

WACOBU Newsletter 2024

YOUR CHOICE COUNTS

From 1949 to 2024 agricultural education at Wagga Wagga has had a vital role in allowing students to pursue a career in the diverse and ever-changing world of agriculture.



The alumni from those 75 years at the Wagga campus has to be truly represented in the name of our organisation to carry on the legacy of all past, current and future students.

Please have your say in this important step of changing the alumni name and moving forward, by remembering the past, the current students and the future leaders in agriculture.



It is time for all former students of WAC and CSU Agriculture graduates to have their say on a new name for the WACOBU.

This name change is in response to:

- *the need to come up with a name and acronym that makes it more relevant to the agriculture alumni from WAC/RCAE/RMIHE/CSU.*
- *the current status of agriculture graduates from CSU which sees as many female students as males entering the workforce after their studies.*
- *Forge closer links between CSU and the CSU alumni.*
- *the need to significantly increase the current WACOBU scholarship fund to assist under graduates with their education expenses at university.*
- *the need to also reflect on the significant history of the university from the days of Wagga Agricultural College.*

Two formal meetings were held of the current WACOBU committee and an interim committee was elected to move this process forward.

Several acronyms have been proposed and discussed in detail by the interim committee.

A time-table for the change has been adopted and a SurveyMonkey has been emailed to alumni for their response to these proposed names.

Please be involved and have your say about the future of the organisation.

(Details of this SurveyMonkey can be found in the newsletter)

In 2025 a formal Dinner is proposed to celebrate 75 years of Wagga Agricultural College.

It is hoped that this Dinner will highlight the significance of WAC in the history of agricultural education in Australia.

Trust you will support these two initiatives from the interim committee.

WACOBU INTERIM WORKING COMMITTEE



(elected at AGM on 8.10.2024)

Deb Slinger (Co-ordinator)	theslingers@bigpond.com
Stu Kanaley	stu.kanaley@gmail.com
Georgia Smith	gsmith7840@gmail.com
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James Brady	james@bradyfarms.com.au





Changes underway with WACOBU

Background

After many years of not having regular WACOBU committee meetings, a special meeting of the current committee was held at the Riverine Club, Wagga on August 28.

Attendees were Stu Kanaley, Deb Slinger, Ros Prangnell, John Mahon, Ross Henley, Warwick Nightingale, James Brady, Graeme Worboys and guest Jim Pratley. There was an apology from Craig Whiting.

After a discussion on a wide range of issues with the current structure and function of WACOBU, the relationship between WACOBU and CSU, current agriculture courses at CSU and male and female graduate numbers, a number of proposals were made to set a path forward with the organisation.

1. An AGM of WACOBU was planned at the Wagga DPI Conference Room on Tuesday 8/10/2024 at 4pm, with zoom access available.
2. Prior to that meeting a notice was to be sent out to members, the Wagga Agricultural Club and CSU Alumni advising them of this meeting and welcome input.
3. The main focal points for that meeting were:

***** The need to change the name from WACOBU to a more relevant name that reflects the current graduates of CSU Agriculture courses.***

***** Renew the relationship between the group and the current management of the University and its Alumni and utilising Alumni staff to assist WACOBU.***

***** The need to have a strong Alumni into the future as the University is providing one in four agriculture graduates in Australia.***

***** The need to build up a corpus fund through CSU via sponsorship or donations to ensure scholarship support for agriculture students in the future.***

***** Forge closer links to the current students via the Wagga Agriculture Club - a very proactive group at CSU, Wagga Ag Rugby and WAC Netball.***

Prior to the AGM Deb Slinger organised the meeting room, business items for the AGM were forwarded to Graeme Worboys to produce a notice for the meeting, which was distributed to members, CSU Alumni and Wagga Agricultural Club members.

Jim Pratley was asked to provide a summary on the significance of CSU in providing graduates for the agriculture sector which will be included in the meeting notice to help gather support.

Committee members were to seek support from other members for this meeting.

Jim Pratley's input

As you may know I have been at the forefront of promoting agriculture education to prospective students based on the buoyant job market and shortage of graduates.

As it stands now CSU turns out about 1 in 5 of agriculture graduates nationally and I would like to see that maintained.

There are 13 universities providing undergraduate students in agriculture and related courses according to the official records.

Enrolments across all total 3400 – with over 800 (1 in 4) coming from CSU - something we can be immensely proud of.

It follows that we need to provide financial support to many students as it is now very expensive to be an undergraduate.

There are quite a few scholarships available at the moment of varying value and questionable longevity.

One of those is the WACOBUS scholarship for about \$3000, about the lowest value scholarship offered.

There was a fundraiser at some time in the past which produced a corpus fund. It generates the interest that provides this scholarship. I understand the corpus fund is currently about \$50,000.

What I would like to do is to use the existing corpus as a base and build it to at least \$1million or preferably more.

The university guarantees 6% interest for 15 years and so \$1 million would provide around eight scholarships annually of \$8,000.

I plan to go through the alumni to start with, and through contacts I have for various years, to spread the word and ask for funds to be deposited in the corpus account.

Any companies, that graduates have worked for, might also kick the tin given that it is they who need these graduates. An annual input for 5 years is an option.

The amounts are whatever people can afford or would like to do - somewhere between \$100 and \$1,000,000 works.

I will be contributing by putting in \$5000 and challenge people to match or beat it. If there are 20 other donors that will also do this I will commit another \$5000.

I have already established a corpus fund for Indigenous students to study agriculture and at the moment it has about \$60,000 in it with a target of \$1 million also.

At 6% interest it will provide about seven or eight scholarships each year at \$8000 per year each.

We need to get to \$150,000 in corpus to generate one \$8000 scholarship per year. I have already committed significantly more than \$5000 to this corpus.

There are two other issues - the current minders of the corpus will need to be encouraged to embrace the plan and it is an opportunity to update the name.

WACOBU doesn't work as we now have more females than males in the courses.

I think we need to recognise that it is 35 years since CSU has existed and 48 years since WAC hasn't.

I have spent almost all my career in this place. I would like this as a legacy that perpetuates our courses and place in agriculture.

This is done with the best of intentions for the long term.

I also acknowledge the custodians of the current corpus - Stuart Kanaley in particular is always around to represent WACOBU.

WACOBU AGM

The WACOBU AGM was held on Tuesday 8.10.24 at the NSW DPI Conference Room at Wagga.

Attendees were: Deb Slinger, Georgia Smith, Stu Kanaley, Jock Munro, Craig Whiting, Pos Prangnell, John Mahon, Sean Roberts, Tom Heilman, Graeme Worboys, Jim Pratley (visitor) with Video Link attendees Brittany Bickford, Danny Parnell, Mike Thew, Ross O'Shea, Mike Oldfield, Michelle Oldfield, Hedy Bryant, Charlie Bell, Ian Johnson, Ross Henley and Justin Williams (CSU Advancement).

Apologies were received from James Brady, Jenny Bradley, Tim Condon and Simon Thompson.

Justin Williams spoke on the CSU Advancement scholarship program and the current dollar values of scholarships offered by a number of private organisations and individuals each year. The current WACOBU Scholarship is valued at \$2000 annually to one student, well below the standard value of \$5000. The relationship between WACOBU and CSU Alumni can be and needs to be strengthened moving forward and Justin offered assistance to make this happen.

Jim Pratley endorsed these comments and asked the group to make the WACOBU organisation all-inclusive and to move forward with CSU in promoting and investing in agriculture.

There was then general discussion on the following issues:

Changing the name of WACOBU

After 50 years of female students at WAC and CSU studying agriculture and with females now representing over 50 per cent of the graduates from CSU Agriculture, the term WACOBU is not representative of the agriculture faculty at the university. To continue a strong Alumni within CSU, which now provides one in five agriculture graduates to the industry Australia wide, this name change is vital to continue this strong legacy well into the future.

After a lengthy discussion from all those present, expressing their views, (including current student Tom Heilman who is president of the Wagga Agricultural Club with 800+ members) it was decided a name change was appropriate.

The committee needed to consult with the broader WACOBU membership and a motion was passed: ***“That WACOBU members be given the opportunity to vote on a suitable acronym organised by this committee, via SurveyMonkey, to determine this new acronym”.*** ***Moved Deb Slinger, seconded Ros Prangnell. Carried***

Current committee members were asked to provide Deb Slinger at theslingers@bigpond.com by 15.10.24 their suggestions and to canvass their year groups and cohorts for their thoughts.

Establish a Corpus Fund

The current WACOBU annual scholarship (started in 2007) is for one student only and is valued at the lower end of the scholarship spectrum. A CSU fundraiser was held in the past to produce a corpus fund, which aims to build a sizeable resource of \$1 million or more to provide around eight scholarships valued at \$8000 annually to students studying agriculture.

After discussion it was decided that the idea of increasing the value and number of annual scholarships available to agriculture students was of great importance.

Ideas included canvassing past students, their employers, industry organisations and others to raise awareness of the scheme and its benefits for future graduates.

A motion was put “That the current scholarship program be revamped with the aim to increase opportunities for new investment via this corpus fund”. ***Moved John Mahon, seconded Warwick Nightingale. Carried.***

Improve relationships with CSU Alumni, the Wagga Agriculture Club and current students

There is a need to improve the relationships between CSU Alumni and the current student body with members of WACOBU to ensure that current CSU management, staff and students are assisting each other in ensuring a strong network between the groups to assist graduates in their future roles in the industry. It was resolved to work through these issues with both CSU Alumni and the Agricultural Club and establish a more formal connection that will benefit all groups.

Election of Office Bearers

Discussion was held on the make-up of the next committee, with suggestions that the current structure could be changed to better fit in with the proposed changes to the organisation and increased interaction with CSU Alumni and the Wagga Agricultural Club.

On this basis an Interim Working Committee was established comprising:

Deb Slinger (Co-ordinator), Stu Kanaley, Georgia Smith, Tom Heilman, Ros Prangnell, Sean Roberts, Brittany Bickford, Ian Johnson, Craig Whiting, Ian Munro, Warwick Nightingale, John Mahon and Graeme Worboys with the right to add others.

Since that Meeting

The interim committee has had a lot of communication between themselves, their WAC class mates and others to determine the most suitable name and acronym for the new organisation.

A time frame has been put forward to plan for this name change by Interim Committee coordinator Deb Slinger with a new name in place by the end of February 2025.





SURVEY

Wagga Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union (WACOBU) - name change survey

The Wagga Agricultural Old Boys Union is the current alumni for agricultural graduates from Wagga Agricultural College (WAC), Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE), Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education (RMIHE) and Charles Sturt University (CSU).

All agricultural graduates from these entities can be a member of WACOBU.

The WACOBU Committee has been reviewing the current structure and function of our Union.

We want to focus on how we can better align ourselves with the evolving needs of members, our relationship with Charles Sturt University (CSU) and the broader cohort of agricultural graduates.

The current name of WACOBU no longer reflects the diversity of our membership, which is now equally male and female, nor has it encompassed the graduate community since 1978, none of whom graduated under the WAC banner.

We are considering a name change for the Union to ensure we stay relevant to all agricultural graduates and your feedback is essential in guiding this decision.

Additionally, we are keen to address the sustainability of the WACOBU Scholarship, which supports one CSU agricultural student annually in their 2nd, 3rd or 4th year on the Wagga Wagga campus.

With your support, we can significantly increase this fund, ensuring that we continue to give back to the next generation of agricultural leaders while preserving the legacy of Wagga Wagga Agricultural College.

We ask that you complete a short survey and provide your thoughts on the proposed name change and the future of our scholarship fund.

Your participation is crucial, as we work to strengthen our Union and leave a lasting impact on our community.

We also want to highlight that the 75th Celebration Dinner is scheduled for 2025, and encourage you to join us in this milestone event.

This will be an opportunity to reflect on our history and look forward to a bright future. We will share further details of this event with you in the new year.

Thank you for your ongoing support of WACOBU, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Regards,

Interim WACOBU Committee 2024

***You may have already received notification about this via email
but for those who have not.....***

Please find the link to the survey by searching:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KZ7FDTY>



OPTIONS FOR NEW NAME

The seven options for the new name are:

WAACSU

Wagga Agricultural Alumni Charles Sturt University

CSUWAA

Charles Sturt University Wagga Agricultural Alumni

WAA

Wagga Agricultural Alumni

WACCSU

Wagga Agricultural College Charles Sturt University

WACSA

Wagga Agricultural Charles Sturt Alumni

CSUWACA

Charles Sturt University Wagga Agricultural College Alumni

WAC-CSU Alumni

Wagga Agricultural College – CSU Alumni

**HAVE YOUR SAY VIA SURVEYMONKEY FORM
BY 31st JANUARY 2025**





Wagga Campus History

In 1948, the Minister for Agriculture Eddie Graham proposed the establishment of an Agricultural College at Wagga Wagga that offered a three-year Diploma course and in September 1949 the Wagga Wagga Experiment Farm was converted into the Wagga Wagga Agricultural College.

Although the first students attended lectures in March 1949, the official opening and naming of the College did not take place until the September of that year.



The College Emblem 1949—1975

Two years earlier, in 1947, the Wagga Wagga Teachers College had been established on a different site in Wagga Wagga (later to become known as 'South Campus') to provide teacher education.

The then School of Agriculture's building 'Doman Hall' was officially opened in April 1964 in response to a dire need for more student accommodation.

This building was demolished in 2018 with an event held to celebrate the history of the building and a book entitled 'Doman' by Sherry Morris was published to acknowledge the important role of the Hall in the college.

During 1971, the Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE) was formally established and in January 1972 the Wagga Wagga Teachers College was dissolved and the Riverina College of Advanced Education was established on the site of the Teachers College with Study Centres opened in Albury and Griffith.

In January 1976, the Wagga Wagga Agricultural College was merged with the RCAE and became the School of Agriculture within the college.

During the 1970s, the Council of the RCAE decided to purchase a site adjacent to the existing campus of the Wagga Agricultural College known locally as 'Boorooma' Campus.

During the late 1970s and into the 1980s, a great deal of building development was undertaken at this new site in readiness for the transfer of staff, students and amenities to the new Boorooma and Agricultural campuses north of the Murrumbidgee River, from the old Teachers College campus in the city.

Effective from March 1985, the name of the college was changed to the Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education (RMIHE) to better reflect the geographical areas served by the institution, with the two main campuses located at Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga.

In 1989, the Charles Sturt University Act brought together the Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education and the Mitchell College of Advanced Education at Bathurst to form Charles Sturt University.

The Wagga Wagga Campus became one of the three foundation campuses of Charles Sturt, along with Albury-Wodonga and Bathurst. In late 2017 the former Wagga Wagga Teachers College site (known as 'South Campus') was sold.



The current logo

Our crest draws on Charles Sturt University's original coat of arms and the logos of our predecessor institutions.

The crest is shield shaped and depicts stylised rivers in the top half, vertical lines in the bottom quarter for the field, and chevrons in the bottom right for books.

The rivers represent Captain Charles Sturt's spirit of exploration and discovery; they symbolise the location of our foundation campuses.

The field is symbolic of our proud agricultural heritage.

The book represents our tradition of learning and inquiry; a seeking for truth, information or knowledge.



THE HISTORY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

AT WAGGA WAGGA

1892

WAGGA EXPERIMENT FARM
STARTED IN 1892 THE FARM OFFERED VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION ON THE CURRENT SITE OF CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY WITH THE FIRST STUDENTS ENROLLED IN OCTOBER 1896.

1947

WAGGA TEACHERS COLLEGE
STARTED IN 1947 WITH THE CHALKIES SETTING UP IN WAGGA AT THE "SOUTH CAMPUS".

1949

WAGGA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
ESTABLISHED IN 1949 AFTER THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE EDDIE GRAHAM PROPOSED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AT WAGGA OFFERING A THREE-YEAR DIPLOMA, AND THE WAGGA WAGGA EXPERIMENT FARM WAS CONVERTED INTO THE WAGGA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.



1971

RIVERINA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION
IN 1971 THE WAGGA WAGGA TEACHERS COLLEGE WAS DISSOLVED AND THE RCAE WAS ESTABLISHED ON THE SITE OF THE TEACHERS COLLEGE AT THE "SOUTH CAMPUS".



*Riverina College
of Advanced Education*

1976

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AT RCAE

IN JANUARY 1976, THE WAGGA WAGGA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE WAS MERGED WITH THE RCAE AND BECAME THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE WITHIN THE COLLEGE.

1985

RIVERINA-MURRAY INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
FORMED IN 1985



1989

CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

IN 1989, THE CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY ACT BROUGHT TOGETHER THE RIVERINA MURRAY INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE MITCHELL COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AT BATHURST TO FORM CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY.



NOW AT CSU, THE SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND VETERINARY SCIENCES (SAEVS) INCLUDES THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH AND HAS A MAJOR FOCUS ON AGRICULTURAL AND WINE SCIENCES, ANIMAL AND VETERINARY SCIENCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES.



ANOTHER MILESTONE IN OUR HISTORY

75 YEARS OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

1949—2024



Prior to 1949 the Wagga Wagga campus dated back to 1892 with the establishment of the Wagga Experiment Farm on about 2,000 acres, which offered vocational agricultural education on the current site of Charles Sturt University.

Initially named the Murrumbidgee Experimental Farm, it was changed to the Wagga Experiment Farm with the first students enrolled at the Experiment Farm in October 1896.

The farm was one of those used by William Farrer who released the first of his rust resistant wheats, the variety “Federation” in 1901, an early maturing wheat that enabled a rapid expansion of wheat growing in Australia.

Farrer had joined the Department in 1898, working mainly at Wagga Wagga but also at Cowra and other experiment farms.

The Wagga Agricultural College grew out of the Experiment Farm in 1949 and the Agricultural Research Institute followed in 1953.

In 1948, the Minister for Agriculture Wagga born Eddie Graham proposed the establishment of an Agricultural College at Wagga Wagga offering a three-year Diploma, and in September 1949 the Wagga Wagga Experiment Farm was converted into the Wagga Wagga Agricultural College.

Although the first students attended lectures in March 1949, the official opening and naming did not take place until September.



***Wagga Agricultural College staff and students around the time of its establishment in 1949
(Picture: Sherry Morris Collection)***

Eddie Graham attended both the Lake Albert Public School and the Wagga Wagga Public School, but only for the minimum time required.

After school, Graham gave carpentry a try, but soon left to work on his father's farm "Summer Glen".

He then entered into the butchery trade in 1917 and established his own business, the Marble Arch Butchery.

Graham then moved into the pig stud business, establishing the Kinilabah Stud Farm in 1932.

Graham had also always been active in rural groups and associations. From 1925-41 he had served as President of the Wagga Wagga District Junior Farmers' Club.

He entered State politics in 1941, becoming the Member for Wagga Wagga, and in 1944 the Minister for Agriculture and Food Production within the McKell Labor Government.

Graham served as Minister for a record ten years during which time he initiated many reforms both in the agricultural industry and in tertiary education, where he secured the building of the Wagga Teachers College, the Wagga Technical College and the Wagga Agricultural College.

Graham's contributions to the agricultural industry are well remembered with numerous memorials erected in his honour.

The Graham Block stands at Charles Sturt University and the Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation is also named after him.

There will be a Formal Dinner in 2025 to recognise this major milestone in the history of WAC.



ABBY KLEIN

2024 WACOBU Scholarship Awardee



Abby Klein receiving her scholarship award from Ted Wolfe and WACOBU President Stuart Kanaley

Abby Klein, a third year Bachelor of Agricultural Science student has a deep connection to agriculture.

With her family background growing up in Tallygaroopna in the Goulburn Valley in Victoria, and her experience at GrainCorp sparking her interest in various aspects of the industry, she seeks a career that offers ongoing learning, problem-solving, and variety.

Abby has been actively involved in her community, serving as a junior netball co-coach and taking on various voluntary roles.

She has developed her umpiring skills and was excited to coach at the Aggies Netball Club in 2024.

Passionate about the future of agriculture, Abby is focused on efficient land use, sustainability, and the impact of climate change.

Facing financial hardship as the oldest of four siblings in a single-parent household, Abby has taken gap years and worked full-time during university breaks to cover her education expenses.

A message from Abby

To the donors of the WACOBU scholarship, I am sincerely honoured to have been selected as a recipient for the WACOBU Scholarship.

Thank you for your generosity, which I will be using to assist my accommodation costs. Currently I have found The Bachelor of Agricultural Science to be enjoyable and interesting and I am thoroughly keen to see what the rest of my degree brings in the future. Upon graduation, I am keen to explore opportunities in the field of broad acre cropping, specifically agronomy, and I am excited to have an impact in this area of the agricultural industry.

Thank you again for your thoughtful and generous gift, and it was wonderful to meet some of the people behind the scholarship process.

*Sincerely,
Abby*

2025 WACOBU Scholarship Applications

The 2025 Charles Sturt University Foundation Trust WACOBU Scholarship is currently open and will be available for applications until Monday, February 10, 2025.

Please let your network of friends and colleagues know about this scholarship.

Hopefully WACOBU alumni children, grandchildren or other friends' family can apply.

Following is the link for the 2025 WACOBU Scholarship:

<https://www.csu.edu.au/scholarships/scholarships-grants/find-scholarship/foundation/continuing/wagga-agricultural-college-old-boys-union-wacobu-scholarship>

Other important dates to remember are:

- Assessing of scholarship applications will take place from February 11 through to March 2025
- Scholarship ceremonies will take place during May 2025 (Date TBC)

The CSU Foundation Trust passes on their thanks to all the generous supporters of the WACOBU Scholarship Fund.

Their support of the next generation of agriculture students assists in shaping not only a brighter future for your recipient, but also the industry at large.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Stacey Fish.

Regards,

Stacey

CSU

REUNIONS



Reunion of the 1959 WAC Graduates

Mooloolaba, Queensland
November 4-8, 2024





Our Reunion

“We gather to reconnect, to reminisce, and to celebrate our shared experiences at Wagga Ag College.

As we gather here with our fellow alumni, our friends and our families, we are reminded of our roots and the foundations that the College gave us.

We honour the rich history and academic excellence that shaped our experiences as students.

Our time there was more than just an education – it was a journey of growth, friendship, and discovery.

As we reminisce about our time at Wagga Ag, we recall the challenges, triumphs, laughter and of course fun we had.

We remember the early morning lectures, the rigorous fieldwork, the challenging assignments, the stress of exams, and the many encounters and friendships that helped us to acquire the knowledge and maturity to start our working lives”

The following gathered in Mooloolaba for the occasion:

Dave and Ann Lock, Roger and Lynn Coddington, George and Martha Kinniburgh, Peter and Beryl Beinssen, and Jane Plasto and her sister Sally and husband Tony.

Sadly, several potential starters had to pull out at the last minute, for health and other reasons.

Monday 4th November 2024

Meet-and-Greet Session

This usual initial get-together session was once again held in the garden of the Peninsular Resort on the beach strip at Mooloolaba.

The Coddingtons generously provided wines aplenty. There was also beer and a delicious non-alcoholic fruit punch. The finger food and snags went down well.



Tuesday 5th November 2024

Excursion to Australia Zoo

Although it was a particularly hot day, we enjoyed visiting this local icon. We had great seats at the restaurant from where we watched the main croc show. Terri and Bindi even put in an appearance. I think the consensus view was that the Asian and African sections of the zoo were the most interesting and best laid out.

Wednesday 6th November 2024

Main Event Lunch in the Function Room of Mooloolaba Surf Club

We gathered at 11.30 am and before being seated to eat, we mingled and watched a slide show of old photos of the shenanigans at WAC in the 50s. Also projected were the collections of photos taken at previous reunions. It was interesting to see ourselves aging in two-year increments.



Peter's welcome words at the Main Event Lunch

"Welcome to our 2024 Reunion Lunch.

Thank you all for your attendance.

Thank you also for the many kind words and appreciation you have expressed to Beryl and to me, but these reunions don't happen because of what we do. They are the result of each of you making the effort and incurring the expense of turning up.

Anyway, two years ago, on this occasion I spoke about those of us who are no longer with us.

Sadly, we have since lost two more good friends: Fred Horsley and Geoff Plasto. Let me start with Dave and Ann, who are faithful helpers each year.

Roger and Lynn, who once again generously provided the wines (and Lynn's memorable chocolate slice). Roger and Lynn are always amongst the first to offer practical help.

And Beryl, my gorgeous partner in crime, who is tireless and completely indispensable.

And thanks to you all for your participation. It's your attendance that makes this happen.

We hope we'll see you all here again, in blooming good health, in two years' time".

Thursday 7th November 2024

We gathered again at our place for a salad lunch and a big feast of those famous Mooloolaba prawns. It was fun to sit around the table on our patio and 'chew the fat'. There was a discussion about whether to meet yearly now rather than two-yearly.

George suggested floating the idea that we meet next year (2025) in Sydney.

Information and photos supplied by Peter Beinssen.

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

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

1972 WAC Get Together

After the 1972 graduate group had their last reunion in 2022 it was decided that they meet on a more regular basis.

Sadly, two graduates Steve Adams and Peter Crick have passed away since that last catch-up.

A group came to Beres Ellwood Oval on June 15 to watch Wagga Ag College play against Wagga City and saw a great game of rugby with City winning 43-36 in the first grade encounter.

There were some very handy footballers for WAC rugby in this 1972 year group - with a Riverina premiership victory that year and they still enjoy the strong fellowship that exists with them all.

Those in attendance were:

Graham "Tank" Quintal, Attila Babos, Graeme "Killer" Clifton, Ron "Ferret" Cullen, John "Bart" Irwin, Lloyd "Bopper" McClymont, John "Harry M" Miller, John "Wheatbags" Moloney, Barry Woolacott, Phil "Gilbert" Palmer with Andrew "Norty" Norton-Knight a late apology.

Jim Pratley joined the group for dinner at the Palm and Pawn Hotel after the games.

Great to see these Old Boys still catching up 50+ years later, after their time at WAC.

1971-73 WAC Catch Up

Six WAC'ers from the early 1970's got together for an annual catch-up lunch at the Wagga RSL Club on October 26.

The group and their partners have remained in contact over the years and enjoy meeting up and solving the problems of the world over a meal and a quiet ale.

John Burbidge (JB), Alan McGufficke (Gecko), John McClure (Clarry), Ian Braithwaite (Noddy), Stew Thompson (Perce) and Graeme Worboys (Benny/Wobs) caught up for a few hours discussing the times at WAC and beyond.

All six have been or are still involved in the agricultural industry in some way.



*Alan McGufficke, Stew Thomson, Graeme Worboys, John Burbidge, Ian Braithwaite, John McClure
at the Wagga RSL Club in October 2024.*

WAC 1974 Reunion

Tony Grant's property at Canowindra was the venue for a reunion of the 1974 graduates.

The get-together was held in early September for the class of 50 years ago.

The 1974 crew saw the first female graduates from the college and now 50 years on over 50% of graduates are women. Times have changed!!

The photo below shows the group in their second year in 1973, taken from the college magazine Kulpana.



SECOND YEAR

Back Row: A. JONES, F. CHUDLEIGH, B. PARKER, W. COWELL, M. OAKES, W. JOHNSTON, I. MUNRO.

4th Row: A. CASEY, W. MAHON, I. MURRAY, J. SALMON, N. HARRIS, A. GRANT,

3rd Row: J. SCOWN, R. FOWLER, G. CRAIG, T. NEWMAN, W. SPEIRS, R. SCHOFIELD, JANET ANTHONY.

2nd Row: J. ROSS, N. CLARKE, M. KUDRYNSKI, I. RICHARDSON, G. PIERCE, M. YELLAND, B. REDDAN.

1st Row: A. SYLVESTER, MERRILEE MORRIS, HELEN RIEK, MICHELE GAIRN, A. VOLLER.

Class of 1973-75 Reunion

The new 73-75 group reunion committee of Ian (Smiley) Johnson, Maggie McKelvey, Justin Toohey, Liz Eglington, Michele Waddington and Mike Thew is organising a get-together in May 2025 at Newcastle. On a positive note, Justin Toohey and Mike Thew have joined the committee which is a welcome addition.

The committee is catching up via Zoom, WhatsApp or FaceTime or other method to get the organisation process going plus then sending our colleagues an update newsletter.

Mac Elliot has been a great help and we plan to largely follow the program of the WAC '71 50th Graduation Reunion that Mac attended in Newcastle in April 2022.

We all agreed it seemed to be a wonderful event and location.



John Harper awarded an OAM in 2024 Australia Day Honours list

John “China” Harper, founder of “Mate Helping Mate”, was one of two men from the NSW South West Slopes region to be recognised for their work in advocating for suicide prevention in the 2024 Australia Day Honours.

John (and Eris Gleeson of Young) were both conferred medals of the Order of Australia for their decades of work in the area of suicide prevention in a region that has seen this tragic outcome on too many occasions.

John formerly from Stockingbingal said that privately he felt the excitement of a small puppy being patted on the head at being conferred an OAM for his service to community health, but publicly he was chuffed an “ordinary Australian” like him would receive the honour.

“This may be awarded by the Governor, but I was nominated by my peers, by committee members, members of the community and I’m slightly overwhelmed at that thought but also very proud that they think I show the characteristics and traits of a person worthy of something like this,” he said.

John Harper’s own experience of depression gave rise to his own mobilisation in breaking the silence around mental health in rural and regional NSW and his candid approach and messaging now resonates around Australia.

Founder of the Mate Helping Mate network – a self-help program and podcast series which addresses mental health and wellbeing in rural communities – John is dedicated to talking to people about what works (and what doesn’t) for helping people struggling in remote and rural communities.

He was also the recipient of a 2008 Pride of Australia Medal for Community Spirit.

Now deputy chair of Temora’s Local Health Advisory Committee and staunch supporter of the Rural Outreach Counselling service, his is a life devoted to encouraging mateship and community involvement.

“The reason I advocate is I want to make the world a better place.

“I have a very simple goal – I want my kids, and my kids’ kids, to be better people than me and to do that I’ve got to give them an example.

“It’s not just saying it, it’s actually doing it, because actions speak louder than words”, said John.

Eris Gleeson, originally from Coonamble, moved to Young in the 1970’ and is a founding member and chairman of the Hilltops Suicide Prevention Network. Formed in 2007, Eris has noiselessly toiled, with others, to provide positive and lasting support to vulnerable and at-risk people in a community that takes in the small towns and villages in the Hilltops Council area.



John Harper (l) at a podcast in Springdale NSW





David Sloane

A servant of the bush

Wagga Agricultural College has had some esteemed graduates in its history books, with many making a significant contribution to the community in many ways.

One such person is David Sloane, who started his WAC life in 1958 and had a life in rural communities as a church minister for over 50 years.

David has served many rural communities as a minister in the Presbyterian and Uniting Churches since 1971 and has written a book about his life titled "A Journey Under Grace".



David as a youngster on Savernake Station, surviving his "Cow Poo" initiation at WAC and with his book A Journey Under Grace: Finding Faith in Rural Australia 1939-71 and Beyond.

(Photo: Courtesy of the Border Mail.)

Perhaps his studies at Ag College and knowledge of rural people and agriculture helped him prepare for a life of ministry in many country NSW towns for over half a century.

He did survive the WAC student initiation process of diving into wet cow manure and other antics to graduate before he returned home onto the farm.

Growing up at Savernake Station, east of Berrigan in south western NSW, he enjoyed his childhood in the bush and attended the local one-teacher primary school.

He attended Geelong College as a boarder, then Wagga Ag College and returned to Savernake Station before deciding to leave the farm and train to become a teacher.

He studied at Armidale, met his future wife Val and raised three children.

He was ordained a priest in 1971 and joined the Uniting Church after its formation in 1977.

David's parishes included Lockhart, Wangaratta, Berrigan, Henty, Manilla, Barraba, Yass, Dubbo, Coleambally, Darlington Point and Nathalia.

His wife is also a minister and accepted a role in Cobram in 2002.

They both retired in 2008 and have made Corowa their home and still contribute to the church and wider community.

His book, written over three to four years during COVID lockdowns, reflects on his life experiences from his early childhood, based on letters written to him by his mother, diary entries and journals he had kept.

His time at WAC was an important part of his life, despite the initiations, and instilled in him a love of agriculture, rural life and mateship.

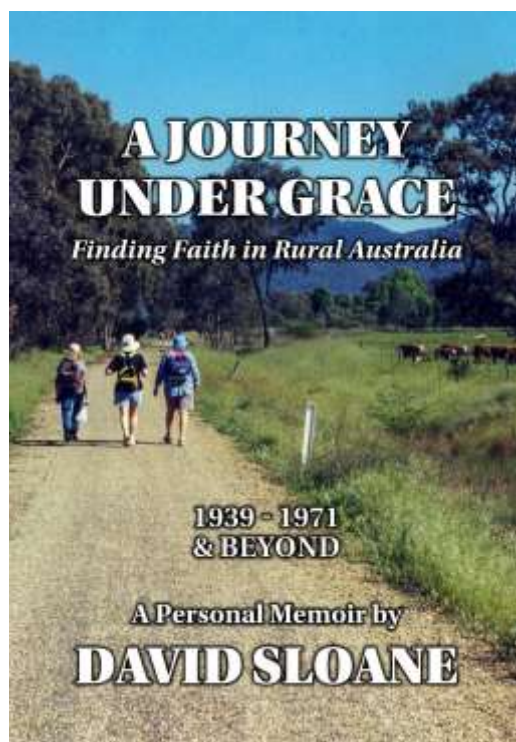
His strong connection with agriculture gave him an understanding of life on the land and in rural communities and greatly assisted him and his wife in their pastoral roles.



His book is available from Dymocks and Booktique at Albury.

Story based on an article by Janet Howie

The Border Mail 27.7.2024





*Ag Race Day
2024*

Ag Race Day 2024

The annual Ag Race Day was held on Saturday September 21 with a huge crowd attending the meeting at the Murrumbidgee Turf Club in Wagga.

The biggest day on the Wagga Ag Club social calendar, the Ag Races is a long running tradition within the Wagga Ag Club Community.

The Murrumbidgee Turf Club is honoured to be involved with one of the largest agriculture social events in Australia, which continues to support the Wagga Agricultural Club (WAC) and the wider community.

The MTC continue to foster their ongoing partnership with the Wagga Agricultural Club, who began the race day initiative in 1989, to raise money for friend and fellow student Peter Worsley, who sustained spinal injuries in a rugby match which left him in a wheelchair.

Since then, the Wagga Ag Club have raised significant funds for Peter and the wider WAC community.

In 2023 the Ag Race Day committee raised over \$30,000 from this event, highlighting its success.

There was a wide range of social activities on the day including Fashions on the Field - with prizes for Best Dressed Man, Best Dressed Couple, Best Dressed Millinery and Best Dressed Lady and the Paddy Wagon Band playing late in the afternoon and at the after races party.

Farmer Wants a Wife 2024 contestants were among those at this year's event.

The idea to bring the reality television stars to Wagga for the epic race day was the brain-child of Murrumbidgee Turf Club publicity officer Jemima Lyons.

"I thought it would be great to have this year's contestants come to one of the biggest country race days in NSW," she said.

MTC CEO Jason Ferrario was excited about the large crowds returning to the track after this year's highly successful Wagga Gold Cup Carnival.

"It's great to see such enthusiasm from our local WAC committee on hosting the annual Aggies Race Day.

"The MTC is the perfect venue to host the biggest day on the Australian agriculture social event calendar," said Jason.

WAC Race Day Committee President Josh Elworthy mentioned the strong charity component and what it means for WAC member Peter Worsley.

"It's so great that we can continue our partnership with the MTC to raise funds for Peter Worsley, his family, and the wider WAC committee.

"In 2023 we raised over \$30,000 from the Race Day and we can't wait to present Peter and his family with this year's fundraising efforts," said Josh.

The success of the day is due to the efforts of the hard-working committee and the wonderful support of people involved in the agriculture industry.



(Photo: Courtesy of Wagga Daily Advertiser)



WAC Rugby 2024 Season

WAC rugby had a great season, with all four grades competitive week-in week-out and with three teams contesting the finals.

These results shows how strong WAC Rugby is and the successful club is a vital ingredient for the Southern Inland Rugby competition.

The First XV were defeated by Tumut in a rugby classic in the minor semi-final. After a stirring comeback from being well down, the Aggies stormed home in the second half to draw level but a late try to Tumut saw them fall short 46-41. Tumut then lost narrowly to Waratahs the next week, showing how close the teams were all season.

The third grade lost their semi-final to Griffith 26-20 and the women's side were beaten by Tumut 33-22 to end their season.

Grand Final Results

Third Grade

Hay Cutters 33 defeated Griffith Blacks 0

Second Grade

Wagga City 25 defeated Reddies 19

Women's

Tumut Bulls 37 defeated Griffith Blacks 15

First Grade

Wagga Waratahs 33 defeated Wagga City 6

First Grade Best and Fairest

Wagga City halfback Matt Roberts was named the Bill Castle Medal winner for 2024.

WAC RUGBY 75 YEARS



Archer Nugan, president Ted O'Rafferty and Josh Elworthy show off Ag College's special jumpers worn to celebrate their 75th anniversary on Saturday 13/7/2024. (Picture courtesy of Les Smith, Wagga Daily Advertiser)

A huge crowd attended the WAC Rugby 75th anniversary games played at Beres Ellwood Oval on July 13.

Green and gold was seen everywhere as people from all age groups attended this special event and witnessed three great games of rugby against Tumut.

First grade won 41-11 after clicking into gear in the second half with some great running rugby. The second XV lost 23-17 in an entertaining match and the women lost 24-22 in an absorbing battle.

Plenty of memorabilia was sold on the day to many ex-students who returned to their stomping ground to celebrate the occasion with teammates, friends and families.

After adjourning to the Dirty Duck for a pre-dinner drink, 330 people attended the WAC Rugby ball held at the ACTA Convention Centre for a wonderful occasion.

Great credit goes to everyone involved in the Wagga Agricultural Club and WAC Rugby Club for putting together this day.

It reminded people of their time at WAC and the many friendships made on and off the football field in this time.



WAC RUGBY 2024 PRESENTATIONS

Another huge turnout of WAC Rugby players and supporters attended the club's presentation night at major sponsor the William Farrer Hotel.

Along with player's achievements a special thank you was given to all the coaches and amazing volunteers for another great year of rugby for this very strong club.

Major award winners were:

1st XV

Best & Fairest- Alex Meades

Best Forward- Will Quirico

Best Back- Josh Elworthy

Coach's Award- Charlie Greer

Women's

Best & Fairest- Tessa Good

Best Forward- Kara Yelland

Best Back- Emily Lucas

Coach's Award- Alice Trevaskis

2nd XV

Best & Fairest- Matt Yeo

Best Forward- Tom Statham

Best Back- Ryan Bollam

Coach's Award- Angus Bartter

3rd XV

Best & Fairest- Paddy Kemp

Best Forward- Jack Johnston

Best Back- Josh Flick

Coach's Award- Mark Lui



Club Awards

Best first year Mott- Angus Troth

Spirit of Rugby- Mark Lui

Clubman- Trent Fordham

Most Outstanding player- Josh Elworthy

Clubwoman- Alex Smith



Major First XV award winners with First Grade coach Tom Lamond.

Clubwoman of 2024

Alex Smith was a deserving winner and was incredibly honoured to receive WAC Rugby's Clubwoman of the Year.

Receiving this award was a complete shock for Alex after her eight years of involvement and four years of strapping for the Aggies.

She was also extremely proud to receive her award from Pennie Scott and Mark on behalf of Andy "COL" Stanham.

Alex thanked everyone who has put in the hard work for the club.

"It has been my pleasure to help where I can, and will always have a spot in my heart for this amazing club", said Alex.



Alex Smith – receiving her award Clubwoman of the Year award from Mark and Pennie.

Clubman of the Year



WAC Rugby Clubman of the Year Trent Fordham with Coach Tom Lamond and WAC Club President Ted O'Rafferty

Kirsty Fordham

Southern Inland Rugby's

2024 Volunteer of the Year



Congratulations to Kirsty Fordham who was named the Southern Inland Rugby Union Volunteer of the Year for 2024.

This award is an incredible achievement and well deserved - for not only her commitment to Wagga Ag Rugby but the entire SIRU competition for several years.

A very popular choice for this major annual award, Kirsty's commitment to WAC Rugby and SIRU has been outstanding – and now suitably recognised by the committee of both rugby organisations.

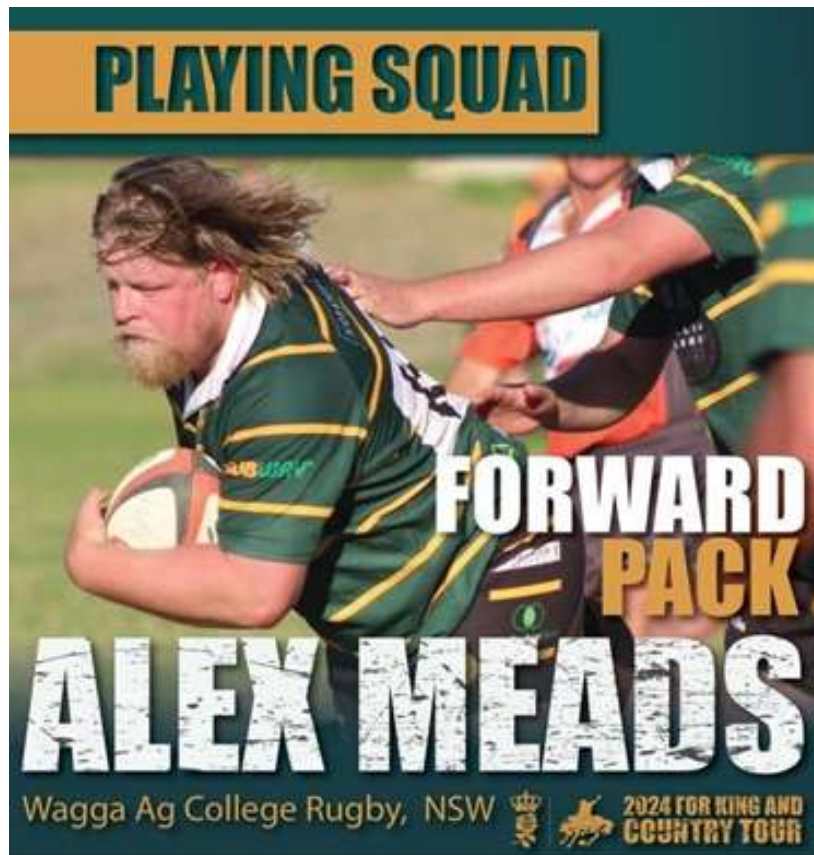
Ego Yah!!



Kirsty Fordham

Alex Meades

Australian Stockman Representative



After a great season with WAC Rugby and taking out the First XV Best and Fairest award Alex Meades headed overseas in October to represent the Australian Stockman Rugby Union team on their For King And Country Tour of England during October.

With the support of many ambassadors, the Stockman Rugby program provides development opportunities for aspiring grass-roots players from Australia's rural and regional areas, while tackling men's health related subjects such as suicide, depression and substance abuse.

Stockman Rugby has toured New Zealand, Ireland, North Queensland, Argentina prior to COVID and this year they headed to England.

The organisation was founded in the iconic outback Queensland town of Longreach, and is proudly country and promotes the classic Aussie values of integrity, mateship, hard work and selflessness.

Players are selected that have country roots from all over Australia to form an Australian Country touring team, providing another development opportunity to the country areas, unions, clubs and players.

According to Stockman Rugby,

“Alex is a versatile addition to our touring front row, he's snug-at-home at loose-head, but is more than capable of settling in at hooker and tight-head, something the coaching staff will appreciate. We expect Alex to bring a physical presence at set piece, be a trusted wall in defence and have ruck-shaking impact at cleanouts.”

Like a number of the 2024 squad, Alex has spent a number of years on a Station in the Northern Territory prior to settling in Wagga and having a run with the Wagga Ag College Rugby Club.

Since 2021 he's enjoyed consecutive years of representative footy with Southern Inland Rugby Union and The Brumbies Country Provincial teams.

He is a bloody good front-rower!

What a great opportunity for Alex to experience rugby at another level.



WAC Rugby AGM

The Wagga Ag College Rugby Club held their AGM at the William Farrer Hotel.

A big thank you to the 2024 committee and everyone who made the season possible including sponsors, coaches and volunteers.

It was a very special year for the club celebrating their 75th Anniversary.

Thanks to everyone who attended the reunion day, it was amazing to have so much support.

Head coach Thomas Lamond has stood down after four years with the club.

We are very grateful for his commitment, hard work and determination over the years and wish him all the best in the future in his role with Waratahs.

Congratulations to the 2025 committee who were elected at the meeting.

President: Malcolm Bartlett

Vice President: Harry Parnaby

Secretary: Josh Flick

Treasurer: Jack Johnston

Club captain: Archer Nugan

Sponsorship: Kara Yelland

Merchandise: Hugh Shadwell

Registrar: Trevor Fosdyke

Match day organisers: Charlie McCaskie and Angus Troth

Board members: Trent Fordham, Mark Lui, Nat Martin, Sophie Janota, Tessa Good

Club tutor: Angus Bartter

Spiritual advisor: Dave Messner

All the best for 2025

Ego Yah!

**Have a very Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year from all at WACOBU**



The WACOBU Newsletter

Stories, photographs, upcoming events and reunion news are asked to contact Graeme Worboys:
0490 241 926
gandsworboys@bigpond.com