

ISSUE 51 | JUNE 2023

# MCCOSA

## Home is Where the Heart is

Grace Ives & Jack Littler tell their story

### From Vine to Wine ... naturally

Matt Pooley on sustainable  
wine-making in the Apple Isle

### Secrets of Success

Katrina Alexander —  
trailblazer of the racing  
industry

### Philanthropy: The Love of Humanity

Scholarship supporters making  
a difference



# Save the Dates 2023

## JULY

14th – 16th Australian Sheep and Wool Show  
30th Open Day, Marcus Oldham College

## AUGUST

6th – 7th Sheepvention alumni reception Hamilton Club  
9 – 10th Mingenew Midwest Expo  
22nd – 24th AgQuip, Gunnedah, NSW  
30th – 31st Dowerin Field Days, Dowerin, WA

## SEPTEMBER

5th – 6th Westech Field Days, Barcaldine, QLD  
6th – 7th Newdegate Machinery Field Days WA  
9th – 10th 1975 reunion at Marcus Oldham College,  
contact Jeremy Curtis — [bullfrogathome@hotmail.com](mailto:bullfrogathome@hotmail.com)  
19th – 21st Henty Machinery Field Days, NSW  
26th – 28th Yorke Peninsula Field Days, SA

## DECEMBER

8th Graduation 2023, Geelong, VIC.

## MARCH 2024

9th – 10th 1972 reunion at Marcus Oldham College,  
contact Rob Rush — [srush38@bigpond.net.au](mailto:srush38@bigpond.net.au)

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Cover & contents photography:  
Brunette Downs — Grace Ives and Jack Littler

We acknowledge we are educating  
on the traditional land of the  
Wadawurrung people and honour and  
pay our respects to their Elders past,  
present and future.



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

# Andrew Baker

I recently came across a powerful metaphor that resonated with me: *"Ignore the waves and watch out for the tides"*.

In the agriculture and equine industries, we are subject to both waves and tides of change. Waves can be loud, big, and crash on the shore, but they slip away for the next wave to come in. Tides, on the other hand, are silent and slow, can change the entire coastline, and can catch you off guard if you're not aware of them, and you can find yourself in deep water. It is our responsibility at Marcus to discern between the two and respond accordingly, to ensure that our curriculum is meeting the needs of future business leaders.

The agriculture industry is currently undergoing a significant transformation, marked by the adoption of cutting-edge technologies such as smart tech, robotics, blockchain, traceability, and artificial intelligence. Additionally, there is a shift towards a more corporate approach to farm management in order to improve efficiency and streamline operations. However, this has not led to reduction in labour requirements. On the contrary, the nature of jobs has changed and there is a growing demand for higher-skilled workers.

One emerging challenge that must be addressed is the labour shortage. Currently, there are six jobs available for every graduate, emphasising the need for a skilled workforce. I recently attended a "Growing the NextGen of Food and Fibre Education" conference where educators, industry representatives, and tertiary education providers discussed the skills that future leaders in the agricultural and equine industries will require. One presenter listed a number of key attributes, including a strong foundation in farming, business acumen, data literacy and tech-savviness, an understanding of biosecurity risks, sustainability management, climate change and CO2 emissions management, as well as interpersonal and people management skills.



However, the list did not include two critical aspects that are becoming increasingly relevant in today's macro landscape - the ability to navigate complex markets, supply chains, and relationships (which are often driven by populist rather than economic, rational decision-making), and an understanding of consumer attitudes across key markets and customer segments.

Our goal at Marcus is to produce graduates who have the necessary skills to navigate the tides and ignore the waves. To achieve this, our courses are carefully crafted to provide students with a thorough understanding of the industry, cutting-edge technologies that drive progress, business and decision-making skills, and the interpersonal skills needed to excel as future business leaders. With a rapidly changing landscape, we aim to equip our students with the knowledge and tools to adapt to the industry's evolving needs and challenges.

**Andrew Baker,**  
Principal

FROM THE MOCOSA PRESIDENT

# Peter Stephens

2023 is off to a great start, with a later winter break than usual. Typically, the change of season falls during AGFEST in Tasmania and hats off to Deputy Principal Elizabeth (Winks) Gubbins for flying the flag for Marcus over the three days.

This year Winks was accompanied by our brand-new Tassie MOCOSA executive member **Sarah Johnston AdDipFBM'02**, and the traditional Marcus drinks and catch up on the Friday night was again a great success. Feedback indicates that Alumni, friends of the College, and potential students really value this interaction and want to hear about how the College is developing, both from an infrastructure perspective but, just as importantly, from an educational point of view. From next year, all courses offered at Marcus will be of degree standard and interest in attending Marcus is at an all-time high.

On behalf of the MOCOSA Executive I would like to welcome the aforementioned Sarah, **Jim Teasdale BBFM'09 VIC, Mitchell Harris GCertAgri'18 NSW/ACT, Rebecca Kelly BB(Agri)'18 WA and Rob Handbury AdDipFM'02 SA**. This new splash of enthusiasm and regionality will help with the Marcus Council's desire to take the Marcus show on the road and engage with Alumni, friends, and prospective students, sharing the Marcus experience and story, and our aspirations going forward.

To that end, College staff are currently working on a "heat map" identifying concentrations of Alumni in each state, which will form the basis of where the Marcus Roadshow



will most likely visit and hope to bring people together within a 200km radius. Stay tuned for updates on the Marcus homepage, Facebook, and Marcus Connect - and please contact any of the Executive if you have any suggestions.

In the meantime, wishing everyone a great winter wherever you are in the nation.

All the best.  
**Peter Stephens DipFM'83**  
MOCOSA President

# Let's talk about it

“Never underestimate the value of having a conversation with somebody. I speak to many people and often it's the first time in their lives they have had a conversation about their experience with suicide.”

"People don't always need professional support when they are under pressure or stress, sometimes they just need a conversation. They need to be heard and you don't always have to have a solution, but the value of having that conversation is something we can all engage in and provide for other people."

That's the sage advice from Associate Professor Alison Kennedy, Director of the National Centre for Farmer Health based in Hamilton, Victoria.

Mental health challenges are different in regional areas, with rural and remote populations over-represented in suicide statistics, and risk factors more prevalent.

"There is limited access to services. Not just physical access to services, but services that offer a really good understanding of the challenges of life and work in rural or farming communities. If you extend that out a bit and think about community, and access to other services beyond mental health, that's a growing area of concern. People lose their local sporting clubs, local bank, post office, places where people often meet and have a bit of a chat. Then there's the impact on families as those communities shrink, children may have to go away to school or travel long distances, so there's a loss of connection and social contact which is incredibly important. We are also seeing farms are generally getting bigger, so there are fewer people around; even having a workforce to feel connected to, that's something we see a lot less of now."

It's vitally important to share your thoughts.

"If you are having a hard time, talk to somebody. That's the first step towards getting some support. Whether that's someone in your family, or a friend, they can help you find somebody to support you. When you are in that place, it can be very difficult to make some of those decisions, so seek support earlier than that if possible. If it's someone in your life who is experiencing this, then it may be up to you to link them with that support. It may be up to you to make those calls to ensure the person is supported. It's all about having that first conversation and really asking somebody, not just 'How are you going?' but flipping that around and not making it easy for someone to say, 'Yes, I'm fine.' Say to them, 'Look, I've really noticed this and this in you. What's happening with that, tell me about what you're going through?' Not allowing for a closed question, asking it in such a way that you are creating an opening for somebody to have a conversation."

The ripple effect of suicide in rural communities means there are very few people who haven't been affected in their community in some way. On the positive side, there is a strong willingness in rural communities to help others.

“Often, when we have people who are quite passionate about supporting others, we find that by doing that, they help themselves as well.”

"They learn more information about helping themselves when they go into some training for helping others and, inadvertently, they learn things about themselves too."

Psychologist and Student Counsellor at Marcus Oldham College, Monika Reichler adds, "Ideally we are wanting to be preventative and regularly considering where we are at in terms of our mental health. Most of us maintain our vehicles through regular checks and servicing; it would be great to approach our wellbeing in the same way. Connecting with those around us and putting energy into our relationships helps with maintaining our overall health and wellbeing. It also makes it easier to reach out to others when we are struggling. Having someone there to weather the storm with us, which eventually will pass, can be life changing".

## NEED HELP?

### Lifeline Australia — Crisis Support Line

Call **13 11 14** or text **0477 13 11 14**  
[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

Lifeline's 13 11 14 crisis support service is available **24/7**. Anyone in Australia can speak to a trained Crisis Supporter over the phone, any time of the day or night.

#### What to expect

We are Australia's largest crisis support service, here to ensure you'll never face your darkest moment alone. The service is confidential and you'll be connected to a trained Lifeline Crisis Supporter who will be there to listen, without judgment.

#### How we can help

We listen without judgement and provide a safe space to discuss your needs, worries or concerns. We will work with you to explore options for support.

### Beyond Blue — Speak to a Counsellor

Call **1300 22 4636**  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Your mental health is important. Some days are better than others and we all need a helping hand from time to time.

#### Suicide Call Back Service

Call **1300 659 467**

24-hour Australian counselling service.



Grace Ives BB(Agri)'18 and fiancé, Jack Littler BB(Agri)'18 have simultaneously fallen in love with one another and with the Northern Territory. Grace hails from Hay, NSW while Jack is from the West Midlands of England and came to work in the outback for a year, 10 years ago.

# Home is where the heart is



"We met when we were both working in the Territory, Grace was working on a station that I was contracting at, and we got to know each other that year," said Jack.

Love and a strong career path have kept them both in the Northern Territory.

"The big one for me is the opportunities in agriculture in Australia versus those in the UK. It is just a whole other league, and it's so diverse, that's what I really enjoy. It's really hard for people back in the UK to comprehend the scale of the northern cattle industry. Unless you actually see it and live in it for a period of time, it's difficult to wrap your head around the unique operating environment and understand the challenges and opportunities. It blows their minds when I tell them how many head of cattle we were managing at 'Brunette Downs' and that the station is almost eight times bigger than London," said Jack.

The first property Jack worked on as a jackaroo when he came out from England was 'Montejinni', south of Katherine. Fast forward through three years studying at Marcus Oldham and four years working at 'Brunette Downs' on the Barkly Tablelands, and he is back at 'Montejinni', now as Station Manager for Australian Agricultural Company (AACo). They breed Brahman cross cattle for live export and domestic markets, on a property that is more than 300,000 hectares. Grace's role at AACo is Operations Business Partner - Pastoral, working on project and development initiatives.

**"It's predominantly about water and wire, for me. A lot of productive rangelands in the northern cattle industry can be a long distance from water, so cattle cannot access it because it is too far away."**



The Brunette Downs Team - 2022



“When you compare northern Australia with Victoria and NSW, it’s fairly undeveloped. There’s an awful lot of opportunity to contribute to the implementation of real change that drives profitability of northern cattle enterprises.”

Looking out onto the Brunette Lake system - Lake Corella, Lake Sylvester and Lake De Burgh

"The paddocks can be really large, so a big part of my role is working through development and operational efficiency opportunities. It's about putting in more water points, making paddocks smaller and the yard infrastructure and laneways that go with it," said Grace.

They both heard about Marcus while working in the Northern Territory, Grace from a head stockman, who had attended the College and Jack from another alumnus while at a campdraft.

"Marcus has played a significant role in getting us to where we are now. I stepped into a role as an analyst and used all the skills in accounting, budgeting and livestock flows. All these skills were quite pivotal in giving me a leg-up in the first two years in the analyst capacity. Now, having progressed over the last five years, the thing that I use most is the critical thinking and having confidence to challenge things. That, I got from Marcus," said Grace.

"For me it was the technical skills in the first few years, now it's more the business knowledge I gained through the course that enables me to communicate effectively throughout the business. Similarly, the critical thinking helps me build business cases to support my decision making and enables me to get proposals through in a fast time frame," said Jack.

Their new roles come with challenges, but the rewards are paying off.

"There's a lot of staffing issues in the North. If you are looking for experienced maintenance staff, then you are competing with the mines and their high wages and fly-in fly-out lifestyles. The other challenge is we have a lot of really good quality, young people come through, they do a couple of years then go to Uni and don't come back up here, whether that's because they don't realise the opportunities, or they go for an opportunity down south closer to family and friends," said Jack.

"I have really exciting projects coming up, scoping opportunities that will continue to improve the productive capacity of AACo's pastoral portfolio. When you compare northern Australia with Victoria and NSW, it's fairly undeveloped. There's an awful lot of opportunity to contribute to the implementation of real change that drives profitability of northern cattle enterprises," said Grace.

Grace's two sisters are also keen to pursue careers in agriculture, with **Lil Ives AG1** studying at Marcus now, and Emily working on the Barkly Tablelands at 'Brunchilly Station' while studying nursing.

**gives96@gmail.com**  
**jdittler7@gmail.com**



Montejinni Creek



Jack and Grace



Grace at Montejinni



# From Vine to Wine

## ...naturally

**Matt Pooley's enthusiasm is infectious. As Brand Ambassador and Wholesale Manager for family owned and run Pooley Wines, Richmond, Tasmania, it's clear Matt Pooley DipFM'92 enjoys what he does.**

"I'm interested in the challenges and rewards of the wine industry. The Tasmanian industry is a close-knit group of producers who are all different and have a great story to share with their visitors. We are unique. We are an island that is so clean and pristine, and we need to maintain that as much as possible whilst maintaining a balance of economic growth and prosperity. We're giving people a one-off experience by sharing our stories, good wine and food, scenic beauty, and service – a full experience that provides lifelong memories. Yes, we are involved in agriculture, which is a great industry, and yes, we are in the wine industry, but ultimately, we're in the people business."

Overlapping with Marcus alumni in the late eighties 'sealed the deal' regarding Matt's decision to apply to study at the College.

"I secured a two-year jackeroo position at "Connorville" near Cressy in Tasmania's northern midlands, owned by Roderic O'Connor and managed by **Bernard Boot DipFM'71**. At the time, **Stewart Palfreyman DipFM'71**, a family friend was also a mentor. When I started in February 1988, I met **Tim Hickey DipFM'92**, another young Southern Tasmanian enthusiast. Enduring the trials and tribulations of farming life, living and working together, our friendship grew.

This was the background that forged my passion for the farming profession. Tim had an on-site interview with **Sam Inglis DipFM'66, HonBB(Ag)'18**, planning to attend Marcus Oldham in 2000 after he had completed his jackerooing time at 'Connorville'. Whilst Sam was interviewing Tim, I asked if I could find out more about Marcus and snuck in a bit of time with Sam. That was the start of my future lifetime pursuits in agriculture."

Education has been a focus for Matt, both at Marcus and then in 2013 as a Nuffield Scholar.

"I liked the small class sizes and the professionalism of the staff I met at Marcus. The reputation of past students was strong, and many held influential positions in agriculture. The business management focus and my alternative enterprise case study (Growing Grapes and the Tasmanian Wine Industry) gave me a lead into my career now, and really made me look further and deeper into diversifying farm income. It made me realise that to make money in agriculture a producer has to position their product closer to the consumer to have greater control over the blockchain network. Traditional farming has so many risk factors which are out of your control. Farmers are price takers and not price makers. It certainly takes special skills to grasp all the components together to make them work but it can be done if you want it badly enough. Nuffield was an awesome experience, spending 19 weeks travelling

and meeting like-minded scholars and professionals studying sustainable small-scale vineyard and winery practices in cool climates."

Matt is justifiably proud of the Pooley product which has received industry recognition over the years, including the Winery of the Year for the Halliday Wine Companion Awards for 2023, Best Riesling in Australia Real Review 2022 for the 2020 Margaret Pooley Tribute Riesling, in 2021 the James Halliday Wine Review awarded their 2020 Jack Denis Pinot Noir 99 points out of 100, and in 2012 they won the Royal Hobart Agricultural Show Society Vineyard of the Year award. But he is equally pleased they have achieved excellence without causing a negative impact on the environment.

"We were the first Tasmanian winery to be awarded our sustainability accreditation with EntWine (now Australian Sustainable Winegrowers Association) and with Freshcare Australia, and we still hold them. We've been long supporters and champions of our local wine industry's VinZero sustainability program."

[matt@pooleywines.com.au](mailto:matt@pooleywines.com.au)

[www.pooleywines.com.au/story](http://www.pooleywines.com.au/story)





# Philanthropy: The love of humanity

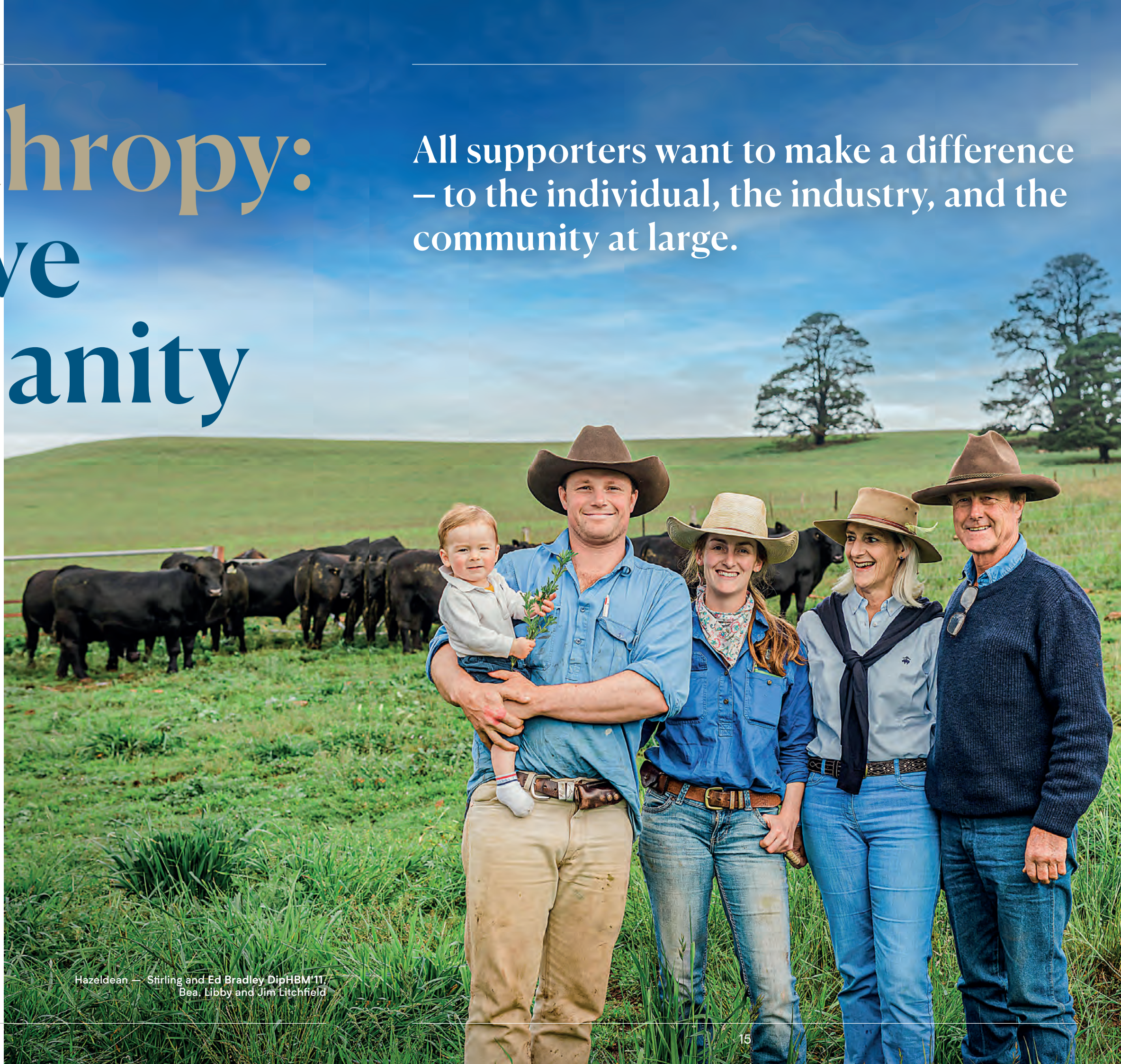
Derived from the Ancient Greek words *phílos*, "who loves", and *ánthrôpos*, "humankind", philanthropy literally means "the love of humanity".

At Marcus, philanthropy is the foundation of our College. It all came to be through an act of benevolence – the bequest of funds from the estate of Marcus William Oldham to establish an agricultural education institution. From that start, many philanthropic acts have helped the College grow and enabled individuals to flourish.

Three scholarship supporters have made their "love of humanity" abundantly clear. Past Deputy Principal and former Lecturer, Alan Blackburn, has initiated the inaugural Marcus Oldham Indigenous Scholarship, open to students studying Agriculture, Agribusiness or Equine Management. Jim Litchfield and family have been behind the Hazeldean Livestock Production Scholarship offering support for Agriculture students since 2002. And Andrew Farran's Yiddinga (Farran) Farm Management Scholarship, available to both Agriculture and Agribusiness students, is making a difference to the fifteenth recipient in 2023. Andrew has boosted his contribution over the years to a very generous \$60,000, which is awarded over the two years of the Bachelor of Business degree.

All supporters want to make a difference – to the individual, the industry, and the community at large.

All supporters want to make a difference – to the individual, the industry, and the community at large.



Hazeldean — Stirling and Ed Bradley DipHBM '11,  
Bea, Libby and Jim Litchfield



**Alan Blackburn:** “If it helps the recipient’s life in a meaningful way, then it’s been a success. I will know the scholarship has made a difference if a recipient feels that the experience has positively enhanced their life by enabling them to see and take new opportunities, as well as enhancing their sense of wellbeing.”

**Jim Litchfield:** “The more people involved in giving back, the better the overall result will be for Australian agriculture. I hate the term networking, but being part of the scholarship does give you access to innovative ideas and people, both informally and formally, and this is a positive side benefit. As a country, Australia is behind in the world in philanthropy, but I think this is changing and I am hopeful we will see a big lift in support and

involvement, particularly given the increased profitability of agriculture generally over the past few years.”

**Andrew Farran:** “We cannot allow those persons with talent and potential to be left on the side, regardless of where they are or the circumstances of their upbringing. We should be searching for that potential, not as a function of social welfare, but for growth, development, and success. That is the essential underlying purpose of scholarship systems in this sector. It is intended also to encourage leadership, without which little can be achieved.”

These three supporters chose to focus their efforts on supporting Marcus’ students, knowing the difference an education at the College can make.



**Alan Blackburn:** “Having been a lecturer and later DP at Marcus for around 25 years, I am both well acquainted with, and a great supporter of, the style and depth of education provided at Marcus. It offers a terrific education to the students, which seems to have only improved. I know some people can’t come because they are financially constrained. It’s a great thing to be able to do, help someone achieve what they would like to do. There are, of course, fees associated with attending, and some worthy applicants miss out because of this. I was motivated by wishing to assist those who otherwise might not be able to come.”

**Jim Litchfield:** “Marcus Oldham is the pre-eminent agricultural training institution in Australia. Its ethos of encouraging objectivity, innovative thinking and stringent commercial decision-making is vital for the continued

success of Australian agriculture. Some years ago, we became aware of the huge disparity between the actual number of people enrolling in agriculture courses and the demand for agriculture graduates. There were clearly not enough people studying agriculture to fill available positions. Rather than just complaining about it, we decided to be proactive and establish a scholarship at Marcus Oldham to do our bit in addressing this serious issue.”

**Andrew Farran:** “Many years ago, when Sir James Darling was the headmaster of Geelong Grammar School, he spoke to me about his plan for a high quality private agricultural college to serve the nation. I committed myself, on leaving school, to giving that plan my support if I was ever in a position to do so substantively.”

Alan, Jim and Andrew all acknowledge that giving is not a one-way street.

**Alan Blackburn:** “There’s considerable pleasure in being able to give and help other people. I think it gets back to a philosophy of life. A 2008 Harvard Business study showed that people who give are actually happier than people who simply make money and don’t give. That is in line with the well-known maxim that, ‘There is more pleasure in giving than receiving’. I think the conclusion reached by both sources is correct, certainly for me.”

**Jim Litchfield:** “It’s partly a feel-good thing, but also important for the future of Australian agriculture more broadly. It also enables us to help students who have obvious

potential but not always the means to gain an education in agriculture, and we enjoy doing this.”

**Andrew Farran:** “This matter has engaged my personal interest for many years, and I am pleased that I have been in a position to give it support through the Yiddinga scholarships.”

All three supporters wish to encourage others to make a difference.

**Alan Blackburn:** “I was very impressed by Marcus’ response to this scholarship idea; it was very positive – I could not have been happier with the response I received. We can all help, it doesn’t have to be money. The success of this scholarship will largely depend on the wider Marcus community to help the College find suitable candidates. If anyone reading this can think of a suitable applicant, please contact the College.”



“We cannot allow those persons with talent and potential to be left on the side, regardless of where they are or the circumstances of their upbringing.”

Yiddinga Scholarship recipients  
Dimity Crowe AG1, Annabelle  
Hamilton AG2, Anna Cotton BB(Ag)'15  
with supporter, Andrew Farran

**Jim Litchfield:** “We are hopeful our involvement will encourage other organizations to follow suit, and with greater numbers it will really start to make a difference. Since we started the Hazeldean Scholarship we have already seen significant growth in the number of businesses providing scholarships to Marcus Oldham, and I think this demonstrates a lot of other people are now thinking as we do.”

**Andrew Farran:** “While our performance in agriculture over the decades has been excellent, it will not remain that way if we stand still. Indeed, as the food and fibre industries become more complex, associated with advancing technologies as never seen before, those entering or growing up in agriculture will need to be better educated and smarter, both in management and technical skills.”

To become a scholarship supporter, contact the College on (03) 5243 3533 or [scholarships@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au](mailto:scholarships@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au), or contact Winks Gubbins on [gubbins@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au](mailto:gubbins@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au)

[marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/marcus-oldham-indigenous-scholarships](http://marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/marcus-oldham-indigenous-scholarships)

[marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/hazeldean-livestock-production](http://marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/hazeldean-livestock-production)

[marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/yiddinga-farm-management](http://marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/yiddinga-farm-management)





“Employers I was introduced to recognised that there was both intellectual and hands-on training at Marcus, which was certainly a very prominent feature at the end. The business side of it was extremely useful. There are many facets of running your own business that I am a lot more comfortable with, having been through the course.”

# Secrets of Success

**Katrina Alexander AdCertHBM’89**

“The secret to success is enjoying what you are doing, no matter what that may be. With horses, there is a lot of planning, it’s all about attention to detail. We have always preferred to have a small team and as employers, my husband, Simon, and I are very hands-on, very much involved in the day-to-day routines of stable work...”



Katrina and Simon Alexander, La Crique and (right) one of the owners, after a Group One win

“H having good people around you and involving your staff in your business so their ideas come through, being open to their suggestions, is what makes our stable run smoothly.”

For **Katrina Alexander (nee Fage) AdCertHBM’99**, the “secret” is working well. Based in Matamata, an hour’s drive east of Hamilton on the North Island of New Zealand, Katrina trains 18 racehorses. Over the past 20 years, they have celebrated a number of winners, most recently enjoying Group One success with four-year-old mare, La Crique, who remains competitive at the elite level.

Horses have always been a big part of her world, but until Katrina crossed the ditch to study at Marcus, she was unsure where to direct her interest.

“Marcus was a good decider for me, I left school not intending to go on to further study. I was already working in the industry in showing stables, and I had seen the Marcus advertisements in magazines here and thought that would be quite good; the duration of the course appealed

to me. I didn’t really know what facet of horses I was most interested in. I was working in low level dressage at the time and competing in the sport horse environment, so I wanted to see where a course like that would take me. If I hadn’t gone through Marcus, I wonder whether my pathway through racing would have been quite so prominent. I might not have gone that way. I think that’s the main attraction, being able to have a look and have a go and gain an insight into the different industries. That was the key.”

On graduating, Katrina realised Marcus had a high-profile, which worked well with prospective employers.

“Employers I was introduced to recognised that there was both intellectual and hands-on training at Marcus, which was certainly a very prominent feature at the end. The business side of it was extremely useful. There are many facets of running your own business that I am a lot more comfortable with, having been through the course.”

After Marcus, Katrina worked for NZ trainer Murray Baker, training her own horse on the side. It was a game-changer for her.



“When he (Murray) realised I was very serious about what I was doing with this horse, he offered to have it in the stables because I used to travel a lot for him and it started to be very successful. We sold it for quite a bit of money which was our first training effort, and in the following year we had the half-sister in the same situation – who was also very successful. Murray gave me the freedom to be able to deal with my horse as well as learn from him. Down the track, he could recognise the talent I had for that. He had a very good team, so it was a great experience there, and the sale of our first horse allowed us to buy our first farm.”

Katrina’s stable grew from there.

“We decided to put ourselves amongst it in the Waikato district, which is when we seriously went into our own business with 35–38 horses to work, and in 2003 I brought a horse over and won a Sydney Cup. It really snowballed from there. What we thought we’d do is a lot of pre-training and train a

few horses for ourselves, but we kind of flipped it and ended up having a very good client base and a lot of success.”

Katrina is a trailblazer for women in the industry.

“Early on, it was quite noticeably a man’s world, in particular sourcing clients and relationships with stud masters. I wasn’t going to door knock and beg and borrow. If people wanted to send me a horse, then they knew how to find me. I didn’t feel I had to go and chase people. I felt my results would speak for themselves. It is still a little bit male dominated in that respect, there are a lot of very good female stable staff and women with potential who could be training and leading the stables, but they are more often behind the scenes, not necessarily in the limelight themselves.”

Katrina found it can be hard to find the balance, and became burnt out with the workload and chasing after a young family, so called time-out on horse training for a few years.

**“Early on it was challenging being a woman in this industry. Moira Murdoch, Margaret Falconer, were around at the time. We were very few and far between but not so much now, it’s completely different. There’s a lot of very successful women giving it a good go...”**



“I always said I was a mother before a trainer. We had a stable of almost 40 horses, young kids – and all three children have been very sporty. I thought it was time to step away.”

Tough times struck Katrina and family when her son Jackson was diagnosed with a melanoma at age 18.

“There was a lot of upheaval. He passed away three years ago after a five-year battle with the cancer. We openly talk about the things we went through and some things you have to laugh about, or you cry. Yeah, absolutely a tough time. It was an extended time, a lot of people don’t have as long as he had from when they first find out. We have a lot of good memories as a family, and it did bring us very close.”

It was Jackson who recognised Katrina’s future was back training horses.

“That is basically why we are back doing what we are doing – because it was his wish that we came back and finished off what we had been doing before.”

It’s been a satisfying move.

“I like to develop horses, getting them in, buying three or four yearlings at the sales, and taking those young ones through. I’ve always enjoyed that development stage and finding the next gem. I’m very well known for having predominately fillies in the stable. We don’t have a lot of male horses and I enjoy working with them and getting the potential out of them, and obviously if they go on and be extremely successful then that’s a huge thrill, that’s what I get a kick out of most.”

As Katrina can attest, success can be simultaneously sweet and stressful.



2003 Sydney Cup



**“It can be stressful watching them compete. We have La Crique now and there is a huge focus on her all the time. I find it more stressful when I know I have a talented horse in a maiden race, hoping they’ll perform to expectation...”**

“Once you get to Group One races and you have good horses around you then you just feel very fortunate to be in that situation but, of course, a little bit of pressure comes on because you want them to perform well. There is a certain amount of nerves racing at every level.”

Katrina has much more to come.

“I can see us being involved in racing for the next five years, we have some nice young horses coming through. I am lucky I am still able to ride myself. I do like to ride the younger ones to have a feel for them coming through. While I still enjoy that, I will probably keep training. I find it very hard to train without being able to ride, so when I no longer wish to be on top of a horse, I may just end up having a small number of horses and just do it for the pleasure of it. In the meantime, we will continue to do what we are doing and enjoy the results.”

[kasabloodstock@gmail.com](mailto:kasabloodstock@gmail.com)



# Careers Day



Careers Day — Excel Farms



Careers Day — Lawson Grains

In recognition for the high demand across the industry to engage with emerging talent, and to provide our senior students one-on-one time with potential employers, the College hosted its inaugural Careers Day in October, 2022.

A select group of 20 prospective employers spent the afternoon in the Ivo Dean Centre, where students across the Agribusiness and Agriculture cohorts were invited to discuss opportunities and expand their professional network.

The afternoon event was a great success, where the students were able to showcase their knowledge and skills. As a direct result, a number of job offers were made, and accepted!

Due to the ongoing demand for skills and the multiple career opportunities available across the ag industry, the event will be ongoing.

While the number of employers we can host is limited, expressions of interest for future events are welcome.

**Kate Gorman**  
Lecturer in Human Resource Management  
[gorman@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au](mailto:gorman@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au)

# Foundation

Students at Marcus Oldham appreciate that they are the benefactors of an extraordinarily generous and supportive College community. They attend classes in the state-of-the-art Douglas Boyd Learning Centre, which opened in 2020, and have access to technologies that make it easy to connect with thought leaders from around the globe.

Students value the unique Marcus model of immersive education. And they appreciate the generosity of those people in the College community who have given funds for the development of facilities that support their future careers and aspirational goals.

The most recent facility is the new 30-bed accommodation wing which opened last year. The Victorian Government contributed \$2.5 million, and the College community raised the additional funds required for the \$10 million construction project. The College can now accommodate 150 students on campus; an important consideration when 70 percent of students come from interstate.

In a new video produced by the Marcus Oldham Foundation, students speak about the pride they share in their facilities, and the lifelong lessons they take away about being considerate, working in with others, and the value of living closely with peers who all share a love of agriculture and equine, while having vastly different experiences they can learn from.

- *"Living on campus with a lot of different people teaches you to get along with everybody. That's a personal skill that you will take into the workforce and into your life."*
- *"Marcus has such a good reputation in industry, for the connections and extensive network you walk away with."*
- *"The quality education is attracting people to Marcus, however the upgrade of the infrastructure, particularly the student accommodation, is a sign of where Marcus is heading as an institution, and looking to keep up that commitment to the modernisation of agriculture in Australia."*

Go to the Marcus Oldham website and click on Foundation to view the video — Investing in Marcus Oldham, Investing in Australia.

The College's commitment to offering more students the opportunity to live on campus is grounded in research. The Association of American Colleges and Universities has found students' academic performance is enhanced through being immersed in a living and learning environment.

The ability to interact with staff out of hours for help with assignments or personal problems adds enormously to the success of the students.



Foundation Coordinator, Deb Howcroft

The focus for the College's capital work campaign has now turned to raising funds for a further 40-bed residential facility with two common rooms, storage, and bedrooms, similar to the new 30-bed accommodation wing. This shovel-ready project, which is expected to cost \$10 million, will ensure the College continues to attract the best candidates from every state and territory to study equine and agriculture business management.

To further support the attraction of Australia's top candidates, our scholarship program remains strong, with almost 30 percent of our students receiving some financial support though our generous scholarship supporters.

The annual Foundation Cocktail Party is an opportunity for scholarship holders and their supporters to catch up, and the experience is both meaningful and mutually beneficial.

The Oldham Society is another way in which you may like to consider supporting Marcus Oldham. The Society offers wonderful and satisfying opportunities to be actively involved with the College during your living years, while still acquiring tax deductible benefits through the promise of a bequest.

More information is available on the Marcus Oldham website, or contact Deb Howcroft on (03) 5247 2919 or [foundation@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au](mailto:foundation@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au)



# Graduate Awards 2022

On Friday 2nd December 2022 graduation was held at Costa Hall at Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus. Ms Melissa Fletcher, CEO of Fletcher International gave the graduation address.

## Diploma of Equine Management



Henry Dwyer Racing Award for Equine Business Management  
— SYDNE WILLIAMS



The Rachel Watts Memorial Award for Commitment and Determination  
— DONNA THOMSON



Marcus Oldham College Old Students Association Award for Practical Skills  
— AMELIA HARVEY



Marcus Oldham Principal's Award for Effort and Achievement  
— BROOKE DALY

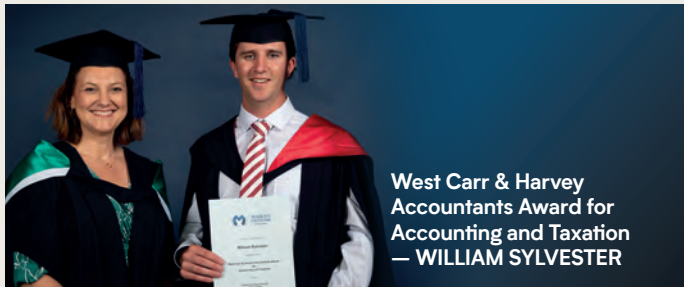


Ballarat Veterinary Practice Award for Horse Husbandry and Horse Health, and The Golden Plains Equine Award to the Dux of the Diploma of Equine Management  
— JUDITH JAECKLE

## Bachelor of Business (Agribusiness)



Computers Now Award for Learning Technologies, and Rimfire Resources Pty Ltd Award for Human Resource Management, and Beggs Family Award to the Dux of the Bachelor of Business (Agribusiness)  
— JACK JORDAN-HILL



West Carr & Harvey Accountants Award for Accounting and Taxation  
— WILLIAM SYLVESTER



Marcus Oldham College Old Students Association Award for Marketing & Economics  
— THOMAS FIELD



Graham McConnell Award for Strategic Planning  
— PAISLEY HORNER



Marcus Oldham Principal's Award for Effort and Achievement  
— LUKE JOHNSON

## Master of Agribusiness



Laguna Bay Pastoral Company Award to the Dux of the Master of Agribusiness  
— ROGER HIRSCH

## Graduate Certificate of Agribusiness



Chase Consulting Award for the Best Graduate Certificate of Agribusiness Business Case Study  
— MADELEINE FARRAR



## Graduation guest speaker

Melissa Fletcher is a Kamilaroi woman from Moree, now living in Dubbo and CEO of Fletcher International Exports Pty Ltd (FIE), a private, 100% Australian, family owned and operated agribusiness, employing more than 1200 people in regional Australia.

Melissa is the Deputy Chair of the Australian Meat Processing Corporation and is serving on the board of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, she is also the owner of an events business "Smoked Garage" in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane.

## Bachelor of Business (Agriculture)



Marcus Oldham College Award to the Student President  
— HUGH BROWNING



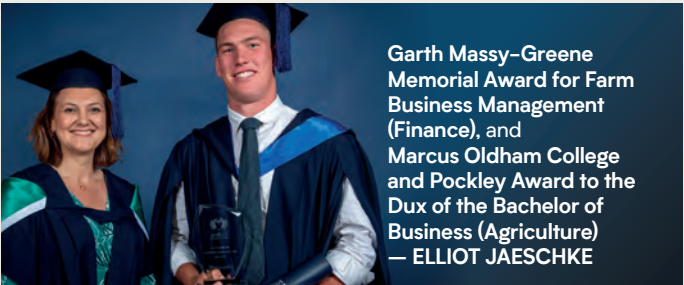
Bruce Kentish Memorial Award for General Service to the College Community  
— LACHLAN BRUMPTON



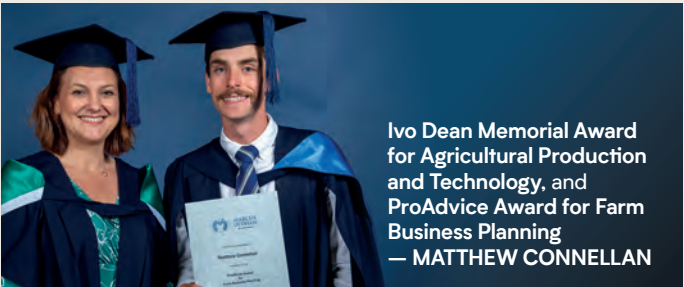
Mike and Jo Stephens Award for Environmental & Sustainable Awareness  
— HUGH BRADLEY



Charles Taylor Memorial Prize for Sport  
— SAM CROZIER



Garth Massy-Greene Memorial Award for Farm Business Management (Finance), and Marcus Oldham College and Pockley Award to the Dux of the Bachelor of Business (Agriculture)  
— ELLIOT JAESCHKE



Ivo Dean Memorial Award for Agricultural Production and Technology, and ProAdvice Award for Farm Business Planning  
— MATTHEW CONNELLAN



Marcus Oldham Principal's Award for Effort and Achievement  
— THOMAS SIMMONS



# Sir James Darling Marcus Oldham Graduate of Excellence Award

— Gordon Dickinson DipFM'79

Over the last four decades, Gordon Dickinson has successfully pursued careers in both agriculture and finance.

Leaving the College in 1979 with a Diploma of Farm Management, Gordon worked in finance for the next two decades, becoming CEO and Chairman of UBS Australia and New Zealand.

Gordon was awarded the Centenary Medal by the Federal Government in 2001 for his contribution to the financial services industry.

At the same time, Gordon and his wife Alexandra have grown their family farming operation, Nareen Station Pty Ltd, in Coleraine from 750 to over 23,000 acres.

Gordon and Alexandra have helped train the next generation through a successful jackaroo and jillaroo program which has involved more than 30 young people. The majority of trainees have continued on to pursue a career in agriculture, with a large number of them undertaking tertiary studies.

Gordon is Chairman of Rubicon Water Ltd, a global leader in the automation of irrigation networks, Deputy Chairman of the Australian Wool Testing Authority, and has served as Chairman of Mutual Trust, and Director of Woolstock.

As the 23rd Graduate of Excellence, we congratulate Gordon Dickinson on this fine achievement.

Gordon presented the following speech at Graduation in December 2022.

"I don't think I've received an award from Marcus Oldham since the car rally in 1979 and my wife, girlfriend at the time but now wife, said that was more due to her navigation than my driving. So that would make this a first.

I'd like to thank the College and the Council, but probably more importantly congratulate what the Council and the academic staff and Foundation have been able to achieve over 60 years. It's an incredible effort. It says something about persistence and having a clear goal in mind about what you are trying to achieve, and they have unarguably built the best tertiary institution for agriculture in the country. We have some fantastic examples from all over the country here today who have benefitted from that.

I must make some quick comments, I am under strict starters orders here, but I have had the benefit of working with a lot of young people, particularly when I was at UBS and I think I have learned a couple things on that and I'll pass them on, in the off chance it may be useful to you. There's a line that says, "By the time you die, you will have learned everything you needed to learn to be successful at the start." It sounds a bit silly but, actually, there is a fair bit in it. So, what we all need to do is speed up the learning process and be able to capitalise on that. So, if you think about that, you can learn things by studying, which is what you have been doing here. You can learn by trial and error, and that's good for changing a motorbike tyre but not so good for something that's really critical. Or you can learn from other people, and my first suggestion to you young graduates going out is, when you go back to your regional areas, look for the good operators. They won't necessarily be the John Dutton, richest most



aggressive people, but they will be people with good businesses that are growing faster than everybody else, with employees that enjoy working in the business. Where the onus of those people is contributing to their community, and their family is still talking to each other. You'll recognise the traits, they might be farmers, they might have businesses in agricultural support areas. I think if you look for them, and sidle alongside them and see if you can strike up a relationship and see what you can learn from them.

**"You'll be surprised that most people, particularly as they get older, are very happy to give up some time to enthusiastic young people - and I think you can learn a lot from them."**



One of the other things that has happened to me erratically over the years is, because I've had a variable career, sometimes young people will come up to me and want to talk about where they're at in their career, and that they're not quite happy and maybe they're in the wrong stream, and maybe they should be doing something else. Then we drill it all down and say, "Ok, well if the phone rang tonight and somebody offered you the job description of your choice, would you take it?" And of course, they say, "Yeah, yeah, of course I'd take it." But the point is that the phone is not going to go, so you can sit there and wait for it to happen, but it won't happen. What you have to do is get moving yourself, take the initiative, and if you look again at those industry leaders in most areas, they will be self-starters. They're not just waiting for someone to phone them, they get on with it, find the opportunity, get it done.

Finally, for those of you not going back into family businesses, lots of you will be going out to work for other employers as I did. Personally, I'd put more emphasis on trying to find the right employer than I would in trying to find exactly the right job because if you find the right employer, your own skills will develop and good people who work hard that have the skills you all have now, and you will progress through the ranks so quickly that your job description really won't be the make or break. If you believe in efficient markets, it will often be the flawed businesses that create the job that is superficially most attractive with the highest salary, and it has to be for a reason. I'd encourage you to try and look for the better businesses and I think you'll be surprised at how quickly you progress.

Thank you once again to the College for the award, I'm very pleased to have it and am very proud of my association with the College, I've enjoyed it a lot. Good luck to all the graduates."

The Sir James Darling Marcus Oldham Graduate of Excellence Award, generously supported by Mr Andrew Farran, is for graduates of Marcus Oldham College who left the College at least four years ago and have since excelled in their chosen field.

The Award is an opportunity for graduates to be recognised for their achievements and contributions within the agricultural, agribusiness and equine industries since leaving Marcus Oldham College.

Sir James Darling played an integral role in the development of Marcus Oldham College. As Headmaster of Geelong Grammar School, he emerged as one of the key drivers in 1958, convincing the trustees of the Oldham Estate with his long-standing belief that an agricultural school was needed and Geelong should be its location.

Andrew Farran was a student of Sir James whilst attending Geelong Grammar School before studying law at Melbourne University. He has had a successful career in public law and policy, business, and wool production. Inspired by Sir James, his Foundation is a generous supporter of Marcus Oldham College, in particular the Yiddinga Scholarship for students interested in wool production and farm management.



# 2023 MOCOSA Graduate of Excellence

## Nominations are invited for the Graduate of Excellence Award for 2023.

You can nominate anyone who is a past graduate of Marcus Oldham, or yourself.

Past recipients include **Howard Hansen (DipFM'94)** in 2005, **Geoff Lucas (DipFM'81)** in 2007 and current Chairman of Marcus Oldham **Rob McGavin (AdCertAA'93)** in 2000.

### Award requirements include:

- Applications must be no more than 1500 words in length.
- Students who graduated from the College more than 4 years ago (1963–2019) are eligible to apply.
- All information provided must be presented clearly and accurately.
- Nominees may be contacted by the rural media
- Award recipients are invited to make a speech at the College Graduation Ceremony in December.
- The winning entrant may be required to submit a short article for MOCOSA.
- Identification of the person nominating and contact details to be included.
- Unsuccessful applicants may apply in any following year.

### The main areas that will be considered by the MOCOSA executive are:

- 1. Leadership**  
Have they/you been prepared to get out in front?  
How have they/you demonstrated leadership capacity in their/your community, industry or business?
- 2. Innovation**  
Have they/you developed new and innovative ways of doing things?  
How have these assisted their/your industry or community?
- 3. Community/Industry Presence**  
How are they/you involved in the community or industry?  
Are they/you involved above and beyond the norm?
- 4. Success**  
Is the business they/you have, or work in, successful?  
What impact did they/you have?

Any other supporting information will also be considered.

**Closing date for applications is 5pm Friday 13th October 2023**

Applications to be submitted to:

**Georgie Thomson BB(Agri)'12**  
Secretary MOCOSA Executive  
[georgie@ingleby.com.au](mailto:georgie@ingleby.com.au)  
**0409 940 295**



# Council news

## Bruce Wilson

**Bruce Wilson DipFM'71, Graduate of Excellence'98** has retired from the Marcus Oldham College Council, having served since 1999, with 14 years as Council Chairman.

Bruce's first contact with the College was through his father, Jim Wilson, who was on Council from the commencement of the College in 1962 until 1980. Bruce's son, **Lachie Wilson BBAM'02**, continued the family connection as a student.

Bruce, strongly backed by wife Judy, has given extensive service to the College, presiding over major building and refurbishment programs, including the addition of The Douglas Boyd Centre and South Wing 30-bed Student Accommodation; refurbishment and extension of the kitchen and Ivo Dean Dining Room; the building extension of the D.G. Neilson Administration Building; the building of the Principal's residence; transformation of the Student Recreation Hub, Lecture Rooms 5 and 6, and the James Darling Resource Centre; and refurbishment of Law-Smith and East and West Student Accommodation Wings.

With his voluntary commitment equal to a day's work per week, Bruce found the role was as rewarding as it was demanding.

"There are two definite points of pride, one is the material side – the structure of the campus. There was a chain of events, firstly selling the block to the Epworth Hospital which John Miles and I worked through, combined with the donation of the farm at Drysdale; and these two things enabled us to increase the building program, resulting in the Douglas Boyd Learning Centre. On the academic side, being able to offer degrees and changing the methodology of teaching has been pleasing. Livo had foresight and it goes back to the master plan, so you know what you are expecting to achieve."

COVID was a particularly challenging time.

"One of the biggest decisions I had to make was closing the College during COVID. We did that over half a day, and it was determined it had to be my decision, so if it was the wrong one, it was the Chairman's fault alone. Students were sent home overnight. Ten days later you really couldn't have done anything else, there wouldn't have been a decision to make. One of the very gratifying things after COVID, when the students came back, was how thrilled they were to be back on campus and doing what Marcus is good at – creating that collegiate atmosphere."

Bruce steered the ship with steady hands and a wise head.

"Success seems to breed success, you have to be a risk taker and, being a farmer, I'm pretty used to that. If the opportunities come along, then you have to seize them. I believe all people have strengths. Not everyone is the same, so you can't presume they will be. Marcus is very different from other boards because the members are not paid. You have to have a vision of where you want to get to, then you have to manipulate as best you can the parameters to get that to happen."



Bruce Wilson DipFM'71, Graduate of Excellence'98

Bruce is looking forward to watching further steady growth as the College moves towards a planned increase in capacity to 200 students.

"If there is a full list of students at capacity, which it has been the last few years, you can get a few more things done and have higher staffing levels; so to do that you have to remain very relevant, and our graduates are becoming very useful in the agriculture world. I'm looking forward to an increased level of alumni connection. A lot of alumni do support the place, but it would be good to see more now that many of us are getting closer to retirement. And a lot of people have done very well out of their time at the College, hopefully they will contribute to make it bigger and better. I will be able to watch it all from a distance."

[bruce@murdeduke.com.au](mailto:bruce@murdeduke.com.au)

### Retiring Directors of the Council are:

**Mrs Sarah Thomson, since 1997**

**Mr Michael Moore, since 1996**

**Mr Richard Anderson, since 2003**

**Mr Michael Dowling AM, since 2012**

We thank them for their service and welcome Richard Carr, Director of West, Carr and Harvey and Ali Erskine, Principal at Harwood Andrews.



# The Network

ENGAGEMENTS

### Dave & Shazli

Dave Graham DipAgri'03 and Shazli Ashad.  
manager@rufftrack.com



### Lily & Callum

Lilly Herzer EM'16 and Callum Cronin DipAgri'18.  
Living in Tully, Quennsland, building their business Mission Helicopters.  
callum@kestrelaviation.com.au  
lillyherzer.lh@gmail.com



BIRTHS

### Nellie Jean Moyle

Zali Dalton and Henry Moyle BB(Ag)'22  
with Nellie Jean Moyle born in Camperdown  
23rd September 2022.  
henrymoyle@bigpond.com



### Archie James Sedgwick

Born December 3 2022, Ballarat.  
Son of Sam Sedgwick AssocDFBM'18  
and Sophie Bingham BB(Agri)'18  
bingham904@gmail.com  
sam.sedgwick@outlook.com



DEATHS

### VALE



### Jeremy Upton

2/11/1961 — 16/1/2023

I had the privilege of meeting **Jeremy Upton AssocDipFM'84** in 1982, Uppy's first year at MOFMC, and my final year. The meeting place on campus at the time, to discuss previous farming exploits over a cool drink, was the "lambing shed" and it was at this location that Uppy made friendships that endured up until his sudden passing in January of this year.

Jeremy John Upton was educated at Moree Primary School and The Kings School in Sydney. Post schooling, Uppy went off jackarooing in NSW, prior to attending Marcus. Uppy's middle year was spent near Carathool in the western Riverina. Uppy graduated with honours from Marcus in 1984 and for the next 38 years built an enormously strong reputation as both leader and manager within the agricultural industry in Australia and overseas. Of those 38 years, 32 were spent at Yarram Park, a 9200-hectare property located on the eastern foothills of the Grampians in western Victoria. This magnificently developed property is testament to the management expertise of Jeremy. Among several awards received by Jeremy over his working life, he also won a Churchill Fellowship scholarship in 2000 for Marketing and Quality Assurance of Livestock (Canada, US, England, Ireland and Scotland).

Further to Jeremy's numerous on-farm achievements, were his notable off-farm commitments to agriculture. Among them was Jeremy's dedication to the next generation of young people looking to invest their lives in agriculture. Jeremy was the Chairman of the Board of R.I.S.T. (Rural Industries Skill Training) for the past 7 years and on the Board for the last 16 years. Jeremy's mentoring and development of future agricultural superstars will be greatly missed. To recognise the calibre, integrity and legacy of Jeremy, RIST has now established the Jeremy Upton Scholarship Program.

Jeremy had a strong passion for cycling and the community. He participated in many charity rides raising money, but one of note was his involvement in 14 Murray to Moyne events (a 530k non-stop team cycling classic), raising thousands of dollars for the Western District Health Service in Victoria.

Jeremy will be sadly missed by all who had the great fortune of meeting and knowing him. Jeremy is survived by Jen, his wife of 37 years, son **Tom BB(Ag)'15** and daughter Georgie.

*By Tim Croagh DipFM'82, Graduate of Excellence'12*

### VALE



### Philip Hulse

16/2/1951 — 5/1/2023

I first met **Philip "Midge" Hulse DipFM'72** in 1970 at the start of the two-year course, both of us in our early twenties, learning the finer points of 'Business Agriculture' at Marcus Oldham, the premier college of its type at the time with a fiercely independent status led by Ivo Dean.

It was a friendship that blossomed to span over 50 years, to include subsequent marriages and two children each of approximate same ages. The Hulse's produced girls and the Holcombe's made boys. Phil was our son Edward's godfather.

His nature was gentle and highly intelligent, with an unquenchable appetite for travel. His college and home farm work were firstly accomplished with efficiency and speed before giving his full attention to more travel plans, mostly accompanied by boats of various sizes and capacity.

On my regular visits to 'Blagdon', Carisbrook, I was warmly welcomed by the broader, immediate Hulse family of Rae and Henry as well as the multiple cousins, aunts and uncles who basically worked as one, independently.

Cropping was an increasing focus, away from stock, under Philip's preferred direction.

I only remember once seeing him in the sheep yards where they ran some meat sheep with the help of a dog called 'Gyp', who when departed was replaced by another called 'Gyp'.

Post our Marcus years, after an hilarious first-year-out shared trip to UK and US, we were busy in our own camps building our lives and families and sharing agricultural practices over the odd ale or wine.

The track was well worn between Carisbrook, Victoria and Goondiwindi, Queensland.

Philip's legacy to Jennifer, Jessica, Sarah, his family, community, and friends remains forever remembered, laced heavily with love, kindness, humility and generosity.

Philip will be missed by all paths that he crossed in his giving life. No worries.

*By Hamish Holcombe DipFM'72*



DEATHS

VALE



Andrew Macdonald

16/8/1949 — 2/11/2022

**Andrew John Macdonald DipFM'71** grew up at Tumut, NSW. He jackarooed for two and a half years in Western Queensland on 'Moombidary Station'- then owned by Scottish Australian Company- before entering Marcus.

"Bear", as he became known, graduated as Deputy Head Student in 1971 with lifelong friends and a future in farm management ahead.

Bear had a couple of career changes over the years and was always able to call on those Marcus skills and friendships. He developed a passion for the Geelong Cats after being introduced to the game whilst at Marcus.

He was always interested in what was going on at the College and when we called in, in March 2022, in the mid-term break for students, we were given a wonderful tour by Andrew Baker. We really appreciated this, and Andy loved that trip down memory lane.

Andy was predeceased by his son Ross, and is survived by wife Chris, daughter Airlie, son-in-law Gus Kelly, and two grandchildren.

*By Chris Macdonald*



VALE



Bruce Sticpewich

15/11/1951 — 11/12/2022

**Bruce Sticpewich, DipFM'73** of Weipa, Qld, formerly of Gilgandra, NSW and Collarenebri, NSW died on the 11th of December 2022, aged 71.

Born in Chatswood, NSW, Bruce attended Knox Grammar of Wahroonga, Sydney. After completing school, he attended ag college at Marcus Oldham. On completion of his tertiary education, he entered the agricultural industry and worked in many roles in several locations across Australia, including Pine Creek, NT, and Bathurst, Hay, Collarenebri, Gilgandra and Coen in NSW. His final days were spent in Weipa caring for elderly members of the community. He was a devoted family man who worked tirelessly to give his family everything they could ever want.

He is survived by his wife Ruth, son Tom, and daughter Emma, who are currently residing in Humpty Doo NT.

If anyone would like to contact the family, please contact Marcus Oldham for details.

*By son, Tom Sticpewich*



DEATHS

VALE



RBF (Bruce) Allen

21/3/1935 — 6/12/2022

Bruce was a graduate of Agricultural Science at Melbourne University in 1957. He subsequently worked for the Department of Agriculture at both Burnley then Glenormiston, conducting pasture and grazing research work. He ventured into the 'new' field of agricultural consulting in 1963, based in Mortlake and servicing predominantly grazing clients of Western Victoria and SE South Australia until he retired in 2010.

Encouraged to join by Geoff Nielsen, Bruce served on the Marcus Oldham College Council from 1980-'99, contributing his practical expertise.

Bruce participated in several farming group committees and boards, delivering a careful and measured influence and encouraging the next generation into the industry.

In his later years he enjoyed boating and fishing at Robe, road trips to inspect Mallee crops (where it all began for him), and tending his own lawns and garden with micromanagement.

Unfortunately afflicted by dementia, he was not able to enjoy the continued association with Marcus Oldham through his granddaughter India, but he would have been delighted to know that he had made a small contribution to her education and career pursuits. He saw education as the solution to most of the world's problems.

He leaves three children, Richard, Nick and Tim, and six grandchildren, including **India Allen AG1**.

*By son, Nick Allen*



VALE



Pat Eyres

26/12/1938 — 16/1/2023

As part of a broadacre farming partnership with her husband Bruce, a Marcus Fellow, Pat was responsible for the care, social advice and feeding logistics of 18 Farm Management students on placement over three decades from 1976-2001 at "Ardeer" at West Kulin in Western Australia.

Many entertaining stories were certainly gathered as a result of so many young and enthusiastic students staying for a year at a time on the property, playing sport locally, spending weekends in Perth (and not always returning in good condition), and generally engaging at all levels in the local community.

Pat would never judge, offer advice only as a last resort, had a brilliant sense of humour and cared deeply for all of those students (and their nomadic friends) who were usually far from home, working hard and appreciative of Pat's genuine support and concern. Pat and Bruce attended many of the students' weddings over the years and have stayed in touch as much as possible with many of them and their families.

Pat had two sons, **Sam DipFM'95** and **Michael DipFM'90**, attend the College, as well as Tony and Rosie, and a grandson who hopes to enrol in Agribusiness at the college in two years' time.

*By son, Michael Eyres*





# Reunions



Front row L to R: Steve Merriman, Steve Sullivan, Martin Wettenhall, Ken Bailey, David Gorman, Charles Rees  
Back row L to R: Pat Dawkins, Tom Dennis, Ian Crombie, Chris Seeley, Graeme Burnham, Alex Wooldridge, Chrichton Collins, Russell Keath, Rod Thompson, Warwick Fisher, David Fearon, Ian Jackson.

## Class of 1973

The Farm Management cohort of 1973 gathered at the College over the Victorian Labour Day long weekend in March to celebrate 50 years since graduation. Organisers, **Graeme Burnham, Martin Wettenhall, Crichton Collins and Tom Dennis** all **DipFM’73** mustered 18 past students from the year. They enjoyed drinks and dinner Saturday night at the Ivo Dean Centre, hosted by Catering and Accommodation Manager, Lyn Cameron and her team, then met on Sunday afternoon for a BBQ and campus tour guided by Associate Lecturer in Equine Management, Roberta MacLeod.

**Ken Bailey DipFM’73** said, “The idea of having it at the College was brilliant, I had no idea how advanced it had become. It is a real credit to the council members over the years who constructed and implemented state of the art facilities and technologies without losing the original educational intent. Just awesome stuff.” Graeme said,

“The idea of having it at the college was brilliant, I had no idea how advanced it had become.”

“The state of the college grounds and buildings are an absolute credit to the staff and everyone who is involved. The old farts from ‘73 felt very proud and thankful to have been part of the legacy that has grown to be the first-class institution it is today. I got a lot of thanks for what I really did not have to do, as it was all done by the College. They made it very easy for me after we sorted out who was who and where they were. All we have to do now is make it to the 60th reunion, so we can admire the progress that we know will happen in that time.”



All **AdDipFBM’01**: Damien Holmes, Ben Hooper **GradCertAgri’11**, Charlie Downie **BB(Ag)’06**, Mick O’Brien, Andrew Hirst, Viv O’Dwyer **BBFM’10**, Richard Knox, Glenn Smith, Dan Jess, Lachie Sears, Lachie Wilson **BBAM’02**, Rupert Cuming **BBAM’03**.  
Kneeling: Rob Davies and Damon Soster.

## Class of 2001

**Mick O’Brien AdDipFBM’01** organised a 21st reunion of Advanced Diploma of Farm Business Management 2001 graduates on 19th August 2022 in Newcastle.

### SAVE THE DATE Reunion

- 1967** — Contact Richard Boadle — 0428 953 044 or richard.boadle@bigpond.com
- 1972** — MARCH 9-10th, 2024. Contact Rob Rush — srush38@bigpond.net.au
- 1975** — SEPT 9-10th, 2023. Contact Jeremy Curtis — bullfrogathome@hotmail.com
- 1980** — Contact David Sweetapple — david@sweetappleco.com.au

The College is very happy to host reunions and the 50th reunion weekend for the class of 1973 shows the importance of letting the College know how you can be contacted.  
Please update your details by going to [marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/alumni/update-your-details](https://marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/alumni/update-your-details), or by scanning the code on this page.  
For assistance organising a reunion please contact Winks Gubbins on [gubbins@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au](mailto:gubbins@marcusoldham.vic.edu.au)





# 2023 Scholarship Recipients



**Front row:** **Alex Jacobson FM1** (Castle Creek, VIC) Mutooroo Pastoral Company, **Jack Demeo FM1** (Raywood, VIC) Nick Petersen Memorial Bursary, **Liam Phillips FM3** (Bradvale, VIC) Victorian Limestone Producers Association, **Clancy Henderson FM1** (Orbost, VIC) Excel Farms, **Sequoia Stones FM3** (Yunta, SA) Mutooroo Pastoral Company, **Caitlin Pauley EM1** (Wickepin, WA) Emerging Equestrian Performance, **Kate Denholm AG1** (Gretna, TAS) Channel Foundation.

**Second row:** **Jane McGuire AG2** (Kojonup, WA) Meurer Pastoral Company, **Dimity Crowe AG1** (Mullion, NSW) Yiddinga Farm Management, **Kyella McKenna FM3** (Warrnambool, VIC) Dairy Australia, **Zainab Habibulla EM1** (Maharashtra Pune, INDIA) International Sport Horse Breeding, **Cody Dobbin AG1** (Riverton, QLD) RC & EC Webb Trust (Agribusiness), **Pip Ireson AG1** (Booligal, NSW) Te Mania Angus, **Ella Bent EM1** (San Isidore, NSW) Thoroughbred Industry Careers (Godolphin), **Eliza Lucas FM3** (Tocumwal, NSW) Dairy Australia, **Anna Finlayson FM1** (Toobeah, QLD) Ingleby Farm Management.

**Absent:** **Michael Blomeley EM1** (Pascoe Vale, VIC) Australian Thoroughbred, **Isabella Leonhardt AG1** (Landsdowne, NT) Warakirri Agricultural Trusts, **Mitchell Lollback AG2** (Forest Springs, QLD) RC & EC Webb Trust (Agribusiness).

**Third row:** **Will Bucknell FM1** (Quambone, NSW) Hazeldean Livestock Production, **Madeline Marks FM1** (Birchip, VIC) Marcus Oldham Indigenous Scholarship, **Sam McConachy FM1** (Kununurra, WA) Australian Farm Management, **Jock Keiller FM1** (Cashmore, VIC) Calvert-Jones Foundation, **Edward Cox AG1** (Coolah, NSW) Warrawidgee (Agribusiness/Agriculture), **India Allen AG1** (Port Fairy, VIC) Bingham Agriculture, **Lillian Ives AG1** (Hay, NSW) Channel Foundation, **Holly Bastian AG2** (Niemur, NSW) Greenham Ag and Rabobank Tertiary Pathways, **Sophie Baker FM3** (Highton, VIC) Ingleby Farm Management, **Annabelle Hamilton AG2** (Narromine, NSW) Yiddinga Farm Management, **Evie Hetherington FM3** (Longreach, QLD) Mutooroo Pastoral Company, **Shannah Mudge EM1** (Humpty Doo, NT) Channel Foundation, **Hugh Dawson AG2** (Elliott, NT) CAS Hawker, **Zoe Murray EM1** (Blackburn North, VIC) Australian Equestrian.

**Back row:** **Jack Wilson FM3** (Camperdown, VIC) Dairy Australia, **James Cox FM3** (Alexandra, VIC) Mutooroo Pastoral Company, **Lachlan Hurst FM1** (Bray, SA) Dr Alastair Mackenzie, **Sam Palmer AG2** (Quirindi, NSW) Warrawidgee (Agribusiness/Agriculture), **Jack Hughes FM1** (Beneremah, NSW) Dalara Foundation & Dalara Pastoral, **Sam Marshall FM1** (Burren Junction, NSW) Mutooroo Pastoral Company, **Charles Uren AG2** (Kingston, SA) Peter Smith Memorial Bursary, **Samuel Cannington AG1** (Rocky Creek, NSW) Smithfield Cattle Company, **Clancy Mackay AG1** (Lockington, QLD) Currawong, **Oscar Philip FM3** (Pura Pura, VIC) Freemasons Foundation, **Henry Lotz FM3** (Adelong, NSW) Lawson Grains, **Tiffany Thomas FM1** (Mulwala, NSW) Warrawidgee (Agriculture), **Claire Koch FM3** (Balhannah, SA) Warrawidgee (Agriculture), **Toby Nixon FM1** (Bele Bolong, VIC) Dairy Australia Dairy Farm Managers Scholarship.



# Meet the Student Executive



**Standing (L to R):** James Ashleigh FM3 (Co Dep Pres), Lucas Atkin AG2 (Social Rep), Will Choice FM3 (Social Rep), Hugh Dawson AG2 (Co Dep Pres), Jack Wilson FM3 (Social Rep), Olivia Patterson FM3 (Social Rep), Matilda Pickard FM3 (Sports Rep)

**Being held:** Angus Crossing FM3 (President)

JAMES ASHLEIGH

Where have you come from?

I grew up in Canberra, then post-school have worked on a sheep and cattle property in Walcha, NSW. During my placement year I was fortunate enough to work on a cattle backgrounding property near Blayney, NSW, under the guidance of two Marcus Oldham graduates, Paddy Armstrong BB(Ag)'17 and Lachlan Ireland BB(Agri)'22.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

I was attracted to Marcus Oldham by the condensed learning and school-like environment, as it meant achieving a bachelor's degree in only 3 years. I had also heard a lot about the networking and post-grad employability opportunities which are also very attractive aspects about Marcus Oldham.

What has been a highlight so far?

A highlight of my time at Marcus Oldham so

far has been the recent study tour around the NSW Riverina. It was amazing to see the scale of some of the operations, from Casella Wines in Griffith to Hell's Gate Feedlot on the hay plains to a medicinal cannabis operation in the Swan Hill region.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

After graduating from Marcus Oldham, I would like to gain employment in the financial sector, either in a bank or a consulting firm.

LUCAS ATKIN

Where have you come from?

I was brought up on a sheep and cattle farm in Guyra, NSW.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

I first heard of Marcus through word of mouth from people I have worked with since leaving school. I was attracted because of the many contacts and friends

that could be made in such a short time, as well as the business and enterprise management knowledge that could be gained through an ag-business degree.

What has been a highlight so far?

I really enjoyed the study tour through Northern Victoria and Southern NSW. It was interesting to see how business managers are adapting and overcoming changes in social and environmental standards.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

After Marcus I would like to continue to grow knowledge and increase skill sets in Australian agribusiness. I am interested in the corporate sector and may try to pursue a career in that area.

WILL CHOICE

Where have you come from?

I am from Highfields, Qld. My passion for agriculture lies within broadacre and cotton farming.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

I chose to study at Marcus Oldham for the excellent course structure, networking opportunities, and the close-knit learning environment; I am grateful to be a part of this great community.

What has been a highlight so far?

A highlight that has stuck with me thus far would have to be the study tours and my middle year placement in northern NSW. These opportunities gave me great industry exposure and unforgettable experiences.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

After Marcus I am starting up a contract spraying business which will be based in Northern NSW; I am very excited to be able to apply my learnings from Marcus and build my business.

HUGH DAWSON

Where have you come from?

I am originally from South Australia near McLaren Vale (wine country) where I grew up on a small property, but moved to the Northern Territory after finishing school.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

I had a realisation after working in the northern beef industry for some time, that for me to progress my career, I needed to develop my commercial acumen. Marcus has the best reputation within industry, and the attractiveness of a two-year bachelor's degree made it a simple decision to enrol at Marcus.

What has been a highlight so far?

Developing financial measurement and reporting capabilities and building financial literacy has been extremely rewarding and has already significantly benefited my career progression. Whilst learning the technical skills has been duly beneficial, it has been the friendships and shared lived experiences on study tours and living on campus that has been the highlight from my time at Marcus.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

I am keeping my options very much open and will be looking to continue developing myself so that I will be in a position to drive positive change in the Australian ag industry long into the future.

JACK WILSON

Where have you come from?

Camperdown, Victoria. Cropping, dairy and sheep producers.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

I heard about Marcus from a lot of past students who spoke very highly about their experience here, they all highly recommended that I attend. Also, I liked the fact I'd be able to get a tertiary education at a reputable establishment in the agricultural industry.

What has been a highlight so far?

One of my highlights would have to be seeing all my classmates from first year. It was great to finally see all of them after our middle year and get back into the swing of things; also meeting all of the other students and getting to know each other has been great.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

I'm hoping that I'll eventually be able to return to the family farm, focusing on production and growth in general.

OLIVIA PATTERSON

Where have you come from?

I'm from a mixed sheep and cropping operation in Gnowangerup, within the Great Southern region of Western Australia.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

The opportunities and connections that come from Marcus don't come with every university ag course. Marcus provides uniquely structured, fast-tracked degrees that allow us to learn quickly and efficiently, which is ideal for people who love being out on the land but also want a beneficial education. This, in my opinion, along with the chance to connect with multiple leaders and front runners of Australia's agricultural industry, is pretty hard to beat!

What has been a highlight so far?

The people. Being surrounded by like-minded and driven people who all share this same major interest with you, striving to make a difference in the ag world, is incredibly encouraging and motivating. Everyone is great value and I feel very privileged to be a part of Marcus.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

I am planning to travel and work in some different operations to get some more experience up my sleeve after finishing Marcus. After this, I'll return home and continue to operate the family business alongside my brother, applying what I've learnt from my time at Marcus and other external experiences in order to help improve our business further. I am also very passionate about mental health within agricultural communities. I aim to do something with this interest in the future, helping people to manage their mental health better in such a high-pressure industry.

MATILDA PICKARD

Where have you come from?

I am from Harlaxton, Qld, and during my younger years grew up on a cattle and cropping farm before moving to town when I was older. Since leaving school, I have been working in the beef industry throughout northern Australia while completing my placement year in the southern beef industry.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

My main attraction was that my parents both attended Marcus in the 80's and I wanted to follow in their footsteps. I have a major passion for the ag industry, and I felt that Marcus was the best place to further my knowledge.

What has been a highlight so far?

My highlight so far is all the great memories, from both learning and socially, and the networking opportunities that come from this. Another one would be the amazing tours that we have the privilege of going on.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

Once I finish Marcus, I am hoping to head overseas for a year or more to further my knowledge of the supply chain and see the agricultural industry from another country's perspective, and do some travelling as I go. After that, I hope to find a farm manager's job within the cattle industry anywhere in Australia, but am also open to any opportunity I may have.

ANGUS CROSSING

Where have you come from?

I have grown up on a family mixed viticulture and grazing enterprise south of Orange, NSW. After finishing boarding school in Sydney, I worked on cattle stations for three years in northern Queensland with a family-owned pastoral company prior to starting my Bachelor of Business (Agriculture) Degree in 2021.

What attracted you to studying at Marcus?

The main attraction for studying at Marcus is the course structure, being able to accelerate your degree to get back into the workplace as soon as possible. The extensive network you develop here at Marcus is one which will follow you around throughout the rest of your life. I am very grateful to have these opportunities moving into the future.

What has been a highlight so far?

One of my highlights would have to be seeing all my classmates from first year. It was great to finally see all of them after our middle year and get back into the swing of things; also meeting all of the other students and getting to know each other has been great.

What are you hoping to do after Marcus?

I am hoping to build into a management position in a mixed enterprise farming business. Marcus is a great place to find these opportunities, with career days and many networking opportunities.



# Out & About on Tour

First term tours students travelled far and wide.

**FM1** visited Boortmalt in Delacombe, Hay Australia at Bridgewater, Teys Feedlot at Yeungroon East, Coolabah Turf Farm in Echuca and Sawyers Farms near Boort. A highlight was hearing from Guest Speaker **Brett Findlay MAgri'22** about his role as Commonwealth Bank Manager in Shepparton.

**Toby Nixon FM1** said, "Obviously, the tour was an awesome experience. I really enjoyed seeing the profit drivers in each business, and the reasons why people choose the enterprises they specialise in."

"What I got out of it most was the importance of cash flow in a business and the ways of ensuring business' have an income for the majority of the year."



FM1 students at Sawyers Farms near Boort, Vic.

**FM3** travelled to Gilmac at Goornong, Cobram Estate Olives at Boundary Bend, Aquna Murray Cod at Bilbul, Kagome Australia in Echuca, Casella Family Brands at Yenda, Hells Gate station at Balranald, ECS Botanics and Southern Cotton Gin and Voyager Craft Malt at Darlington Point along with Kooba Ag's almond plantation, where Glenn Lok, General Manager was on hand to show them around.

**Henry Fowler FM3** enjoyed the unique itinerary.

"Each business we visited was very engaging and different from the last. The Riverina tour taught me that to set yourself up to excel as someone in agriculture you need to be dynamic, and surround yourself with people/staff who are smarter than yourself. I learnt a vast amount from hearing about small businesses achieving rapid growth through being risk tolerant and using different avenues of funding, like joint ventures or going public on the ASX."



FM3 students toured the Kooba Ag almond plantation.

**AG1** visited Green Eggs at Great Western, JBS Meatworks at Bordertown, Smartgroup Properties at Keith, Yumbah Aquaculture, Portland, Di Giorgio Wines in the Coonawarra, Donovan's Dairy near Mt Gambier and Kurra-Wirra, at Culla, a family operated Merino and cattle stud, breeding approximately 200 Red Angus and Senegas composite bulls each year. They were hosted by **Michael Close DipAgri'18**.

**Cody Dobbin AG1** had a great experience.

"Exploring the various regions of Western Victoria and South Australia allowed me to witness diverse countryside and gain valuable insights from industry experts on the operations of various enterprises that I would have never otherwise experienced, such as dairy farming, abattoirs, wine production and even an abalone business."



AG1 students visited Kurra-Wirra Merino & cattle stud.

**AG2** visited Velisha Farms in Werribee, McIvor Farms in Tooborac, Koala Cherries at Yarck, HG Turf at Alexandra, Lawson Angus at Yea, Holbrook Paddock Eggs and Lambpro at Holbrook, Rennylea Pastoral Company at Culcairn, AgriProve at Albury, Gundowring Fine Foods, Feathertop Winery at Porepunkah and MainStream Aquaculture, a barramundi farm in Werribee.

**Mitchell Lollback AG2** found the tour offered great insight into industry options.

"To see several businesses that have successfully implemented technology, and other new practices from all areas within the sector, was refreshing and it excites me knowing that as a Marcus graduate there will be so many opportunities accessible to make a positive impact on the industry."



AG2 cohort visited the Mainstream Aquaculture Barramundi Farm.

**EM1** toured Inglis Bloodstock Auctioneers at Oaklands Junction, Living Legends at Greenvale, Ellanbrae Park at Macedon, Future Farms Australia in Bolinda, Karasi Park in Bass, Ladbrokes Park in Springvale, scholarship sponsor The Victorian Wakeful Club, Racing Hearts at Balnarring, Ciaron Maher in Cranbourne, Sky Park Rugs at Pakenham, Equine Sports Breeding in Euroa, Darley Stud in Seymour and a solarium for horses, at Macedon Lodge, one of the top racehorse-training establishments in the world — which has produced no fewer than five Melbourne Cup winners.

**Shannah Mudge EM1** said, "It was an incredible opportunity to hear from people in the industry and explore some of the different pathways that can be opened through being a student here at Marcus, as well as becoming aware of so many other pathways that I never knew existed."



EM1 students enjoyed testing the facilities at Macedon Lodge's horse solarium.

**Current and past Marcus students** headed south to the Australian Dairy Conference in Hobart from 15-17th February, adding to the record-breaking attendance numbers. The students, all recipients of the Dairy Farm Managers Scholarship sponsored by Dairy Australia, joined the 600 farmers, industry representatives and other undergraduate students from across Australia.

The conference provided an invaluable opportunity for the students to establish new connections and consolidate existing professional relationships.

**Kyella McKenna FM3** said, "It was a great opportunity to go to an event and network with global leaders in the industry. It reinforced the issues of welfare and climate change and the role we, as the future of the dairy industry, should be playing."

Our students had the opportunity to visit several farms and agritourism businesses across Tasmania as part of the pre-conference tour, including a robotic dairy, pasture-based systems, and operations partnering with the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture to conduct research trials of asparagopsis for reducing methane output. Key themes of the conference included a focus on workforce and succession planning, animal welfare and addressing social license, and opportunities for growth within the industry.

Applications for the Dairy Australia Dairy Farm Managers Scholarship are now open for people seeking to build a career in farm management. A Dairy Learning Plan is provided as part of the College's Bachelor of Business



Current and past Marcus' students at the Australian Dairy Conference in Hobart.

(Agriculture) course, enabling sponsored students to develop dairy specific business management skills. An 11-month practical placement on a working dairy farm is a core component of the course, alongside two years of study.

To apply go to:

[www.marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/dairy-australia-farm-managers](http://www.marcusoldham.vic.edu.au/scholarship/dairy-australia-farm-managers)



# Marcus All Over

## How do you eat an elephant?

A cautionary tale from one who knows.

### Dave Pockley

Marcus Oldham alumni **Sandy MacKenzie (SM) Staff Member 1965/67** and **Dave Pockley (DP) DipFM'68** caught up recently for an educative exchange.

**SM:** "Now, roll up your sleeve and show me the scar on your left forearm".

It didn't appear overly impressive until one looked closer and realised that all the flesh, vessels, nerves, tendons and ligaments must have been severed — (Hold you own forearm, looking at your palm, and place your right thumb and forefinger on the bones and you will appreciate what was cut through to see the bone — in fact both bones, the radius and the ulna).

**SM:** "Well, what on earth were you doing Dave?"

**DP:** "Fifteen years ago my son wanted to remove a tennis court fence on a farm he had bought. It was a standard two-inch pipe fence with cross bars at the top, some 3 metres from the ground. The house was about 45km east of West Wyalong and about 3kms from the workshop where my son and another guy would be working — so not far away. I used a tall A-frame stepladder, placed firmly on level ground, started the generator to use the eight-inch angle grinder and headed up to about the third last step. I was now well short of being able to use the grinder at waist height, so I was operating it above shoulder height. OK so far, but then it somehow snagged, flew upwards and dropped onto my arm.

**"With the grinder stopped, I came down from the ladder with blood gushing out and I said to myself, 'Jeeez - this isn't good.'"**

That's when a rather silly little book title and the First Aid Training from my Goulburn Fire Brigade days must have kicked in. The title 'How do you Eat an Elephant?' was all about if you've got a task to do, don't rush into it, pause and think about the steps involved to do the job and break it down into bite-sized bits.

So first – obviously to slow the bleeding. I removed my wide leather belt, wound it two or three times around my upper left arm (I couldn't buckle it) and kept it tightly against my chest. Fortunately, I was right-handed. That seemed to help quite a bit but there was blood everywhere.

Next — do I call 000 — no — the reception there was marginal, and I couldn't waste time explaining where I was and the extent of the injury. Do I get a compression bandage from the kit I always keep in the truck? — no that's more time, and the belt strap tourniquet seemed to be helping a bit. So, I headed for the workshop 4-5 minutes away, hoping like hell they were there or nearby. What if they're not there? Do I head for West Wyalong? I reckon by then I was starting to lose it a bit. I call the UHF emergency channel 1, so anybody could hear. But wait —



what if the boundary gate is closed? — more time to get out and unlatch it. Do I drive straight through the fence and risk the wires wrapping around the drive shaft? Oh, thank God the gate's open enough to go through without getting out. At the shed I blasted the horn and out they both came! Phew!"

**SM:** "So can we stop there Dave for a minute or two."

**When planning this exercise did you have goggles? Did you secure the step ladder to the 2-inch fence post? Did you consider waiting till one of the others was with you? At the time, did you recall the first aid courses or the book title?"**

**DP:** "No, no, no, and no to all of those — the 'To Do' stuff must have just kicked in subconsciously. But I was just a bloody stupid, 60-year-old and not thinking about the risk I was taking."

**SM:** "What next?"

**DP:** "They tightened the belt and called 000 to say we were heading to the hospital. The very sensible 000 person called back to say that the hospital had a duty GP on, and the ambo would meet us if we kept our warning lights flashing. With the Landcruiser at a speed that it would not have experienced ever before, and with one of them in the back seat with me in case I passed out, we met the ambo halfway; they patched me up a bit and asked how long the belt had been on. My son then called my wife who was on the golf course at Cootamundra. At the hospital the doctor said the helicopter was on its way from Orange and would I go to either Canberra, Orange or Wagga — I chose Wagga and my wife headed there, less than an hour away."

**SM:** "So, you were in safe and very efficient hands — in Victoria there have been a number of critical situations including one where 000 didn't answer for 15 minutes. What were the outcomes from Wagga?"

**DP:** "A specialist surgeon from Sydney just happened to be in theatre that day. The theatre sister said that the surgeon was a highly regarded professional, both in Sydney and Wagga where he had a hand clinic. So, despite my kids thinking we should charter an aircraft and head to Sydney, I decided to stay put.

### Hamish Holcombe

**Hamish Holcombe DipFM'72** has two strong memories of his time as a young man jackarooing at 'Gundaline Station' at Carrathool in the Riverina.

"I distinctly remember avoiding the Vietnam War birthday ballot conscription call-up by very short numbers either side of my birth date, the 13th of December, and attending a Marcus interview in Melbourne in 1969."

Fortunately for all, these life-determining events brought Hamish to "MOFAC", sparking a strong interest in holistic farm management with a particular focus on water conservation. Hamish has held a range of positions with the Catchment Management Authority, Rural Lands Protection Board Action Group, as Chairman of Boggabilla Boomi Floodplain Association, and on the Murray-Darling Basin Community Advisory Committee.

As well as a passion for water, Hamish has enjoyed photography and poetry, expressing his creativity on his website, Ginger Trunk Creations, and through his three published books.

"My writing only started in earnest in the past ten years after multiple years of photography. I published two books 'Creations from Inspirations' and 'Creations from Generations' where I combined Mum's old words with some of mine. Both are principally photographs with words, sometimes in poem form, of how the image inspired me. Then I published my third book 'People, Places, Pubs & Dunnies' in 2022."

After 40 plus years on the home property at Boggabilla, NSW, Hamish now lives with his wife Gerda on 250

The surgeon did a great job and I have the highest regard for him. I also let 000 know of the outcome and they were very appreciative as they seldom had a patient calling to say thank you."

**SM:** "So with a lot of nerve and vessel restoration, rehab exercises and so on, the left arm is near as good as before."

**DP:** "Yes, as you can see. But there was a rather amusing question put to me back in Cootamundra — two dear elderly ladies, obviously of the faith

— asked if had prayed when I did it! I did — oh so gently — suggest that I was just a bit busy at the time, so I don't recall doing so! What I did learn, however, is to treasure every day, whether working or not, and to encourage family, friends and others to do likewise. And remember, assess risk and engage the four P's of Plan, Prepare, Practise, and never Panic.

**sandymackenzie@ozemail.com.au**  
**dpockley@bigpond.com**



acres on the NSW side of Goondiwindi, running some sheep on regenerative principles.

"Of my two grown sons, **Tristram Holcombe, DipAgri'07** is contract mustering in the NT and Daniel is teaching in Dalby QLD. Our third son Edward, on his gap year out from school in 2014, was tragically killed, aged just 18, in a car accident between Kalgoorlie and "Rawlinna" on the Nullarbor."

Hamish was encouraged to write and share his diarised recording of dealing with the loss of a child. He found writing was a help.

"After the disbelief and grief that really never goes away, comes a complete reorganisation of your life values and priorities. Most of us survive physically, but what is really hard to regain, is a passion for life.

It is a tricky balance, particularly when siblings or dependants may be feeling neglected, but not willing to say anything out of respect for a parent

grieving. The risk of becoming an all-consuming grief 'zombie' creates more family victims."

Hamish finds comfort knowing his son is never far from his thoughts.

"It comes down to a deliberate positive direction of how to handle a loss that nobody dreams will happen. As for myself, Edward's death prompted me to resolve to lead as full a life as possible, just because I am still up here. His death, and the subsequent knowledge of so many other families experiencing the same pain, is an inspiration to get on with it and include him at all times. He would expect no less of me."

### Of Whines, Wines and Signs

*Stop your whines. 'cause no one cares. Enjoy good wines. More fun to share. Treasure the times. Let down your hair. Create little signs. Prove you were there.*

**By Hamish Holcombe**  
**www.gingertrunkcreations.com.au**  
**merribastock@bigpond.com**



Adam Coffey & George King

Adam Coffey AdDipFBM'05 and George King AdCertAA'95 hold two of the seven elected Directorships for Cattle Australia (CA). Both are keen to play their role as advocates for Australian beef cattle producers.

"I would like to achieve producer engagement and then producer/consumer connection. The entire board of CA is keen to make this happen. We need to establish CA as the go-to for governments to speak with our industry on topical issues," said George.

It's no surprise George aspires to connect farmers, in the December 2022 issue of MOCOSA we learnt about ONFARM, a meeting and marketplace platform he and wife, Melinda created.

Advocacy is also a key motivation for Adam. "Being elected to the board of Cattle Australia is a once in a lifetime opportunity to influence the direction and success of our grass-fed cattle peak body in its infancy. For some time now industry has been bogged down in restructure, which has hindered our ability to lead national policy development and advocacy. The Australian beef industry faces many challenges but also huge opportunity when we consider the current context around issues like biosecurity, environmental sustainability, profitability, carbon, climate, and trade access".

Owner and director of Coffey Cattle Co. with wife Jacynta in Central Queensland, Adam has clear ideas on his new role.

"As a family cattle producer I didn't really set out to represent industry or delve into agri-politics, however I feel



Adam Coffey

there is such a great opportunity to build a strong body to advocate on behalf of Australian beef cattle producers." "I'm pretty passionate about how production and profitability tie into environmental sustainability, and how as an industry we can further improve and display our unique credentials around this on an international stage."



George King

Adam grew up in Tasmania and has lived and worked in most states and territories in Australia, ultimately managing extensive beef cattle operations in the live export sector. Some sage advice led him to Marcus.

"As I didn't come from a family agricultural background, I took a while to work out that's where I wanted to be.

I still reflect on a conversation I had with an older station hand as a young jackaroo; he said I could "do it the hard way" or go and get educated. Marcus was at the top of the pile when it came to finding that education. It never fails to amaze me where the Marcus network reaches. It's amazing how many long, dusty roads I've been down and still bumped into MOC graduates. As someone who wasn't a standout academic performer in school, Marcus taught me business management skills that I could never have anticipated; these skills are still applied in our business today."

To top it off, Adam became a Nuffield Scholar in 2016, then served as Queensland State Treasurer for Nuffield for two years. He has had the honour of being both a mentee and mentor in Beef Australia's Graham Acton Beef Connections Program where he developed a passion for helping young people achieve in the industry. He has a lot to offer and a desire to share.

"Through hard work and taking advantage of opportunity, my wife and I have managed to realise our dream of owning and operating our own business."

"As a first-generation entrant into Australian agriculture, I feel it is my obligation to give back to the industry that has provided so much opportunity and help support and guide the success of our great sector well into the future."

[ajcoffey@hotmail.com](mailto:ajcoffey@hotmail.com)

[George.king@onfarm.co](mailto:George.king@onfarm.co)

Steve Merriman

Steve Merriman DipFM'73. Jude Merriman, Emma Merriman, Matt Merriman AdDipFBM'01 and Charlie Downer DipFM'72 are the proud owners of 'Right You Are', winner of the Ladbrokes Victoria Gold Cup over 2100m at Sandown on 25th February and the TAB Australian Cup Prelude over 2000m at Flemington on the 11th of March 2023. There is great excitement as this means the horse has won his last five starts in a row. He was

set to race in the \$3 million Group One Australian Cup at Flemington on March 25th, lining up as second favourite but had to be scratched after he cut his heel.

Steve hopes 'Right You Are' will be back in spring after a rest, but despite the setback is enjoying the excitement of it all.

"We are sheep and cattle farmers with a passion for horses. We bred 'Right You Are', then when he was two years old he was trained by Darren Weir and now Ciaran Maher and David Eustace. It's very different when you breed not buy, they really are a member of the family, that's what makes it so exciting that he has won nine out of his 20 starts."

Steve is pleased with the Marcus link.

"Three old Marcus students owning a part in it all is great. We are all really enjoying sharing the experience."

'Right You Are' is an Australian thoroughbred born in 2016, dam is Leica Ding and he is sired by "So You Think"; co-incidentally owned by the Coolmore Stud, supporters of the Australian Thoroughbred Scholarship at Marcus Oldham College.



Sharon Elphinstone

National Potato Manager for Elders. Sharon Elphinstone AdCertAA'93, was pleasantly surprised to find COVID lockdowns were beneficial to Australia's number one vegetable.

"COVID was very good for us because people were at home cooking, they weren't out buying other stuff, so potatoes were a staple in people's diets. Before COVID there had been a stigma about potatoes being bad for you. There was negativity towards carbohydrates, but I haven't heard that since COVID, which is good. People who think potatoes are bad for you are misled. Potatoes have more potassium in them than bananas and tomatoes. They have a lot more health benefits than many people give them credit for; it's not that they are bad, it's more about what you put on top of them, and I know people like to put things on top of them because I'm one of them."

Even though potatoes are Australia's biggest vegetable crop, Sharon is looking forward to continuing their growth, so they have a bigger share of the market than they do.

"I'm hoping to bring more sales to my new role, which is all about having the

right variety for whatever market you are chasing. Elders has potatoes in every inch of the country, we import them, have seed crops, and we sell to buyers all over Australia, apart from the Northern Territory. We have 40 varieties at last count. My role is to manage all the seed growers in Australia for Elders, and I deal with buyers as well."

Sharon grew up on a vegetable and cattle farm in Thirlstane, Tasmania. After graduating from Marcus, Sharon joined McCain Foods for five years, then spent six years with the Department of Agriculture in Tasmania as a Certification Officer, before joining Elders on the mainland, 18 years ago.

"The administration part of the Marcus course, spreadsheets etc. gave me a start, and I still use them. I think vegetables have a higher profile now than they did when I went to Marcus. Grains had a lot of focus and yes, they are important, but vegetables are far more so. I think people are realising they need vegetables to survive, to live on. Grains you can't live on, especially with all the intolerances out there now, some people can't eat grains. I don't think many people have an allergic reaction to vegetables."

During her time with Elders, Sharon has seen some positive developments.

"Growing up in the industry helped me obtain this job. It was hard being a woman in the industry 10 years ago, anyone who has been in it a long time will admit that it was definitely a man's world and you had to break those barriers down, there were women but they left. It's not about trying to fly the female flag, it's just about having good people in the industry, male or female."

Sharon's inside potato tips are to 'keep it simple'.

"My favourite varieties are Kestrel because they are multi-purpose. Most people like multi-purpose potatoes because they can do anything. The best mash is when you use Bounty, it's a table spud and that's what it's good for, mash and baking. I make my mash with butter, milk to make it nice and creamy, then season with salt and pepper - it's true comfort food."

[sharon.elphinstone@elders.com.au](mailto:sharon.elphinstone@elders.com.au)







Tim Finger with sister Kate (left), Mum Vera, partner Nina Burnett, Dad Ian Finger.

Tim Finger

A family history of breeding the Latvian Brown Cow carried over to the establishment of Riga Angus Stud when **Tim Finger's BB(Ag)'19** maternal grandparents migrated from the Baltic States to Australia after World War Two. The name Riga being a nod to the capital of Latvia.

"Riga Angus was established in 1972 by my grandfather in Healesville, Victoria. He was inspired by the 'doing ability' of Angus in the bush in the 1960's and 1970's."

Established near Mansfield, the stud now comprises 300 HBR (Herd Book Register) and APR (Angus Performance Register) females. Thanks largely to his Mum Vera's management of the stud and passion for animals, the growth of the business has continued on from her parents.

"We are positioning Riga Angus to be in a competitive space given the collective/complementary knowledge base/skill set within the family, including Vera (science and education), my sister Kate (agronomy) and my dad, Ian (mechanical). My role as Farm Manager in the business is day to

day management of stock, pasture establishment, fodder conservation, bull preparation, sale planning, and infrastructure improvement, future planning, and genetic/breeding decision making."

Tim was the first in his family to study at Marcus after an advertisement in the Weekly Times for the Marcus Minds weekend piqued his interest.

"I decided to go and check it out, and it's fair to say I was hooked after the first day. Everyone was so nice and passionate about agriculture that it convinced me to enrol for the Associate Degree of Farm Management course, full time study with the fourth year being part-time to secure the Bachelor of Business (Agriculture). It certainly gave me confidence in what I do, and the knowledge to successfully run a business. I use a lot of what I learned from Marcus in day-to-day life decisions. It's also given me a vast number of people from all areas of Australia as contacts."

Tim's thirst for knowledge about the red meat industry, specifically the Angus Society, led him to successfully join the GenAngus Future Leaders

Program through which he has created a network of likeminded people, including fellow Marcus Oldham alumni **Oli Le Lievre BB(Agri)'17** who has been his mentor. Through the GenAngus Future Leaders Program, Tim was involved in six months of virtual mentoring with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation as part of the Drought Resilience Leadership Program.

"The program gave me some tools to build resilience, and my big take away was to set myself goals for the year or 6 months and try and achieve them rather than going through the motions of farm life and sometimes getting stuck in a rut. Along with these programs, I've been reconnecting with the Mansfield community through sporting teams, the Bonnie Doon football club and men's and mixed basketball teams. I've also been helping with the Merrijig Rodeo alongside my partner Nina Burnett."

Tim's tip is simple but apropos to the success of his business.

"Knowledge is power. Breed for clients' requirements into the future and stay current."

timfinger49@gmail.com

Judith Jaeckle

Inspired by a conversation with Associate Lecturer in Equine Management, Roberta MacLeod, on their tour bus last year, **Judith Jaeckle EM'22** is in training to conquer the world's longest horse race, the Mongol Derby.

"It's Roberta's fault, she was talking about it a lot, then I got curious and started following the 2022 race on Facebook and became a bit addicted. Seeing them and reading about their strategies, I just love the challenging part about the riding and the horsemanship. I want to develop an eye for selecting a horse that might be able to deal with the situation, because you choose the horse, hop on, then try to make it to the next camp 35-40 kilometres away. For me, that's the biggest part of it, just being around those horses."

The Mongol Derby completed by Roberta and **Warren Sutton AdCertHBM'90** in 2017, is an equestrian endurance race covering 1000 kilometres over 10 days, held each August. To make it even more challenging, the course is not revealed until closer to starting time and you choose your horses on the fly. But that's not all.

"The terrain is mostly open land, the Mongol Steppes, it's in the highlands and you ride between the mountains; during the day it can be warm, around 30 degrees but at night it can get really wet and cold, down to zero

degrees. So, it's a lot to adjust to every day. Then there are big marmot holes, that's one of the scariest things because if the horse goes into the holes, they will have a fall, so you have to try to avoid them."

The aim is to ride to as many camps as possible in the 10-hour daily schedule, with Judith's goal to finish after 8-9 days. The accommodation may be staying with local families in their yurts or camping in the wild.

"To prepare I'm really trying to ride for long stints, like 30-35 kilometres, to try to get a feel for that. The horses are vet-checked at every camp so you can't gallop all the way and have a sweaty, exhausted horse; there is a two-hour penalty if their heart rate is over 70. That is the endurance part of it. It is not just surviving it, you are competing, it is a race."

Roberta loved her experience.

"There is nothing as exhilarating as pushing yourself to the extreme. Twenty-eight different horses I rode in my year, changing every 32 to 42 kilometres, trying to ride 160 kilometres per day. You don't do this race if you are looking for comfort. When Judith asked me about riding the race herself, I was so excited for her. She will learn so much about herself as she prepares for the race, and then in turn rides in the longest, most gruelling race on the planet. I plan on supporting Judith in any way I can, I have confidence in her. She is tough, a quiet achiever who just gets in and gets it done."



As part of the race, competitors support a charity. Inspired by a visit to Racing Hearts on the College tour, Judith has made it her charity of choice.

To support Judith, go to:  
<https://gofund.me/24799561>  
[judith@ironstonequestrian.com.au](mailto:judith@ironstonequestrian.com.au)

"That is the endurance part of it. It is not just surviving it, you are competing, it is a race."





Rob Young

**Rob Young BBAM'12** thinks dung beetles are fascinating, and the way he talks about them makes it hard to argue.

"The sheer variety of species, colours, body shapes and distinguishing features is truly remarkable. The role they play in the ecosystem and nutrient cycling is huge and often unrecognised. Without them, Australia would be a wasteland of dried dung pats and uncycled nutrients – both native and domestic – not to mention the fly population. Besides, name another worker that will literally dig themselves to death and are happy to be paid in poo."

After completing a Bachelor of Agricultural Science from the University of Queensland in 1996, Rob gained experience in all aspects of animal production, but knew his progression to higher level farm management roles would be aided by attaining a business qualification.

"Enter Marcus Oldham Farm Business Management Degree. It aligned strongly with my deficiencies and there was a significant component of recognised prior learning for which I was able to gain credit. The high regard with which the degree is held in industry was also a contributing factor. The guidance and seemingly unbounded availability of the lecturers, tutors and other staff is something that has stuck in my mind ever since. It has opened the door to management roles which have then put me on my current path and exposed me to people and contacts that I doubt

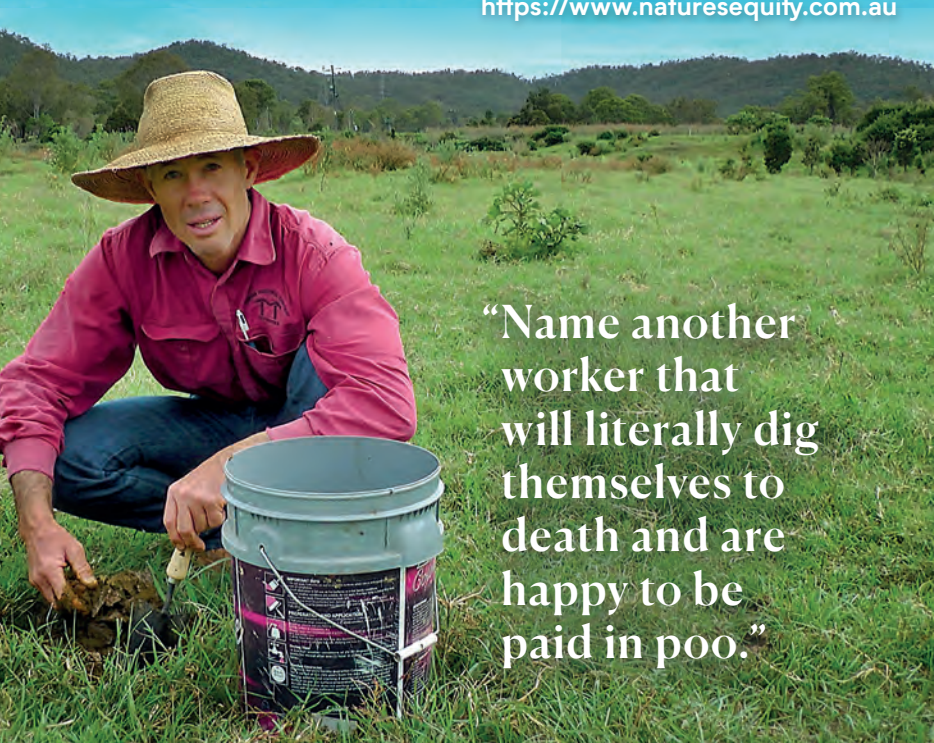
would have happened without my MOC studies."

Since Marcus, Rob has spent several years managing properties including a CSIRO Research Station, the livestock portion of a stud operation, and then a wholistically managed, time-controlled sheep and cattle grazing operation in southern NSW. This led him to grazing management under the guidance and mentorship of Dick Richardson, the founder of Natures Equity. In late 2018, Rob moved back to Queensland and continued working with Dick but also became involved with Col Paton and his business EcoRich Grazing, helping people learn and manage feed budgeting in all types of businesses and environments, using a wide range of techniques and technologies. Finally, Rob found himself attracted to the dung beetle.

"A lull in feed budgeting activities resulted in an approach from Paul Meibusch from Colere, a consulting business, to assist with a dung beetle monitoring and survey project – kick starting my involvement with dung beetles. I'd like to see far wider understanding of their biology and benefits. I would also like to help facilitate a far greater diversity of beetle species into the northern regions of Australia which are in dire need of increased species diversity and longer periods of activity. Put simply, they are a fascinating creature – I have not ever met a producer who didn't think dung beetles were at least interesting."

**rob.young@ecoinsects.com**  
**<https://www.naturesequity.com.au>**

"Name another worker that will literally dig themselves to death and are happy to be paid in poo."



Henry Moyle

After trying banking, beef, sheep, pig, chicken, and crop farming it was the opportunity to become a sharefarmer rather than a wage earner that attracted **Henry Moyle BB(Ag)'22** to dairy farming. Now milking 275 three-way crosses of Montbéliarde, Aussie Red and Holstein cattle near Cobden in south-west Victoria, Henry thanks Marcus for opening his eyes to dairy.

"Through the various tours and case studies, Marcus allowed me to see a variety of farm businesses and dig into what makes them, not just productive, but also profitable. Being around a group of motivated future leaders of the industry really encouraged me to pursue my dreams and work hard to achieve them, much like everyone else. This degree allowed me to dive deeper into the financials and has ultimately led to my partner and I becoming share farmers and managing and growing a business of our own."

Having started Agricultural Science at the University of Melbourne, Henry opted out, looking for a better fit.

"After leaving Melbourne Uni, I worked on a number of properties and really wanted to learn more of the business side of things. Marcus had such a good reputation from listening to previous students, and after a really good chat with Simon Livingstone, I felt like Marcus was the place for me."

Henry used his time at Marcus to guide his thinking.

"Going to Marcus immediately changed my mindset on farming, to see the bigger picture. Having not grown up on a farm, it allowed me to see the businesses behind the farm as opposed to the day-to-day operations that were more interesting in my younger days of working. The difference was immediate at Marcus Oldham with 120 like-minded, motivated young people, and felt more like a rural community than just a university."



Henry and his partner Zarli Dalton, along with their young daughter Nelly, have taken on a one-third share of the 242-hectare farm, pay one-third of the grain, nitrogen and electricity,

and take one-third of the milk cheque. Through keeping an eye on the big picture, they have found their fit.  
**henrymoyle@bigpond.com**

Ellie Carter

"I think it's so important in this industry to not put too much pressure on yourself. I'm sick of reading about good people taking their lives. I just really want to get that point across. It doesn't matter that your career's not exactly where you want it to be, or you haven't met the love of your life... it's all about finding joy in the little things."

**Ellie Carter BB(Ag)'15** finds joy in life in every way. Originally from Yorkshire in the UK her "one-year visit" to Australia working at "Yarram Park" in Western Victoria and "Rocklands" near

Camooweal, Qld, cemented a desire to explore a future in Australian agriculture.

"Marcus had been recommended to me by everyone at 'Yarram Park'.

I knew it offered a lot of good opportunities to travel and see different areas and properties, covered a range of topics, and that I'd get a comprehensive insight into a lot of areas of farm management. I also found

the College was understanding of me being an international student and helped with payment plans and sourced a bursary for me."

To support herself, Ellie worked weekends and College breaks at Sovereign Hill in Ballarat. The juggle was worth it.

"I learnt a lot and it really opened my eyes to different operations. The beef

industry is where my passion lies, but it was so good to gain an understanding across the whole agricultural industry. The China trip was one of the best experiences I've had in my life. It was so special to see areas of China a lot of tourists don't go to, to see the agricultural industry there. Going to Marcus definitely made me approach things differently and opened my brain to options and opportunities. I also met one of my best friends there."

Since graduating, Ellie has made sure she has had a wide range of experiences.

"I've always just followed my passion in life and have not taken a straight course. After leaving Marcus, I was a Senior Land Management Officer for four years based in Rockhampton and travelled out to a lot of different properties to consult with landholders about grazing management and funded projects. I'm currently working on a property north of Rockhampton which I'm enjoying. I also achieved my Aussie citizenship."

Ellie's Australian future is as bright as her attitude.

"I want to buy my own block in Australia and run a mob of breeders and live a self-sufficient life. I'll get there one day. I have a plan. Life's been an amazing journey so far, I've taken a few wrong turns but there's so much out there in this industry."

**elliemobile24@hotmail.co.uk**





# Staff news

## Staff Arriving



**Roberta MacLeod**  
Associate Lecturer in Equine Management

Roberta has experienced horse racing at the top level having trained two Group One winners. She loves adventure and has ridden in many countries, including Mongolia, Botswana, Argentina, Russia, Jordan, and Tibet. On these adventures Roberta learned how to milk and ride reindeer, and hunt with golden eagles. She loves to push the boundaries, having ridden in both the Mongol Derby and the Gaucho Derby and loved every minute. While being a mother to two amazing young people, she is looking forward to many more adventures in the future. We welcome her to the lecturing team for Equine Management.



**Steven Crawford**  
ICT Support Specialist

Steven graduated with a bachelor's degree in business computing at La Trobe University in 1999. For the last four years he has worked at Colac Otway Shire in the roles of IT Coordinator and IT Manager. Steven has worked in the IT Industry for over 20 years in a variety of managerial,

leadership and technical roles, including spending several years working in the education sector. In his spare time he enjoys time with his family, and in the past was a keen sportsman, playing tennis, basketball, and Aussie rules football. He hopes his industry and strong customer service experience will add value to MOC and enhance IT support for staff and students.

**Duncan Ashby**  
Lecturer in Accounting and Finance

*In his own words:*  
I lived on campus from the age of one to nine years. My Dad, Rod Ashby, was a lecturer at MOC from 1971 to the 1980's. We lived in the middle of the three houses facing the valley. It was a great experience. We had a country upbringing next to the town. I remember burning stubbles when Andrew King was the Farm Manager and fishing for yabbies in the dam. The Kings, McConnells and Blackburns were the families on campus, and we roamed the farm. We remain friends to this day. I completed school at the Geelong College and then went to Melbourne University to complete a Bachelor of Commerce. I have also completed post-graduate qualifications in accounting, blockchain strategy, and political science. I am a CPA and also completed a Churchill Fellowship in 2014, studying farmland leasing and share-farming in the USA, UK, and Canada. My rowing highlights are Head of the River 1990, Intervarsity, national titles with Mercantile Rowing Club, Australian Junior and U23 teams, and Masters rowing ongoing. I also rowed surfboats for Torquay

and Portsea. I am still rowing for Corio Bay Rowing Club, and coach as well. Organising the rowing for the first Marcus Oldham Head of the river in 26 years (in 2022) was very satisfying and I hope to continue to make it an important event on the College calendar. After University, I went backpacking and then worked in the money market at the Royal Bank of Scotland and then HSBC in London. Then I came home to work as a Money Market Dealer at JB Were in Melbourne. After some further travel, I moved to Canberra to work on the review of the Australian Wheat Board, and then at the Department of Agriculture and then the Department of Defence (covering military strategy in the Defence White Paper, Indigenous Land Use Agreements for defence bases in the Northern Territory, and then the Air Warfare Destroyer Program in Adelaide). For the next 15 years I worked as a farm business consultant based in Geelong, covering the southeast of Australia from Yass to Robe. I worked with my father Rod, which was a great learning experience. I also began guest lecturing at Marcus Oldham in 2007 and have always enjoyed that part of my work. When the full-time role came up in 2022, I jumped at the chance.

I am really enjoying being at Marcus full-time as it allows me to get to know the students better. I am involved in the case studies and tours which is particularly interesting and rounds out the lectures very well. Lecturing to the post-grad students is also a different challenge. I am developing an elective for the College on leasing and share-farming; and am studying the breadth of issues that come under the 'sustainability' banner to try and address where our courses cover ESG and sustainability topics.



## Staff Leaving



**Janet Craigie-McConnell**

Janet has retired for her third and final time after a 45-year connection with the College. Janet has worn many hats, firstly as wife of the second Principal, Graham McConnell, and parent of **James McConnell DipFM'95** and Dougal McConnell. Then as Foundation Executive Assistant, Marketing Officer, Scholarship Coordinator, and finally, Executive Assistant to Council. There have also been roles without titles, such as host to everyone in the College community, which included champagne breakfasts for final year Farm Management students the morning they handed in their final case studies, socialising and refreshments for council members after meetings, morning coffees for spouses of councillors, dinners for the Student Executive, social occasions for staff, accommodating visiting lecturers and international and Australian rural industry visitors, piping in the pudding at 'Christmas in July' student dinners, comforting students when upset, working around the hijinks of their very close student neighbours, and on the list goes. Janet suspects she is the only staff member to have held so many roles. "I was very involved and loved it. When I first saw that the Principal's House was attached to the student hostel, I was a 'bit alarmed'. Janet quickly discovered there was wonderful camaraderie between the families on campus. In fact, the telephone system for the staff houses involved calls going to the main switch in the office and transferred to staff houses. At weekends, a staff family was scheduled to be 'on duty' to receive calls to transfer to the requested family. When each house eventually received independent phone lines, it was almost worth celebrating.

"However, it was generally, a very good experience being in the centre of College life, and yes, the football bounced into the garden and was retrieved; noisy utes were driven around the 'top circle' during the night; noise snuck through the adjoining door from 'Death Row'; but as a player of the bagpipes, I had an answer for students' loud music."

Marcus Oldham then offered a full social life including student activities involving a Wheelbarrow Race, Car Trial, Talent Night, Debating Night, B & S, and Swimming Competition at the pool shared by the Geelong Grammar Junior School (now Christian College).

Janet's good sense of humour and can-do attitude has served her and the College well, and her fondness for Marcus is obvious as she lights up at the mention of it.

"I have a deep affection for Marcus Oldham College and am so proud of its place in the agricultural and equine education spheres. It has grown up and has its own magic. It is exciting to have been part of its steady development. Travelling across Australia for 11 years as Marketing Officer was a rewarding opportunity to connect with young people, parents, and rural and equine industry representatives to encourage them to connect with Marcus Oldham. Equally rewarding was communicating with the generous sponsors of our worthy Scholarship Program and seeking funding for the Foundation in its infancy."

**“Generally, the academic and administration staff have a fondness for the place. It has forged its way with great care, it has dedicated directors on Council, strong management teams and, importantly, a proud and supportive Alumni.”**

Janet is proud of the College's development. "It hasn't rushed into things; it has allowed each course to settle while continuing to look at how it can be developed. It is that great care and passion, combined with the College community and wider community support, that has allowed us to not fall over, and to appreciate the excellent reputation the College enjoys."

There have been many golden moments during Janet's involvement, including, in 1994, a Farewell Dinner Dance held for Graham, Janet, James and Dougal, at the end of Graham's 16-year tenure as Principal. An emotional night for Janet, it was made even more special, when **Graeme Burnham DipFM'73** and then MOCOSA President, presented Janet with a gift and title of 'Honorary Student'.

Life on campus as a family was fun with plenty of company and opportunities for their sons. When Graham was considering applying for the Principal's role whilst living in New Zealand, Janet only knew from a map where Geelong was located. Duncan Ashby was living on campus with Rod and Barb and the children of both families went to the same primary school, so it fitted in very well. As adults, they are still good friends who enjoy opportunities to get together. James kept a horse on campus and started a business minding the horses of the Horse Management students when on study tours. Dougal was a member of a pipe band, and when he was 12 years old, marched right around the accommodation and the administration playing his snare drum.

"The Student Executive came to dinner every year and they were fun evenings; there were always jokes and one evening, highland dancing over the brooms, to execute the sword dance. Some of the students minded the children for us; the students liked coming to the house as they could have the TV to themselves and there'd be a home-cooked supper."

Janet was a perfect fit for all her roles at Marcus, growing up on a sheep farm in southern New Zealand, and chosen as a young woman to be an ambassador for her country, travelling to Canada and England to promote New Zealand's primary products and the tourism industry.

We thank Janet for her wonderful contribution to the College, knowing the connection will not be broken by her retirement.

"They talk about the students making lifelong friends but so too do the staff."

**janetmcconnell@yahoo.com**



# Staff news

## Staff Leaving



### Katrina Wood

**GCert Lrng & Teach(HrEd)’20, BB(Agri)’15, DipHBM’06.** is leaving the role of Director of Equine Management. In 2018, Katrina joined Marcus as Associate Lecturer in Equine Management, working with and learning from Director, Emma Morel who had been her lecturer in 2006. Katrina has been a great contributor to the College, as a Lecturer, course Director and MOCOSA Executive member. Katrina has worked tirelessly on changes to the structure of the Equine Management course. She has been instrumental in its progression towards offering the opportunity to complete an Advanced Diploma of Equine Business Management in the final trimester, making students eligible to apply for entry straight into the final year of the Bachelor of Business (Agribusiness) or industry placement year of the Bachelor of Business (Agriculture). Her approachability and sense of fun have made Katrina a great addition to the students’ experience at the College and staff collegiality. We thank her for the difference she has made to Marcus and wish her all the best in her next endeavours.



### Emily Van Es

Administration Assistant

Thank you to Emily for her welcoming smile as first point of contact for the College for three years. Emily’s attention to detail ensured events, particularly Graduation and the Marcus Oldham Rural Leadership Program ran smoothly. We wish her well for her future career.



### James Pickles

ICT Support Specialist

James provided IT support to staff and students at Marcus Oldham from August 2019 – August 2022. He was responsible for the full scope of the IT environment at Marcus, including helping grateful students recover deleted/missing case studies. James is now working as a Cybersecurity Consultant for Security Risk Advisors. Thank you for your contribution to Marcus, James.

# Meet the MOCOSA Executive



**PRESIDENT:**  
**PETER STEPHENS**  
**DipFM’83 VIC**  
peter.stephens60@gmail.com  
0447 224 969



**SECRETARY:**  
**GEORGIE THOMSON**  
**BB(Agri)’12 VIC**  
georgie@ingleby.com.au  
0409 940 295

### ORDINARY MEMBERS:

**TOM UPTON BB(Ag)’15 VIC**  
tomupton@live.com.au | 0400 154 729

**JENNIE PARKER AdCertAA’93 VIC**  
jaypee3@bigpond.com | 0407 840 558

**LACHIE BARCLAY AssocDFBM’14 VIC**  
lachiebarclay@hotmail.com | 0438 346 291

**OLI LE LIEVRE BB(Agri)’17 VIC**  
oli@humansofagriculture.com | 0488 215 889

**JESS CHANDLER MAgri’22 QLD**  
chandlerjessie@gmail.com | 0447 641 646

### NEW ORDINARY MEMBERS:

**SARAH JOHNSTON AdDipFBM’02 TAS**  
eskfarm@activ8.net.au | 0407 048 806

**JIM TEASDALE BBFM’09 VIC**  
jimteasdale@hotmail.com | 0428 623 081

**MITCHELL HARRIS GradCertAgri’18 NSW**  
mitchell.harris@nab.com.au | 0447 444 888

**BEC KELLY BB(Agri)’18 WA**  
beccaleighkelly@gmail.com | 0417 275 021

**ROB HANDBURY AdDipFBM’02 SA**  
r.handbury@tdcagents.com.au | 0429 131 186

After 36 years, **Sam Inglis DipFM’66, Honorary Bachelor of Business (Ag)’18** has retired as Secretary of the MOCOSA Executive with **Georgie Thomson BB(Agri)’12** replacing him. Georgie came to Marcus to study a Bachelor of Agribusiness after completing a law degree with Bond University and practising as a lawyer for five years with Harwood Andrews in Geelong.

“I was working with farmers on succession planning, business structuring, but having grown up on a farm I couldn’t really picture myself working in an office forever. I like that, like Bond, Marcus courses are fast-tracked, so I was only 26 when I came to Marcus. I thought if I didn’t go then, I might never have another opportunity. I also had my own farm in Winchelsea by that stage. After those three years, I realised I didn’t ever want to go back into the law and that being on-farm and being in farm businesses is what I wanted to do. I’d heard quite a bit about Marcus as I had friends go through there. The course was more than I could have expected, it opened my mind to a whole new world of the business side of running a farm. We were exposed to a lot of different enterprises and industries.”

When Sam approached Georgie to be a part of the MOCOSA Executive 12 years ago she was more than happy to give back.

“I don’t think there’s anyone who comes through Marcus who wouldn’t want to fly the flag. My time at Marcus was a really positive one, I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing now, without having gone there.”

**"It’s a great community, it’s small, it has that family feel about it because everyone lives there. You make lifelong friends."**

Georgie is looking forward to her new role as Secretary.

“I plan to support Stepho and the rest of the committee. We have the ability now to access more alumni around Australia. It’s all about reconnecting. The 60th function highlighted that, there was a wide demographic of ages and experiences. Getting everyone together is very enjoyable, everyone gets along and has that common love of agriculture, whether living on farms or working in ag industries. It provides a great opportunity to share knowledge and experiences. Marcus was a great place when I went through, I wouldn’t have changed a thing. I’d go there again if I could.”



# Meet the MOCOSA Executive

Introducing our new ordinary members



## Sarah Johnston

**What are you doing now?**

Farming in Tasmania with my husband and three teenage children. I still, to this day, work for the same property I started working for when I left Marcus Oldham 20 years ago. My role and the amount of time I spend there has changed over the years, but I still thoroughly enjoy the challenges being involved with this large property.

**What difference has Marcus made in your professional/private life?**

I married a Marcus graduate and moved to Tasmania when I completed Marcus, so I guess Marcus Oldham changed everything for me. My professional and private life have both evolved from my move to Tasmania. The Marcus Oldham 'Network' is the most invaluable tool I took from Marcus.

**Why are you happy to be a part of the MOCOSA Executive?**

It was strongly suggested to me that Tasmania needed a MOCOSA rep and I was asked to fill the spot. Marcus Oldham has been a major part of my family's life. My father, father-in-law, husband, first cousin, and both my uncles attended Marcus Oldham, so I was actually more than happy to give back and help where I can.



## Jim Teasdale

**What are you doing now?**

I have been living back in Geelong with my family for the last seven years. We recently started our own livestock trading and export business, with a small backgrounding and Wagyu cattle breeding operation in Queensland, and exporting mostly breeding cattle, sheep, goats and alpacas to numerous overseas markets including Japan, New Zealand, South East Asia, Middle East and Central Asia from several ports and airports in Australia.

**What difference has Marcus made in your professional/private life?**

From a knowledge perspective, I'd have to say some of the things I found very dry at Marcus — Excel spreadsheets and contract law are just a couple that come to mind — I now use and rely on every day and have made or saved me on many occasions. But by far, the great friends and networks that seem to become closer and add more value as the years go by, have made the biggest difference in both my personal and professional life. The ability to call on a network of people and bounce a few ideas, or call in for a beer and feed when passing through town, always yields quality conversations that, regardless of whether it supports or challenges you, always leaves you feeling wiser, warmer, and with a fuller cup than before.

**Why are you happy to be a part of the MOCOSA Executive?**

As above, Marcus and the MOCOSA community have added enormous value and confidence to my life, and I saw this as an opportunity where I might be able to contribute and reciprocate to the cause.



## Mitchell Harris

**What are you doing now?**

I'm a Senior Agribusiness Manager with NAB based in the big city of Yass, NSW. I manage a growing portfolio of agribusiness clients, covering both pre-farmgate and post-farmgate. I've been with the bank since I left Marcus and have travelled the east coast starting in Albury NSW, Burnie TAS, Yass NSW, Moree NSW, then back to Yass.

**What difference has Marcus made in your professional/private life?**

The knowledge I gained from Marcus was/is invaluable to my current role and day to day dealings with clients. Reviewing and understanding financials, budgets, commodity markets, etc. and the impact they have on farming operations allows me to add value to these businesses from an outside perspective. Also, the connections made at Marcus have helped me professionally keep abreast of the developments happening within the agriculture industry. I met my wife **Yolanda Heineman DipHMB'11** while at Marcus, we now have two children, Ruben - four years and Audrey - one and a half years old.

**Why are you happy to be a part of the MOCOSA Executive?**

It's great to be a part of MOCOSA, to be able to reconnect with alumni and preach the benefits of a Marcus education to prospective students is a privileged opportunity.



## Rebecca Kelly

**What are you doing now?**

I am a grain farmer in Mingenew. I have received a Nuffield Scholarship for 2023 to study how energy and agriculture co-exist and what are farmers rights/ what are the implications of energy on ag (farms)/what people have learnt around the world/what we can do better etc. I am heading to Texas now and then Canada.

**What difference has Marcus made in your professional/private life?**

The best part of Marcus was the connections you make.

**Why are you happy to be a part of the MOCOSA Executive?**

Happy to be the WA rep for MOCOSA, but I also hope there are other people in WA who would like to help out and join the board.



## Rob Handbury

**What are you doing now?**

Since graduating MOC in 2002, I have been living at Lucindale in south-east SA. Married to Eliza (2006) and we have three children Olivia, Lucy and Tom. I'm a partner in a private stock and station agency called TDC Livestock and Property and have been in the agency business since 2009.

**What difference has Marcus made in your professional/private life?**

To me MOC was a life changing experience that gave me confidence to pursue anything agricultural or otherwise. Highlights have to be the study tours and the friendships and lifelong network that comes with being a MOC graduate.

**Why are you happy to be a part of the MOCOSA Executive?**

There is no doubt this has helped me in the industry I'm in and I'm hoping to be able to give something back to the college by taking on a role with the MOCOSA Executive. To me Marcus Oldham is a special place and it's comforting to see how the college has continued to improve its facilities and enrolment numbers. All this ensures that MOC will be turning out well-rounded graduates for a long time to come, into an industry that still has so much untapped potential and a dire need for educated leaders.



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