

School's no limits for bush children

DR CHARLES Huxtable, 1891-1980, founded the Bush Children's Education Foundation in 1965 after surviving the hell fires of the Somme in World War I and Changi concentration camp in World War II.

After WWII the medical graduate joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Broken Hill and witnessed another tragedy - the plight of isolated children deprived of an education, other than correspondence school, and a normal social life.

Together with (the then) Country Party's Ian Sinclair and Sir Leslie Herron, Chief Justice of the NSW Supreme Court, Dr Huxtable urged the NSW government to provide funding to establish a boarding location for affected young people. The purpose-built Bush Children's War Memorial Hostel at Tibooburra was the first of a number of newly established boarding locations.

Over the past six decades, bursaries and scholarships to rural secondary and tertiary institutions have empowered isolated students to overcome the academic and social burdens imposed by family life off-the-beaten track. Boarding schools empower students to thrive from courses and extracurricular activities.

The results and academic records of BCEF recipients are only part of the story - the



Dr Charles Huxtable.

friendships, new horizons, greater empathy and understanding of different environments have been uplifting.

In 2022, the BCEF of NSW awarded 68 secondary rural boarding bursaries to young people from 50 families from isolated areas who attended 13 boarding schools in country NSW.

Today BCEF is totally reliant on like-minded donors to support and carry on this precious cause.

BCEF applicants today should draw strength and resolve from Charles Huxtable's example and vision, who as a young medical graduate not only won a Military Cross in June 1917 on the Somme but also, aged 48, enlisted in WW2, becoming a Japanese POW in Changi for four years, his grateful fellow-prisoners dubbing him "St Luke of Changi".

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