



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



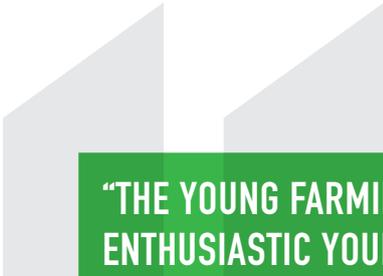
“IT’S A SIMPLE IDEA: WE ALL DO BETTER WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER AND INVEST IN OUR FUTURE.”

ELIZABETH WARREN



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“THE YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS PROGRAM ATTRACTS ENTHUSIASTIC YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE. PUBLIC SPEAKING AND MEDIA TRAINING ARE STANDOUT SKILLS THAT THEY HAVE USED TO ADVANCE VISIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL ISSUES. PARTICIPANTS LISTED MULTIPLE ORGANISATIONS THEY HAVE JOINED, OFTEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS, SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS, AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT HAVE COME ABOUT BECAUSE OF THE PROGRAM. THIS IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE PROGRAM IS HAVING A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR CAREERS AS WELL AS IN AGRICULTURE MORE BROADLY.”

ELIZABETH WARREN

INTRODUCTION

Through [Art4Agriculture's](#) acclaimed [Young Farming Champions](#) program Australia's agricultural youth have gathered to share their journeys, to influence their future and to engage with the community and the next generation.

Schools and communities across Australia are meeting with the diversity of young people from sixth generation farmers to city-kids who have chosen agriculture as the place they want to be. There are Young Farming Champions who have grown up on remote arid stations, on vast cropping plains, on coastal hobby farms and in suburban streets, but no matter their background all have been drawn to the opportunities and innovation provided by Australian agriculture.

Today these Young Farming Champions are employed across the spectrum of agricultural careers. They have become agronomists, researchers, business owners, veterinarians, and budding politicians. You will find them growing cotton on outback lake-beds, developing new varieties of wheat or new methods of animal pain relief, selling Australian beef to the world, breeding coloured sheep, advising government on agricultural policy and assisting the planet's poorest to improve farming practices.

The Young Farming Champions are determined to influence their future. They have attended international climate change conferences and organised youth movements within Landcare. They have travelled to China and Hong Kong to follow the wool and moved motions within industry bodies to change regulatory direction. And for their efforts they have been rewarded. You will meet an Australian Young Farmer of the Year, Rising Beef Champions and Young Australian of the Year Finalists. You will see multiple show ribbons for excellence and meet RAS Rural Achievers.

For all they have achieved, and are achieving, perhaps their greatest legacy will be changing perceptions of agriculture by engaging with the community and the next generation and telling the positive stories. You will find them in schools with The Archibull Prize or on Facebook sharing the progress of a cotton crop. At the Sydney Royal Easter Show they will be talking about grains and biofuels, and at gala dinners they will be promoting the benefits of good grazing management.

These Young Farming Champions really are remarkable young Australians. We invite you to step inside, share their stories and celebrate all that is good in agriculture.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Art4Agriculture is a network of young people who share a passion to tell others about the pivotal role Australian farmers play in feeding the world.

Art4Agriculture has a vision for agriculture that is full of promise. We want an innovative, exciting, dynamic and profitable agrifood sector, a sector that our next generation's best and brightest see as a career of first choice.

The Archibull Prize and the Young Farming Champions are our signature programs. The Archibull Prize is a project-based learning program for schools. It is designed to give young people in schools the opportunity to connect face to face with farmers and young people working in agriculture. This program fosters vibrant conversations and allows the farmer and young people to work together to develop ways to co-create a bright future for Australia.

The Young Farming Champions program seeks out and trains our best and brightest and dynamic young agricultural professionals.

We develop their skills to enable them to share their ideas, dreams and motivations with their host schools.

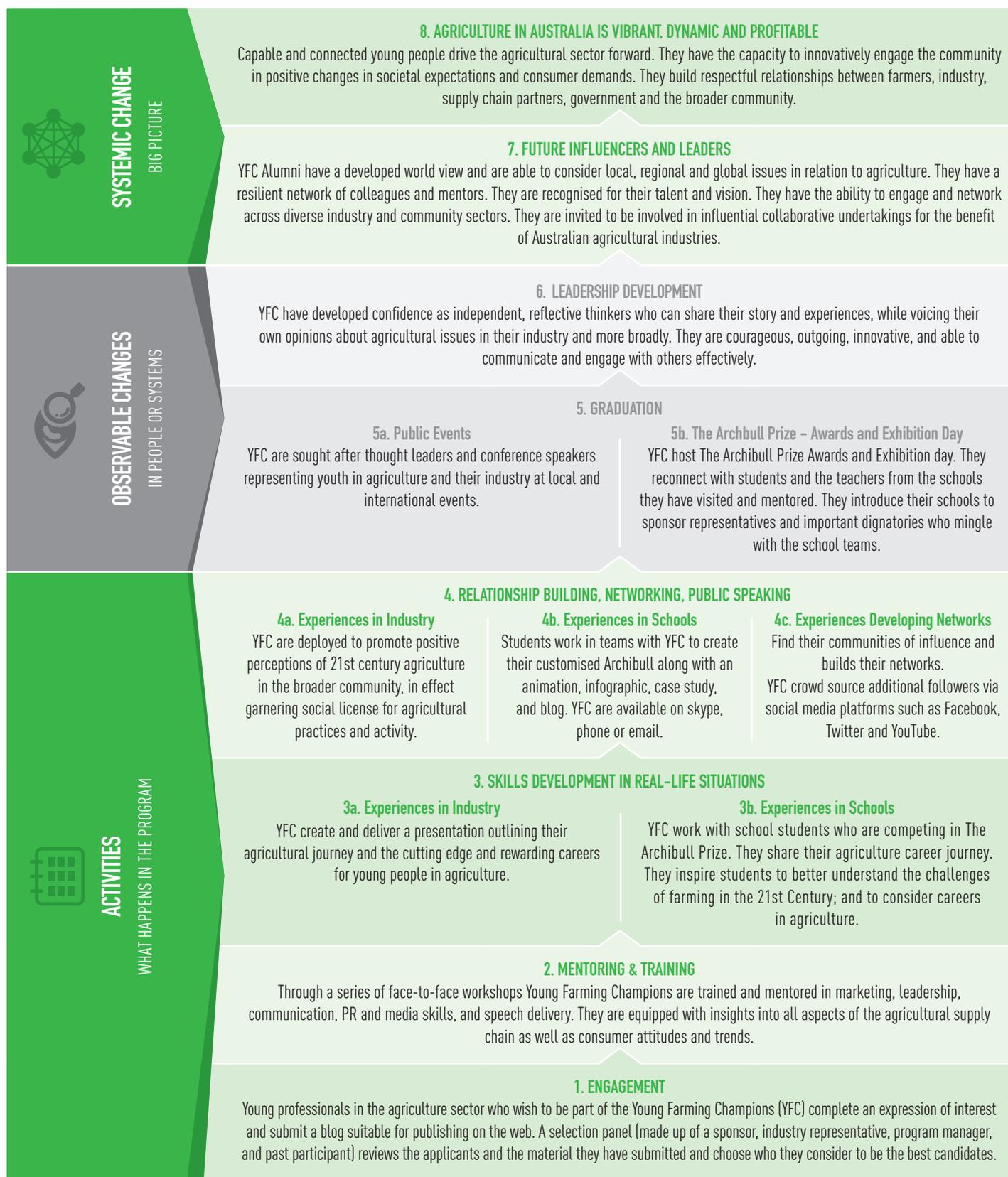
They promote positive images and perceptions of farming and, because they are young, can relate to students and are adept at breaking down stereotypes of farming and agricultural careers.

Taking part in the Young Farming Champions program involves undertaking a series of workshops under the mentorship of some of Australia's finest communication, marketing and professional development experts. The program's focus is developing confident, independent, reflective thinkers who can share their story and their personal experiences, while voicing their own opinions about agricultural issues in their industry and more broadly.

The outcomes and impacts of Art4Agriculture programs are measured through extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis. In the last five years, the programs and their key messages have reached over 160,000 students in schools, almost two million people through exhibitions and close to 2.6 million people through print, TV and radio coverage yearly.

See The Archibull Prize Annual Report [HERE](#).

THE YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS HIERARCHY OF INTENDED OUTCOMES



MEET OUR 2017 YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS

OUR 2017 YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS WERE SUPPORTED BY:



Back Row L to R Sam Wan, Emma Longworth, Meg Rice, Joe Banks, Hamish McGrath, Nellie Evans, Jessica Lehmann, Caitlin Heppner,
Front Row L to R Deanna Johnston, Annicka Brosnan, Katherine Bain, Lucy Collingridge



SAM WAN

As a first generation Australian-born Chinese from Western Sydney Sam Wan's stereotypical career may have been accountant, doctor or lawyer. Wool broker probably didn't make the list. Sam is the first to admit she didn't know much about agriculture growing up but the combination of a great high school teacher, keen classmates and a mob of black Corriedales opened up an entirely new world.

With an agricultural degree from The University of Sydney, cross-institutional wool units from The University of New England and a hands-on certificate from TAFE, Sam set about crafting her future and her career as a technical officer and auctioneer for Elders Wool, based at the National Wool Selling Centre in Melbourne.

"My teachers and mentors enriched my life," Sam says. "From them I drew direction into an incredibly rewarding, constantly evolving industry. By sharing my passion for an industry that adopted such a black sheep, it might open the eyes of someone who didn't think agriculture was the place for them."

[READ SAM'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



EMMA LONGWORTH

With a plethora of schools to choose from for her secondary education in north-west Sydney, Emma Longworth was attracted to one with the novelty of a school farm. Through school programs such as The Archibull Prize and involvement with the Sydney Royal Easter Show Emma has seen this novelty bloom into a genuine passion and has even moved to the country in Armidale to study agriculture at university.

"As a young person from the city I am looking forward to inspiring other city kids to follow my career journey into agriculture," Emma says. "I want to share with them you don't need to buy a farm to farm and you don't even need to be a farmer. Everyone in the agricultural sector has an important role to play."

So where does Emma see herself at the end of her degree? "Anywhere," she says. "With five jobs for every agricultural graduate the opportunities are endless."

[READ EMMA'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



MEG RICE

Agriculture may sometimes be perceived as hooning around on motorbikes and horses, tending animals and growing crops but Meg Rice is attracted to the policy and legal issues that make the industry tick.

Growing up on a livestock ad cropping property in the central west of NSW Meg was encouraged to pursue an agricultural career by her father. "Dad has always encouraged my sisters and I to be involved in agriculture and to consider why certain things happen the way they do," Meg says. "We were often quizzed on car trips about the varying agricultural practises and have all developed quite a knack for spotting weeds when driving around the property!"

Now at UNE studying a Bachelor of Agriculture and Law Meg has aspirations of using legal, consultancy and policy knowledge for the betterment of agriculture as a whole.

[READ MEG'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



JOE BANKS

Joe Banks from Dirranbandi in Queensland remembers his early years dominated by drought as he and his family moved their sheep along stock routes in a bid for survival. In fact the vagaries of weather and a changing climate were to be catalysts for his career in agriculture.

“As with a lot of eastern Australia we were hit with some pretty severe droughts in the early 2000s. We stopped dryland cropping and planted saltbush into the old cropping land to act as a fodder buffer for dry times so that we could continue to carry most of our sheep,” Joe says. “It is innovative practices such as this, and cell grazing, that drove me to seek out further knowledge, education and experiences in agriculture.”

Joe has since expanded his agricultural knowledge, education and experience: working on remote northern Australian cattle stations and live cattle export ships, and studying a Bachelor of Agribusiness at Marcus Oldham College; all experiences that have contributed to his current role as Commercial Analyst for NAPCO.

[READ JOE'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



HAMISH MCGRATH

Hamish McGrath's early education was sporadic as he gave his mother the slip from distance education classes to follow his father around their 36,000 acre Merino operation at The Marra in Western NSW. Then as time passed it was the attractions of city life and rugby that held his attention. But now in his fourth year of an agricultural science degree at Sydney University Hamish realises wool, and the farm, are integral to his future.

“I have begun to see how few young people are interested in returning to the wool industry, chasing the dollars of cotton and mining, or leaving agriculture all together for life in the city. It really worries me that some of the most comprehensive knowledge and best farming practices in the world will be lost with Australia's aging farmers. What will be left then?” Hamish asks.

Hamish understands the long days and hard work associated with sheep and has experienced the pull of an urban lifestyle but it is a career in agriculture where his heart lies.

[READ HAMISH'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



NELLIE EVANS

As a fourth year agricultural science student at The University of Sydney Nellie Evans has taken a circuitous route to the world of cotton agronomy. As a youngster she wrestled steers with her brother and exhibited horses at Royal Agricultural shows before studying landscape architecture and obtaining her heavy rigid truck licence. But ready for her next challenge – “the one I should have always started out with” she says – she found cotton on the plains of Warren, Gunnedah and Bourke.

“The cotton industry is really at the forefront of research and development as they face a future of climate, social and market based challenges,” Nellie says. “I've also been fortunate to see the policy side of agriculture with NSW Farmers, livestock auctioning with Elders and U.S cropping and agronomy with GrainGrowers Australia.”

“Each experience I am privileged to be a part of directs my future towards research agronomy.”

[READ NELLIE'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



JESS LEHMANN

Born into a family of cotton luminaries in grandfather Vic Melbourne and father Chris Lehmann, Jess Lehmann has a genetic attraction to rural Australia. She grew up on the family farm at Narrabri and with her father's words of support ringing in her ears Jess set on a path of innovation and agricultural research.

Working with the NSW DPI, The University of New England and the Australian Research Council and learning from mentors along the way, Jess believes we can deliver environmentally sustainable and ethical agriculture.

"When I reflect on the work I am doing and the work I've done, I am always amazed by the various people and bodies who contribute to our agricultural sector," Jess says. "Whether it's farmers, contractors, researchers, scientists, policy developers, or agronomists; everyone is a part of the overall equation and everyone will benefit from future agricultural research."

[READ JESS' BLOG POST HERE](#)



CAITLIN HEPPNER

"I Belong Here" - the title of her 2014 poem reflects Caitlin Heppner's love and sense of place in the Australian wool industry.

Born and bred in the Barossa surrounded by grapes may have directed Caitlin to a career in viticulture, but a chance meeting with the Australian Shearing and Wool Handling team changed her life forever. "I remember sitting on the catching pen rails, watching everyone, totally engrossed in the atmosphere," she says. "And the feel of the wool and the pungent aroma of the lanolin felt like home. In that moment I knew my life would revolve around the wool industry."

Caitlin completed her secondary education with a traineeship leading to an Australian Woolclasser's stencil, is the 2016 State Champion Merino Fleece Junior Judge, a Long Tan Award recipient, and is planning a political advocacy campaign called Farmers Not Forgotten.

[READ CAITLIN'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



DEANNA JOHNSTON

Deanna Johnston describes herself as a rookie farmer, which is an oxymoron considering her life spent amongst the fleece. From sleeping in the wool bins at shearing time, to running the long-blow on a Coolalee ram before she started primary school, Deanna has a solid start to a career in wool.

She has worked with breeding stud stock and shown sheep. She has a certificate in woolclassing and competes in shearing and wool handling competitions. She has participated in the National Merino Challenge and in 2014 was runner-up in the National Young Guns competition at LambEX in Adelaide.

As part of the Young Guns Competition Deanna wrote an essay on attracting young people to the industry; a topic close to her heart. "Young people are the future of a successful wool industry through the whole supply chain from the sheep's back to yours," she says, "and I am lucky I will be a part of that future."

[READ DEANNA'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



KATHERINE BAIN

Five generations of sheep farmers before her have inspired Katherine Bain to look to a future with wool. Growing up on the family farm at Stockyard Hill, Victoria, Katherine took charge of her future at an early age – establishing the St Enoch Coopworth Stud at the age of 14.

But it wasn't until 2012, when she did a Rotary Exchange year to Japan, that she really began to understand the global interest in Australian wool. "My time in Japan was fascinating," she says. "I found a society with a strong sense of tradition and appreciation for quality. Wool clothing is a staple in their wardrobes and I came to understand the importance of ensuring Australian products meet consumer expectation."

Grounding herself with industry experience with exposure to wool brokerage, scouring and testing, and as a wool classer, Katherine is now in her second year at Marcus Oldham College working towards a career in commodity trading.

[READ KATHERINE'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



ANNICKA BROSNAN

Although Annicka Brosnan grew up on a hydroponic lettuce farm it was never suggested to her that she consider agriculture as a career, which explains why she found herself somewhat lost at university studying biomedical science, Spanish and geography.

"Nothing was fitting," Annicka says, until she did a geography module on agriculture. "Like any 18 year-old with an epiphany I rang Mum and rambled non-stop for about 15 minutes and declared with absolute certainty I wanted to study agriculture."

Annicka has now changed degrees and is studying agriculture externally from the family farm. She is learning the ins and outs of running a business, engaging with the public at farmers markets and consulting with industry to manage quality issues.

"Working in agriculture no longer means returning to the family place for life," she says. "I feel like I am at the beginning of an exciting career that could take me anywhere."

[READ ANNICKA'S BLOG POST HERE](#)



LUCY COLLINGRIDGE

A self-confessed townie Lucy Collingridge did not think her career would lie with wool until she was introduced to shearing, at age 15, and fell in love with wool. Returning to the farm each school holidays she immersed herself in all aspects of the industry "because there is no better feeling than being on the land, out in nature, and enjoying your surrounds," Lucy says. "Whether it be drenching mobs or harvesting paddocks, it is a very rewarding feeling to look back on your productive day on the farm."

Lucy turned to studying agriculture, initially at high school and then at university, and became involved in agricultural shows where, through sheep and junior fleece judging, she learnt more about the fibre. "I have met many people from all walks of life, who have all welcomed me with open arms. I cannot recommend being involved with the sheep and wool industry highly enough."

[READ LUCY'S BLOG POST HERE](#)

MEET THE YOUTH VOICES LEADERSHIP TEAM

The YVLT sees the Young Farming Champions program take the next step from leadership development to leadership practice roles.

We are very excited about this initiative and look forward to seeing the team thrive and build strong relationships.

The YVLT will mentor and support the Young Farming Champions program and provide an agricultural youth leadership voice to the community, media and industry.

The Youth Voices Leadership Team are recognised thought leaders in their fields of expertise. They deeply understand the needs of young people in the agriculture sector and the broader marketplace in which they operate. They are generous with their time and the determination to pay it forward, they have the vision and the commitment to enhance their ability to cultivate conversations, speak widely and build a physical and online presence around key ideas.

The YVLT will share their perspective and experience about:

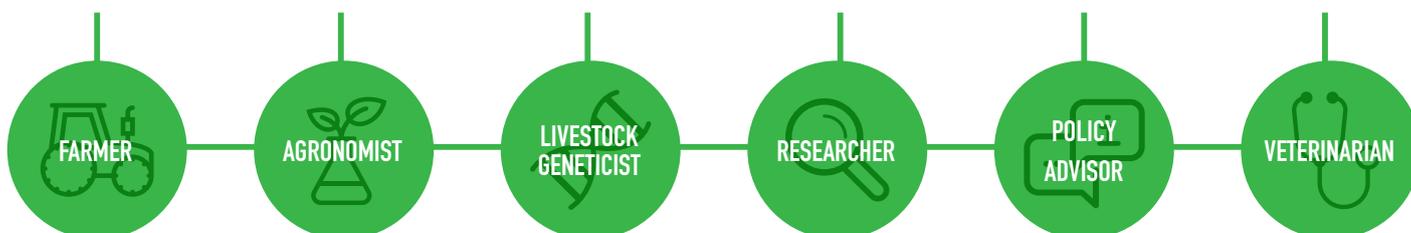
- What is front of mind and important to young people in their personal, work and study environment.
- The contemporary challenges and opportunities for young people.

The YVLT will help ensure the Young Farming Champions program design is:

- Flexible in that it fits in with young peoples' real-life challenges be they in personal, study or work settings.
- Contemporary in meeting personal leadership challenges.

Meet the team [HERE](#).

THE YOUTH VOICES LEADERSHIP TEAM ARE DIVERSE AGRIBUSINESS PROFESSIONALS



MEET THE YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS EVENTS TEAM

Our Young Farming Champions have trained with some of Australia's finest communication, marketing and professional development experts, and are equipped with the skills to design and deliver paddock to plate agriculture education activities.

Our Event Activation Team work with primary and secondary schools as part of [The Archibull Prize](#), and with organisations such as the [RAS of NSW](#) and Local Land Services.

We cover a range of agricultural industries, so let's meet the team:

REPRESENTING WOOL ARE PETA BRADLEY, DIONE HOWARD, LUCY COLLINGRIDGE AND DEANNA JOHNSTON.

[Peta](#) grew up amongst sheep on her family's New Armatree Border Leicester Stud in northern NSW, where she gained a life-long appreciation for wool. She completed a Bachelor of Rural Science at the University of New England in 2017 and is now a development officer with MERINOSELECT. Peta has been involved with event activation at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

[Dione](#) also grew up surrounded by sheep on her family's Illawarra Merino Stud in the Riverina and is currently in her final year of study at Charles Sturt University, from where she will graduate as a veterinarian. Her expertise covers areas such as animal production, welfare communication and animal biosecurity. Dione has been involved with event activation at the Sydney Royal Easter Show and presented to the Australian Agriculture Roundtable Conference in 2017.

[Lucy](#) is a self-confessed townie but grew to love the wool industry after she was introduced to shearing at age 15. She furthered her interest in the industry through involvement with agricultural shows and completed a Bachelor of Agriculture, before joining NSW Local Land Services where she now works as a biosecurity officer. Lucy has presented to Local Land Services stakeholder groups.

As a child, [Deanna](#) slept in wool bins during shearing and could run the long blow on a Coolalee ram before she started primary school. She has a certificate in woolclassing and competes in national shearing and wool handling competitions. Deanna works with the public on a daily basis as she runs shearing demonstrations for tourists with Outback Pioneers in Longreach.



REPRESENTING HORTICULTURE IS TAYLA FIELD

[Tayla](#) grew up in Sydney and, from an environmental background, developed an interest in agriculture at university. After completing a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, and recognising environment and agriculture work hand in hand for a common goal, Tayla now works as a graduate agronomist with One Harvest. Tayla has presented for the Growing Leaders 2017 Get Vegged project.

REPRESENTING GRAINS IS MARLEE LANGFIELD

Inspired by her father and, with a strong succession plan in place, Marlee is on track to take over management of her family's cereal cropping farm near Cowra. In preparing herself for the role she has completed a Certificate III in Agriculture and Diploma in Management and in 2015 was the Western NSW Trainee of the Year. Marlee has worked with the Cowra Show Society and has presented to students as part of The Archibull Prize.

REPRESENTING SOIL IS EMMA LONGWORTH

City girl [Emma](#) was exposed to agriculture through her school's involvement with The Archibull Prize and the Sydney Royal Easter Show. She is now studying a Bachelor of Rural Science in Armidale. Emma presented her story to dignitaries and attendees at the 2017 Archibull Prize Awards Ceremony.

REPRESENTING THE COTTON INDUSTRY ARE EMMA AYLIFFE AND SHARNA HOLMAN

[Emma](#) grew up tailing wild merinos on station country between Port Augusta and Coober Pedy but transferred her agricultural dreams to agronomy when she studied a Bachelor of Agricultural Science. She has worked with cotton on the lakebeds of Menindee and as a cotton consultant with Elders, and now runs her own agronomy business. Emma has presented at various industry functions including Local Land Services, and to students as part of The Archibull Prize.

[Sharna](#) is another past student of The Archibull Prize who credits the program for influencing her decision to study agriculture. Graduating with a Bachelor of Science Sharna now works as a development extension officer with the Queensland Government. Sharna has appeared in a [series of videos](#) promoting farm hygiene in the cotton industry.

REPRESENTING THE EGG INDUSTRY IS JASMINE WITTEN

[Jasmine](#) grew up on a mixed farm near Tamworth, asking questions of anyone who would stand still. She has since continued to expand her broad knowledge of agriculture through shows, meat judging competitions and work as a jillaroo in northern Australia. Today Jasmine, studying a Bachelor of Rural Science at UNE, has found her niche in the egg industry. At the Sydney Royal Easter Show she will run workshops with junior "egg farmers", teaching them about egg quality and safety and encouraging them to ask questions of their own.

Watch the 2017 video of Sydney Royal Easter Show Primary School Preview Day featuring Wool Young Farming Champions Peta Bradley and Dione Howard [HERE](#).

In 2018 we are expanding our partnership with the RAS of NSW to include a Careers Workshop for Secondary School Students at the Sydney Royal Easter Show featuring eight of our Young Farming Champions.



YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS WHO GOT A CALL FROM THE COUNTRY

The Young Farming Champions Program is not just for rural youth with a background in agriculture but consistently attracts those from urban areas.



TAYLA FIELD

Tayla Field grew up in Sydney and did not come into contact with agriculture until she was at university studying environmental science. She quickly changed her degree to a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and in 2017 commenced work as a graduate agronomist for salad grower OneHarvest.



SAM WAN

Sam Wan is an Australian-born Chinese from the western suburbs of Sydney whose first memories of lamb are of her Dad putting it into a herbal soup. She was introduced to agriculture at high school where a great teacher, keen classmates and a mixed bunch of black Corriedale sheep opened up a world of ag shows, sheep classes and junior judging. Sam went on to study a degree in agriculture and for the last five years has been working as a wool broker for Elders in Melbourne.



SHARNA HOLMAN

Sharna Holman, another Sydney girl, found agriculture through Muirfield High School, when the school participated in one of the earliest runnings of The Archibull Prize and competed in the district exhibits at the Royal Easter Show. Sharna took this passion to university, was awarded a Cotton Australia scholarship in 2014 and now works with the cotton industry at Emerald in central Queensland.



EMMA LONGWORTH

Emma Longworth is following in Sharna's footsteps, having attended the same highschool, being involved with The Archibull and the Sydney Royal Easter Show. In 2016 she stepped out of her comfort zone and went to Armidale to study agriculture at the University of New England, where she is thriving as she joins committees such as Farming Futures – a convention showcasing careers in agriculture.



LUCY COLLINGRIDGE

Lucy Collingridge is a self-confessed townie who was introduced to agriculture when she was given a job in a shearing shed when on school holidays. Visiting on further holidays she learnt about sowing, harvesting, lamb marking and mustering and realised she had found her career direction. After studying a Bachelor of Agriculture Lucy now works with NSW Local Land Services as a Biosecurity Officer.

“Marlee Langfield taught us about biosecurity in the grain industry. We also met Ms Stephanie Fowler. She inspired me the most. I am quite interested in science, so her presentation was quite memorable for me.”

WOOL

I was really interested to learn more about the wool industry as I was not very knowledgeable on this topic. The farmer was intriguing and educated me on how important the wool industry is in Australia. It was also great to learn from a farmer that was a girl.

DAIRY

Our Young Farming Champion was a Geneticist and she worked with animals to change the way they are bred to increase the amount of milk they give us.

YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS INSPIRING STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY AND CONSIDER EXCITING CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

Whilst agriculture offers exciting, diverse and challenging career roles, little of this comes across in the current vocabulary used to describe jobs in the agricultural sector and in the way the industry is depicted in the media and popular culture. The language typically used in the farming sector to describe the roles of people employed in the industry is out-dated and reflects a mindset which is unattractive to young people.

The Archibull Prize program entry surveys reflect this outdated image of careers in agriculture with students struggling to identify careers in the sector beyond farming related activities. Most of the students’ words were about activities that farmers did i.e. feeding, harvesting, gardening, shearing, milking, watering.



With 80% of careers supporting farmers both beyond and behind the farmgate, year on year The Archibull Prize evaluation shows us the key to success is exposing teachers and students to exciting young professionals working in diverse roles in the agriculture sector. A key hook for both teachers and students is the innovation, science and technology that drives 21st century farming. It is also pivotal agriculture provides them with the tools to workshop the diversity of careers.



YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARDS

During 2017 our Young Farming Champions were recognised by government, industry and community through awards and scholarships.



JO NEWTON

Jo Newton won the Dairy Symposium Emerging Scientist Award for her work as a research geneticist with the Gardiner Dairy Foundation initiated project, ImProving Herds. "The project is demonstrating the impact investing in genetics and herd improvement has on the bottom line for dairy farmers," Jo said. "For example, the project has recently been able to show cows sired by high genetic merit bulls make greater contributions to farm profit over their lifetime than other cows do."

The Emerging Scientist Award is voted on by all symposium attendees, the majority of whom are farmers and Jo feels her training with the YFC helped her to convey complex scientific research in a manner that was engaging and easily understood. "My presentation included props like blow-up cows, rubber gloves and even an alarm clock and since the symposium I have been asked to deliver the same talk to different groups."

Jo was also awarded an Endeavour Research Fellowship, which will allow her to undertake study, research and professional development with The Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland during 2018. See the full story [HERE](#).



MEG RICE

Meg Rice was selected as a [RAS Rural Achiever](#), in a leadership program run by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. The program acknowledges the achievements and aspirations of young people and provides an opportunity for them to further skills and form connections that will assist them to ensure the prosperity of rural communities and the agriculture industry.

As part of her role as a Rural Achiever Meg will meet rural leaders and attend functions during the 2018 Sydney Royal Easter Show. "I wanted to become a Rural Achiever as it presents many opportunities to develop skills and meet new people," she said. "I also believe it will allow me to network and learn from agricultural industry leaders and delegates and will be a fabulous opportunity to learn more about rural and regional Australia."

"The Rural Achiever program emulates the aims of the Young Farming Champion program through the empowerment of young people to promote all that rural communities and the agricultural industry have to offer. The training that YFC provided me with allowed me to confidently articulate my thoughts throughout the application and interview process for Rural Achiever."



PETA BRADLEY

Peta Bradley attended the 2017 Australian Wool and Sheep Show in Bendigo and was awarded the national title of Young Stud Master, the first time the award has been conferred on a woman. This award is a celebration of the best and brightest young people working in all aspects of the sheep industry.

Peta received the award for her dedication to the sheep industry, which includes pursuing a career with MERINOSELECT while still significantly contributing to her family's Border Leicester stud at Armatree in New South Wales.



EMMA TURNER

Emma Turner was another multiple award winning Young Farming Champion. In 2017 she and fellow YFC Hamish McGrath were two of four finalists in the inaugural NSW Landmark Merino Scholarship, with Emma announced as the winner in August. She was identified by the judges as epitomising "our best, most passionate and committed young Merino people."

Emma, a 2014 YFC who remains active in the program as an alumni visiting schools as part of The Archibull Prize, received \$2000 towards tertiary education tuition as part of the scholarship, which will go towards the purchase of text books and study material.

Emma was also awarded an Australian Wool Education Trust Undergraduate Scholarship, valued at \$6000, to support her university studies in 2018, an accomplishment achieved by YFC Max Edwards in 2017.



FELICITY TAYLOR

Felicity Taylor completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Sydney in 2017 with the assistance from a tertiary scholarship from NSW Farmers. Worth \$4000 the NSW Farmers Scholarships support students they believe are committed to the future of agriculture and rural communities.

The scholarship "helped me take up extension opportunities, notably a work placement with the US Department of Agriculture in Texas during August 2017," Felicity said. "I will commence a Graduate Program with Rabobank in March 2018 and look forward to staying in close contact with the NSW Farmers Association as my career progresses."

YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS IN THE MEDIA

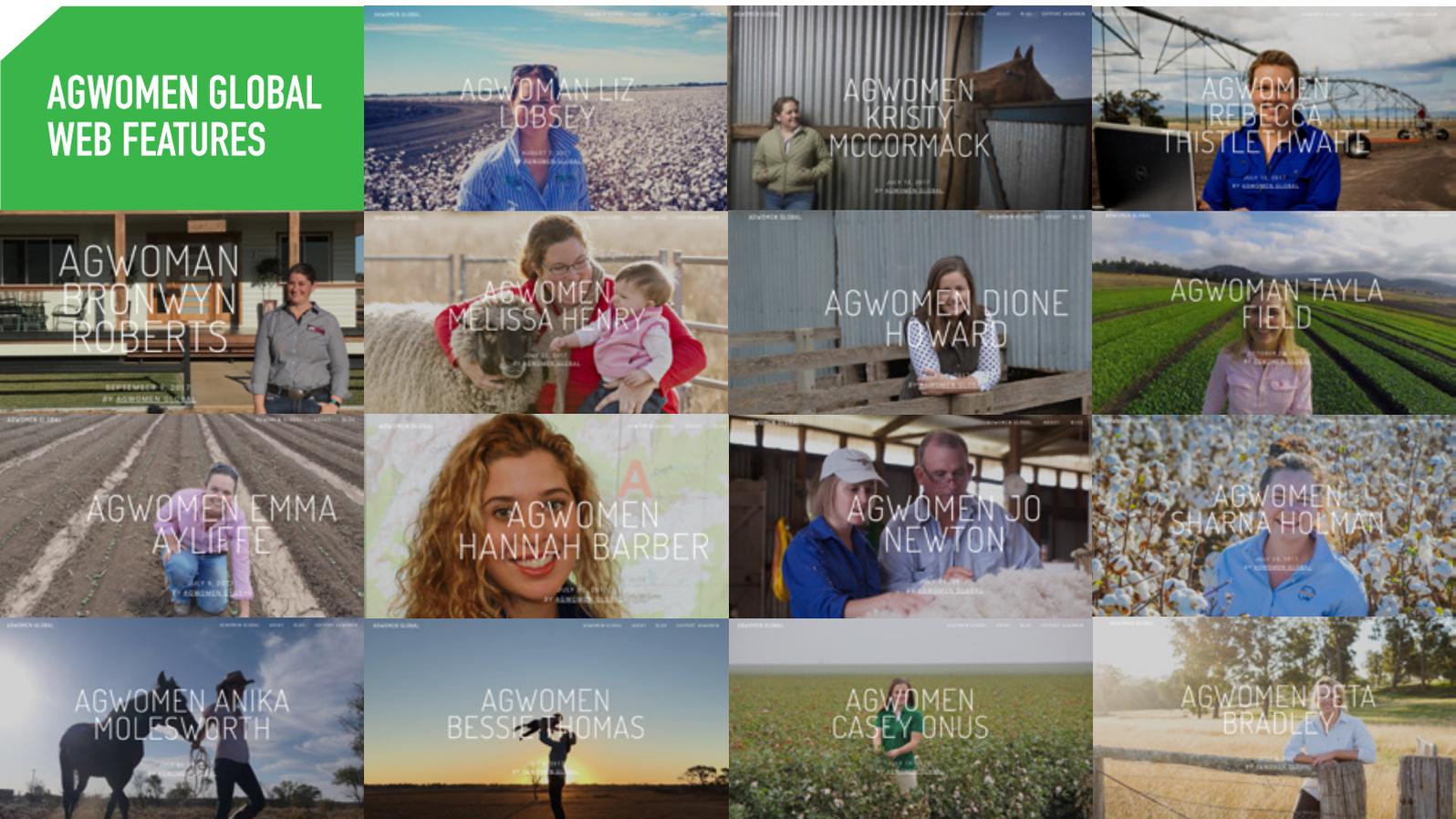
Through partnerships and cross-promotion Young Farming Champions collaborate with the media to promote youth in agriculture. An example of this is the partnership with the University of New England (UNE) where not only does the university engage in social media promotion of YFCs but will be actively supporting YFCs to go into local schools during 2018.

Our YFCs have appeared in national and international media in 2017. Highlights were:

- 16 YFCs, including [Melissa Henry](#), appeared on the international site [AgWomen Global](#) – a year-long project to profile 365 women from around the globe who have made a difference in primary industries.
- Bronwyn Roberts, Anika Molesworth, Jo Newton, Rebecca Thistlethwaite and Bessie Thomas, along with PYiA founder Lynne Strong, were profiled on the Australian [Invisible Farmer](#) Project, a three-year study funded by the Australian Research Council aimed at revealing the hidden stories of women on the land.

- YFCs also appeared in the prestigious R.M Williams Outback magazine in conjunction with The Archibull Prize and in online publication Leading Agriculture, including a profile of [Geoff Birchnell](#) and his financial literacy program.
- Three YFCs – [Peta Bradley](#), [Dwayne Schubert](#) and [Max Edwards](#) – were profiled in The Land in a series promoting young agricultural leaders. Peta’s story was one of the most popular articles in The Land during 2017.
- 25 Career Snapshot profiles of YFCs, including 2017 inductees [Lucy Collingridge](#) and [Samantha Wan](#), appeared on [The Archibull Prize](#) website and were promoted extensively through social media.

AGWOMEN GLOBAL WEB FEATURES



YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

We are excited and very proud to announce that several of our Young Farming Champions are moving from leadership development to leadership roles.

We have Young Farming Champions on:

- Farmers for Climate Action Board
- Future Farmers Network Board
- RAS Youth Group
- ASC NextGen Board
- NSW Farmers Young Farmer Council
- Industry and Farmer Advisory Committees
- University Committees and Initiatives

We salute them. It's a courageous step moving from leading yourself to leading your team. It can be both very challenging and very rewarding.

As leadership guru Zoë Routh says.

None of us wants to be a dud leader. We want to contribute, we want to have an impact, and help improve the lives of others, ourselves and the planet. We take leadership as a serious stewardship opportunity. We need to develop confidence born from purpose not pride.

Leadership is both personal and public. Deeply so. Who we are and how we show up causes effects. Sometimes it's a ripple in a pond, sometimes a deep and steady current, sometimes a tidal wave! Crafting and managing our leadership presence is as much an imperative as designing good strategy. After all, if we don't get heard, we don't advance our cause.

Leaders committed to making a difference and contribution face certain challenges:

- *Performance under pressure when the stakes are high demands enormous focus, energy, and nerve. We need to learn control of our emotions, so they don't control us.*
- *Leaders with strong opinions can be engaging. They can also be polarising. Our responsibility as leaders is about bringing people along for the ride, not pushing them into the car. We need to learn to express conviction without coercion.*

Young Farming Champions Steph Fowler and Hannah Barber are taking this courageous journey to leadership roles through the [Australian Agricultural Show](#) movement.



Hannah Barber (right) and Stephanie Fowler have inspired in schools as part of The Archibull Prize and are now leading the next generation of #youthinag.

Meet [RAS of NSW Youth Group](#) Chair Stephanie Fowler.

Steph first entered the Young Farming Champions Program in 2012 and the skills she developed have held her in good stead in her role as Chair of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW's Youth Group.



Dr Stephanie Fowler's day job as a [meat scientist](#) keeps her very busy but she is a multitasker giving back to the industry she loves through many volunteer roles.

The prestigious RAS Youth Group is responsible for the engagement and entertainment of both rural and urban youth at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. It does this through three avenues: a social networking event, Agrichats – where topical issues are discussed – and the Young Farmers Challenge, which highlights the technical skills and the abilities of youth working in agriculture to urban audiences in a fun and entertaining way. One of the legacies of the Young Farming Champions Program is to forge paths for those who follow. In her leadership position with the RAS Youth Group Stephanie is doing just that with Young Farming Champions Lucy Collingridge and Cassie McDonald joining the committee in 2017.

For the last two years of her five year term, Stephanie has held the role of Chair, a challenging position requiring her to oversee people of her own age. "As Chair it is my job to facilitate meetings and to make sure that the group is on track and on task. The biggest challenge comes from the fact we are all peers, but unfortunately sometimes in leadership there are times that you have to step up and be not popular to get something done."

And how does she overcome these challenges? "With lots of mentoring, which has helped me get to the point where I have an understanding with everybody that I'm a friend when I need to be a friend but there will come times, and it's nothing personal, that I'm not and that's the way of the role."

Her mentors, who include former Art4Agriculture events coordinator and RAS Youth Group Chair Kirsty Blades and councillors from the RAS, are people with whom she has created relationships, giving her support when the going gets tough. "They take some of that weight off when you have to make those harder decisions but sometimes it is not things you want to hear. Criticism and negative feedback actually allows you to step back and be reflective; to reassess where you are going with your leadership."

"Being a leader is probably one of the toughest but most rewarding things I think anyone could ever do. There is something about putting yourself forward like that and stepping up that seems to highlight all the parts of yourself that you really wish you didn't have. But in the same way being able to see people grow and develop, and witnessing their journey, which you can be a part of and have an influence on, is probably one the most rewarding things I've had the privilege of doing."

Meet ASC [NSW Next Gen](#) President Hannah Barber.

Young Farming Champion and secondary school teacher Hannah Barber also holds a leadership position with agricultural shows as President of the Agricultural Societies Council (ASC) of NSW Next Generation, which is designed to attract young people into show society executives.



Hannah Barber is a busy girl. A school teacher by day and president of Agricultural Societies Council (ASC) of NSW Next Generation in her spare time.

Hannah's role as president, which she has held since 2016, sees her liaise with the ASC as well as members of Next Gen who range in age from 18 to 35 and who have a passion for agriculture and an enthusiasm for the show movement. "The president adopts a leadership role and my duties are heavily liaison and managerial, but the entire ASC Next Gen committee are outstandingly driven and capable which makes my role very easy," she says.

Hannah's connections to agricultural shows began in her childhood when she competed in horse events, and was strengthened with the Showgirl Competition where she twice made it to the finals at the Sydney Royal Easter Show representing her home town of Parkes. "Most shows in NSW have been running for over 100 years and have been a key event for their communities during this time, allowing them to connect, educate and celebrate. The importance and impact of shows can never be underestimated and I'm committed to doing my part to ensure their sustainability."

That commitment is evident in her position as president. Depending on the time of the year the job may take only a few hours a week but when events, such as ShowAll Ball and ShowSkills, are imminent the workload increases. It is then that Hannah's experience and understanding of the show world, and her high organisational and interpersonal skills developed as a teacher come to the fore.

Despite the challenges of dealing with different personalities and personal goals Hannah finds the opportunities the leadership has given her far out-weigh the negatives. "Running a non-profit organisation is not a skill many young people get to experience. To be run by, and for, youth in agriculture under the distant but watchful eye of the ASC has made Next Gen a great way to experience this. To climb the hierarchy of positions has given me skills I've transferred into the workplace and has resulted in direct benefits including promotions."

YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS GIVING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE A VOICE LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY

A passion to link consumers with producers... to promote public understanding of farming, and the interconnectedness of health and nutrition and the agricultural sector... is the driving force behind the role of the Young Farming Champions.

Our Young Farming Champions help agriculture connect, collaborate, and communicate with impact.

They advocate and promote a culture where farmers have regular conversations and interactions with each other, consumers, community stakeholders, business, and politicians and come together to focus on partnerships to collaborate around initiatives for agriculture production, conservation, and other community challenges.

During 2017 our Young Farming Champions engaged with industry and the community in many different arenas, taking skills, learnt through the YFC program and honed with The Archibull Prize, into the world at large.

PETA BRADLEY

Peta Bradley shared her wool story with students at the Sydney Royal Easter Show's Primary School Preview, an exclusive invitation to students to learn how food and fibre is produced in Australia. Together with Dione Howard she demonstrated the properties and uses of wool and promoted the wool and sheep industries.

"The presence of youth voices at the Primary School Preview day showcased an atypical side of Australian agriculture," Peta said, showing both teachers and students that agriculture is not necessarily run by aged male farmers. "Having both Dione and I presenting at the day showcased the young, fresh face of the wool industry and agriculture more generally."

Peta describes the opportunity to present to over 200 predominately urban based children as one of the most elating moments in her YFC journey. "What amazed me was students were so excited and invigorated by the sheep and wool industry that I knew they would go home and share the story they had learnt with their friends and family." See the video [HERE](#).



GEOFF BIRCHNELL

Geoff Birchnell focussed on increasing financial literacy amongst young people in agriculture and is part of the Young Farmer project, run in conjunction with the NSW State Government and NSW Farmers, which facilitates the Young Farmers Business Program. So successful was the 2016 pilot of the program, which takes bank-ready workshops across New South Wales, that in 2017 the NSW State Government announced a funding package of \$6 million over four years to expand it.

Geoff has also helped develop business software Farmecco, established Grow Capital Finance and is a director with the Future farmers Network. "These days being part of a farming enterprise means not only knowing how to strain a fence but also having the capacity to represent the business at the board room table," Geoff said. "What I am particularly focused on is providing assistance for young farmers to enter the industry and grow their business." Read Geoff's story in Leading Agriculture [HERE](#).



SAM WAN

Sam Wan made a presentation to delegates during the Australian Wool Industries Secretariat Inc. (AWIS) Wool Week in August 2017. The 2017 theme was Education in the Wool Industry and Sam spoke in support of Peter Somerville and Emma Doyle from the Australian Wool Education Trust and Wool Education at The University of New England.

"I had completed the Wool Education units with UNE as part of my Science in Agriculture degree at The University of Sydney and the units strongly influenced my direction in the wool industry," Sam said. "As a previous student now working in the wool industry, my presentation demonstrated the success of the program, and also showed that wool and agriculture is attracting a different type of individual, one not defined by background and geographic area."

Organisers of Wool Week were very impressed with Sam's presentation, receiving many positive comments on her education message, and for Sam it was a chance to employ new skills. "I attribute much of the success to the communication and presentation skills developed when attending my first Young Farming Champions workshop," she said.



ANIKA MOLESWORTH

Anika Molesworth had the honour of speaking at TEDxYouth@Sydney during September, amongst a stellar line-up of young people with a broad spectrum of experience from sex workers to mathematicians. For Anika it was the chance to share the farming story to a large and diverse audience.

"My [TEDx presentation](#) set out to explain how everyone plays a role in the food system," Anika said. "To ensure a vibrant and resilient future we must be conscious of our shared responsibility, and be equipped with the knowledge that farmers are the link to the land and to our food. This engagement shapes the farming story, shapes our industry and the world in which we live. Strengthening our connection to farmers, food and the land, further strengthens our connection to our soil, water, plants and animals, and our communities that are reliant upon these."

Anika believes youth voices are critical for the future of farming. "Farmers around the world carry the weight of how to feed a hungrier world, with reduced environmental footprint, in an increasingly difficult climate. We need the hopefulness and drive of the youth, coupled with the wisdom and skill of mature generations, to create a collective action for the benefit of our common future."

Anika's talk was declared by TEDx as one of 5 Talks From This Year's TEDxYouth [That Made Us Totally Psyched For The Future](#).



TIM EYES

Tim Eyes used skills gained as a Young Farming Champion to host an agricultural field day on the central coast of New South Wales. The Food Farm attracted 4000 visitors and invited people to meet their meat, discover dairy and dig their own potatoes. "My passion is getting people onto farms and knowing where their food comes from," Tim said. "We go to Bunnings and ask the man at the tool shop to compare the Makita saw over the Hitachi but we don't have anyone to talk to, face to face, about food and food is the most important thing we buy."

With support from MLA, Luke Micallef and his Jersey cows and Tim's local agronomist, who turned him into a potato farmer within a week, The Food Farm was a hugely successful event. Tim runs a farm contracting and consulting business and sells grass-fed beef and lamb but the field day was not just about selling his own product, but selling Australian agriculture. "We want to say if you're buying something from an Australian farmer it's going to be the best."



DIONE HOWARD

Dione Howard was invited to speak at the Australian Farm Institute's 2017 Round Table Conference held in September in Sydney. During the second session, which discussed the future agricultural workforce, Dione spoke on behalf of AWI and Art4Agriculture as a Young Farming Champion.

"I was honoured to be given the opportunity to speak at such a prestigious event," Dione said. "My key message was to highlight the enthusiasm of youth in agriculture and the opportunities for our industries to invest in us early in our careers. In doing so, youth and their respective industries can mutually benefit for years to come. I understood the enormity of this opportunity in that someone so young has not been able to share their story on such a platform previously. I am excited to have been able to help pave the way for other young people in agriculture who want to present at events such as this in the future."

The positive feedback from Dione's presentation began the moment she stepped off the podium and has continued from the event organisers and AFI members, showing the power of investing in the Young Farming Champions program.



CALUM WATT

Calum Watt extended his passion for promoting agriculture when he became a founding member of [AgriEducate](#), a website and social media platform used to educate people about agriculture and where their food comes from. "AgriEducate combines both practical and scientific perspectives via access to farmers and researchers to give the best possible explanation for how the food got to your plate," Calum said. AgriEducate covers anything from Indigenous Australian foods and aquaculture to the more commonly known grains and livestock industries. "I think it is really important to promote agriculture because despite its importance (everyone needs to eat) we here in Australia take it for granted because the supermarket shelves are always full."

Calum is continuing his own education with a PhD studying barley grain size and heat tolerance, in conjunction with the Western Barley Genetics Alliance based out of Murdoch University in Western Australia. "I have always held the mantra that plant breeding is the most efficient way with which to improve the sustainability and productivity of cropping enterprises; be that grain farming or market gardening."



TAYLA FIELD

Tayla Field was part of Growing Leaders in 2017, a leadership platform facilitated by Rural Training Initiatives and delivered through funding from Horticulture Innovation Australia. As part of Growing Leaders she presented at the Get Vegged initiative. "Get Vegged aims to reach millennials, of which 76% believe that it is important to know where their vegetables come from, while delivering the stories behind Australia's Horticultural Industry on social media," Tayla said.

It was her YFC training that gave Tayla the confidence to apply for the Growing Leaders course and to present at Get Vegged. "Being a YFC has provided me with a well-rounded skill set, focusing on public speaking, direct messaging and communication that assisted with designing a project with a targeted, meaningful and resonating message."

Like all YFCs Tayla feels it is important for youth voices to be heard believing they offer fresh ideas, enthusiasm, intrigue and a genuine passion to make a change or look at a problem a new way. "The opportunity to speak alongside my peers was very exciting. It gave us a platform to present our findings, ideas and recommendations to industry members that are in the position to provide constructive feedback and take action to benefit the horticultural industry as a whole."



YOUNG FARMING CHAMPIONS FOLLOWING THE LEAD

Young Farming Champion Meg Rice, a UNE Bachelor of Law/Agriculture student was recently named a 2018 RAS Rural Achiever. It continues her list of achievements, which also include being president of the Farming Futures committee at UNE – a legacy generated by Young Farming Champions before her.



[Farming Futures](#) is an annual careers fair and dinner at the university, showcasing industries and businesses who are employing agriculture graduates. It was established in 2011 by Young Farming Champion Jo Newton.

Sally Strelitz is an Outreach and Engagement Officer at UNE and supports student committees. “Jo identified there were four or five jobs per ag graduate, yet students felt like they had little awareness of where these jobs actually were. Farming Futures seeks to bridge this gap in the sector,” Sally says. “The inaugural careers fair had 11 booths and this year we are looking at about 40 different businesses from around Australia who are coming to exhibit and talk to our students.”

Jo showed foresight in the overarching design of Farming Futures which has helped ensure its ongoing sustainability. Things like actively planning for succession, fostering a culture to support this and seeking mentors to guide future iterations of the committee are ideas rarely implemented in volunteer student organizations.

This sustainability has seen several Young Farming Champions take up positions on the committee, the latest being Meg.

“Last year Meg was president of RSUS (Rural Science Undergraduate Society) and on the committee of Farming Futures and now she has moved to president of Farming Futures,” Sally says. “Meg is very open-minded. She is happy to take other people’s ideas on board but she also knows what she wants. She is an inclusive leader. She’s not afraid to work hard and take a risk if she thinks something is a good idea. I see Meg’s career will be one to watch.”

Last year Meg took under her wing a young agricultural student who had moved to Armidale from Sydney and convinced her to join the Farming Futures Committee. That young student is Emma Longworth, a 2017 Young Farming Champion. The legacy of the Young Farming Champions Program continues.

CONCLUSION

ART4AGRICULTURE'S YOUNG FARMING PROGRAM BEGAN IN 2010 WITH A MISSION TO DEVELOP YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE THE CONFIDENCE, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF AGRICULTURE AND TAKE UP LEADERSHIP ROLES IN INDUSTRY AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. EIGHT YEARS DOWN THE TRACK AND THE PROGRAM HAS EVOLVED TO BE SO MUCH MORE.

New YFCs begin their training and hone their skills in schools with The Archibull Prize, and then spread their wings to take their stories to the wider world. Today you will find YFCs conversing with politicians and policy makers, with government organisations, with industry influencers, with the general public and with the next generation of agriculturists.

YFCs have the ability to skip adeptly through the world of social media and then to adapt that story to meet mainstream media, on both the national and international stage. Their commitment and determination to succeed is reflected in the multiple awards and scholarships they regularly receive.

As the YFC program continues to evolve we are proud to see our YFCs moving into the leadership roles we envisaged for them, and prouder still that they give back to new YFCs, to support and strengthen the program as a whole; to create a self-fulfilling legacy for Australian agriculture.

CONTACT DETAILS

LYNNE STRONG

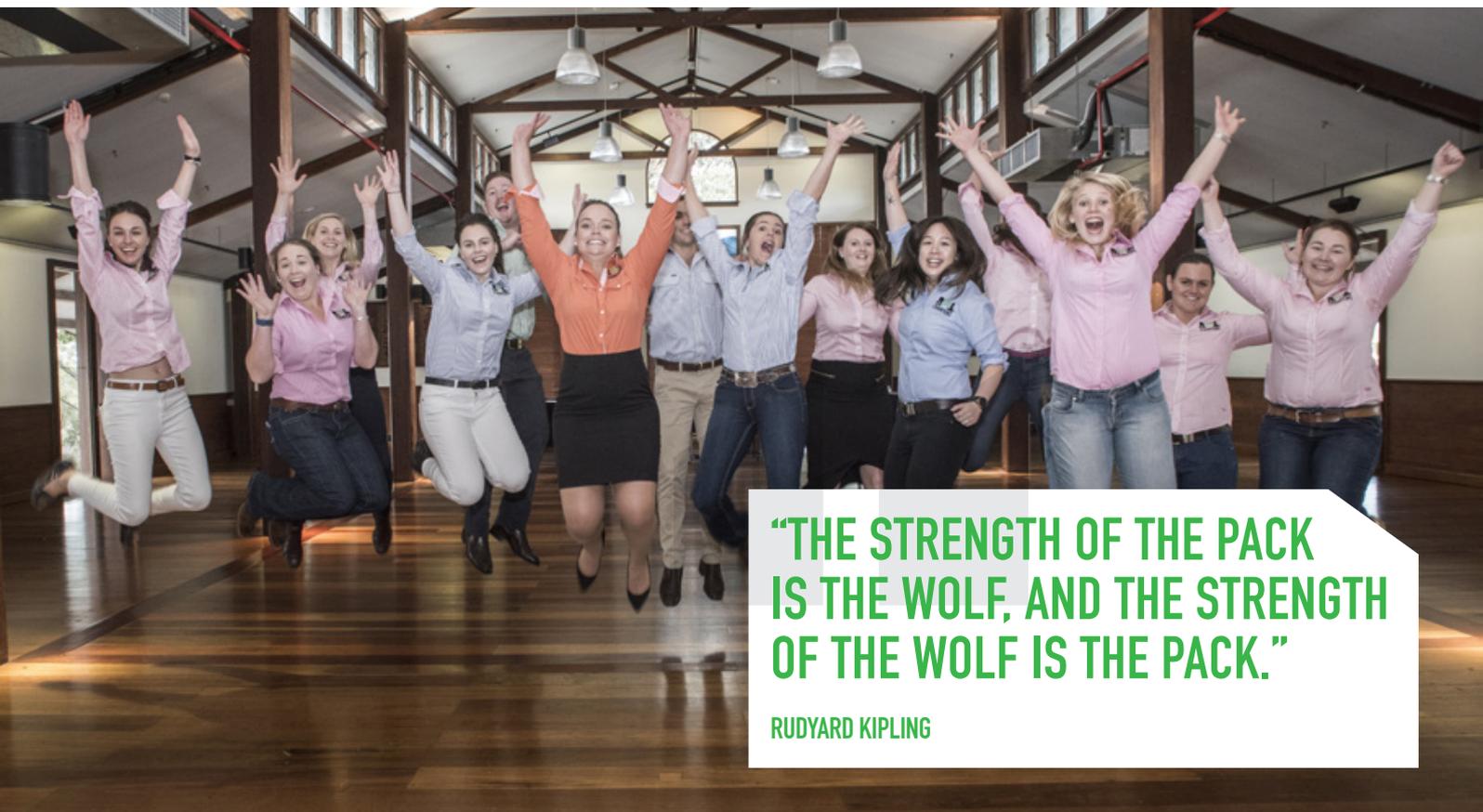
National Program Director - Art4Agriculture

PO Box 241
105 Clover Hill Rd Jamberoo NSW 2533

Mobile: 0407 740 446

Email: Lynnestrong@art4agriculture.com.au

Web: www.art4agriculture.com.au



**“THE STRENGTH OF THE PACK
IS THE WOLF, AND THE STRENGTH
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RUDYARD KIPLING