

Partner Newsletter – July 2024

Message from Michelle Zahra, Head of Foundation



"It has been a lively period for our volunteering program, with Origin volunteers inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers in schools across the country, as well as helping young people prepare for their future careers. We are privileged to collaborate with teachers in these ways, to make a real difference for students.

I have been humbled by the recent reflection from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) on our decade-long partnership and our trust-based approach to philanthropy.

As their 'Back to School' program comes to an end, we congratulate FRRR for their vital work in providing \$50 vouchers to thousands of families in need, to help with the essentials for school.

This quarter, we've also been embedding our measurement and evaluation framework for our current grant partnerships, using the Smarty Grants platform. The tool will provide us with valuable insights into the impact of our partnerships and the progress we're making in improving educational outcomes for young people in Australia. Thank you to those who've embraced the new system so far.

I hope you enjoy this winter edition of our newsletter and wish you warmth and wellness throughout this chilly season."



Every Child, Every Opportunity report launch

In the wake of the pandemic and natural disasters, children's wellbeing has become a top priority for schools across Australia.

In their new research, *Every Child, Every Opportunity*, our partner Australian Schools Plus found that 97% of support requested by schools last year was to address the mental health and wellbeing needs of students.

We know that poor wellbeing impacts a child's ability to connect and learn at school and that more than half of teachers don't feel equipped to deal with wellbeing and mental health issues. We recently sat down with CEO of Schools Plus Sherrill Nixon to discuss the new report that our Foundation has been proud to support, and the importance of collective action now.

Our partnership with Schools Plus since 2018 has focused on enabling coaching to increase leadership capacity for 1,241 school leaders, mostly in regional and rural areas.



Congratulations to our 2024 Grant King Indigenous Scholars

Our Grant King Indigenous Scholarships program was established in 2017 to support First Nations students in pursuing a career in STEM.

Each year, at least two First Nations students are eligible to receive full residential scholarships while they complete a degree in Science or Engineering at the University of NSW.

This year, our 2019 scholar, Kim Porter, graduated from UNSW with a Bachelor of Science, First Class Honours, and is now working with the CSIRO in Sydney as a graduate Research Technician. Kim joins Cailin Ramsay and Jesse Mills who also recently graduated from UNSW.

We are pleased to announce three new scholarships in 2024. Nina McMahon from Mullumbimby in NSW has commenced her studies in Medical Science, Nathan Moss from Springfield in QLD is studying Advanced Science and Sonya Khizar from Nowra Hill in NSW is studying Engineering (Honours). We congratulate Nina, Nathan and Sonia and wish them well for their studies.



Helping young people prepare for the world of work

In recent months we've hosted secondary school students in Origin's Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane offices, to help them prepare for the world of work.

In these workshops, which include The Smith Family's Work Inspiration program, students learn about career pathways, what it's like to work in the energy industry and get the opportunity to network with a range of Origin volunteers.

Feedback from the students has been positive, saying *"It gave me inspiration to work harder at school and to fulfil my goals"*, and *"It provided knowledge of many different opportunities involved within different careers."*

These hands-on learning experiences draw upon the principles of Purposeful Partnering – our Foundation's online resource designed to guide schools and businesses in forming long-standing, mutually beneficial partnerships.



Welcome to our new Board Director

In June we welcomed Samantha Stevens to the Origin Energy Foundation Board as a non-executive director.

Sam will work with our existing Board members to collectively steer the governance and strategic direction of the Foundation's work to help break the cycle of disadvantage and empower young Australians to reach their potential through education.

As a senior executive with over 25 years' experience in Corporate Affairs, Sam has worked across resources, industrials and financial services sectors. Sam holds deep experience with the Origin Energy Foundation and is a champion for volunteering and giving across Origin's workforce, and a strong external advocate for the Foundation's work amongst key external stakeholders.

We also thank and acknowledge Kevin McCann AO and Helen Williams AC who have retired from the Foundation Board. Both Kevin and Helen have provided an invaluable contribution to the Foundation over the past 14 years, helping to sharpen our focus in education philanthropy.



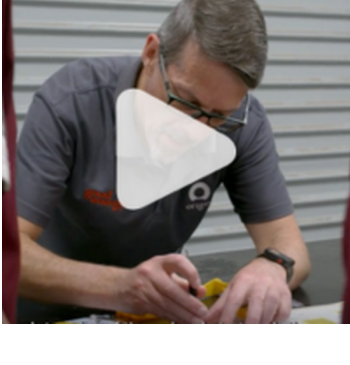
Celebrating volunteering

Through our Give Time volunteering program, Origin volunteers helped 7,637 students with their education this financial year, through mentoring, facilitating STEM workshops, sharing their career stories and conducting workplace visits.

We celebrated the role of our Origin volunteers during National Volunteer Week in May.

In the past 12 months they have given 8700 hours to support young people and pitched in to help the community where it was needed the most. We also reflected on the evolution of volunteering in Australia.

Helene Young is a Maintenance Systems and Process Specialist based in Brisbane, and an Ambassador for our Foundation. She reflects that *"volunteering is not just about giving; it's also about personal growth and development. Working with schools, I get the chance to hone my leadership skills and empathy as I interact with children from diverse backgrounds."*



Lighting up learning from Hobart to Darwin

This quarter we ran our Lights for Learning program in 17 schools across Australia.

From Tasmania to the Northern Territory, including Goodwood Primary School in Hobart, and Henbury School in Darwin, we focussed on schools with students who have a range of diverse learning needs.

In these workshops students learn about renewable energy and energy poverty and build portable SolarBuddy lights for children in Papua New Guinea, where only 12% of the population has access to electricity. The lights enable students to study after dark, increasing their study time by up to 78%.

In partnership with DXC Technology, we also donated 30 refurbished laptops to Hobart's Karadi Aboriginal organisation, to support First Nations students and the broader community with their education, computer literacy, and access to technology.



With a generous unlimited volunteer leave policy, Origin's workforce is motivated to give their time to support our partners. If you have a volunteering opportunity or require skilled volunteering support, please let us know!

Get in touch today

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