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Media Release

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Growing Leaders Scholarships awarded to WA farmers

The CBH Group and Grower Group Alliance (GGA) have announced that two Western Australian farmers are the recipients of prestigious Growing Leaders Scholarships for 2022.

These scholarships are delivered through the Growing Leaders Scholarship Program – an initiative to support the leadership development of existing and emerging WA grain industry and community leaders.

Funding is provided by the CBH Group, applications are coordinated by the GGA and scholar selection and program delivery is by Leadership WA.

Dr Alaina Smith, of Kojaneerup, and Ben Cripps, of Northampton, will develop their skills in Leadership WA's 10-month 2022 Signature Leadership Program, valued at \$15,500 per scholar.

The program brings together a diverse cohort of senior professionals from the corporate, government, small business and not-for-profit sectors across WA.

Dr Smith is a partner in her family's mixed cropping and livestock business on WA's South Coast. She is Vice-Chair of her local grower group, Stirlings to Coast Farmers, and was previously a research officer there.

Dr Smith has a PhD in crop physiology and worked as a barley development officer for the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development prior to joining the family farming business in 2006.

Along with his wife, Mr Cripps operates a grain farm north of Northampton, growing wheat, lupins and canola. He has been an active member of the Northern Agri Group, on which he has served in various roles including Chair.

Prior to managing the farm, Mr Cripps had a diverse career which included working on farms and a period in the Australian Army, in which he was deployed to Afghanistan.

Grower Group Alliance Inc

 3 Baron-Hay Court, South Perth, WA 6151

 (08) 9368 3418

 admin@gga.org.au

 www.gga.org.au

 @GGA_WA



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In its fifth year, the Growing Leaders Scholarship Program has supported grain growers and others in the industry to grow and develop their leadership skills. Eight scholars have previously undertaken the program.

CBH Group Chief External Relations Officer, Brianna Peake, said the Growing Leaders Scholarship Program aimed to build leadership capacity within regional communities and build a pool of growers ready to take on leadership positions in the grain industry.

“Sponsoring the program is part of our commitment to fostering leadership capacity within our regional communities, where having a pipeline of strong leaders is so important for the sustainability of our industry, communities and for the CBH Group,” she said.

GGA Chief Executive Officer Rikki Foss said the GGA continued to have a strong focus on developing the capacity of grower groups and their members, and was proud to support the Growing Leaders Scholarship Program.

“The program is a fantastic way to help build the professional development of growers and others involved in the grains industry, and I congratulate Alaina Smith and Ben Cripps for being awarded these highly regarded scholarships,” she said.

Leadership WA Chief Executive Officer Dominique Mecoy welcomed Dr Smith and Mr Cripps onto the program.

“Through the Signature Leadership Program, these two worthy recipients will have the opportunity to access the State’s most experienced and insightful leaders, and to take part in a journey embracing leadership far beyond ‘management thinking’,” she said.

More information about the Growing Leaders Scholarship Program is available on the [GGA](#) and [CBH Group](#) websites.

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Caption: Dr Alaina Smith, business partner within her family’s mixed cropping and livestock business at Kojaneerup.

Caption: Ben Cripps, who operates a grain farm north of Northampton.

Contact

Kallista Bolton | Stakeholder & Communications Manager – GGA
kbolton@gga.org.au
0421 623 406