

# Cash for Caring

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By Daniel Birchfield

Waitaki Girls' High School pupil Ashleigh O'Connell has been named the first recipient of the North Otago Irrigation Company (NOIC) tertiary scholarship. Ashleigh, a year 12 student, was presented with a cheque for \$500 at NOIC's annual meeting on November 7. The scholarship was established to promote environmental management and stewardship among young people.

NOIC chief executive officer Robyn Wells says Ashleigh was the ideal recipient of the scholarship for having a goal of "leaving the land in a better state than I received it, for a continuation of New Zealand's clean, green philosophy."

Ashleigh has had an interest in agriculture sector for many years, specifically around sheep and beef farming. She has been a boarder at the school for three years. Ashleigh has been actively involved in various academic and sporting fields, such as being vice-chairperson of the Young Farmers Club, school librarian; and the recipient of this year's Duke of Edinburgh Silver. A talented netball player, she is also a qualified netball umpire. After the completion of her studies this year, Ashleigh is moving on to study Certificate in Agriculture at Telford, followed by a diploma in rural business. She then plans to a management degree at Lincoln University, of which Telford is a part, outside Christchurch. Ashleigh says she is "proud and honoured" to receive the scholarship.

The NOIC tertiary scholarship is open to high school pupils around North Otago or pupils with family from North Otago but boarding elsewhere. The scholarship is to be presented annually.



Ashleigh O'Connell at the NOIC Board Room