**2019 Graduate Scholarship recipient: Sophie van Dam (WA School Canteens Association)

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**Brief history of myself**

While I have an eclectic array of interests (e.g. ideologies, leadership development and mentoring, health and nutrition), my passion is child and adolescent health, particularly in education-based settings. This interest stemmed from my experience living in East Arnhem Land, attending boarding school in Queensland and having parents as teachers. I was fortunate to see firsthand the importance of a supportive food environment.

At Curtin, I initially completed a Diploma of Nutrition and transition to understanding more preventative approaches to health undertaking the Bachelor’s Degree in Health Promotion. My comprehension of the detriments of health has grown exponentially throughout my studies and has encouraged me to seek co-curricular opportunities to share, support and grow my learning. I previously worked in Curtin University’s Marketing Department as a student ambassador, assistant course advisor and student recruitment officer. I also attended the LEAP Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles, and also to coordinate the AHPA (WA Branch) Student Subcommittee.

**Summary of Scholarship Project**

WASCA has been contracted by the Department of Education and Department of Health since 2006 to support schools implementing the Department of Education’s Healthy Food and Drink (HFD) policy. The policy is based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines, a traffic light system of rating food and drinks according to their nutritional value and the Health Promoting Schools Framework. In 2016, evaluation of the HFD policy showed whilst compliance was high, secondary and regional schools have lower compliance in comparison to their primary school and metropolitan school counterparts.

My AHPA scholarship project aims to identify barriers and enablers towards complying with the policy specifically in WA secondary schools and regional schools. I will be working with the WASCA team developing surveys, conducting focus groups, investigating partnerships and then developing tools and resources that will support schools to take action on nutrition.