

Patron: Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO KC Governor of New South Wales

**Help Our Bush Kids with Educational Opportunities**



*Welcome* to our June 2024 Newsletter providing an insight into recent BCEF activities supporting isolated and economically disadvantaged young people in the NSW outback with bursaries for regional boarding schools and scholarships for regional universities. We hope it will provide you with an insight into the positive benefits of secondary and tertiary assistance gained from the educational support we provide to families and young people in the NSW outback.

A similar number of bursaries have been awarded this year, 56 in 2023, 55 in 2024 which suggests little change in conditions in the bush, however the ongoing demand for our bursaries is expected to continue at similar or higher levels and the need for support on compassionate grounds has increased.

A recent trip in western NSW shows the country looking good with very significant crop planting but the costs associated with farm inputs continue to soar while average grain prices have remained static for many years, and we expect this to continue. While we maintain our relevance in a rapidly changing world, we are always looking for new opportunities and needs to help young people in the Bush get an education and achieve their dreams.

### Allison House – Broken Hill

The closure of Broken Hill's bush hostel, Allison House, at the end of 2023 represents a massive blow to students from far west isolated properties. The boarding hostel, which was due to celebrate 60 years of service in 2025, was part of BCEF's first student intake providing a home away for remote students attending school in Broken Hill - and changing their lives.

The home was donated by Keith William Allison (1942-2009), president of the Pastoralists' Association of West Darling, who ran a highly successful livestock and butchery company.

Allison House, a not-for-profit entity, has been struggling with rising maintenance costs amongst other factors. BCEF is working with ICPA NSW and other parties to hopefully help achieve the continuation of this invaluable facility.

*"The year ended in 2023 looking very dire, as last year we only had one third of the average annual rainfall and with stock prices the way they were, it wasn't looking great for 2024. Hopefully with the rain received earlier this year, a more positive year will be coming."  
Family from Milparinka*

### New Director – The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC



The Directors at their recent Board meeting unanimously elected The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC as a Director. As a former NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning and the current Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning & Western NSW, she is a welcome addition to the Board with her knowledge and understanding of Education needs in NSW.

#### PRESS RELEASE - NEW BOARD MEMBER FOR BCEF

The Bush Children's Education Foundation of NSW has gained a new board member, with the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC being formally endorsed in April.

Chairman of the BCEF Richard Dougan has welcomed Ms Mitchell's appointment to the board, saying she will bring experience and energy to the role.

*"We are delighted that Sarah has joined our board, and I know I speak on behalf of all members when I say that she will be an asset to our organisation," Mr Dougan said.*

*"Sarah has been a Member of the NSW Legislative Council since 2011 and served as the Minister for Education from 2019 to 2023. She is currently the Shadow Minister for Education and Early Learning, and I know that her experience will be invaluable as we continue to grow and support country students with their education."*

Ms Mitchell said she is thrilled to be serving on the Bush Children's Education Foundation board, noting that all board members are focused on making sure regional students have access to the best possible education and academic opportunities.

*"I am delighted to have been asked to serve on the BCEF board in a voluntary capacity, as I have admired the work they do for many years. I know my experience in education policy will help the Foundation to achieve its objectives," Ms Mitchell said.*

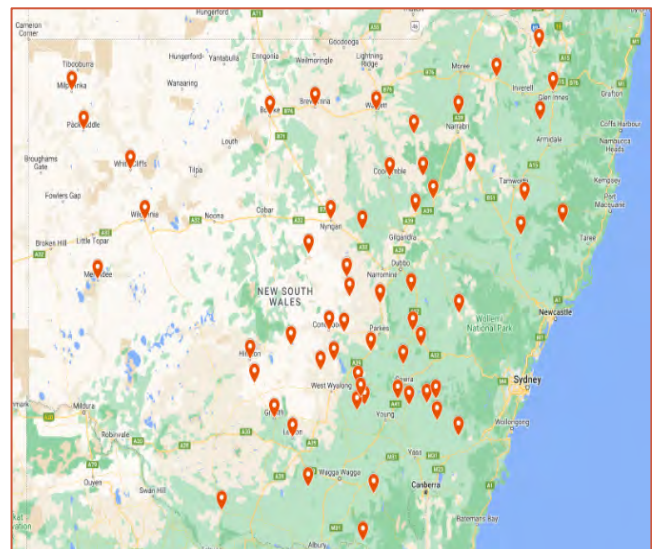
*"I have always been passionate about ensuring that children living in regional, rural and remote communities get the best start in life and can access a quality education, and I strongly believe that the work of the BCEF makes a real difference for so many students from the bush.*

*"I look forward to serving with my board colleagues and continuing the great work the BCEF has been doing since its inception in 1965."*

### 2024 Secondary Rural Boarding Bursaries

Each year rural families living in remote parts of NSW face new challenges and each year BCEF receives more applications for Boarding Bursaries than the previous year. This year we received 93 applications, which indicates how valued our bursaries are and the continuing need for educational support by rural families. 58% of applicants were landowners. The map shows the 57 remote areas where these applicants live. 62% of applying families lived between 30-320km away from the nearest government school.

Following a detailed assessment of these applications, 55 bursaries have been awarded at a total cost of around \$102,000. These bursaries support young people from 42 families, with the students attending 13 boarding schools throughout country NSW.



| Schools Supported in 2024                          | Students  |
|--|-----------|
| Calrossy Anglican School, Tamworth                 | 4         |
| Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, Tamworth | 6         |
| Hurlstone Agricultural College, Glenfield          | 1         |
| Kildare Catholic College, Wagga Wagga              | 3         |
| Macquarie Anglican Grammar School, Dubbo           | 2         |
| New England Girls School, Armidale                 | 1         |
| Presbyterian Ladies College, Armidale              | 1         |
| Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes                  | 21        |
| Scots All Saints, Bathurst                         | 10        |
| St Francis de Sales Regional College, Leeton       | 1         |
| St Gregory's College, Gregory Hills                | 1         |
| St Paul's College, Walla Walla                     | 2         |
| Yanco Agricultural High School, Yanco              | 2         |
| <b>Total students</b>                              | <b>55</b> |

### Bursary Application Processing System (BAPS)

We have been developing an online application form for 2025 BCEF Secondary Rural Bursaries to enter data directly into our systems. The system was beta tested at the end of the 2024 application period and passed all tests. We will utilise the fully operational system from February 2025.

### Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary/TAFE Programs

As mentioned in previous communications we are developing a new concept in providing Post Secondary Non-Tertiary education with a focus on agriculture courses which help in the bush. If you would like to register your interest in participating in this scheme, please send your enquiry to [info@bcef.org.au](mailto:info@bcef.org.au).

### CSU University Scholarship Program

This year we awarded a further scholarship at CSU as part of our program bringing our current scholars to nine. Tess Power is studying Nursing at the Wagga Wagga campus and should prove to be a worthy recipient.



Tess Power & BCEF Chairman Richard Dougan



Lesley Dougan, Millie Power, Sharon Power, Tess Power & Richard Dougan

Our scholars' academic results continue to be excellent with good Grade Point Average results. Unfortunately, one of our Veterinary Technology students was injured working a part time job and has had to discontinue her course this year. We and the University are continuing to support her, and she should be able to resume her studies next year.

### ICPA Delegation – Sydney, May 2024

The Chairman Richard Dougan met with the Annual ICPA Delegation to Sydney to discuss mutual interests and opportunities. The foremost topics are obtaining increases in state and federal government allowances and the closure of Allison House.



ICPA Delegates Libby McPhee, Tegan Barton, Kirsty Wilson, Richard Dougan and Myfi Kellahan

### Economic and Environmental Factors Climate Outlook 2024 – 2025

Changes in climate can have dramatic impacts on agricultural operations as has been clearly demonstrated over the last 10 years with an extreme drought and then flooding rains.

CSIRO have now predicted that there is a 66% likelihood that the annual average near-surface global temperature between 2023 and 2027 will be more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels for at least one year. There is a 98% likelihood that at least one of the next five years, and the five-year period, will be the warmest on record.

Forecast June to August maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely to be above median (greater than 80% chance) in Australia. For June to August, much of Australia has an increased likelihood of unusually high maximum and minimum temperatures.

*“The last couple of years have been financially challenging for farming communities due to the adverse weather conditions.” Family from Burcher*

### Fundraising & Marketing Committee

We are continually striving to obtain funding for our bursary and scholarship programs. We are now developing post-secondary non-tertiary programs. Many of these programs attract significant costs due to regulations, transport accommodation and WH&S, which will need to be funded on an ongoing basis.

We would like to identify long term support for all our programs from some of the Agribusiness Companies which are benefitting from the recent upturn in agricultural production.

### Current Fundraising Activities

#### Ionian Club of NSW

At a recent luncheon of the Ionian Club, BCEF Director Jenetta Russell provided a presentation on the activities and programs of BCEF which was well received.



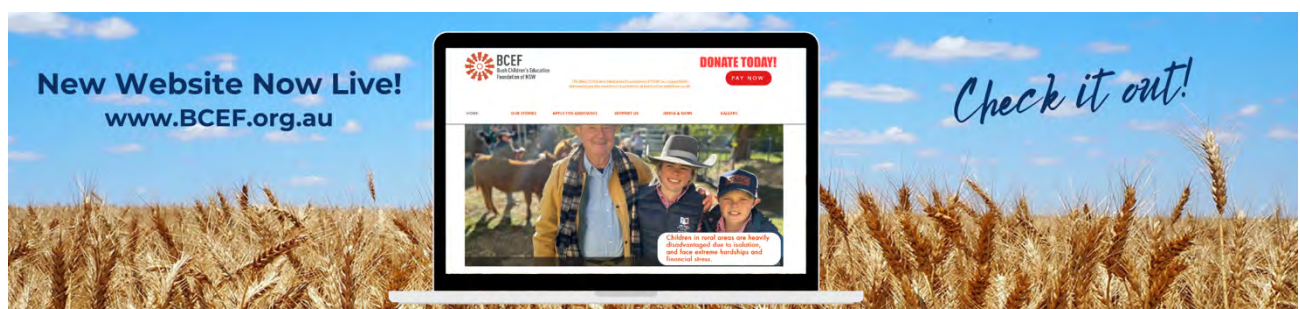
Director Jenetta Russell with Ionians

We would like to acknowledge the generous donation provided by the Club at the lunch.

#### BNP Paribas

We have great pleasure in welcoming the return of BNP Paribas as a supporter of BCEF's education programs. BNP have assisted us over many years, and they have now included BCEF into their Workplace Giving program and we are very appreciative of this.

BNP Paribas has been supporting the Australian and New Zealand economies for more than 140 years. Originally established locally in 1881 to finance the wool trade with Europe, today BNP Paribas provides financial services on a worldwide scale with distinctive European insights. We welcome support from a business with a history of supporting Australian agriculture.



### BCEF to Celebrate 60 years of Service to Young People and Families in the NSW Outback in 2025

BCEF founder, Dr Charles Huxtable (1891-1980) will be celebrated as part of our 60th anniversary next year. Educated at Shore and Sydney University, he survived the hells of the Somme in WW1 and Changi concentration camp in WW2. Afterwards, having joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Broken Hill, he witnessed the plight of isolated children deprived of an education other than correspondence school, with no associated school social life.

Dr Huxtable's determination to urge the NSW government to provide funding to establish boarding facilities for such affected young people culminated in the purpose-built Bush Children's War Memorial Hostel at Tibooburra, the first of a number of newly established BCEF boarding locations.

Almost six decades from the foundation of BCEF, we continue to help provide and maintain on-going contemporary support for young people in the bush.



View and follow our activities through the BCEF website <http://bcef.org.au/> and social media:

Twitter



Facebook



LinkedIn



Instagram



#### Directors & Staff as of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024

##### Chairman

Richard Dougan BA, CMC, FIMC, Cert IV & Dip Proj Mgmt

##### Vice Chairman & Public Officer

Andrew Heaven BA Dip FP CFP JP

##### Treasurer & Chair Finance & Investment Committee

John McRae\_BA, MComm, FCPA, FCA, AICD, JP

##### Chair Education, Scholarships & Bursaries Committee

Kerry Blight Med, BA, Dip Ed, Ltt B

Jenetta Russell OAM GAICD CCEO

The Hon. Duncan Gay AM

Rod Cowdroy BBus

Joy Dodds BEc (Hons), Post Grad Dip AFTVS

The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, BA

Board Secretary - Helen Rath BSc, Grad Dip ComMgt

Social Media Officer - Sarah Pratt BComm (Media)

#### BCEF Making a Difference

To all our supporters and stakeholders, thank you for your ongoing support. It does not take much for our climate conditions to change things in the bush. We expect to maintain similar funding requirements for our Bursary and Scholarship Programs into the future and will always need your generous support to achieve this.

Kind regards



Richard Dougan – Chairman

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

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

### Help Our Bush Kids with Educational Opportunities



*“Please pass on our wholehearted thanks to BCEF donors, as living rural does provide a challenge for our kids to be involved in activities large town and city students have access to, but extra support allows for this gap to be filled somewhat. We feel very grateful to be a part of the BCEF community.”*

#### Direct Deposit

Name: Bush Children's Education Foundation  
BSB: 062-195 Account Number: 10104674  
Reference: Your Name

#### PayPal

Visit [www.bcef.org.au](http://www.bcef.org.au) and click the yellow donate button to access the PayPal BCEF donation page.

#### Cheque

Payable to Bush Children's Education Foundation of NSW. Post to PO Box 138, Lindfield, NSW, 2070.

#### BCEF Contact Details

PO Box 138, Lindfield NSW 2070  
Phone: 0412879236 Email: [info@bcef.org.au](mailto:info@bcef.org.au)



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