

Good afternoon Associate Vice-Chancellor, Marea Nicholson, valued donors, award and scholarship recipients, family and friends.

It is an honor to be here receiving a scholarship and being given the opportunity to deliver the vote of thanks on behalf of all the recipients here this evening. To begin I would like to tell you a little bit about myself, and my journey to where I am today.

My origins lie in the Southern Tablelands of NSW, more specifically in the small town of Crookwell, about 250km south west of Sydney. Growing up on a reasonably sized farm I was lucky enough to experience a very different childhood in comparison to some of my university peers. My childhood revolved around the property, hockey, guitar, school (of course), and cricket. Unfortunately, living such a major distance from a city, also comes with lot of kilometers ticking over in the car. With a busy childhood in a small country town, comes a lot of travel time. Cricket especially started to take off. Playing every Saturday, and the majority of Sundays, along with tournaments and training, meant travelling to Sydney and Canberra three to four times a week, which could mean up to 12 hours a week of travelling, not including time spend playing and training. This of course, started to have an effect on my schooling. It was soon very apparent that this could not continue, and I was faced with the biggest decision of my life so far. To remain in Crookwell and travel, or to make a move up to Sydney to assist with my schooling. And so, at age 16, I packed my bags and headed off to boarding school. Although difficult at first, this decision proved to be life changing. I had great teachers, great facilities, and great support no more than a few kilometers away, I was still only 1 train (and a car ride) away from home. Living away from home was, and is still now, quite overwhelming. I still have my roots in the country, and still consider myself 'from Crookwell'.

I decided I wanted to become a teacher roughly around my first year of high school. I remember having some great teachers through primary school and some great teachers and mentors in high school. From teaching me how to use verbs, to working on my out-swing, to supporting me in the foreign environment of a boarding house, teachers have been a huge part of my life, and I'm sure a huge part of everyone in the room's life. Whilst undecided on what or where I would want to teach, I made a last minute UAC preference change of a history major in education, to a course in primary education, and I have never looked back. So far, teaching has taken me across Sydney, and even overseas. I was lucky enough to have been accepted into FutureSense's Challenges Abroad Program, where I spent two weeks teaching English in rural Thailand, to some very talented, and cheeky, local children. Currently I am completing my final year of my degree and working between The Scots College and Cranbrook School as a casual teacher, a teacher's aide, a sports coach, and everything in between. Whilst I have greatly enjoyed my time at university, I am very excited for what the future has in store.

The scholarship I have received tonight will prove to be a major help in the continuing cost of living, and also assisting me in my future as a teacher. As I'm sure you know resources are vital part of teaching, and this will prove to ease the financial burden that can come with providing resources such as laminators, paper, ink, pencils, and countless other items.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Council of Catholic School Parents for the scholarship extended to me. It will prove a great help in pursuing my goals as an educator throughout my transition into the profession. On behalf of every award winner and scholarship holder here this evening, I would like to extend my thanks to all donors for their generous ongoing support of the university.