

## **QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**No. 647**

**Asked on 30 April 2008**

**MR LAWLOR** asked the Minister for Primary Industries and Fisheries (MR MULHERIN)-

### **QUESTION:**

How does the annual scholarship scheme operated by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries for science faculty students benefit scientific research in the primary sector?

### **ANSWER:**

Through its Smart State agenda, the Queensland Government is building a robust, skilled and diversified economy based on innovation, creativity and science.

Smart science is critical to improving the profitability of Queensland's primary producers and to maintaining the competitive advantage of our rural industries. However, a commitment to smart science isn't just about investing in today's research programs. It is also about investing in the researchers of tomorrow. It is the researchers of tomorrow who will continue to drive the profitability of our primary industries well into the future.

This is why the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) is collaborating with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to provide a scholarship scheme to exceptional science students. Under the scheme, DPI&F will provide funding to two QUT Faculty of Science students undertaking research related to the primary sector, with the scholarships valued at up to \$10,000 per year for a maximum of two years.

DPI&F's aim is to nurture the best and brightest who have aspirations to work in Queensland's exciting fields of food technology, horticulture, aquaculture or agriculture.

One of the two recent student winners, Ms Leisha Brown has completed a Bachelor of Applied Science majoring in biotechnology and has a keen interest in virology. This year, she has entered QUT's Honours program and will combine these two key fields to study banana streak virus diversity. By surveying the genetic diversity of banana streak virus in other countries, a reliable and robust DNA test can be developed to diagnose and quarantine the virus, which will contribute to the sustainability of the Queensland banana industry.

A scholarship has also been awarded to Mr Matthew Warren to enable him to complete his tertiary studies in Ecology, which are focussed on the biology and population structure of species that may be suitable for commercially viable and sustainable resources in the future.

The scholarships are entirely in keeping with DPI&F developing itself as an economic development agency by moving into high-end niche markets, domestically and internationally, with top-quality produce supported by leading edge science.

DPI&F already employs some of the State's best scientific minds and through this scholarship scheme we will be supporting up and coming young scientists with their early studies. As well as providing funding for our scholarship students, DPI&F will also provide research project supervision, academic mentoring and work experience placements.

The scholarships will be available to QUT students currently enrolled full-time in the second year or third year of the Bachelor of Applied Science or Bachelor of Mathematics course, with a major relevant to a DPI&F area of interest.

This is another example of how DPI&F is committed to maximising the economic potential of Queensland primary industries on a sustainable basis, not just today, but also well into the future.