



bright future - shining stars

What inspired you to go and do what you wanted to do through high school, 'cause you know, it would have been daunting with all these men dominating Science. What kept you going and inspired you to do it?

Jenny Martin

I just got inspired by being really curious about how things work. I just love finding out how things happen and how our body works, what proteins are involved in the biological processes that allow us to digest food or cause disease and in terms of the men, I mean, I grew up in a very large family of nine people, nine kids and five of them were boys, so it didn't worry me that I was surrounded by boys 'cause that's how I grew up so perhaps that made it a little bit easier, I don't know.

Melissa Griffith

I think I was in my last year of school, I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do and I was still looking at my QTAC form going, what the hell am I going to do? And I had a fantastic maths teacher and he really encouraged me to get involved 'cause he had a daughter doing engineering at the defence force so she was in the army and he said, she's having a really good time and, you know, why don't you give engineering a go? So I just put it on the QTAC form and thought, okay, you know, I'll give it a go and I'll do a year of it at uni and if I really hate it, you know, I'll just drop out, I'll go do something else and I think at that time, I didn't even know really what engineering was and I didn't really know that women didn't really do engineering so it was probably, you know, turning up on my first day and going, ah, about 10 girls out of 400, fantastic. You know, it's alright though, lots of blokes, you know, it could be a positive thing so, but yeah, I sort of fell into engineering and it's worked out.

Miranda Forwood

Yeah, I think I was similar. People say to me, programming, that's not a very girly IT thing to do and I'm like, what? What's the difference? So yeah, it never really occurred to me. I think because I sort of fell into it as well, it wasn't anything I noticed. I mean when I started IT in the first year, I think it was about 60% guys, 40% girls and by the time I got to the end, doing the crazy 3D subjects, it was sort of two girls to 40 guys. But, yeah, I don't know, it doesn't really, it doesn't bother me, I don't notice it but what inspires me to do it? I don't know, it's just fun, like if you enjoy what you're doing, you can see the results in no matter what it is, it's rewarding. I mean I think, I find that with anything, you make something, you build something, design it, find something new, I think we've all got those kind of jobs. It's yeah, it's quite sort of tangible, you can see it, you can touch it, you can, yeah, that's very rewarding and that's what inspires me to do it.

Jenny Martin

And perhaps I can add something else that, 'cause I've been around a lot longer as well I can tell you that it, you know, it's great if you stay in science, but it's not necessarily the case that because you've chosen to go into one science degree or engineering, that you're definitely going to end up doing that. I started off as a pharmacist and I actually wanted to be a vet and I didn't get into vet but I got into pharmacy and then I realised when I was in pharmacy that I would be a hopeless vet, because I can't stand the sight of blood and I can't work on animals and so it's lucky I got into pharmacy.

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But then when I finished pharmacy, I realised that I didn't really like standing behind a counter and doling out pills and telling people what shampoo they should buy, so I thought, I really like understanding how drugs work and I want to make better drugs, I want to make drugs that don't have side effects. So I went back and did a research degree and then went overseas and trained in an area that allowed me to work on drug design so I've ended up being what's called a structural biologist, which is a long way from being a vet and a long way from being a pharmacist but you don't know until the opportunities arise, how to follow your dream or your goal.

Miranda Forwood

I just wanted to say something about that as well. I'll never forget when I was in Year 12, not knowing what I wanted to do, someone came to my school and said, you know, if you don't get the marks that you might need, or you don't know, just get into anywhere and just get into some uni. Like I started out doing an Arts degree, so I could sort of do anything and in that Arts degree, I took Philosophy, I took Maths, I took Cognitive Science, I took IT. It was just all over the shop and I was going to major in Information Management or Cognitive Science or something but just from experimenting and just finding out, you don't have to, I know it's so daunting in Year 12, you just feel like, oh my God, this is what I've got to do, but you can change around. You definitely can and I mean through uni, it'll sort of happen again at the end of uni, you'll be like, oh gosh, what am I going to do now? And I had honestly not considered my job. I didn't say, I'm going to be a mobile phone game programmer, it didn't occur to me. I got an email from one of my lecturers saying, hey, you know, someone's looking for a student to work on this project, and I was like, oh my God, that's awesome, that's exactly what I want to do and I also was up against my friend, who was like the smart one, which was, he was always, you know, really good with the same uni course and that was a bit scary and I think one of the reasons why I got the job was because I think I was so excited about the idea of it and having things like communication skills and being able to work with other people and teamwork, which people say that women are good at, generally they don't want to be stuck in the dungeon bashing away at the keypad all day so and I think that's helped me get my job.



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