



PHILLIPA WEEKS SCHOLARSHIP

ANU College of Law announces the 2012 recipient

The ANU College of Law congratulates Sarah Jones, the 2012 recipient of the Phillipa Weeks Scholarship in Law.

Interview with Sarah Jones:

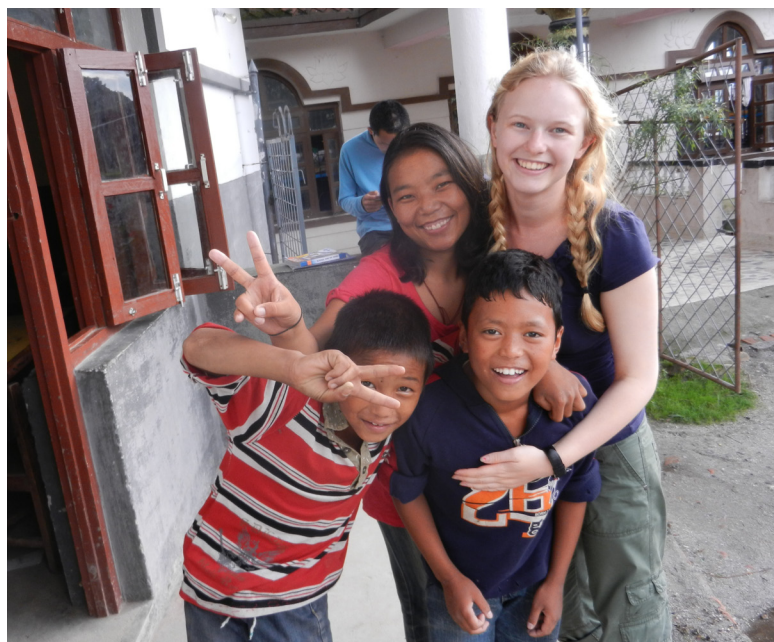
> Can you tell me a little about your background?

I grew up outside Bunbury; located in the southwest of Western Australia, which is primarily a rural area along some of the best coastline in Australia.

I went to primary school and high school in Bunbury both at the local public schools. I did all my high school years at Newton Moore Senior High School which is one of the larger high schools in the area. They had some wonderful programs such as their wetlands environmental program which took me to two national conferences as a speaker at workshops. I also attended Country Week; a state competition for regional schools, as a part of the speech and debating team and later captained the team. The school, although it had great programs and teachers in my year group, had a high drop out rate, which left little choice when it came to selecting WACE courses. In year 12 I had to take History my strongest subject via the School of Isolated and Distance Education which was tough at times but in the end I succeeded as I topped the subject out of all the students taking the course via SIDE.

I was always very active participating in many things but was always on the go doing things whether it be camping and hiking with the Australian Air Force cadets or more recently taking to the air with my private pilots licence as supported by the Air Force and the Australian Womens Pilots Association.

In 2011 I took a Gap year to work and gain valuable life experience. This has allowed me to take on a variety of challenges. I worked initially as a medical receptionist in the largest



radiology department servicing regional patients. In time I took on the sole position of accounts officer at the site which led to me being on a steep learning curve when it came to understanding Medicare as well as the true costs of being seriously ill when you reside outside the metropolitan area. This has created some what of a passion for me as I feel that people in regional areas really have substandard health care compared to their metropolitan counterparts; this is an inequality that I feel strongly about. I have also taken on other challenging roles like being the Ultrasound Clinical Assistant which took me to a front line role when it came to clinical care within the hospital. Working not only gave me a taste of the real world but it gave me the opportunity to go overseas to Nepal in August.

I travelled to Nepal as a volunteer to work at Snowland Ranag Light of Education School. This was one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences I have ever had. I lived with a Nepali family and travelled every day to work on local transport, although I often raised many eyebrows as not too many young Caucasian girls frequented the local minibuses. Snowlands is a school like no other it is full of 150 of the most inspiring children you will ever meet. They all come from the Himalayan region most from the same village of Dolpo. They are abandoned, orphaned or sent to Kathmandu to improve their quality of life. Their lives are basic but that does not dampen their spirit to learn or to continue to overcome whatever obstacles come along. I took part in

teaching classes, getting the kids outdoors and just generally improving their quality of life by providing kindness and support which really acts to boost their often low self esteems. The kids are aged four to seventeen and their lives are a little brighter by what the volunteers do there. I think the greatest impact I left was the material donations I left behind. Four days into working at Snowlands I realised there were severe issues that my presence there couldn't fix. Like most Nepali people they would be severely cold through the harsh winter to come, they didn't have closed in shoes, first aid was basic and one of the greatest issues was that most children suffered malnutrition. On a phone call home feeling a little bit overwhelmed by the reality of poverty in this school my parents with my help reached out to friends, family and colleagues to try and buy shoes for our Snowlands kids. Five days later I got a call saying that our fund raising efforts had raised \$2,700. I soon realised that we could buy a lot more than just shoes. On my last day at snowlands I handed out 150 pairs of sneakers, 164 pairs of thermals and 450 pairs of socks. By far the biggest influence was the money we left behind as the kids now enjoy fruit and curd once a week which has really been a great boost to their health.

This year has also allowed me to complete my private pilots which I have been working towards for the last two years. I was able to finally complete it with the aid of the Australian Womens Pilots Association which I am a member of. The AWP in 2011 selected me to be the editor for the WA branch publications that has led to me writing state newsletters as well as contributing articles to the national magazine Airnews. This involves ensuring all women aviators across WA have access to information within a group of like-minded individuals especially when it comes to an often male dominated industry and community. I have been involved in disseminating important state information, submitting numerous articles to Airnews the national magazine, organising a fly-in fundraising event as well as helping organising the National Annual General Meeting. My role in this organisation I believe is particularly important in the context of Western Australia due to female pilots often residing in some of the remotest areas as my role acts to help them feel supported no matter what issues they are facing.

No matter what the challenge has been this year or in the past; whether it has been tackling the oddities of Nepal, struggling with cushions and severe vertical challenges when it comes to flying, serious neurosurgery or six WACE exams

I tend to take things in my stride and as most people attest to there is never a challenge I don't take on without a smile on my face.

> What does it mean to you winning this scholarship?

This scholarship will help me so much in financing University however its value is not just fiscal but also is a great privilege to be representing ANU Law as well as the memory of Phillipa Weeks. From what I have been able to ascertain Phillipa was a great ambassador for law as well as being a truly inspirational leader in her field and this makes me proud to be representing her in this way.

> What do you plan to study at ANU? (If a double degree - what is your other degree)

I plan to study a double degree of Law and Arts majoring in both Political Science and International Relations and ANU is definitely the place to do it.

> Why have you chosen law?

Law is something that I can use to harbour change in the future. It is a degree which is flexible and provides me with many pathways for future careers. The subject of Law is a challenging and rewarding choice I believe as it can take you in many directions to act to change whether it is in a court room or in international relations. It is this diversity that interests me most as well as having the ability to influence positive change.

> What are your ambitions, hopes and dreams etc in relation to law and your future?

Ideally I would love to work internationally; one of the things that I learnt from my time in Nepal is that western countries have a lot to give when it comes to educating developing countries when it comes to legal and political processes. It is this field that I wish to go in to with either international law or working with the department of foreign affairs and trade. I believe that Australia has a lot to give when it comes to its international role and this role I believe will only become more prominent in Australia's near future.

For more information about Phillipa Weeks and the scholarship created in her memory, please see: [Phillipa Weeks Scholarship in Law](#).