



**Congratulations:** The recipient of the 2025 Salt Creek Scholarship, valued at \$36,000, was named this week. Recipient Stephanie Grist will have her accommodation expenses paid as she sets off to study a degree in Adelaide, which was inspired by her father's stroke four years ago. 2025D

# A father's resilience inspires Salt Creek scholar

INSPIRED to help others after her father suffered a stroke, Brauer College's Stephanie Grist has been named the recipient of the \$36,000 Salt Creek Scholarship.

The scholarship is offered each year to students across the district to alleviate the costs associated with accommodation when moving to the city to study a course which is unavailable locally.

Stephanie will set off this weekend to her new residence at St Ann's College in North Adelaide, while she studies a double Bachelor Degree (Human Movement and Business - Sport and Recreation Management) at the University of South Australia.

She formally accepted the scholarship at a presentation ceremony, held at Salt Creek Merino Stud where the wind farm is situated, on Monday.

Stephanie was joined by her mother Catherine, Brauer College teacher Iain Jackson and Year 11-12 sub-school leader Natalie Draper, Moyne Shire mayor Karen Foster and former councillor Ian Smith, and a contingent of Tilt Renewables employees including asset manager Barend Van Der Poll.

Speaking with *Western District Newspapers* at the presentation ceremony, Stephanie admits she was still pinching herself.

"I'm so truly grateful," she said.

"I couldn't believe it when I found out - I nearly cried.

"I just sat there because this is truly life-changing for me, for mum, for my whole family."

Stephanie said she had been inspired to

pursue her studies after her father suffered a stroke 2021, and she's since watched him endure the gruelling rehabilitation process.

"I feel it's been rewarding to see because he's been putting in so much effort, you can see it's helping to get him to a better point of life where he can walk better and move better," she said.

"I want to help people do that again.

"To improve people's quality of life and make it more enjoyable, especially for people who have had severe injuries - to get them back to their normal life, and help them out."

While her studies will take her to South Australia, Stephanie has no doubt she'll be back to use her newly-acquired knowledge in support of the south west's next generation of athletes.

"When I come back after my degree I want to keep helping out in Warrnambool and this community," she said.

"I want to give back through hockey because I've grown up playing it my whole life.

"I've been coaching at Hockey South West for three years with the juniors through Hookin2Hockey (Hockey Australia junior entry program), and I love getting to give back through these kinds of programs

"I want to help local junior players get in to state programs - they miss the opportunity because of the distances and a lack of resources compared to the metro kids who have professional coaches."

Sally Towell, a member of the scholarship's selection panel, said there had seen 20 applications this year before the field was shortlisted to seven, but Stephanie emerged as a clear winner for her community-mindedness and maturity in how she viewed her future.

"She knew what she wanted to tell us, she took it seriously and I think she took the opportunity and did not miss one thing," she said.

"She completely nailed it - she was fantastic, very eloquent and driven.

"It was a unanimous decision."

The scholarship was launched in 2018 after the opening of the Salt Creek Wind Farm.

Property owner Peter Coy had watched his daughters grow to success in their own careers in spite of the disadvantages rural students face in seeking out higher education, and he wanted to use income from the wind farm to assist other students in doing the same.

Salt Creek Wind Farm developer Tilt Renewables was so moved by Mr Coy's concept, they offered to support the scholarship dollar-for-dollar.

The presentations have become increasingly emotional for Mr Coy - not only for the chance to congratulate the newest scholar, but also to

welcome back former scholars who have since gone on to graduation and professional success.

"I can see it makes such a difference to these kids, and to have so many of them coming back each year is something I find lovely," he said.

"It's amazing how they change so much at that age - they come to us as kids, and we see them coming back as adults."

Mr Coy said he looked forward to the "highlight" of presenting the scholarship each year, and encouraged any students looking to begin their studies at university to apply.

"I'm so happy we're able to do it - the difference between a city kid and a country kid can be tens of thousands of dollars towards relocating, so it's an unfair disadvantage for the country kids," he said.

"I'd encourage any student to try for the scholarship next year - we had 20 deserving applicants and I wish we could give them all a scholarship."

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