



## CASE STUDY

### ENTERPRISE + STEM

## Dr Tanya Hill Astronomer

**Dr Tanya Hill is an astronomer at the Melbourne Planetarium at Scienceworks. In this case study, Tanya shares the things that inspired her to become a scientist and the opportunities in the field. Through sharing her story, Tanya encourages us to be curious about the world around us, and to enjoy the process of finding your way in the world.**

#### **Working as an astronomer at Scienceworks**

Dr Tanya Hill works as an astronomer at the Melbourne Planetarium at Scienceworks. She loves working at the planetarium and delights in being able to take the enormity of space and share her knowledge and wonder with all the people who come to visit.

Tanya's role at the planetarium is mainly behind the scenes.

She has fun creating the planetarium shows, which are 30-minute movies about science and astronomy.

To make these movies, Tanya works with a colleague from the film industry. Together, they combine their knowledge of science and film production and draw on their creativity to share their love of astronomy with the world.

**Tanya loves to share  
her passion for  
space with everyone  
who visits the  
planetarium**

#### **Case Authors**

Associate Professor Naomi Birdthistle

Dr Bronwyn Eager

Associate Professor Therese Keane

Dr Tanya Linden

#### **Supported by**

The Invergowie Foundation

Swinburne University

Griffith University

The University of Tasmania

Another part of Tanya's job is staying up to date with what's going on in the field of astronomy. She does this so she can ensure she is sharing the best information with the public.

### **Finding her career path**

When Tanya was a young girl, she was scared of the dark! Which is an unlikely characteristic for someone who is now an astronomer and loves the night sky!

Her fear of the dark was transformed one night when her dad took her outside to observe the stars. Looking up at the stars, she realised their beauty and was no longer scared.

Her love of science developed further when she when she was in high school and witnessed Halley's Comet. Halley's Comet only comes around every 76 years. Tanya was lucky that her school had an impressive telescope. She was able to look through the telescope and become familiar with the night sky. With the telescope she was able to discover even more stars in the sky than before! She could even see where stars are born and observe millions and billions of stars living out their lives.

### **Becoming an astronomer**

When Tanya was younger, she thought she'd become a teacher. But she received some advice that she should study mathematics and science, and then add to this with a

teaching degree.

Tanya also got work experience in her field. When she was at university, she applied for a summer job and worked for three months at the Australian Astronomical Observatory with the brilliant Charlene Heisler.

Through looking at Charlene's career, Tanya was able to imagine what her career could look like in the future. Tanya realised that her love of astronomy could be more than a hobby... it could be a career.

### **A sense of curiosity**

Tanya encourages us to be curious about everything. She believes that curiosity is at the heart of science. She thinks it is important for us to have a basic 'science literacy', which means that we should have a little bit of an understanding about what's going on in the world, even if you don't know the topic in depth. With a sense of curiosity, and an interest in building a career in science, Tanya believes that doors will open for you to pursue your dreams.

### **Enjoy the journey**

Tanya tells us that life can be messy and it can sometimes feel like you are waiting for life to start. But, Tanya reminds us that life is happening right now! She encourages us to enjoy the process of life.

Tanya's advice is to be open to opportunities that might come our way, and to explore our career paths. Throughout your career, there

**Life is happening right now!  
Enjoy the process and embrace the  
twists and turns of life.**

**“Science is something that everyone can do. We all bring something important to the field”**

will be lots of twists and turns along the way... and that can be the exciting part about the journey.

Tanya tells us to ‘take a chance’ and see where new things might lead.

#### **Working together to find new solutions**

For Tanya, discoveries in science are bigger than just one lone individual.

One of the great things about her job is being able to work with lots of people – often from all around the world – to find new solutions to problems.

#### **Girls in Science**

Tanya thinks that the old way of thinking is changing. In the past, girls and women were told that we have to change. That we had to be more confident. That we had to ‘fit the mould’ and copy what male scientists did. But no longer!

Tanya believes that we shouldn’t focus on changing ourselves or being something that society expects us to be. Rather, she encourages us to be our true selves and, importantly, to be our own cheer squad in support of our dreams.

Tanya tells us that as more and more girls and women do this, we’ll be able to show the world that science is something that everyone can do. We all bring something important to the field.



**“Be your true self. Be your own cheer squad”**