

## **BPS Study Bursary**

Agriculture could be described as Australia's most important industry simply because populations worldwide cannot survive without food and nutrition. Demand for foodstuff is such that farmers must develop more efficient practices to produce more from the same amount of land. Agronomists, who have generally completed three years of tertiary study before obtaining a degree, play an ever increasing role in advising farmers on all types of productivity issues.

However, it is well recognised that there is a general skills shortage in agronomic expertise Australia-wide. To address this matter on a local level and to encourage Burdekin based secondary school students to progress into the field of agricultural sciences, the board of Burdekin Productivity Services Ltd has decided to offer financial support in the form of a bursary to one suitable candidate each and every year until further notice. This shall be known as the BPS Study Bursary. The BPS Study Bursary is not a donation to assist with the cost of university, but rather a reward for hard work, so there are conditions that must be met before the funds are distributed.

### **The following criteria must be met to qualify as a suitable applicant for a BPS Study Bursary:**

1. Must be a current Burdekin resident who has resided in the district for the past 2 years at least.
2. Must have completed Year 12 in the last 2 years either at a Burdekin High school or at a boarding college elsewhere.
3. Must have successfully completed, to the required standard, those Year 12 subjects that are required for acceptance into an Australian university course to study an agronomy related Bachelor's degree.
4. Must be willing to undertake full-time study on campus at a selected University and must be prepared to complete the selected course in the designated time period.
5. Must complete a written application and agree to be involved in an interview process with the Bursary Selection Committee if selected to do so.

### **The following conditions apply to a BPS Study Bursary:**

1. A BPS Study Bursary shall activate only when the successful awardee is accepted into an agronomy related Bachelor's degree course at an Australian university.
2. Maximum payment for a BPS Study Bursary shall be \$15000.00 over a 3 year period. These funds shall be dispersed in tranches of \$2500 per semester (\$5000 per annum).
3. In any one semester, full payment of the \$2500.00 tranche shall remain dependent upon successful completion of all required course subjects during that semester.
4. In any one semester, a pro-rata deduction to the \$2500.00 tranche shall apply, but only if 75% or greater of required course subjects are completed successfully in that semester (i.e at least 3 out of 4 subjects are completed successfully). If less than 75% of required course subjects are completed successfully in that semester, the \$2500.00 tranche shall be withheld and deemed not payable.
5. Tranches of a BPS Study Bursary shall be paid half yearly in arrears once written proof of semester results are presented to BPS management and confirmed by the relevant university.
6. If an awardee of a BPS Study Bursary changes or alters their university course at any time, whereby it no longer qualifies as an agronomy related Bachelor's degree course, the BPS Study Bursary shall be cancelled.

7. If an awardee of a BPS Study Bursary converts their university course to part time study whereby the length of time for completion is extended beyond that of fulltime study, the BPS Study Bursary shall be cancelled.

**The following selection process shall apply to the BPS Study Bursary:**

1. During the year, management shall promote the BPS Study Bursary throughout secondary schools and colleges in the immediate area.
2. At the October board meeting, the board shall nominate a Bursary Selection Committee comprising of at least one member of BPS management and one director of the company. The board shall advise this committee of a selection criteria to follow when ranking applicants.
3. 1st November each year, a BPS Study Bursary shall be released to applicants.
4. Applications shall close 30<sup>th</sup> November each year.
5. Those applicants deemed suitable shall be interviewed by the Bursary Selection Committee and ranked according to the selection criteria set down by the board.
6. The committee shall present their recommendation at the December board meeting where a final ranking shall be approved by the board of directors. Related parties who preside on the board shall abstain from voting due to conflict of interest implications.
7. The top ranked applicant shall be offered a BPS Study Bursary subject to acceptance into a qualifying university course.
8. If the top ranked applicant refuses the offer or is not accepted into the university course for any reason, the second ranked applicant shall be offered a BPS Study Bursary. This process shall continue until an applicant is accepted or the list of applicants is exhausted, at which point the BPS Study Bursary shall not proceed in that year.
9. A BPS Study Bursary document shall be drawn up that clearly defines all conditions that apply to the granting of a BPS Study Bursary, and such document shall be executed by the BPS Board Chairman and the successful applicant.
10. Unsuccessful applicants shall be notified in writing and encouraged to re-apply in the subsequent year if eligible to do so.
11. Directors have the final say on who shall be offered a BPS Study Bursary and there shall be no grounds for appeal.

In the following months, the BPS management team of Rob Milla and Mark Rickards will attend all Burdekin High Schools to conduct information sessions with students and raise awareness of this important program. Applications for the bursary will open in November and a selection panel will interview applicants before offering the bursary to the student deemed most suitable.

The board, management and members of BPS regard the BPS Study Bursary as an important opportunity for local students to progress into the field of Agricultural Sciences and encourage as many students as possible to consider a career in agriculture.