

EXTRAORDINARY TOGETHER

Westpac Scholars
2023 Impact Report



100 SCHOLARSHIPS A YEAR, FOREVER.

Westpac Scholars Trust launched in 2014 with a \$100 million gift from Westpac Group to fund 100 scholarships every year, forever.

We're proudly investing in new generations of brilliant Australians to challenge, explore and set new benchmarks in innovation, research, environmental sustainability and social change.

Together with 14 university partners across Australia, we offer five scholarship programs across four areas we believe are at the heart of the nation's future prosperity.

We're backing everyday Australians helping to create a more inclusive country, a thriving tech sector, a sustainable future and contributing to Australia's presence in Asia.

Because we believe that, together, we can be extraordinary.

Westpac Scholars Trust (ABN 35 600 251 071) is administered by Westpac Scholars Limited (ABN 72 168 847 041) as trustee for the Westpac Scholars Trust. Westpac Scholars Trust is a private charitable trust and neither the Trust nor the Trustee are part of the Westpac Group. Westpac provides administrative support, skilled volunteering and funding for operational costs of Westpac Scholars Trust.



2022 Young Tech Scholars, left to right: Benjamin Neal, Ashley Grant, Jimmy Lin, Sophia Mo, Priscilla Babalola, Natalie Francis, Indigo Hennig, and Erfan Mahmoodi.

OUR APPROACH

Our Funding Priorities

We've centred our scholarships around four areas we believe are at the heart of Australia's future growth and prosperity:

Sustainable Futures

Responding and adapting to climate change is one of the world's most urgent challenges. We want to accelerate innovative solutions to reduce Australia's environmental impact and build a more sustainable future.

Australia in Asia

Asia is a dynamic and complex region deeply intertwined with Australia's future. We want to strengthen people-to-people connections and foster ideas beyond borders.

An Inclusive Country

Our nation holds enough space for all Australians to be included. We want to back changemakers building resilient communities and overcoming social injustice.

Thriving Tech Sector

Technology is intertwined with our future, and today's bold ideas will transform lives tomorrow. We want to back the next generation of innovators creating solutions to benefit all Australians.

Our Scholarships

We offer scholarships across five categories to those we believe will be leaders, innovators and pioneers with the drive to shape the future prosperity and growth of Australia:



Research Fellowship

Working with some of Australia's leading research universities, we invest in the brightest, most innovative early career researchers to enable them to do their best work and help them influence positive change. Recipients receive a minimum of \$400,000 in flexible funding over three to five years.



Future Leaders Scholarship

The Future Leaders Scholarship was designed in partnership with Australia's leading universities to be a life-changing experience, investing up to \$120,000 in recipients' postgraduate studies, overseas experiences and leadership development.



Young Technologists Scholarship

Young Technologists Scholarships are designed for high school graduates passionate about technology and eager to explore its potential for good. Valued at \$20,000, the program provides networking, leadership development and growth opportunities.



Asian Exchange Scholarship

Scholars have an immersive international experience to help develop their cross-cultural thinking and provide access to networking opportunities. Valued at \$12,250, the program aims to forge relationships between the next generation of Australian and Asian leaders.



Social Change Fellowship

A social innovation program focused on the growth and development of extraordinary individuals leading social change in Australia. Valued at up to \$50,000, the fellowship is tailored to the personal development needs of the individual to help them grow as a leader.

Our Strategic Pillars

We align our efforts around three pillars to achieve our mission of investing in and uniting outstanding people from all walks of life with the ambition, ideas and drive to help shape a better future for all Australians:

1. Scholarships that shape futures
2. Leaders that create a better tomorrow
3. Collaboration that drives change



1. SCHOLARSHIPS THAT SHAPE FUTURES



2. LEADERS THAT CREATE A BETTER TOMORROW



3. COLLABORATION THAT DRIVES CHANGE

2023 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

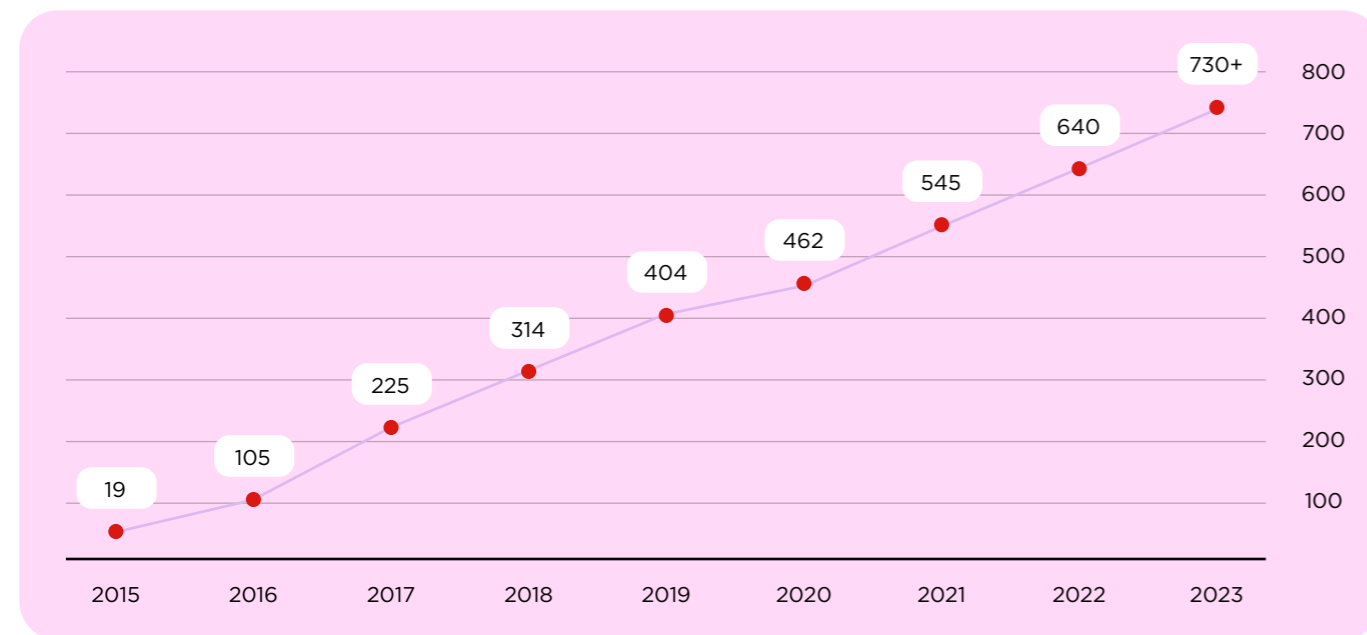
730+
Westpac Scholars since 2015.¹

100
Westpac Scholars awarded in 2023.¹

\$40M
awarded to Westpac Scholars since 2015 including \$5.1M co-contributed by university partners.²

\$4.9M
awarded to Westpac Scholars in 2023.³

OVERALL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED



1. Total number of individuals who have been awarded a scholarship and have completed or are in the process of completing their degree or fellowship. 2. University partners include The University of Melbourne, The Australian National University, The University of Sydney, The University of Queensland and RMIT. 3. \$4.9M awarded in 2023 includes a total of \$578,191 contribution from The Australian National University and The University of Queensland. Throughout this report, 2023 refers to the financial year 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023.



2021 & 2022 Social Change Fellows and Westpac staff making sandwiches for Eat Up.



Gabrielle Mordy & Tenille Gilbert,
2023 Social Change Fellows.



Usman Iftikar,
2019 Social Change Fellow.

FROM THE CEO

Extraordinary, together.

The buzz was absolutely back this year among our growing community of Westpac Scholars, with our programs of face-to-face events and international travel returning to full swing following the pivots of the pandemic.

As always, it's been a privilege to get to know our newest cohorts of scholars in 2023 – who have brought the total number in the community to more than 730 – and see them embrace the potential of what it means to become part of the Westpac 100 Scholars Network, known as the W100.

Watching the personal and professional growth of each scholar as they forge new, productive connections, combined with the unique leadership development opportunities that distinguish our program, I'm reminded every day just how extraordinary this program is in delivering on its mission to support those who are creating a better future for Australia.

New research shows mission on track

This year we released the first findings from a long-term research project to quantify the impact our scholars are having on society as they advance their careers. To be conducted every five years, the initial research results – which evaluated the careers of the scholars since awarding our first scholarship eight years ago – were overwhelmingly positive.

Conducted by market research agency Pollinate¹, the research found:

- 1 in 3 Westpac Scholars hold a position of leadership in business or community organisations;

- 1 in 5 have launched one or more organisations and 72% of these organisations have generated new jobs;
- 1 in 4 are receiving financial investment to support their work through venture capital, grants or government funding;
- 7% have had their research commercialised; and,
- 2 in 3 are actively helping create the next generation of leaders.

While these results demonstrate the Westpac Scholars program is making great progress towards its ambition, what excites me most is that it's still in its infancy. Just imagine the impact when, by 2030, we anticipate we will have more than 1,500 Westpac Scholars, each of them playing a part in strengthening the future of our nation.

Building global leadership

It was wonderful to see many of our scholars able to fulfill their aspirations this year of attending international study tours, workshops or programs as part of their scholarships, some of which had been delayed by pandemic travel restrictions. In an exciting move, our 2023 Young Technologists Scholars also had the opportunity to travel to Singapore for their week-long Disruptive Leaders Program, the first time we've held it in Asia. Providing this international cultural experience – alongside our leadership development program for Asian Exchange scholars, also held in Singapore – links to one of our focus areas to strengthen ties between Australia and Asia. Surveys showed the experience was highly valued by scholars.

New digital collaboration platform

Recognising the power of collaboration among the

growing W100 community of scholars, we invested this year in the development of a new digital engagement platform, the W100 Hub. Driven by a committee of W100 scholars, the platform empowers scholars to connect with others based on areas of study, work and interests as well as facilitating mentoring.

Recognising inclusive leadership

In honour of the enormous contribution made by a founding director and now strategic advisor to Westpac Scholars, Helen Lynch AM, we were delighted to introduce a new award this year, the Helen Lynch AM Leadership Award. The award – a bespoke leadership development experience valued at \$10,000 – will be offered annually to one scholar among the W100 who demonstrates leadership, collaboration and impact in their efforts to create a more inclusive Australia. We look forward to revealing the inaugural winner.

Thank you

On behalf of the Westpac Scholars Trust, thank you to all those who have contributed to the ongoing success of the program this year, including our board, our small yet immensely effective internal team, people across Westpac who collaborate with us in so many ways, our university partners who uncover and nurture scholars, our generous selection panel members and, most importantly, our scholars. Our collective success shows that together, we truly can be extraordinary.



Amy Lyden
CEO, Westpac Scholars Trust



1. Findings from Westpac Scholars Trust Long-Term Impact Evaluation – Measuring Scholar Impact Over Time, February 2023.

“Being able to meet and interact with amazing, like-minded individuals who are all dedicated and inspired to make change, in a nurturing environment was a very eye-opening experience that really motivated me to do more, and to be better.”

Priscilia Babalola, 2022 Young Technologists Scholar, studying at Murdoch University in Western Australia.



1. SCHOLARSHIPS THAT SHAPE FUTURES

We attract and invest in outstanding people to find new and better ways to contribute to Australia's progress across technology, social issues, environmental sustainability and our engagement with Asia.

Every year, we award 100 scholarships to everyday Australians who aspire to be the next generation of leaders, across five programs:

- Westpac Research Fellowship
- Westpac Future Leaders Scholarship
- Westpac Young Technologists Scholarship
- Westpac Asian Exchange Scholarship
- Westpac Social Change Fellowship

2023 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

100
scholarships awarded.

\$4.9M
awarded to Westpac Scholars.¹

94%
of scholars agree the program has given them access to opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have had.²

93%
of scholars agree the program has given them access to new networks that are valuable to their career ambitions.²

90%
of scholars agree the program has given them access to thought leaders they probably would not have had otherwise.²

1. Includes a total of \$578,191 contribution from The Australian National University and The University of Queensland.

2. Finding from 2023 Westpac Scholar Survey (responses from 120 scholarship recipients since 2020).

OUR 2023 SCHOLARS



Awarded 2 Westpac Research Fellows:

Valued at \$1,238,191

Andrea La Nauze, Kai Xun Chan



Awarded 17 Westpac Future Leaders Scholars:

Valued at \$2,038,946

Megan Amos, Rebekah Ash, Roshini Balasooriya, Christian Bien, Zubin Bilimoria, Queenie Cheung, Charlie Cooper, Elliott Fourie, Jessica Freund, Alexander Frisina, Evelyn Lambeth, Tori Millstead, Stuart Nicholls, Nicholas Pritchard, Harry Spurrier, Indigo Strudwicke, Tayla Wilsdon



Awarded 10 Westpac Social Change Fellows:

Valued at \$497,309

Audrey Deemal, Tenille Gilbert, Eloise Hall, Kirra Johnson, Mandy Lau, Nicholas Marchesi OAM, Gabrielle Mordy, Hedayat Osyan, Michael Tozer, Corey Tutt OAM



Awarded 35 Westpac Young Technologist Scholars:

Valued at \$700,000

Aliyah Baleem, Matthew Bond, Tahlee Cale, Elisa Chiremba, Julianne Deecke, Rhyda Demaagd, Kelsie Dowley, Samantha Exposito, Harrison Gatt, Imogen Gilbert, Bess Gosling, Joshua Ho, Mela Hoffman, Mahd Khan, Tristan Le, Julia Magris, Jocelyn Mayger, Freddy McLoughlan, Charlie McMahon, Nicholas Messiha, Charlotte Mills, Vivian Nyugen, Hayden Owen, Allan Phung, Patrick Richardson, Thomas Rodenhuis, Lauren Sheppard, Arshdeep Singh Cheema, Joel Thomas, Thomas Tran, Leonel Vallejos Praslin, Lachlan Van Luu, Connor Weir Kai Whittaker, Celeste Yun Hang



Awarded 36 Westpac Asian Exchange Scholars:

Valued at \$441,000

Leo Barry, Max Buchholz, Renee Byrne, Chelsea Chaffey, Song Chen, Joe Christie, William Davie, William Day, Lachlan Drury, Jan Michael Gonzales, Piero Jaksa, Emily Liao, Conan Liu, Emma Linfoot, Milie Maccallum, Finn Maguire, Skye Manley, Sweeney Marshall, Dhiiren Moganaraju, Mina Naeem, Emily Nelson, Naveen Nimalan, Seung-hyun Pan, Clare Peterson, Wuyou Qu, Abigail Russell, Timotea San Jose, Rohan Sims, Claudia Tedjasaputra, Helen Tong, Holly Trikilis, Jhermayne Ubalde, Sara Watson, Flynn Wedd, Emma Whitney



University of Wollongong representatives, left to right:
Renee Burton, Belinda Melmoth and 2020 Young Tech Scholar, James Barton.








VALUE OF DIVERSITY

Each year, we strive to invest in people from different backgrounds, with different mindsets, values and views, in line with our belief that greater inclusion leads to greater diversity of ideas, perspectives and outcomes.

Our five scholarship programs are designed to challenge ways of thinking, broaden perspectives and push the boundaries of what is possible.

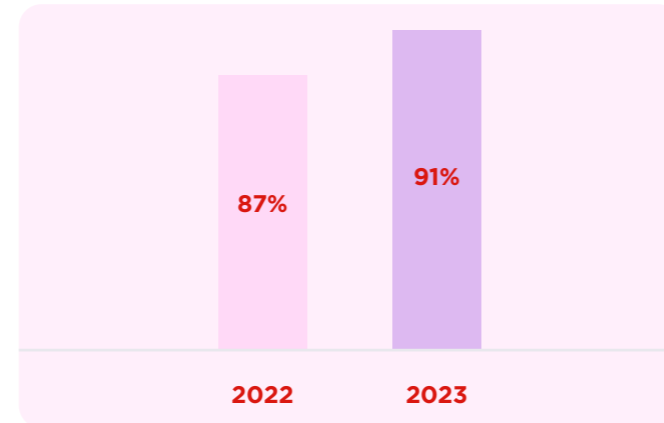
Our 2023 Westpac Scholars Survey showed 91 per cent of participants agreed the program is inclusive of people from all walks of life and 88 per cent agreed it promotes diversity in thinking and ideas. While these are positive findings, there remains room to improve in the diversity among our scholars' intakes and we will continue to aim for this.

2023 Scholar Demographics

-  Indigenous - 4%
-  Disability - 4%
-  Male - 50%
-  Female - 49%
-  Non-binary - 1%
-  First in family to attend university - 15%
-  Attended public high school - 38%

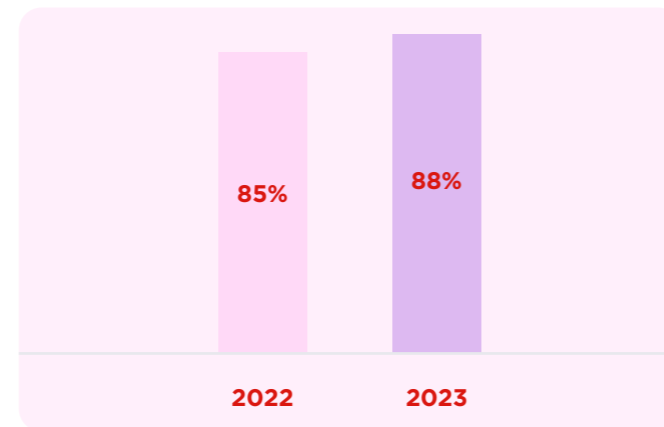
Inclusivity

91% of Westpac Scholars agreed the program is inclusive of people from all walks of life.¹



Diversity

88% of Westpac Scholars agreed the program promotes diversity in thinking and ideas.¹



“There’s such a diverse group of people among the scholars who are deeply passionate about different things. I think we need different perspectives and approaches to solve problems.”

Associate Professor Alice Motion,
2020 Westpac Research Fellow and
a researcher and science communicator
based at The University of Sydney’s
School of Chemistry.



1. Finding from 2023 Westpac Scholar Survey (responses from 120 scholarship recipients since 2020).

SPOTLIGHT

BREAKTHROUGHS FOR FUTURE FOOD SECURITY

Dr Kai Xun Chan is among Australia's leading young scientists stepping up to the challenge of how to feed the growing global population, a task that will require more food to be produced in the next thirty years than the entire history of human civilisation.

“My research addresses the urgent need for transformative solutions to improve crop resilience,” says Dr Chan, a biology lecturer at Australian National University.

Following his career breakthrough – the discovery of a stress sensor protein that controls the pores on leaves of drought-stressed plants – Dr Chan has been exploring ways to help crops, such as rice and wheat, to minimise damage caused by extreme drought and heat.

“The plant’s sensor is able to sense when conditions become unfavourable,” Dr Chan explains, noting that plants are far more complex than many people give credit.

“This sets off a ‘fire alarm’ in the plant, telling it to respond, but it can often occur too late and the plant will have suffered damage. If we can get the alarm to go off at the first signs of water deficit, we can help the plant survive.”

To do so, Dr Chan’s team has worked on a first-of-its-kind prototype chemical tool used like a spray to activate the plant’s sensor earlier than it normally would. “There’s still a long road ahead, but we’re excited about how this can provide farmers with a new tool in our race against climate change.”

The significance of Dr Chan’s research is reflected in a growing list of awards including an Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) 2022 Fellowship, ACT Emerging Scientist of the Year Award and a Marie Curie postdoctoral fellowship from the European Commission. This year he added a Westpac Research Fellowship, which he sees as “transformational” at this point in his career, giving him the practical and financial support to boost his long-term contributions to the scientific community.

“This is a high-risk, high-reward project which, if successful, could benefit not just Australia, but the world,” he says. “From a practical point of view, the ability to undertake such an ambitious project is made possible by the funding from Westpac Scholars Trust. But the fellowship is also giving me extremely important opportunities to develop as a leader.”

In the traditional academic pathway, he says leadership skills are learnt “mainly by osmosis” in the absence of formal training.

“What Westpac Scholars Trust offers is this opportunity to better understand myself and how best to tailor my leadership style to grow. I’m still quite junior in my career so building a team at this point is difficult, but vital to training up the next generation of scientists with a clear goal to help agriculture and society more broadly.”

“Becoming a Westpac Research Fellow at this point in my career is transformational.”

Dr Kai Xun Chan, 2023 Westpac Research Fellow and biology lecturer at Australian National University.



“The leadership program is unmatched and remains a highlight to my personal and professional development because of the connections, programming, and being away from distractions.”

Thomas Da Jose, 2022 Future Leaders Scholar, who completed a Masters of Commerce, Strategy, Innovation and Management at the University of Sydney Business School.



2. LEADERS THAT CREATE A BETTER TOMORROW

We help Westpac Scholars to be world-class leaders equipped with the skills and networks they need to reach their full potential.

Initiatives include:

- Bespoke leadership programs for each scholarship stream.
- Access to global thought leaders.
- Access to global experiences and networks.

2023 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

124

scholars took part in a Leadership Development Program in 2023.

89%

of scholars agree they feel more confident in their ability to contribute to the prosperity of Australia.¹

83%

of scholars agreed their leadership potential has been enhanced.¹

85%

of scholars agreed the leadership development programs opened their mind to new ways of thinking about leadership.¹

98%

of scholars felt energised and inspired after attending the 2023 Scholars Summit.²

86%

of scholars felt the 2023 Scholars Summit provided them with new skills or knowledge.²

1. Finding from 2023 Westpac Scholar Survey (responses from 120 scholarship recipients since 2020).

2. Finding from the 2023 Westpac Scholar Summit Survey (responses from 58% of summit attendees).

LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

Our focus on developing leaders is a unique offering of the Westpac Scholars program, highly valued by scholars.

Our five leadership programs tailored to each scholarship stream aim to help scholars develop their soft skills in leadership, communication, pitching, cultural competence, self-awareness and people management, all of which are vital for successful careers in industry and academia.

The programs, four of which include week-long residential programs with full agendas, also aim to strengthen relationships within the W100 Network, fostering meaningful connections between scholars who are ordinarily geographically displaced from one another, in turn creating more opportunities for collaborative impact.

Next gen tech disrupters unleashed

In an exciting development this year, our newest leadership program – the Young Technologists Disruptive Leaders Program, designed in partnership with Murdoch University and Common Purpose* – was held over a week in Singapore.

Having kicked-off last year for the first time in Australia, the residential program gave our Young Technologist Scholars a rare opportunity to gain exposure to international experts speaking on the important role technology, innovation and disruption plays in the region, while also building cultural competency.

The program ran just before the week-long Asian Exchange Scholars leadership development program, which has been held annually in Asia since 2017, building on one of our program’s focus areas to strengthen ties between Australia and Asia.



“This program truly connected me to some of the most knowledgeable and compassionate people capable of sharing information and tips that will stay with me for life...an experience that will not be forgotten!”

Song Chen, 2023 Asian Exchange Scholar, studying biomedicine at The University of Melbourne.



“The Disruptive Leaders Program was an amazing opportunity where I learned much about technology, leadership, taking initiative and the greater world around me. It really pushed me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to improve myself in a multitude of ways.”

Bilal Shah, 2022 Young Technologists Scholar, studying cybersecurity at Western Sydney University.



“The residential is one of things that makes this scholarship so unique. They are really setting us up to be strong, collaborative, Asia-capable Australian leaders.”

Claudia Tedjasaputra, 2023 Asian Exchange Scholar, studying biotechnology at The University of Melbourne.

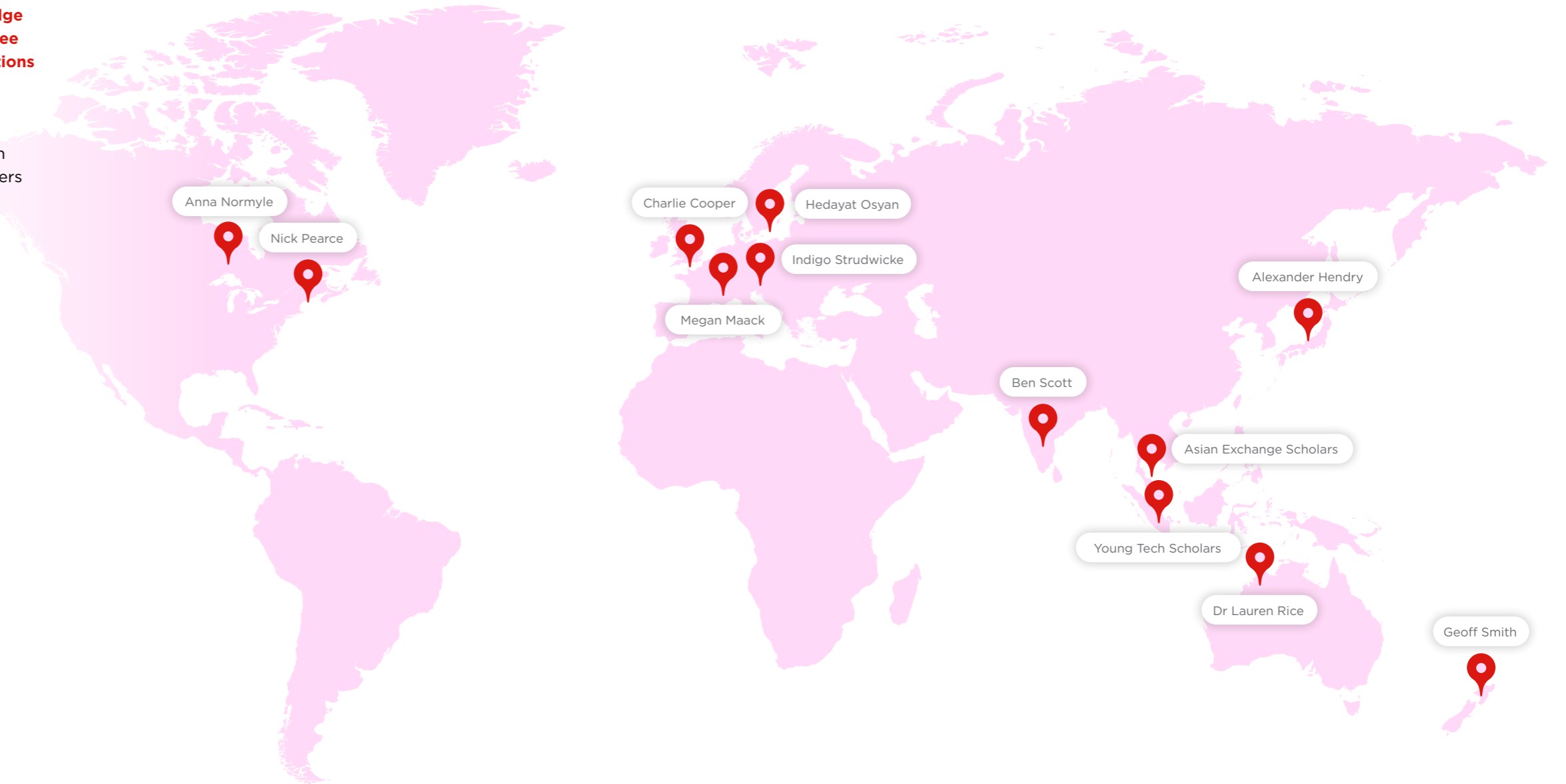
*Common Purpose Student Experiences Ltd (ABN 85 633 217 642) is a partner organisation who helps deliver transformative learning experiences with Murdoch University as part of select WST Leadership Development Programs.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES

For many of our scholars, a core element of their award is the opportunity to develop their knowledge and leadership through tailored programs which see them connecting with thought leaders and institutions around the globe.

For some, it's to attend educational or leadership courses; for others it's to undertake internships with organisations having impact in their area; while others undertake study tours, using the opportunity as a door-opener to meetings with highly respected relevant global innovation leaders.

We've highlighted here just a small handful of examples of the many scholars who have pursued global leadership experiences during 2023.



GLOBAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES



Wellington, New Zealand

Geoff Smith, chief executive of social enterprise Australian Spatial Analytics, was supported by his 2022 Westpac Social Change Fellowship to visit The Akina Foundation in Wellington, New Zealand, to learn more about the social enterprise movement across the Tasman and broaden his knowledge and connections as a social change leader.

“The important learning for me was that if I want to have a meaningful career in social change, I can’t rely on only one model to create impact. Communities and government policy can change rapidly, which means I must always be open to new models and concepts that will garner support from the right stakeholders to make the most contemporaneous change with the possible resources at hand.”



Edinburgh & Glasgow, Scotland Amsterdam & Groningen, Netherlands

Charlie Cooper, a PhD student at Monash University investigating social media and youth suicide prevention, was supported by his 2023 Westpac Future Leader Scholarship to attend and present at suicide prevention conferences in Scotland, and a summer school in youth suicide prevention at the University of Groningen and the Dutch National Suicide Prevention organisation, 113.

“I connected with some brilliant researchers doing similar work across the US and Europe which has already led to an opportunity for collaboration. I was able to learn from so many leaders in mental health, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, AI and data analytics. It left me really energised, with new ideas of what will be possible during the PhD and afterwards.”



United Kingdom and Europe

Megan Maack, the founder of the Childhood Dementia Initiative, was supported by her 2022 Westpac Social Change Fellowship to travel to the UK and Europe to connect with other leaders dedicated to progressing dementia research and care, including at the Alzheimer Europe Conference, Alzheimer’s Disease International and Alzheimer Scotland.

“Throughout this trip, I established a network of connections including with the CEO of the global peak body for dementia. As a result, we are working on joint-advocacy to position dementia as a lifespan condition that will see the research, work and care provided in the adult population extended to children. The work we will do together has the potential to improve the lives of millions of children around the world for years to come.”



Inuyama, Japan

Alexander Hendry, a student of ecology and Japanese at the University of Queensland, was supported by his 2021 Westpac Asian Exchange Scholarship to spend a semester at Kyoto University, Japan, after which he took up an internship at the university’s Centre for the Evolutionary Origins of Human Behaviour in Inuyama, researching the behavioural diversity of mandrills at the Japan Monkey Centre.

“My internship gave me the opportunity to conduct real, independent research in the field of zoo biology. I also had the unique opportunity to travel to the UNESCO World Heritage listed island of Yakushima to assist with field research on invasive tanuki – or raccoon dogs. I met interesting researchers and got involved with the community in the small town where I was living, which really helped my cross-cultural communication skills.”

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES



London, UK

Hedayat Osyan, the chief executive of social enterprise CommUnity Construction, was supported by his 2023 Westpac Social Change Fellowship to travel to the UK to complete an executive education course at The London School of Economics – Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Age of Change, and meet with advocates for refugees from Oxford and Cambridge.

“As my first formal entrepreneurship course, this helped me to discover and evaluate new opportunities in the new market and also how to build a global ecosystem to achieve my goals. The trip was a unique journey as it was my first trip in England. I’ve met and built relationships with over 45 important people from 30 countries. I’ve learnt so much from the course and trip.”



New Delhi, India

Ben Scott, a student of Applied Econometrics at The University of Queensland, will be supported by his 2022 Future Leaders Scholarship to work with the UN Economic and Social Commission in New Delhi, India.

“Working with the UN will be exciting for so many reasons – it will be my first time in India and first time working at an international intergovernmental organisation. My remit will be to provide technical assistance and capacity-building services to encourage work aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It feels surreal that I’ll witness the nuts and bolts that go into making the SDGs a reality. More than anything, I hope this ‘inside look’ strengthens my belief that we really can change the world one step at a time.”



Washington DC, USA

Anna Normyle, a PhD student at The Australian National University, was supported by her 2021 Future Leaders Scholarship to travel to Washington DC as a plenary speaker at an international conference and was invited to share her findings at the US Department of Interior and the US Geological Survey to inform the US National Strategy for Natural Capital Accounting.

“It was a privilege to share the insights gained from Australia’s First Nations communities and understand how these lessons can help to inform international environmental accounting practice. I’m excited to see that in a small way we were able to put Indigenous knowledge on the Natural Capital Accounting agenda and am so grateful for the opportunity.”



Rotterdam and Leiden, Netherlands

Indigo Strudwicke, a PhD student at The Australian National University with an interest in the use of science in democratic decision-making was supported by her 2023 Future Leader Scholarship to travel to Europe to attend the Public Communication of Science and Technology conference in Rotterdam, Netherlands followed by a writing collaboration with the International Science Council.

“I spent a week in Leiden in the Netherlands collaborating on a report on science, trust and multilateral policy-making for the International Science Council’s Public Value of Science forum. It was a bit of a pinch-me moment to be one of five authors in the room as it wouldn’t have been possible without the scholarship.”

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES



Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia

Dr Lauren Rice, a Research Fellow at The University of Sydney with an interest in improving the health and wellbeing of people living in remote Aboriginal communities, was supported by her 2021 Research Fellowship to live in the very remote Fitzroy Valley in WA for three years and work with an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation on the Bigiswun Kid (Kimberley Kriol for adolescent) Project.

“The Fellowship allowed me to work alongside and learn from senior and emerging First Nation leaders who are driving change for their communities. The research resulted in establishing a new state-funded Social and Emotional Wellbeing Service for young adults in the Fitzroy Valley.”



Massachusetts, USA

Nick Pearce, the CEO and co-founder of social enterprise HoMie, was supported by his 2021 Westpac Social Change Fellowship to travel to the US to complete Harvard Business School’s Strategic Perspectives in Non-profit Management Course.

“The fellowship has certainly accelerated both my organisation’s and my own personal rate of growth. I have far less uncertainty about what the potential levers may be. It’s an exciting proposition for the first time since starting the business to be able to focus on working ‘on’ it instead of ‘in’ it. I’m deeply satisfied when I reflect on the body of work undertaken, as I personally feel I’m far closer to where I envisioned myself post-fellowship.”



Bigiswun Kid Project Team, left to right: Emma Bear, Lauren Rice, Nikkita May and Mudge Bedford.

SPOTLIGHT

REACHING FOR THE STARS

For as long as she can remember, Emerald Gaydon has known she wanted to become an astronaut, but never imagined the path to getting there would see her summit a mountain in Nepal's Himalayas.

"Reaching that peak was like nothing I'd ever felt before," says Gaydon, an honours student studying quantum physics at The University of Queensland. The spark for her 20-day mountaineering expedition, which saw her climb in freezing conditions to an altitude of almost 6,000 meters, came when Gaydon was one of 20 selected by the mountaineering club at the National University of Singapore during her six-months there as part of her Westpac Asian Exchange Scholarship in 2022.

"It's hard to overstate how influential the scholarship has been," she reflects. "Not just the mountaineering - and that definitely taught me big lessons in resilience and grit, the most important skills for a job as an astronaut - but so many other opportunities for my career have come from meeting other Westpac Scholars and hearing about opportunities. It's been invaluable."

In fact, it was her W100 connections that led her to join the UQ Science Demo Troupe, a group that visits schools to spread enthusiasm for science. When representing the Troupe at the 2022 World Science Festival, she met members of STEMPunk, a global STEM education program, and was asked to be an MC at SPACE2101, an international program giving students the opportunity to work with astronauts and scientists to encourage careers in the space industry.

"That was an awesome opportunity," says Gaydon, who last year jetted off for the program at both Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) and in the UK, with future gigs in the pipeline. Along the way, she met five astronauts, including Prince Sultan ibn Salman Abd al-Aziz Al, the first Saudi Arabian and first royal astronaut. "It's something I'm still quite giddy about," she says.

Gaydon returned to KAUST for a month in July this year having been selected to attend a Photonics Summer Camp and, back at home she's also won funding for her UQ Science Demo Troupe to run more regional science outreach programs in Queensland with a focus on low socio-economic areas.

With her eye still firmly set on her interstellar dream career, Gaydon's next big step is her plan to pursue a PhD after she completes her honours and combines her research with continuing science education outreach.

"I am looking forward to exploring the many exciting opportunities that I can take advantage of during my career, and my time in the W100."

"I've summited Tsorku Peak in the Nepalese Himalayas, worked with five astronauts and ended up meeting Saudi Arabian royalty, all by getting into the W100 Network!"

Emerald Gaydon, 2021 Asian Exchange Scholar, studying quantum physics at The University of Queensland.



“It just is so energising to spend ‘think time’ with other scholars. It opens the mind and lights the fire. We are all so passionate and driven but we need support from our community and the Scholars Summit gives so much of that. I always leave with new perspectives and connections.”

Mick Cronin, 2020 Social Change Fellow, and executive manager for youth justice and social enterprise at YMCA Victoria.



3. COLLABORATION THAT DRIVES CHANGE

We create opportunities for collaboration and networking to encourage bold innovation and inspire the future generation of leaders.

Initiatives include:

- Westpac 100 Scholars Network, “W100”.
- Partnering with 14 universities to create lifelong access to professional development.
- Access to Westpac Group networks.
- Annual Westpac Scholars Summit.

2023 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

93%

of scholars found value in collaborating with other Westpac Scholars to share and evolve ideas or projects.¹

88%

of scholars found value in engaging with W100 in-person events.¹

95%

of scholars agreed the 2023 Scholars Summit connected them with a network they wouldn't otherwise have been able to access.²

102

scholars connected through the Mentors in Residence program.

1. Finding from 2023 Westpac Scholar Survey (responses from 120 scholarship recipients since 2020).

2. Finding from the 2023 Westpac Scholar Summit Survey (responses from 58% of summit attendees).

POWER OF W100 NETWORK

Over the decades to come, one of the most powerful aspects of the Westpac Scholars program will be the W100 – the community of scholars and alumni.

While our scholars' membership of the W100 begins when they become Westpac Scholars, their connection lasts a lifetime. Growing by 100 scholars each year from across all scholarship streams, it's a scholar-led network, guided by a committed National Executive of alumni.

Our scholar's initial glimpse of its power comes as they are welcomed to their first Westpac Scholars Summit, held in April each year. From that point, many connections and collaborations form organically among the W100 Network, and are reinforced by a number of events – including the leadership development programs, organised networking events and informal sessions – along with ongoing communication during the lifetime of the W100 membership.


During 2023, the networking events organised by scholars ranged from workshops about inclusive design, to panel discussions about navigating life post-university, to educational guided cultural tour of Australian National Botanic Gardens, to social activities including laser tag, picnics, outdoor yoga and theatre events.

The W100's most successful scholar-led initiative is the Mentors in Residence Program, which connects scholars seeking guidance and advice with a team of experienced scholar-mentors. In 2023, 75 mentees were connected via the program with 62 scholar-mentors over a period of four months, resulting in valuable scholar-to-scholar connections.

Through the network, many friendships and professional collaborations have formed, sparking new projects, programs and business opportunities along with career defining opportunities.

New W100 Hub to support collaboration

To help strengthen opportunities for collaboration and connection, this year we introduced a new digital platform, driven by a working group of the W100. Known as the W100 Hub, the value of the platform will be in centralising communication and empowering the growing network of scholars to connect with others based on areas of study, work and interests. In addition to the Hub's detailed scholar directory, it offers scholars a range of events and opportunities boards, active interest groups and a structured mentoring facilitation program.



“We have been able to continue our connections beyond the program by bouncing ideas with each other in a psychologically safe environment. This includes ideas in our professional lives, postgraduate studies or general life.”

Elizabeth Wong, 2022 Future Leaders Scholar, pursuing Masters of Public Health at UNSW.

FLAGSHIP SUMMIT RETURNS

Our flagship annual two-day event for the newest intake of scholars, the Westpac Scholars Summit, took place in April and survey results¹ demonstrates the high value placed on the event.

It's an opportunity to bring together the 100 new scholars from across the country – along with leaders from the W100 Network – to celebrate, learn, connect and gain an inspiring glimpse into what it means to become a part of the Westpac Scholars community.

This year's summit included:

- **Scholar Showcase:** W100 Alumni from each scholarship program shared reflections on how being a Westpac Scholar has impacted them personally and professionally.
- **Facilitated networking:** Scholars stepped outside their comfort zones to meet people with shared interests, careers, research or values.
- **Imagination Lecture:** Two powerful keynote addresses by 2020 Research Fellow and Interim Director of Sydney Nano Institute A/Prof Alice Motion; and the founder of Street Side Medics, a not-for-profit GP-led mobile medical service for people experiencing homelessness, Dr Daniel Nour.
- **Celebration event:** University partners, key senior leaders from Westpac and other internal and external stakeholders were invited to attend an evening to recognise and celebrate our next 100 Westpac Scholars.
- **W100 engagement:** W100 Alumni took a lead role in MCing, hosting and facilitating various sessions.

1. Findings from the 2023 Westpac Scholar Summit Survey (responses from 58% of Summit attendees).

A valuable experience

A post-event survey, completed by 58% of Westpac Scholars Summit attendees, demonstrates the high value placed on the event:

98%

of scholars agreed the Summit energised and inspired them.

97%


agreed it motivated them to participate in future W100 initiatives.

95%

agreed it connected them with a network they wouldn't otherwise have been able to access.

86%

agreed it provided them with new skills or knowledge.



“This was the single biggest highlight of the scholarship besides the actual exchange semester. The two days were such an inspiration, it really did force me to reflect on my academic and professional career and wonder about all the possible pathways of making an impact on the world!”

Ronaldo Keng,
2022 Asian Exchange Scholar,
studying a Bachelor of
Actuarial Studies at UNSW.

SPOTLIGHT

THE NETWORK EFFECT

When Associate Professor Amy King needed to recruit research assistants with the specialised skills required in her field, she knew exactly where to look: the W100.

“Finding people with the language skills and deep political and historical knowledge of the Asia Pacific Region is challenging,” says King, a Westpac Research Fellow and Associate Professor at Australian National University’s Strategic & Defence Studies Centre and Deputy Director at Coral Bell School of Asia-Pacific Affairs.

“But because a focus area of Westpac Scholars is on building Australia-Asia ties and funding scholars to spend time in the region, I was confident that within the network I’d find someone who’d be able to immediately get stuck in, while also supporting their own careers.”

King’s research, which has also attracted an ARC DECRA Fellowship and a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, explores China’s role in shaping the international economic order, with a view to strengthening Australia’s understanding of economic and security forces in the Asian region.

Among a number of talented Westpac Scholars who put themselves forward to join King’s team, two in particular – Westpac Asian Exchange Scholars Meira Chen and Alicia Turner – stood out, taking up the part-time roles in mid-2022.

For Chen, who’d studied with Beijing’s Tsinghua University in 2018 as part of her exchange during her Law and International Studies degree with UNSW, the role was

a chance to “deep dive” into Asian affairs, expand her network and put her skills into practice. “It was a great opportunity to both help out Amy, and also get great insights into the ways a very senior academic formulates her arguments,” says Chen, who also spent two years in Japan earning a Master of International Relations at Waseda University in Tokyo.

Meanwhile, Turner took up the role alongside her Westpac Asian Exchange last year with Hosei University in Tokyo as part of her International Relations and Politics degree at University of Adelaide, giving her an ability to provide on-the-ground insights as part of King’s team.

As well as being “lively contributors”, King has enjoyed watching Chen and Turner’s professional growth, including the confidence they’ve gained in applying for their next professional steps.

Earlier this year, Chen transitioned to a role with the NSW Government where she’s leveraging her background in law and Asian languages to lead policy reforms and projects that accelerate the adoption of hydrogen, including attracting investment from trade partners in Asian markets. For Turner, who has valued King’s “mentorship and words of wisdom”, it’s helped solidify her plans to pursue further research and work opportunities in Japan.

“There’s no way I would have come across Meira and Alicia without the W100 Network,” King says. “It brings together people with similar interests really effectively and the more we, as Westpac Scholars, all put into it, the stronger it keeps getting which ultimately benefits Australia.”

“There’s no way I would have come across Meira and Alicia without the W100 Network.”

Amy King, 2017 Westpac Research Fellow, and Associate Professor at Australian National University’s Strategic & Defence Studies Centre and Deputy Director at Coral Bell School.



A SHARED BELIEF IN THE POWER OF EDUCATION

Our university partners

We would like to thank our 2023 university partners across Australia whose support makes our programs possible. Together, we are investing in the individuals who will help shape a better future for Australia.



Thank you to The University of Queensland for recognising the value of our programs by awarding Westpac Scholars Trust the 2023 UQ Corporate Philanthropy Award.

Front cover scholars, top: Kirra Johnson, Christian Bien, Indigo Strudwicke, Hedayat Osyan. Bottom: Kai Xun Chan, Sara Watson, Freddy McLoughlan, Audrey Deemal. Page 21 scholars: Alexander Frisina, Emily Nelson, Lachlan Luu, Jhermayne Ubalde, Corey Tutt OAM, Eloise Hall, Nicholas Messiha, Jessica Freund, Elisa Chiremba, Aliyah Baleem, Evelyn Lambeth, Flynn Wedd, Megan Amos, Max Buchholz.

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OUR NATIONAL SELECTION PANELS

Each year, independent panels of experts provide their considerable skill, knowledge and leadership at the Westpac Scholars' National Assessment Centres to determine the scholars selected. We thank each panel member and the many other individuals involved in the attraction and selection of scholars for the important role you play in the program's success. In particular, we'd like to thank those involved in the assessment of our Future Leader, Research Fellow and Social Change programs in 2023:

Future Leaders and Research Fellow National Assessment Panel:

- Dave Curran (Chair)
- Professor Aidan Byrne
- Professor Nicholas Farrelly
- Professor Annamarie Jagose
- Professor Jacqueline Lo
- Margaret (Margie) Seale
- Dr Heather Smith PSM
- David Thodey AO
- Dr Shelley Wickham
- Professor Asmi Wood

Social Change Fellows National Assessment Panel:

- Jon Nicholson (Chair)
- Susan Bannigan
- Karyn Baylis AM
- Lalitha Biddulph
- Lisa Boothby
- Cindy Carpenter
- Michael Combs
- Danny Hui
- Keith Rovers





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2016 Young Tech Scholar, Amy Robertson and 2022 Young Tech Scholar, Ruvindu Hewage.