



Annual Report

2020

The Country Education Partnership acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

We recognise the impact of the bushfires, drought and COVID-19 pandemic will be significant and enduring for rural and nonrural Indigenous Australians.

Contents

4	Chair's Report
6	Mission and Purpose
5	CEP in 2020
7	Advocacy, Leadership and Representation
7	Growing in 2020
8	National and Statewide Working Groups
8	Key Stakeholder Partnerships
9	Government Meetings
9	Rural Youth Ambassadors
10	Reviews and Research
10	Communication and Information
10	Small Schools
11	Supporting Rural Learning Provision
11	Partnerships and Clusters
12	Accessible Learning
13	Energy Breakthrough
14	Ballarat Catholic Education Office Collaboration Initiative
14	Fairfax Youth Initiative
15	eKids
16	Workforce Development and Education Leadership
16	Virtual Learning Webinars
16	Victoria's Bastow Leadership Institute
17	Steve Munby Webinars
17	Flourish Movement
18	Rural Youth Aspirations
19	Believe
20	Connect
21	Challenge
22	Thanks
23	Committee of Management
24	Financial Report

Chair's Report



Pictured: Helen Clarke

It is an understatement to say that 2020 was an incredible year and hopefully never to be repeated. The year began with devastating bushfires in a number of our rural communities and then the impact of COVID-19 has seen a number of our communities presented with challenges that they have not faced before.

As an organisation whose membership is made up of many of these fire affected communities, we would like to acknowledge the amazing work and leadership that many educators have provided in these communities and acknowledge that the work to rebuild and re-establish their communities continues.

Country Education Partnerships (CEP) is a small and efficient organisation that continues to work across all school education sectors, advocating for, and supporting them in building their capacity to provide quality and responsive learning opportunities and improved education within a place-based, collaborative approach.

I am pleased to report that, although some of our activities did not go ahead in 2020, we took the opportunity to focus on evaluating our initiatives, reinvigorating our communications; increasing our partnerships, developing innovative programs in partnership with our schools and expanding our reach to become more inclusive. Staff support was central to how we worked

through 2020, and we were privileged to host a series of wellbeing webinars for teams of staff from multiple states.

Our work in enhancing rural youth aspirations continued to expand with inaugural Rural Youth Ambassador programs operating within New South Wales and South Australia – and all within an online learning environment.

We would like to recognise the support of the Commonwealth Government, as well as the New South Wales, South Australian and Victorian Governments in their support of our rural youth aspirations work.

Throughout 2020, CEP has also reflected on our own performance. To ensure we continue to be an effective advocate for rural education in the future, the Committee of Management has reflected on our strategic direction, governance and organisational capability.

Under the leadership of our Executive Officer, Phil Brown, CEP has had a very productive year. I would like to specifically thank Phil for his hard work and ongoing support for our members as well as his effective advocacy.

Organisations such as the CEP rely upon the support and enthusiasm of many people. Phil and I are particularly grateful for the guidance we receive from our Committee of Management who



generously make time to provide stewardship for the organisation. We appreciate your interest and insights.

We would also like to make a special thank you to our Committee of Management Executive members: Sally Baker, Treasurer Fran Waterman, Secretary Jodi Waters, and Deputy Chairperson Mark McLay.

Farewell and thank you to retiring Committee of Management member Jim O'Brien.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank staff from the various education sectors we worked with on a regular basis, and to those key stakeholder groups with whom we work together to ensure that education provision within our rural communities is the best it can be.

Our member schools are vitally important, and we are always grateful for your continuing interest. This year we had an increase in the number of members who contributed financially to the work of CEP. Thank you for your support, it enables us to continue the great work that we do at a grass-roots level.

I would like to thank the Victorian Government for its continuing support of CEP's work, as well as the Commonwealth, South Australian and New South Wales Governments for their efforts in assisting

and supporting CEP's expansion across the country.

The Country Education Partnership is a strong and determined advocate for rural education. As we move through 2021, we will continue to work with our existing stakeholders, as well as develop new and productive partnerships. Most importantly, we will continue to proactively contribute to the combined effort from rural education communities and governments to improve the opportunities for all students regardless of where they live.

Helen Clarke
Chair

- Pictured left to right:
1. Fire affected road sign near Buchan, Victoria.
 2. Rural Youth Ambassador Lauren Cain working for CFA in Gippsland, Victoria
 3. Students returning to onsite learning wearing masks.

Mission and Purpose



Pictured: Students from Carisbrook Primary School ahead of their mini Energy Breakthrough event.

We work for, and on behalf of, all rural and remote education communities. We strive to ensure that learners within these communities have access to the highest quality of education provision from 0-18+ years across government and non-government education organisations.

To best service our rural communities we are guided by three main values:

- **Collaboration** that fosters inclusiveness, participation, sharing and responsiveness to members.
- **Leadership** that is proactive, professional and consultative.
- **Achievement** that strives for constant development, and seeks challenge, excellence and celebration.

The Country Education Partnership (CEP) has an enduring history of 40 years and is a pre-eminent organisation for rural and remote education internationally. Our efforts continue to focus on:

- Advocating and representing rural and remote education communities to governments and education sectors.
- Supporting rural and remote education communities in developing and providing innovative approaches to learning provision through a collaborative, place-based approach.
- Developing a highly skilled workforce that is inclusive of education leadership, education staff and support staff.
- Lifting the aspirations of rural and remote young people encouraging them to realise and pursue their dreams.

CEP in 2020

The Country Education Partnership (CEP) has continued its support and representation of rural and remote learning communities throughout 2020. This work featured across all education sectors, supporting rural learning communities as they built their capacity to provide quality learning opportunities and improved education within a place-based, collaborative approach.

The year began with devastating bushfires across many of our rural communities. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges that have not previously been faced by rural learning communities.

The loss of homes, local businesses, community facilities and sadly lives, as a result of the January bushfires was devastating. Local schools and their staff quickly became an essential recovery component within their communities. School grounds became a safe haven for the community. They facilitated the provision of food and essential services, and ensured that the community had a place where they could congregate to support each other and share stories. Throughout this challenging time, many of our rural educators fulfilled significant leadership roles in their communities. This further highlighted the important role educators (and especially education leaders) provide in the overall economic and community development of rural communities.

As an organisation whose membership base is made of rural learning communities, we would like to acknowledge the amazing work and leadership that many of our education staff have provided within these communities. We know that many communities are still working through the rebuilding and recovery and acknowledge that this process takes time and significant amounts of work.

At the end of bushfire season our rural communities were faced with the unprecedented challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the world. Restrictions were placed on the way we

live, schools were asked to operate very differently, staff had to deliver learning from their lounge rooms, and education resources needed to be redesigned to be completed online and at home. In response to these new challenges, rural education communities developed a range of innovative and creative approaches to ensure that students, and their families, were supported and provided with opportunities throughout their learning journey. Staff used school buses to drop off learning materials to students and conduct brief farmgate interviews with parents, so as to accommodate the learning needs of their students.

One example of this creative mindset was the creation of the “Corinthian Project” – an online resource developed by a group of schools within the Wimmera region of Victoria where staff uploaded, and shared, curriculum resources and learning activities that could be used within a remote learning environment. In addition, the concept also developed online forums and chat rooms for staff to come together and support each other throughout the remote learning environment. As a result, these rural schools are now exploring how the learnings and support they gained through this experience can be sustained into the future.

Throughout 2020 CEP staff consulted with numerous Victorian rural education communities to gain insight and feedback on the challenges they faced throughout the year as well as the creative approaches developed to overcome them. A report summarising these discussions was written and presented to both State Government and Education sectors.

Country Education Partnership would like to acknowledge the incredible work and commitment that our rural education communities have displayed throughout 2020, not only in provision of learning, but also the key role that they played in sustaining their communities.

Advocacy, Leadership and Representation

Growing in 2020

Despite the challenging set of circumstances our rural and remote education communities faced throughout 2020, the Country Education Partnership is pleased to have experienced significant growth as an organisation.

This growth has been achieved through key partnerships with organisations and governments in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

National and Statewide Working Groups

The Country Education Partnership has seen its advocacy and representation role expand over the past twelve months both at a state and national level.

Within Victoria, CEP has continued to be involved in a number of state working groups and forums representing the interests and needs of rural communities. These include:

- The Education State Guiding Coalition and its various Working Groups
- Student Resource Package Consultative Group
- Initial Teaching Education Working Group
- Marrung State Governing Council

In addition, CEP has been invited to contribute to the consideration of rural and remote education provision in other States and Territories. For example, within South Australia, the state government is establishing a Country Education Strategy which CEP has been contributing to.

At a national level CEP has been involved in a range of discussions with the government and the

Department of Education, Skills and Employment in areas such as commonwealth funding of rural and remote schools, provision of higher education in rural communities through their Regional University Centres initiative, and through the Rural Youth Ambassador initiative.

Key Stakeholder Partnerships

The Country Education Partnership has maintained strong links with a range of key stakeholders within several states, including principal organisations, education unions, peak parent organisations, state school governance groups, and student representative organisations.

At a national level, the Country Education Partnership has maintained strong links and relationships with key organisations relevant to rural and remote education.

Additionally CEP has maintained its partnerships with many international organisations who provided valuable support and information for rural education communities throughout the year.



Pictured: CEO, Phil Brown, and staff member Julia Enter.

Government Meetings

The Country Education Partnership Committee of Management has continued its relationship with State Governments in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. Additionally, CEP has continued to meet with the Commonwealth Government.

The Country Education Partnership had numerous meetings with the State and Commonwealth Ministers for Education throughout 2020, especially in light of the governments' recent focus on rural and remote education provision.

In addition to these meetings, the Country Education Partnership provided input into a number of reviews and working groups throughout 2020.

Rural Youth Ambassadors

The Rural Youth Ambassador program continued to provide a strong student voice, focused on the needs and interests of young people within rural and remote education communities.

They met with state Ministers for Education, the Commonwealth Minister for Education, and many education sector personnel advocating for the needs of rural young people and presenting many creative ideas as to how they believe rural education can be improved.

Advocacy, Leadership and Representation

Reviews and Research

The Country Education Partnership contributed to a number of researches and investigations throughout 2020. These included:

- Ongoing discussion with the Commonwealth Government in relation to the outcomes of the Commonwealth Review of Rural, Remote and Regional Education.
- Representation on the Rural and Regional Education Working Groups in Victoria.
- Supporting the South Australia education department in the development of a country education strategy

In addition to contributing to the various researches and discussions within education, CEP undertook a significant research project focusing on the impact of drought, bushfires and COVID-19 on rural communities throughout 2020. The CEP staff consulted with numerous rural education leaders gaining their reflections on education provision within their communities. A report of these deliberations was documented and presented to governments and education sectors, with many follow up discussions generated as a result of this [work](#).

Communication and Information

The Country Education Partnership has continued with a range of communication strategies to ensure that the achievements of rural and remote education are regularly promoted. The strategies include:

- An interactive website
- Regular Bush Voices articles and newsletter delivered to subscribers
- Active social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- Engagement with traditional media (radio and newspapers) to further promote rural and remote education in Australia.

Small Schools

Throughout 2020, the Country Education Partnership continued its work exploring the key role small schools provide their communities. Additionally CEP is considering how small schools can be supported to provide a quality education for their young people into the future. Through discussions with small schools, researchers and education sector representatives, CEP is continuing to explore this area and the 2021 Rural Learning Summit will see a focus on the future sustainability of rural small school settings within Victoria.

Supporting Rural Learning Provision

The Country Education Partnership is committed to supporting rural and remote education communities in developing and providing quality education experiences for their young people, thus ensuring that they gain the learning they need and desire to realise their career pathways and dreams.

In 2020 there were many new challenges to the provision of education for rural young people. Through the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic, rural schools faced numerous disruptions, with many schools turning to remote learning. Despite the challenges, rural schools developed a range of creative strategies to support their young people in gaining access to the learning they needed, often through the utilisation of virtual learning and locally determined approaches. One example saw rural catholic schools across the western part of Victoria develop the “Corinthian Project”, an initiative that supported schools working together to share their learning resources, develop a range of online learning activities and curriculum for their students, while also providing a range of online support networks for teachers and support staff.

Additionally, the innovative education programs CEP operates, such as Energy Breakthrough, we impacted dramatically throughout 2020. Despite this CEP worked closely with education communities to develop innovative approaches that meant these initiatives could still occur in some way.

Partnerships and Clusters

Since its inception, CEP has promoted and supported rural communities working collaboratively to enhance and improve learning opportunities and outcomes for rural young people.

“Clustering” has been a key element of rural and remote education for many years and CEP has consistently advocated the use of clustering as a way of providing quality learning opportunities and outcomes for these communities.

The support provided by CEP throughout 2020 took on a different approach with many schools providing learning online. CEP continued to work with a number of rural partnerships to explore ways in which they could work together in both supporting the development of online learning resources, as well as facilitating the development of partnerships.

Partnerships such as the Mallee, Sale Rural school, Far East Gippsland, West Wimmera, and Corner Inlet in South Gippsland were supported by CEP staff throughout 2020.

Throughout the year, CEP continued to learn from the unique circumstances of 2020 to further develop the Partnership Framework that provided a strong basis for building effective clusters and partnerships.

The work of the CEP staff, along with the support of the CEP Consultancy Team (including Kevin Philips, Maggie Farrar and Steve Munby) has been instrumental in the development and implementation of this work.

Supporting Rural Learning Provision

Accessible Learning

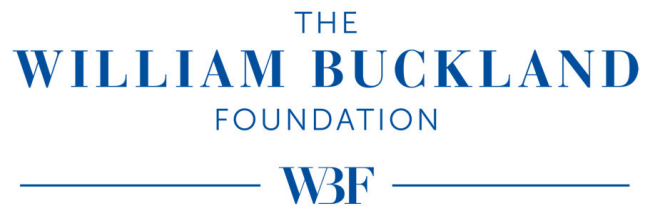
The Rural Education Accessible Learning (or REAL) initiative entered its fourth year of operation with the valuable support of the Buckland Foundation. Focused on exploring creative approaches to the provision of learning across their five education communities, especially in an environment of declining youth population, the Mallee cluster continued to explore how they could improve their education provision, even with the challenges of COVID-19.

The Education Leaders met on a regular basis throughout the year, not only to support each other through the challenges, but to also continue the ultimate goal of working together to enhance the learning they provided.

In addition, many staff professional networks operated to provide support for each other, and to share the approaches they were developing within a remote learning context – and in some cases brought students together across the Mallee Cluster to share their learning.

To support the provision of remote learning, the Mallee Cluster engaged Andrew Douch to provide a series of professional development activities aimed at building the capacity of staff in the establishment of engaging and interactive online learning approaches and curriculum.

Even though staff were unable to meet in person, or come together for any length of time to plan, the cluster continued to promote the opportunities that a collaborative approach provided their students.



Pictured, top to bottom:
1. Students from Deniliquin Primary at their own EB event. 2. Student from Carisbrook Primary school testing out a human powered vehicle. 3. Student from Carisbrook Primary School ahead of their mini Energy Breakthrough event.



Pictured: Students from Carisbrook Primary working on their HPVs.

Energy Breakthrough

Due to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on many education communities, the 30th Energy Breakthrough Festival was cancelled in 2020.

Despite this, the Country Education Partnership, along with the Central Goldfields Shire, and the Energy Breakthrough partner sponsors remained committed to supporting the schools involved in the program. Both CEP and Central Goldfields Shire continued their involvement by assisting with individual school support, and linking our partner sponsors to individual schools, providing expertise and mentoring.

A great development of the Energy Breakthrough program in 2020 was the strengthening of the partnerships between the Energy Breakthrough schools and the programs Partner Sponsors. The established EB Mentorship Program connected students with STEM related industry professionals to demonstrate ways the Energy Breakthrough experience can lead to future careers. Mentors also provided consultation and support to students and coordinators as they completed their

design and presentations, and builds throughout 2020. Transurban and Regional Roads were two of the key players in these partnerships, which involved around 20 schools across Victoria.

During Term IV, when the COVID-19 restrictions relaxed, and schools returned to onsite learning, many held their own Energy Breakthrough Festival. Some even linked with their feeder primary schools to share their learnings throughout the year. Carisbrook Primary School, Bendigo Senior Secondary College and Deniliquin Primary School all celebrated the program learnings through a one day celebration. These were great successes and met with excitement from students and community.

Supporting Rural Learning Provision

Ballarat Catholic Education Office Collaboration Initiative

Throughout 2020, CEP continued to work with the Ballarat Catholic Education Office to develop an initiative to support schools within the Diocese to form collaborative approaches to the provision of education.

While it was challenging to provide specific support and involvement in partnership with the rural and regional partnerships due to COVID-19, CEP worked with Maggie Farrar from the UK in providing a range of professional development activities and forums for the schools and education consultants of the Ballarat CEO.

It is planned that the work to support rural and remote schools to establish collaborative approaches will begin in earnest in 2021.



Pictured: Students participating in the Fairfax Youth Initiative (2019)

Fairfax Youth Initiative

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting schools throughout 2021, the Fairfax Youth Initiative had to be cancelled in 2020. Planning however, began later in the year to prepare for the 2021 program. The 2020/21 program provided online mentorship in storytelling to 15 young people living in the Murray Mallee.

The mentorship provided tools and techniques in crafting and delivering truthful and engaging stories from lived experience. Storytellers will present in a virtual storytelling event live-streamed from their homes to audiences across Australia across February to May 2021.

Up to five storytellers were selected to adapt their story for the small screen, working with some of Australia's finest filmmakers to shoot short films on location in the storytellers' hometowns (May 2021).

NATIONAL ZOO & AQUARIUM CANBERRA

eKids

During the time that schools were providing learning remotely, many rural schools were interested in developing an online program for students across schools.

CEP, in conjunction with a number of rural primary schools developed a science based program in partnership with the National Zoo in Canberra.

Focused on upper primary school students, the program involved approximately ninety students from schools all over rural Victoria in a weekly learning program facilitated by staff from CEP and the National Zoo. The program was well received by staff and students involved.

Workforce Development and Growth

Country Education Partnership continued to support rural education communities in providing professional development opportunities throughout the year. While the format of these needed to be adapted to accommodate the remote learning environment, many schools took the opportunity to work with CEP in participating within a range of professional development activities.

Based on feedback from rural education communities, the format of these professional development activities were designed to:

- Allow groups of staff from education settings and cluster to participate;
- Deliver a webinar series approach where a number of professional development activities were provide in a shorter version over a number of weeks;
- Focus on the specific needs of rural staff;
- Be held directly after school to allow all staff interested to participate.

Based on these guides, CEP worked with a number of key educators to facilitate these webinar series.

Virtual Learning Webinars

In response to requests from several rural education communities, CEP worked with Andrew Douch to provide a series of webinars focusing on supporting staff in developing skills and knowledge to provide an engaging remote learning experience.

Andrew worked with small teams from each education setting who would then provide professional development for other staff on the team or across a cluster.

The webinars were recorded so that the staff could utilise them when supporting other staff. These webinars were a great success and were extremely well received.

Victoria's Bastow Leadership Institute

While the challenges faced by education settings throughout 2020 meant that many rural staff were unable to access the "traditional" professional development opportunities provided through Bastow Leadership Institute, CEP continued to promote and the various online professional development activities and webinars provided by Bastow.

Via regular Bush Voices articles and across social media, Bastow programs were circulated to the CEP network, with many schools taking the opportunity to be involved in the variety of online programs offered.

Pictured: Steve Munby



Steve Munby Webinars

CEP was pleased to have partnered with Steve Munby in 2020, to deliver a series of webinars throughout Term 3. Steve Munby is highly regarded around the globe for his work and expertise in education and leadership.

Taking place over six weeks, the series consisted of three separate webinars: Leadership at a Time of Crisis and Uncertainty, Imperfect Leadership, Leading Professional Development Within and Beyond your School.

The program aimed at supporting school teams to participate within the webinars so that the learnings gained through the series could be utilised within their own settings.

More than ninety education settings participated within the webinar series with many locations having leadership teams participating.

Once again, the webinars were recorded to allow local education settings to work through Steve's presentations with their whole staff. Great evaluation was received from those who participated within the series.

The Flourish Movement

The Country Education Partnership was pleased to partner with The Flourish Movement in 2020. The professional development opportunity was an online workshop which focused on sustaining well being and engagement during struggle and uncertainty.

Dr Adam Fraser presented to participants some recent research, results and strategies for embracing struggle and uncertainty in education communities.

Over 350 education sites connected into the webinars which were centred on supporting schools in developing a culture of well being and support. The webinars were held during the remote learning experience of 2020, and were greatly received by those who attended. Participants from rural and regional education settings took the opportunity to be involved.

Rural Youth Aspirations



Pictured: Rural Youth Ambassadors prior to speaking with politicians

Throughout 2020, CEPs work within the rural youth aspiration area has grown significantly with the Rural Inspire initiative being recognised as a powerful tool for providing a range of activities, programs and information for rural and remote young people.

Through support provided by the Commonwealth Government, the initiative expanded into New South Wales and South Australia in 2020, with both Queensland and Northern Territory expressing an interest for programs in 2021.

Central to the operation of the Rural Inspire initiative is the Rural Inspire website and a range of social media platforms which provide a wealth of information and resources specifically focused on rural and remote young people.

A new Rural Inspire website was developed and launched in 2020. The website was custom

designed in collaboration with our Rural Youth Ambassadors in order to create an online platform that will connect, inform and inspire rural young people all over the nation.

In 2020 the Rural Inspire initiative developed a strategic marketing strategy, inclusive of new and traditional media. The implementation of this strategy began in early 2021 and will continue into the future. Already it has resulted in a growing number of rural and remote young people engaging with Rural Inspire.

Within Victoria, the Rural Inspire initiative was further strengthened through support provided by the state government in establishing several local Rural Youth Ambassador programs with a focus on lifting aspirations of young people.

Rural Inspire continues to focus its activity on the three key areas of Believe, Connect and Challenge.



Pictured: Rural Youth Ambassadors working on their notes



Pictured: South Australian Rural Youth Ambassadors.



Pictured: Several New South Wales Rural Youth Ambassadors



Pictured: Victorian Rural Youth Ambassadors

Believe

A key element of the Rural Inspire initiative is sharing the stories of young people and the journeys they have taken since leaving school. In 2020, following the launch of the new website, several stories were shared across the Rural Inspire website and social media platforms. These stories created opportunities for inspiration and increased awareness of opportunities amongst rural and remote young people across Australia. Additionally the Believe component focuses on sharing the stories of exciting, successful or

inspirational rural and remote people whose journeys showcase the significant role rural and remote young people have in Australian society.

There were a number of these stories shared online in late 2020, with the intention to gather, and promote a significant number of 'success' stories in 2021. This element of the Rural Inspire initiative will connect rural young people to potential mentors and supports as they journey from school to the next stage of their life.

Rural Youth Aspirations

Pictured: Rural Youth Ambassador and staff hearing from a university researcher.



Connect

This element of the Rural Inspire generated significant interest amongst rural and remote young people in 2020.

Accessed through the Rural Inspire website, it provided a range of services, information and opportunities were developed or shared providing rural and remote young people with any information that they may want to have access to after completing their schooling.

Information on scholarships, advice videos, work opportunities, on campus accommodation for university students, shared housing, budgeting, were covered by this focus area of Rural Inspire. The information was delivered or created by rural young people and as a result was extremely relevant for rural and remote young people in the final years of high school.

In addition to information and resources, the Connect area also links rural and remote young people to other rural and remote young people who are undertaking study or work.

Throughout 2020, Rural Inspire linked numerous young people from rural and remote communities to a range of other young people who were undertaking work or employment. This resulted

in informal mentoring opportunities where young people could share information, advice and support. Additionally, a trial program which linked rural and remote young people who recently completed their schooling with another rural young person who would provide relevant support. These supportive links were made by finding people who had already started their journey (often in similar tertiary courses or relevant professions) and would become a go-to for the recent school leaver to ask questions, get advice and also feel connected to the community.

Through the discussions with the South Australian Rural Youth Ambassador participants in 2020, the idea of providing “Rural Expos” across several rural locations was founded. These expos of information and resources were developed and planned in 2020, with trial programs being implemented for 2021. The expos intend to gather rural and remote young people local to the geographic area, and would be supported to deliver workshops and information on the opportunities and journeys others may take in the future.

Challenge

The third pillar of the Rural Inspire initiative is the focus on Challenge. This incorporated the facilitation of the state-wide Rural Youth Ambassador program across the three states in 2020. As a result of COVID-19 the program operated in an online environment. This provided its own challenges in relation to connectivity. Even so, the numbers of nominations received in 2020 increased from the year prior. With interest from other states and territories the recognition of this program continues to grow in stature.

In 2020, the online forums were held on the interactive iSee platform. This software supported the ambassadors to meet throughout the year with the ambassadors maintaining a high level of commitment and engagement.

- Within Victoria, 23 rural young people participated in the program and met ten times throughout the year
- Within New South Wales, the inaugural program involved 28 rural and remote young people who met eight times throughout the year
- Within South Australia, the inaugural program involved 16 rural and remote young people who met ten times throughout the year.

In each of the state-wide programs, several initiatives and programs were developed, and then presented to key personnel within education sectors as well as state Ministers of Education. Positive responses were received from these key personnel.

In addition to the individual state-wide programs, Rural Inspire facilitated two national forums. The first occurred online where the Commonwealth Minister for Education discussed the range of the issues and challenges identified by the Rural Youth Ambassadors.

While each group was disappointed that they couldn't meet face to face throughout 2020, they developed plans to ensure that a face-to-face forum was held in each state early in 2021. In addition, Rural Inspire also developed an approach to facilitate a face-to-face National Rural Youth Ambassador Forum in Canberra in February 2021.

Victorian Localised Rural Youth Ambassadors

As a result of the Victorian Government's allocation of resources focused on lifting the aspirations of rural and regional students across the state, CEP was supported to take the state-wide Rural Youth Ambassador program to a local level. Working in partnership with a number of rural clusters and networks in establishing localised Rural Youth Ambassador programs.

Six clusters and networks expressed interest to be involved in the initiative throughout 2020. While the intention was to implement the initiative in the second half of 2020, the ongoing remote learning environment resulted in the programs being deferred until 2021.

Thanks

As an organisation, the strength of CEP lies in its people. We would like to acknowledge and thank: Those in schools who work tirelessly to educate our rural and remote children and young people by providing opportunities and experiences to help them create their futures, especially through the challenges that 2020 presented;

Those working across schools to provide better educational opportunities and enhanced professional development;

The state Ministers for Education who have provided valuable support and interest in the work of CEP;

The various education sectors are inclusive of Government, Catholic and Independent sectors - especially thanks to the senior personnel across the various States and Territories who have provided valuable support for CEP;

The Federal Minister for Education, The Hon Dan Tehan, along with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, for their support of the Rural Youth Aspiration work of CEP;

Key Stakeholder groups who have worked in partnership with CEP to improve education within rural communities;

Philanthropic organisations who have worked in partnership with the Country Education Partnership throughout 2020 - especially The Buckland Foundation;

Our Committee of Management and Board Executive who are generous of their time, expertise and wise counsel;

Our Staff – Chris Ronan, Trish Hodge, Britt Ditterich, Bill Jeffs, Jeremy Campbell, Julia Enter, FuturesIsle, Jemma Walsh, Charlotte Nixon and Loni Jeffs whose work in their specific areas of responsibility, and all the behind the scenes activities, contribute significantly to the success of our operations;

Our Consultancy team, especially Kevin Philips, Steve Munby, Maggie Farrar and John Marks for their knowledge, expertise and lived experience;

Our Executive Officer, Phil Brown for his boundless energy, enthusiasm, knowledge, expertise, insights, educational leadership and unshakable commitment to supporting rural and remote students, educators and their communities.

Committee of Management

Helen Clarke
Chair

Mark McLay
Deputy Chair
Avoca

Fran Waterman
Treasurer
Beechworth

Jodi Walters
Secretary
Swan Hill

Trish Perry
Lancaster

Cathy Grace
Murtoa

Jason Whiteley
Katamatite

Kimberley Tempest
Cobram

Joanne Amott
Balmoral

James O'Brien
Stawell

Arn Gorman
Yarrowonga

Sally Baker
Co-opted
South Gippsland Shire

CEO Representatives
Kaye O'Connor
CEO Office – Sandhurst Diocese

Sue Crowe
CEO Office – Ballarat Diocese

Rural Youth Ambassadors
Xavier Healy
Ouyen

Joe Collins
Woomelang

Financial Report

Country Education Project Inc.

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Income			
Revenue	2	1,164,650	721,168
Expenses			
Salaries and oncosts		496,606	300,868
Depreciation expenses	6(a)	7,697	7,876
Consulting projects		327,668	302,205
Administration and operating expenses		45,318	56,351
Vehicle and travel expenses		16,814	33,759
Total Expenses		<u>894,103</u>	<u>701,059</u>
Operating surplus for the year		<u>270,547</u>	<u>20,109</u>
Income tax expense	1(j)	-	-
Net surplus		<u>270,547</u>	<u>20,109</u>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive result for the year		<u>270,547</u>	<u>20,109</u>

The above statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Country Education Project Inc.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,001,279	94,850
Trade and other receivables	4	106,272	180,599
Other	5	14,806	6,989
Total Current Assets		<u>1,122,357</u>	<u>282,438</u>
Non-Current Assets			
Plant, furniture and equipment	6	<u>37,470</u>	<u>22,483</u>
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>37,470</u>	<u>22,483</u>
Total Assets		<u>1,159,827</u>	<u>304,921</u>
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	731,694	148,446
Provisions	8	<u>54,117</u>	<u>53,006</u>
Total Current Liabilities		<u>785,811</u>	<u>201,452</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>785,811</u>	<u>201,452</u>
Net Assets		<u>374,016</u>	<u>103,469</u>
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		<u>374,016</u>	<u>103,469</u>
Total Equity		<u>374,016</u>	<u>103,469</u>

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial Report

Country Education Project Inc.

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Accumulated surplus		
Accumulated surplus at the beginning of the financial year	103,469	83,360
Net surplus for the year	<u>270,547</u>	<u>20,109</u>
Accumulated surplus at the end of the financial year	<u>374,016</u>	<u>103,469</u>

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Country Education Project Inc.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Cash Flows from Operating Activities			
Receipts from grants and customers		1,764,707	625,335
Payments to suppliers and employees		(842,935)	(713,252)
Interest received		2,425	2,258
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities	9	<u>924,197</u>	<u>(85,659)</u>
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		20,227	-
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(37,995)	-
Net cash inflow/(outflow) from investing activities		<u>(17,768)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash Held		906,429	(85,659)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		94,850	180,509
Cash at the End of the Financial Year	3	<u>1,001,279</u>	<u>94,850</u>

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial Report

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies

(a) Basis of accounting

In the Committee of Management's opinion, Country Education Project Inc. is not a reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. These are special purpose financial statements that have been prepared for the sole purpose of complying with the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* to prepare and distribute financial statements to the members and must not be used for any other purpose. The Committee of Management has determined that the accounting policies adopted are appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

Under AIFRS, there are requirements that apply specifically to not-for-profit entities that are not consistent with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) requirements. The Association has analysed its purpose, objectives and operating philosophy and determined that it does not have profit generation as a prime objective. Consequently where appropriate the Association has elected to apply options and exemptions within the AIFRS which are applicable to not-for-profit entities.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations and other authoritative pronouncements with the exception of the requirements of the following:

- AASB 7 - Financial Instruments: Disclosures
- AASB 9 - Financial Instruments
- AASB 15 - Revenue from Contracts with Customers
- AASB 16 - Leases
- AASB 119 - Employee Benefits
- AASB 124 - Related Party Disclosures
- AASB 132 - Financial Instruments: Presentation
- AASB 1058 - Income for Not-for-Profit Entities

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention. Unless otherwise stated, the accounting policies adopted are consistent with those of the previous year. Comparative information is reclassified where appropriate to enhance comparability.

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(b) Revenue recognition

(i) Goods sold and services rendered

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised in the Income Statement when the significant risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer. Revenue from services rendered is recognised in the income statement in proportion to the stage of completion of the transaction at the balance sheet date. The stage of completion is assessed by reference to surveys of work performed. No revenue is recognised if there are significant uncertainties regarding recovery of the consideration due, the cost incurred or to be incurred cannot be measured reliably, there is a risk of return of goods or there is continuing management involvement.

(ii) Government grants and other contributions

Grants are recognised as revenues when the Association obtains control over the asset. Control over granted assets usually occurs at the time they are received. However, where any amounts of grants received at balance date remain unexpended and may have to be refunded, these amounts are not brought to account as revenue and are disclosed as a liability called income in advance (note 7).

(iii) Interest

Interest is recognised on an accrual basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

(iv) Sale of non-current assets

The gain or loss on disposal is calculated as the difference between the carrying amount of the asset at the time of disposal and the net proceeds on disposal. It is brought to account when an unconditional contract of sale is signed.

(c) Maintenance and repairs

Maintenance, repair costs and minor renewals are charged as expenses as incurred.

(d) Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash includes deposits at call which are readily convertible to cash on hand and are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

(e) Trade and other receivables

Debtors are brought to account at their nominal amounts. The collectability of debts is based on an expected credit loss model.

Financial Report

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(f) Impairment of Assets

Assets that are subject to depreciation and amortisation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use. As the Association is a not-for-profit entity, the value in use is the depreciated replacement cost of the asset.

(g) Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair values as indicated, less, where applicable, accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Plant and Equipment

The cost method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets. Cost is determined as the fair value of the assets given up or liabilities undertaken at the date of acquisition plus incidental costs directly attributable to the acquisition. Assets under the value of \$300 are expensed as incurred.

All property, plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less depreciation. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items. Depreciation is calculated using the prime cost and diminishing value method to write off the cost of the asset over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates applied are as follows:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Plant and Equipment	25-33%	25-33%

(h) Employee Benefits

Annual leave

A liability for annual leave is recognised, and is measured as the amount unpaid at the reporting date at current pay rates in respect of employees' services up to that date.

Long service leave

A liability for long service leave is recognised and is measured at 100% of the entitlement at the reporting date for all employees with 5 years' service or more.

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(i) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

In the statement of cash flows, GST received and GST paid are recognised as part of cash flows from operating activities.

(j) Income Tax

Country Education Project Inc. is exempt from income tax under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

(k) Trade and Other Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Association prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. These amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within normal trading terms.

(l) Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The Committee of Management evaluates estimates and judgments incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the Association.

(m) Leases

Leased assets have not been recorded as an asset and a corresponding liability in the financial statements, as the Association has opted out of complying with AASB 16. Instead, monthly lease/rental payments are expensed as incurred.

Financial Report

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Note 1. Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(n) COVID-19

On 22 March 2020 the Federal Government announced measures and restrictions on social gatherings to protect the Australian Community from the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Over the following months, Government policy and restrictions relating to COVID-19 continued to evolve. Some grant program activities and milestones could not be fulfilled during the current year due to these restrictions causing delays in program delivery.

The committee and management have developed and are continuing to implement measures to attempt to limit the severity of the financial impact, which include online and remote forums to continue delivery of grant programs.

Note 2. Revenue from ordinary activities	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Revenue from rendering services		
Grant funding	871,683	351,837
Other funding	144,203	210,449
ATO Cash Flow Boost (COVID-19 stimulus)	85,753	-
Fees	42,331	156,624
Other revenues from ordinary activities		
Interest & investment revenue	2,425	2,258
Other Income	13,339	-
Profit/(Loss) from sale of non-current assets	4,916	-
Total revenue from ordinary activities	1,164,650	721,168

Note 3. Current assets – Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash at bank	1,001,279	94,850
--------------	-----------	--------

Note 4. Current assets – Trade and Other Receivables

Debtors	106,272	180,593
Accrued interest	-	6
	106,272	180,599

Credit risk- Trade and other Receivables

The Association does not have any material credit risk exposure to any single receivables or group of receivables. It is expected that these balances will be received when due.

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Note 5. Current assets – Other		
Prepayments	<u>14,806</u>	<u>6,989</u>

Note 6. Property, Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment - at cost	45,918	36,408
Less: Accumulated depreciation	<u>(8,448)</u>	<u>(13,925)</u>
Total Property, plant and equipment	<u>37,470</u>	<u>22,483</u>

The Association does not own any land and buildings. It rents the premises from which it operates.

It is the responsibility of the lessor to maintain the buildings and to insure for public risk, fire and storm and tempest.

(a) Movements in Carrying Amounts

Movement in the carrying amount for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year:

	WDV 1 January 2020	Additions	Disposals	Depreciation	WDV 31 December 2020
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Plant & equipment	22,483	37,995	(15,311)	(7,697)	37,470
	<u>22,483</u>	<u>37,995</u>	<u>(15,311)</u>	<u>(7,697)</u>	<u>37,470</u>

Note 7. Current liabilities - Trade and Other Payables

Accounts payable	2,067	8,374
Sundry	61,420	4,936
Grants in advance	<u>668,207</u>	<u>135,136</u>
	<u>731,694</u>	<u>148,446</u>

Note 8. Current liabilities - Provisions

Annual leave	5,585	8,354
Long service leave	<u>48,532</u>	<u>44,152</u>
	<u>54,117</u>	<u>52,506</u>

Financial Report

Country Education Project Inc.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Note 9. Reconciliation of surplus to net cash inflow from operating activities	2020 \$	2019 \$
Surplus after income tax	270,547	20,109
Depreciation	7,697	7,876
Net (profit)/loss on sale of fixed assets	(4,916)	-
Change in operating assets and liabilities:		
Decrease/(Increase) in trade and other receivables	74,327	48,815
Decrease/(Increase) in Prepayments	(7,817)	870
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and other payables	50,177	(16,303)
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions for employees	1,111	(4,636)
Increase/(Decrease) in grants in advance	533,071	(142,390)
	<u>924,197</u>	<u>(85,659)</u>

Note 10. Commitments

Lease Commitments

Total operating lease expenditure contracted for at balance date but not provided for in the accounts:

Payable within 1 year	14,812	7,767
Later than 1 year but not later than 5 years	-	14,812
	<u>14,812</u>	<u>22,579</u>

Note 11. Events after the Reporting Period

Ongoing travel and border restrictions imposed by federal and state governments in order to manage COVID-19 is likely to continue to impact the Association's ability to deliver its normal range of services. The ongoing impact of this cannot be reliably measured at this time.

There are no other significant events occurring after reporting date likely to impact the future affairs of the Association.

Note 12. Contingent assets and liabilities

The Committee of Management are not aware of any contingent assets or liabilities that may exist as at 31 December 2020.

Country Education Project Inc.

Committee of management's declaration

For the year ended 31 December 2020

As stated in Note 1(a) to the financial statements, in the opinion of the Committee of Management, Country Education Project Inc. is not a reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. These are special purpose financial statements that have been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards and mandatory professional reporting requirements to the extent described in Note 1(a).

The Committee of Management declares that the financial statements and notes set out on pages 2 to 12:

- a) comply with the Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements as detailed above, and the *Association Incorporations Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*; and
- b) give a true and fair view of Country Education Project Inc.'s financial position as at 31 December 2020, and of its performance, as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows, for the financial year ended on that date.

In the opinion of the Committee of Management, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Country Education Project Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee of Management.



Chairperson



Treasurer

19th of March, 2021

Financial Report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Country Education Project Inc.

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Country Education Project Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position at 31 December 2020, and the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, a summary of accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the Directors' declaration.

In our opinion the financial statements of the Association is in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 31 December 2020 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in note 1 and complying with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis of Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 of the financial statements which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statements have been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee of Management's financial reporting responsibilities under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012*. As a result the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose.

Independent auditor's report to the members (continued)

Responsibility of the Committee of Management for the Financial Statements

The Committee of Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial statements which are appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members.

The Committee of Management is also responsible for such internal control as the Committee determines necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Committee is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee's financial reporting requirements under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial statements to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Johnsons MME
Chartered Accountants



Ryan Schischka
Director

Albury
19 March 2021



Country Education Partnership

PO Box 1255
Wangaratta 3676
03 5723 0005
admin@cep.org.au

www.cep.org.au