



## MEDIA RELEASE

### R.G. Menzies Scholarship Winners for 2026 Announced

The **Robert Gordon Menzies Scholarship to Harvard** is one of Australia's most prestigious national awards for postgraduate study in the United States. Inaugurated in 1967 by prominent Australian alumni of Harvard to honour the Australian statesman and longest-serving Prime Minister, the Menzies Scholarship grants have assisted more than ninety talented Australians to undertake post graduate study in a wide range of disciplines. Our winners this year are no exception.

We look forward to hearing them talk at the upcoming AGM on Tuesday 16th June. Find out a little about both of these outstanding individuals below.

#### Chris Ronan



Chris Ronan is an accomplished educational leader, policy expert, and advocate dedicated to transforming higher education access across regional, remote, and outer suburban Australia. Chris grew up in regional New South Wales and currently resides in regional Victoria. His firsthand experience with the unique challenges faced by non-metropolitan areas has driven a lifelong commitment to ensuring all Australians can access and succeed in higher education, regardless of their postcode.

As the co-founder and co-CEO of Study Hubs Australia, Chris champions a unique shared leadership model that partners with communities, universities, and governments to embed community-led Study Hubs permanently into the national tertiary system. He previously served as the CEO of the Country Universities Centre, where he successfully scaled a local model of regional higher education access into a network of 28 centres supporting thousands of students annually. Chris holds a Bachelor's degree from the Australian National University and a Master of Tertiary Education Management with First Class Honours from the University of Melbourne, where his research specifically targeted regional higher education policy. Chris is a graduate of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian Rural Leadership Program. Demonstrating his ongoing leadership in the sector, Chris has served as President and is the current Vice-President of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia.

Awarded the prestigious R.G. Menzies Scholarship to Harvard, Chris will head to the United States to complete a Mid-Career Master's in Public Administration at the Harvard Kennedy School. He aims to leverage his deep on-the-ground experience into broad-scale policy reform, equipping regional Australians with the skills, leadership, and opportunities required to drive positive change directly within their own communities.

## Effie Tan



Effie Tan is a dynamic Australian leader whose work spans the intersection of economic policy, climate action, and cultural storytelling. Born in Shanghai, China, Effie migrated to Melbourne with her family at age ten. Witnessing firsthand how economic opportunities could transform lives, she pursued a Bachelor of Economics at the University of Melbourne, graduating with High Distinction. She began her career in management consulting at the global firm Bain & Company before transitioning to public service.

At the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Effie worked directly on vital national health reforms. Her expertise earned her a national scholarship to represent Australian youth at the 2022 World Health Assembly. Currently, she works with the Net Zero Economy Authority, helping Australia's coal-dependent regions transition to a net-zero emissions economy.

Beyond her policy work, Effie is a prominent creative voice. She was named a national finalist in "Raw Comedy", Australia's largest open mic competition. Driven to champion representation, she created and hosts the comedy podcast "You Do What?!", interviewing trailblazing women across business, science, entertainment, and politics. As the 99th recipient of the prestigious R.G. Menzies Scholarship, Effie will undertake a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Harvard Business School. She intends to use her time at Harvard to build innovative, commercially sustainable solutions in the traditionally under-researched and underfunded field of women's health and nutrition. She will also be keeping a keen eye out for new material on the Boston stand-up scene.