



Harvest insider: Nicole Starkey

Viterra Karoonda group

Head Classifier

I first started as a harvest worker in the 2015/16 harvest at our Apamurra site as a classifier. I enjoyed it so much that I returned the following year for the 2016/17 harvest and was then kept on as a permanent staff member.

To me harvest is the best time of year. We have extra staff on site and lots of growers and carriers coming through and we are generally busy. I think we have the best bunch of growers and carriers in the Karoonda group, although I could be biased! You're always guaranteed to have a good chat and a laugh with them and that makes the job so much easier.

Viterra gives staff the opportunity to learn new skills so I was able to step out of the classification office and learn how to operate plant and machinery, load and unload trucks, and fumigate. I have also become a trainer and assessor, so I am able to train other staff and harvest workers joining the business.

My role during harvest

As the Head Classifier, during harvest I can usually be found in the classification office where we are determining the quality and grade of the grain. I oversee the classifying of grain coming in and provide assistance and support for our small teams of classifiers working in the office, whilst also ensuring we work safely and provide excellent customer service to the growers and carriers.

I have enjoyed working at all sites within the Karoonda group between Karoonda, Lameroo and Apamurra. There is a lot of variety and you meet lots of new people. I have also found it is a great way of getting to know people in the community. There is always opportunities for harvest workers to move between sites which is a great learning experience.

I joined Viterra as I lived locally and after growing up on a farm and going for rides in the truck to the silos as a kid, it seemed like something I could have a go at. I thought I might have an advantage coming in with a farming background but there was still heaps to learn and with the in-depth training provided it doesn't matter if you've never seen grain in your life, you'll pick it up very quickly.