



Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



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The Industry Placement Camp

Being accepted into the PICSE Industry Placement Scholarship program was great news for me. The camp was held at Coolum with spectacular views of the Coast. Each day we were charted around the Coast to many different primary industries such as Gourmet Garden, EcoFish and DEEDI, Maroochy Research Station where we met people from many different work backgrounds. We learnt about the history of the industries and the importance of their existence and were involved in many hands on activities. I found the camp really enjoyable, busy, well-organised and full of devoted and enthusiastic people who were all more than happy to share their experiences with students. I really enjoyed getting to know the students while on camp and they were all so friendly and mature young adults – perfect candidates for the scholarships they were chosen to participate in.

My Industry Placement with Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group

While on placement we began to plant trees to finish a revegetation job on a farm to prevent land slippage. The day was hot, very hot and the 40 trees we were intending to plant became 110 trees. The job of an environmental scientist can be very demanding physically when you are working outdoors in the heat and heavy rain. What made it particularly difficult was that the tree guards we were working with were Home Brand cartons with the words 'Orange Fruit Drink' written on them, which I found a little tormenting while working in the hot sun.



I also have an interest in photography so the next day was exciting as we spent the day photo point monitoring five different properties within the catchment area. The photos provide information to compare the vegetation before and after the project work.

LBCCG had been working on the Maleny Dairies property for over a year improving tracks and working to restore water quality within the Obi Obi Creek that runs through the farm. Part of the project at Maleny Dairies involved us collecting samples of macro-invertebrates from the creek. After the samples were collected I was given the job of identifying and naming the critters back at the office.



Macro-invertebrates are analysed to give a better indication of the health of the waterway. Macro-invertebrate data provides more information than a pH because the presence of specific invertebrates (which likely have been in the water for many life cycles) indicates the health of the waterway over a longer period of time.

We used ice-cube trays filled with water to separate the invertebrates after analysing them. Analysing the invertebrates was a long process but it was exciting to find new or different species in the water samples.

How My Placement has Influenced Me

I learnt a great deal throughout my week at Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group with Mark, such as never tell a farmer what to do and close gates on farms at all times. As for future study and career options the industry placement broadened my horizons as to the type of work that goes on for an environmental scientist. Work load consists of compiling reports, assessing and working outdoors and the need for public awareness. Scientists work with farmers to ensure a more sustainable and safer future for our environment and for future generations. As I'm beginning a double degree at the University of the Sunshine Coast, majoring in Environmental Science, my placement with Mark gave me an idea of one type of work that I could pursue when I finish my degree.

Thanks

I would like to thank Sue Lanham, Marina Fitzpatrick and Kristin Mulligan for the hard work and risk they took in selecting me to participate in this scholarship program. I would also like to thank Mark again for his keenness and willingness to share his knowledge and time with me as well as the morning pick-ups and afternoon drop-offs, but also for letting me actually be *involved* with his work, not just watching over his shoulder. Thank you to the rest of the staff at Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group for your friendliness during my time there. Thank you to the Grains Research and Development Corporation and the University of the Sunshine Coast – Faculty of Science, Health and Education.