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NEWS

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Goobang Group gives back to community

Farmers affected by the devastating bushfire that escaped from the Goobang National Park at Yeoval in December 2001 will present the Goobang Fire Scholarships at the NSW Farmers' Association's Annual Conference next week.

NSW Farmers' Association Rural Affairs Committee Chair Alan Brown says four scholarships are being offered by the Goobang Group this year as part of the Association's Tertiary Scholarship Program.

"The scholarship program aims to encourage young people studying in various fields to return to rural NSW and use their skills to strengthen regional communities," Mr Brown said.

"The addition of the Goobang Scholarships has extended the program, which has been great. Application numbers this year were very high," Mr Brown said.

Goobang Group Spokesman Trevor Coady said the small group of farmers affected by the bushfire set up the fund to show their appreciation for the support they received from the local community in the months following the fire.

"Those affected by the fire received an enormous amount of help and support from the local and broader communities. People from near and far helped dispose of burnt livestock, donated fodder and feed, helped to reestablish fence lines and to get farms up and running again," Mr Coady said.

"Following mediation with the State Government in December 2006, the nine plaintiffs involved set up the fund as our way of saying 'thank you' and to give something back to the community and the NSW Farmers' Association," Mr Coady concluded.

Four Goobang Fire Scholarships will be offered each year for seven years.

The NSW Farmers' Association Tertiary Scholarship program includes a total of eight scholarships worth \$5000 each, including a new memorial scholarship in honour of the former long serving NSW Farmers' Association Chief Executive, John White.

Federal Agriculture Minister Peter McGauran will announce the winners at the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference at Sydney Showground, Hall 2A at 11:30am.

The Goobang Group is made up of farmers who suffered huge losses of stock and farm infrastructure in a bushfire at Goobang, near Parkes in central western NSW, in 2001.

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