

## Ben St Clair

### BSc Major in Astronomy and Astrophysics, 2006



#### Why did you choose your degree at Macquarie University?

"I chose to study astrophysics entirely out of interest. I have always found the discipline to be both challenging and astonishing.

Having chosen it I found Astronomy to be a great option for study for numerous reasons. Firstly, it is not as dry as some of the sciences and will hold your interest, vital if you want to graduate (I don't know how the accounting kids do it!). Secondly, you have reasonably broad study options that will enable specialisation in the theoretical or technical aspects of the field while still permitting a degree of creativity. Thirdly, all of the skills gleaned from an Astronomy degree are highly transferable. Granted, general relativity is not broadly applicable to the business world, but high levels of numeracy and a methodical approach to problem solving is highly valued.

Finally, Physicists are all about asking why and the business world is keen for people who will seek to understand the numbers, not just crunch them."

#### Employment\*: Strategic Planner in the Energy Sector

"I have worked in a total of ten jobs since the commencement of my tertiary studies, and it was not uncommon to attend university and work two jobs on the same day. Thus, the transition from study to work is more a transition from less preferred types of work to a more preferred "career".

I graduated about a year ago and travelled in Asia for some months after that. I have now started my career in strategic planning for a major energy company. My physics studies will be invaluable in this role as I am now well placed to understand the science upon which energy generation is based. The Astronomy and Astrophysics program at Macquarie encompasses both the fundamental theories of, and the technology relevant to, physics today."

#### How has your degree from Macquarie University helped you progress your career?

Watch this space.

#### Reflections and advice

"Having a major in Astronomy and Astrophysics can be a cause of embarrassing moments. The first type is that people assume that you must be a genius akin to Einstein and will accordingly be disappointed if you can't conjure a wormhole to help them avoid traffic. The second type will inevitably involve a small child named Max who will publicly question your credentials if you are not able to recite the exact mass of the moon (as he most probably can!).

The hardest way to get a degree is to do it all in the final year."

\*Current September 2007.