





creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



How do you stop younger generations from leaving regional communities and moving to the city?

In Hay NSW, we “built” a school using the knowledge and experience of local landholders and business folk who volunteered their time to teach young people how to be jackaroos and jillaroos.

Here’s how we did it. You can do it, too.



Credit: Dylan Robinson/The Daily Telegraph

Contact

Ms Sandra Ireson

Ph: 0439 938 119

Email: engageag1@gmail.com

Tips to get started

- » Firstly we established a committee - every town has people who are passionate about where they live - they won't be hard to find and a committee allows you to establish a governance mechanism for clear communication, organise engagement and to get things done.
- » Then we established a not-for-profit incorporated group, bank account, goals and explored funding options (see our tips).
- » We established a curriculum that suited our region / rural industry. The model can also focus on specific industries such as livestock or cropping.
- » We found experienced landholders or local businesses who were the key to our success. They donated their valuable passion, time and facilities to teach the students.
- » We created a marketing campaign to engage and to get the message out. It can be as simple as setting up a facebook page or getting local media coverage.
- » Then we were able to start recruiting students to the program.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5	Participant Cost	11
Background	5	Governance	11
Key milestones for the Program	6	Insurance for the Program	11
Our Committee	8	Funding the Program	12
Our Volunteers	8	Ag Placement Program / Work Experience	12
Our Trainers	8	Networking	12
How Students Apply	9	Mentoring and Support	13
Training Program	9	Alumni	13
Program Example	10	Sustainability of the Program	13
Graduate/Qualification	10	Want to know more?	13
		Promoting the Program	14
		Marketing Strategy	14

“It’s a good way to get young people back into country towns and a great way to get into the agriculture industry.”

Jack Kimpton, 2016 graduate,
TA Field Estate sub overseer, “Congi Station”



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Engage Ag – creating opportunities for a career in agriculture

To develop an adaptable model of the 'Hay Inc. Rural Education Program' to implement in other rural communities across Australia.

Introduction

The Hay Inc Rural Education Program is a three-week course run over a five month period generally aligning with farming seasons. It provides hands-on training modules covering all the necessary skills of stockmanship in sheep, cattle and farming skills.

It takes lessons out of the classroom and onto the farm where practical skills are taught by working or retiring experienced farming and business operators. The skills learned give young people the tools to springboard into a rural career.

The initiative was established in Hay, New South Wales, to address the reduced number of young people entering or staying in our agriculturally dependent community.

The Program provides mentoring, knowledge, support, skills and opportunities to engage and retain young local people in primary industries.

The Program has already delivered substantial benefits to Hay and development of an adaptable model would allow for increased positive benefits to be realised across other rural communities across Australia.



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Background

The Program was established by local Hay landholders Mr Chris Bowman, Mr Sandy Symons, Mr Richard Cannon, Mr Ben Barlow, Mr Duncan Fraser, Ms Janine Bryant and Ms Sandra Ireson in 2014 to counter the demise of the jackaroo and jillaroo training system in the district.

The Program was established at a time when the younger generation in Hay had limited opportunities to gain hands-on training and bush skills to make them employable.

Since its first intake of participants in 2014, the Program has delivered immense benefits to the local industry and community.

Not only have regionally-based students been attracted to the Program but it has helped bridge the gap between country and city by introducing city students to the rural community of Hay.

It has promoted the agricultural industry, enhanced tourism to the region and educated the importance of food and fibre production.

It also has captured valuable local knowledge and provided an opportunity for it to be transferred onto future generations. The initiative has also developed partnerships and provided a valuable network for industry between Government, landholders and employers. It has given young people a pathway to a future working on farms and in the agricultural industry.



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture

Key milestones for the Program

2013

2014

August 2013

A start up meeting of Hay locals was held to gauge interest and ideas. This set the agenda for the initiative. The group then explored funding options. The next step was establishing a not-for-profit incorporated group, bank account and ABN for Hay Inc.

November 2013

Met with the Short Course Coordinator from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Tocal and Murrumbidgee Rural Studies centre (Rural Training Organisation - RTO). They advised us on training opportunities and funding.

November 2013

Researched viable funding options get started (ie deductible gift recipient didn't fit criteria). Sent letters to industry bodies and local shire for support.

January 2014

The Hay Shire Council responded to a letter from the committee and offered support providing local facilities ie meeting room and some office support.

May 2014

A marketing strategy was created and a logo was designed to build an identity and brand.

June 2014

The Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) provided a \$24,500 grant for scoping, development, coordination and pilot delivery of the Program.

June 2014

Letters sent to all landholders in the district to gain interest in the Program and support. The responses included cash donations and offers of support including the use of local facilities and livestock.

July 2014

Advice and support received from Tocal/ NSW DPI Short course coordinator Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre Yanco Ms Michelle Houghton and Trainer Ms Natalie OLeary.

August 2014

The Inaugural Hay Inc Annual General Meeting training program developed, expressions of interest form developed.

September 2014

Social media accounts designed to promote the Program.

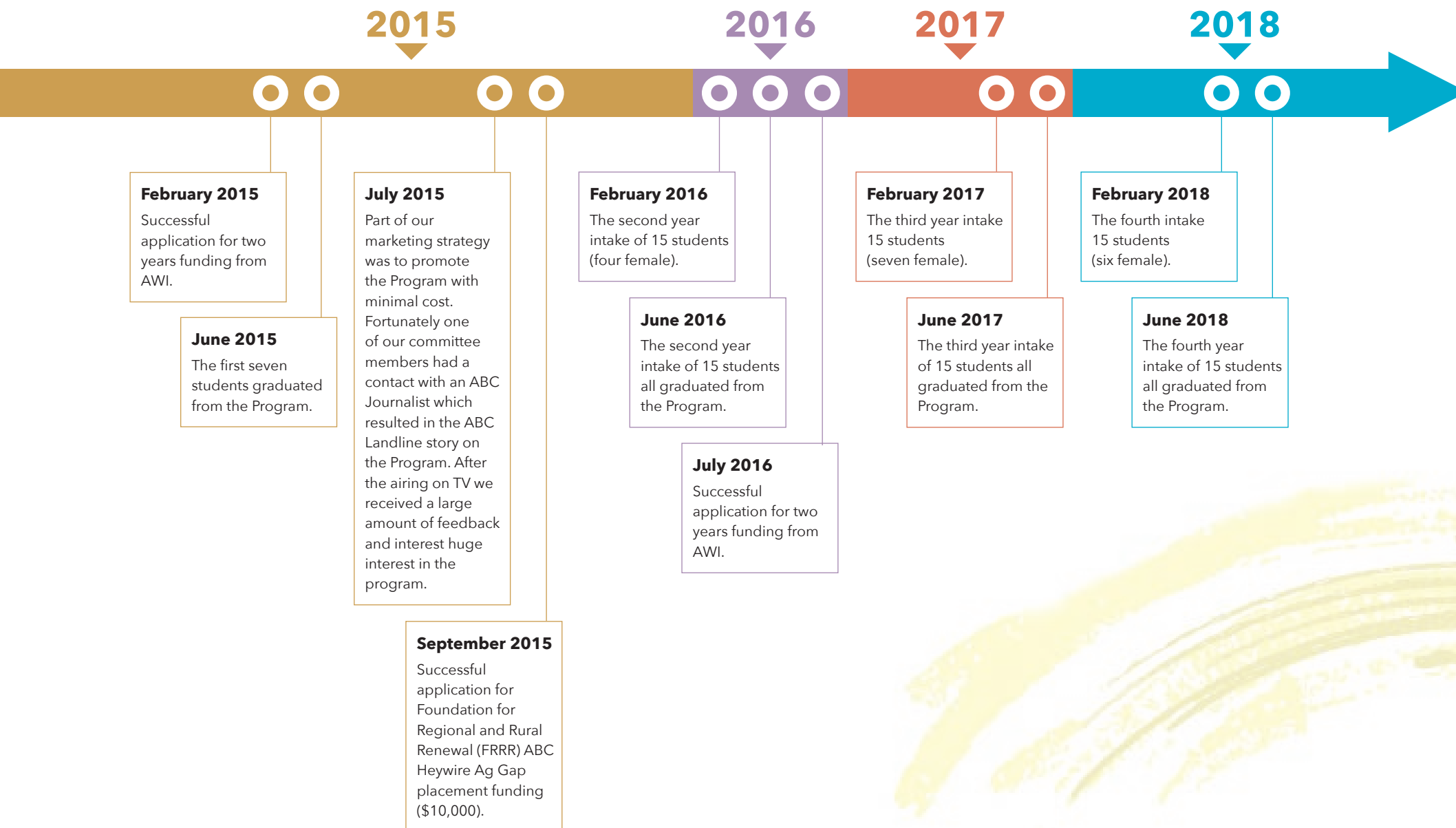
September 2014

NSW Government Smart and Skilled Training Funding received through Tocal NSW DPI for trainer assessor.

September 2014

The Program received first intake of eight students (all male).

Key milestones for the Program (continued)





creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



KNOWLEDGE

The farmers in this region have hundreds of years of knowledge between them and it's been great for the students to learn tips and skills you don't get through a traditional training program.

HANDY TIP

To support volunteers Hay Inc provided travel vouchers \$100 fuel from local petrol station.

Those who have supported the program and/or volunteered their time are sent a thank you letter from the Committee and invited to the Hay Merino Sheep Show.

TRAINERS

Trainers are selected by the committee based on their knowledge as well as their personable skill at teaching (keeping it real and interesting) and advising young people and their interest in taking part.

Our Committee

Check out what we did with our committee and the skills of those on our board.

- » Committee Chairperson: former Hay Merino Stud Manager and professional sheep classer
- » Secretary/ project coordinator: farmer, PR marketing/events.
- » Committee: ex farmer /fencing contractor, station manager and farmer, solicitor and farm partner, wool producer, Rural Education Department admin, farmer and rural industry board member, rural bank employee and young farmer advocate, AWI representative and sheep classer, previous Hay Inc participant station overseer.

The Committee agreed to when meetings were held and roles and responsibilities of the Committee members.

The Committee Secretary/ Program coordinator role was key to keeping the committee informed of updates and planning meetings held throughout the year both face to face and teleconference (arranged using the AWI teleconference facility).



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Our Volunteers

The Program is delivered by local landholders or retired farmers, who volunteer their valuable time and knowledge to the students. They teach the students so they can develop the skills they will need and most importantly the understanding of a "good work ethic".

Our Trainers

- » Sheep handling: four local wool producers and Tocal assessor/trainer.
- » Sheep Classing: professional sheep classer – Chris Bowman and Stuart Hodgson Sheep classer/AWI representative, prime lamb assessor Geoff Duddy Sheep Solutions,
- » Lamb Procedures: Laracy Contracting – lamb marking professional
- » Shearer and wool handling training course: AWI shearer trainers.
- » Fence construction and maintenance: for first 2 years training delivered by local fencing contractor, we now funded training delivered by Tocal at facilities Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre, Yanco.

- » Operate Quad Bike: Tocal trainers
- » Workplace, Health and Safety: Tocal trainer/ assessor and farmer (volunteer), have also used safe work NSW inspector.
- » Working dogs: Ed McFarland "Puzzle stock dogs" (farm manager and dog breeder/trainer)
- » Motor bike and small engine maintenance: Les Lewis (local mechanic service centre) – volunteers workshop and equipment
- » Stock water maintenance and repair: Richard Cannon and Roley Desailly and volunteers
- » First Aid – local ambulance paramedic via TAFE (accredited)
- » Cattle Handling: Richard Cannon and Matt Ireson (cattle breeders).

"The program is that good I have recommended it to mates that have now graduated. I'm still able to catch up with the trainers and other graduates to bounce different ideas off them."

Luke Hull, 2015 graduate,
Station Overseer, Moulamein NSW

CHECKLIST

Check local area on time frames for shearing and harvesting. Speak to local landholders to determine when they are available to donate time.



How students apply

- » Participants fill out an expression of interest form. This is used anytime throughout the year when people might contact us for interest in the program.
- » Each applicant undertakes a phone interview by the committee chairman (Mr Chris Bowman) where they are told what they are signing up for (an outline of the course).
- » In the event of students pulling out at the 11th hour (it has happened) waiting lists and social media and traditional media outlets are used to find new recruits.

Training Program

The program is a three week course that is held around the farming seasons.

- » Five days in February
- » Five days in March
- » Five days in June.

Graduation occurs in June at the end of the third training week to coincide with the Hay Merino Sheep Show.

The timing of the training modules are ideal as its worked around the farming seasons as well as when young people are starting out, such as a gap year.

Certain modules are accredited including:

- » On Farm Workplace Health & Safety Processes
- » Environmentally Sustainable Work Practices
- » First Aid
- » Operate Quad bike
- » Sheep Handling; and
- » Fence Construction and maintenance.

GRADUATE

The students graduate at the Hay Merino Sheep Show – an excellent occasion to not only celebrate with volunteers and trainers but also in front of industry leaders.



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Program Example

The Program commences with a welcome BBQ with Hay Inc volunteers and all new participants. This is a casual introduction and networking opportunity and often includes parents, friends or placement employers.

February module: Introduction to Program and Work Ethic, On Farm Workplace Health & Safety Processes, Environmentally Sustainable Work Practices, Livestock Handling, Introduction to Employment Record Keeping, Sheep Handling and Yard Work, Operate Quad Bikes.

- » Workplace Health & Safety Processes as well as Environmental Sustainable Work Practices were originally delivered in a classroom for the first two years. But are now delivered on-farm for a more hands-on experience.
- » Sheep handling: Participants and trainers stay at Wyvern Station for the real on-farm experience living as a jackaroo/jillaroo - and early starts. It gives the group a chance to "bond" and network in the down time. Volunteers specialising in this area teach the sheep handling skills along with a Total assessor/trainer.

» Fence construction and maintenance: Initially this training was delivered by a fencing contractor and a waratah fencing representative where a new fence was built for a landcare area. The Total assessor also attended the day so the training could be accredited. This is now delivered at the great facilities at Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre Yanco where the students are now able to get a hands-on experience at the Centre.

» Introduction to employment record keeping: This includes a speaker with advice on financial security, safety, income tax management and awareness of insurances such as private health/ ambulance cover.

March module: Small Engines and Motor Bike Maintenance, Livestock Water Maintenance and Repair, Working Dog Training and Management, Shearing and Wool Handling.

» Working dog handling and training is delivered at the local Tourism facility Shear Outback the Australian Shearers Hall of Fame, Hay by local dog trainers/breeders as well as farm managers and stock and station agents involved in the Hay working dog club.

» Three days of shearing, shed management and wool handling is delivered by AWI shearer trainers on a working station volunteered for use during their annual shearing program. Participants stay for three nights in the shearers huts on the station.

June module: Fence Construction and Maintenance, Lamb Procedures (lamb marking), Cattle Handling, Prime Lamb Assessment, Sheep Classing.

- » On the last day of the course students compete in the Merino sheep judging at the Hay Merino Sheep show.
- » Graduation at Hay Merino Sheep Show - industry network opportunity.

"The program helped me get a better worth ethic and gave me a range of skills to help me gain employment."

Dean Lees, 2015 graduate,
Roads Maintenance Service



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Graduate/Qualification

Upon completion of the course, the students will receive a certificate of participation in the Hay Inc Program listing their modules on a statement of attainment. Students are provided transcripts of the accredited training from Tocal and receive a helmet with the Quad bike training.

First-aid certificates are provided by TAFE NSW (Technical and Further Education) who deliver the first aid training in Hay. Australian Wool Innovation students with a certificate for their participation shearing training school. Some of the subjects in the Program are accredited units towards a Certificate in Agriculture.

Many students have then used these competencies they have received to go onto further education and study. The confidence they receive by taking part in the training encourages them to learn more and participant in further training.

Participant Cost

- » The Programs costs each student \$400 for the full 15-day program. This includes training classes, accommodation on farm, training facilities and some meals.
- » Each student is required to pay for their own accommodation and meals when not provided for on farm.

“Hay Inc helped me build on skills I had and gave me new avenues of employment. It looks great on the resume and helped me get my current job. Before this job I had five offers of employment working on farms in NSW and Victoria.”

Sam Pizzey, 2017 graduate,
working on a property at Cooma NSW



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



“Growing up in Hobart I took a leap of faith to do Hay Inc and it’s paid off. It was the perfect course to help me grow and learn skills I need for a career in agriculture.”

Maddy Sellars, 2016 graduate,
Salesperson at D and M Rural
at Bordertown SA

Governance

Success has been achieved by instilling governance similar to any well run not-for-profit organisation. The Program’s committee used standard accountability mechanisms including terms of reference, minutes and actions of meetings and audited financial statements.

As well as complying with NSW Government requirements for the incorporation annual reporting.

Information and guidance on how to set up a Not For Profit can be found at https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=2097

<https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Getting-started/Starting-an-NFP/>

<https://www.connectingup.org/learn/articles/how-start-nonprofit-australia>

www.hayinc.com.au/policies

The Program also established policies and these can be found on the policy tab of the Hay Inc web site.

These include: Child Protection Policy, Working with Children Policy, Student Physical Contact Policy, Child Protection Complaint Policy and

Guidelines, Anti- Discrimination & Harassment Policy, Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy, Code of Conduct Policy and a Privacy Policy.

Working with children checks are mandated for all trainers as some students under 18 years of age have completed the Program.

Insurance for the Program

Hay Inc has an Edupac Combined Liability Insurance Policy with AON (insurance company) It includes educators liability, student accident protection, voluntary workers accident plan. Limit of Liability \$20,000,000. Total insurance cost for 2018 was \$7586.46.

TIP

Insurance companies will require policies in place for the insurance coverage ie: working with children, harassment etc



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Funding the Program

While in the majority of our committee are volunteers and a lot of our facilities are offered "in kind", funding is still needed to cover costs such as insurance, first aid training and admin support. The Program funds some events including meals to the participants and volunteers to create opportunities for networking/mentoring.

The Program has been successfully in receiving funding from:

- » Australian Wool Innovation.
- » Rural Training Organisation, NSW DPI Total received NSW Government Training Services NSW funding to deliver the accredited units of Workplace Health and Safety, Sheep Handling and fence construction and maintenance.
- » ABC Heywire youth innovation grant for \$10,000. This helped with setting up "AG Gap" work placement program where students are connected with farmers in the Hay district for on farm work and training support.

- » Department of Social service volunteer grant for laptop
- » Hay Shire Council and local landholders have donated meeting rooms, livestock and on farm accommodation and facilities at no cost to the program.

"The course provides hands-on experience to help pursue a career in agriculture."

Sophie Stephens, 2016 graduate,
studying agribusiness at
Marcus Oldham College VIC

TIP

High quality photos are useful to distribute for media releases. (See media Tab on Hay Inc web site which showcases some of the media the program has obtained).

As funding is from a major sponsor (key partner) ie AWI, media releases have to be approved by the organisation before distribution.



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture

Ag Placement Program / work experience

The Program is not an employment agency however students have been connected to local landholders for work experience or work placement. The Program confirmed that there are people who are willing to employ good workers with good success rate. Landholders want to retain local skilled employees.



Networking

The Program has proved a great opportunity for young people to meet people of their own age and get involved in the social fabric of the district. Some stations where students are located are isolated. The Program encourages students to catch up on the weekend and become involved in the local sporting teams. The Program has allowed for young people with the same interests and careers to get to know each other. Firm friendships have been formed with Hay Inc participants in the past.

During the training weeks the Program aims to organise opportunities over a barbecue dinner or lunch where participants can chat to volunteer, trainers and people in the industry.

The Program also includes an evening speaker ie local accountant who goes through employment paperwork and finance opportunities (keeping it basic for those starting out).

Mentoring and support

Email is used to stay in touch with participants to make sure they return for the subsequent week training blocks. In 2018 closed facebook page was created for the cohort to communicate and share information and local Hay events. This has been an effective way of communicating directly with the participants. Email is also useful for keeping in touch with some of the employers, to keep them up to date with the training program.

The Program is investigating the possibility of a closed Facebook page/group for the whole Alumni in the future.

Communication continues with the alumini after completion of the Program. Emails and calls have been received from past participants seeking advice. This connection has proved vital to keep graduates in the agriculture industry. The Committee are more than happy to continue to support these young people with their careers to keep them in the agricultural industry.



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Alumni

Students are connected by regular updates via email and through the Hay Inc facebook page and twitter account. The Committee are looking to develop this further, possibly with further face to face get together for the Alumni.

One of the first students is now on the Committee.

Current and past Hay Inc participants have also been invited to be involved in the Australian Wool Innovation National Merino Challenge (NMC). The NMC is, a two day, national competition which improves the engagement of young people with the merino industry by developing their knowledge skills and networks.

Sustainability of the Program

AWI funding and commitment of volunteers has maintained the sustainability of the Program along with the need and interest from participants to take part in the Program.

Publicity for the program has also helped increased the interest ie NSW/ACT Agrifutures Rural Women's Award.

Where are they now

Of the 52 student who have graduated from the Program all are employed in the agriculture sector or are studying at university.

Some are still located in the Hay district working on stations in overseer and station-hand positions.

Promoting the Program

- » Hay Inc distributed media releases with photographs to key local media outlets, television, print and radio asking the media outlets to promote the Program and to encourage applications.
- » Through social media accounts established for the Program.
- » Direct emails to careers advisors and agricultural teachers at local as well as the Agriculture Teachers Federation, to forward information to all their teachers.



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



Marketing strategy

- » Media coverage is important especially in the early stages for recruiting applicants and also for promoting positive stories about the town and district.
- » The Program established social media accounts early on twitter and facebook to create a following and engage with potential participants, journalists and industry.
- » Regular media releases with information on the Program are sent to local media from radio, print and television to tell the story. Also contact is made with journalists before a training week or event ie Hay Merino Sheep Show to link in a story whilst in the district.
- » Implemented Web Site (we used Wagga Web Design), produced a pull up banner, and printed professional flyers.
- » Presence at Field Days - local merino stud displaying Hay Inc banner at Australia National Sheep Show and Presentations at conferences.
- » **Word of mouth and testimonials from past participants has helped promote the program.** These testimonials are shared on social media.



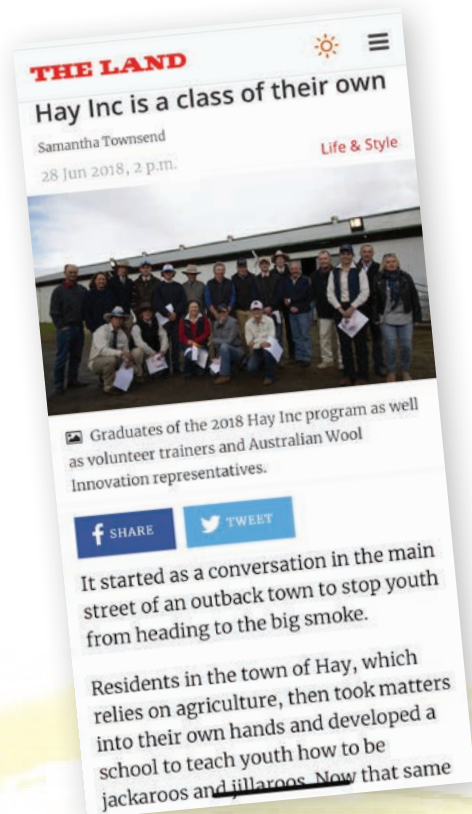
@hayinc



/hayinc



creating
opportunities
for a career
in agriculture



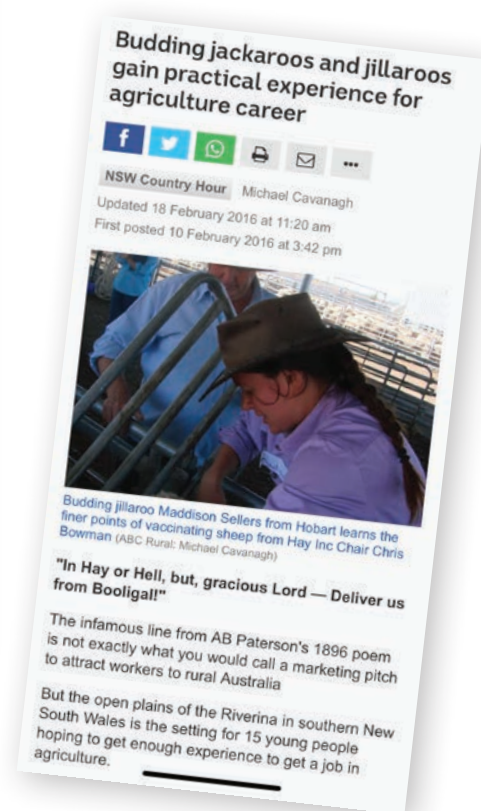
The Land



The Daily Telegraph



The Weekly Times



ABC Landline



HAYINC.
RURAL EDUCATION

 **AgriFutures**
Australia

Want to know more?

Further information on the Hay Inc Rural Education Program is available at:

www.hayinc.com.au

More information on how to develop a similar Program in a rural community contact

Ms Sandra Ireson

Ph: 0439 938 119

Email: engageag1@gmail.com

Credits:

Copywriting - Sam Townsend

Layout - Simone Kain and Ben Hood, Hello Friday