

As the Hurlstone Agricultural High School, School Captain for 2008 and Vice Captain of Hurlstone Boarding School I welcome the opportunity to address you all here today. It is extremely heartening to see such an enthusiastic gathering of Hurlstone's Supporters.

I too am extremely passionate about Hurlstone and I would like to share with you how this passion has evolved and how it is now shaping my future. I maintained our strong family tradition with Hurlstone, which now spans over 20 years, by following my two older brothers, who are also proud to be called Hurlstonians. For your interest my older brother Troy, is the manager of the Northern Australian Cattle Company, which exports 160-180 000 head of live cattle per year through the ports of Darwin, Townsville, Wyndam, Broome, Port Headland, Geraldton, Freemantle, Adelaide and Brisbane.

I have been fortunate to be able to seek and embrace many of the opportunities Hurlstone offers and I am confident that these experiences have helped me develop the knowledge and qualities I need to stand before you here today.

This year I have been president of Hurlstone's Rural Youth Association. Being an Active member of Rural Youth since 2003 I have been proud to represent Hurlstone by participating in the Camden Shows and living in at the Sydney Royal Agricultural Shows with Hurlstone's very successful Aryshire Cattle Team. I was a member of Hurlstone's successful State Dairy Challenge Team in both 2006 and 2007 at the Sydney Royal.

It is a fact that Hurlstone is the only NSW School that exhibits Dairy Cattle at the Royal.

Last year I successfully negotiated the donation of 2 tons of cattle feed from Riverina Stock feeds and with the help of Shorthorn cattle breeder, Ian McDoull I raised my own steer here at Hurlstone. Along with Hurlstone's keen Show Team members we took our steers to Dubbo National Steer Show. The steer I successfully raised on the Hurlstone farm came second in the highest pure breed weight class.

I have also won a second placing in the Dubbo National Junior Judging in 2006 and Intermediate judging in 2007. This is a 4 hour competition which starts off with 150 students, just as keen as myself, and requires knowledge, judgment skills, written reports and public speaking. All of these skills I learnt and practiced here on Hurlstone's farm.

This opportunity to demonstrate practical knowledge and skills about beef cattle is repeated every year at the Dubbo National Steer Show by a whole team of enthusiastic Hurlstone Students. Its hard work but the teamwork required certainly is character building and very different to trying to learn about it whilst sitting at a school desk.

I'm sure you can see Rural Youth involvement helps students like myself maximize the learning experiences and life skills offered to us through the existence of the Hurlstone Farm. Removing the farm removes the opportunity for future students to show cattle at future Agricultural Shows.

I have greatly enjoyed studying Agriculture and the Vocational Education and Training subject, Primary Industries. Earlier this year I was awarded the regional Vocational Educational and Training Award for Vet Student of the Year for South Western Sydney. For this Award I competed against many thousands of students from Picton to Strathfield to Parramatta.

I then competed at the State level and was awarded the 2008 Vocational NSW School Student of the Year Runner up Prize. Furthermore I am now nominated for the Australian Vocational Student Prize for 2008, with the possibility of receiving the Prime Minister's Award for Skills Excellence in School.

My own Primary Industries Workplace experience at Killara Feedlot at Quirindi further demonstrated to me the advantages of networking and linking with higher tertiary institutions. Killara Feedlot works in tandem with the University of New England Co-operative Research Centre carrying out valuable research for our cattle industry. I see no reason why Hurlstone could not be involved with similar institutions here.

By choosing to study Agriculture and Primary Industries for my HSC. I was confident the Hurlstone Farm could provide me with all the resources and hands on experiences necessary to pass all the Competencies required to gain my Certificate II in Agriculture whilst still here at School.

For Primary Industries it was possible to practice many invaluable life skills including occupational health and safety procedures, safe handling practices, shearing, quad bike riding, welding, fence repairs and Dairy work.

These skills not only make me employable but throughout the entire Agriculture and Primary Industries Curriculum we also keep a global perspective and the importance of efficient, sustainable farming methods is always emphasized.

The study of Agriculture and Primary Industries also provided me with a solid understanding of the nature of the diverse skills needed by our rural workforce.

The Hurlstone farm offers all students working examples of efficient farm management which they can directly relate back to their textbook learning. I have no doubt that with the right support Hurlstone could become a showplace Working Farm for the entire Sydney Region. A farm where sustainable methods of farm production could be practised demonstrated and studied.

Hurlstone could be a Centre of Excellence that is visited by children from pre-school age to post graduate - aged students. A place the Government could be proud of. A place where ethical, sustainable practices so desperately needed in our State and Country are showcased.

We are encouraged to visit examples of environmentally sound housing designs. Hurlstone could be the rural equivalent, here on the edge of Australia's largest city –

encouraging students of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences with living, working models.

Only this week, on Sydney Radio 2UE our Premier Nathan Rees stated once again that he was only interested in long term solutions. A decision to leave Hurlstone with 20 Hectares is no long term solution.

The Government needs to be advised that 20 hectares is definitely not a working farm. 20 hectares is definitely not a long term solution.

Hurlstone is the only Department of Education, Co – Educational Boarding School in NSW. Hurlstone offers equal opportunity to both boys and girls to learn and study farming practices together. This is a fact that the State Government should be very proud of.

Hurlstone is a wonderful example of equal opportunity to both males and females and is the reason many country families choose to send their children to this school.

Hurlstone is a very unique school in NSW because of its very nature and ongoing commitment to both Agriculture and Multiculturalism with over 30 different cultures being represented in our student enrolment. Two thirds of the students are drawn from metropolitan south west Sydney and one third of my school's students are selected as Boarders from Rural NSW.

The wonderful mix of cultures and backgrounds enable's Hurlstone's students to develop both a city and a country perspective whilst here at this wonderful school. **Such an understanding is critical for all who make decisions about future directions for Australia.**

From 2003 Hurlstone has been my extended Family and community. I have enjoyed representing the students of Hurlstone for 6 years in Student Representative Council meetings at both School and Regional level.

I am sure my Agricultural pursuits and achievements learnt and practised on Hurlstone's farm gave me the confidence to compete and be awarded the 2008 Helen Handbury Leadership Award. This Award is for year 12 students in rural and regional Australia who have shown outstanding community leadership. I was one of four students in Australia to receive this Future Leaders Scholarship Award. I look forward to my prize of an international trip to study community development in another culture in a field related to my University study.

Now in its 101st year Hurlstone has a proud history of producing students who have become strong leaders. Take for example ex-student Alan Trounson – who started out studying sheep embryos and now overseas a \$3 billion stem cell research budget at the Californian Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Alan Trounson's enthusiasm and often unconventional approaches to chronic and life threatening illness and disease affecting

people world wide should be inspiration to us all to dare to question what is considered to be wisdom.

I too hope that I can make a difference as I am a current candidate for being a member of the NSW Government Youth Advisory Council for 2009.

This week in The Australian Newspaper, Dennis Shanahan quoted Tony Burke, our Federal Minister for Agriculture as insisting “that we must now look toward long term solutions, for even though we as a Country, have improved technology, better farming practices, plant breeding and food distribution systems we are constrained by limited available agricultural land and shrinking water resources”. So don’t reduce or Agricultural Land here. Think of its potential as a Learning Centre.

Penny Wong, the Federal Water Minister is also under pressure. The Federal Government is beginning to realize that short term decisions to buy back Water Entitlements has been at the expense of helping farmers stay on their land and produce food more efficiently by saving water.

We don’t need a short term decision made about Hurlstone’s future because the Government might not be able to give back what it takes from us. The damage will be done as the houses encroach upon the School.

Food Security - that is the ability to supply food not only for ourselves but also for countries that can’t produce enough food themselves, is rapidly overtaking the discussions about green house gas emissions in our Federal Government. Environmental Minister Peter Garrett emphasized this week that Food Security is a big ethical issue for us all.

By having experiences on the Hurlstone Farm we can be sure not only country students but many city children, who might never ever have the opportunity to visit a farm elsewhere in their lives are sufficiently inspired to embrace a future involved with Agriculture.

My future goal is to study Agricultural Economics at Sydney University so that one day I too can make a difference by influencing the quantity or quality of some aspects of food or animal production and it’s more equitable distribution to the communities of the world.

We are all morally and ethically bound to considering the best use of the resources we have left here in Australia. So don’t waste Hurlstone’s potential to teach us more about the best long term decisions that we need to make.

Lloyd Setter.

22/11/08