

In our Member spotlight this month, is Millicent Crowe at the University of Newcastle. She is also a board member on the Federal Executive and Communications Chair of the ASEG.



Photo: Millicent demonstrating groundwater concepts to public at Geoscience Australia Open Day.

1. What is your current role?

PhD Student at the University of Newcastle and MinEx CRC, but previously worked at Geoscience Australia

2. For how long have you been a geophysicist?

Seven years

3. What to you say when you are asked what you do - what do you do?

To my grandmother I am like a water diviner using an Xray-like machines in helicopters. To geophysicists I am working on a PhD looking at groundwater in the Cobar Basin using Airborne Electromagnetics.

4. What do you like most about being a geophysicist?

The combination of fieldwork and computational. I also love looking at the models, aka different coloured patterns.

5. If you weren't a geophysicist what would you be?

Radio presenter. I love the radio, especially my childhood local, 105.7 ABC Darwin. I love the diverse topics and the community focus. In my childhood I was a frequent caller to the local Science show and ABC quizzes. Our family did very well with those quizzes, managing a stay in Kakadu and a chef to cook dinner in our own backyard.

6. What is your best interview tip?

Interviews work two ways, you are interviewing the workplace as much as they are interviewing you. If you are someone who gets very nervous, the symptoms you feel about getting nervous or anxious are the same as you get when you are excited. Try reframing with self-talk, I am excited to do this interview. Maybe this is why I like interviews, I'm a nervous person who has tricked themselves into being excited for interviews.

7. What's one thing that we wouldn't know about you?

I am a champion Hay Bale Stacker. My sister, friend and I won the juniors competition at the Freds Pass Show, we had to stack 15 haybales as high and as quick as possible.

8. What's one thing you wish someone had told you when you were at university?

I wish someone had told me about unconscious bias! There were many times where I felt unwanted and frustrated, and I assumed there was something wrong with me. Now (after A LOT of training) I realise a lot of this was down the usual suspects of unconscious bias, ie being spoke over, having your comments/ideas ignored only to be brought up by someone else and praised,

not being allowed on fieldwork with another woman, having to prove yourself over and over again etc. I wish someone had told me, there is research to show how you are feeling has little to do with your ability, and a lot to do with unconscious bias from others ... and your own unconscious bias too!

9. Your funniest or worst field memory?

I call this memory type 2 fun. Not fun at the time, but a very fond memory now I look back on. It was late in the afternoon (how all good stories start) and I was driving the straight dirt track along NSW/SA dog fence after deploying some MT stations with Kate Robertson. Suddenly I realised the dirt track I was driving on was now 10 metres to my left, and I was driving through a dried-up depression FULL OF BLACK CLAY. The car only got so far before the thick clay caught us, and we were bogged. We spent hours trying to get maxi traxs to take and dig ourselves out, but the car was sinking - and there was no way we were getting out of this thick black clay. Kate & I drew straws to call in over the radio to the nearby homestead, who came to our rescue - not before taking a number of photographs of the car. They offered a high pressure hose down (for the car, not us), some lasagne, a room for the night - and some kind words, saying there was no way we would be able to dig ourselves out of that black clay.



*Photo: Bogged. It was not going anywhere, despite our best recovery efforts.
Photo courtesy of M.Crowe*

10. Your most respected geophysicist?

Marina Costelloe - she is a skilled electromagnetic geophysicist who always knew the answers to my questions, and managed to juggle an impressive workload or surveys. She is also an empowering leader, who really wants the best for the community and individuals. She is very clever in how she manages people, to bring out the best of them.

11. What do you do in your spare time?

I play Ultimate Frisbee. Last year I went over to China to play for Australia in the Asian-Oceanic Champs, and was supposed to be playing in the Worlds Masters Comp this year... but ya know COVID...