



MEDIA RELEASE – Thursday July 23, 2017

Esperance student wins scholarship to raise awareness of depression

From a young age, Darcie Yeend loved farms and the outdoors and it was this passion that led her to study a Bachelor of Agribusiness at Marcus Oldham College in Geelong. After leaving high school in year 11, Darcie returned to study as a mature age student and she is now excelling in her second year at the university.

Darcie is this year's worthy winner of the Rob Ashman Memorial Scholarship which will help to fund her studies and reduce financial pressure for her. The scholarship, which is sponsored by Hassad Australia and the South East Premium Wheat Growers' Association (SEPWA), was developed to raise the awareness of depression in rural Australia and support capacity building in agriculture.

It is targeted at young people who are passionate about agriculture, with a keen interest in the future of the industry and who are ready to expand their networks and learn new skills.

It is in honour of Rob Ashman who sadly took his life in 2015 after suffering from depression for many years. Rob managed properties for Hassad Australia and was also an active member of SEPWA.

The winner of the scholarship will be announced at the SEPWA Harvest Review, this Friday (24th) in Esperance, by Tony Stringer from Hassad Australia.

21 year-old Darcie said as a young teenager she loved spending time with her step father on their Gibson property and she has continued to be attracted to the industry - working with CBH and on farms to save money to study.

Darcie said the financial support from the scholarship was very welcome since she was at university 5 days a week and she also supported herself by working two jobs and saving while working at home on holidays.

Darcie said this scholarship's aim to raise awareness of depression in rural Australia was something she could relate to, since she had suffered depression herself in recent years and knew of many others who had also. She had gained new confidence and a sense of achievement through her studies and this had helped her to find motivation which had changed her life.

"While Esperance is a tight knit community, farming can be very isolating," she said. "Raising awareness, removing the stigma around depression, admitting that you are not ok and making sure there is always someone to talk to is very important."

The scholarship, which is available to a commencing or current undergraduate student studying agriculture related fields at university, provides a bursary of \$3500 and the opportunity to work with SEPWA for a work experience.

The Rob Ashman Memorial Scholarship will be open on an annual basis, for more information is available on the SEPWA website www.sepwa.org.au.

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Photo caption – Darcie Yeend is congratulated by Hassad Chief Executive Officer, John McKillop at Marcus Oldham College.

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