

Rural Education Program

# Rural Education Program

## Third Report 2008

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# Founding Donors Report

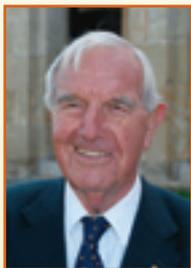


## **Children are special.**

*In our significant concerns about the economy, the drought, the aged, the disabled or the plight of those in the developing world we cannot ignore the critical importance of a good start in life for every Australian child.*

*To achieve this education is so important.*

*The Founding Donors and those others who contribute so generously to the Rural Education Program are helping many young people to a better future.*



*For their sake and on behalf of FRRR - a sincere thankyou.*

**Ian Sinclair AC**  
*Chairman FRRR*

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

When Rural Education Program (REP) began in 2003 it was meant to run for two years, to assist children during the drought. Such a short time ago, we believed that droughts came and went, and that REP would only be needed during the (then) current drought. We now know that drought is likely to be the normal condition of many parts of Australia and there will be continuing effects on the education of rural children.

Grant requests to REP now reflect the impact of drought on education. A common feature is the declining capacity of parents and communities to raise the funds that traditionally supported schools, kindergartens and community facilities. Schools have always relied on a percentage of equipment and curricular activities being provided through fund raising. This is no longer possible for many.

*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](http://www.frrr.org.au)*

*Front Cover Picture: Italo Vardaro, Project Stories: Genevieve Barlow*

Increasingly, schools are asking for help for camps, excursions and activities that are taken for granted by city schools. Kindergartens write about the rock-hard playgrounds where grass has died and water restrictions prevent re-planting. We are helping where we can by providing grants for water tanks, artificial grass, shade cloth and other supplies that allow safe outdoor play.

Over the past two years we have been active at the national level in raising awareness of rural education. In April 2007 we co-hosted the National Forum on Remote Rural and Regional Education attended by the Minister for Education, Science and Training. Outcomes included a resolution to establish a national “voice” for rural children, along similar lines to the National Rural Health Alliance. REP recently made a grant toward establishing that organisation.

Through alliances with national organisations such as Volunteers for Isolated Students Education, National Seniors, and Isolated Children’s Parents Association, we have been able to leverage support for children right across the country.

Thank you to my co-Founding Donors, Sarah Myer, Janet and John Calvert-Jones and Tim and Gina Fairfax, for their enthusiasm for rural education and their personal interest in the people and organisations in the bush who are trying to make the best of difficult times.

We have travelled throughout Australia to meet these people, learning so much, and being inspired to continue our support. I also thank the team at FRRR led by CEO Sylvia Admans and to our Education Officer Helen Morris for her advice and research.

**Baillieu Myer AC**

*Chairman*

# Taking to the Stage

**Nanneella Estate Primary School**  
**VIC Grant \$7,253**

When the 28 children from Nanneella's school in northern Victoria, were declared the winners of the 2007 Science Drama Award in Victoria, chests around the drought-stricken dairying area burst with pride. The school production, *Metals Rock*, argued the case in music and drama for building cars out of different metals. With the guidance of a drama teacher, the costume-making contribution of members of the local Country Women's Association and parents' club, and the stage set-makings skills of a few dads, the kids carried off the Archimedes Award for most outstanding performance by a primary school. The awards are made by the Science Teachers Association of Victoria.

"It was such a buzz for our community," says science teacher Faye King. "Things were pretty dire here and the fact that our little school got the opportunity to go to Melbourne was a highlight in itself. FRRR/REP's

grant provided the money for the materials for the costumes which the CWA members made. We were able to buy a video camera and computer to make the required DVD for the Science Drama awards and with this, we were selected for the finals. Without the grant, there was no way this small school could have entered the science drama awards."

Year Three student Tannum Foley led the case for the metal, lead. "We learnt a lot about metals and I would love to do it again. We learnt when you are building a car you need lead for the battery, copper for the wires and steel for the frame." Year Five student Anna Roughley who played the Zinc Detector says performing in front of other finalist schools in Melbourne was fun and nerve-racking but made her very happy.

The children performed *Metals Rock* again for the community at the end-of-year concert in the local hall where

FRRR/REP funds also helped pay for new curtains. The costumes will be kept for future productions. This year they starred in a special performance of Metals Rock at the local CWA's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The FRRR/REP funding enabled an engineer to work on a weekly basis for ten weeks to guide the students in the process of designing, planning, constructing, trialling and modifying a pushcart. Then it was off to the RACV Energy Break Through Pushcart Challenge in Maryborough. Our Green Speed Machine came third. FRRR/REP funding gave the children wonderful opportunities for participating and learning, not otherwise possible in a small school.



**Stage Stars:** Austin Glass, Neil Boys and Stephen Briggs were part of the Science Drama award winning crew from Nanneella Estate Primary School.



**Metals Magic:** Elise Anderson and Yolanda Foley in the costumes that Nanneella's CWA members made with materials purchased with FRRR/REP funds.

# Kids Camp Out

## Echuca Special School VIC Grant \$2,000

Josh Cheep rarely gets to spend three days away from home. The 14-year-old Echuca Special School student spends most evenings and weekends under the vigilant care of his parents and younger sister Rebecca. For the first time, he and 24 other kids from the special school went bush, staying at a communal camp near Deniliquin in southern NSW for the school's annual camp.

Accompanied by school staff, the kids played table tennis, mini-golf, pool and skittles, fished and enjoyed team games and rope courses. Josh said he liked the night walks and seeing possums. "I don't get to do that at home because I am usually in bed by dark," he says.

The camp gave parents who care for their intellectually and sometimes physically disabled children, a break.

"It's a double whammy effect," says school principal Christine Wakefield. "It's three days of rest for the parents



***Fishing for Change:** Echuca Special School kids enjoyed a few days away from home on their FRRR/REP-supported camp.*

and it shows that the kids can go away from home and can take part in normal activities and it also shows us what life skills they have. It's also a great chance for the kids and staff to bond."

There are 65 kids at the Prep to Year 12 school. They travel by bus up to 140km daily from towns around northern Victoria and southern NSW including Pyramid Hill, Cohuna, Mathoura, Kyabram and Corop.

# Art and Museum Works Go Bush

## Orana Arts NSW Grant \$2,000



*Tooraweenah Public School student Johnathon Acton works a telephone handset used by a linesman around Dubbo c. 1945.*

History stepped out of cabinets into a suitcase and headed out to hundreds of children at 21 schools around Dubbo in NSW thanks to an FRRR/REP grant. Fossils found in the region, one of the region's earliest telephone handsets, a drawing of a squirrel and other artefacts and artworks from Dubbo's Regional Gallery and Museum toured schools in a project brought about by the Western Plains Cultural Centre and Orana Arts. Professionals from the centre and Orana Arts travelled with the suitcases to explain the significance and meaning of its contents.

The idea, says Melissa Ryan from Orana Arts, was to give the children a chance to see and touch objects and begin to understand the value of art and museum pieces. "Some of the schools such as Binnaway are 2.5 hours away from the Western Plains Cultural Centre and the opportunity to visit is not always regularly available," says Melissa.

At Tooraweenah Public School, 120km north-west of Dubbo, principal Carmel Munns says the travelling suitcase project, aptly named *Box 'o Tricks*, was "a wonderful opportunity for students to gain a further insight into parts of our history as well as gain an understanding of the purpose of a museum and be inspired to visit one." A digital video artwork showing a white rat moving through a green wall prompted students to ask questions such as are we like lab rats and where are we going. Discussion around the fossil, an imprint of a fern that grew in the Triassic Period, revealed how it had led a geologist to realise that Australia was once part of a large continent called Gondwanaland. Children were amazed at the old telephone handset used by a linesman in the late 40s. It led them to learn that in 1899 just 35 people in Dubbo had telephones and that it wasn't until 1904 that people in the region could call Sydney.

# Buying Computers for an Island School

**Northern Territory Christian Schools Association NT Grant \$12,800**

Elcho Island, 1.5km off Australia's northern shore is 550km east of Darwin. For the island's 2000 or so residents, connection with the wider world through computers is relatively recent. While the main settlement of Galiwin'ku has a well known art and craft centre, over on the other side of the 11km-wide island, the Gawa Christian School is the focus of the Gawa community. It opened in 2004 and has an enrolment of about 40 students.

With support from FRRR's Rural Education Program, the school bought eight laptop computers and a printer and helped establish a wireless network.

"The students love being able to connect to the Internet," says head teacher Lara Hvala. "It gives them a whole range of information and experiences that are outside their small community. The computers also complement our educational program: students enjoy playing phonics, spelling and math games that



*Technology time – Gawa Christian School head teacher Lara Hvala shares the screen with children on Elcho Island.*

reinforce a whole range of concepts in a fun and interactive environment. The community is looking forward to the wireless network being extended to cover the new school building. This will enable the laptops to be used on the cool, shady classroom verandahs as well as inside."

Northern Territory Christian Schools Association executive assistant Debra Twartz says since the school at Gawa serves as the community centre, it is very much an open classroom, making the technology available for youngsters, parents, older teenagers as well as the students.

# Educating Children with Speech Challenges

**Lockhart Central School Parents and Citizens Association NSW Grant \$12,500**

Toby Mildren can't talk. The Lockhart kinder kid understands plenty but his autism threatened to leave him and his high-functioning autistic older brother, Riley, under-educated. That was until his mother, Margot, with the help of a friend and the Lockhart Central School Parents and Citizens Association, swung into action. They organised for the school, in a farming region 80km west of Wagga in south-east NSW, to introduce an alternative communication system, plus courses for teachers, administrative staff, parents and others involved with the school to learn how to use it.

"It's for people with no speech or speech difficulties or for whom English is their second language," says Margot. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a series of cards featuring pictures to represent words. "If Toby wants an ice-cream he will go to the board and choose the picture that says I want, another that says ice-cream and another that says please. He'll

**Speaking in Pictures:** Toby Mildren with aide Celeste Beale (left) and speech therapist Shelley Brennan at Lockhart Central School.



put the three of them together then tap them out and I know he wants an ice-cream." FRRR/REP funds helped fund the PECS course.

The system is also helping with educate a profoundly deaf child at the school. Margot says it meant her family could stay in Lockhart, close to her and her husband's parents, their jobs and their strong networks of friends and community. Now the school is planning to expand its facilities and support services for special needs children. "If we can set up the school as a centre of excellence for special needs kids we can encourage families with special needs kids to come and live here," says Margot.

# Using Music to Engage Indigenous Children in Education

Djarragun College, about 30km south of Cairns, has discovered that enthusing kids about education can sometimes start with a little lateral thinking ... and a hip hop beat. The prep-to-grade 13 school which offers a post-secondary vocational year has 550 students including 100 boarders from Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands. This year, using FRRR/REP funds, the school bought a computer, hip hop recording software and a stage speaker system to teach hip hop and beat box recording, which mixes music with the replicating sounds of a drum machine and voice.

Internet Technology teacher Aaron Agius ran sessions out of class hours teaching kids how to work as a group and building their confidence to perform for an audience. "Using beat boxing, people with little money can create hip hop music," says Aaron.

"It's a form of protest music in which people express themselves about issues important to them. In our dj lessons, the students use dj software on a laptop to scratch and mix music from cds and mp3s.

"They use play, exploration and trial by error, with a little supervision, to teach themselves and each other. We are building teams and literacy with students who are beginning to carry rhyming dictionaries as a status symbol.

"The look on a young person's face as they leave a stage with a crowd cheering, when only moments before they did not want to go on, is wonderful. Pushing them through their feelings of not being able to do it and seeing the payoff for them, is a positive experience."

## Djarragun College QLD Grant \$5,115

Principal Jean Illingworth says the impact on some students has been profound. “Some of the shyest children are performing and writing their own songs.”

Ms Illingworth says one student, a troubled boarder who was unco-operative and difficult to teach, transformed within two terms of joining the sessions. “She’s a different girl. She’s performing in front of the school and writing her own songs and came and asked if she could join art classes. Kids always do better if their self-esteem is in order and this is raising their self-esteem.”



*Getting the Beat: A Djarragun College student learns to mix hip hop using software and a computer.*

# Teaching Kids to Lead Show Animals

**Lochiel Progress Association  
SA Grant \$1,974**



*Students from Snowtown Area School participate in the handlers' competition at the Royal Adelaide Show.*

In Year Nine, looking after a baby goat and learning how to feed, care for it and show it in competitions hardly seems a tough education,

but Rebecca Savage says there's more to it than people think. Rebecca led a capretto (baby) and an older goat in the handlers' competition at the Royal Adelaide Show. Her trip to the show from the Snowtown Area School, 150km north, along with 16 other students and five teachers was helped along with FRRR/REP funding. Rebecca earned third place in the baby goat handlers' competition.

"The school keeps the animals and we have to learn to lead and to build up trust because it's all about that one day at the show showing them off," says Rebecca. Classmate Mitchell Nicholls who lives on a farm says he learnt a lot about animals' digestion systems as well as the practical business of caring,

grooming and leading animals. Teacher Phil Magnusson says learning how to lead steers and goats in the Adelaide Show competitions has become a rite-of-passage step for Year Nine and 10 students at the Snowtown Area School.

"The farm kids here are really keen to go the show. We're on the highway between Port Wakefield and Port Pirie in a grain growing area and there are fewer students as a result of the drought so we've really appreciated FRRR/REP's support." Parent Kathy Nicholls says the city experience and socialising with other kids is the highlight of the year for the students, many of whom cannot afford to fund it themselves.

"No extra curriculum money is allowed in the education department for this type of event. We have a very low socio-economic population: more than half the students are school card beneficiaries. The show team project instils self-esteem and confidence and pride in our students."

# Outback Kids Learn to Juggle

**Palinyewah Parents and Citizens  
Association NSW Grant \$7,388**

At Palinyewah, 65km north of Mildura, juggling and riding strange vehicles is usually serious business done by grain, grape and vegetable growers on horticultural and broadacre farms and vineyards. But it was the kids' turn when

FRRR/REP helped fund experts from Adelaide's circus training centre, Cirkidz, come to the Palinyewah Public School for two workshops. The school at the heart of this dry region has 30 kids this year.

"We wanted to instil some confidence in the children," says parent and Palinyewah Parents and Citizens Association member Wendy Robertson. "Because we live out of town there is not a lot for the children to do and when they go to bigger centres they can find it overwhelming."



*Circus Finale: Palinyewah Public School children used their newly polished circus skills at their end-of-year performance.*

Enter juggling balls, unicycles, flower-sticks, hoola-hoops and all the fun stuff of a circus. Cirkidz ran two workshops at Palinyewah. The first introduced the kids to circus tools and showed them how to use them. The second, three months later, helped refine their skills and prepare a show for the end-of-year concert.

"The kids really took to it and put on a wonderful performance," says Wendy.



# Mentoring Through Music

**Stride Foundation  
VIC Grant \$10,000**

*Mildura mentor Erica Graf and her mentoree Ashleigh with guitars bought with FRRR/REP funds. Picture: Sunraysia Daily*

musician. Dale Hudak, 33, teaches music and drumming privately and last year his two-piece band, Jackson Firebird, won a \$50,000 national recording deal after being spotted by Spiderbait. Part of his weekly schedule also involves mentoring disadvantaged kids through music. He's one of four musicians mentoring six indigenous students from each of five schools around Mildura and Coomealla. "Over the time I have spent with the kids, their level of confidence has risen dramatically," Dale says. "In the first couple of months it was hard to get a word out of them (with exception of a couple of kids) about anything. Now they open up to me, share intimate details about their life and discuss any problems or joys that life has thrown their way. They now invite other students in to listen to them bash away and brag

By day he's an accountant.

By night he's a drum-beating, frenzied

when they get a rhythm right. Now I feel what an incredible opportunity I have had to meet these awesome kids."

The aim of the program, says Sally Pannifex from Melbourne's Stride Foundation through which FRRR/REP funded Mentoring Through Music, is to inspire students to continue with their education by engaging them in a school-based music program. "Musicians trained as mentors work with indigenous youth from local schools," Sally says. "While the young people are learning music skills, the music mentor works with them to set goals for other areas of their life, such as school attendance and participation, dealing with adversity and developing positive networks with their community.

With FRRR/REP's funds, The Stride Foundation bought musical instruments for the kids to congratulate them for taking part in the program and to encourage them to keep up the good work.

# Mixing Cultures to Learn

## Kiwirrkurra Outreach WA \$8,000

It's said that as recently as the mid 1980s, the last of the Pintubi people emerged from the Gibson Desert to the homeland community of Kiwirrkurra, 680km west of Alice Springs. Out there, an all-indigenous school with 35 enrolled children aged five to 17, is headed by Mitchell Drage. "We're one of the remotest schools in Australia and the people here are very traditional. Some students can speak three or four dialects," says Mitchell proudly. Most Australians never get to visit Kiwirrkurra but for three years, Year 11 students from Fremantle's all-male Christian Brothers College have travelled 1400km to Kiwirrkurra where they stay for at least a week, sharing jobs and mixing with the Pintubi.

"The first year we went out we supplied a barbecue and built barbecue tables and benches," says the college's Head of Catholic Service and Justice, Mark Walawski (Wal). "Last year we put shade over the men's lore area. These are areas

where the men gather."

Mitchell says the visits allow for a general exchange of cultural ideas

and knowledge. "The kids love the interaction with the boys and this year we're hosting some girls from Iona College as well." FRRR helped fund the trips which Mark and Mitchell expect will continue annually.

Mark says 'the immersion project' has many attributes: it involves the entire school community and it helps bridge a gap in infrastructure and assistance for Kiwirrkurra. He also believes it will be a step towards greater reconciliation between indigenous and white Australia.



*Students from Kiwirrkurra and Fremantle's Christian Brothers College mingle during a visit partially funded by FRRR/REP.*

# Rural Education Program Grants 2006 - 2008

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Bairnsdale Secondary College	Digital English Classroom Extension	VIC	10,000
Balranald Central School	Equine Therapy	NSW	4,000
Balranald Early Learning Centre Inc	Outdoor Play Area	NSW	5,000
Bathurst Regional Council	Australian Fossil & Mineral Museum - Written in Stone Small Schools Outreach Program	NSW	5,000
Batlow Technology School	Phonica Reading Program for BTS	NSW	5,500
Biggenden & District Kindergarten Inc	Classroom Furniture & Equipment	QLD	5,000
Biloela State School	Welcoming New Families & Students	QLD	5,000
Bourke Public P & C	Coaching Clinic at Bourke Public School	NSW	4,000
Burren Junction Pre-School Assoc Inc	Large Toy & Equipment Purchases	NSW	5,000
Cairns School of Distance Education	Technology on the Road" Phase 2	QLD	5,000
Cairns School of Distance Education	Cyclone Monica	QLD	15,000
Cairns School of Distance Education	Technology Bootcamp Community Leadership	QLD	7,500
Camperdown College	Camp Out for Kids	VIC	3,000
Canowindra Pre School Kindergarten	Educational Resources for Children & Staff	NSW	1,000
CBC Fremantle	Kiwirrkurra Outreach	WA	8,000
Charleville Kindergarten Association Inc	Safe Play at Kindy	QLD	6,710
Childrens Charity Network	The Writing, Wings & Words Workshops	VIC	8,000
City of Mount Gambier	Mount Gambier & District Tertiary Education Grants	SA	6,000
Clontarf Foundation	Academy Room Refurbishment	WA	5,000
Company B	Performance Alive!	NSW	5,000
Condoblin Public School	Canberra Excursion	NSW	10,000
Conondale State School	ICT Enhancement	QLD	5,980
Contact Incorporated	School Packs for Drought Area	NSW	35,000
Contact Incorporated	Locum Initiative for Isolated Children's Services	NSW	15,000
Country Education Foundation Australia Ltd - Eudunda	Eudunda Pass it On	SA	4,700
Crave Insight Pty Ltd	Scattered Bones - Dead Bones Society Remote Schools Outreach Program	NSW	5,000
Crystal Brook Primary School	Integrating Computing into Learning	SA	5,000
Cumnock Village Pre-School	First Steps Outdoor Development	NSW	2,765

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Deaf Society of NSW	Deaf Intergration	NSW	3,600
District Council of Tumby Bay	Rural Options: Southern and Eastern Eyre Peninsula Families	SA	5,000
Djarragun College	Beat Box/Hip Hop Grooves	QLD	5,115
Drake Public School	Literacy Booster	NSW	2,000
Eastern Eyre Health and Aged Care Inc	HOPE Program - Helping Ourselves through Personal Education	SA	8,800
Echuca Specialist School	School Camps	VIC	2,000
El Arish State School	Annual School Camp	QLD	4,098
Elliston Area School	Media Centre	SA	3,000
Feluga State School	Coping With Trauma through Creativity	QLD	6,064
G S Kidd Public SSP Gunnedah	Community Participation Programs for Students with Moderate to Severe Intellectual Disability in a Rural Area	NSW	3,000
Gladstone High School	Student Wellbeing	SA	11,000
Good Beginnings	Sing & Read, Port Augusta SA	NSW	5,000
Hawker Area School P & F Assoc	Integrating ICT into the School, Secondary Learning & the Community	SA	8,000
Hay School of the Air P & C	Hay SOTA to Borambola	NSW	3,761
Hermidale P & C Association	School Excursion to National Capital	NSW	3,000
Illracombe Primary P & C Association	Purchase & Installation of Computer Hub & Digital Photocopier	QLD	2,700
Innisfail State High School	Emergency student assistance	QLD	422
Isolated Parents & Friends Association - Port Augusta	2008 SA State Conference	SA	2,000
Isolated Childrens & Parents Association - Mt. Isa	Sport for Bush Kids	QLD	4,437
Jelly Beans Community Centre	Resource Upgrade New Photocopier	QLD	5,200
Kaniva College	Addressing the Imbalances	VIC	3,000
Karcultaby Area School	Distance Education Access and Equity	SA	15,000
Kingaroy State High School	Musical Instrument Upgrade and Replacement	QLD	4,689
Kojonup District High School	Great Southern Youth Theatre	WA	10,000
Kulin District High School	New Sports Equipment	WA	3,000
Lochiel Progress Association Inc	Snowtown Area School Led Show Team	SA	1,974
Lockhart Central School Parent & Citizens Association	Picture Exchange Communication System and Integrated Computer Technology	NSW	12,500

# Rural Education Program Grants 2006 - 2008

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
Longreach School of Distance Ed P&C	Travel To Chess Championships	QLD	1,800
Longreach Shire Council	Longreach Residential College Supply and Upgrading of Gym, Sport & Recreational Equipment	QLD	10,000
Luurnpa Catholic School	Early Childhood Playground	WA	5,000
Mallee Family Care Inc	Chances for Children	VIC	5,000
Mansfield Primary School	Giving Children a Future through Literacy Intervention	VIC	12,000
Marcus Oldham College	Student Support Program - Assistance to Students in Times of Personal Crisis	VIC	5,000
Mukinbudin District High School	Retention & Participation	WA	6,157
Mullaley Public School	Special Help for Special Children	NSW	10,000
Nanneella Estate Primary School	Community Hands On Initiatives	VIC	7,253
Narrabri Early Childhood Intervention Service	Services for Children who are Geographically Isolated	NSW	5,000
Nathalia Primary School	Library Computers & Books	VIC	4,000
National Seniors Australia	Volunteer Literacy Program in Aboriginal Communities	QLD	7,500
Northern Territory Christian Schools Assoc - Gawa Christian School	Computers for Remembering Our Learning about Ourselves and the World Beyond Gawa	NT	12,800
Nyah District Primary School	Art Shed	VIC	10,000
Oakey State High School	Oakey Youth Expo	QLD	1,250
Orana Arts Inc	Box O'Tricks	NSW	2,000
Ouyen Secondary School	Garden Tractor Pullers	VIC	2,000
Palinyawah Parents & Citizens Assoc.	CirKidz	NSW	7,388
Paroo Education Group Inc	Assisting Young People in the Paroo Shire to Participate further in Education & Training	QLD	3,000
Queensland Murray Darling Committee	Cultural Catchments 2007	QLD	5,000
Rainbow Secondary College	VCAL Senior Community	VIC	2,450
Renmark High School	Support for Children to Attend Excursions	SA	2,000
REVISE - WA	Tutor Travel For Distance Ed in WA	WA	5,000
Richmond State School	Lab Rats Science Club	QLD	6,600
Roma Junior School P & C	Playground For Prep	QLD	5,000
SPELD SA Inc	SPELD Online Tutoring	SA	10,000

Organisation	Project	State	Grant
St Josephs Primary School Hillston	Outdoor Learning Area	NSW	3,000
St Joseph's School Wyndham	Kindergarten & Pre Primary Literacy Listening Center	WA	6,000
St Patricks Catholic Primary School Trundle	Outback Maths	NSW	3,460
St Philip's College	Bridging the Gap	NT	5,000
Stride Foundation	Mentoring through Music, Mildura	VIC	10,000
Sunraysia Down Syndrome Support Group	Consultancy Visits	VIC	3,500
Tangentyere Council	Leaping the Line	NT	6,200
Taralye (Language Centre for Deaf Children)	Video Monitoring to Aid the Development of Language and Communication Skills	VIC	5,510
The Clontarf Foundation Inc	Academy Room Refurbishment	WA	5,000
Toobeah Kindergarten and Children's Centre	Kikuya for Kindy Kids	QLD	4,000
Tooleybuc Pre-School Assoc. Inc	Outdoor Activity Safety & Sustainability	NSW	5,000
Towamba P & C Association	Sharing the Journey	NSW	4,368
Try Youth & Community Services	Work Ready Rural Education	VIC	5,000
Tumby Bay Kindergarten	Play Equipment Upgrade	SA	10,000
Tyrrell College	Travel Assistance	VIC	1,840
Volunteers for Isolated Students Ed.	Longreach District VISE - Newsletter	QLD	500
Volunteers for Isolated Students Ed.	2007 VISE Tutor Program	WA	25,000
Volunteers for Isolated Students Ed.	Financial Assistance to Remote Families Requiring Education Assistance	QLD	25,000
Walwa Primary School	Canberra Educational Excursion	VIC	3,500
Wattle Range Educational Network (Millicent High School)	Engaging Senior Students using Technology Support	SA	24,880
Wentworth District Preschool Playcentre Inc	Excursion & Music Entertainer	NSW	1,748
Winters Flat Primary School	Winters Flat Kitchen Eco Garden	VIC	2,500
Yeoval Preschool Inc	Enhancement of Learning Outcomes for Preschool Children in Yeoval	NSW	2,488
Youth Opportunities Association	Operational Support	SA	10,000
<b>Total Grants</b>			<b>\$667,207</b>

# Teaching Kids to Ride Horses

## Balranald Central School NSW Grant \$4,000



***Riding High:** Balranald Central School student Harry Gorman with his horse Ozzie. The school is attracting students by offering horse-riding lessons.*

It makes sense to customise education for different regions. At Balranald in western NSW, a strong interest in horse riding, for example, has prompted the Balranald Central School (Year 7-12) to run equine studies after class on Thursdays. Laurel Stevens, a primary school teacher and Pony Club dressage judge trained to Equestrian Federation of Australia standards, says the classes prepare students to strive to meet EFA proficiency standards in dressage and eventing.

“It’s probably lifted our enrolments at the school by several students in recent years,” says Laurel. “We had one student, Jason Scott, who went through the program since Year Eight. He finished school last year and is training racehorses and schooling equestrian horses but I’m sure if we hadn’t offered this he would have left school in Year Nine or 10.

Jason’s sister, Emma, a successful event rider, was also a graduate of the school’s riding program and has competed at a high standard in equestrian riding. Emma assists with the school’s equestrian program when she is not competing.

“We’re using FRRR/REP’s funding to get instructors to come,” says Laurel. “We used to compete in three inter-school competitions but we can’t now because we’ve been restricted by new zonings so we are planning to start our own inter-school competition here in Balranald.”

# Enthusing Indigenous Children About Learning

**Tangentyere Council,  
Alice Springs NT Grant \$6,200**

In the 19 town camps for indigenous people around Alice Springs, children face immense hurdles making it to school. Beset by poor nutrition, a shortage of sleep from communal living and cultural differences, their attendance at school is mostly sporadic.

Intensive circus skills training during holiday periods, funded by FRRR/REP during 2007, aimed to boost the children's confidence and exercise. Sarah Gosling who conducted circus skills training for the camp-dwelling children for four years, says the intensives offered the children something to do during holidays as well as nutritional food.



***Learning by Having Fun:** Circus trainer Daniel Rabin with Larapinta children Lekita Malbunka, Fatima Robina, Anslum Malbunka, Harvey Ebatarinja, Emma Malbunka, Brianna Ebatarinja. The children took part in circus skills training in Alice Springs to maintain focus during school holidays.*

She used the opportunity to teach the children about the impact of eating sugary foods on their ability to focus. "The program was also important for building family connection with what their kids are doing," says Sarah. "Each year the Larapinta kids (pictured) would prepare for a public performance. You'd have them all trained and ready to go and they just couldn't do it. Then, after four years, it just suddenly clicked and it was amazing to see this massive transformation in some of the children."

# Revealing the Night Sky

**The Lab Rats, Richmond State School**  
**QLD Grant \$6,600**



*Teachers and students now see the stars in a different light thanks to FRRR/REP assisting with the funding of a new telescope.*

Five hours' drive west of Townsville sits the town of Richmond, touted as Australia's fossil capital. Once it was buried beneath an inland sea, but the district's vast plains now offer big views of the night sky. With treasures below and in the sky above, students at the Richmond P-10 State School formed an after-school group called The Lab Rats. Their goal is to explore the science that surrounds them.

With FRRR/REP's help and other local donations, the students bought a telescope. "We've seen many features in our local sky, including the rings around Saturn," says principal Kaye O'Sullivan who declares that the skies are brilliant for astronomy studies. "The prep class was the first to use the telescope.

Unlike many six-year-old Australians, station girl Shanelle has seen the rings around Saturn. Her classmate Hunter, who lives in town where his dad is the shire engineer, was thrilled by his telescope-viewing. "You press the buttons and the telescope moves," he says. "Then you put your eye in and close the nother (sic). You can see the moon."

The school plans to run star-gazing nights for each class and for locals and visitors and plans to offer visiting schools a look at the skies too.

Hundreds of busloads of visitors pour into Richmond annually to check out the fossils in the local museum called Kronosaurus Korner. It's hoped The Lab Rats will become host experts, not only in fossils but in stars too.

"The telescope has made our sky come more alive for our students," Kaye says.

# Outback Parents Appealing for Education

## Isolated Children's Parents Association SA Grant \$2,000

Educating children on a remote outback station offers lots of challenges. It can be a lonely journey so the Isolated Children's Parents Association is a vital organisation for outback parents seeking support and group strength to petition for better access to education. In South Australia that organisation has eight branches, each with membership of five to 25 families. State president Sharon Nutt, from Edeowie Station north of Hawker in the Flinders Ranges, says the annual state conference is where members identify issues and form advocating strategies. Over the years it's urged for seat belts and air conditioners on buses and improved education and boarding allowances.

This year's state conference, for example, called for the government to establish dedicated internet accounts for kids studying via the Open Access College and School of the Air and that a travel allowance be made available for pre-school children living more than 4.5km from a pre-school

or a bus route to a pre-school and that hostel accommodation be part of technical colleges so outback students can attend. They were among 13 motions considered at the conference.

"Most of our members live remotely on isolated stations, small towns or they might be national park employees," says Sharon. "The money FRRR provided through its Rural Education Program helped us pay for guest speakers and our conference dinner at Port Augusta in March and we also supported members to attend."



***Catching Up:** They rarely see each other but these outback South Australian women find the annual conferences of the Isolated Children's Parents Association a great social occasion as well as a vital forum for refining strategies to improve education opportunities for their kids. They are Colleen Grove-Jones, Sharon Nutt, Glennis Crawford, Jackie Matthey, and Jeanette Coombes.*

# Science Lessons and Story Writing Go Bush via Video



**Bone History:** Staff at Bathurst's Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum prepare to beam live, via interactive video, to remote area schools in NSW.

Getting to the fossil museum at Bathurst when you're a kid at Dunedoo is the equivalent of a Mt Isa art enthusiast's trip to New York's Museum of Modern Art. It's a long way and the funds aren't

always readily available. But the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum and Bathurst Regional Council have teamed up, with FRRR/REP's help, to close the distance and beam the contents via video live into classrooms.

So from where they sit at Dunedoo, Coolah, Cobar, Mingoola and Murrumburrah, up to hundreds of kilometres away, they get to see a Tasmanian lion's skull, a sabre-toothed cat, a crab caught fleeing a volcanic eruption in Italy, all fossilised 10 to 20 million years ago.

It's the towering Tyrannosaurus Rex, Australia's only such specimen, that really captures the kids' imaginations.

Donated to the museum as part of palaeontologist Warren Somerville's collection, it was a provocative part of a pilot program called Scattered Bones during which author Paul Stafford and Mr Somerville as well as other museum staff took the faraway kids on a video tour down history's track to a time when T-Rex roamed the earth and when lions lived in Tasmania.

"It's a brilliant way to allow all of these really remote schools to access a resource they would otherwise have little chance of seeing and not only that but they got an opportunity to have a palaeontologist walk them through the exhibition and they could ask questions of him," says Paul. He spent a week working via video with about 100 kids (many of whom were reluctant readers and writers) encouraging them to write stories

## Bathurst Regional Council Written in Stone Small Schools Outreach Program NSW Grant \$5,000



**Story Time:** Author Paul Stafford and Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum staff member Colin Ellis meet their class online.

prompted by what they'd seen. Fifth grade Bonshaw Public School student Sean Terrin from Texas in Queensland says the kids in his class, 683kms north of Bathurst, wrote a story about a mad scientist who crossed chicken DNA with T-Rex. The story had all the drama of a sci-fi thriller, complete with an uncontrollable giant creature who lays golden eggs and a shrinking machine. Bonshaw principal Mick Collins says such programs, when refined, will be vital for isolated and remote schools like his. "These kids wouldn't even know where Bathurst

was and wouldn't have been there so even from that point of view it's positive."

David Foley, who manages communication technology for remote schools across NSW in the Department of Education and Training says Scattered Bones was based on a similar project which allowed remote schools to visit NASA's Johnson Space Centre in Houston Texas. "This project really shows how far we can push this technology. We can put it in the remote areas and bring the world to them."



**Meeting the Master:** NSW Remote area kids chat via with author Paul Stafford, fossil collector Warren Somerville and museum staff member Colin Ellis at the Australia Fossil and Mineral Museum in Bathurst.

# Stepping Through the Trauma of Cyclone

**Feluga State School QLD Grant \$6,064**

In five hours on March 20, 2006, much of the Queensland hinterland along the 85km from Tully to Babinda was savaged by Cyclone Larry. Fortuitously, Larry wreaked his savagery before 9am so the children of Feluga and surrounds, 135km south of Cairns, were at home rather than school. The school was damaged: 1500 books were lost, furniture was ruined and power was lost but the human impact was greater. Many of the children were traumatised enough to warrant intervention.

Feluga State School principal Edmond Starkey says that with funds from FRRR's Rural Education Program, the school engaged a drama expert and

a ceramicist to work with the children to help them acknowledge the cyclone and to put it behind them.

"After the cyclone, one little girl started pulling her hair out and other kids started wetting their beds. We had a sheet of iron on the roof that used to flap when the wind blew and the kids would get quite jumpy."

The children produced a dance and drama presentation and also made ceramic tiles and stepping stones in their Cyclone Larry recovery project. Edmond believes it helped the children recover. The bed wetting and hair pulling stopped, but the memory lives on, he says.

## The Rural Education Program Has Been Funded By:

### Founding Donors:

John and Janet Calvert-Jones  
Tim and Gina Fairfax  
Baillieu and Sarah Myer

### Other Contributing Donors:

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Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal  
Yulgilbar Foundation  
The Calvert-Jones Foundation

# Rural Education Program

## Financial Information 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2008

### INCOME

Opening Balance . . . . .	\$103,522
Donations Received . . . . .	\$660,000
Other Income* . . . . .	\$170,451
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$933,973</b>

### EXPENDITURE

Grants Paid . . . . .	\$667,207
Expenses** . . . . .	\$66,110
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$733,317</b>
<b>Value of Program @ 30 June 2008 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$200,655</b>

\* 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 \$1,784,384. This chart shows grants by state and territory.**

