

IRRIGATORS WELCOME FIRST INDUSTRY INTERN (26 April 2016)

The NSW Irrigators Council (NSWIC) has welcomed its first Industry Intern under a new Irrigation Sector Scholarship & Internship Program, launched this year in association with Charles Sturt University (CSU). The first NSWIC Irrigation Sector Industry Intern is 4th Year Agricultural Science student, Jessica Kirkpatrick, who hails from her family's livestock and cropping property in South Western Victoria. Jessica is an undergraduate at CSU Wagga.

The Scholarship-Internship program, which is backed by a \$5000 scholarship fund for the successful candidate, is designed to build a deeper understanding of industry water policies and issues amongst young agriculturalists and natural resources managers, with a view to building irrigation sector knowledge.

NSWIC Chief Executive Mark McKenzie said the launch of the Program recognises that the irrigation sector in NSW needs to begin bringing a new generation of potential policy officers, regional irrigator organisation executive officers, organisation leaders in the regions, and more water policy knowledgeable irrigators through the ranks.

"While it does not mean that every intern who participates in the program over the coming years will end up working in or running irrigation sector organisations, it will mean that our sector's profile amongst undergraduates and masters students will increase, in line with our exposing more university students to the issues and policies affecting irrigators across NSW. Over the longer term we trust that the program will give us more water and irrigation sector policy-savvy people who may consider a career in water policy, and have grassroots policy experience to draw on, as well as boosting the understanding how important irrigated agriculture is to Australia."

Inaugural Intern, Jessica Kirkpatrick, concludes her initial placement with NSWIC in Sydney on Friday April 22, and will spend the next 5 weeks working with Policy Managers at Cotton Australia and Rice Growers Association of Australia; ahead of a placement with one of the irrigation corporations in the Murrumbidgee region later in the year. As well as developing her knowledge of rural water related issues and policy development in the irrigation sector Jessica has commenced work on a research project designed to improve the engagement of irrigators with environmental watering programs, which she will present at CSU in October.

ENDS

Approved: RS/TG

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