

**Patron: Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley
AO QC Governor of New South Wales**

Our New Patron

Recently our new Patron, Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC and her husband, Mr Dennis Wilson, had a COVID-19 friendly Zoom meeting with several Directors. We have been fortunate that the Governor of NSW has been our patron since our foundation, as this has assisted us in many ways.

Her Excellency expressed her keen desire to help the Foundation in its efforts to support young people living in the Bush. We greatly appreciate her support.

2020 A Year for Helping Out in the Bush

For much of the 55 years we have been providing support in the bush the main reason for families needing our help, in addition to their isolation, has been severe and prolonged droughts.

This year, there have been additional difficulties for country people with major bushfires and now the COVID-19 lockdown.

At the end of 2019 the BCEF Board approved a 150% increase in our Rural Secondary Boarding Bursaries program up to a maximum of \$2,500 per student.

While 2020 has been disastrous with drought, bushfires and COVID-19, the Foundation has received incredible support to assist young people living in the bush.



We have been extremely fortunate to have received financial assistance from the Commonwealth Bank's Drought Relief Fund and the Thyne Reid Foundation to help us support our bursary program this year.

**THANK
YOU**

Marketing Activities

The Board has identified that many isolated and disadvantaged families are not aware of the assistance they can receive from the BCEF, similar charitable organisations and government. This year we embarked on an advertising and marketing campaign to let people in the bush know about our support. BCEF Director, Duncan Gay, was interviewed on the ABC Country Hour in the Riverina while Richard Dougan was interviewed

on the ABC Country Hour, Dubbo, and spoke to the ABC's Macca on a Sunday Morning. He also joined Natalie Peters and Matt Wilton on the 2GB podcast rural/agriculture show called "Further Afield". In addition, we advertised in The Land Newspaper on Thursday, 20th February 2020.

Rural Secondary School Boarding Bursaries Program

The severity of the drought and bushfires and the impact of COVID-19, coupled with the increased value of our bursaries and our marketing campaign have resulted in BCEF receiving 132 applications for support.

After detailed assessment of these applications we have approved 81 bursaries in 2020 with a few still waiting for completion of documentation requirements at a total cost of around \$160,000. These bursaries will support young people from 50 families, with the students attending 15 boarding schools throughout country NSW including the following.

Calrossy Anglican School, Tamworth (5)
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School (16)
Kildare Catholic School, Wagga Wagga (5)
Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange (3)
Macquarie Anglican Grammar School, Dubbo (1)
Mater Dei Catholic College, Wagga Wagga (4)
Presbyterian Ladies College, Armidale (1)
Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes (14)
Saint Francis de Sales Regional College (7)
Saint Paul's College, Walla Walla (1)
Scots All Saints College, Bathurst (10)
Snowy Mountains Grammar School, Jindabyne (1)
St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst (1)
The Armidale School, Armidale (2)
Yanco Agricultural High School, Yanco (10)

We have raised the bar in 2020 and will need to at least maintain that support in 2021, or increase it, as the economic effects of the drought, bushfires and COVID-19 will be with us for many years.

If you know people who need help then please let us know, or have them contact us, or download an application for support from the BCEF website.
<http://bcef.org.au/>

Your donations, large or small, are critical in providing assistance to isolated and economically disadvantaged young people living in the bush and we thank you all for this.

Changing lives... is what we do!



University Scholarships Program

We maintain a commitment for four scholarships at Charles Sturt University with two students studying Veterinary Science at the Wagga Wagga campus. A further two students are studying Early Childhood and Primary Teaching at the Dubbo and Bathurst campuses. Our scholars perform very well with high Grade Point Averages.

This year we had 45 applications for one scholarship which was ultimately awarded to Alex Farquhar to study Vet Science at the CSU Wagga Campus. Alex comes from Manilla near Tamworth and attended Calrossy Anglican School and Tamworth High. He is currently learning online and looking forward to living on campus when the universities re-open.



Alex Farquhar – BCEF CSU Scholar 2020

These scholarships are awarded for 3 years for a total value of \$10,000 each.

Each year the BCEF selection panel is privileged to interview outstanding candidates for the BCEF CSU Scholarship and would be delighted to award further scholarships at CSU, University of New England and University of Newcastle, if funds were available. This would help mitigate the severe financial hardship

experienced by many country students from isolated areas as they undertake tertiary studies.

While this has been a challenging year for the BCEF Board and our Education, Scholarships and Bursaries Committee due to the large number of Rural Boarding Bursary applications, the available funding has provided an outstanding result in helping families to educate their children at Rural Boarding Schools.

BCEF and Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem CSU Scholar 2019 – Hayley Grimson

Our 2019 CSU Scholarships were supported by the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem and BNP Paribas. To inform these organisations about the benefit and impact of our scholarships Hayley Grimson was asked to travel to Sydney from Dubbo to make a presentation to the BNP Paribas Bank's Environment Group. She was also asked to attend the Military and Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem Annual Patronal Church Service and Dinner at St John's College, Sydney University.

Her presentation at both functions provided the background to her studying Early Childhood and Primary Teaching and how critical it was for her to be the beneficiary of BCEF's support, which was extremely well received.



Richard Dougan, Chairman, BCEF, Hayley Grimson BCEF/OSLJ CSU Scholar, Chevalier Martin Dowling, KLJ, President, NSW Commandery, The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem

Hayley concluded her presentations by saying:
Thank you, the Bush Children's Education Foundation, the Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem and the members of the BNP Bank for your kindness, your generosity, and the work you do for creating education opportunities for children living in the bush.

Without your work, I, as well as many other students, would not be in the position we are today.

Thank you for making this scary university adventure not so daunting, and helping me to achieve my goals.

Your generosity has motivated me to do well at university, to not only make me and my family proud, but to make all of you proud too with what I can achieve. Thank you!

Environmental and Economic Factors

As we all know, for those living remotely in NSW (across the other side of the 'Sandstone Curtain'), 2019/20 has had its challenges, firstly with the long-term drought, then the unprecedented bushfires and finally a pandemic.

Although the long-term Bureau of Meteorology forecast is looking reasonably positive in the short term, a global recession, fear of a second wave COVID-19 and uncertainty around international export markets for Australian agricultural commodities is certainly front of mind to all our stakeholders.

We are committed to assisting the many families who are struggling with this diverse range of challenges, however, we can only continue whilst we have financial help from our very generous benefactors.

Board Meetings

The Board has met regularly throughout the year to manage the affairs of the BCEF and to provide support for the bush as much as possible.



BCEF Board 2020 - John McCrae, Gerald Naughton, Jenetta Russell, Richard Dougan (Chair), Kerry Blight, Duncan Gay, Rod Cowdroy, Andrew Heaven,

There have been no changes to the composition of the Board since our last communication.

Financial Report

Despite the economic impact of the pandemic, donations of \$169,000 were received in the 9 month period to 31 March 2020. We have paid or committed to using these donations to fund secondary school bursaries and university scholarships to over 80 students over the ensuing 12 months, subject to boarding closures due to COVID-19. Further applications for assistance are currently being assessed.

Funding Packages for our Donors

We can tailor funding packages for individual and corporate donors enabling them to support specific areas including:

- ☀ **Secondary Rural Schools Boarding Bursaries**
- ☀ **University Scholarships at Charles Sturt, Newcastle and New England Universities**

Please contact us if you would like to discuss the level of commitment required in any of these areas.

In times of drought, economic disaster, recession, pandemic there is a greater call for our support to help families in the bush send their young people to school. Your support is greatly appreciated in making bursaries and scholarships available.

BCEF is a Registered Charity with tax deductible status as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).

Recent Testimonials

Dear Kerry and BCEF Board,

Once again, I write to thank you and the BCEF Board members for awarding my three daughters Molly, Grace and Alice McBride Rural Boarding Bursaries for the 2020 school year.

We are currently waiting to hear from Yanco Agricultural High School (where the girls attend) regarding when they will return to school.

In the meantime, I have managed to secure a faster internet coverage at home, by installing a satellite system so that we can better manage our school work from home.

All in all, 2020 is proving to be a year we won't be forgetting in a hurry, as the drought lingers and the COVID 19 crisis makes life harder for everyone.

Thank you again for considering our three daughters Molly, Grace and Alice worthy recipients of the Board's generosity.

*Faithfully
Pip McBride*

Dear Ms Heaven,
Thank you for your advice that the bursary funds have been transferred. We are so grateful for the support of the Bush Children's Education Foundation for our boarding families at Mt Erin, especially during this challenging time. The bursaries will make a huge difference to the families' financial situations and to their wellbeing.

Kind regards,
Val Thomas, Principal
Mater Dei Catholic College, Wagga Wagga

Don't forget to LIKE US on the Web, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

The Board has recently appointed a Social Media Officer to manage input into our social media platforms. Sarah Pratt has accepted this position and has already had a very significant effect on the look and feel of our posts. We look forward to achieving much greater impact with our social media spreading the word about the work BCEF does and increasing the level of donations.



Sarah Pratt BCEF Social Media Officer and Jenetta Russell, Director and Chair Fundraising, Marketing & Partnerships Committee

Sarah's impact on our social media can be seen in the Facebook post below



Apart from the BCEF website <http://bcef.org.au/> you can also view and follow our activities through social media.

- <https://twitter.com/BCEFAustralia>
- https://www.instagram.com/bcef_australia/
- <https://www.facebook.com/BCEFAustralia/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/bcef-australia/?viewAsMember=true>

We really appreciate your support at all times and especially in these recent times of extreme drought, bushfires and now in the world of COVID-19 with its' unknown economic fallout for the special assistance required for disadvantaged and isolated young people in the bush.

With best wishes



Richard Dougan - Chairman
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Bush Children's Education Foundation of NSW Inc

List of Directors as at 30th May 2020

- Richard Dougan BA, CMC, FIMC, Cert IV & Dip Proj Mgmt Chair
- Gerald Naughton BCA, FCA, SF Fin, GAICD - Vice Chair
- John McRae –BA, MComm, FCPA, FCA, AICD, JP - Treasurer
- Kerry Blight Med, BA, Dip Ed, Ltt B - Chair, Education, Scholarships & Bursaries Committee
- Jenetta Russell GAICD CCEO - Chair, Fundraising, Marketing & Partnerships Committee
- Andrew Heaven BA Dip FP CFP JP - Public Officer
- The Hon. Duncan Gay
- Rod Cowdroy – BBus

BCEF Contact Details

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