

# YOUNG CHAMPIONS ARE ALL 4 INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

By Eliza Adamthwaite

THREE of Australia's next generation of agricultural ambassadors soaked up what Catherine Marriott had to say at Holbrook last week.

Parkes' Hannah Barber, Crookwell's Jasmine Nixon and Stephanie Fowler, who grew up on the Central Coast, are all calling Wagga home.

All three are Art4Agriculture Young Farming Champions, a network of young people passionate about agriculture.

Ms Barber, 22, is in her final year of a bachelor of arts/bachelor of secondary teaching at Charles Sturt University, where Ms Fowler, 26, is working on her PhD in meat and livestock science.

Ms Nixon, 24, has a bachelor of livestock science from the University of New England and is now a quality assurance and quality control graduate with Teys Australia at their Wagga beef processing plant.

Young Farming Champions are ambassadors for a range of industries — beef, sheep, dairy, cropping, wine or horticulture — and go into schools where they use creative arts and multimedia to engage urban and rural students in the challenges of feeding, clothing and housing the world.

Last week the Wagga trio attended Ms Marriott's Influential Women workshop at Holbrook as part of their professional development.

Ms Barber says Art4Agriculture has opened up possibilities to develop her own PhD plans.

"I want to research and then present to government the idea to make agriculture compulsory in secondary schools," she said.

After completing her PhD, Ms Barber will work for the Department of Education and Training in a remote rural area as an English and economics teacher.

But she dreams of then returning to Parkes where she grew up.

"I firmly believe education is the key to ensuring the Australian agricultural industry is understood and supported by our urban cousins," she said.

"And I look forward to a career where I can achieve this, and then come home to the farm every evening."

Ms Fowler has ambitions to become a leader in the red meat industry in research and development.

She wants to develop efficiencies relevant to beef farmers in the paddock.

"I spend days out in the paddocks, in the yards, at the feedlots, in the processors, and in the lab," she said.

"It's that vital step where paddock meets the plate, where we can make or break the hard work of the farmers.

"It's also important — and usually overlooked — to make sure that the meat industries can increase productivity to ensure supply of meat without compromising animal welfare, the environment and all essential meat quality."

Ms Nixon, the 2012 Sydney Royal Showgirl, is focused on what she can contribute to agriculture and taking advantage of the opportunities on her horizon.

"Agriculture is an exciting place to be," she said.

"Yes there are challenges but there are also endless opportunities within agriculture and that is something I hope to share, and to encourage a new generation to take on the challenge to help feed the world."



● Art4Agriculture Young Farming Champions Jasmine Nixon, Hannah Barber and Stephanie Fowler all attended the Influential Women workshop at Holbrook last week. Picture: TARA GOONAN