foundation. He had been shocked by

the number of young people who were not enrolled in any school and whose only contact with other young people was through visits to a township and the occasional visits of the Bush Brothers from Brotherhood House in Dubbo. At that time there was no government financial assistance for these young people, other than access to the Correspondence School, based at Darlington in Sydney.

Dr Huxtable, along with the Chief Justice of New South Wales, Sir Leslie Herron, the Right Honourable Ian Sinclair and Mr Ian Hardy, prepared a Trust Deed for the Foundation, which was approved by the NSW Attorney General.

The Foundation provided funding for isolated young people to board at the purpose-built Tibooburra Hostel and subsequently other similar hostels in the far west of New South Wales. The Foundation appealed for individual and corporate donations so that bursaries could enable young people to board at one of these hostels in order to attend school.

Ahead of public opinion at the time, the Foundation encouraged aboriginal families to apply for bursaries. They included the descendants of the Wadlkali and Karengappa people, original tribal groups from the northwest corner of New South Wales.

## BCEF's Operating Environment

The principal aim of the Foundation is to ensure that young people from outback New South Wales are not deprived of educational opportunities through Isolation or economic circumstances.

In the early years the occupations of the families receiving our support covered the range of outback working life: from farmers, station hands, fencers and bore sinkers, to kangaroo shooters, prospectors and miners, and to bush nursing sisters, small business owners and itinerant circus people. Over time many of these occupations have declined.

Today assisted students generally come from families associated directly or indirectly with farming and those who continue to work the circus and show circuit. Government run hostels where young people could live to attend school have ceased to exist and there has been a general trend towards the de-population of rural areas. However there remains a genuine and continuing need for students in rural, remote and isolated areas to receive support and assistance from the Foundation.

In recent years the Foundation has expanded its support arrangements to include scholarships for students receiving (or aiming for) an education through university or TAFE vocational training.

In terms of secondary schooling, the only government agricultural schools with boarding arrangements are Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, Hurlstone Agricultural High School and Yanco Agricultural High School. Otherwise high school students' from isolated areas must look to non-government schools with boarding facilities for an education. With the exception of one agricultural school, the Foundation focuses on assisting eligible students who attend schools situated west of the Great Dividing Range or as it is often know, "the Sandstone Curtain".

The rural environment continues to evolve and some of the key features considered in the preparation of this plan include:

-  changing face of the "land" in terms of ownership, production (mining, in particular coal, and coal seam gas, versus farming and grazing), and social structure;
-  continual move to broad acre farming with greater use of seasonal workers often backpackers;
-  no consistent future government plan to address the critical lack of trained rural workers in agriculture;
-  the drift of remote rural residents to regional centres and the cities;

-  dying towns and failing infrastructure due to the legacy of prolonged drought, uncertainties such as water resource allocations, country electricity, internet bandwidth and fuel price rises;
-  lack of experienced resources in the bush in the area of education;
-  the financial pressure on rural based universities to attract students with direct competition between city and rural institutions;

## Plan Consultation

Significant consultation was undertaken in developing this 2016-2021 Strategic Plan involving workshops, face to face meetings and telephone interviews. The consultation program included current and past BCEF Directors and staff and educational organisations including boarding schools and universities. This was essential to obtain input on requirements, directions, sensitivities and priorities and to ensure that the plan is relevant.

## Future Trends

There are a number of important factors which will impact educational support for isolated and economically disadvantaged young people during this planning cycle.

### Demand for Scholarships, Bursaries and Endowments

-  Changes in climatic and economic conditions may impact the demand for BCEF support.
-  Regional NSW have become less dependent on agriculture to drive their economies, which has also led to out-migration of population.
-  Small rural towns have been affected by farm restructuring, industry rationalisation, corporatisation and deregulation, and decline of services which have in turn favoured larger regional centres.

### Continuing Support for BCEF

-  The traditional donor base supporting BCEF, mainly located around Sydney's Lower North Shore has been doing so for many years and needs to be expanded and extended.
-  A small number of corporate organisations, mainly city based provide annual funding to BCEF.
-  The amount of funding that is provided to BCEF as a corpus is extremely low.
-  There is a significant number of charities, foundations and Public ancillary Fund's which operate in the same support area as BCEF which compete for support.

## BCEF's Key Strategic Objectives 2016-2021

To deliver against BCEF's mission, five key strategic objectives have been identified. These have been developed to align with the educational and funding requirements of isolated and economically disadvantaged young people in the bush in conjunction with State and Federal allowances and programs.

1. Significantly increase our total revenue and support.
2. Maximise the number of appropriate applications for support and assess their suitability equitably.
3. Engage with organisations which can assist in identifying needs, requirements and priorities and enable solutions.

4. Monitor and assess current and future trends in all aspects of BCEF operations and activities.
5. Continually improve the direction, management and support of BCEF.