

Griffith UNIVERSITY Book a personal Q&A session to talk about your study options for 2017 **BOOK NOW 19-30 Sept** Gold Coast and Brisbane

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MY OPINION



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Q and A: Michelle Burford, winner at tech awards

SEPTEMBER 7, 2016 | 14 | |



Griffith University academic Professor Michelle Burford has been named a winner in the [Women in Technology Awards](#) in the Life Science and ICT Research category for her collaborative work with government, industry groups, and national and international researchers to tackle some of the big environmental questions of our time.

The Executive Deputy Director of Griffith University's Australian Rivers Institute was also recognised for supporting and mentoring colleagues and associates, regardless of their gender, position and affiliation.

The Women in Technology awards celebrate the achievements of women in the traditionally male-dominated fields of technology and life science.

Griffith University was [named](#) Employer of Choice at the awards.

My BT Gold Coast caught up with Prof Burford to find out more about her work.

Tell us about your work and what you do?

I lead a research team in the Australian Rivers Institute.

We study water quality, and more specifically take a catchment-to-sea approach to understanding what causes algal blooms, as well as the role of nutrients and other factors (e.g. climate change) in promoting the productivity of algae, with flow on effects to aquatic animals, such as fish and prawns.



What impact do you hope your work will make on the world?

Our research is focused on tackling the important environmental questions of our time.

We aim to provide research results to help everyone from our local farmers through to all tiers of government make informed decisions to keep our waters clean and healthy.

Additionally, I aim to help people in developing countries by providing training and research to improve their quality of life.

Why do you love being in this field?

I love making a difference both for people and the environment.

I get to work with all sorts of people and organisations, and have a lot of freedom to tackle environmental questions close to my heart.



Join in this month's community assignment

MyBT Gold Coast is where you tell the news. Do you know of a great event someone you know done something great? Is there a dodgy pothole in your street? Do you know of a great restaurant? Tell people about it by clicking on the "write a story" tab at the top of the [doesn't matter how long or short post, help others by sharing your experiences.](#)

Your favourite moments

What's the best beach on the Gold Coast? Is it Kirra for the surf? Currumbin beautiful? Or Coolangatta family friendly? Or Coolangatta for ice cream? [Everyone's got a favourite share yours with the Gold Coast community here.](#)

My Calendar

« SEPTEMBER 2016 »						
M	T	W	T	F	S	
29	30	31	1	2	3	
5	6	7	8	9	10	
12	13	14	15	16	17	
19	20	21	22	23	24	
26	27	28	29	30	1	
THU	Gold Coast Eisteddfod					
08	July 28 @ 9:00 am - September 1 pm					

I love inspiring and empowering the next generation of scientists to change the world for the better.

Why is it so important for women in technology to have visible role models and mentors to look up to?

I mentor and train many women (and men) in science because the future relies on having people capable of meeting the environmental challenges.

Young people (including women) from both Australia and developing countries need to see opportunities for themselves, and role models are one way to do this.

Additionally, my approach is not just to improve their scientific skills but also their abilities to communicate and promote themselves and their work.

Is there a lot of cool tech advances going on at Griffith?

Our group is developing bold new approaches to simulate large scale processes in the Great Barrier Reef using just a bottle of water. We are using algae as indicators of how land use might negatively affect the reef.

Developing new methods for identifying which rivers are contributing high numbers of prawns to the fishery in the Gulf of Carpentaria. This involves challenging fieldwork in remote locations and adverse conditions (including crocodiles). Our new technological approach will be to track animals back to the rivers they came from.

There are new ways to simplify and pull apart our complex world using freely available computer programs. For example, we can map interactions between soil and water using clever methods showing never seen before human effects on water quality.



What's next for you?

While you think what happens on the land shouldn't affect what happens in the water, in fact it does.

Our new Australian Research Council project will combine the latest technological advances in measuring how plants can drive the chemistry of our freshwaters, and the flow on effects on cost of water coming out of your tap.

Outside of work, what are your hobbies and passions?

Outdoor activities including birdwatching, canoeing, bushwalking, and engaging with citizen science groups.

- *Do you have a story to tell? Simply click 'write a story' above and follow the prompts, or join the My BT Gold Coast community on [Facebook](#).*

THU	Fiesta De La Musica 2016
08	September 1 - September 18
FRI	Swell Sculpture Festival
09	September 9 - September 18
FRI	ProBlogger Training Event
09	September 9 - September 10
FRI	Surfers Paradise Beachfront Markets
09	September 9 @ 4:00 am - 9:00



Who's saying what a...

Gold Coast



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QPS Media Unit
@QPSmedia

Thank you public and media for helping police locate this missing girl. <https://t.co/t1PtWnAU4M>

CROWDYNEWS

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ME

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