

## Media Release

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### ABCN OPENS APPLICATIONS FOR 2017 ACCELERATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) Foundation is accepting applications for 2017 *Accelerate* scholarships. Applications can be submitted [online](#) until Friday, 11 August.

*Accelerate*, is a three-year mentoring and financial scholarship program for exceptional yet disadvantaged students. The program is open to all Year 10 students who are Australian citizens or permanent residents. Successful applicants receive one-on-one mentoring support from a business leader, coupled with financial aid to support them through Years 11, 12 and their first year of tertiary studies or training. The program has more than quadrupled in size since its launch in 2013.

To date, 62 scholarships have been awarded with another 24 scholarships to be presented to outstanding students this year.

“Students from low SES backgrounds are 40% less likely to complete school than students from more advantaged areas which means they also have a greater risk of unemployment” says Samantha Luck, ABCN’s General and Foundation Manager. “*Accelerate* aims to level the playing field for disadvantaged young people. With the generous support of our donors we are able to help these students prepare for the workforce and life after school’, She adds.

One 2014 Scholar comments, “I knew that I wanted to go to university, but after starting the program and working with my mentor, my aspirations became much clearer. This scholarship has changed my life and helped me to excel in my educational journey”.

Scholarship applications are assessed by the ABCN Foundation’s scholarship selection panel comprised of ABCN staff, Board members and educators against a rigorous set of predetermined criteria. There are various equity questions relating to the applicant’s personal circumstances and any obstacles or adversity they are facing. All applications are submitted by the principal on behalf of the student and are confidential.

Each year ABCN offers a range of targeted scholarships to students who face amplified levels of disadvantage due to their ethnicity, gender, geographical location or identification as LGBTI. Some of these targeted scholarships are sponsored by member companies and donors. Categories for 2017 include Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, female, LGBTI and refugee/new arrival.



Successful recipients are notified in November and attend a scholarship awards ceremony hosted by ABCN in their State.

For more information about the scholarships and application process, please visit:

<https://www.abcn.com.au/scholarship-foundation>

For other information about ABCN and *Accelerate*, please contact:

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### **About ABCN**

The Australian Business and Community Network (ABCN) is a not-for-profit organisation that partners business with education through structured programs, which involve corporate volunteers mentoring students in the workplace. Our goal is to improve the opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

ABCN also awards intensive mentoring and financial scholarships to exceptional students from highly disadvantaged backgrounds through the ABCN Foundation. Scholars receive one-on-one mentoring, professional development and financial assistance over a three-year period.

All ABCN programs encourage the completion of school and an awareness of post-school opportunities. They aim to provide mentoring support, which would otherwise not be accessible, bridging the gap between today's curriculum and tomorrow's jobs.

### **About Accelerate Scholars**

Of the 2016 *Accelerate* applications 98% were from low-SES backgrounds and 45% of those students had suffered trauma. Often there was less than 0.4% difference in disadvantage, between applicants, demonstrating the high level of need.

For 20% of applicants, their parents were unemployed. Others were victims of domestic violence, had parents who were incarcerated and/or perpetual substance abusers – and 3% were living in out-of-home or foster-care arrangements.

By contrast, 100% of these students share one common attribute – despite considerable challenges, their applications and consistent effort at school, demonstrate a deep-seated desire to realise their potential. ABCN mentoring and financial scholarships help them achieve this. Our goal is to continue year-on-year growth to address the ongoing demand for our work.