



Make a *Difference*

# Jan Cathcart Scholarship 2021

Q & A with Sarah Cudmore

## What is your connection to the Australian rice industry?

I grew up on a mixed cropping farm in Benerambah, near Griffith. My father has been growing rice since 1983 and my Grandpa about 20 years before that. Growing up, Dad had us all involved in the farm and I drove the chaser bin during harvest and helped with basic ground preparations.

## Why did you apply for the Jan Cathcart Scholarship?

I was a little unsure of how I would cope with city life after graduating but at the same time I hadn't quite figured out what I would do with a degree in Sustainability and Mandarin in rural NSW. With my Father's encouragement I realised that my studies were very relevant to SunRice's vision and that I could definitely apply my skills and contribute back to the rice industry, which has supported my family and community.

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

I studied a Bachelor of International Studies, with a major in Global Sustainable Development and Minor in Mandarin Chinese. The scholarship made me seriously consider what my career in agriculture looked like and SunRice has paved the way for my future. I can see myself helping the business understand the cultural differences of China, translating and working on our sustainability strategy.

## How were you able to use/are using the scholarship?

The scholarship has contributed to alleviating my HECS debt, which has been a huge relief financially for me. In my third and final year of university I was also given the opportunity to do two weeks of work experience with SunRice in Sydney to learn and explore different sections within the business that appealed to me and I found marketing the most interesting.

I am now employed full-time by CopRice in a very flexible role that has me assisting the marketing and sales teams as well as working on a new project which is launching soon.

## Why is this scholarship important to the rice industry?

This scholarship is important so that women can picture themselves in the rice industry and more broadly in agriculture. It is important that we keep our talented women from the bush, in the bush. Unfortunately for many of us we need to relocate quite far away from our hometowns in order to access tertiary education and once we are there for a few years, having established friendships and networks, we may not return. The scholarship definitely provides the incentive for us to return, bringing valuable knowledge back to rural areas and further contribute to the industry and SunRice's longevity.

## What does the scholarship mean to you?

In addition to alleviating financial pressure and the pressure to find a full-time job after graduation, the scholarship opened up job opportunities. Immediately after graduating I decided to relocate to Leeton and take on a great role with CopRice, and it has been wonderful to be back in country NSW to enjoy all the things I was missing in the city. It is also great to be working in Leeton with long time employees who knew Jan. Many people recognise me as the Jan Cathcart Scholar and share stories of what a hardworking lady she was.

## Why would you encourage other women to apply for the scholarship?

I would encourage other women to apply because it is important to further develop and acknowledge the rice industry that has supported us. Rice is not a cash crop. Rice is a commodity, which, through SunRice, supports many rural communities.