

Media release

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From fries to forensics, Macca's employee wins scholarship

McDonald's franchisee goes above and beyond to help high school student staff

McDonald's employees in the Far North have been given the opportunity to have their tertiary study costs covered to the value of \$5,000 per year, and the first ever winner has been announced.

Owner and operator of Far North McDonald's restaurants Lynley Reid has awarded the inaugural University/ Polytech Student Scholarship to employee Damia Feisst, an employee at Kaitaia McDonald's who is studying in Auckland.

When Lynley noticed many of the young employees dreamed of tertiary study but were deciding against it, she wanted to help.

"With three restaurants in the Far North region, many young people come to work with me during their high school years," says Lynley. "Financial difficulties meant many very capable high school students felt that they couldn't go on to study out of town at a tertiary level."

McDonald's NZ employs over 10,000 people in restaurants nationwide, and is one of the country's largest employers of youth. The scholarship is exclusively offered to staff of the Far North Group – the collective of Macca's restaurants in the area – with the caveat that the applicant is a current employee and has worked at a Far North McDonald's restaurant since the age of 16.

Damia Feisst met the criteria, and Lynley was thrilled to offer her the scholarship to contribute to her living costs as she begins her studies at the University of Auckland this year.

"There is a fantastic existing McDonald's scholarship but courses are limited to AUT and majority of courses or staff wouldn't fit the criteria, says Lynley.

Damia, who has worked at Macca's for over three years, is studying a Bachelor of Science, with a chemistry and biological sciences double major with the aim to work in forensics.

"I applied for the scholarship as a way to fund my accommodation for my first year of study," says Damia. "I'm so thankful for the contribution from the Far North Group, it will ease the financial burden as I settle in to my coursework and allow me to focus on my studies."

Lynley believes Damia will be the first of many to receive the scholarship, which will be awarded annually.

“We work with so many students through high school, it only makes sense to help them as they continue to their next chapter and do our bit for the next generation.”

Ends

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About McDonald's New Zealand

New Zealand's first McDonald's restaurant opened in Porirua in 1976. Today there are over 170 McDonald's restaurants across New Zealand, 85 per cent of which are owned and operated by local business men and women. The organisation employs over 10,000 people in restaurants nationwide, and is one of New Zealand's largest employers of youth. In 2018 McDonald's spent more than \$170 million with local suppliers, while New Zealand producers exported over \$170 million of food to other McDonald's markets around the world. McDonald's is the primary supporter of Ronald McDonald House Charities New Zealand, who keep families close while their children are in hospital.

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