

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) paid study opportunity –  
Commercialisation of native rice for Indigenous enterprise  
development: Agronomy and value-adding**



Charles Darwin University's (CDU) Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL) and the Northern Territory Government (NTG) are offering a scholarship for a PhD candidate to undertake a project, based at CDU's Casuarina campus in Darwin, titled 'Commercialisation of native rice for Indigenous enterprise development: Agronomy and value-adding'.

**Scholarship and financial support:** The successful applicant will receive an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship valued at \$32,192 per annum (from 2024; indexed annually) and an RTP Fee Offset for tuition fees. For further information about the RTP Scholarship conditions for CDU see the [RTP Policy and Procedure](#). For further information on CDU Scholarships please visit [Higher Degree by Research Scholarships at CDU](#). An additional top up scholarship of \$6,000 per annum will be provided by the Future Food Systems CRC, to create a total annual scholarship of \$38,192 per annum (tax exempt), for 3 years from commencement. Open to Australian citizens/residents or New Zealand citizens.

The University will also support Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students by providing RTP Scholarship recipients with a University Relocation Allowance. In 2023, this allowance is up to \$2,000.

**About the project:** CDU and NTG are seeking a PhD student for a project investigating the agronomy and commercialisation of native rice. This project builds on a previous research project, on the 'Commercialisation of native rice for Indigenous enterprise development', which was funded by the Future Food Systems CRC.

This project will investigate agronomic issues associated with planting, nutrition, water efficiency, harvesting and/or milling of Australian native *Oryza* species. There is flexibility in the specific areas of focus, depending on the interests of the student. Project outcomes will support First Nations enterprises interested in the commercialisation of Australian native rice through cultivation.

The opportunity will include a minimum 3-month higher degree by research (HDR) internship with a research end-user to gain industry experience and develop connections. The details of the internship will depend on the final project plan.

**About you:**

The successful applicant must:

- Be an Australian Citizen, an Australian Permanent Resident; or a New Zealand Citizen.
- Meet the [PhD course entry requirements at CDU](#).

**Benefits to you:** This project involves unique experiences, working with an iconic Australian native food plant of cultural significance to First Nations peoples, and global significance as a close relative of domesticated rice. The project is focussed on supporting interested Indigenous enterprises in northern Australia, with access to native *Oryza* populations.

**Essential selection criteria:**

To be considered for this opportunity you should have:

- First Class honours (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline
- Experience and/or qualifications in plant science (agronomy, physiology, genetics or ecology)
- Interest or experience in agriculture and enterprise development in the context of First Nations economic development
- Willingness to be based in Darwin, NT



**RIEL**

Research Institute for the  
Environment and Livelihoods

### **Application process:**

To submit an expression of interest please send the following to Penny Wurm ([penny.wurm@cdu.edu.au](mailto:penny.wurm@cdu.edu.au)) or Sean Bellairs ([sean.bellairs@cdu.edu.au](mailto:sean.bellairs@cdu.edu.au)):

- Brief cover email outlining your interest and relevant experience
- Curriculum Vitae
- Academic transcripts

### **For further information:**

- Visit the project website at [Australian native rice commercialisation](#) for a full list of project partners.
- Contact a member of the CDU team: Dr Sean Bellairs ([sean.bellairs@cdu.edu.au](mailto:sean.bellairs@cdu.edu.au)) or Dr Penny Wurm ([penny.wurm@cdu.edu.au](mailto:penny.wurm@cdu.edu.au)).
- Contact a member of the NT Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade team: Dr Muhammad Sohail Mazhar ([muhammadsohail.mazhar@nt.gov.au](mailto:muhammadsohail.mazhar@nt.gov.au)) or Dr Edward Mwando ([edward.mwando@nt.gov.au](mailto:edward.mwando@nt.gov.au)).

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

At CDU, we actively celebrate our diversity. We innovate, embrace new ideas, and act with courage and kindness. We're about what we can give to the world rather than what we take, and we believe in the transformative power of education. We work hard to make sure every member of our university community feels that they truly belong. Understanding that it is through our focus on our people and leveraging our differences that will make CDU the most connected university in Australia, we are striving to ensure that our culture and our community are inclusive of all our staff, students and visitors. We are committed to maintaining a culture where everyone feels respected, safe, encouraged to speak up and supported in achieving their professional goals.

You make CDU. And we want you to be exactly who you are.