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2006 SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS
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5 October 2007

Nuffield scholarship for Eyre Peninsula's Ben Ranford

Wheat and sheep farmer Ben Ranford from Cleve on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula will tonight be awarded Australia's leading farming scholarship, a Nuffield Australia Farming Scholarship.

Mr Ranford is one of only 16 Australians to receive a 2007 Nuffield Scholarship. He will be presented with his award tonight at the Innovative Farming Australia awards dinner, part of the Nuffield Australia Spring Tour being held in Fremantle, WA.

Nuffield Farming Scholarships, each worth \$25,000, give young Australian farmers the opportunity to travel internationally and explore agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context. There are about 1300 Nuffield scholars worldwide.

Mr Ranford will use his scholarship, sponsored by Australian Wool Innovation, to investigate methods to meet increasingly tough business challenges.

A fourth-generation farmer, cropping cereals and running a 1200 breeding ewe, self-replacing, dual-purpose sheep flock on 3000 arable hectares, Mr Ranford wants to ensure farming's future, but says being a 'good farmer' is no longer enough to meet business challenges.

"I have always loved farming but the past five years have dealt Eyre Peninsula and many other regions a mix of poor seasons, low commodity prices and spiralling input costs," he says.

Through his Nuffield Scholarship he wants to see how other agricultural communities have secured vibrant futures, and identify ways that his community and others in Australia can restore a balance of economic power to farmers, ensuring the long-term viability of farming communities.

"In particular I want to study how to achieve this in terms of a business model, what principles maintain farmer's loyalty and participation, and to quantify the benefits to farm business and the region's economy resulting from a cohesive approach."

Nuffield Australia CEO Mr Jim Geltch says many Nuffield Scholars go on to become active leaders in agriculture and the community. "For many, the scholarship experience changes their lives by opening their eyes to the wider world and giving them the confidence to pursue their goals," Mr Geltch says.

The 16 2007 Australian Nuffield Scholars will leave Australia in either February or June 2008 for a compulsory Global Focus Program. This will involve travel to China, North America, South America and Europe investigating agricultural marketing and trade issues, environmental issues and experiencing the different social and cultural aspects of each region.

Following the initial six-week program, the scholars will go their individual ways to pursue specific study programs in the country or countries of their choice. Mr Ranford hopes to travel to the UK and Europe, North America, South-East Asia and the BRIC nations – Brazil, Russia, India and China on his individual tour.

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