



**SUPPORTING GLADSTONE'S
BEST AND BRIGHTEST**



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Some of Gladstone's best and brightest have a new helping hand to keep them – and their skills – close to home.

ACCIONA Energía and CQUniversity have joined forces to deliver the CQUniCares ACCIONA Energía Aldoga Solar Farm Higher Education Scholarship program.

The initiative is designed to support education opportunities for students who want to undertake tertiary studies that will benefit the local community.

The \$25,000-a-year Scholarship Program delivers vocational education and training (VET) and higher education scholarships to students wanting to study in the areas of health and education, science, engineering or agriculture.

The first three inaugural scholarships were awarded last month to Tyson Phillips, Matthew Lloyd and Charlie Burge at a special presentation event at the CQUni campus.

Mr Lloyd, who is studying a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) (Major) and Master of Engineering Project Management, said the scholarship will help him purchase tools and parts to prototype a small-scale wind-powered DC generator as part of his studies.

"This generous support will make a meaningful difference to my ability to focus on my coursework and engage fully with my learning," he said.

"It allows me to devote more time and energy to developing the skills and knowledge I will need to contribute to the engineering profession — particularly in areas of sustainable and renewable energy."

Mr Phillips, who is studying a Bachelor of Psychological Science, said he was grateful to be selected as one of the first scholarship recipients.

"This money will truly make a substantial difference in my life allowing to ease living pressures and continue contributing to my community," he said.

The scholarship program was launched early this year and includes four VET scholarships worth \$2,500 each and three higher education scholarships worth \$5,000 each.

CQU and ACCIONA Energía will award the scholarships annually until 2029 to recipients living in the Gladstone, Mount Larcom and Yarwun areas.

A HELPING HAND TO STAY LOCAL

ACCIONA Energía's Queensland Community and Stakeholder lead, Renee Mooney, said the scholarship program was designed to encourage students to stay local.

"ACCIONA Energía is pleased to be able to provide meaningful support to local Gladstone students to help them stay close to home to pursue their university or TAFE studies," she said.

"We hope this program will encourage more school leavers to stay in Gladstone and help create a legacy of skilled and qualified young people in the region."

Rod Ainsworth, Associate Vice-President of CQUniversity's Gladstone campus said,

"CQUniversity is incredibly proud of this partnership with ACCIONA Energía and of the inaugural recipients of the scholarships; Tyson, Matthew and Charlie"

"This is a great demonstration of the power of the local university and industry working together to make a difference to students' lives – to genuinely support 'growing our own' workforce," Mr Ainsworth said.

ACCIONA Energía and CQUni will continue to work closely with local high schools to adapt and facilitate the program to meet local needs.

The scholarships were provided as part of the Aldoga Solar Farm's \$120,000-per year community benefits program.

The program includes the annual Small Grants Program to support local not-for-profit organisations as part of ACCIONA Energía's commitment to the long-term future of communities around its renewable energy projects.

The Aldoga Solar Farm also launched a Legacy Investment Program this year to provide grants of up to \$40,000 a year towards projects that will deliver a lasting impact to the Gladstone community.

The inaugural legacy grant was awarded to the Strong Communities – Calliope Community Hub project to support the transformation of the historic Calliope RSL Memorial Hall into a vibrant community hub.

REMEMBERING DAVID CASEY

One of the scholarships awarded last month is of special significance to the Aldoga Solar Farm team.

The CQUniCares ACCIONA Energía David Casey Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Charlie Burge to support his Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) and Diploma of Professional Practice (Co-op Engineering) studies.

The scholarship was established in memory of David Casey, a member of Economic Development Queensland, who was heavily involved in the development of the Aldoga Solar Farm.

EDQ A/CEO Julian Simmonds said,

"By all accounts, David Casey was a wonderful character who brought energy and passion to everything he did – his genuine commitment for Gladstone has left a lasting impression on our EDQ team and the broader local community."

"Because of David's legacy and through our partnership with Acciona, it's rewarding to see the community grants program supporting local students and local projects long term. We congratulate the inaugural scholarship recipients and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will have on the Gladstone region."

Mr Casey passed away in October 2020 after a 20-year career in the Queensland public service.

The scholarship, named in his honour with his family's permission, recognises David's critical role in the early stages of the Aldoga Solar Farm.

ALDOGA SOLAR FARM

Construction on the \$500 million 480MWp solar farm began in April 2024.

During construction, more than 350 workers were employed and up to \$150 million in goods and services were sourced from local businesses and suppliers.

"We engaged more than 40 local businesses during the project, from catering provided by Gladstone Fruit Shop to Potable Water supplied by Gladstone Water Haulage," Ms Mooney said.

"We also set up an online employment hub to help locals and contractors find work and were pleased to be able to provide opportunities for local workers."

The project also built on ACCIONA Energía's strong history of sustainability and innovation, using more than 500km of recycled cable coverings from Plastic Forests, an award-winning Australian manufacturer of recycled plastic products made from 100% soft plastics.

ACCIONA Energía also worked with Australian manufacturer Orrcon Steel to incorporate locally produced steel components for the solar panel mounts.

"We are proud of the work we have done in the Gladstone community to help leave a positive legacy for the Aldoga Solar Farm," Ms Mooney said.

"That work continues each year through our community grants, initiatives like the higher education and VET scholarships and our Workplace Volunteer Program.

"Aldoga Solar Farm employees started the program run by NFP House to offer their skills to help build regional capacity and support not-for-profit organisations locally."

The Aldoga Solar Farm is expected to be fully operational in the coming months.

