

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

Welcome to our June 2023 Newsletter which we hope will provide you with an insight into the positive benefits of secondary and tertiary assistance from the educational support we provide to families and young people in the NSW outback.

Bush isolation and the social and academic deprivation it can impose can be a major disadvantage in Australia.

Remember those precious childhood and schoolyard memories of yesteryear - kicking a football around an oval, attending a school assembly where local and school room news was discussed? Then imagine being kilometres from a 20-student bush school where the curriculum was, by necessity, limited - having in many cases a significant effect on career aspirations and real and sustained enjoyment of school and companionship.



Children beside the Dingo Fence in the late 60s from Fortville Gate, Onepah and Naryilco Stations who attended Tibooburra Hostel.

That's where the Bush Children's Education Foundation can help make a difference.

BCEF began nearly 60 years ago after Dr Charles Huxtable returned home from internship by the Japanese during World War II. Retirement from medical practice did not slow him, joining the Royal Flying Doctor Service, based in Broken Hill.

There he became very aware of the limited educational and social opportunities for children on properties in isolated Australia. Dr Huxtable worked with politicians like Ian Sinclair and Doug Anthony and local groups to fight such perils of isolation affecting students from isolated families.

The Bush Children's Hostel Foundation was formally established in Broken Hill in 1965, helping to develop government-run hostels for isolated students in towns such as Bourke, Tibooburra, Wentworth and 20 other sites. It became an education foundation when regional boarding schools replaced hostels.

Last year, BCEF's financial support enabling secondary scholarships and bursaries exceeded \$200,000 and we cannot thank our individual and corporate donors for making this possible. The University Scholarship program was also expanded for students at New England and Charles Sturt Universities. The total value of the current tertiary scholarship program exceeds \$130,000.

The long-term effects of the sustained drought and other calamities, such as the Tibooburra floods, have stretched BCEF resources and it is hoped that donations increase with the prospect of even greater El Nino devastation.

The NSW Governor, supportive of our work, invited BCEF Directors to Government House to mark the occasion of King Charles' Coronation, and it is hoped that such support will continue.

Think back to one's own childhood - and then to another devoid of schoolyard friendships, schoolroom learning, sporting activities, laughter and banter.

It's a pretty strong incentive to add your donation to the funding of secondary and tertiary scholarships and bursaries for our isolated students and their families in the bush.

Are we headed for another drought?

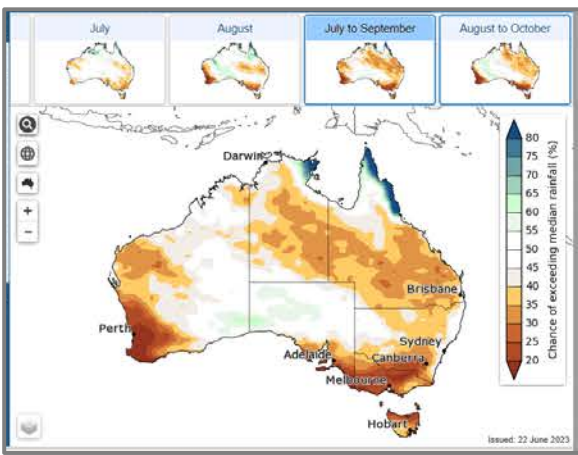
EL NINO is Spanish for THE YOUNG BOY. EL HOMBRE translates to THE STRONG MAN.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) is currently forecasting an EL HOMBRE rather than a historically occurring EL NINO weather event to commence in the next few months, citing the possibility of an extreme drought. The BoM models (see below) are showing this as very likely with the Pacific Ocean water temperatures currently increasing, a symptom of EL NINO/EL HOMBRE.

As at June 2023, the BoM states "it has shifted its ENSO El Nino Southern Oscillation Outlook to El Nino ALERT, indicating a 70% chance of EL NINO/ EL HOMBRE forming

this year. This is roughly three times the normal chance of an El Nino forming." If these predictions are correct, reflecting on the past experiences of BCEF since its establishment, there will be a significant increase in demand for those in regional areas west of the Dividing Range and out to the NSW and Queensland borders to get financial assistance for their secondary school aged children, allowing them an opportunity to realise their full potential.

BoM Summary of Climate Outlooks



The potential for adverse weather for rural Australia in the future needs to be monitored as it may place greater demand on organisations and individuals for educational assistance in the bush.

Gerald Michael Naughton
Vice-Chairman 2016 - 2023



It is with great sadness we report the untimely passing of our Vice Chairman, Gerald Naughton.

Gerald came from a background of financial leadership, working with AMP Finance Capital as Chairman of the

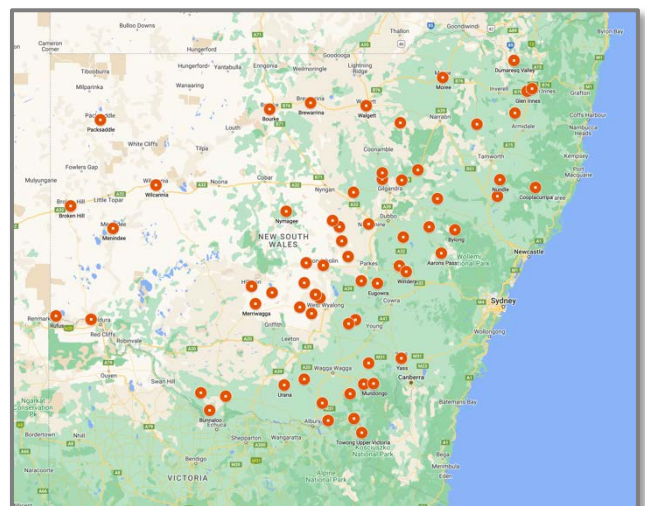
Board of the Trustee Company with 24 Trusts and approximately \$1 billion in funds.

He was highly experienced in Investment Management, researching and client relationships over a wide range of market conditions from 1977 through to 2017. The skills Gerald brought to BCEF meant we were able to

carefully manage, budget and strategically plan as well as protect our generously donated funds and allow us to maximise the needs of our worthy applicants/recipients. Gerald was renowned as a "Gentleman" and also a "Gentle Man" - he will be greatly missed by us all and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

2023 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 Rural Boarding Bursaries than the previous year. This year we received 123 applications, which indicates how valued our bursaries are and the continuing need for educational support by rural families. The map below shows the remote areas where these applicants live.



After detailed assessment of these 123 applications, 54 bursaries have been awarded at a total cost of around \$101,500. These bursaries support young people from 38 families, with the students attending 13 boarding schools throughout country NSW.

Parents and students provide us with valuable feedback on how the BCEF Boarding Bursaries have benefited them. For some it is being able to participate in learning activities with other students, for others it is to forge ahead with their studies and achieve academic success, and for some students it is to progress despite personal and learning challenges.

BCEF is proud of the help we give rural families to educate their children at rural boarding schools, and we would like to do more. Increased donations will allow us to support more families.

13 Schools Supported in 2023	Students
Calrossy Anglican School, Tamworth	5
Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, Tamworth	6
Hurlstone Agricultural College	2
Kildare Catholic College, Wagga Wagga	4
Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange	3
Macquarie Anglican Grammar School, Dubbo	2
New England Girls School	1
Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes	14
Scots All Saints, Bathurst	6
St Gregory's College, Gregory Hills	1
St Paul's College, Walla Walla	6
St Stanislaus' College	1
Yanco Agricultural High School, Yanco	3
Total students	54

This year we conducted more radio interviews and advertised in The Land (print and digital editions) to let people in the bush know about the availability of our support. The BCEF Chairman was interviewed by ABC Riverina, Western Districts, and Dubbo. Director Joy Dodds discussed our support with Ian McNamara on ABC National, "Australia All Over".

We asked our bursary applicants, "How did they hear about BCEF?" The responses received from the applications identified many sources. The table below summarises these sources of information.

How did you hear of BCEF?		
Source	Number	Increase Vs 2022
School	95	
WOM	23	153%
The Land	4	200%
FB	4	
Boarding House	2	
ICPA	2	200%
Radio	2	100%
Website	1	

While this has been another year of high demand for our Scholarships and Bursaries the available funding has provided an outstanding result in helping families to educate their children at Rural Boarding Schools.

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

Market Research Results

At the end of 2022, we conducted several market research surveys to help refine our educational support program and ensure we can continue to make a real

and sustainable difference. We asked, "What are the major difficulties for families in the bush getting a secondary school education for their children in rural NSW today?" We received the below responses:

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Distance from school	80.65%
Cost of school fees	69.35%
Cost of travel	53.23%
Limited selection of subjects at local school	50.00%
Cost of "extras" charges	48.39%
Availability of transport	38.71%
Lack of gifted and talented programs	20.97%
Classes too small	17.74%
Medical issues	4.84%
Classes too large	4.84%

The BCEF Secondary Rural Boarding Bursaries program is very much appreciated by recipients and their families. Below are a few of the responses received when asked about the value BCEF adds.

"The support from BCEF has been such a huge part of our girls' education experience. Without the support our family would have struggled to keep the girls in boarding and would have decreased their opportunities for education, social skills and their independence."

"Absolutely vital for our family's wellbeing and children's education. Thank you we appreciate the support it has been invaluable."

"To allow my children an education that they would not have received otherwise."

"Helped financially and always a lovely relief when I saw the BCEF scholarship deducted from the school fee account. It felt good to know that people in the city are interested and care about the education of our country kids."

"After several tough years of drought, bushfires and flood, the BCEF bursary has really helped us, as we get back on our feet, to afford to send our student to boarding school. As an isolated student, distance education is far too solitary and we have found in our family that being able to attend boarding school is absolutely essential for mental health. It is so difficult to meet the costs of boarding and tuition and the BCEF bursary eases the burden."

"As a recipient of a BCEF grant, it eased the financial burden on us by lessening just one of the many great expenses of Boarding school. This has allowed my son to continue his education, uninterrupted and us to breathe a little easier also. I pray we will continue to be able to afford the cost of boarding school fees as we have another child about to commence her boarding school journey in 2023."

University Scholarship Program

Charles Sturt and New England Universities

Our university scholarship programs is seen as an extension of our Rural Secondary School Boarding Program by providing funds for isolated and economically disadvantaged students living away from home to stay in a university college or hall of residence. The essential aim is to provide some means to improve the student's ability to succeed at university. This year we have continued to fund our expanded scholarship programs at UNE and CSU.

We are delighted with the academic performance of all our scholars, and we wish them continued success.

The BCEF Education Committee selection panel was again privileged to interview outstanding candidates for the BCEF CSU and UNE Scholarships. We would be delighted to award further scholarships when more funds are available. This would help mitigate the severe financial hardship experienced by many country students from isolated areas as they undertake tertiary studies.

Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary/TAFE Programs

We are continually reviewing the potential to support these critical programs and students; however, we have not been able to identify clear cut programs which are supportable, quantifiable and manageable by BCEF. We are continually monitoring this very important educational area.

Financial Report

Our Bursary and Scholarship programs have provided a great result in utilising the funds donated for these purposes. The Board is always concerned that funds donated for Bursaries and Scholarships are used for these purposes.

We continue to manage our operational expenses keeping them to a minimum and covering them by one-off specific grants or from investment income wherever possible.

Whilst BCEF is in a strong financial position at the end of this financial year, our continuing plans to expand the number of bursaries and scholarships offered to applicants will place ever-increasing demands on available funds.

The rising cost of living – in particular power, transport, and interest rates – is impacting less fortunate members of our rural communities. In recent times there has also been a significant fall in cattle prices, and

long-term weather forecasts are predicting far drier seasons ahead. All these factors will have a significant impact on the economic circumstances of bush families.

We are also conscious that once we commit to helping a family meet the costs of educating their children, we wish to ensure we have adequate funds available to go the distance from Forms 7 through to 12 of their children's High School years should they require it, and not find ourselves in a position where we must reduce our level of support.

ICPA Delegation – Sydney, June 2023

Our mutual commitment and dedication to ICPA activities and economically disadvantaged and isolated young people and their families in the Bush continues.

Recently Tanya Mitchell ICPA - NSW President and Richard Dougan BCEF Chair discussed several aspects for funding education for young people in the bush. Of major concern is that NSW is slipping behind as the Queensland Government recently announced an increase in the Remote Tuition Allowance for rural families sending children to boarding school.

For remote secondary school students, The Queensland Government will now fund \$10,276 instead of the current \$6,276.

The ICPA has long lobbied to increase the support payments across Australia. This is obviously supported by BCEF.



Tanya Mitchell ICPA - NSW President & Richard Dougan BCEF Chair

It has been identified that the rising cost of boarding school fees means rural families are out of pocket at least \$20,000 per student per year.

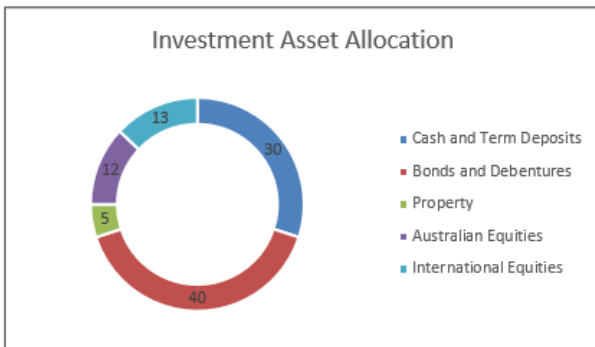
BCEF Investment Strategy and Performance

BCEF's investment strategy ensures the long-term sustainability of our organization while maximizing returns for the benefit of our community.

We maintain a reserve pool of funds dedicated to generating investment returns, which cover our operating costs. Surplus returns are reinvested for future projects when our investment performance surpasses these costs. This approach allows us to allocate all donations, grants, and bequests exclusively for bursaries and scholarships.

To secure BCEF's sustainable growth, we adopt a longer-term investment horizon for funds not immediately required for cash needs. Our targeted investment time frame is five years, providing a benchmark for fund commitment before relying on them.

Our asset allocation plan encompasses the following categories:



The Finance Committee, meeting quarterly and reporting to the Board, directs our investment decisions and oversees guidance from our Investment Adviser. This collaborative approach ensures informed decision-making and diligent management.

Our investment policy is built on three key aims:

Preserving the corpus: We prioritize safeguarding the principal funds, ensuring BCEF's longevity and stability.

Maximizing income: Our strategy focuses on generating income to support operational needs and the provision of bursaries and scholarships.

Achieving growth above the Consumer Price Index: We strive for investment growth that outpaces inflation, maximizing the impact of our resources over time.

By adhering to these principles, we create a sustainable and impactful future for BCEF.

Board Meetings

The Board and its Standing Committees meet regularly throughout the year to manage the affairs of the Foundation and to provide support for the bush as much as possible. Directors attend in person or by Zoom enabling maximum attendance at each meeting.

Fundraising & Marketing Committee

We anticipate a continuing and possibly higher demand for our Bursary Program, with the possibility of an El Hombre bringing drought conditions. We look forward to gaining support from some of the state and national agribusiness companies which have flourished in the Bush in these good times.

Social Media

Our social media presence has grown over the past few years where we have tripled our followers. We need everyone to share our Bursary information so any child that needs our help in Rural NSW can find us....so please keep sharing and talking about BCEF.

Our followers love our messages of hope, our testimonies, and stories of success, being our most favourite reposted feeds and shared stories. Thank you to all our followers, those who have shared us and given a child a new beginning with their education, please keep on sharing.

With our increased presence on social media platforms, radio and print we have been able to reach more families across country NSW.

We have exciting new endeavours for 2024 and we can't wait to share more stories with you, as you help us to grow.

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



Twitter

Facebook

LinkedIn

Instagram

BCEF Making a Difference



Kate's Story

"This Bursary is going to help us tremendously, particularly given that Kate is now in year 12 and being able to board really helps as she has a lot more time to devote to study by not travelling each day, and the after school study time gives her a lot more structure in her day. Thank you again for your support and please keep up the great work that you do helping rural families."

Benjamin's Story

"Just a short note to again Thank you for awarding Benjamin the Bursary last year. This enabled him to select and partake in the elective subjects such as Metal and Wood Fabrication and to go on the Year 9 excursion to Mt Kosciusko in December in which he enjoyed immensely. He appreciated this so much and enjoyed partaking in all aspects of his schooling and boarding experience this year. "



Bianca's Story

" I wish to thank you so much for having the time to read my application for this scholarship and awarding me with such an honour. By having this scholarship, it will greatly aid me with my studies and relieve financial stresses. After graduation, I hope to travel around Australia using my degree to help animals within remote areas of Australia, visiting the small isolated towns and hopefully working on cattle stations or whatever opportunities I can pick up along my Veterinary technology journey."

For all our supporters and stakeholders, thank you for your ongoing support. It does not take much for our climate conditions to change. 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
0412377989
rdougan@bcef.org.au

Bush Children's Education Foundation of NSW Inc



Direct Deposit

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

PayPal

Visit 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.

Directors & Staff as at 31st May 2023

Chairman

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

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

Public Officer

Andrew Heaven BA Dip FP CFP JP

Jenetta Russell OAM GAICD CCEO

The Hon. Duncan Gay AM

Rod Cowdroy BBus

Joy Dodds BEc (Hons), Post Grad Dip AFTVS

Helen Rath - Board Secretary BSc, Grad Dip ComMgt

Sarah Pratt - Social Media Officer

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

BCEF Contact Details

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