

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

It is with great pleasure that the Directors of the Bush Children's Education Foundation present this 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the activities of the Foundation over the past twelve months.

We continue to operate as efficiently as possible in providing support for our bursary and scholarship recipients. Our funding which assists with the education of isolated and disadvantaged young people from the bush in NSW is valued by many families who are suffering great hardship due to the current drought and the severe impact and financial downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

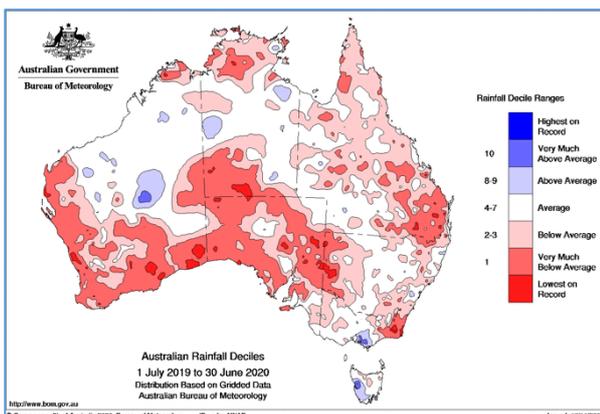
### **We Live in Extraordinary Times**

In these challenging and difficult times with Australia suffering one of the worst droughts ever and the worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic, the Foundation has experienced record numbers of applications for bursary and scholarship support. To help us with this huge increase in demand we have been very fortunate in receiving record levels of donations.

The increased level of donations has had a major benefit as the Board increased the value of Bursaries up to a maximum of \$2,500 per student per year and University Scholarships were increased in value to \$10,000 per student, payable over three years.

### **Climatic Impacts on the Bush**

The financial year July 2019 to June 2020 was drier than average over much of Australia. After a very dry end to 2019, rainfall returned to eastern Australia in the first half of 2020. Rainfall was above average across large areas of New South Wales and Victoria from January to April, but the 12 months ended with Australia's fourth-driest June on record.



The Australian Rainfall Decline Map shows most of the state of New South Wales in 2019 – 2020 having rainfall: Average; Below Average; Very Much Below Average; and Lowest on Record.

Daytime temperatures were warmer than average across most of the country, including large areas of the west and east that had their highest mean maximum temperature on record for the year ending 30 June. Night-time temperatures tended to be closer to average but were still highest on record over parts of the country.

While much of NSW received rain in mid 2020 the effect on dams and rivers has not been as great as was hoped.

To illustrate this we have shown photographs below of the Darling River beside the Tilpa Pub taken in January 2019 and September 2020 to show how little run off there has been into the states river systems.



Darling River beside the Tilpa Pub – January 2019



Darling River beside the Tilpa Pub – September 2020

Rain has certainly helped the bush but unfortunately it takes some years to pay down the debts incurred through hand feeding of stock and the cost of re-stocking can be prohibitive.

### Performance Against Strategic Goals

The three key goals in the BCEF Strategic Plan and our performance against them are shown below.

1. Significantly increase our total revenue and support. *Total revenue for 2019 -2020 is double previous years.*
2. Maximise the number of appropriate applications for support and assess them equitably. *Our marketing campaigns the press and radio coupled with the impact of drought and COVID-19 has resulted in a 110% increase in rural boarding bursary applications and a 100% increase in bursaries awarded.*
3. Engage with organisations which can assist in identifying needs, requirements and priorities and enable solutions. *There has been significantly increased involvement with organisations supporting our activities in financial and non-financial areas.*

### Secondary Rural Boarding Bursaries Program - 2020

135 Bursary Applications were received and 80 Bursaries that met our strict evaluation and selection criteria were awarded.

The total value of 2020 bursaries awarded was \$160,000.

The publicity and marketing campaign we carried out in late 2019 and early 2020 to inform people in the Bush that the BCEF Rural Boarding Bursary Program could help them get their young people to school had a clear impact effect on the number of applications that we received. We will utilise a similar program in 2021.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on rural boarding schools we are unlikely to require the total amount of funding allocated in 2020, however we believe that the demand may be greater in 2021 particularly for non-farming applicants.

Application forms and criteria for our bursaries are published on our website, [www.bcef.org.au](http://www.bcef.org.au). As always, if you know anyone who needs a hand please let them know that we may be able to help.

The 80 Bursary recipients this year are attending the following country boarding schools.

Calrossy Anglican School, Tamworth (5)
Kildare Catholic School, Wagga Wagga (5)
Presbyterian Ladies College, Armidale (1)
Scots All Saints College, Bathurst (10)
Saint Francis de Sales Regional College, Leeton(8)
St Stanislaus' College, Bathurst (1)
Yanco Agricultural High School, Yanco (10)
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School (14)
Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange (4)
Mater Dei Catholic College, Wagga Wagga (4)
Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes (14)
Snowy Mountains Grammar School, Jindabyne (1)
Saint Paul's College, Walla Walla (1)
The Armidale School, Armidale (2)

Rural Boarding Bursary Schools 2020

Reports from the schools which have placements of our bursary recipients indicate that they are performing with above average or exemplary ratings. It is very pleasing to have the students that we support performing in line with their cohort.

### CSU Scholarship Program - 2020

45 applications for CSU Scholarships were received and with three existing scholarships, we awarded one new scholarship in 2020 for a total of four with two at the Wagga Wagga Campus, one at Dubbo and one at Bathurst.

The total annual CSU scholarship funding, in 2020 is \$13,200.

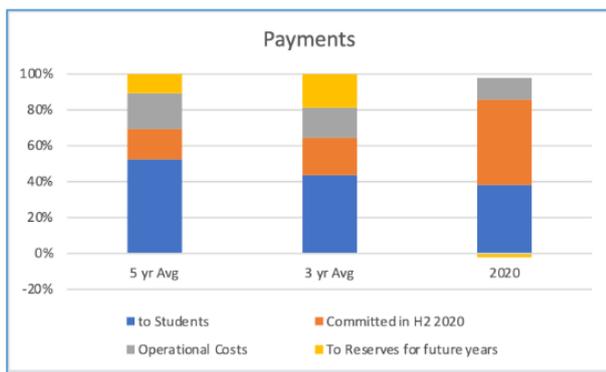
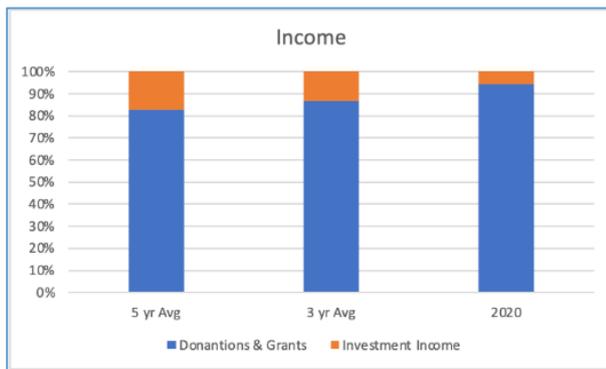
The BCEF is always very conscious that wherever possible all funds donated are used to support Secondary Bursaries and University Scholarships.

### Financial Management

We endeavour to manage our finances, donations and investments to maximise the number of students on secondary rural boarding bursaries and university scholarships in any one year. We are also guided by the need to utilise funds donated for scholarships and bursaries rather than to increase our corpus or fund administration costs.

Our operational expenses have been kept to a minimum and are mainly covered by one-off specific grants or from investment income.

The amount of investment income that we receive has decreased over the past five years as interest rates have reduced to ever lower and lower levels. An analysis of our income, expenses and donations over the past five years is shown in the charts below.



This financial year we have been especially fortunate in receiving significant donations to assist families suffering through the drought and COVID-19 from corporate organisations, private foundations, families and individuals.

### Audit Report

The Foundation's Financial Accounts and Reports have been audited by McCormack & Partners Pty Limited, Chartered Accountants with no adverse findings in relation to the management of our operations, donations and assets.

### Corporate Governance and Policies

The Board is highly cognisant of the need for ongoing governance and management of key areas including Audit, Risk, Confidentiality, Privacy, Data Protection, and WH&S and is continuing to develop, manage and improve its performance in all of these areas.

### Board Meetings

The Board has met regularly throughout the year to provide direction and support to the Committees and to manage the affairs of the Foundation with the fundamental goal of providing support for isolated and economically disadvantaged young people and families in the bush.

There have been no changes to the membership of the Board during the past twelve months.

### Committees of the Board

The Finance, Administration & Investments; Education, Scholarships & Bursaries; and Fundraising, Marketing & Relationships committees have worked diligently and with great success in managing, developing and promoting our core activities.

### Annual General Meeting

The 56<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 17 September 2020 was this year convened as a Zoom video conferencing meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The following Directors were elected office bearers for 2020 - 2021.

- ☀ Chairman - Richard Dougan
- ☀ Vice Chairman – Gerald Naughton
- ☀ Treasurer – John Mcrae
- ☀ Public Officer – Andrew Heaven

Since our establishment in 1965 up to 2020, we have given over \$2,150,000 for isolated financially disadvantaged young people in the bush.

From 2012 - 2020, BCEF has raised over \$450,000 and paid out \$435,000 in bursaries and scholarships.

Our operational expenses have been kept to a minimum and are covered by one-off specific grants or from investment income wherever possible.

Over the past five years the Board has achieved payments to our bursary and scholarship recipients of around 100% of donations and grants that we have received. While this may change in any given year it is our aim to maintain this performance goal.

#### **Funding Packages for our Donors**

We tailor funding packages for individual and corporate donors enabling them to support specific areas including: Secondary Rural Boarding Bursaries and 3-Year University Scholarships at Charles Sturt University, University of Newcastle and University of New England.

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

**Remember that in times of drought and pandemic there is a greater call for our support to help families in the bush get their young people to school.**

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



#### **Testimonials from BCEF Scholarship and Bursary Recipients**

Two of our CSU scholars have provided insight into the benefit of the BCEF Scholarships that they are receiving:

*...The scholarship that has been awarded to me will be a great help in paying for my living costs on campus at Wagga and the associated travel. I have recently discovered the cost of textbooks so this will help a lot.*

*...receiving the BCEF/Hospitaller & Military Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem scholarship has reduced my worries about financing my course and enabled me to gain four High Distinctions and four Distinctions in my first year at CSU.*

BCEF Rural Boarding Bursary recipient response:

*... what a horrific set of circumstances to culminate an already stressful situation leading on from the drought. We appreciate any assistance received and thank you for your support.*

#### **Web and Social Media**

The Board maintains a strong presence on Social Media through the Internet, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

<http://www.bcef.org.au/>

<https://twitter.com/BCEFAustralia>

[https://www.instagram.com/bcef\\_australia/](https://www.instagram.com/bcef_australia/)

<https://www.facebook.com/BCEFAustralia/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/bcef-australia/?viewAsMember=true>

*We really appreciate our donors and supporters at all times and especially in these days of extreme drought and pandemic for their assistance in helping with the special needs of disadvantaged and isolated young people and their families in the bush.*

Richard Dougan - Chairman

0412377989

Email: [rdougan@bcef.org.au](mailto:rdougan@bcef.org.au)

#### **Directors as at September 2020**

Richard Dougan BA, FIMC, CMC, Cert IV&Dip Proj Mgt  
Chairman

Gerald Naughton BCA, FCA, SF Fin, GAICD  
Vice-Chairman

John McRae BA, MComm, FCPA, FCA, AICD, JP –  
Treasurer and Chairman, Finance, Administration &  
Investments Committee

Kerry Blight BA, DipEd, Litt.B, MEd - Chairman,  
Education, Scholarships & Bursaries Committee

Janetta Russell OAM GAICD, CCEO- Chairman,  
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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