

Newsletter from the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union

2020



1949 *is when it started.....*



Wagga Agricultural College staff and students photographed around the time of its establishment as a College in 1949. (Photo: Sherry Morris Collection)

WACOBU News

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Got News?

Any old boys with news stories, photographs, upcoming events and reunion news are asked to contact Graeme:

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A different newsletter

This year's newsletter is different.

2020 was a year that tested us all.

Old Boys and families affected by drought, fires, floods and COVID-19.

Any planned WAC Old Boys reunions did not proceed.

College life at CSU was virtually put on hold till later in the year with lectures and tutorials delivered remotely until mid-September.

No men's rugby.

No Ag Race Day.

This meant that the newsletter will not have many stories.

Hopefully some more news in 2021 as life returns to somewhere near normal.

Please forward your news and photos for inclusion in the 2021 edition of the WACOBU newsletter.

All past newsletters can be found on the CSU alumni website:

alumni.csu.edu.au/news-and-events/newsletters/wacobu



Drought, bushfires, floods, a pandemic and general negativity from all sections of the media made 2020 a year that most people may want to forget.

Many Old Boys and their families were affected in one way or another during 2020 and WACOBU hopes that everyone has come through on the other side and can look ahead with confidence.

The Mate Helping Mate program continues to provide great support to people from the bush – and it was especially so in 2020!

Please utilise and publicise the podcasts produced by Old Boy John Harper which add another dimension to his ongoing work.

John and his team are doing a fantastic job and helping many farmers, their family, friends and rural communities.

The farming sector received a boost with many regions of Australia getting the season they wanted with timely rain making it ideal for crops, animal enterprises and replenishing dam and soil water reserves. Hopefully the current harvest sees the fruition of this work and boosts farm income.

The major winter grain growing belt in eastern Australia saw many potentially high yielding crops. Cereal crops, canola and pulse crops yields were forecast to be above average. Many crops were cut for hay to replenish used reserves.

Pasture growth was excellent and improved stock health and productivity. Weeds also flourished! After many dry years Paterson's curse made a big comeback with some spectacular purple coloured landscapes contrasting to the yellow canola and green cereal crops. A photographer's delight!

Sheep and cattle prices remained high and the demand for quality red meat continued even when retail prices went skywards.

Diverse and unique farming enterprises also came to the fore. Paddock to plate continues to gain momentum and many primary producers are using flair and initiative to successfully market their products.

The "buy from the bush" scheme saw budding entrepreneurs show their products and services to many customers from all parts of the country and many city people finally realised there are goods being made outside urban Australia that suit their needs.

Bush tourism also increased and the grey nomad brigade and others travelled to country areas to see their home state instead of jet-setting overseas.

Good to see urban dwellers realising there is a part of NSW west of the Great Dividing Range and spending their dollars in rural communities.

Closer to home life at the agricultural campus at CSU Wagga was different. No face-to-face lecturing for most of the year. Remote learning was the norm.

No men's rugby, no Ag Race day, no social get-togethers (or Old Boy reunions) made university life very different.

On a positive the women's rugby competition went ahead and Ag College won their first SIRU premiership, defeating the previously undefeated Chalkies in an exciting grand final. Well done ladies!

The demand for young people to follow a successful career in agriculture is high. There is great scope for a career in the many fields of this vibrant sector.

Talk up the industry, give agriculture a plug and mention the quality education you can receive at CSU Wagga creating a pathway to a satisfying career.

Let's move on to the new year with renewed enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

The WACOBU committee wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, safe and prosperous 2021.

Graeme





Benjamin Fowler

2020 WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

The WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP for 2020 was awarded to Benjamin Fowler.

This year was very different selection process as the interviews were done remotely due to COVID -19 and there was no presentation ceremony at the University.

Thanks to all of the WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP donors who make this scholarship available each year. It is great to see the Old Boys helping out current students annually with this scholarship.



Benjamin Fowler



WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP President Stuart Kanaley



Benjamin's letter of appreciation to WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP 2020.....

This year has been a difficult year for all of us. For a university student like me the covid-19 pandemic along with a serious knee injury has made the year extremely challenging, not just for my studies but for personal reasons as well.

Despite these challenges this year has proven to be one of my best academic years. I have achieved a substantial increase in my GPA. Additionally, the subjects that I studied this year have aided me in the process of making the decision to take the honours stream for my studies next year.

Furthermore, an achievement of this year that I am particularly proud of is the overcoming of my knee injury.

Whilst this was a great year to injure my knee, due to covid-19, it was still a major setback due to the serious nature of the injury.

Whilst continuing my studies I effectively had to learn to walk on my right leg again, putting pressure on my peers to give me a hand.

However, despite these challenges, I am now fully recovered, and I am very excited to continue my studies at CSU next year for my fourth year.

The funds that were allocated through the WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP 2020 assisted me with adapting to the challenges of online studies, this being the increased charges to the household electricity bill and the internet bill (due to the unavailability of CSU facilities during the early days of the pandemic).

Additionally, the funds assisted with the purchasing of textbooks for the subjects that were undertaken this year.

Furthermore, the funds assisted towards paying for my knee surgery and for subsequent physiotherapy sessions, and for these contributions I cannot thank the donors enough.

Next year I hope to graduate from CSU with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Hons) degree after completing my Honours Project with Dr. Jeffery McCormick.

Whilst the details are still in the workings, the basis of the project is the effect of temperature on the growth of a dual-purpose wheat crop in the Murrumbidgee area.

WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP 2020



I also hope to begin pre-season training for the WAC football club in order to play a full season of rugby in 2021.

For any younger students that are thinking about applying for scholarships, all I have to say is go for it. There is absolutely no harm in applying for all available scholarships that are presented to you.

CSU makes it a very easy process to filter the scholarships that you are eligible for and the application process is simple.

Additionally, don't just focus on the money of the scholarship, have a read of the scholarship and the history behind it such as the WACOBUS scholarship.

Finally, thank you again to all the donors for awarding me this scholarship for 2020.

I feel extremely privileged to have been awarded this scholarship with such a connection to the Wagga Agricultural Club.

I wish the donors and the Old Boys Union members all the best for 2021, and I hope to see some of you soon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Go You Aggies!!

Regards,

Benjamin Fowler.





WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP 2021

Application close: 08 Feb 2021, 11.59pm

Terms: Open to continuing students

Value: \$2,000 Status: Open

This scholarship is provided by WACOBUS and is one of more than 200 Foundation scholarships provided each year to students across the campuses of CSU.

The scholarships are able to be provided due to generous donations to the Charles Sturt University Foundation Trust in support of the University and its students by friends of Charles Sturt University, the many service organisations, individuals and corporations throughout our region.

Eligibility for recipients is that they must be studying in second, third or fourth year in an undergraduate degree within the School of Agriculture & Wine Sciences. Applicants must possess a sound academic record and demonstrate a positive contribution to furthering the interests of agriculture within the Schools through sporting, social or University activities.

WACOBUSCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

The WACOBUS committee is asking Old Boys for further donations towards this annual scholarship.

The scholarship has doubled in value to \$2000.

If a reunion or get together is organised please consider making a donation.

All recipients have greatly benefitted from their scholarship.

This scholarship is one way of ensuring that WACOBUS remains in the spotlight at CSU.

Donations can be made to WACOBUS by direct debit.

YOUR HELP WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED

WAC OLD BOY- HELPING OUR MATES



WAC Old Boy John (China) Harper ('74) has received tremendous support from the WACOBU network, several government agencies, private businesses and individuals in promoting the latest “Mate Helping Mate” initiative - podcasts.

The podcasts were launched at Temora on February 19 this year and have provided another valuable resource in the “Mate Helping Mate” programs which are a guide to mental health and mateship in the Australian bush.

Hosted by John, the series of podcasts features farmers, locals and health workers discussing what works (and what doesn't) when it comes to helping people that are struggling in remote and rural communities.

Featuring great yarns, big hearted guests and the distinct flavours of the bush – the podcasts are a must listen for anyone living outside of the big smoke!

John Harper's tremendous initiative, drive and dedication to the cause of assisting rural people with mental health issues are undeniable.

A wheat and sheep farmer and former shearer from Stockinbingal in the Riverina John produced this series of podcasts, to raise awareness of mental health and mateship in the bush.

Mate Helping Mate is a series which features stories of farmers, business owners and families who live in remote and rural communities.

The series is described as a guide to mental health and provides strategies from other farmers and people from rural communities who have used the strategies to build resilience when struggling in rural and remote communities.

Having been bitten by 'the black dog' himself, John realised how many of his own mates were struggling with depression and their mental health but were not openly talking about it and decided to act.

John originally launched the Mate Helping Mate program in 2006 but found that he was unable to attend all the events or talk to everyone who needed to hear his message.

According to John, people in the bush face a whole host of challenges that are different from those in the big smoke, including the stress of financial dependence on the land, erratic environmental conditions and social isolation, and increased barriers to accessing health care.

There's also shocking statistics showing that suicide rates increase with remoteness, and that suicide rates in very remote areas of Australia are more than double those within our major cities. It's an absolute tragedy.

So this podcast series is in response to this. Follow the link below to hear their stories:

<https://www.matehelpingmate.org.au>



Australian Agriculture needs younger people

By Ian "Smiley" Johnson ('74)

Despite the severe drought, major severe bushfires and many other challenges in recent times, Australian Agriculture and Agribusiness is a key growth industry for our nation and presents excellent career opportunities for younger people, as it has for me over the last 42 years.

I thoroughly enjoy what I do but as me and my colleagues head into a semi- retirement/mentoring role phase of our lives, agricultural industry needs younger talent.

I strongly encourage those who live in the cities, who have an interest in science, technology, product development, marketing, education, quality assurance and have a passion for the environment, stewardship, high quality safe food and fibre and sustainable farming practices help support our agricultural and agribusiness industries by researching the industry and finding out more about agriculture and the opportunities that exist in this dynamic and vibrant industry.

As shown this year a quick turn-around in fortunes is possible and a good season in most parts of Australia has seen a more positive attitude towards producing food and fibre.

I, as many others Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys did, found a good start in the industry was going to Wagga Agricultural College (now Charles Sturt University).

Worth a look at what the university has to offer!



In 2021, be part of a team shaping the future of Australian farming.

Pacific Seeds has partnered with Australian farmers for more than fifty years. With a commitment to innovation, research, and collaboration, we have grown to become the country's leading seed provider. Our success is only possible with the right people driving it.

Position vacant: Seed Production Agronomist *(permanent)*
Location: Griffith Riverina Region, NSW or immediate surrounds
Applications close: Friday 15 January 2021

Contact Jack Neill for full position description and further details.
Email: jack.neill@advantaseeds.com or Phone: 0455 085 704

Refer a friend, and if they are successful, you will receive a \$100 merchandise gift pack from Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union.



CSU Indigenous careers in Agriculture

The new Charles Sturt University Indigenous Agriculture Initiative aims to support Indigenous students to undertake a career in agriculture.

The Indigenous Agriculture Initiative plans to support Indigenous students in pursuing a career in agriculture, while contributing to research about Indigenous agricultural and land management practices with a goal of integrating these cultural learnings into Charles Sturt agriculture courses.

The driving force for the initiative is Research Professor in Agriculture in the Charles Sturt School of Agricultural and Wine Sciences, Emeritus Professor Jim Pratley, who says this initiative, has the capacity to facilitate greater participation of Indigenous people in the agricultural sector where they have been under-represented for generations.

“At Charles Sturt University, we believe the preservation and integration of Indigenous land management into contemporary agriculture study and research has the potential to create better outcomes for all,” Professor Pratley said.

The inspiration for the initiative arose from Professor Pratley’s observation that Australia-wide there were very few Indigenous graduates in agricultural science, and while Charles Sturt was the leader in both Indigenous student enrolments and in agricultural graduates, it had few Indigenous agriculture graduates.

“This initiative aims to bring the two cultures together to bridge the gap, to understand where they agree and disagree, to build respect, and to identify synergies,” he said.

To test his hypothesis, Professor Pratley researched and presented a paper to a conference of industrial agriculture experts, and found there was great interest and support for his findings and proposal.

"I also recognised that just one scholarship was not enough and there needed to be a systematic approach, to create a continuous cohort of Indigenous undergraduates leading to industry employment and in some cases research higher degrees.

"To this end, with the assistance of the Charles Sturt Foundation, we have developed a proposal and are actively seeking additional financial support for the initiative beyond the initial contributions we have received from Indigenous organisations and other benefactors," he said.

The inaugural research higher degree student in the program is Mr Josh Gilbert, a Worimi man with an agricultural story stemming from Indigenous land management to modern agriculture. Mr Gilbert was Australian Geographic 2016 Young Conservationist of the Year.

"I am truly inspired by Charles Sturt University's ability to lead a dialogue regarding Indigenous agriculture.

"Over the past few months, the University has shown a deep empathy to work with our communities and listen to our experiences and dreams.

"As significant (40 per cent) land owners still of this country today, I see my role through my study at Charles Sturt University to provide our perspective on agriculture, while defining Indigenous agriculture into the future.

"The initiative shown by Charles Sturt University in developing this program has the potential for Australian agriculture to leapfrog our thinking and discussions in this area, particularly to empower Indigenous peoples in the space to speak on our own behalf," Mr Gilbert said.

The Indigenous Agriculture Initiative has already gained the support of private donors who have committed more than \$100,000.

The University seeks others who are passionate about agriculture and Indigenous outcomes to support this important initiative.

For more information contact the Charles Sturt Advancement Office at the Wagga Wagga campus.

MARILYN – REVIVES MEMORIES

The article and photo on “Marilyn” in the 2019 newsletter brought back some memories for Wagga Ag College and other agricultural college students from the past 50 years. Seems like the memories from those students in the 60’s are alive and well.....

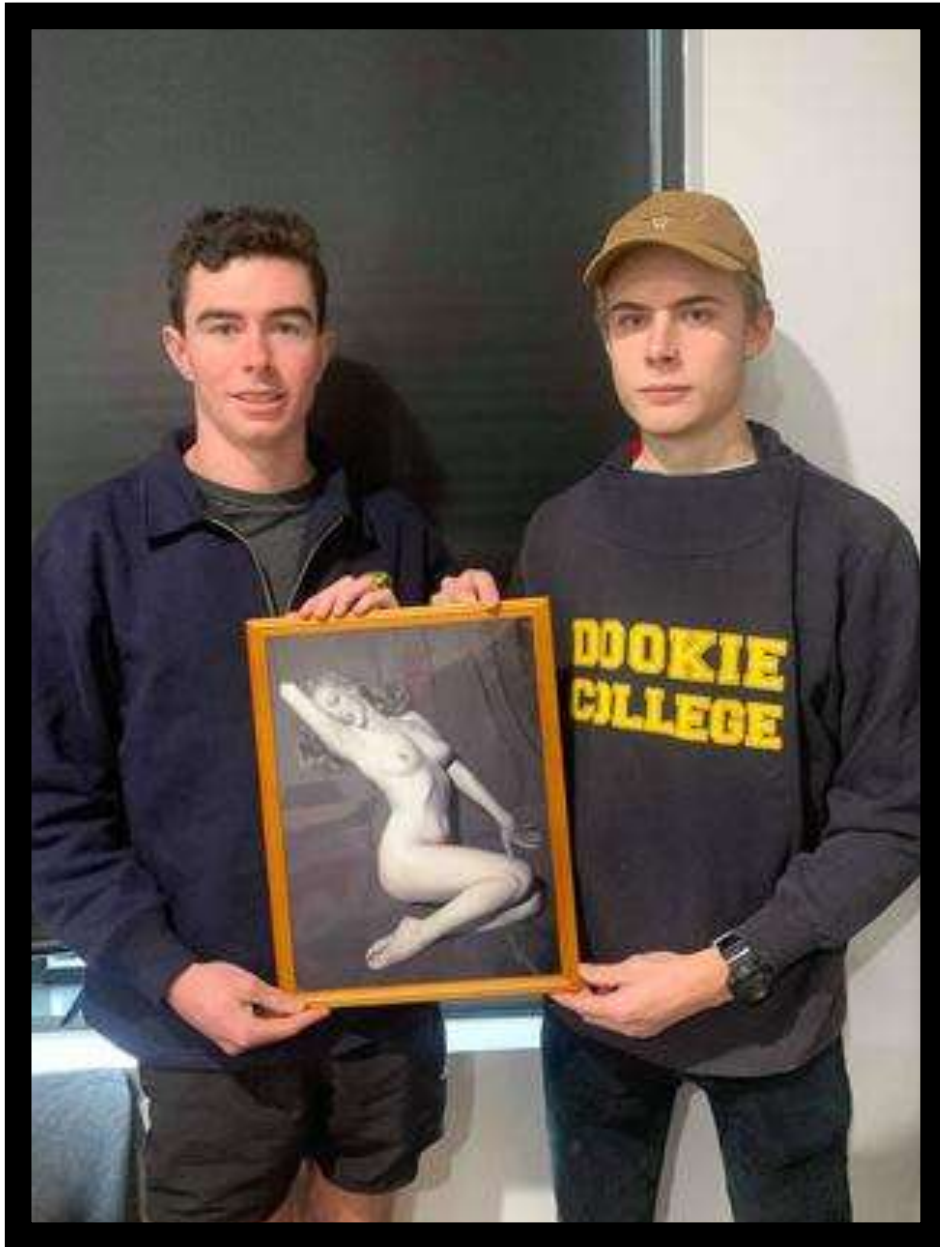


Photo from 2019 newsletter: Dookie agriculture students Tom McGillivray and Luke Allison with “Marilyn”.

Graeme Hockey ('66)

Thanks to WACOBU for their 2019 newsletter.

Our 1966 year got a mention in the newsletter with mate Bob Barwell getting an AM for his tremendous work in the beef industry and our dairy lecturer Dave Heptonstall writing an interesting article.

Even Marilyn is featured in the magazine!

The real one is shown in the photo below. We may need to dig out the history starting with Dick Gill snaffling it in Dookie or somewhere in 1965 on an intercollegiate trip. Then Sox and Bill G pinched it back when stolen from us.

Col Rathbone brought another Marilyn in all her glory to our reunion in Fremantle in 2009.

The Marilyn one shown in the 2019 WACOBU newsletter has shrunk and before Marilyn started getting cellulite!



Photo: Bill Gornall, Roger Wee and Ross Stockings with Marilyn (taken in 1965 or 1966)

Gordon Tink (65-67)

I enjoyed reading the last edition of the WAC Old Boys Newsletter and was amused that Marilyn is still floating around.

During Easter when I was a mot in 1965 she was stolen and we were informed that she was residing at Dookie Agricultural College.

So a group of us loaded into a very old Vanguard and headed off to Melbourne for the long weekend.

We returned via Dookie to see if we could find Marilyn.

We introduced ourselves to some students who offered to give us a guided tour of the college.

We were disappointed that Marilyn was nowhere to be seen.

One of us plucked up the gall to inquire where Marilyn was only to be told she was "stolen" on the previous Friday night.

So after 55 years she still creates interest in the much younger Aggies!

Cheers

Gordon Tink (65-67)



Jersey Presentation to WAC - Rugby Ladies team

Coach Elliot Barrett asked former WAC Rugby 1973 premiership captain Graeme Worboys to present jerseys to his team at their last game before the finals.

The game was played at the home of WAC Rugby - Beres Ellwood Oval on September 5 against Leeton.

Graeme and Elliot's father Gary (Euch) Barrett both went to Hurlstone Agricultural High School and WAC at the same time.

Graeme stressed to the team the importance of WAC Rugby to many Old Boys and spoke of the tradition and pride behind wearing the green and gold jersey especially at their home ground.

Despite all the name changes seen at the college from Wagga Agricultural College through to Charles Sturt University, one aspect of college life that has not changed is the WAC Rugby Club.

Graeme was impressed with the group of ladies especially their respect for the history of WAC rugby, their team focus and their positive attitude both on and off the field.

They were a talented group of ladies who had obviously trained hard all season, showed great skills and followed the coach's game plan on the field.

The ladies responded with an emphatic 45-15 over the Phantoms to cement their spot in the semi-finals and eventually going on to claim their first Southern Inland Rugby premiership by defeating CSU Reddies in an exciting decider 22-19.

They represented WAC with pride.



Jersey presentation at Beres Ellwood Oval September 5 2020

WAC Rugby President Tareq Sorial, Coach Elliot Barrett, WAC Old Boy Graeme Worboys and the WAC Rugby Womens 10's team – 2020 Premiers!!

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WAC 2020 Women's Rugby Premiership



Grand Final wins are sweet!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

In a major upset, the WAC women's rugby managed to topple the previously undefeated CSU Reddies Rugby Club 22-19 to claim their first premiership trophy in this grade.

What an effort from the ladies team and their coaching staff!

Each year the Women's game continues to entertain, and once again the 2020 grand final was no different.

With a three point score line for the final minutes of the game, everyone within Conolly Park was absolutely engaged until the final whistle, especially when the final pass in the game from a Reddies player was ruled forward with the try line beckoning.

WAC came out with a set game plan to take on the undefeated and dominant CSU Reddies Rugby Club.

Coach Elliot Barrett (son of '73 Old Boy Gary "Euch" Barrett) had done his homework and earned the respect of his playing group with his tactics all year.

Their plan certainly worked as they retained possession with controlled play for most of the match, as well as finding space out wide when moving the ball.

The WAC ladies led 17-0 at half-time to stun their opponents but knew the match was far from over.

Half time did the Aggies no favours and the Reddies came out in the second half with renewed energy and closed the gap before a WAC try stopped their momentum briefly.

It was a nervous final five minutes for WAC supporters as the CSU Reddies' speedsters started to see more of the ball.

However the WAC Ladies held firm and ran out winners of the 2020 Aon Australia Women's X's.

The team really trained hard all year and stuck to their game plan to win the title. The old adage that "a champion team will beat a team of champions" was shown out again.

The Adamson Family Medal (Player of the Match) was Aggies' Megan Seis.

In another major win for WAC Rugby the 2020 Alicia Lucas Medal went to WAC team captain Harriet Elleman. Each year the Alicia Lucas (nee Quirk) Medal is awarded to the best Women's player of the regular season with the Match Officials sending in their 3, 2, 1 points each week.

It was extra special to have Alicia at the ground to present her medal to Harriet.

The ladies and supporters celebrated in style.







Australian rugby 7's player Alicia Lucas (nee Quirk) with Harriet Elleman- best player in SIRU.



Best in the Grand Final Megan Seis receiving the Adamson Family medal.

Southern Inland Rugby 2020

It was a different rugby season due to COVID -19 this year.

In the men's first grade it was impossible for all teams to compete and WAC Rugby sat out the season along with Leeton, Griffith and Albury.

There was certainly a different feel to WAC life this year without rugby. With no face-to-face lectures and courses being run on-line, men's rugby was impossible to organise.

In what has been a long time coming, Wagga City finally took out the premiership with a convincing 40-29 win over fierce rivals Waratahs to collect the Total Ag Solutions trophy.

The Reddies Old Boys Medal (Player of the Match) went to star forward Pita Herangi who had an outstanding season for City, who had looked the team to beat all year.

The Bill Castle Medal is awarded each year to the best Men's player of the regular season and was won by Liam Krautz from CSU Reddies who made it back-to-back wins after playing with Albury in 2019.

The Leeton Phantoms showed their combination of both size and skills were too much when they defeated Albury 33-12 in the Romano's Hotel Second Grade Premiership decider.





2021 WAC Rugby committee

After a very different 2020 season where the men's team did not get on the field due to COVID-19, the women's tens team carried the WAC colours with distinction by winning the grand final and celebrating long in style.

Thanks to Tareq Sorial and his committee for their work in 2020 and ensuring a successful season for the women's side. They supported the women's team 110% and were rewarded for their hard work throughout the season on grand final day with the premiership trophy.

The incoming committee will have a big job getting the men's teams back up and running in 2021 and seeing WAC Rugby continue to be a powerful force in Southern Inland Rugby.

Leading the WAC Rugby Club is:

President: Pat Lemmich

Vice President: Liz Young

Secretary: Riley Catts

Treasurer: Mac Cusack

Merchandise: Meg Seis

Sponsors: Ellie Burnett

Club Captain: William Nixon

Registrar: Harry Hayes

Match Day Organisers: Pat Crawley and Shannon Taylor

Board Members: Matt Harris, Alex Meades and Sam Nixon

EGO YAH!





No 2020 Ag Race Day

COVID -19 claimed a major social event with the Murrumbidgee Turf Club (MTC) unable to hold the annual Ag Race day planned for September 19.

The club did hold a race meeting - but without any patrons in attendance.

It was a major disappointment for the Wagga Agricultural Club and the MTC as this day has become a major event in Wagga's social calendar, attracting several thousand patrons to the race track and raising money for charity and WAC Old Boy Peter Worsley.

Bring on 2021.



No crowd at the Ag Race Day in 2020.



The Wagga Ag Club usually hosts a full calendar of social events and listed below are the activities for 2020 that were impacted by COVID-19:



Here's hoping 2021 can see a return of all of these events for ag students.

WACOBU MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

MEMBERSHIP: \$10/year (1 Sept - 31 Aug)

DETAILS:

Name: _____

Years at WAC: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

phone: _____

WORK DETAILS:

Employer- _____

Position Title- _____

****I wish to join/renew annual membership from *1 Sep-Aug31 Amount: \$10**

****Scholarship Donation:** Amount: \$ _____ TOTAL: _____

WACOBU BANK DETAILS

BANK: ANZ

BSB: 012-823

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 2070-98615

REFERENCE: (your name)

MESSAGE: (eg, membership, donation)

**** PLEASE EMAIL ROZ PRAGNELL ON rozza1957@gmail.com**

"I have transferred \$_____ by EFT to WACOBU for eg, membership". A receipt can then be issued.

**The membership period is 1 September to 30 August with allowances that if you join during the period 1 May to 31 August your membership will run until 31 August the next year.*

WACOBU scholarship donations are TAX DEDUCTIBLE. Any donations are transferred annually to the Charles Sturt Foundation.