

Media release

Work placement gives a sweet taste of research for engineering student

Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering student Ms Rhianna Cardamone has received an up-close look at the inner mechanics of the Australian sugarcane industry – and she likes what she has seen.

Ms Cardamone is among this year's cohort of undergraduate and graduate students participating in scholarship and bursary programs supported by the Sugar Research Institute (SRI) and Sugar Research Australia (SRA).

As part of the ASIS (Australian Sugar Industry Scholarship), Ms Cardamone has recently completed a four-week placement at the SRA Ingham research station, working with SRA Agricultural Engineer Mr Joseph Bonassi.

"This has been the first of three four-week placements for me, and it has been a great introduction to the sugar industry through SRA," she said. "Coming from Brisbane, I had never been to Ingham before and didn't have an appreciation that the sugar industry is such a huge employer and such an important industry for Australia.

"As an engineering student, it is also great to get a taste of the diverse possible careers on offer in the sugar industry, and also to see engineering work done by Joseph here at Ingham."

This work includes the recently rebuilt chopper test rig, which is a stationary machine that replicates the feedtrain of a sugarcane harvester. This impressive tool is used for both research and adoption to assist SRA's research program for reducing sugar and cane loss.

Mr Bonassi is himself a former recipient of an ASIS and said: "Hosting Rhianna was a great opportunity to showcase the industry and build potential future capability."

The scholarship is awarded to university students in their penultimate year studying chemical, mechanical, process or electrical engineering or science degrees with an interest in working in the Australian sugar industry.

SRI Learning and Development Manager, Mr Bruce King, said: "Scholarships and bursaries are awarded to a variety of undergraduate and graduate engineers with the aim of investing in young people and building capacity in the industry."

"Since the program's inception in 2015, graduate recipients are now working in the Australian sugar industry. Past recipients gained valuable learning experience of process systems and machinery, insights into the maintenance requirements of a sugar factory, people skills and opportunities to apply theory on real projects that improve process efficiency, sugar quality and plant design," Mr King said.

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CAPTION: SRA Agricultural Engineer Mr Joseph Bonassi and Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering Student Ms Rhianna Cardamone.



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