



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **2020 EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURE AWARDS NOW OPEN TO BENEFIT RURAL COMMUNITIES**

The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia has opened its 2020 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards and is seeking nominations from bright young farmers and rural youth who are inspired to make a difference to their community and the agriculture sector!

The Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards provides unique opportunities, including valuable financial support, to motivated individuals who will benefit from personal and professional development to support a successful career in their chosen field.

Award winners are chosen on their abilities, achievements, vision and motivation for success and applications are now being accepted for the following awards:

- The Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship sponsored by Department for Environment and Water (DEW) is an \$8,000 grant for a farmer (aged 18-40) 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 our natural resources.
- The Rural Youth Bursary sponsored by Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) is a \$5,000 grant for rural young people (aged 18-30) working in a rural community, not necessarily in agriculture, to undertake further study in their chosen career with an ultimate benefit to their community. PIRSA is committed to growing primary industries and driving regional development.

The Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship honours the memory of the late Peter Olsen, a serving member of the Advisory Board of Agriculture who was 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 careful consideration is given to select the successful recipient for each award, ensuring they are motivated to succeed and deeply driven to support their local communities.

"The Ag Bureau of SA is proud to support and encourage the career development of our rural youth, not just in primary production and agriculture but areas that are absolutely critical in sustaining our rural communities," Mr Grossman said.

“We are encouraging members of South Australia’s rural communities to consider who they can nominate or, if they ARE the passionate young farmer or rural youth committed to pursuing their dreams, to self-nominate. We want to hear your ideas on building or supporting sustainable rural communities and we urge you to apply today!”

“The Bureau gratefully acknowledges the support of both the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA), which allows us to provide these prestigious scholarships to young South Australian farmers and rural youth.”

**Applications for the 2020 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards are open until 5pm on Wednesday September 30, 2020.**

To find out more and apply: [www.agbureau.com.au/awards](http://www.agbureau.com.au/awards) or call (08) 8249 7581. The 2020 awards will be presented at the Agricultural Bureau of SA’s annual Spirit of Excellence Awards Dinner at the Arkaba Hotel on Friday October 23, 2020.

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**AWARD SPONSORS:**

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



## **2019 Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Award winners**

### **Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship winner: Paul McGorman**

Committed to developing a suitable farming model for his family's farming business, Paul McGorman's winning 2019 Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship application comprised environmental, economic and social sustainability property practices.

Together with his wife Kimberley, brother Alex and sister-in-law Fiona, Paul runs 'St Ives', a 2,700 acre property at Parndana on Kangaroo Island which they were running ewes on before December's double tragedy hit the family. Paul and Alex lost their dad just two weeks before the bushfires ravaged the island and burnt out 25 percent of their property.

Experiencing grief, traumatic bushfire recovery efforts and the COVID-19 pandemic, Paul could have easily pushed his plans for permanent irrigation, a hazelnut orchard inoculated with French black truffle, grasses and containment yards for livestock aside.

Instead, he doubled down on his desk-based research efforts to progress the strategic design of his business model for St Ives and, thanks to online webinars, continued to build his knowledge in truffle growing, soil integrity and regenerative practices as well as expanding his valuable network of farmers and consultants.

"Winning the Sustainable Agriculture Scholarship in the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards has been a big motivation for me," said Paul. "Given the year we've had, with dad passing away and then the fire, it would have been easy to let my plans slip, but the scholarship and timeline have been great to keep things moving along."

Paul says the awards are an opportunity to create connections and a great motivator if you have a project you are clear about.

"Applying for the Spirit of Excellence in Agriculture Awards is very straight forward. It's a smooth and simple process and if you know what you want to get out of it, the award can help you to achieve results."

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### **Rural Youth Bursary winner – Grace Sampson, Nairne**

For Rural Youth Bursary winner Grace Sampson, of Nairne, her love of agriculture and enthusiasm to inspire and educate South Australia's young people motivated her winning application.

Two weeks after winning the award, Grace was offered the role of Agriculture/Science teacher at not one, but two regional high schools. Thrilled to accept the position at Murray Bridge High School, Grace has been busy integrating agriculture in to the school's curriculum to provide students with "a more solid foundation" to agriculture education.

"I finally landed the job that I was looking for and needed in order to support my idea of the educational program," said Grace. "I'm completely surrounded in the educational sector and I'm gathering all the pieces to keep building on my ideas."

Grace used the \$5,000 Rural Youth Bursary to attend the National Ag Teachers Conference in January where she met many like-minded people and met connections 'in all the right places'. She learned what other teachers are delivering and identified gaps that need filling.

There were a number of other courses Grace had lined up for 2020, however they have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19 and she will participate in these when the opportunities arise.

"On the whole, applying for and winning the Rural Youth Bursary has been so positive for my career and has helped me land a job I'm loving. I'm determined to keep the momentum going and carry things further to help boost positive attitudes towards agriculture."