



Australian
Rural Leadership
Foundation

ARLP



COURSE 29

PARTICIPANT DIRECTORY 2022-23



Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of all the lands on which we meet, work and live and recognise that this land has always been and will always be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

The ARLP is a unique 15-month program which runs across Australia and the Asia-Pacific for leaders serving rural, regional and remote Australia, from a range of backgrounds, industries and communities.

The program provides experiences to develop leadership capabilities; the application of understanding self and others; ethics, values and social responsibility; and opportunities to engage with industry, community and region. The ARLP broadens perspectives and connects participants with an extensive, supportive alumni network.

The program develops leadership so people act beyond themselves, work with others, and facilitate change in their organisations, sectors, and communities. The 29th cohort of the ARLP convenes 31 leaders from the furthest reaches of Australia to challenge themselves to serve their communities, industries and organisations for the greater good of rural, regional and remote Australia.

31

LEADERS

FROM ACROSS
RURAL, REGIONAL
AND REMOTE
AUSTRALIA

15

MONTHS

LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM

4

SESSIONS

OVER 48 DAYS

More information about the ARLF leadership approach can be found at
[rural-leaders.org.au/national-leadership-programs/
australian-rural-leadership-program/](http://rural-leaders.org.au/national-leadership-programs/australian-rural-leadership-program/)

COURSE 29

MEET THE AUSTRALIAN RURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM COURSE 29 COHORT

Stuart Austin HERNANI, NSW

Scholarship funded by **Wilmot Cattle Company** // wilmotcattleco.com.au
Meat and Livestock Australia // mla.com.au

Stuart is the General Manager of Wilmot Cattle Co, a grassfed beef business based in the New England region of NSW, spanning four properties totalling over 8,200ha. The business is managed in a holistic context, focused on regenerating and restoring the ecological function of the landscape in a profitable way, and producing the healthiest, most nutrient dense beef. Stuart spent a vast majority of his early career working in the northern Australian pastoral industry, as well as time in broadacre agriculture in Canada, a feedlot in southern Queensland, and was the founder of an international agriculture recruitment business. Stuart is most passionate about helping others, and this passion is shared amongst the Wilmot Cattle Co team. He often shares his story online, in print media, on podcasts and has been a keynote speaker on various occasions in Australia and North America. In 2019, Stuart was awarded the national Young Carbon Farmer of the Year Award and the business has been twice recognised as a Champion in the NSW Landcare Awards. In 2021, Wilmot Cattle Co successfully transacted the world's first private market soil carbon credit, called the Regen Network CarbonPlus Grasslands Credit, which was sold to Microsoft.



Carly Baker-Burnham MONTO, QLD

Scholarship funded by **Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry** // agriculture.gov.au

Carly Baker-Burnham is an organic beef producer west of Monto, Queensland. She is director and finance manager of Bonnie Doone Beef, a family-owned operation in the North Burnett region. Carly has a lifetime connection to the land and more than two decades co-managing her family's agricultural business with her husband Grant. Carly's innovation has enabled a transition to organic and regenerative practices, implementation of a soil organic carbon project and bespoke farmstay accommodation. Carly has been invited to share her story and insights with others at events such as Beef Australia, Graziher, Landcare Conferences and more. Carly believes coupling the arts and agriculture is the solution to ensuring vibrant and vital rural communities. Mobilising her leadership and philanthropic contribution, she has established The Rex Monto Ltd, an arts and cultural organisation located within a historic art deco theatre in Monto. Its purpose is fostering creative thinking and practices through the arts and bringing community together to co-create relevant and on-ground long term solutions. She is most proud of her role as mother of four empathic and resilient children.



Renee Bartolo JINGILI, NT

Scholarship funded by **Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry** // agriculture.gov.au

Renee is a landscape ecologist and Chief Remote Pilot (drone operations) for the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and is based in Darwin. She holds a number of governance positions in the drone and earth observation communities and ensures both the inclusion of women in science, and views from regional and remote Australia are represented in national forums. Through continuing leadership development, she is focused on influencing step changes in integrating environmental and biosecurity sciences by connecting and empowering others to lead.



Melanie Bish GOLDEN SQUARE, VIC

Scholarship funded by **Telstra Corporation** // telstra.com.au

Living on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in Bendigo, Victoria, Melanie is the Deputy Dean of La Trobe University's Rural Health School. In over 25 years working as a Registered Nurse, Melanie has held senior management positions and a variety of clinical roles in rural, regional and metropolitan healthcare organisations to inform her work as an academic. Passionate about the health and wellbeing of rural communities, Melanie's research, teaching and engagement activities involve local, national and international collaborations. Melanie is an Associate Editor of The Australian Journal of Rural Health and a mentor for the Australian College of Nursing Emerging Leader and Mid-Career Leadership Programs. Motivated to approach her work guided by the values of kindness and curiosity, Melanie is committed to positively impacting the capacity and capability of Australia's rural health workforce.



Jack Brennan GIN GIN, NSW

Scholarship funded by
Cotton Research & Development Corporation // crdc.com.au
Australian Food and Fibre // australianfoodandfibre.com.au
Cotton Australia // cottonaustralia.com.au
Paraway Pastoral Company // paraway.com.au

Jack is a fourth generation farmer from Warren in north west NSW where he manages an aggregation of farms for Paraway Pastoral Company. Jack is a passionate farmer and father and wants to be a more effective leader in his local community and in the agriculture community in general.



Timothy Brennan CROWS NEST, QLD

Scholarship funded by **Australian Lot Feeders' Association** // feedlots.com.au

Tim is the Livestock Team Coordinator for NH Foods' Whyalla Beef feedlot. Raised as a fourth generation beef producer on the Darling Downs, Tim has a strong passion for agriculture and in particular the red meat industry. After completion of tertiary studies in Accounting and Business IT, Tim took the opportunity to move south and become involved in the fast growing feedlot sector. Tim sees the Australian Rural Leadership Program (ARLP) as a keystone in his leadership development and aims to utilise the program to better contribute to the teams and industry he works within.



Melissa Brooke BUNDABERG, QLD

Scholarship funded by **National Indigenous Australians Agency** // niaa.gov.au

Melissa is passionate about improving and enhancing the communities we live in. Offering over 25 years experience in senior management positions within state and federal government departments, Melissa's strengths are her commitment to lead, challenge and mentor her workforce to achieve their personal career goals whilst succeeding at delivering the broader organisational deliverables. Melissa was appointed by the Queensland Premier for a two-year seat in the Wide Bay-Burnett-Fraser Coast Regional Community Forums and is a board member for Shalom College. She has also held positions with the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Services consumer reference group, been Vice President for Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce, and a Community Reference Group member for Paradise Dam. Melissa's commitment and passion for the community she lives and works in is steadfast. Melissa actively seeks out opportunities for self-development to enhance her ability to motivate and drive economic growth, inclusiveness and resilience in local communities. She has undertaken an abridged pilot program with ARLF and is honoured to receive this life changing scholarship opportunity in cohort 29 of Australia's most distinguished signature course.



Ryan Brown COVERTY, QLD

Scholarship funded by **Australian Lot Feeders' Association** // feedlots.com.au

Ryan spent his early life in the Hunter Valley region of New South Wales and moved to Queensland with his family as a child. Here, Ryan was raised on a beef breeding and backgrounding operation in regional south-west Queensland where, as a young adult, he began his career in cattle trading. In addition to his involvement with the family business, Ryan started his own business for agricultural labour wherein he developed an affinity for livestock handling and training working dogs and horses. In 2010, Ryan started work for Smithfield Cattle Company. Starting as an entry level livestock hand, Ryan has progressed through various supervisory roles to now being part of the executive team. Ryan is interested in learning about, and teaching, leadership development and professional advancement in agriculture.



Thomas Cocks BROKEN HILL, NSW

Scholarship funded by **Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care** // health.gov.au

Tom was born and bred in Broken Hill in far west NSW. After completing a Bachelor of Oral Health at the University of Adelaide and a Doctor of Dental Medicine at Sydney University, he became the Principal Dentist at The Dental Centre in Broken Hill. Tom has been involved with the Australian Dental Association Recent Graduates Committee and more recently with the BUPA Clinical Advisory and Business Advisory Panels. He has a strong passion for rural workforce retention and through the skills gained from the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation's leadership course, he hopes to be a driving force in bringing talented professionals to the bush.



Zelmary Coetzee MILDURA, VIC

Scholarship funded by **Agriculture Victoria Research** // agriculture.vic.gov.au

Zelmary is originally from South Africa and came to Australia to pursue a PhD in Viticulture at the National Wine and Grape Industry Centre (NWGIC) in Wagga Wagga as part of the ARC Training Centre for Innovative Wine Production. She is currently a research scientist in Mildura and is working on sustainable management practices in almond production. She would like to become a strong leader in her community and inspire and support rural students, especially women, to pursue careers in AgSTEM.



Ella Credlin ECKLIN SOUTH, VIC

Scholarship funded by **Gardiner Dairy Foundation** // gardinerfoundation.com.au

Ella is employed as a Senior Agribusiness Manager at ANZ in south-west Victoria where she actively manages 60 agribusiness clients and supports their business and growth objectives. In addition to this role, Ella and her husband own and operate a large-scale dairy operation, milking 1500 cows across three farms. Ella is extremely passionate about the dairy industry and her objective is to encourage young people to enter the industry and highlight the opportunities for growth and wealth creation. Ella is excited about the opportunities for personal growth and developing her own unique leadership skills to benefit the industry and regional community that she is proud to live in.



Jay Dryden PORT NOARLUNGA, SA

Scholarship funded by **Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care** // health.gov.au

Jay is the owner and director for Authentic Support, an allied health company working in the disability sector. He is also a founder and director for the 'Mothers For Hope Foundation' working to build orphanages and set up trade and agriculture in schools in South Sudan. Jay's passion is in helping his community become a better place, focused on community engagement and finding new innovative ways to help re-build and teach local rural communities how to better help themselves through sustainable technologies. Jay is keen to grow and learn new skills to become a reliable, intelligent leader for his community.



Steve Fawns DENILQUIN, NSW

Scholarship funded by **AgriFutures Australia** // agrifutures.com.au

Steve, with his wife, own and manage a mixed irrigation farm, the primary enterprises being stud sheep and rice production. They also operate a plant and heavy equipment training business, providing services to manufacturing, construction and agriculture. Steve was born and educated in Deniliquin in south-west NSW, qualifying as a diesel mechanic that would later take him to the Antarctic and other remote parts of Australia. Steve has also served in the Army Reserves for the past 35 years, providing some unique experiences including work in remote areas and UN peace keeping in Timor-Leste. He is currently the Acting CEO and Chair of Murray Irrigation where, in recognising water can be an emotive issue, his passion is to help the community adapt and manage change that is often out of its control. Steve is looking forward to learning new skills from the ARLP so he can contribute to longer term community problem solving and sustainable primary production.



Rob Fish LENNOX HEAD, NSW

Scholarship funded by **Fisheries Research and Development Corporation** // frdc.com.au

Based in the northern rivers region of NSW, Rob started his career with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) in the mid-90s. Since then, he has worked directly with industry and other marine stakeholders keen to improve the management of our fisheries. Rob has managed fishing and aquaculture operations across Northern Australia and was Chair of the Northern Territory Seafood Council for eleven years. This experience as both regulator and stakeholder provides a unique insight and knowledge across the management of our fisheries. With more progressive fisheries management often held back through unnecessary stakeholder conflict, Rob seeks to improve as a leader to help build the trust and cooperation needed between stakeholders to ensure we get the best outcomes from managing our marine resources.



Jason Herbert DUBBO, NSW

Scholarship funded by **Australian Meat Processor Corporation** // ampc.com.au

Jason grew up in Moree and relocated to Dubbo in north-west NSW to start a career in the meat industry. Jason is the General Manager at Fletcher International Exports, the country's largest sheep meat exporter. Jason has an invested interest in the meat industry, working closely with a number of industry stakeholders. Jason is passionate about promoting the meat industry and being a part of developing the next generation of leaders looking to contribute to not only the meat industry but other industries within the agricultural sector.



Luke Hooke CASTLEMAINE, VIC

Scholarship funded by **John B Foundation Innovation in Agriculture Scholarship**

Luke grew up on a sheep farm at Serpentine in northern Victoria before moving to Melbourne to complete a law degree. He worked in federal and state politics and industry representation before joining Nutrien's commercial sustainability team in 2022. Luke wants to ensure regional communities remain attractive and rewarding places to live and do business.



Bernice Hookey CHARTERS TOWERS, QLD

Scholarship funded by **National Indigenous Australians Agency** // niaa.gov.au

Bernice descends from the Waanyi Nation in Queensland. She founded MZB Empowerment, a niche professional service with leading capabilities to drive generational equity. Bernice is a cycle-breaker mum, influential changemaker, an accomplished speaker, author, and mentor. She works at Tranby across numerous areas including the 'Yanalangami: Strong women, Strong Communities' program and is a One Business trainer. Bernice serves on numerous boards at both local, community and national levels to provide advice and contribute to organisational decision-making. Bernice is a survivor of disempowerment, feelings of unworthiness, and has overcome adversity to speak up. Her lived experience lends her an expertise that she incorporates in her work. Bernice is excited to grow her impact and learn new skills to become a stronger, more strategic leader to influence her mob in community.



Aaron Kiely EMERALD, QLD

Scholarship funded by **Cotton Research & Development Corporation** // crdc.com.au

Australian Food and Fibre // australianfoodandfibre.com.au
Cotton Australia // cottonaustralia.com.au

Aaron is a second generation irrigated cotton farmer from Emerald in Central Queensland. He has been working on the family owned and operated farm for over 20 years and continues to run his own operations on farm. Aaron is always looking at ways to expand and trial new technologies. He is extremely passionate about agriculture and has a real love for sharing his experiences with others. Aaron is the current Vice President of The Queensland Farmers Federation. He is always looking at ways to improve his knowledge and leadership skills to better manage his many roles, including those within his local community. Aaron is looking forward to challenging himself to become a more effective leader and gain stronger connections within the agricultural industry.



Erin Lew Fatt JINGILI, NT

Scholarship funded by the **Tim Fairfax Family Foundation** // tfff.org.au

Erin is a local Aboriginal woman born on Larrakia land in Darwin. She's been working in the Aboriginal health sector for over 20 years and is currently the Chief Operations Officer for the Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance NT (AMSANT). Erin has a passion in the workforce, education and leadership space and has been focused on these areas in her career in Aboriginal health. Erin is on a couple of boards around Workforce and Education and is always looking to support and nurture the younger workforce to navigate through their own career pathways. Erin is looking to learn more skills and further develop leadership qualities to bring out the best in any role that she has professionally and within community.



Renee Lynch NAREMBEEN, WA

Scholarship funded by the **CBH Group** // cbh.com.au

Renee is a fifth generation wheatbelt grain grower and together with her husband, they run a broadacre cropping and cattle enterprise in Narembeen. Renee has a marketing and communications background and holds several grain industry and community leadership roles including the CBH Grower Advisory Council. Renee aims to use her combined commercial and agricultural experience to be a driver of positive change supporting sustainable farming businesses and thriving regional communities. She is excited to learn new skills and build her capabilities to be a strong rural leader.



Renee Manning MERREDIN, WA

Scholarship funded by **Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development** // dpird.wa.gov.au

Renee Manning hails from Merredin, the heart of the state's Wheatbelt region. She considers herself fortunate to work in a role with a direct focus on identifying solutions to help build thriving and resilient regions. Growing up in Mukinbudin, and returning to the region to work, Renee has carved out a rewarding and challenging career spanning almost 20 years in the fields of soil conservation, land use planning, regional leadership and regional development. Her impact as the Principal Regional Development Officer for the Wheatbelt Development Commission is richly informed by the community roles she holds in education, local council and with her involvement in her family small business. She strongly believes the multiple roles that regional leaders have enable a unique perspective and is always on the lookout for opportunities to tell the success stories of the Wheatbelt region. Renee is excited about this once in a lifetime opportunity to share and learn alongside others with passion for rural Australia and is keen to strengthen her impact as a regional leader.



Clare Purcell WATTLE FLAT, VIC

Scholarship funded by **Agriculture Victoria** // agriculture.vic.gov.au

Clare has a long family connection to agriculture and in 2019, with her husband and two young children, bought her own grazing property in south-west Victoria. Clare works for Agriculture Victoria, as part of the Victorian State Government, and has extensive experience providing advice to government and developing policy in the areas of drought, natural disasters, young farmers and rural women. Clare is motivated for her work to support and enhance thriving agricultural communities and is looking forward to participating in the Australian Rural Leadership Program to broaden her perspectives and thinking about present and future opportunities that face agriculture locally, nationally and internationally.



Chris Ronan COOMA, NSW

Scholarship funded by **Prime Super** // primesuper.com.au

Chris is the Equity and Engagement Director at the Country Universities Centre (CUC) and the National President of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA). He has worked in the higher education and not-for-profit sectors across the United States, New Zealand, and Australia in a range of management and consultancy roles. Chris has led national research projects in regional, rural and remote higher education policy, student equity, widening participation and rural student transitions. He hopes to further develop his leadership skills to create a more inclusive higher education system for regional communities.



Tracy Sullivan CABLE BEACH, WA

Scholarship funded by **Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry** // agriculture.gov.au

Tracy is a cattle veterinarian with extensive experience of over two decades in the beef industry ranging from clinical veterinarian, bull semen specialist, beef producer, PhD researcher, published scientific author, adoption and extension provider, federal government regulator of live animal exports and on plant abattoir vet, to a representative on professional and industry groups. Tracy advocates for improving sustainability, productivity, efficiency and animal welfare in the beef industry. Through developing her leadership skills, Tracy aims to join the existing diverse industry leaders steering Australian agriculture towards a bright sustainable future.



Angus Street AVALON BEACH, NSW

Scholarship funded by **AuctionsPlus** // auctionsplus.com.au

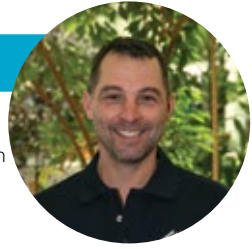
Angus grew up both on the family farm and inside his father's computer shops. Today, he is CEO of Australia's Digital Ag Market, AuctionsPlus, which facilitates the trade of over three billion dollars in livestock, machinery and commodities. Having had a front seat to how farmers adopted new technologies like computers, mobile phones and the internet, he is passionate about helping businesses evolve to stay ahead of the pack through the use of digital tools and software. By continuing his personal development, Angus hopes to empower the next generations of innovators to be brave and free to explore the wonderful opportunities within rural and regional Australia.



Aaron Thomas WON WRON, VIC

Scholarship funded by **Gardiner Dairy Foundation** // gardinerfoundation.com.au

Aaron has been the farm manager at Gelbeado Park in south-eastern Victoria for some 17 years. Aaron is a mental health ambassador and a strong leader on this issue in his local community. He also has a strong passion for the dairy industry and rural health. A father of three girls, Aaron is keen to use this ARLP experience to strengthen his leadership and grow as a leader in his industry and keep raising awareness around rural health.



Jane Wardle PERTH, WA

Scholarship funded by the **CBH Group** // cbh.com.au

Jane grew up on the south coast of Western Australia and has come from a line of farming generations. She has spent most of her career within the agri-food industry and believes there is no better industry to be a part of. She currently leads grain quality and sustainability in the marketing and trading division of Australia's largest grain exporter CBH. Jane has previously held positions based in Perth, regional WA, and Melbourne. Jane understands that leadership requires finding opportunities to develop and promote self-actualising skills, and the use of these skills will help her build a better culture for future generations.



Eugene Wong AVOCA, QLD

Scholarship funded by the **Tim Fairfax Family Foundation** // tfff.org.au

Eugene is a rural generalist doctor, now based in Bundaberg. His first exposure to rural medicine was in 2010 when he spent a year working in the Northern Territory, which inspired a love for the country. The next decade took him throughout Queensland working in Longreach, Emerald, Cape York (with the Royal Flying Doctor Service) and the Torres Strait. He is currently the Director of Medical Services at the Bundaberg Base Hospital. He is on the Board of Doctors Health Queensland and is involved in educational leadership of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. By continuing to develop himself as a team member and leader, Eugene aims to nudge his local health service towards being a healthier place to work and more healing for those who need its services.



THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

We would like to thank our generous partners for their commitment to and investment in building leadership capability for rural, regional and remote Australia.

ARLP29 Scholarships



John B. Foundation





rural-leaders.org.au

