

La Trobe University Industry Research Scholarship Farm-scale Natural Capital Accounting – soil biology

\$Amount *

28,597 per annum

Amount footnote

Per annum, for three and a half years.
Fee relief additional.

How is it paid? (e.g. fortnightly stipend, lump sum, etc)

Fortnightly stipend

Total places available*

One

Start date 1st February 2021

End date 11th March 2021

Scholarship information (background)*

'Natural capital' conceptualises nature as a set of assets including stocks of renewable resources such as clean air, water, soil and living things. These natural capital assets produce ecosystem services that have value because they benefit society. Natural capital accounting is the process of measuring changes in these stocks and associated flows to ecosystem services with the goal of enabling farmers to record and manage the natural capital on their farms.

This project offers a full PhD scholarship to an outstanding candidate with a suitable background in soil science, ecology, environmental microbiology and/or agricultural science to examine the relationship between on-farm natural capital associated with soils, soil microbiology and soil-related ecosystem services such as water use, water storage and carbon sequestration. A deeper understanding of how soil biology generates and impacts natural capital will contribute to holistic and sustainable soil management practices in agricultural systems.

This Industry PhD Research Scholarship has

been established by La Trobe University in partnership with Odonata Foundation and is part of a larger study of farm-scale natural capital accounting across 50 farms in NSW, Vic and Tas. The successful applicant will join a multidisciplinary team of researchers quantifying the importance of natural capital for agricultural production at the farm-scale across south-eastern Australia. The PhD candidate will be based at La Trobe University (Bundoora) and will spend time on farms in Victoria and NSW, and work closely with our industry partner, Odonata Foundation, in promoting sustainable farming and unlocking the value of nature for agriculture.

Benefits of the scholarship include:

- a La Trobe Research Scholarship for three and a half years, with a value of \$28,597 per annum, to support your living costs
- a fee-relief scholarship for up to four years
- relocation allowance and publication/thesis allowance
- operating funds included (as part of larger project)
- opportunities to work with La Trobe's outstanding researchers, and have access to our suite of professional development programs
- opportunities to work as part of a larger project with exposure to network of professional organisations in the field of sustainable agriculture

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for this scholarship, applicants must:

- have completed a Masters by Research or other significant body of research,

such as an Honours research thesis or lead authorship of a peer-reviewed publication, assessed at a La Trobe Masters by research standard of 75 or above

- not be receiving another scholarship greater than 75 per cent of the stipend rate for the same purpose
- be an Australian and New Zealand citizen or Australian permanent resident (optional)

In selecting the successful applicant, we will prioritise applications from candidates who:

- will be enrolled full-time and undertaking their research at a La Trobe University campus
- has a relevant background in soil microbiology, soil/agricultural science or ecology.
- can work independently as well as in a team, show a high level of initiative and collaboration, and have good communication skills
- have a valid driver's licence
- have good quantitative skills (desirable)
- have experience working with farming communities (desirable)

The candidate will be trained in the following areas: Field-based experimental design, multivariate statistics, molecular techniques, bioinformatics, programming in R. Previous experience in these areas is not critical but prior exposure to one or more is advantageous, please highlight any experience you have in your cover letter.

How to apply* If you wish to apply for this scholarship, please contact Dr Jim Radford (J.Radford@latrobe.edu.au) for preliminary discussion. Once you obtain in-principle agreement for you to apply, follow [Step 3 on our research application page](#) – please ensure you submit a full application for scholarship and candidature by March 11, 2021. **Please**

address each of the eligibility criteria in a statement accompanying your application.

Please note: As part of your application you are not required to identify a potential supervisor – Dr Jen Wood is the designated supervisor for this project.

In your application, clearly indicate that you wish to be considered for the La Trobe University Industry Research Scholarship Farm-scale Natural Capital Accounting – soil biology.

Please note that

- a research proposal is not required as part of the application
- the successful applicant will be required to have a police check and WWCC prior to commencing the position (to be paid for by applicant)

Selection process: The University will carefully review your application and consider you for this scholarship.

If you are shortlisted for the scholarship and candidature, you will be invited to an interview with representatives of La Trobe and Odonata.

The final decision will be made based on your application and interview. The successful candidate will be made an offer for candidature and scholarship.

You will be advised of an outcome in March 2021.

It is anticipated that the successful applicant will commence candidature in Semester 1 2021.

Contact name and email*

If you require further information about the scholarship, please contact: Dr Jim Radford (J.Radford@latrobe.edu.au)

If you require further information about the application process, please contact the Graduate Research School at grs@latrobe.edu.au or on (03) 9479 3640.