

The Sparling Travel Award for Environmental Studies was established in 2019 by Dr Graham Sparling and his wife Ruth Sparling. The Award recognises Dr Sparling's time at the University of Waikato where he enjoyed much interaction with staff and students and held them in high regard.

Dr Sparling was a well-known New Zealand soil scientist and was recognised internationally for his work in soil biology and biochemistry as well as indicators of soil quality and health. After many years with the former NZ Soil Bureau (DSIR), some years at the University of Western Australia, and later with Landcare Research, Dr Sparling decided to follow his personal interests. Dr Sparling was offered a Research Associate position at the then Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences at the University of Waikato. There followed a productive and enjoyable 10 years until he retired in 2017.

An award of up to \$5,000 will be awarded each year among one or more recipients. Scholarships will be awarded to a meritorious student undertaking postgraduate research in environmental sciences who meets the Purpose, and Eligibility and Selection criteria.

The funds are held in trust by the University of Waikato Foundation and the Award will be offered until 2028 when it is anticipated the funds will be fully depleted.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the Award is to support meritorious students to undertake their postgraduate research in environmental studies, with particular emphasis on the science and ecology of soil, by supporting conference attendance and/or other travel of relevance to their postgraduate research; research should be of benefit to New Zealand.

2. Eligibility and Selection Criteria

2.1. To be eligible, candidates must:

- 2.1.1. be enrolled in any level of post-graduate study (preference will be given to those studying full-time, i.e., 120-points);
- 2.1.2. be undertaking research of benefit to New Zealand in the area of environmental studies, natural sciences, or agricultural sciences, **but not** including marine or volcanic studies;
- 2.1.3. be presenting a research paper, or travelling for their research, within 12 months of the scholarship closing date. Retrospective funding will not be available for conference presentations and/or travel that has occurred before the closing date of this award;
- 2.1.4. be a good communicator who contributes to departmental functions (e.g., tutoring, field assistance, etc.) and shows willingness to contribute 'above and beyond';
- 2.1.5. be willing and able to provide a report on the completion of the travel (see Clause 6.2); and
- 2.1.6. be eligible for domestic fees status (i.e., be a New Zealand Citizen, New Zealand Permanent Resident, New Zealand Resident Class Visa holder, or Australian Citizen/Permanent Resident domiciled in New Zealand)

- 2.2. Past applicants and recipients may re-apply, but preference may be given to new applicants.

2.3. **To maintain eligibility**, candidates must:

2.3.1. submit a final report to scholarships@waikato.ac.nz within one month of the conference/travel taking place on the benefits of attending the conference/undertaking the travel and must detail the following which will be imparted to the donor:

- Evidence of presentation at the conference (i.e., presentation time slot; copy of slides);
- Benefit to the recipient of attending the conference (e.g., new academic colleagues, feedback on presentation, awards gained);
- Any other pertinent information.

3. Value, Tenure and Awarding

3.1. The value of the Award will be **up to \$5,000** and will be paid in one lump sum cash payment in full as soon as practicable after acceptance of the Award.

3.1.1. If the Selection Panel finds one or more candidates of sufficient merit they may choose to divide the \$5,000 award among multiple recipients. The allocation of funds to each recipient is at the discretion of the Selection Panel and may be based on considerations such as cost of travel, number of points enrolled in, financial need etc.

3.2. The Scholarship shall have a tenure of one year.

3.3. Successful applicants will be advised of the offer of a Scholarship via their MyWaikato portal and must accept the offer by the prescribed date or the offer will lapse, and the scholarship offered to the next reserve applicant.

3.4. In accepting the Scholarship, the recipient will be deemed to have read, understood, and accepted the conditions of the Scholarship and the [Scholarships Policy](#).

4. Application

4.1. The closing date for applications is **31 May**.

4.2. Applicants should submit the following along with their online application:

- a) A Personal Statement (using the prescribed template), which includes the following:
 - A short statement (maximum 250 words) detailing the postgraduate research topic, its fit to environmental studies, and benefits of the research to New Zealand.
 - A short statement detailing either the name, date and location of the conference, or the travel to be undertaken, and the predicted benefit to the student of attending the conference/travelling (conference attendance may be in person or online).
 - A short statement describing contribution to departmental functions (e.g., tutoring, field assistance, etc.), communication and willingness to contribute “above and beyond”.
 - A budget of estimated costs and how these will be met through this Award or any additional funding gained.
 - For only those applicants seeking conference funding, they must also include an outline (draft is permissible) of the paper/presentation to be offered at the conference.
 - Agree to provide a report at the completion of the travel (see Clause 2.3.1).
- b) As part of the application process, the candidate must also request the submission of a confidential academic reference, attesting to the academic and research strengths of the applicant, and their involvement in departmental activities.

5. Selection Panel

5.1. The Selection Panel will comprise the Chair of the Scholarships Committee (in the Chair) or nominee, a member of the Development Office nominated by the Chair of the Scholarships Committee, and an academic nominated by the Chair of the Scholarships Committee who undertakes research in environmental studies, natural sciences and/or agricultural sciences.

5.2. The Selection Panel may refrain from making a recommendation if it finds no candidate(s) of sufficient merit.

The Selection Panel's decision is final and no further correspondence will be entered into following the Selection Panel's meeting

6. Other Conditions

6.1. The Award may be held in conjunction with any other scholarship, Award or prize, unless the conditions of the other award preclude this.

6.2. Should a recipient withdraw from any papers, without adding sufficient papers to maintain their enrolment as at the time of award the University may ask for the Scholarship to be repaid.

6.3. Recipients should seek independent financial advice about any tax implications of their Scholarship.

6.4. The Scholarships Committee may terminate this Scholarship at any time, and recoup any funds disbursed, if the holder withdraws from the University of Waikato, brings the Scholarship, University or Donor into disrepute¹, does not meet Clause 2.3.1, or is otherwise not complying with the regulations governing the Scholarship and/or the University of Waikato. The holder of a Scholarship will have the right to appeal to the Scholarships Executive against any decision to terminate the award and/or recoup funds.

6.5. The Scholarships Committee in agreement with the Sponsor has the power to amend or vary these regulations provided there is no departure from the main purpose of the Scholarship. By accepting the offer of an Award, the recipient agrees to participate in any publicity concerning the Award arranged by the University of Waikato.

¹ See [Code of Student Conduct](#).