



national science week 2019

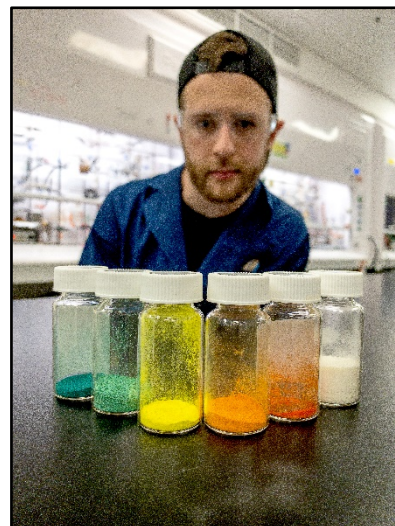
Liam Burt

Platinum – A precious metal story, from NW Tasmania to the Nation's Capital

Chemical Explorer

**Research School of Chemistry,
Australian National University**

What is an element? Which one is your favourite? Every chemist has a preference. To celebrate the international year of the periodic table in 2019, my YTS tour will be the story of my favourite element 'Platinum'; my first love in the world of science. We will be investigating everything platinum, its precious elemental cousins, sustainability in chemistry, race cars and everything else through to the meteor that wiped out the dinosaurs.



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 shared his stories about his former career as an industrial chemist and that provided the greatest inspiration. **This story is dedicated every year to him.**



Currently, my research is working on rare and exciting molecules for the emerging field of molecular electronics. I join two different metal atoms together by a single carbon atom. I then explore their structure using X-rays, their properties using giant magnets and most importantly their electronic properties. Ultimately, I want to see 'can two metals talk to one another through a single carbon?'

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](https://twitter.com/burtasaurus_rex) and on Instagram at [@burtasaurus](https://www.instagram.com/burtasaurus)

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