

The Scientists

Hilary Goh  download



I'm currently doing research into the thermal conductivities of rocks in north east Tasmania. This is so we can look for hot rock areas for geothermal exploration. It is hoped that geothermal power plants could provide electricity in the same way that current coal plants do.

How did you become interested in your field?

I had a really big backyard when I was little. My parents planted lots of trees and other vegetation which brought a lot of wildlife to our place. My dad also built a large wall made of rocks around part of the garden. I would look at them and touch them wondering why some rocks were different to others. Some were black with a smooth texture

while others were paler and would crumble a little between your fingers. Later I found out the black rock was basalt (a rock made from lava) and the pale yellow ones were sandstones. So this curiosity about rocks and minerals led me to want to become a geologist.

What interested you in science as a child?

From very early on I was interested in all sciences. I was curious to know how things came to be. Not just rocks, but also landscapes, animals, oceans, other plants, physics, technologies and engineering marvels. I really enjoyed watching Quantum, a science program on the ABC in the 1990's, as it showcased a range of science discoveries each week. I used to watch a lot of Sci-fi (and still do) when I was in high school and this sparked my interest in actually trying to create things. Role models for me are Sir David Attenborough and Carina Kelly from Quantum.

What did you like about studying at uni?

It's great to have a relaxed time schedule - you don't have to go to uni every day of the week. And in between classes, you have time to catch up and have a coffee with friends. Meeting like-minded people who you can study with is great too. Also when you do a geology degree, you do lots of field trips - because, just like wild animals, the best place to see rocks is in their natural environment.

What do you want to do in the future?

I want to be a part of the team which builds the first geothermal power plant in Tasmania.