

The ABCN Scholarship Foundation

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) Scholarship Foundation will award 20 scholarships for disadvantaged students in 2016. The ABCN Scholarship Foundation, at the request of our donors, allocates some scholarships in specific categories including Indigenous, refugee, LGBTI and State-based scholarships. The application form seeks to confirm, on a confidential basis, details of a student's eligibility for the general scholarships and the specific scholarship categories. ABCN's key objective is to assist students to overcome various forms of disadvantage and to achieve their full potential. We are delighted that the scholarship program has attracted significant financial support from corporate Australia and has enriched the lives of many disadvantaged students.

Background

The ABCN Scholarship Foundation was established in 2013 to provide scholarships to exceptional, high potential students who face economic, family or social challenges that are impacting on their study or capacity to pursue their desired tertiary pathway. Since 2013, the Foundation has awarded 41 scholarships with 100% of inaugural scholars enrolling in tertiary education in the third year of their scholarship. The Foundation was created as a result of the Australian Business and Community Network's (ABCN) work with disadvantaged schools. Since 2005, over 100,000 students have participated in ABCN programs, with over 33,000 corporate mentors giving their time to support and mentor students. Member companies and individual mentors identified, through their work in schools, the critical need for financial and mentoring support to ensure that high potential students facing disadvantage complete Year 12 and enrol in tertiary education.

The Application Process

School principals submit applications on behalf of students during Term 3 of Year 10. All principals of Australian schools can apply for a scholarship on behalf of a student. School principals assess the applicant's needs, school and academic records. Students are not asked to assess their own disadvantage or answer questions relating to their personal circumstances. There are 24 equity questions relating to the applicant's personal circumstances and any obstacles or adversity they are facing. This information is confidential and is provided at the discretion of the school principal. The equity questions capture information relating to the applicants' level of disadvantage, ensuring the selection process is equitable.

Selection Criteria

All students selected for an ABCN scholarship must fulfil the following criteria:

- They must be facing significant financial and/or social disadvantage
- They must demonstrate outstanding academic achievement
- They must demonstrate leadership qualities and have demonstrated leadership in their school or broader community

In addition, students are required to submit an essay via their School Principal addressing the following topic: *The difference this ABCN scholarship will make to my life and the community around me*

The Scholarships

Scholarship recipients receive financial support for Years 11, 12 and their first year of tertiary education, and participate in a structured mentoring program over three years to develop their leadership skills and enhance their study and career plans. Scholarships awarded in 2016 are for years 2017–2019.

Specific Category Scholarships

In 2016, 5 of the 20 scholarships will be awarded in specific categories. Candidates must meet the above selection criteria before being considered for each of these specific categories.

- 1 student who identifies as Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander
- 1 female student in Victoria
- 1 student from a refugee background
- 1 student who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI)
- 1 student from Western Australia

Each of these scholarships is funded by individual donors or groups who have directed the scholarship to a specific category of recipient. Early in 2016, the Citi Pride network proposed raising funds to support a student identifying as LGBTI, in recognition of additional challenges faced by LGBTI students in their senior years of schooling. The scholarship is funded by individual donations from Citi and other corporate employees, with Citi matching individual donations.