



About Otago

Mō Ōtākou

Continuing the legacy

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The Waikato-raised student says receiving one of the 2022 scholarships was a surprise and a huge honour.

It's always a win when a young woman realises her dream and has the support of other women to make it a reality. For Tania Dalton Foundation Scholarship recipient Atareipounamu Crown, this is how things are coming together.

The Scholarship, set up in memory of Kiwi sportswoman Tania Dalton, is awarded to 12 young sportswomen each year. It provides financial assistance and mentoring to talented sportswomen, encourages them to make a difference to their communities, and continue Tania's legacy in future generations.

The Waikato-raised student says receiving one of the 2022 scholarships was a surprise and a huge honour.

"I found out at the end of last year that I had received the scholarship. I feel special because not everyone gets it. You get all this support from the Tania Dalton Foundation. What they've done for so many girls is awesome and I'm really excited to be part of that.

I was nominated by Waikato Rugby last year and shortlisted. We had a bunch of interviews and then 12 girls out of the country were selected."

The Health Sciences First Year student has big plans which include studying Dermatology and eventually representing New Zealand in rugby at a national level.

"While I'm in Dunedin I'll be playing for the University Rugby team. I wanted to study at Otago as it offers a real student-life and the courses I want to set myself up. I had some contacts down here for rugby as well. Our season starts in April and I'm really excited. I haven't been on the field since October last year. I eventually want to make the Black Ferns - that is my main goal in my sport career.

Alongside her recent scholarship award, Atareipounamu has had quite the success streak in leading the way for other women in rugby and academia. She was head girl at her high school in 2021 and was selected to play in the New Zealand Under-18 Māori Ngā Māreikura team.

Atareipounamu hadn't always planned on being a rugby player and at first didn't even like rugby, but things changed in high school.

"I started playing three years ago in year 11 at Te Awamutu College. When I started I really didn't like Rugby. I mean I was good at it so I thought maybe I could create a dream out of it. I think whatever you dream about - you can do. It's now the one thing that keeps me grounded. Staying active in sports keeps me balanced out with my academics."

To other young sportswomen who have a dream of taking their sporting passion to the next level, Atareipounamu's advice is simple.

"Make the most of it. Take every opportunity, the more you put in the more you get back."

You can see Atareipounamu alongside her team members as they take to the field later this year.

Kōrero by Internal Communications Adviser, Chelsea McRae