

# HORIZON PROVIDES BIG OPPORTUNITIES FOR AG STUDENT

From learning about holistic station management in the Northern Territory, to poppies in Tasmania, Claudia Raleigh is the first to admit she's been on a steep learning curve in the last couple of years.

The experiences are courtesy of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Horizon Scholarship program, which supports undergraduates studying agriculture at university with a \$5,000 annual bursary, professional development workshops and mentoring, industry work placements and networking opportunities.

Claudia, who is from Cootamundra in NSW, was awarded a Horizon Scholarship in 2013, when she commenced her Agricultural Science course at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga.

"In my first year of university, I just found the ad for Horizon in the newspaper and it looked really good and I thought it would be a good way to give myself a kick-start for university, so I applied," she explains.

"The application process was pretty easy, you just had to answer questions and then I made it into the next round and had a phone interview with a panel of people from RIRDC, and then I got the phone call saying I had received it.

"While the \$5,000 annual bursary is extremely useful, Claudia says there is much more to the program than the financial side.

"We attend an annual workshop in Canberra where they teach us networking skills, how to present ourselves and we talk about current and future issues in agriculture.

"The scholarship holders not only learn from each other, but also from leaders who are already in the agriculture industry - this year we were fortunate enough to meet the Federal Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce and our local Member of Parliament, Angus Taylor, which was really good," Claudia explains.

While Claudia found the workshop in the nations capital to be a great learning experience, it is perhaps the industry placements through the program she values the most.

"I did one industry placement in my first year, which was 2013, in which I went to a cattle station called Coodardie Station near Mataranka in the Northern Territory.

They manage their farm holistically and it was one of the best experiences that I've ever had - I'm from a farm and it's really different to how we, and others in our district, operate," she says.

For her second year industry placement, Claudia will be going to a poppy farm in Tasmania, which will again be a big learning curve.



Claudia Raleigh

"I didn't even know poppy farms existed in Australia - I know nothing about this industry, so I'm really looking forward to learning about it," Claudia says.

"The Horizon Scholarship gives us financial help at university, but it's so much more than that - who else gets to go on industry placements to the Northern Territory and then Tasmania, it's really amazing."

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Claudia is entering her third year of Agricultural Science at Charles Sturt University, and once graduated hopes to complete a Diploma of Education. Her ambition is to become a high school agriculture teacher in rural Australia, a career pathway fully supported by her scholarship sponsor, RIRDC.

"I've learnt so much more than I could have otherwise hoped through the Horizon Scholarship, which will help me as a teacher - the more experience I can get on the ground the better," Claudia said.

Also, just learning about personality types and how to deal with different people has been so valuable - agriculture is so diverse, with the social side, the science side and the business side and I think you really need to know a lot about all of them."

Undergraduates entering their first year of an agriculture-related degree at university are eligible to apply for a scholarship, which will provide:

- A bursary of \$5,000 per year for the duration of their degree
- Opportunities to network and gain knowledge at a range of industry events
- Annual industry work placements giving first-hand exposure to modern agricultural practices
- Professional development workshops

For details on how to apply for a Horizon Scholarship, please visit [www.rirdc.gov.au/horizon](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/horizon), find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @HorizonScholar.

