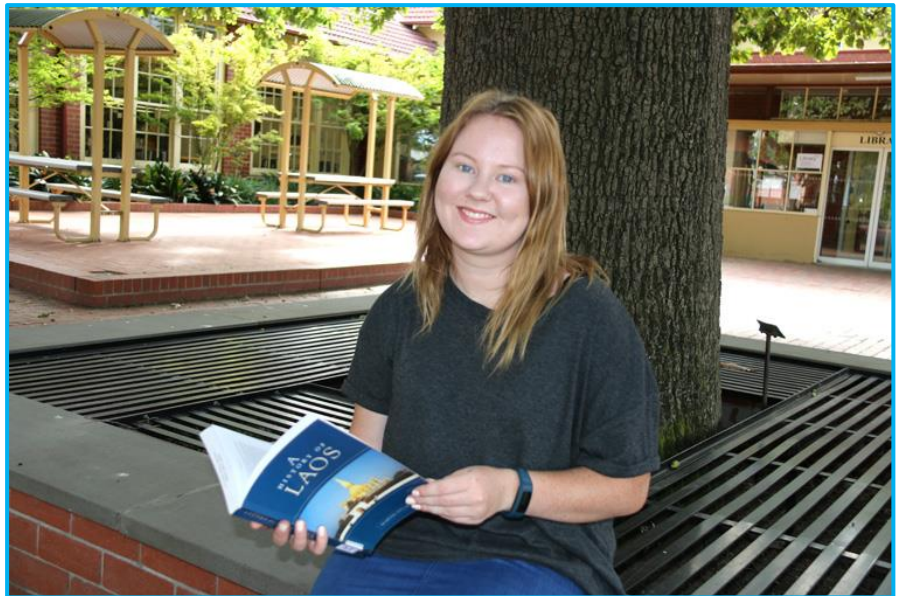


SCHOLARSHIP WINNER EMBARKING ON LAOS TEACHING ADVENTURE



It doesn't get much further from Ballarat than the valley of Luang Prabang in northern Laos, yet this city on the banks of the famous Mekong River will be home for ACU education student Monique Fahey for six months. Leaving in April, the 19-year-old will make the life-changing journey to the Southeast Asian country to teach English as a Youth Global Ambassador for the City of Ballarat, after being awarded the \$3,000 Young People without Borders Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded exclusively to Ballarat residents aged between 18 and 20, allowing the recipient to volunteer in sports coaching, community service or teaching in a range of regions throughout Southeast Asia.

Fresh from completing the first year of her Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree at the ACU Ballarat campus, Monique (pictured right) said she was looking forward to the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity experience to contribute to education in Laos. "I've always had a strong desire to give back to the community. I feel very fortunate in my life that I've been afforded amazing opportunities such as access to education," Monique said. "Then you look internationally to third world countries where life has significantly greater challenges and education is not even an option. As someone who is studying to become a teacher I strongly believe that education is the most important tool to empower people. It's really sad to think that there are people who don't have access to education."



Ballarat Mayor Cr Des Hudson said the Young People without Borders Scholarship was part of the wider Experience Asia program, linking the City of Ballarat with Asia. "The Experience Asia program aims to build stronger links across Asia by creating opportunities for young people to exchange ideas, culture, language and passion with our neighbours in the region," Cr Hudson said.

"Scholarship recipients have the opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge to share with the Ballarat community on their return. The program provides a genuine, unique experience for Ballarat youth as leaders now and into the future to broaden their horizons, explore the world as global citizens and develop international connections for themselves and the Ballarat community."

The Young People without Borders Scholarship is managed by the City of Ballarat's Youth Service team, with the support of the Foundation of Young Australians and facilitated by Global Volunteers International.