



Jan Cathcart Scholarship 2021

Q & A with Millie Mertz

Make a *Difference*

What is your connection to the Australian rice industry?

I grew up on a farm just outside of Moulamein NSW where my family grows rice.

Why did you apply for the Jan Cathcart Scholarship?

One reason was the encouragement and support from my family. Another was that I could see the benefits that would arise from the financial assistance and the many doors that could be opened up to assist with my studies and career development.

How has winning the scholarship assisted your future career plans?

The Jan Cathcart Scholarship has been instrumental in my future career plans. The resulting work opportunities have enabled me to explore numerous areas within SunRice, which has ultimately exposed me to roles that I may never have considered without such guidance.

I studied a Bachelor of Business degree with a major in accounting and I am now employed as a full time IT Analyst. Without the scholarship I wouldn't have looked outside finance.

Financially, the scholarship has enormous benefits in significantly decreasing my HECS debt. As a consequence, I will have a reduced amount to repay in my early years in the workforce.

Why is this scholarship important to the rice industry?

I believe that it is important for SunRice to maintain the connection to the farmers who are essentially the 'grass roots' of the business. Involving scholarship winners who are linked to rice farms, such as myself, is a valuable way to inject the growers' perspective into the business.

What does the scholarship mean to you?

Being awarded the scholarship is very humbling and I feel extremely grateful and fortunate enough to be a part of the program. It is an honour to be associated with the legacy of Jan Cathcart, who made such an enormous contribution to SunRice and the broader rice industry.

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

I would encourage anyone who is thinking of applying to do so. The opportunities that are opened, knowledge gained, and support given set you up not only to finish your studies but also to 'kick start' your career.

Even if you are unsuccessful in receiving the scholarship the skills you learn from the application and interview process will in themselves be useful.