



National Science Week 2018

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The fun only begins when we turn on the light

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I always found myself questioning the world around me and simply wanted to know why things were the way they were. As a child I was particularly interested in space and obsessed with animals. Why were birds able to fly and I couldn't?



Having always been obsessed with learning, attending university was my dream. Growing up in North-West Tasmania, my family has always been my biggest influence by always answering the thousands of questions I had. Some of my teachers inspired me by extending and nurturing my passion for science. One of my science teachers, in particular, shared his stories about his former career as industrial chemist and that provided the greatest inspiration.

Through my role in the Young Tassie Scientists program again this year, I want to share the exciting adventure I have had so far. Currently, my research is working on chemical reactions that are promoted by exposure to light. This allows us to control the reaction to form certain molecules that are useful in materials, agriculture and medicine. All this is possible simply by turning on a coloured light! And if we use a blue light we may get a different result to using a green light! I also get to play with circuits and use the physics I have learned to control voltage and energy.

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Science is everywhere and is becoming significant part of our lives and this will extend further in the future. I want to show the next generation how cool science really is and how innovation can solve the problems of the future! Most importantly, I want to demonstrate the importance of diversity and accessibility to science. It takes all kinds of people from all over the world and that is what I love most about being a scientist, being involved in the big picture and essentially being a part of a big team.

In my spare time I enjoy heading out to the track to compete in my race car (which I largely built with some help from Dad). Just goes to show that not all scientists wear white coats, we all have alter egos.

Find me on Twitter at [@burtasaurus_rex](#)

For more information: www.utas.edu.au/chemistry