

Media release

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Enterprising Young Rural Ambassador wins award

Lachy Johnson, a 19-year-old apprentice mechanic from Bordertown, has been named South Australia's Young Rural Ambassador for 2017.

Representing the Mundulla Agricultural, Horticultural & Floricultural Society (A, H & F) and the South East and Border Show Association, Lachy was named the winner at the Young Rural Ambassador Award State Final by the Agricultural Societies Council of South Australia at Rydges South Park Adelaide on Friday night.

Lachy began a school-based Agricultural Mechanical Apprenticeship at Wise Farm Equipment where he is currently employed as well working at the local hardware store and running his own lawn mowing round. His hobbies include collecting and restoring old tractors, cars, engines and machinery and he volunteers at Clayton Farm, a local museum dedicated to restoring and preserving local history.

His involvement at the Mundulla Show includes being an exhibitor since a young age, assisting with the planning, set up and clean up with the trade sites and other areas of the show and taking on the role of Trade Site Convenor next year.

"I am thrilled and looking forward to the opportunities and experiences ahead after winning the state final, like networking with other youth and increasing my confidence in public speaking," he said.

"Over the next 12 months I hope to attend as many country shows as I can and bring back ideas to my own show."

Rebekah Starick from Central and the Angaston A, H & F Society was named runner up and is currently studying a Bachelor of Agricultural Science. After the completion of her degree she plans to work in agronomy and encourage more young women to enter the agriculture industry. She has exhibited and assisted with the cookery section for a number of years and recently created the Home Brew Section at her show.

"I hope to use this as a platform to educate others about the billion dollar industry that is agriculture and associated careers for youth and women," she said.

"I look forward to experiencing other shows, networking with like minded people and learning new things to use at my show."



The other seven finalists were: Ella Kain (South East and Border), Henry Scott (Southern), Stephanie Brownrigg (Yorke Peninsula), Alizah Fogden (Murray Lands), Phoebe Eckermann (Northern), Emily Allchurch (Northern) and Kane Goldsworthy (Eyre Peninsula).

PIRSA Director Agriculture, Food and Wine Justin Ross said the winner and finalists contribute greatly to country shows around the state.

“The State Government is proud to support the Young Rural Ambassador Award, which recognises dedicated and committed young people in the agricultural show movement,” Mr Ross said.

“All the finalists are high achievers keeping actively involved in their local communities’ activities.

“I congratulate the winner, Lachy Johnson from Bordertown, the runner up Rebekah Starick and finalists of this year’s award and look forward to seeing them shine brightly.

“In 2015–16, South Australia’s agriculture, food and wine industries generated \$18.6 billion in revenue, accounted for 45% of the state’s merchandise exports, and employed about 147,400 people or one in five working South Australians.

“The state’s regions are crucial to South Australia’s prosperity, contributing about \$25.4 billion to the state’s economy. They produce about half of our merchandise exports, with just 29% of the state’s population.”

The Young Rural Ambassador Award highlights the importance of youth in rural South Australia, and in particular, the agricultural show movement.

Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) is the main sponsor of the Young Rural Ambassador Award. Other sponsors are the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society Education Foundation, Stock Journal, R.M Williams, the Showmen’s Guild of South Australia and JLT Insurance.

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