

# Rural Youth Ambassadors

The Country Education Partnership (CEP) developed the Rural Youth Ambassadors program to provide young people within rural and remote communities the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and capacity. As well as, to establish a strong youth advocacy on education provision. By partnering with education sectors, rural communities and governments the program aims to enhance and improve the lives, learning opportunities and education outcomes of rural and remote young people.

*“The Rural Youth Ambassadors program has changed the way I think about the environment, myself and communities I am involved in. I’m so grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of such an amazing program and I know the things I’ve learned will benefit me in the years to come.”*

## Who is it for?

A Rural Youth Ambassador has the following qualities:

- Is enrolled in Year 11 within a rural/remote community;
- Demonstrates that they can meet timelines and achieve identified outcomes;
- Shows a dedicated and strong commitment to their studies
- Demonstrates leadership within their local communities;
- Is endorsed and supported by their school, family and community.



## Program Overview

The year-long program is comprised of a number of face-to-face, and online, forums. Throughout these forums, the Rural Youth Ambassadors will undertake a range of leadership development activities, conversations focused on rural and remote life and learning, participate in presentations to senior education sector people, meet with Ministers for Education, meet with philanthropy organisations and key stakeholder groups, as well as present at education workshops, forums and conferences.





## Background

Involving up to 20 young people from all parts of rural and remote communities, the first Rural Youth Ambassadors program was established in Victoria in August 2011.

Since then, annual Rural Youth Ambassador groups have been supported in Victoria. In 2020, the Rural Youth Ambassador program expanded to South Australia and New South Wales. Programs will be established in Queensland and the Northern Territory in 2021.

CEP believes that youth agency is much more than gaining a youth perspective. It is about empowering young people to think and act within a complex environment, develop their own leadership skills, establish a solution-focused mindset and contribute to discussions on issues which influence their lives.

A core element of the program is the development of an Action Project which responds to an identified challenge within rural and remote education.

*“Rural Youth Ambassadors has ultimately been a life changer. I have realised so many things about myself. I have developed so much confidence and have grown as a person. Its about finding what you love and I can’t wait to see what my future life brings me”*



## Opportunities and Impacts

Over the course of its 10+ year history, the Rural Youth Ambassador Program has seen rural and remote young people:

- Contribute to the development of a country education strategy in South Australia and Victoria;
- Present on behalf of their peers to the Commonwealth Government on the education challenges faced by rural and remote young people;
- Represent their peers on the Education Declaration at a national level;
- Contribute to the review of Career Education in Victoria;
- Establish a Localised Rural Youth Ambassador initiative; and
- Be involved in a broad range of working groups, conferences on rural education and meetings with education officials to enhance learning opportunities for all rural and remote Australians.