



ACTION4YOUTH CASE-STUDY: LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL



Action4Youth, a new initiative from [Action4Agriculture](#) funded by the [National Careers Institute](#) (NCI), helps young people to EXPLORE, CONNECT and be SUPPORTED to thrive in careers in agriculture.

Using identified best practice Action4Youth will build a pipeline to agricultural career opportunities for secondary level students in rural and urban areas and create a deep collaboration between stakeholders to realise specific outcomes for both employees and employers.

“Action4Youth will bring together government, industry and the education system to ensure young people successfully transition to a world of work that meets their values and offers exciting opportunities for them to thrive,” Action4Agriculture director Lynne Strong says.

As the new program rolls out, a prototype of how it may work in practice in schools has been developed at Lake Illawarra High School. Under the guidance of careers advisor Rhonda Willingham, with support from Tracy Hicks, Head Teacher Careers, [Educational Pathways Program with NSW Department of Education](#), interested students have spent a term exploring agricultural careers.

This exploration, culminated in an Urban2AG workshop at the school held on Wednesday June 29, with presentations by Lynne Strong and four early-career agricultural professionals. Also invited to attend was Sharon Justice, the school's apprenticeship, and traineeship engagement officer.

Giving the students an insight into their agricultural careers were [Young Farming Champions](#) Danielle Fordham and Lachlan White, who were joined by University of Wollongong students TJ Allman and Hannah Brien.



LACHIE WHITE TOWNIE LIVING THE COUNTRY LIFE (CLICK TO WATCH)



TJ ALLMAN AT LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL JUNE 2022 (CLICK TO WATCH)



LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Danielle spoke about the various careers' pathways available, which led her to Tocal Agricultural College after completing high school, and then to university. Now studying as she works for Tocal, she opened the student's eyes to the diversity of careers available.

Lachlan spoke about his time working on a dairy farm (particularly relevant to a school with close to 120 dairy farms in its surrounding region) and his current career as a farm manager with a large pastoral company. His take-home message was "you don't have to own a farm to be a farmer".

University of Wollongong Sustainable Communities students Hannah and TJ gave the students examples of different backgrounds and interests that can be influenced by agriculture; Hannah having come from a sheep property to study and TJ overcoming a troubled childhood and no ATAR to become a mature-age student selected to be a New Colombo Plan Scholar in Japan.

At the conclusion of the presentations the students had the further opportunity to sit down with each of the guests on a "speed dating" exercise, which allowed for more in-depth questions to be asked.

The Urban2AG workshop was a resounding success, mirrored in comments from the teachers and support staff involved:

"The variety of presenters and how far they have travelled to attend shows how passionate they are about their careers and their futures. To have that opportunity for my students is awesome."
- Rhonda Willingham

"I think it is an incredible opportunity for students in the Illawarra to hear these stories and realise the potential that they have and the potential agriculture has for their future. We are so lucky to have these inspirational young adults to come and connect with our youth."
- Tracey Hicks

"Those presenters were so inspirational, really fantastic. I wish I had a career in agriculture."
- Sharon Justice

Lake Illawarra High School will continue their year of agricultural career exploration by spending Term Three participating in [The Archibull Prize](#) and [Cows Create Careers](#).

The framework adopted by Lake Illawarra High School is an example of how working with Action4Youth can support teachers and students investigating careers in agriculture by giving them real-world role-models from all walks of life who are studying or employed in a diverse range of industries.

"The power of Action4Youth is that it is very participant centric. We can give ownership of the program to teachers and students and ask them how they would like to run it in their schools. Lake Illawarra High School is an impressive example of how one school and their ecosystem of support have embraced the Action4Youth model and tailored it to meet their own wants and needs," Lynne says.



DANI FORDHAM LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL
(CLICK TO WATCH)



HANNAH BRIEN LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL URBAN2AG
(CLICK TO WATCH)



URBAN2AG SPEED DATING CAREERS EXPLORATION SESSION
(CLICK TO WATCH)