

# CONTACT

winter 2018

MEET THE UQ WOMEN INSPIRING  
FUTURE GENERATIONS

## GLOVES OFF *for change*

*Not if, when*  
HISTORIC GIFT TO BUILD  
FUTURE WORLD LEADERS

UNCHAINED MELODY  
*Talking music with*  
Tim Munro

*Smiles to the jungle*  
HOW A DENTIST BECAME  
A HERO IN TIMOR

# UQ women create CHANGE

From designing safer cities, to helping fight world hunger -  
UQ women are creating change every day.

For more than a century, UQ has educated and worked with outstanding people to deliver unparalleled teaching and research.

Now, more than half of UQ's community of students and staff are women who lead the way in their industries and inspire the next generation.

Significant senior staff appointments this year include Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Bronwyn Harch, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement) Bronwyn Fredericks, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Information Technology Professor Vicki Chen, and Executive Dean of

the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Professor Heather Zwicker.

UQ is also excited to be part of the national SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN program this year. Forty-five Australian organisations, including universities and medical research and government research institutions, are involved in the program, which aims to address and improve gender equity in the science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) disciplines.

In this photo essay, *Contact* is highlighting just some of the many UQ women who are excelling in STEMM disciplines. Women like Associate

Professor Cynthia Riginos (pictured), from UQ's School of Biological Sciences. Originally from Washington DC, Riginos joined UQ 11 years ago and researches ecological and evolutionary genetics.

She co-founded the Diversity of the Indo-Pacific Network (DIPnet), a group of more than 50 scientists from various countries who research genetic-based marine biodiversity and are committed to principles of open data and mentoring young scientists.

Read on to meet more outstanding UQ women working to create equality, while saving threatened species, finding cures for diseases, and leading the way in engineering and construction.



To watch videos and read stories about the many amazing women at UQ, visit [contact-magazine.uq.edu.au](http://contact-magazine.uq.edu.au).



*“Although I have much less time for snorkelling and diving nowadays, early morning swims off UQ’s Heron Island Research Station are highlights of my year – there is always something new and surprising to see.”*

Associate Professor Cynthia Riginos  
School of Biological Sciences



*“I really hope I can realise my childhood dream and develop a new drug.”*

**Associate Professor Irina Vetter**  
Deputy Director,  
Centre for Pain Research  
Institute for Molecular Bioscience

One of Vetter’s earliest memories is reading about the discovery of penicillin. She has wanted to achieve something similar ever since. Vetter’s research interests lie in the fields of peripheral pain mechanisms, target identification and analgesic drug discovery.

*“I want to use my experience of being a member of both the queer community and a woman to help make science a better and more inclusive place.”*

**Natasha Taylor**  
PhD student, School of Mathematics and Physics

Taylor is nearing the end of her PhD on quantum effects inside biological systems. She completed her undergraduate degree at the Australian National University with a double-major in theoretical physics and physics, followed by honours in quantum coherent control, researching how to use lasers to control chemical reactions.



*“I started tutoring at age 14 and, by 15, I was tutoring students older than me in subjects I hadn’t yet taken myself.”*

**Carmen Gorska Putynska**  
PhD student, School of Civil Engineering

Gorska Putynska is a PhD student studying self-extinguishment of cross-laminated timber and its potential uses in large structures.

She excelled at high school – particularly in mathematics, physics and chemistry – and gained a better understanding of the subjects through her mother, who has a mathematics degree and encouraged her to look for different ways to solve problems. This influence led her to tutor older students in those subjects.

Gorska Putynska obtained a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and was subsequently accepted into the International Master of Fire Safety Engineering program on a fully funded European Union Scholarship, giving her the opportunity to study in the UK, Belgium and Sweden in the discipline of Fire Safety Engineering.

*“Dermatology had not allowed anyone to train part-time or job-share in Queensland before me. Since then, there have been at least five who have taken advantage of a more flexible training program.”*

**Dr Erin McMeniman**  
Deputy Director, Dermatology Department,  
Princess Alexandra Hospital  
Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine

McMeniman is a private-practice dermatologist and a visiting specialist at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. She is also completing her PhD part-time within the Faculty of Medicine at UQ, studying genetic associations of multiple primary melanoma.

Erin believes in the importance of a healthy work-life balance and enjoys sports like rowing, swimming, running and cycling.



*“I can clearly recall the first time I took Ventolin and how much this drug benefited my life. The thought that my research and teaching could ultimately improve the health of others is one of my primary motivations.”*

**Professor Avril Robertson**  
Biotechnology Program Director, School  
of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences

Originally from Scotland, Robertson had severe asthma as a child and also experiences anaphylaxis. She attributes the difference therapeutics made to her life, and the desire to improve the health of others, as the reasons she pursued a career in drug discovery and teaching.

After initially struggling at school due to missed days, Avril found a passion for chemistry and excelled. She spent 10 years working in industrial chemistry and senior drug discovery roles before taking up research and teaching at UQ.



*“I’ve had great mentors at UQ who have always encouraged me to strive for my goals.”*

**Isobella Stone**  
PhD candidate, School of Chemistry  
and Molecular Biosciences

While completing her undergraduate degree, Stone was involved in Oaktree, a volunteer organisation of young people fighting to end extreme poverty. She is also passionate about promoting science to a wider audience on social media.

*“Sometimes someone has to shake the tree to keep science moving forward.”*

**Dr Rochelle Soo**  
Postdoctoral Fellow, Australian Centre for Ecogenomics, School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences

Soo studies the microorganisms that live in the gut of marsupials. Originally from New Zealand, she studied Biomedical Science, Commerce and Administration at Victoria University in Wellington.

When Soo was looking for a supervisor for her master’s degree, a professor at the University of Waikato was recommended to her. Despite not having funding to study hot spring microbiology, which Soo was most interested in, he had funding to study thermophilic soils in Mt Erebus, Antarctica. So, she packed up her life and moved for what she describes as one of the most amazing experiences of her career.



*“I had to decide whether I would miss out on the field work or fight the system and take my five-week old daughter with me.”*

**Dr Rebecca Dunlop**  
Senior Lecturer, School of Veterinary Science

Originally from Ireland, Dunlop obtained her Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Environmental Biology and, by 25, had completed her PhD in fish neuroethology at Queen’s University Belfast. She moved to Australia in 2003 and completed a postdoctoral research project on humpback whale social communication.

Outside of academia, Dunlop trains in boxing, and began competing in bouts in 2017.

She has a young daughter who joined her on a large field project in 2014 when she was five weeks old.

*“I was the first engineer in the office to have a baby, so a colleague and I had to write the maternity leave policy.”*

**Dr Liza O’Moore**  
Senior Lecturer, School of Civil Engineering

O’Moore came to UQ from an all-girls high school in 1983 to find herself one of 12 women in a cohort of 260. She completed her undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering and later returned to UQ to undertake a PhD in high-performance concrete. O’Moore accepted an academic position at UQ 17 years ago and teaches Engineering and Civil Engineering while researching concrete design and structures.

