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Media Release

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Hub extension and adoption bursaries awarded to students

The South-West WA Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub (SW WA Hub) has announced four successful applicants for its student bursaries focused on extension and adoption activities.

The students, all from The University of Western Australia, received SW WA Hub bursaries worth \$8000 each that require them to undertake activities including engagement with WA grower groups, participatory action research, workshops, field days, or conferences.

Led by the Grower Group Alliance (GGA) with funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund (FDF), the SW WA Hub has a strong focus on extension and adoption of drought resilience research outcomes.

SW WA Hub Director Mark Holland said the Hub's bursary program provided an exciting avenue for students to build their understanding of the need for 'co-designed' research to increase the adoption of research outcomes that can improve drought resilience.

"The students will have the opportunity to work with GGA's grower group network members so they can understand the importance of industry collaboration while gaining stronger experience and knowledge in extension practices for adoption and practice change," Mr Holland said.

"The bursary program also enables the Hub to engage more deeply with WA universities such as UWA, which are among the Hub's more than 50 valued consortium partners representing all sectors of the WA agricultural supply chain."

Director of The UWA's Institute of Agriculture, Hackett Professor Kadambot Siddique, welcomed the bursary initiative which he said would provide valuable opportunities to participating students.

"These student bursaries will enhance the ability of our postgraduate students to engage meaningfully with grower groups and industry," Professor Siddique said.

"UWA is pleased to be a consortium partner of the SW WA Hub and to be working with the Hub on this initiative, which will help to translate research outcomes by bringing people together."

The four student bursary recipients include:

- Garima – PhD student undertaking a 'Farm to Port' study aimed at optimising grain supply chains. The study is being informed by a survey for grain growers which can be completed via this link <https://bit.ly/3KyfiLL>.

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- Dan Kierath – Master of Science (MSc) student investigating the impact of farm-level management decisions on soil carbon content down to one metre on a WA Wheatbelt property.
- Emanuel Gomez – PhD student studying grain growers' adoption intentions and behaviours regarding supply chain digital technologies, with the aim of identifying impediments and key drivers.
- Jane Brownlee – MSc student assessing water quality used for chemical applications in agricultural production systems. Quality issues will be identified, costs and benefits of improvement techniques quantified, and viable solutions communicated with farmers.

The SW WA Hub's extension and adoption bursary program, which is led by the Hub's Project Manager Kellie-Jane (KJ) Pritchard, is open to further applications from WA university students.

Students are encouraged to have research themes that align with SW WA Hub priority topics which are available on the Hub webpage www.gga.org.au/drought-hub.

Eligible students include those undertaking Honours studies; Master of Science (MSc) (coursework projects) or accelerated MSc; work placements (work integrated learning) while studying at post-graduate level; or PhD students.

More information about the SW WA Hub bursaries is available by contacting Ms Pritchard via swwadroughthub@gga.org.au.

– ENDS –

Caption: SW WA Hub bursary recipients Jane Brownlee, left, Emanuel Gomez, Garima (centre) and Dan Kierath, all from UWA, with Director of The UWA's Institute of Agriculture, Hackett Professor Kadambot Siddique, Hub Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Officer and Adoption Officer Theo Nabben and Hub Project Manager Kellie-Jane (KJ) Pritchard.

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