



MEDIA RELEASE

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2018 EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE AWARDS NOW OPEN TO BENEFIT RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia has opened its 2018 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards, which offer young farmers and rural youth the opportunity to pursue personal and professional development to ultimately benefit their local communities.

Applications are now being accepted for the following awards:

- The Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship sponsored by the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is an \$8000 grant to provide farmers (aged 18-40) in South Australia with the opportunity to improve personal and professional skills that will benefit; the rural industry, the individual in their own business or employment, and the sustainability of natural resources. Recipients are able to pursue further study, take a study tour or run a special project. DEW is committed to supporting communities and industry to make decisions and take action to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources.
- The Rural Youth Bursary sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) is a \$5000 grant for rural young people (aged 18-30) working in a rural community in South Australia, to undertake further study or develop a special project, which will ultimately benefit the rural community. The Rural Youth Bursary is open to applicants employed in any rural capacity and not restricted to primary production.

The Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship honours the memory of the late Peter, a serving member of the Advisory Board of Agriculture and his wife Wendy who were both killed in a Whyalla plane crash in 2000. The Scholarship acknowledges Peter and his wife Wendy's passion for environmental management and advocates for sustainable farming practices.

Mark Grossman, Chair of the Ag Bureau, says that successful recipients for each award are chosen on their abilities, achievements, vision and motivation for success.

"The Ag Bureau of SA is proud to continue to encourage and support rural youth who are working not only in primary production but in careers that sustain rural communities," said Mr Grossman.

"We encourage all members of the community to nominate and encourage applicants.

"The Bureau also acknowledges the support of both the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and PIRSA, which allows us to provide these prestigious scholarships."

Applications forms are available on the Ag Bureau of SA website at www.agbureau.com.au. Entries close 5pm Monday, 17 September 2018.

Award winners will be presented at the Ag Bureau's Spirit of Excellence Awards Dinner on 18 October.

2017 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Award winners

Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner: Tracy Bonython

Winning the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship for Young Farmers at last year's Spirit of Excellence Awards has been "a huge game changer" for Tracy Bonython and her family business, Bon Chevon, a gourmet goat meat business in the Barossa Valley.

Tracy says that receiving the 2017 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship gave her the confidence in the family's unique business to "really consider what role we can play" as part of the Australian agriculture industry and, more importantly, the Australian goat industry.

The scholarship has enabled Tracy to conduct pasture trials to work towards better practices for grazing goats and more sustainable options; purchase equipment and training; participate in a study tour of Victoria; and create a new housing facility for the Bon Chevon bucks utilising sustainable pasture options including Tagasaste trees.

"The Spirit of Excellence Awards can open doors and create opportunities that you never thought possible," Tracy says. If you are passionate about what you do and want to be a part of a better and more sustainable future for Australian agriculture, then you are the kind of person that should be applying."

Rural Youth Bursary winner – Kayla Starkey

Winning the 2017 Rural Youth Bursary has helped Mount Pleasant's Kayla Starkey to progress her dreams of becoming a secondary agricultural/science teacher.

Growing up on a sheep property at Mount Pleasant, Kayla is highly passionate about teaching youth within the agricultural sector and is currently in her final year of a Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Adelaide. She plans to complete a Masters of Teaching over the next two years to fulfil her dream of qualifying as a secondary educator.

Kayla's winning application for the 2017 Rural Youth Bursary included detailed plans to travel to Launceston in January 2018 to attend the four day National Ag Teachers conference, followed by some on-farm visits to explore the practises of Tasmanian sheep growers.

"Even if you think it's the smallest idea that may help in your community, or help your career in the rural sector, have a go," Kayla said. "I have personally made so many contacts and connections through winning the award that have already benefited me and that I will continue to use throughout my ag teaching career."

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AWARD SPONSORS:

The **Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship** is sponsored by the Department for Environment and Water
The **Rural Youth Bursary** is sponsored by Primary Industries and Regions SA



**Government of
South Australia**