

31 March 2025

## Media Release

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### Round two scholarships now open to inspire future ag leaders

Round two of the WA Agricultural Research Collaboration (WAARC) scholarship program is now open, aimed at inspiring and supporting our State's next generation of agricultural scientists and leaders.

The Postgraduate Research Scholarship Program provides career and skills development for PhD students while building research capacity and future-proofing Western Australia's agrifood sector.

Eleven top-up scholarships are on offer to eligible students in partnership with WAARC's three university members: Curtin, Murdoch and The University of Western Australia.

Successful students will be awarded an annual top-up scholarship of about \$25,000 for up to 3.5 years, to support their living expenses while completing their PhDs.

WAARC's non-university members CSIRO, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Grower Group Alliance will provide access to leading industry researchers as possible co-supervisors, world-class research facilities, field sites, grower groups and industry networks.

"WAARC's transformative scholarship program is opening doors for the next generation of leading scientists and attracting talent from diverse professional backgrounds to advance agricultural innovation in WA," Director Kelly Pearce said.

"These PhD scholarships will provide more than financial support - they are an invaluable opportunity for our student researchers to access mentors, networks, professional development and first-hand industry experience.

"Scholarship recipients will become part of a multi-organisational network of talented WAARC researchers and students, completing industry-relevant projects that respond to emerging priorities and challenges within the agrifood sector," Dr Pearce said.

Round one of the program was launched last year with 68 applications received and 22 WAARC top-up scholarships awarded.

[waagresearch.org.au](http://waagresearch.org.au)



In the past eight months, the inaugural WAARC cohort of PhD scholarship students have engaged in a range of capacity-building activities including workshops on networking, presentation skills, writing strong research papers and podcasting.

They also gained first-hand public speaking experience when they presented their research topics to industry at WAARC's PhD Showcase last November.

Applicants do not need to be enrolled in a current PhD or have a base scholarship to apply for the WAARC top-up scholarships.

They will need to align their research projects with one or more of WAARC's six key research programs: Northern Agriculture, Grains Transformation, Resilient Agricultural Futures, Agricultural Technologies, Aboriginal Science Engagement and Capacity Building and Extension.

For round two only, applicants may also demonstrate their research project aligns with Polyphagous Shot-hole Borer (PSHB) or Agrivoltaics research.

"You may be a rural agronomist or regional Grower Group member interested in a particular area of research, or perhaps you're a computer scientist or engineer keen to apply new technologies in agriculture," Dr Pearce said.

"We are encouraging cross-sector applicants across all fields of research - those who can bring their unique skills and insights to make a real impact on WA's primary industries.

"Through this scholarship program, WAARC is incredibly proud to build a vibrant research environment for the sustainability and resilience of our State's agrifood sector."

Applications close 5 May 2025 at 5pm (AWST).

For more information and to apply, visit [SmartyGrants](#).

The State Government is providing \$25 million dollars in funding to support WAARC and boost Western Australia's research capacity and industry sustainability.

#### **Pic captions:**

1. WAARC Postgraduate Research Scholarship Program students Darcey Lefroy and Mahnaz Afsar are among a cohort of 22 inaugural scholarship recipients who were announced last year. Round two of the WAARC PhD scholarship program is now open with 11 more scholarships on offer.
2. The inaugural cohort of 22 WAARC Postgraduate Research Scholarship Program students were announced last year by Minister for Agriculture and Food Jackie Jarvis. Round two of the WAARC PhD scholarship program is now open with 11 more scholarships on offer.

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