

19 October 2025

Gina Rinehart backs next generation in agriculture

Mrs Gina Rinehart AO, Executive Chairman of Hancock Prospecting, has helped transform life for Australia's future agriculture leaders with the opening today of a new student accommodation centre at Marcus Oldham College in Geelong.

Named in honour of both sides of Mrs Rinehart's family, Nicholas from her mother's side and Hancock from her father's side, both of whom were pioneering agricultural families, Nicholas Hancock House is a \$11.3 million, 45 bed student accommodation facility officially opened today at the College by the Hon. Adam Giles, Chief Executive Officer of Hancock Agriculture on Mrs Rinehart's behalf.

Based in the coastal city of Geelong, Marcus Oldham is Australia's only independent tertiary institution offering agriculture and agribusiness degrees to students from across the country.

This new residence means every student now has the opportunity to live on campus, something Marcus Oldham has not been able to offer until now. Its model is unique in that students remain with the same cohort throughout their degree.

Marcus Oldham Chairman Rob McGavin, an alumnus and co-founder of Cobram Estate Olives, said extraordinary philanthropic support led by a large gift from major donor Mrs Gina Rinehart AO, was a gamechanger for the College.

"Mrs Rinehart's generous support of the College speaks volumes about her commitment to Australian agriculture and her belief in the importance of educating the next generation of leaders," Mr McGavin said

"I can only imagine how proud her grandparents would be that this building is named in their honour.

"Although the college is based in Victoria, students attend proportionally from every state and territory," Mr McGavin said

"Importantly, they are returning to every corner of Australia with their newfound business skills to contribute to this great country that relies so heavily on regional Australia.

"Thanks to the incredible support from Mrs Rinehart and so many other friends of the College who gave so generously, it's the first time in more than a decade, all 195 Marcus students can now live on campus, which has always been a key ingredient of our success.

"Marcus Oldham is a charity that receives zero government funding. This help ensures its continued independence and success," Mr McGavin said.

Mrs Rinehart said she was proud to continue to support the agricultural industry, saying: *"agriculture has been at the heart of our country and of my family for generations. Supporting young Australians with facts, common sense and truth to build their futures in this essential industry is an investment in the future of our nation, and its continued food and fibre self-sufficiency."*

“As the world faces rising demand for food and fibre, it is critical that our governments do not bring in bad policies and excess regulations to stifle our agriculture industry. I hope Marcus Oldham is a place where truth and facts, common sense and reasoning flourish—and leaders can be grown.

“Nicholas Hancock House will give students from across the country the opportunity to live and learn together, towards supporting our agriculture industry, an important industry for our country that they will need to learn that they must stand up strongly for.”

James Bufton, Chair of the College Foundation which drove the ambitious capital campaign to raise the funds, reminded guests that Marcus Oldham does not receive government funding, which is central to its independence and sole focus on student outcomes.

“Every building at Marcus Oldham has been funded through the generosity of others, and we thank all our donors. Nicholas Hancock House reflects that tradition and stands as a legacy of our alumni, industry partners and supporters who are shaping the future of Australian agriculture.”

Sam Hector (student from WA) said *“Having Nicholas Hancock House will make such a difference to our time at Marcus. We won’t just be classmates — we’ll live, eat and learn together, which will bring us really close as a group. We’ll pick up so much just from the people around us, whether it’s a chat over dinner or studying together late at night. It’ll help us become more confident and better prepared for whatever comes next. The friendships and lessons we build there will stay with us long after we leave campus.”*

Finally, **Andrew Baker, Marcus Oldham College Principal** added: *“living on campus is central to the Marcus Experience, where learning extends to the common rooms, dining rooms and corridors.”*

– Ends –

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