



national science week 2017

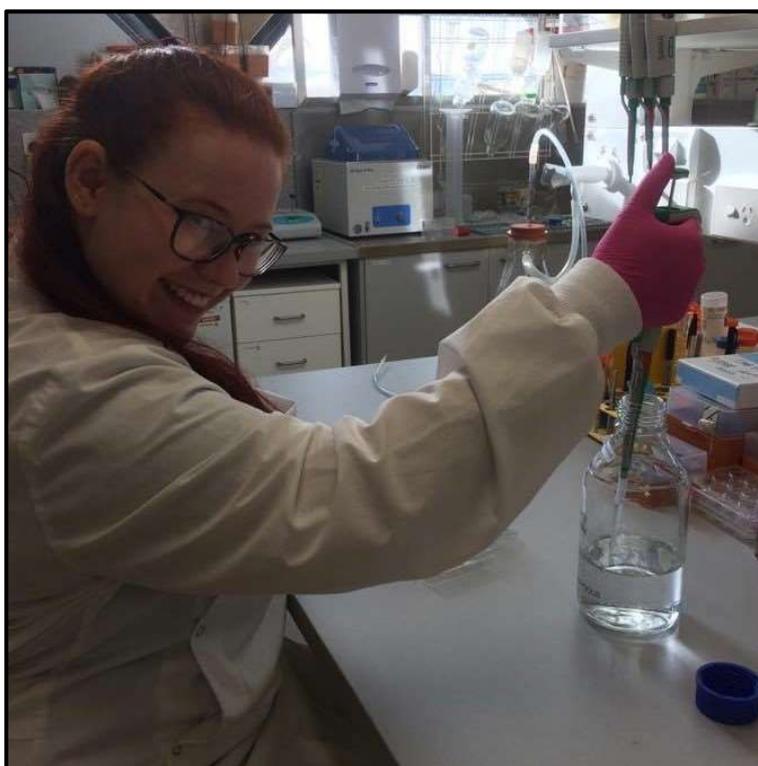
Sarah Sawyer

Bizarre brain behaviour!

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I am proud to be a girl in science! While other kids sat in the playground and battled BayBlades or shared Polly Pockets, I preferred to sit and observe the people around me. I wanted to figure out what made people tick. How do we all function? Why are we all so different? These questions led to me becoming fascinated with the brain from a very young age.

The brain is the organ which gives us our personality and allows us to think, feel, communicate, be creative and understand the world around us. My obsession was fostered by the wacky science teachers I had in high school – one was the mad inventor of coloured popcorn and the other, a physicist, who practised with Buddhist monks in Nepal. They inspired me, drove my studies and supported me to fulfil the next part of my science journey – going to university.



My brain brought me to Tasmania from country NSW, where I finished my degree in Biotechnology and Medical Research. As you can probably guess, I specialised in neurobiology, which is the study of the nervous system. During my degree, I investigated Alzheimer's disease and nerve damage in Type 2 diabetes - which led into the research I'm doing today.

I am currently focussed on exploring the effect of Type 2 diabetes on the brain... There is still so much that we don't know about how it all works! My job is to work out whether having high sugar in your blood (ie. diabetes) can stop your brain sending signals and communicating properly with the rest of your body. What I enjoy about this research is that no one knows the answers yet! All these mysteries about the brain captivate me, drive me and motivate me to share this fascinating area of science with others!

For further information: www.utas.edu.au/medicine