

ANTARCTIC

adventurer

AS THE FIRST MELBOURNE AQUARIUM EMPLOYEE TO VISIT THE ICY CONTINENT, JULES BIGGART GAINED INVALUABLE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ANTARCTICA AND THE SOUTHERN OCEAN THROUGH THE MARINE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME.

Antarctica is the coolest place in earth!

The best thing I have ever done was when I was lucky enough to join a research crew from the Australian Antarctic Division on a six-week voyage from Hobart to Antarctica.

Going to Antarctica was the most amazing experience of my life. Working on global research projects with leading scientists to better understand future climate changes and environmental impacts, provided me with great insight into the bigger picture of how important conservation and preservation of Antarctica is.

Journeying down to the bottom of the Earth on a ship was a humbling experience, travelling through the degrees of harshness in climate as you venture further south to the land of ice. There was an amazing abundance of wildlife and I was astonished at how the landscapes and seascapes were forever changing along with the weather.

It was a once in a life time experience that I will never forget.

Volunteer to kick-start your career

After completing a Science degree with Honours in marine biology and aquaculture at James Cook University, I volunteered at as many places as possible to get experience.

I volunteered in the Interpretation and Education department at Reef HQ in Townsville, collected Crown of Thorn sea stars for the

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Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and helped out at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute in Queenscliff.

I successfully applied for a job at Melbourne Aquarium in the Interpretation and Education department in August 2006 and then I moved into a position as an Aquarist with the Curatorial team in March 2007.

A rewarding and enjoyable job

My role as an Aquarist on the Ground Level at Melbourne Aquarium is responsible for maintaining the displays and creating a happy, healthy and safe environment for the animals. I look forward to going to work each morning to work with animals and an environment that I am very passionate about. The best part is spending most of my day in the water feeding sharks and a whole host of other amazing animals.

I also feel privileged to help the conservation of certain species of animals, through activities like replenishing stocks into the ocean, such as Sooth stingray pups, or caring for sick animals that have been brought into Melbourne Aquarium for rehabilitation.

The most awesome animal at Melbourne Aquarium is...

Leo the Leopard shark, who lives in the Coral Atoll on the Ground Floor. He is such a cute and playful shark. He acts more like a puppy dog rather than a shark while he is underwater and we have even managed to teach him a few tricks too.

There are also heaps of other wonderful animals I work with every day. I love all the sharks because of their stealth and graceful nature, as well as the stingrays, the Maori octopus and Solomon the Hump-Headed Maori wrasse.

Surfin' safari

My passion for the marine environment started at a young age. I was such a water baby when I was growing up, it was impossible for my mum to drag me out of the water, even after the summer sun had long gone down. I interact with the marine environment outside of Melbourne Aquarium by swimming at Port Melbourne most afternoons, as well as regularly going sailing and scuba diving.

But my favourite water activity is surfing. I love heading down to places like Corsair Rock in Portsea and Central Avenue in Blairgowrie. I find surfing very relaxing and calming - being out in the ocean and in elements that I have no control over. I enjoy it both from a fitness point of view and that it takes me to a place where I can escape stress or forget about things that are bugging me. I also love to chill out by listening to music like Jack Johnson, Ben Harper, Xavier Rudd and Bob Marley.



fast facts

NAME: Jules Biggart **AGE:** 28 **BIRTHPLACE:** Melbourne, VIC **RESIDENCE:** Port Melbourne, VIC
OCCUPATION: Aquarist at Melbourne Aquarium **QUALIFICATIONS:** Bachelor of Science (Honours in Marine Biology and Aquaculture) and PADI Dive Master **HOBBIES:** Watersports, reading, camping, hiking and cooking