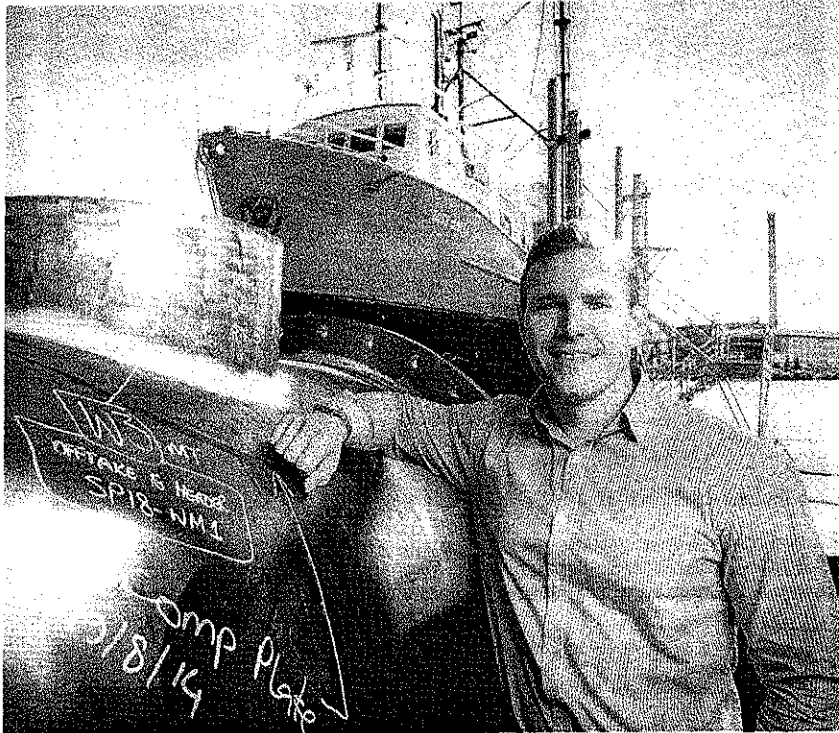


# Fund gives career lift to stars of industry



ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE: Emilio De Stefano, general manager of Smart Fabrication.

## CHRISTOPHER RUSSELL

BRIGHT stars among the state's industrial leaders will be given a career lift thanks to study grants awarded last night.

A record \$392,000 has been awarded by the Industry Leaders Fund to 33 candidates to enable them to study at Harvard, Stanford and Oxford as well as UniSA, Adelaide and other institutions.

Recipients include internet entrepreneur Vanessa Picker, metal manufacturer Emilio De Stefano, food maker Claude Cicchiello and electricity infrastructure builder Meagan Franklin.

The Industry Leaders Fund is an independent, private sector body which aims to lift the standard of business leadership in South Australia.

Chief executive Geoff Vogt said the 33 grants were chosen from a competitive field of more than 80 applicants.

They were selected as leaders with flair in entrepreneurship, innovation and professional skill and who have a passion to improve themselves, their companies and the state.

"I've been quite amazed at what people are doing," Mr Vogt said.

"Some of them are operating in very competitive markets against imports.

"There's Andrea Mead at Heatlie Engineering which makes barbecues, or Country Blinds, where Rhett Payne has taken over from his father and grown the business from working out of a small shed into a medium-sized company with 20 employees.

"Then there's Patrick Power, founder of PowerHealth Solutions.

"Thanks to Patrick's vision and commitment, PowerHealth is now an award-winning company employing 50 people and offering a suite of fully integrated hospital and health software solutions.

"Over at Saab Australia,

Derek Rogers is heading up a global project for the defence manufacturer developing a boat that's the maritime equivalent of aircraft drones."

The Industry Leaders Fund has been providing grants since 2009 using earnings from endowments and capital which came from a defunct engineering employers' training scheme.

This year's grants take the total number of recipients to 66 and the funds allocated to \$847,000.

Vanessa Picker will receive \$20,000 toward a leadership program at Oxford University.

Ms Picker, who was Young South Australian of the Year in 2013, is co-founder and chief executive of FitUsIn, an online booking platform for short-term gym memberships. The company began in Adelaide,

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was helped by an ANZ Innovoz grant, and has expanded nationally.

"Because it's at an exciting stage, everything I learn over in England I can integrate back into FitUsIn straight away," she said.

Emilio De Stefano is general manager of Smart Fabrication in Port Adelaide and Islington. He will study at Stanford Graduate School of Business in the US.

Smart Fabrication has diversified from basic metal manufacturing into supplying into defence and the resources sector, especially oil and gas.

Under guidance from consultant Goran Roos, it has diversified into services such as quality assurance.

"We also attribute our success to having a culture where we don't do average," Mr De Stefano said. "Average just isn't good enough."

## THE GRANTS

Recipients of grants are:

**Simon Atterton**, International Cleaning Services

**Dr Sarah Cannard**, Nova Systems

**Neil Gibbins**, Beach Energy

**Meagan Franklin**, Cowell Electric Supply

**Emilio De Stefano**, Smart Fabrication

**Claude Cicchiello**, La Casa Del Formaggio

**Michael Harrold**, Glen Carron

**David Hart**, Dematec Group

**Jeremy Hawkes**, Bowhill Engineering

**Carl Heyne**, Heynes Nurseries

**Kris Lloyd**, Woodside Cheese Wrights

**Andrew Kay**, Wirra Wirra Vineyards

**Anne Hinton**, TGR BioSciences

**Melanie Malig-Spranz**, B.-d. Farm Paris Creek

**Josephine Hugman**, Redarc Electronics

**Joe Matto**, Quality Plastics

& Tooling

**Johnathon Matthews**, The Pipette Company

**Andrea Mead**, Heatlie Engineering

**Vanessa Picker**, FitUsIn

**Rhett Payne**, Country Blinds

**Ben Olsen**, Re-Timer

**Stephanie Morris**, Home Support Services

**Peter Piliouras**, On The Run, Shahin Enterprises

**Patrick Power**, PowerHealth Solutions

**Benjamin Radford**, Rockford Wines

**Derek Rogers**, Saab Australia

**George Ujvary**, Olga's Fine Foods

**Cher Min Teo**, Nova Systems

**Jon Seeley**, Seeley International

**Grant Schroeder**, Maric Flow Control Australia

**Michael Ward**, Jubilee Almonds

**Ben Wigzell**, Australia Milling Group

**Grant Wilkens**, Discovery Holiday Parks Group



Claude Cicchiello