

# HORIZON OPENS STUDENT'S EYES TO POLICY POSSIBILITIES

With an eye on a career in agricultural policy, Finnlay Cowden couldn't be more pleased to be part of the Horizon Scholarship program and the opportunities it provides thanks to support from the Grains Research and Development Corporation.

Finnlay, from Harden in NSW, is studying an agricultural economics degree at Sydney University, and is looking to move across to an agricultural science degree in 2015.

That decision is in no small part to the impact of Horizon over the last year, a program which supports agriculture students at university with an annual bursary, industry placements, networking and a yearly workshop in Canberra.

"Horizon has certainly already helped shape what I want to do down the track - I would love to take a career path that is involved in policy decisions.

When I first did my degree I was looking more at consultancy, and I still am, but I think an ag science degree caters for both a consultancy role, but also can lead in to policy advisory.

I think the degree accommodates being able to communicate to farmers in the paddock and develop strategy to improve whatever they're producing, but you can also take that further along and be involved in developing policy that can later on help those farmers and regional areas," he explains.

Finnlay's interest in policy has in part stemmed from the annual Horizon workshop held in Canberra, attended by all current scholars.

"Going to the summit definitely opened my eyes to the impact policy makers have, from the Regional Australia Institute all the way to the Ministers.

Seeing those connections and how the policy mechanisms work clicked in really well with the degree that I'm looking at doing," Finnlay says.

As part of the Horizon Scholarship, students are offered industry placements and while Finnlay hasn't been on one yet, he says hearing other students experiences at the workshop was invigorating.

"I don't know if I can say enough about the annual Horizon workshop in Canberra," Finnlay says.

"Talking to other scholars and finding out what they did was just so exciting and encouraging to know that the industry I'm interested in working in is so diverse and can offer so many opportunities.



Finnlay Cowden

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"Going to Canberra with the other scholars and speaking to MP's and Ministers involved in agriculture about the issues that directly affect farmers both big and small was an experience I don't think I'll ever forget - it laid some excellent foundations to build a career on."

While the financial aspect of the Horizon Scholarship is important, Finnlay believes the most attractive element is access to a network of scholars who are like-minded in their passion for agriculture.

"They have very cultivated ideas about the future of agriculture and where they see themselves in that - it was very encouraging to hear there was so many other people who were looking at a very strong and involved career within the agricultural industry.

"I think Horizon is an excellent program, it just takes you that next step in what you want to do - first years come into the program with a molded idea of what agriculture is and they get to speak to the Deputy Prime Minister, I don't know how many scholarship programs there are that provide that sort of opportunity," he said.

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.

