

Rural Education Program

Rural Education Program

Fourth Report 2008 - 2010



Rural Education Program Completes its Mission

History

Rural Education Program (REP) was established in 2002, as a program of Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, by private donors as a short-term response to their concerns about the effect of drought on children living in rural and remote areas of Australia. The six Founding Donors have personally donated and attracted other donors to FRRR through REP for almost ten years now, to a variety of organisations to improve the opportunities for children in the bush. Some of the program's achievements are summarised below.

The drought of the last decade has been the worst on record, causing devastation of agricultural production and the social and economic heart of rural communities. The effects of the drought on education have been many and complex, but at the ground level they were manifest in the reduced capacity of local people to financially support their schools

and kindergartens, so important educational activities like camps and excursions were jeopardised, as they relied on fundraising. Additional programs in the arts, sports, and science that enriched the limited curriculae that rural schools can offer were also restricted as they relied on locally raised funds.

Anecdotal information came from schools that many young people were showing stress and some were deliberately failing so their parents would not worry about paying for further education. Parents tutoring their children on outback stations could no longer afford to pay tutors and often felt they were compromising their children's education because they had to spend more time working the land or leaving home to gain paid work. At the policy level it was clear that a few simple and relatively inexpensive adjustments to government funding would give

rural and remote students more equitable access to higher education. REP supported the organisations that lobbied for these changes, gave substantial funding to support volunteer teachers in the outback, and commissioned research that highlighted the un-level playing field for bush kids compared with those from urban areas.

In 2010 it was decided that the program would cease, having achieved much of its original aim and leaving a legacy of increased public interest in and support for rural education. With above average rainfall across most of the country this year, 2011 was the right year to close. Each of the donors has established their own family foundation that will continue to support rural education. Also, a number of other Australian philanthropic foundations have taken up rural education as a focus since REP began.

REP has been a good example of private philanthropy supported by FRRR, making a mark on a serious social issue involving a voiceless minority. Rural and remote children are a small population and although they have their champions, they have struggled to make their special needs known to the rest of the country. The REP founding donors have supported those champions and added to research and public education such that now the issues are more widely understood and indeed adopted now at the national policy level.

REP will close its operations on 30 June 2011.

Rural Education Program Completes its Mission

What REP Has Meant to the Founding Donors

“Working with our partners for REP over the past eight and a half years has been a rewarding and eye opening experience for us both. We have learnt about and met some of the 300000 preschool, primary and secondary children living in the bush – many of whom are not getting a “fair go”. We have visited some of their schools; met some of their teachers, volunteers, carers and parents who work with and for them. We understand better from first hand exposure, the difficulties they face and have to overcome to gain a good education – vital for their future. We hope we have made a difference and will continue to help where we can.”

Sarah and Baillieu Myer

“What have we gained ourselves is knowledge about the challenges of educating children in rural and remote areas; knowledge of organisations running on a shoestring, that have made huge contributions to rural and

remote education; awareness of the plight of many non-indigenous families that are just as badly off, for education, as indigenous families; pleasure to think that we may have made a slight difference to the availability and quality of educational opportunities for rural and remote families.”

John and Janet Calvert-Jones

“Over the past eight and a half years the Rural Education Program has opened our eyes to the enormity of the struggle that people and communities face in drought affected areas in isolated, rural and remote Australia. The three donor families have collaborated to hopefully make a difference to their lives and plight. It has been a privilege to be able to help, where help is needed. Our commitment and involvement has been a most fulfilling, rewarding and enjoyable experience for us.”

Tim and Gina Fairfax

What REP Has Meant to FRRR

The establishment of the Rural Education Program (REP) meant for FRRR an opportunity early in the life of the Foundation to work with a committed and passionate group of private donors to further an important aspect of the foundation's responsibilities – educational disadvantage.

The work of REP was highly complementary to other FRRR programs such as the Back to School Program, E3 Grants program with the RASF NSW and Australia Posts' Stretching the Envelope Small Grants Program and the REACH – Rural Early Childhood Grants Program. REP was

the first FRRR program to highlight the importance of access to good educational opportunities for school students in rural and remote Australia.

The REP program will be greatly missed because of the niche funding provided in grants that truly reached many remote and disadvantaged communities and helped expand educational horizons.

Rural Education Program Completes its Mission

What REP Has Meant to Some Grant Recipients

"A Rural Education Program grant enabled us to buy an electronic whiteboard to support our isolated parents in their critical role as home tutors. They have benefitted enormously from the opportunities that access to regular on-line contact has afforded them. Parents can communicate with other parents, share experiences and reduce the feeling of isolation and frustration. Teachers can use the whiteboard to solve problems and demonstrate to children and parents. Parents feel reassured their children are not missing out on the interactions that are available in schools."

**School of Isolated and Distance
Education**

"The support from Rural Education Program is crucial in our efforts to ensure that children and young people across the Mallee are given every opportunity to pursue their dreams regardless of their financial or social background."

Chances for Children Mildura

"I am a governess working with one of the families who received your wonderful (school) pack. To see the kids' faces was delightful, beaming with smiles when they opened their mail. It's great to know that there are people out there like yourselves, assisting children and families in remote areas."

Home School Governess

“The preschool children are outdoors for a great deal of the day and they enjoy running and playing on the new lovely green lawns that have replaced the dust - thanks to the ability to water the lawn from our water tank, bought with your grant money.”

Tooleybuc Preschool

“Because of the funding we received we were able to continue with our three-day camp. As both parents and students participate in the program it provides a break from ongoing climatic problems besetting the grape, cattle and dairy industries that are the predominant employers in our community.”

Moyhu Primary School

“This grant (for a volunteer community mentoring program for disadvantaged children at risk of leaving school) has been pivotal in allowing Camperdown College the chance to provide this program and opportunity to its students. Due to its success it will continue in the years ahead continuing to act as additional support for students who lack a mentor figure in their lives.”

Camperdown College

Rural Education Program Completes its Mission

Summary of REP Achievements

1. What we have done

- Raised some \$3 million with the help of a number of supporters, who contributed approximately \$500,000 of this
- Made grants of \$2,809 million to 385 schools, support groups, kindergartens, universities and national organisations
- Distributed 8,435 school packs to children in remote outback regions
- Lobbied governments on rural education issues
- Successfully approached the Commonwealth to fund a major study on rural and remote education at Charles Sturt University
- Organised a national conference on rural and remote education in 2007 in Albury
- Made seven Study Tours of every State and Territory, to get direct exposure to the major issues in rural and remote education
- Worked closely with Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal including membership of its Board and sub committees
- Appointed and worked with a professional part-time education officer
- Each Founding Donor established a Family Foundation, each of which will continue to work with and for, rural and remote children
- Supported the establishment of a *Chair in Rural Education and Communities* by The Myer Foundation

2. What we have learned

- There are approximately 300,000 preschool primary and secondary children living in rural and remote Australia
- Some 40,000 of these are indigenous
- They largely live in safe, non marginal Federal seats
- There is no effective peak national body to lobby their interests
- There are outstanding organisations working with and for them, largely staffed by volunteers, including VISE, Contact, Isolated Children's Parents Association , and Frontier Services
- Children are disadvantaged by remoteness, drought, lack of team sport, music, arts and financial circumstances, low boarding school allowances
- Rural communities have been financially stretched by drought and have been unable to raise sufficient funds to support the educational "extras" that are so important to rural and remote children's education

Further information about funding sources for rural education may be obtained from:

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

P.O. Box 41 Bendigo 3552

www.frrr.org

Philanthropy Australia

Level 2, 55 Collins Street

Melbourne 3000

www.philanthropy.org.au

Founding Donors Report



Left to Right: Sarah Myer, Baillieu Myer, Gina Fairfax, Tim Fairfax, Janet Calvert-Jones, John Calvert-Jones



A good education is a great start in life. It helps each of us develop to our full potential wherever we live and whatever our social or economic background.

In rural and remote Australia distance and sparseness of population are a challenge and access to quality education in schools with reliable, competent teachers is not always possible. The range of subjects and their academic level too are often less than in the cities and tertiary opportunities are limited.

It is these difficulties the Founding Donors and the private contributors to the Rural Education Program have sought in part to redress. FRRR is proud to have been able to work with the REP donors in delivery of their diverse initiatives and grateful for their support and exceptional generosity.

Ian Sinclair AC
Chairman FRRR

When our founding donors established the Rural Education Program in 2003, their vision was to support children's education in rural and remote Australia. Each year since, those donors have travelled outback to schools and kindergartens and communities to find what the needs are.

We have discovered that everywhere, there are inequalities in education resources and training that should embarrass any first-world nation. Rural and remote Australia desperately needs more quality teachers. It also needs more specialist teachers at pre-school level to help give children the building blocks for language and reading.

Governments must also bolster support for those teachers already in rural and remote Australia. More locum teachers are needed to

The Rural Education Program is a program of The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. PO Box 41, BENDIGO VIC 3552. www.frrr.org.au

Project Stories: Genevieve Barlow

replace them while they undertake professional development and upgrade their skills.

We are pleased to say that alongside the deficiencies, we also discovered joys and generosity that gladdened our hearts: we met parents and teachers going beyond the call of duty to inspire children's learning. We met retirees on stations doubling as modern school governors and governesses through the marvellous Volunteers for Isolated Students Education (VISE). We met early childhood education specialists working for Frontier Services who travel thousands of outback kilometres to monitor children's development and support parents. We met lobbyists and advocates working through the Isolated Children's and Parents Association to close the inequalities that come with isolation.

It is these people that REP supports wholeheartedly for we share their belief that all children, regardless of

where they live, are entitled to a sound and robust education. This report for 2008-2010 includes some of their stories.

Thank you to my co-Founding Donors for their personal commitment to our purpose and to the team at FRRR, led by CEO Sylvia Admans, which supports us so well in our endeavours. Also a special thanks to our Education Officer, Helen Morris.

Tim Fairfax, AM

Chairman, Rural Education Program



Accommodating country students in the big smoke

Rotary Residential College WA Grant \$10,000

Jack Baldwin, 17, knows his life would have taken another path had Perth's Rotary Residential College (RRC) not existed. Jack's family lives in the agricultural wheatbelt at Beverley, almost two hours east. Beverley has a high school but Jack had his heart set on aviation, a course offered at Perth's Kent St Senior High School. Daily travel there was impossible. The Rotary Residential College, built by Rotary clubs for country kids needing city accommodation during their secondary years, meant he had somewhere to board near the school. "It opened up all these opportunities for me," said Jack, whose dad is a truck driver. "I started studying aviation. It's a brilliant course but I didn't have the passion. The hostel was brilliant though and after school I'd muck around with my mates there. We'd all go and play tennis and that's when I switched to the tennis course at school. Now I'm a tennis coach."



Robert McKenna's story is similar. "I wanted to go to Trinity College but it's non-boarding so I needed somewhere to stay," said Robert of Tardun, 130km east of Geraldton. "I started boarding at the RRC in 2006. That year I went to the Kent St Senior High School and studied tennis. We'd do up to five hours coaching a week, play pennant on Sundays and go on school tennis camps. Now I'm in my second year studying sports science at university."



The college provides a safe, friendly and homelike environment for up to 96 students from as far away as Derby, Broome, Kununurra and Newman where remoteness leaves them educationally disadvantaged. Each student has his or her own room with an ensuite and toilet. During term breaks, the rooms are rented to visiting country sporting clubs. Annual boarding fees at \$9870 a student cover students' costs but the not-for-

profit college has little money to spare for upgrades. REP's grant upgraded the toilets. "The cisterns were failing at an incremental rate which was draining our maintenance budget," says manager Graeme Cooper. "By upgrading them simultaneously, we saved money on the capital cost and the call-out fees to fix them as required, plus the new toilets have more advanced water saving features."

Bringing theatre to schools

**Australian Festival for Young People
SA Grant \$3867**



Demand from high schools was so high, the play's performance was extended by a week and went further inland to Renmark and Waikerie, thanks to REP funding.

A play about two boys who unintentionally killed a motorist by throwing rocks from an overpass on a freeway really hit home when it toured country secondary schools in South Australia.

Performed by Sydney's Zeal Theatre, the two-man play called *The Stones* was based on an actual event involving two teenagers in Melbourne in 1994. Similar attacks occurred in Adelaide in 2005.

Sixteen schools, 603 students and 72 teachers saw the play during the Australian Festival for Young People otherwise known as *Come Out*.

Festival program producer Julie Priest said the regional tour introduced many regionally isolated young people to award-winning theatre performed by professional artists.

Rebekah Zadow, 14, of Mt Barker's Cornerstone College told *The Adelaide Advertiser* that the play could encourage young people to change their behaviour.

"It makes you realise what can happen and how you would feel," Rebekah said.

Bush kids go to the big smoke

Clare Public School
NSW Grant \$2260



Trams, art galleries, buses and boats, museums, meerkats and mandrills. For kids from the bush, such things are a mystery and great fun when first discovered. So it was when the seven children from the Clare Public School, 155km north of Balranald, went to Adelaide for a week during drought-riddled 2008. The school's four families normally raise funds in the surrounding farming community to pay for maintenance costs and extras such as books and school excursions but the long drought and rising fuel prices had hit hard. "The excursion is the highlight of the school year and we wanted to take the children away from the stresses of farming life and expose them to new things," says the then Parents and Citizens Association president, Fleur Turner.

With REP's support, the children, their teacher and their parents were accommodated for a week in Adelaide during which they visited the zoo, the art gallery, the Granite Island whale and penguin centres, a motor museum, a maritime museum, visited the zoo and went for a ride in the Glenelg Surf Club's rubber ducky. "It made such a big difference to them. Some hadn't been in a tram or on a bus," Fleur says.

Fourth year pupil Laine Fitzgerald was impressed. "On the last day we went to the zoo," he says. "It was the best day of my life."

Cooking up a storm

Leitchville Primary School VIC Grant \$3773



What better place to learn maths, science and English than in the kitchen. Reading recipes, measuring ingredients and discovering the difference between an egg white and yolk have become part of the curriculum at the Leitchville Primary School in the tiny dairy farming community just south of the Victorian/ NSW border, thanks to a REP-funded school oven, chicken run and vegie patch.

The school's 24 children collect the eggs and feed and water the chooks and in warmer months grow vegetables. They are learning about the connection between healthy soil and healthy people.

"We cook with the children at least once a week," says principal Amanda Bradford. "Parents also use the oven to give their kids hot lunches."

School council president Sharon Keath says amid drought, declining water allocations and the more recent closure of the town's milk factory, interest and support from outside the community is warmly welcomed.

"It's a boost for our community to know that people care enough to give us a grant."

Giving books to at-risk children

Children's Charity Network National \$5,000

If reading was a religion then Sandra Smith would be a disciple. Sandra, the Early Years Outreach Officer at the Casey-Cardinia Library in outer suburban Melbourne, is an ambassador for Books for Kids, a national project to get kids-at-risk reading.

"I visit new parent groups at maternal child health centres and read to babies as young as three months. I talk to parents about how language is a building block for their children's lives and emphasise that the earlier they start reading to their children the better their life chances will be. Children who can read are more likely to be successful at school, more likely to hold down a job and less likely to be dependent on social services."

Sandra is one of about 50 Books for Kids ambassadors nationwide distributing books to children facing literacy problems. Typically such children are from low-income families who have no books at home and their caregivers are not aware of the

importance of reading to their children, says volunteer executive director of the Children's Charity Network and Books for Kids founder Rob Leonard.

A retired publisher turned horse trainer, Rob started Books for Kids in 2008 with the aim of giving 50,000 new books to 25,000 children across regional Australia. "To date about 27,000 books have gone to 12,000 children. We're now working in partnership with Lions Australia. We also have motivational reading events and we've started a magazine called Oz Kids in Print."

Sandra says that in her area, which is classified as disadvantaged, she also works with local emergency support services because they're in touch with families and kids needing support. "Often these families have nowhere to live and no money. One support worker told me how their eyes light up when they get the books."



Guiding outback pre-schoolers

Dulacca & District Kindy Playgroup QLD Grant \$4379

Pre-school years are when children learn to socialise and play with others so they're able to mix well when they start school. When home is a farm in south-central Queensland, five hours west of Brisbane, the opportunity to do so is not always there.

The mums from around Dulacca and Drillham were determined. Though their local kindergarten had petered out in the drought, with funds to pay teachers too hard to find, they established a playgroup. "We wanted a facilitated playgroup so our children wouldn't be disadvantaged before starting school," says Nicole Harrison whose family runs a bulldozer business in the cattle and cropping area.

With their grant from REP, the mums paid a professional facilitator to organise a weekly program of play-based learning for their babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers for a year. "She organised the program and would come and lead the children,"



says Nicole. "Our nearest kindergarten is half an hour away for most of us and the cost and time getting there was too much."

"We were really lucky to get the REP grant. It was different to many others in that we could use it to pay a facilitator.

Introducing pre-schoolers to language

Carewest - Talk About NSW Grant \$5500

Forty per cent of children at rural schools have delayed language development. Without a language-rich environment at home where parents talk to and play with them and sing them nursery rhymes, school starters face disadvantage from day one. Left unaddressed those delays can impede their chances in life.

That's why the Supporting Children Starting School Project set about educating parents, pre-school teachers and childcare workers in language development in central western NSW. They established Talk About, a program to tackle the limited language development of pre-schoolers. A key part of this was to buy oral language kits developed by speech pathologist Ruth Fox and then to train childcare workers, playgroup supervisors and pre-school teachers in their use.

Teacher/director Emma Thomas uses the kits with all the three to five year olds attending pre-school in Molong, a

farming town 30km west of Orange. Emma says those without basic skills

can learn and those with language skills can develop them further. "The kits are really good for improving school readiness, for helping the children develop concentration and language skills such as listening and describing and following directions. What's really nice is they come back and ask to do the kit exercises again."

Ellen Fisher, of CareWest, the agency that trained kit users, says they teach children concepts such as under and over. "Many children have language delay simply because they are put in front of the television and their lives are poor in language expression. These kits help build language concepts."



Sharing life's journey

Camperdown College VIC Grant \$4784

Former lab technician and printing business owner Pat Robertson is 63 years old. Ashlea McKenzie is 14. The two might not have met had Camperdown College, a Prep-to-Year 12 school in southern Victoria, not introduced mentoring. Now they're swapping craft tips and knitting patterns.

Each Tuesday for an hour Pat and Ashlea meet, usually at school. "We've made handcraft (quilting

and patchwork) and Christmas decorations and I'm knitting now," says Ashlea. "It's fun."

She's the youngest in her family. Her older two siblings have left school and Pat's friendship has given her an adult to chat with. This is exactly what Standing Tall, a school-based mentoring program established at Bainbridge College in western Victoria some years ago, is designed to do. It matches adult volunteers with

students beyond their families, a link that research shows helps young people build resilience. Jacinta Tolland said Camperdown College adopted Standing Tall, with REP funds for training, to build student motivation and



connectedness. About a fifth of the college's families are single parent, a fifth are unemployed and the same percentage are manual workers, "We are in an area of declining rural population and declining



enrolment and we suffer from poor community perception and struggle to life our public profile," said Jacinta when seeking funds to establish Standing Tall. She said many young people were struggling.

Pat joined up as a mentor after observing the school's struggles. "The school has been through some rough patches," she says. "When the opportunity came up, my husband (a retired teacher) and I thought this was something we could do to support it. Ashlea and I get on very well and

she's always eager to be there. When we started knitting I was away one week and she was apprehensive. She said what if I make a mistake. Neither her mother nor her grandmother knits. I reassured her."

Three years on, 11 of the 13 original students continue to meet their mentors. Pat and Ashlea declined to change over at the two-year mark. "I said to Ashlea: we could keep going on until Year 12." She seemed to like that idea.

Rural Education Program Grants 2008 - 2010

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Pre-School			
Binnaway Preschool Inc	Toilet Amenities Block	NSW	5,000
Coonamble Neighbourhood Centre	Playgroups & Parenting	NSW	4,500
Dulacca Kindy Playgroup	Facilitator Wages Funding	QLD	4,379
Euroa Kindergarten	Improving Euroa Kindergarten	VIC	3,500
Kingston On Murray Playgroup	Toy Library	SA	4,500
Menindee Childrens Centre Inc	Photocopier	NSW	4,000
Playgroup Tasmania Inc	Baby & Me	TAS	5,000
Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association - Jingera Preschool	Rural Preschool Access - Fee Subsidy	ACT	4,500
Swan Reach & District Preschool	Outdoor Equipment	VIC	4,234
The Channon Childrens Centre	The Extension of Educational Resources and Individualised Learning Support for Rural Students	NSW	5,868
Ungarra Playcentre	Verandah & Paving	SA	3,500
West Bathurst Pre School Inc	Earlystart Kelso	NSW	5,000
Young Childcare Centre inc	Supporting Children's Literacy & Numeracy	NSW	2,667
Primary School			
Bambaroo Primary P&C Association	Technology Upgrade - Smart Board	QLD	3,500
Beacon P&C	Cooler Kids	WA	5,000
Bealiba Primary School	Mother Goose Transition to School Program	VIC	3,500
Bonalbo Central School	Springboard Reading Program	NSW	14,036
Booborowie Primary School	Student Wellbeing; Addressing Rural Isolation to attend Metropolitan Services & Opportunities	SA	3,000
Clare Public School P&C Association	School Resources & Excursion	NSW	2,260
Conondale Primary P&C Association	P.A.V.A Centre/Community Support	QLD	10,000
Croppa Creek Public School	Safe Fenced Area for Preschool and Playgroup	NSW	5,000
Currawa Primary School	Quality Education	VIC	8,000
Dallarnil State School P&C Assoc	Early Years Resources & Equipment	QLD	2,000
Deniliquin North Public School	Kidslink @ North	NSW	5,000
Echuca East Primary School	Breakfast Programme	VIC	3,000
Eurongilly Public School	Engagement and Excellence in Literacy and Numeracy	NSW	6,200
G S Kidd Public SSP Gunnedah	Whole School, Five Day Major Excursion to Coffs Harbour	NSW	8,000
Holy Rosary Primary School Derby	Computer Lab Upgrade	WA	4,658
Jamieson Primary School Council	History Camp Experience for Rural Schools	VIC	4,100
Katunga Primary School	Grade 5/6 School Camp to Canberra	VIC	6,300
Kentucky Public School	Quality Performance Opportunities for Isolated Children	NSW	5,750

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Leitchville Primary School	From Garden to Table Healthy Eating & Food Preparation	VIC	3,773
Linton & Cape Clear Primary Schools	School Camp subsidy	VIC	2,000
Linton Primary School	School Camp 2008	VIC	2,000
Morgan Street Public School P&C	Equity x Encouragement = Excellence	NSW	10,000
Moyhu Primary School	Sustainable Ski Program	VIC	6,700
Napperby Primary School	Interactive Whiteboards	SA	5,940
Neville Public School P & C	Music for Everyone	NSW	5,000
Neville Public School P & C	Achieving Sustainable Organised Natural Education	NSW	5,460
Port Germein Primary School	Whole School Camp to Arbury Park 2008	SA	6,000
Port Pirie West Primary	Learning Through Play Class	SA	5,000
Pyalong Primary School	Swimming Like Fishes	VIC	3,680
Sir Henry Parkes Memorial Public School - Tenterfield	Early Literacy Program	NSW	3,740
Springhurst Primary School	Love that Learning	VIC	8,000
St Ignatius Parish School	Sunsmart, Sunshaded, Smart Kids	NSW	5,000
St John's Primary School P&F - Trangie	Renewing Reading Resources	NSW	5,000
St Johns School - Cobar	Smart Tech Teaching - Reaching 21st Century Readers	NSW	6,000
St Josephs School Murgon	Breakfast Programme	QLD	7,200
St Marys Central School Wellington	School Readiness Program	NSW	4,000
St Michaels School Dunedoo	Excellence in Literacy - Reaching for the Stars	NSW	5,000
Swan Hill North Primary School	Establishing a Developmental Curric. in Prep	VIC	6,327
Tocumwal Public School	NSW Festival of Instrument Music	NSW	5,000
Toolamba Primary School	Replacement of Guided Reading Books	VIC	5,000
Waikerie Primary School	Performing Arts	SA	500
Wee Waa Public School P & C Assoc	Improve the Learning Environment for Students Requiring Extension	NSW	5,000
Weethalle Public School	Go MATHS Core Program and Supplementary Mathematics Resources	NSW	1,719
Welshpool & District Primary School	A Day at the Zoo Memories Forever	VIC	2,937
Wonthaggi Primary School	Fair Go Camping & Excursion Program	VIC	5,000
Woorinen District Primary School	Camps and Excursions Program 2009	VIC	5,550
Yea Primary School	Provide Camp Experience for All our Students	VIC	10,530
Yenda Public School P & C	Interactive Whiteboards	NSW	5,000
Yerong Creek P&C	Festival of Music - Sydney Opera House	NSW	2,500
Secondary			
All Souls St Gabriels School P&C	Canoes for the Duke of Edinburgh Award	QLD	4,000
Baradine Central School	Steer Program	NSW	4,234
Camperdown College	Standing Tall - A New Mentoring Program	VIC	4,784
CBC Fremantle	Kiwirrkurra Outreach	WA	5,000
Centacare Wilcannia	Out There Learning - Condobolin High School	NSW	5,252
Charleville State School P&C Assoc.	Japan Tour 2008	QLD	5,000
Denmark High School	Denmark High School Theatre Company	WA	5,000

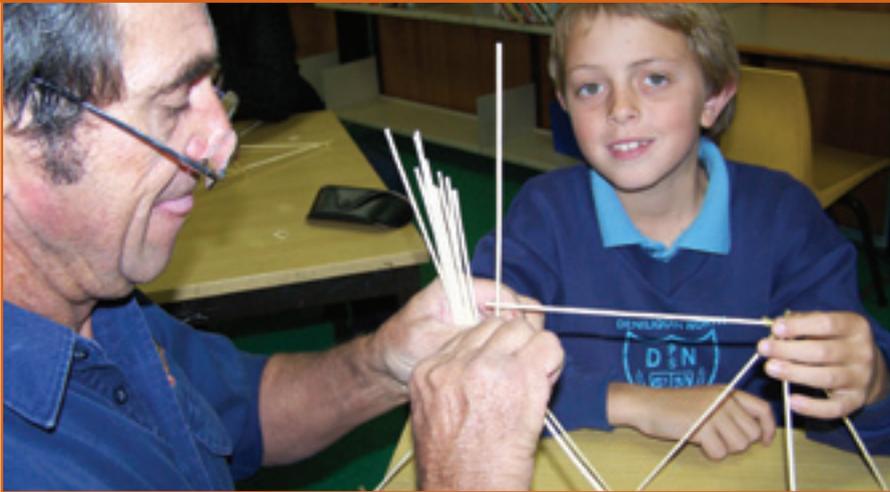
Rural Education Program Grants 2008 - 2010

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Gladstone High School	Focus on Health and Wellbeing	SA	4,800
Heywood Consolidated School	Boite Schools Chorus 2010	VIC	3,000
Mansfield Secondary College	Agribusiness at Mansfield Secondary College	VIC	5,200
Mansfield Secondary College	Ginger Fluff Project	VIC	5,000
Mooroopna Secondary College	MSC Ag Plot Redevelopment	VIC	5,000
Murgon High P & C Association	Senior Biology Excursion	QLD	5,000
Narrandera High School	Broadening The Minds Of Our Youth	NSW	8,000
Nimbin Central School	Canberra & the Snow Excursion	NSW	9,000
Peak Hill Central School	Science & Engineering Challenge Team - Super Challenge	NSW	4,850
St George State High School	Enhancing Employment Skills of Rural Youth	QLD	5,000
St Mary's College Broome	Performing Arts Cultural Tour Group 2009	WA	5,000
Stawell Secondary College	Grampians Region Adolescent Mentorings Program	VIC	5,000
Streaky Bay Area School	Middle School Camp 2009	SA	5,000
Waikerie High School	Independent Learning Centre	SA	5,500
Yakanarra Community School	A Visit To The City	WA	8,000
Other			
Academy of Sport Health & Education	Literacy and Numeracy Resources & Tutoring	VIC	6,000
Australian Children's Music Foundation Ltd	Music Program at Hillston Central School	NSW	10,000
Australian Festival for Young People Inc	Come Out 09 - People's Puppet Project, Whyalla & 'The Stones'	SA	3,516
Big Hart Inc	Bowraville	TAS	5,000
Bourke Walgett School of Distance Ed.	Remote Student and Family Workshop Program	NSW	8,900
Buzz DanceTheatre	Big Stretch	WA	10,000
Cairns School of Distance Education	Bush Kids 'R' Water Smart	QLD	4,955
Cairns School of Distance Education	Bush Kids 'R' Water Smart	QLD	5,150
Charles Sturt University	Improving Literacy Through Culture & IT	NSW	5,000
Charleville School of Distance Ed P&C	Home Tutor	QLD	6,600
Childrens Charity Network	Books for Kids	VIC	5,000
Chinchilla Student Accommodation Association Inc	Help Students Graduate	QLD	7,200
Christian Aboriginal Parent Directed School	Aboriginal Gifted & Talented Program	WA	3,000
Contact Incorporated	School Packs NSW 08/09	NSW	18,400
Contact Incorporated	School Packs 2009/2010	NSW	50,000
Contact Incorporated	Additional School Packs for 2009	NSW	15,071
Contact Incorporated	2011 School Packs	NSW	35,900
Country Education Foundation of Australia Limited	Narrabri Helping Hand for Education	NSW	10,000
Country Womens Association of NSW Binalong Branch	Music for Binalong Public School	NSW	5,000
Country Womens Association of NSW Barwon Group	Medical Grants for students	NSW	5,000
Discovery Science & Technology Museum Inc	Animating Buloke	VIC	5,000

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
DOXA Youth Foundation	Bendigo Afternoon Program	VIC	5,000
Injune P-10 State School P&C Assoc	Restoring Our Oval	QLD	4,000
Injune P-10 State School P&C Assoc	Improving Reading Outcomes for Country Kids	QLD	3,500
Isolated Childrens & Parents Assoc. - Mt.Isa	Sports for Bush Kids 2009	QLD	12,000
Isolated Childrens & Parents Assoc. - Mt.Isa	Student Teacher Home Support	QLD	5,000
Isolated Childrens & Parents Assoc. - Aust.	ICPA Website Redevelopment	SA	10,000
Isolated Childrens & Parents Assoc. - Mt.Isa	Sports for Bush Kids 2010	QLD	10,000
Karangi P & C Association	Creating Musical Opportunities for Rural Young People	NSW	5,000
Karcultaby Area School	Canberra Crusade - Drought Buster	SA	5,000
Mallee Family Care Inc	Chances for Children Website - Online Tertiary Scholarship Facility	VIC	10,000
Mansfield Shire Council	High Country Legends - Shadow Puppet Performance	VIC	5,700
Midwest Life Education	Life Education Program Delivery	WA	5,000
North East Local Learning and Employment Network Inc	Myrtleford Bright Sparks	VIC	1,890
Numurkah Community Learning Centre Inc	Basic Technology & Reference Materials to Enhance Learning Experience	VIC	649
Orange Community Resource Organisation	Talk About	NSW	5,000
Port Augusta School of The Air	Outback Musicians	SA	10,000
Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre Incorporated	KMRC Homework Support Program	WA	4,000
REVISE - WA	Volunteer Educational Assistance to Outback Families and Children	WA	5,000
Rotary Residential College Inc	2009 Boys Dorm Refurbishment	WA	10,000
Rural Education Forum of Australia	National Peak Body Scoping Project	QLD	25,000
Shepherdson College, Elcho Island	Student Art Exhibition	SA	20,000
Stand Like Stone Community Foundation	Melaleuca Park Primary to Canberra	SA	5,000
Swan Hill Aboriginal Health Service	School Matters	VIC	5,000
Taralye (Oral Language Centre for Deaf Children)	Partners in PlayBus	VIC	20,000
Tasmanian Centre for Global Learning	2010ruMAD? Youth Action Conferences	TAS	1,900
The Australian Ballet	Out There	VIC	5,000
The Friends of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia (SA)	Regional Youth Reach Initiative of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in South Australia	SA	2,500
The Smith Family - SA	Port Pirie Learning Clubs	SA	5,000
Tomorrow Today Foundation	Improving Benalla Student Outcomes	VIC	50,000
Uniting Care Frontier Services	Mobile Kindy Education Project	NSW	25,000
Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music	String Program Development	NSW	5,000
Volunteers for Isolated Students Education	Tutor & Angels Travel Subsidies & Reading Workshops 08-09	ACT	25,000
Wangaratta Concert Band Inc	Music Mentors	VIC	3,510
Woomera Area School	Retail Training - Through Woomera Marine Centre	SA	4,855
Total Grants			\$971,324

Standing by children in drought

Deniliquin North Public School NSW Grant \$5000



In the decade leading to 2009, the rich pastoral surrounds of Deniliquin in southern NSW were parched by drought. Farms destocked and families bore the brunt of low production and falling returns. Deniliquin North Public School principal Chris Hogan says the resulting low morale in the community affected people's involvement in local and school activities so the school decided to do something about it.

During 2009, it invited local adults in to share their skills with the Year 3-6 children. "The idea was to introduce

the children to new experiences and give them the chance to learn skills," Chris says. Artists, retired builders and musicians rolled up to teach everything from kite-making, to knot-tying, painting, singing and more in a program the school called Kidslink@North. REP funding helped pay for materials and some professional support.

Retired woolbuyer John Tainsh, 75, was among local Men's Shed volunteers who helped the children assemble and have fun with billy carts and electronics kits, among other things. "We were



thrilled to be involved,” John says. “The satisfaction of seeing the kids’ eyes light up is wonderful.”

Chris says Kidslink continues to be a highlight for many children. They are more settled. Volunteers have also gained a sense of meaning by helping the children. “The school now has stronger links with the community and organisations such as the Men’s Shed and we’ve had lots of great publicity as well,” Chris says.

“Kidslink@North was designed to address some behavioural issues, to get kids together with others and get them to learn about sharing, teamwork, goal-setting and perseverance. It’s since been picked up by the National Australia Bank with very big sponsorship and is now national. This grant was really important for getting that up and going.”

Educating tomorrow's farmers

St George State High School
QLD Grant \$5500



Like most farmers, those at St George in Queensland need food for their animals in drought, but hay gets ludicrously expensive as demand rises. It makes sense then to cut and store it in good seasons. This is exactly what the up-and-coming farmers at St George State High School decided in 2008 that they must do so they bought a baler with help from REP.

The 200-student Gateway Agribusiness school, deep in the heart of cotton, cattle and grape country, 600km west of Brisbane, runs a strong agricultural and horticultural program. Its 16.2 hectare farm is a classroom for the school's entire Grade Eight class (about 50 students). They learn to grow crops and manage pastures and cattle, sheep and chickens. About

20 students stay with agriculture through to Grade 12 and go on to jobs in agriculture and or horticulture. The school is a rare provider of hands-on learning at secondary level for tomorrow's farmers.

"We just can't afford to keep the cattle on during a drought if we don't have hay," principal Annette Woodrow says. "In the past we've had to offload them."

With an in-house baler, the school now cuts and bales lucerne and sorghum from about four hectares under irrigation. "Depending on conditions we either feed it to our cattle or sell it to make money to put back into our agriculture program," Annette says.

"In the past when we had no rain and no water for irrigation we'd have to offload our cattle but we'll be able to feed them ourselves now. It's only grants like this that enable us to keep doing this. We couldn't have afforded it otherwise."

Realising a dream to finish school

Chinchilla Student Accommodation Association QLD Grant \$7920



Donnella Harradine wanted just one thing for her teen indigenous daughters - for them to finish school. Twins Tarni and Shauna were doing well when their mother shifted from NSW to Condamine in south Western Queensland.

They were in Year 12, boarding midweek about 1.5 hours from home at Leichardt House in Chinchilla so they could attend high school, when funds ran out. "We'd hit a brick wall," says Gaye Gordon, the president of the Leichardt House Management Committee (Parents and Citizens Association) which hires house parents and runs the not-for-profit boarding hostel.

Most of the hostel's boarders are from farm families who qualify for Isolated Children's Assistance. Shauna and Tarni, then 17, did not qualify. Nor was Abstudy available. Donnella was struggling to pay the fees. "The girls had fitted in so well at Leichardt House," Gaye recalls. "They were settled and fun and happy to have around and were achieving. We either had to say leave which we didn't want to do or find another way." REP stepped in, funding the twins' accommodation so they could finish school and graduate.

Joan Hubbard from Leichardt House says the girls' graduation was a significant first for the Indigenous family. "Donnella broke down and cried when they graduated because they were the first generation in her family to finish school."

White meets black - mixing cultures

**Christian Brothers College, Perth
WA Grant \$5500**

About 700km west of Alice Springs in the Gibson Desert, Kiwirrkurra, an indigenous community, is blinking in the harsh light of westernisation. Its people, the Pintubi, emerged from the desert just 25 years ago. Each year for the past five years, Perth's Christian Brothers College has sent Year 11 students there to experience the vestiges of the Pintubi culture and to befriend their Indigenous equivalents. REP funds their flights.

The college's Director of Catholic Leadership, Peter Baldry, says the Perth students invariably experience a radical change of attitude. "When we get to Alice Springs, which is on the way, and walk down the main street, they take a wide berth around the Indigenous people they see, but by the time we return they sit and talk with them. We don't go there to Kiwirrkurra to do things in the

community. We go there for friendship and to give both groups exposure to each other."

Kiwirrkurra's community development advisor, Marianne Davis, says the Kiwirrkurra kids invariably discover their passion for sport when the Perth mob arrives. "Every night there must have been at least 50 kids down on the basketball court and they'd play 'til midnight. The kids from Kiwirrkurra tend to be very shy and this is one way of bringing the world to them to help them get over their shyness."

Several trips to Kiwirrkurra changed Jordan Mulrone's life. The former CBC student says they were "a massive eye-opener" and now wants to establish a scholarship to fund at least one CBC student's trip to Kiwirrkurra annually. "Since going there I've had a much more empathetic understanding of the



*Participants in the original
2007 Outreach Program*

plight of Indigenous Australians. We saw ... how everyday life is so much harder and so different to our lives and ... I found myself wondering why these people have become so disadvantaged, essentially, purely because of their difference in culture. That such a culture could soon go to waste was, and still is, terrifying for me. This fear and love for the culture now drives my ambitions for a career in community development and politics.”

Between his university social work studies, Jordan is working on establishing a committee of past students to raise funds for and oversee the scholarship. He also wants to fund an ‘old boy’ to guide future CBC delegations to Kiwirrkurra and to ensure the program continues. “If the program could have such a profound impact on me, then surely there must be students who simply need the exposure to such an environment to decide that they want to dedicate their lives to the equality of all people as I did.”

The college itself is planning to expand the project to include other remote Aboriginal communities.

Switching on the writing bug

Morgan Street Public School Broken Hill
NSW Grant \$10,000

Computers and depleted resources break the hearts of school teachers keen to imbue children with the gift of hand writing and its kinetic powers. With mines closing, the city's population falling and enrolments at Broken Hill's largest primary school falling, principal Chris Dougherty faced rising challenges in his bid to do just this. "A few years ago our students, especially our boys, weren't doing so well with writing. Put them in front of a computer and they're fine but put a pencil in their hand and they just freeze. Once boys decide not to write it's hard to get them interested later." The school's staff decided to seek outside expertise so they flew authors in for occasional workshops. Then, with REP's grant, the school employed junior fiction writer Jane Carroll a day a week. Highly accoladed and awarded in children's literature circles, Jane had moved to Broken Hill, 1200 km west of Sydney, for two years. "Without the grant, our school couldn't afford authors such as Jane," Chris said. Jane taught the children how to engage

the reader with their writing - to show not tell. "I call it making movies in your head," Jane says. "The group I worked with last year were quite able but after we worked together they switched to more detailed writing rather than writing 'and then and then and then'.

Chris's faith in the project was rewarded when a Grade Sixer, previously pre-occupied exclusively with football, presented at his office one day with some written work. "It was a magnificent piece about the Darling River and it told me this kid had switched on to writing and I knew if he had, others would too. Our gifted and talented writers are writing a lot better and others are improving. The REP grant was a great transition for us. We suddenly realised that we could bring in expertise from out of town, resources that we just wouldn't otherwise have."

Though Jane is leaving Broken Hill, she will return regularly and the school is seeking funds to continue to employ her and others like her.

Teaching outback kids to swim



Cairns School of Distance Education
QLD Grant \$5450.50



Jessica Lusk lives on a cattle station an hour south of Cooktown. She had some swimming lessons when she was small but then the family moved north to the station. There the threat of crocodiles means the rivers and creeks are not the best place to swim and professional swim instructors are certainly not available. So in 2009, Jessica, then 11, and about 40 fellow Cairns School of Distance Education enrollees went to Cairns for three days of professional swimming instruction, courtesy of REP.

The children live across 300,000 square kilometres from the Torres Strait, 2800km north of Brisbane, west to Karumba and south to Cardwell, and complete their schooling at home. "Most of them have creeks in their backyards but can't swim there

and have never had any swimming lessons," says the school's Lynn Atkins. "It's such a dangerous area," says Mutchilba mum Karen Muccignat. "We have crocodiles and floods. One of the families at Cape York has the water go right through their home when it floods and they have nowhere to learn to swim because of the crocs."

Jessica said she learnt lots during three days. "I learnt a few more survival tricks such as how to save people and how to tread water and how to swim in currents so I know if I get into trouble in the water I can get myself out of it."

Cassidy Pumpa and her sister, Sheree, live on a small farmlet at Julatten, 1.5 hours from Cairns. Cassidy says she jumped three swimming levels during the trip. Her mother, Andrea, says the support from REP gave her daughters a chance they would never otherwise have. "My husband has a degenerative bone disease and I home-school the children so without this support the kids would miss out."

Swimming like fish

Pyalong Primary School VIC Grant \$3680



A general store, pub, one-man police station and a school – that’s the sum of Pyalong, a tiny town just

over an hour north of Melbourne. It’s proximity to the city means families that can ill afford Melbourne housing, especially single-parent families, live there alongside small area farmers.

Normally it costs \$65 each for the school’s 90 children to attend the school’s annual learn-to-swim classes. Transport by bus alone to five one-hour lessons at the pool in the nearest biggest town costs about \$2400. Then

there’s entry and instructors’ fees.

“We always have children who do not participate and I believe that’s because of the cost of the program to parents,” says principal Catherine Hoey.

2009 however was different. A REP grant covered most of the costs, reducing the annual per-child learn-to-swim fee to just \$15.

“Swimming is such an important skill to learn,” says Catherine. “Country children in particular are surrounded by dams which have no fencing. The financial support for this program was so important. No child felt left out or different. Everyone was able to participate.”

The Rural Education Program Has Been Funded By:

Founding Donors:

John and Janet Calvert-Jones

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Rural Education Program

Financial Information 1 July 2008 to 31 October 2010

INCOME

Opening Balance	\$200,686
Donations Received	\$932,330
Other Income*	\$10,698
Total	\$1,143,714

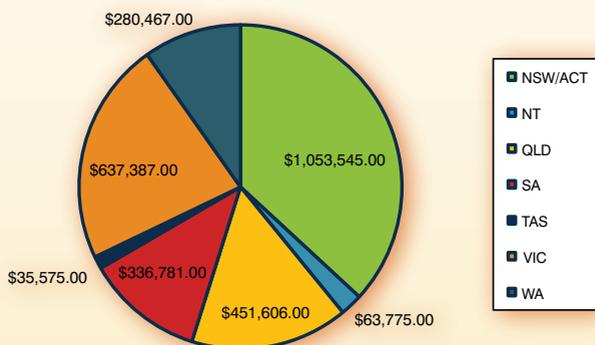
EXPENDITURE

Grants Paid	\$971,324
Bushfire Grants**	\$26,000
Expenses**	\$122,070
Adjustments	\$139
Total	\$1,119,533

* Includes Grants Received, Interest Earned and Refunds

** Includes Cost of consultations & administration. These costs are met by Founding Donors contributions

Since inception Rural Education Program has granted a total of \$2,859,136. This chart shows grants by state and territory.



Rural Education Program

Project Locations

