



Make a
Difference

Jan Cathcart Scholarship

Q&A with **Tiarna Burke**

How has winning the scholarship assisted your in your future career plans?

I am currently in my third year of pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy at Charles Sturt University, Albury campus. My academic journey this year has entailed rigorous training, transformative experiences, and instilled a profound commitment to the field. One significant aspect of my course this year has been the extensive 14-week unpaid placement, during which I had the privilege of immersing myself in the practical realities of Occupational Therapy in a private hospital setting and in a rural community-based setting.

Currently, I am eagerly anticipating a 16-week placement scheduled for the beginning of the upcoming year. I am determined to continue expanding my knowledge and honing my skills in diverse settings. This Scholarship has allowed me to strive to experience unique challenges and opportunities, enabling me to develop a comprehensive understanding of Occupational Therapy's applicability across different communities and environments, which I hope to be able to use in the future.

What has happened since winning?

Since receiving the award, the degree of the demanding nature of my placements has limited my ability to actively participate in SunRice events, which I had eagerly anticipated.

Nonetheless, I have been fortunate to experience a profound sense of community within the network of past Scholarship recipients. This network has brought together like-minded individuals from a variety of fields who share a common passion for excellence and positive impact. The camaraderie and support I have encountered among fellow recipients have been both encouraging and welcoming.

I remain dedicated to my educational and professional pursuits, and I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to further engage with the SunRice community in the future.

Why is this Scholarship important to the rice industry?

With the help of the Scholarship, I look forward to giving back to the rice community by studying how I can assist people, including rice growers and their families, to optimise their mental and physical health. Improving the quality of life of others is a deeply meaningful goal and I envision finding great joy and fulfilment in doing so upon graduation, leaving a positive impact within the rice industry.



The Scholarship has helped me to gain practical skills that coincide with the theory I have been learning in my degree, which will enable me to be more prepared for a future career path within the rice industry. As a result, I have been able to make the most of my learning opportunities without having to stress financially with not only university placement opportunities inter-State but also experiences outside of university that increase my clinical knowledge in a multitude of areas of OT.

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

This Scholarship represents a remarkable opportunity that empowers women to pursue careers aligned with their passions, irrespective of their chosen field. It serves as a catalyst for women to pursue their aspirations and leave a lasting impact, not only within the rice industry but also within their local communities.