



Jan Cathcart Scholarship 2022

Q & A with Annabel Arnold

Make a Difference

What is your connection to the Australian rice industry?

I grew up on a mixed farming property near Berrigan in the Riverina. My family planted their first rice crop in the early 1970s and my Dad has continued to do so in seasons when water is available for irrigation. I have many fond memories of helping Dad with watering the crop and driving a chaser bin during harvest. We both share a love of birds and loved that growing rice brought hundreds of them to our property, not to mention being able to listen to a chorus of frogs each night.

Why did you apply for the Jan Cathcart Scholarship?

I applied for the Jan Cathcart scholarship because it offered a great way to give back to the rice industry, which has helped provide a livelihood for my family. I was also interested in the potential job opportunities being offered with SunRice as a result of winning the scholarship, which I have taken full advantage of. Jan left the most incredible legacy and I think if I can be half the woman she was, then that would be enough. It is a very special scholarship and one that I and all the other recipients are very proud to be a part of.

How has winning the scholarship assisted your future career plans?

Winning the scholarship has given me the confidence to explore career options, build networks, grow professionally and meet a wide range of inspiring people in the rice industry. It has enabled me to do work experience at SunRice whilst still studying full time at university, giving me the opportunity to work in a range of fields, from Grower Services, to Rice Research Australia Pty Ltd, and within the Consumer Markets team. This has helped me to determine where I want to begin a career and the type of work I enjoy. It has also broadened my knowledge about how businesses work and the type of roles that are out there in the workplace, which is something that isn't taught at university.

Why is this scholarship important to the rice industry?

This scholarship enables young women from rural areas to broaden their horizons and step outside their comfort zones. However, the knowledge and skills that the recipients bring from on farm experience is a huge benefit to the broader industry and SunRice.

How will it help you to support the rice industry/agriculture?

In the past many women were overlooked for their contribution to agriculture and it is great that the rice industry is taking the lead in supporting the smart and clever women we have in our communities. This scholarship has opened my eyes to the possibility of a career in agriculture, and I hope to really make a difference to my wider community in one way or another. The opportunities SunRice faces on the world stage are exciting, however, I hope that I will be able to continue to support our local growers and those that rely on the rice industry here in Australia.

What does the scholarship mean to you?

This scholarship transcends financial help because the opportunities I have been given have motivated me to want to work harder, achieve my career goals in the rice industry and give back to the rice growing community. Receiving this scholarship has made me feel very humbled and proud to be continuing Jan's legacy and the contributions she made to the industry. It is important to never forget where you came from as you travel through life's journey, as it will help in finding out where you really want to be, which the scholarship really supports.

Why would you encourage other women to apply for the scholarship?

I missed out the first time I applied for this scholarship, and I was determined that I would apply again because I could see all the potential opportunities in receiving it. It doesn't matter if you don't have a clear direction of where you want to go with a career. Opportunities arise for people that go out there and seek them. This scholarship is a wonderful opening for women with a connection to the rice industry with a clear interest in agriculture and who want to make a difference to their local community. I can't possibly describe how much this scholarship has opened my eyes in terms of future job prospects and I would seriously encourage young women with a passion for rural Australia and agriculture to apply.