



Hillunga
farmers market

**FARMERS
scholarship**



Government of South Australia

Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges
Natural Resources Management Board

Introduction

Developed in 2014 in response to the declining number of farmers in the industry nationwide, the Willunga Farmers Market Scholarship is our contribution to ensuring the future of farming on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

The \$15,000 scholarship, with partnership support from the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board is awarded to encourage farming on the Fleurieu Peninsula by an emerging business.

The scholarship is paid to an eligible scholarship recipient for one 12 month period in order to assist setting up a business growing primary produce on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Scholarship recipients add tremendous value to the Market community through the new products they bring to Market, the enthusiasm for what they do, the interest they create and fabulous food they make available to our customers. As well as the focus they bring to farming on the Fleurieu, new farmers are a reminder that Willunga Farmers Market has a longstanding and important role as a business incubator in the region.

Pip Forrester, Chair of the Willunga Farmers Market

Partner

The Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board is a keen supporter of tomorrow's farmers, and is delighted to partner with the Willunga Farmers Market to provide the Farmers Scholarship. By promoting sustainable land use, and supporting new farmers and the production of fresh local produce, the scholarship opens up farming to anyone with a great idea and the energy to make it happen.

Chris Booth, Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board



South Australia's first Farmers Market - the Willunga Farmers Market was established in 2002 and operates every Saturday from 8am until 12.30pm in Willunga Town Square

Case Studies

The Garden Farmers

Jay Kimber, Emmanuel Marquis, Aidan Jones and Alexander Steimanis
Scholarship Winner 2014

Where were you on your journey before applying for WFM Scholarship?

I had been working on farms for 4 years. My experience with Farmers Markets, farming and farm management was stacking up. I had just returned to Adelaide and was running two other small hobby businesses, deciding where to focus next.

What prompted you to apply?

I sent it to my brother who wanted to start farming, and then we decided to apply together because I had the experience and he had the desire to start a Farm and change his life and focus.

What did winning the scholarship mean for your business / you personally?

Winning the scholarship was a huge LEVEL up in business for me. It made me have to be more accountable and set goals and stick to them. My business mentor Jock Harvey was excellent at helping with this. It also helped me develop rapport with the community. Standing out in the weather, rain, hail or shine and serving something from my heart built trust and very strong relationships.

What does it mean to you now?

The scholarship literally changed my life. Like I said it helped me level up. It made me truly get a taste of business and infused a passion for conscious business into me. I now run another type of business, but I use lots of what I learnt from the scholarship and farming days in my current business. I have a goal to give back to the Farmers Scholarship in the future so that others can continue to experience this opportunity.

How did the mentoring offered to you as part of the scholarship impact on your business?

The business mentoring was spectacular, to have Jock as a high-end businessman step up and get serious with us was very helpful. The farming mentoring from Diana Bickford was amazing, she was so supportive and was an incredible source of knowledge and guidance when we needed it. The mentoring is crucial. We really enjoyed that we were able to choose areas for our mentors. This helped with compatibility.

What advice would you give to potential/future WFM Scholarship applicants?

The connections that you make are more powerful than the funds that you receive. I suggest that future scholarship applicants do research in the industry that they want to enter into... or apply within the industry that they already are in. The less experimenting you do with the funds from the scholarship the better. You will be pouring a lot of energy into the project you embark on and it is important to have a solid business plan in place before spending any money. You want the return on investment and enough to pay yourself. This will make your venture sustainable for you and the community.

Jay Kimber



“The scholarship literally changed my life. Like I said it helped me level up. It made me truly get a taste of business and infused a passion for conscious business into me.”

Jay Kimber

Vive

Kate Washington
Scholarship Winner 2015

Where were you on your journey before applying for WFM Scholarship?

I had started a small market garden and was growing vegetables and herbs. I had a very limited distribution through a box system. The scale at which I was growing was not economically sustainable. I maintained off-farm income to support my "farming habit".

What prompted you to apply?

I was made aware of the scholarship and its affiliated opportunities (financial, training & access to market). I was encouraged to apply by a few of the stallholders who were aware I had started my own market garden. I was unable to access any grants or loans for farm inputs. Such opportunities simply didn't, and still don't, exist for micro-business owners in the agricultural sector.

What did winning the scholarship mean for your business / you personally?

As the sole owner/operator of the market garden, I required a less intensive distribution outlet for my produce. The box system required a lot of coordination with customers, which ate into a lot of time that otherwise should have been used in improving efficiencies of production on farm. The guaranteed stall, and assistance with stall fees, meant I had more certainty in being able to sell my produce on a weekly basis.

I was able to establish a regular customer base, and my business was also promoted with the marketing/promotion done through the Market. I gained access to marketing advice through my mentor as well, which was highly useful and helped me develop my brand.

I needed to increase my output by increasing the amount of land under production. I couldn't finance such an expansion at the time. The money received through the grant allowed me to do so which increased production. I also had access to a mentor with extensive market gardening experience. She assisted me in determining how best to manage the production side.

Personally, it reduced the stress load in distributing my produce and being able to fund my expansion without getting into debt. I felt supported in developing and implementing my business by both the administration and community associated with the market.

What does it mean to you now?

Still, the scholarship remains as one of the pivotal turning points in my life. The opportunity to become a market gardener, increasing my experience and expertise in the field of growing organic produce and becoming a regular member of the Market family, has set me up for ongoing professional and personal opportunities.

What advice would you give to potential/future WFM Scholarship applicants?

This is a fantastic opportunity to reach your potential in a community environment in what can be otherwise, a very lonely industry. Primary production requires a lot of hard work and commitment, often with very limited returns. The scholarship helps to ease some of those hardships, through financial help as well as the support of your mentors. Importantly, you are embraced as part of a community that loves what you are doing. You will receive ongoing recognition each week at the market, for your hard work and love of producing on the land. Your customers will let you know, through their committed patronage at your stall and will remind you each week why you do what you do.

Kate Washington



“In short, the grant and mentoring allowed me to make a real go of it. Without it, I never would have gotten it off the ground.”

Kate Washington

Heirloom Harvest

Tara & John Butler
Scholarship Winner 2016

Where were you on your journey before applying for WFM Scholarship?

We had a vision of what we wanted our small business to look like and were making small steps in that direction. We started Heirloom Harvest a few years prior to applying for the scholarship, selling seeds and seedlings in Adelaide part-time while studying, working and raising two young children.

John took the opportunity to work on a certified organic seed and market garden building skills, knowledge and confidence. With a few years' experience we decided to apply for the scholarship to give us the financial kick-start that would enable us to make the business a full-time gig.

What prompted you to apply?

Since the scholarship began, we had the opportunity to meet with the first two recipients Jay Kimber and Kate Washington and felt that we were in the right place in our lives to commit our time and resources. The one thing holding us back was capital and a known market stream, both of which were offered with the scholarship.

What did winning the scholarship mean for your business / you personally?

Winning the scholarship gave us the financial kick-start we needed to jump in full time into growing seeds and fresh produce. The capital was used to purchase start-up equipment such as tools, irrigation, and machinery.

Personally, winning the scholarship gave us a confidence boost knowing that we had support behind us, and others believed in our vision.

What does it mean to you now?

The scholarship started a chain of events that have forever changed our lives. After much blood, sweat and tears we now have a thriving small business. It has grown from a part-time hobby to a business that employs multiple people in the region to grow and supply certified organic seed and fresh produce to our local community and beyond.



How did the mentoring offered to you as part of the scholarship impact on your business?

We identified branding and accounting as two key areas we required additional support. The Farmers' Market identified and arranged local mentors who spent time with us improving these important aspects of our business. The branding mentor helped bring out our long-term visions and find the core of our values and story. The accounting mentor helped us set up our business record keeping in a useful and professional manner.

What advice would you give to potential/future WFM Scholarship applicants?

The advice we would provide applicants is to make sure you have a well thought out business idea and have completed plenty of background work and research to make sure your business idea is financially viable. While the scholarship is great to get the ball rolling, the business needs to be able to support itself once the scholarship money and momentum runs out.

Tara Butler

“The scholarship started a chain of events that have forever changed our lives. After much blood, sweat and tears we now have a thriving small business.”

Tara Butler

Primordia Mushrooms

Michael Taylor
Scholarship Winner 2017

Where were you on your journey before applying for WFM Scholarship?

I was about to start a small gourmet mushroom farm, I'd written a business plan, convinced my fiancé and started to plan a tiny little beginning of a business. I was unsure if it would really work, if people would actually want weird looking mushrooms, if I could truly upscale what I was planning to small commercial scale. I had a lot of doubts.

What prompted you to apply?

I realised that the scholarship could offer a huge step up from what was going to be a very slow start, to something worth pouring myself into in a much shorter time frame. The fit seemed good, there was a market gap and I felt I had something to offer.

What did winning the scholarship mean for your business / you personally?

It took my concept from a neat idea, a functional hobby which might become a business, into an actual business very rapidly. For me personally, it showed me that maybe I wasn't crazy. That I should air my ideas with others. That I can ask for help and seek feedback and ultimately find a hugely supportive community.

What does it mean to you now?

The support and warmth I found in the Willunga Farmers Market has thawed out a bit of me. The community that has been built around the market is a wonderful thing, which is hard to describe. The long-time market patrons want to know who you are and welcome you into their weekly routine and lives. It has been a fantastic experience.

How did the mentoring offered to you as part of the scholarship impact on your business?

It took me from being unsure if I had strengths to finding them and using them to much greater effect. Learning how to operate in a business environment was completely new to me and I was going into it feeling like at any moment I'd slip up and have it all taken away. Being able to ask questions of people much wiser than me was a massive benefit both in a business capacity and also to my anxiety!



What advice would you give to potential/ future WFM Scholarship applicants?

To reach out. To talk to the market board and stall holder and learn about what they do, how it all works, and get some insight into where and how you could operate in that space. Write a plan. I had written down what I wanted to achieve and ideas on how to get there, so even though things changed rapidly at times, I had something to refer to. There was no way I'd have had the headspace and hours to research and plan like I did once things started. Ask for advice but know what you want. Even an opinion you don't agree with helps you share your own thoughts.

Michael Taylor

“I realised that the scholarship could offer a huge step up from what was going to be a very slow start, to something worth pouring myself into in a much shorter time frame.”

Michael Taylor

Cockatoo Creek Farm

Chris Day & Bridgett Toner
Scholarship Winner 2019

Chris and Bridgett's mission is to regenerate the land through their farming practices and management, to provide nutrient dense food to the community, and a resilient livelihood for themselves.

"Going forward we aim to grow our farm enterprise to provide increased quantities of lamb to match demand, and expand into long storage garlic varieties, medicinal, culinary and indigenous herbs, potted fruit trees and fruit. We intend to provide associated value-added products such as ready-to-go lamb packs comprising garlic, oil and herbs." says Chris Day.

Chris and Bridgett believe a diversity of crops and incomes is especially important with an increasingly unpredictable climate. They will choose robust, appropriate species and animals that will produce in a wide variety of conditions. "Building personal and professional relationships with neighbours and the local community" is important to them says Bridgett.

After being announced as the successful scholarship recipients in February 2019, Chris and Bridgett will focus on their key priorities in the first year, being Pasture Raised Lambs, rotated on a weekly basis to lush green mixed pastures, stress free stock handling, natural and regenerative farming methods, and free choice minerals.

In the future they plan to expand their farm to include Medicinal Herbs, for teas, and natural remedies as well as infused speciality olive oils including a traditional roast blend, spicy BBQ and fresh salad blend along with potted

heritage Fruit heritage tree varieties suited to the Fleurieu Peninsula. They will build a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model, together with other local farmers to supply nutrient dense ethical foods to members and hope to offer Farm tours to customers to connect their food with our farm and on-site training and education packages for adults and schools.

"Our farm enterprise plan is based on long-term development of the entire property with a diversity of incomes, however we will start small-scale and develop a strong base with achievable and manageable targets."



"Building personal and professional relationships with neighbours and the local community" is important to them says Bridgett.

Village Greens of Willunga Creek

Nathaniel Wiseman
Willunga Farmers Market Development Grant

In 2018 a unique one-off opportunity arose for the Willunga Farmers Market to offer a Development Grant. Village Greens of Willunga Creek, an existing farming enterprise were awarded a Grant to facilitate the expansion of their market garden.



“We do this because we have a passion for small-scale, local food and farming, and want to be a leading part of the next generation of farmers on the Fleurieu Peninsula.”

Nat Wiseman

Where were you on your journey before the Development Grant?

I had been on my farming journey for around 6 years prior, first doing a 3-month internship in NSW in 2012, then starting a small urban farm (2012-2014), then finally starting Village Greens of Willunga Creek in late 2014. Our business was growing and we had started selling at the WFM.

What prompted you to apply?

We were at the stage of our business of needing to expand our greenhouse space to meet the local demand for our products but didn't have the funds to invest in the new structure outright.

What did winning the Grant mean for your business?

It was a huge support for us to finance the construction of a new greenhouse to expand production of local, organically grown produce (tomatoes, cucumbers, capsicums etc). It gave us recognition from the market and wider community that we were worth investing in, that we could make a positive difference to the market and local community.

What does it mean to you now?

The grant really helped us cement our position as a reliable, regular local producer at the market, which has meant increased sales and connecting to more customers and the local community. We are just entering our second season using the new greenhouse and are looking forward to expanding our yields as our soil and management improves over time.



How did the mentoring impact on your business?

We chose to invest in some tailored online courses, which have really helped hone our business and get world-class information on organic greenhouse production. One of these courses/platforms has lifetime membership so we will continue to learn from it in the years to come.

What advice would you give to potential/future WFM Scholarship applicants?

Look for gaps in the market! Identify products that aren't already being sold, or aren't being produced in particular ways, and target these as possible areas of specialisation. In addition, put the money towards a really concrete, tangible outcome, rather than something generic like "Helping my business get started". The reality is that it costs a lot more money than the WFM grant can cover to successfully launch and continue to run a small business, so make sure the grant is going towards something specific that can leverage your existing capacity/skills/capital etc and take your idea to the next level.

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