



Pipeline brings Scottish lad to the Wimmera

The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project has given young Scottish immigrant Ian Spence a chance to pursue his love of the environment.

He moved to Horsham earlier this year after obtaining a position as a graduate environmental officer with GWMWater's pipeline project unit.

Ian grew up on a mixed stock and arable farm in Scotland but has strong ties to Australia as his mother is originally from Pidgeon Ponds, south-east of Balmoral. His love for Australia grew each time he holidayed here as a child.

After he left school, Ian wasn't keen to return to the family farm in Scotland but his agricultural background prompted a strong interest in and love for the environment.

He graduated in Countryside and Environmental Management from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland last year, a course that is similar to natural resource management or environmental management in Australia.

Working at a Scottish golf course over summer gave him an opportunity to investigate employment opportunities in Scotland.

"Being a densely populated country, Scotland doesn't have the range of national parks that Australia enjoys," he said.

"My employment opportunities were limited to a few government departments and agencies, similar to Victoria's Department of Sustainability and Environment."

So with a vision of Australia in mind, Ian saved enough money to travel here and arrived in Melbourne to stay with family last November.

He worked for a property management company for three months but was keen to get into a rural area and work in an environment-focussed role.

While staying with an uncle in Ballarat who used to manage a farm, Ian attended the Wimmera Machinery Field Days in March where he visited the GWMWater site.

He also met Wimmera Grampians Regional Migration Project coordinator Diane Baillie who encouraged him to submit his resume.

"About a week later I received a phone call from pipeline project director Clive Perrett who had obtained the resume from Diane. I drove to Horsham for an interview and was offered a job the next day," he said.

Ian's new job has him communicating with landowners to discuss proposed route changes, weed management and the spread of pathogens. He is also involved in keeping track of the development and implementation of the pipeline's environmental management plan.

"It's great to be involved in such an important regional project," Ian said. "This project will provide many economic and environmental benefits throughout the region; and I am very lucky to be involved in a project that has such an environmental focus."

Ian said he was also really enjoying Horsham's friendly, accommodating people and the rural lifestyle.

He has only one minor gripe: "Everybody thinks I come from Ireland!"

Further information is available by contacting the Horsham Piping It Office on 1300 659 961 or dropping into the office at 42-44 Kalkee Road.

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