

## The Scientists

Rachel McInerney  download



### What inspired you to do science?

Science is where we hope to find all the answers and don't we all want to know the answers to everything? The weather and our atmosphere is a particularly interesting area of science (to me, anyway!). The weather impacts everyone everyday, and it's constantly changing. What my career in science so far has taught me most of all is that science can help us understand the natural world but it doesn't help us control it. Mother Nature always wins!

### What did you study at university?

I studied a Bachelor of Science, as well as a Bachelor of Arts, at the University of Melbourne and chose to study meteorology as my major in Science. I wouldn't call myself a particularly "science-y" type of person, but I like to understand things and I believe that meteorology is a great practical application of all the theory involved in the physical sciences. We don't get too bogged down in sums and numbers, we like to look at the clouds! It is also worth pointing out that to become a meteorologist you don't necessarily have to have a major in meteorology (not many universities offer it as a subject). Other areas of study such as physics and maths are just as important in a potential career in meteorology.

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### How did you become a meteorologist?

After completing my science degree, I applied for a Graduate position with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) as a meteorologist. While staying in a little adobe village in northern Chile I found out to my great excitement that I had been accepted! As a Graduate with BoM, the initial ten months of employment are spent at the Bureau of Meteorology Training Centre in Melbourne studying a Graduate Diploma in Meteorology. That's right a full time salary to study, make friends and enjoy the Melbourne lifestyle! After completing the Grad Dip, the newly trained meteorologists are sent to all corners of the country, and I was lucky enough to start my forecasting career in Darwin.

### What are you doing now?

I spent three years as a weather forecaster in Darwin, learning a huge amount about tropical weather forecasting and analysis. After getting a bit of a grip on tropical weather forecasting, I decided it was time to head back to the mid-latitudes, and have been living and forecasting in Hobart for just over a year now.

As a weather forecaster I don't just look at the temperature for the next day. I help analyse international charts, issue warnings, monitor for severe weather, keep an eye on volcanoes in the Indonesian archipelago and warn of any eruptions, as well as providing forecasts for aviation, defence and the general public so it can be a pretty varied and interesting job!

### And what does the future hold?

A career in meteorology can provide many options to live and work in amazing places across the globe. I hope to spend a summer forecasting in Antarctica in the next few years, and I am also considering the possibility of working as a forecaster overseas for a year or so. There are opportunities for forecasting all over the world, including the UK, Fiji, Dubai

and Singapore! In the meantime, I hope to get to know Tasmania a bit better by exploring all parts of the state on foot and by kayak!

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