

# Broadening career prospects

*“It is important to choose something you enjoy”*

**T**revor Barry has spent the last five months tracking a powerful electrical storm on Saturn. He is one of four amateur astronomers around the globe working to provide NASA with images of the storm, which has lightning bolts 10,000 times more powerful than Earth's.

For Barry, it is a far cry from his former job as a mine worker in Broken Hill. He was able to make his lifelong hobby into his career after he completed a post-graduate Certificate of Science in Astronomy at Swinburne in 2005.

You may not be looking to make such a drastic change but there are many reasons to consider undertaking a post graduate qualification.

The MBA and Postgrad Expo, now in its 8th year, provides information on certificates, diplomas, masters and doctorates from education providers around Australia.

According to research from previous Expo attendees, personal development is high on the list of reasons why people choose post-graduate study, followed by career development. Other reasons include career change and standing out in the crowd in the labour

market.

Graduate Careers Australia research manager Dr Bruce Guthrie, says for some people post-graduate study is an absolute requirement for a career in the field. For example, science graduates who need a Masters or PhD in order to work in research.

A post-grad degree can also give an occupational or a professional direction to an undergraduate degree. For example, someone who has completed an arts degree and then does a post-graduate degree in education to become a teacher, he says.

For others, a post-graduate degree helps them stand out from the crowd. According to Guthrie, over the last 20 years the number of bachelor degrees coming out of universities has grown by around 60 per cent, so some people will undertake post-graduate studies to differentiate their skills.

This may also help those who are looking for career change or promotion and Guthrie points out that people with post-graduate degrees have better employment prospects.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data suggests the unemployment rate among people who have post-graduate qualifications is 2



Trevor Barry with telescope

per cent, around a quarter of the rate of those who don't.

Post-graduate study is not about specialising and narrowing your career options but can be a way of opening up opportunities.

Penrice Soda Holdings' human resources manager Marnie Brokenshire says post-graduate education is definitely an asset in specialised areas of the company such as finance,

information technology and HR.

Brokenshire – who has two post-grad degrees herself – says post-graduate learning is tailored to specialist areas and the learning is highly

applicable.

“Employees who have completed post-grad courses have a more robust and complete toolbox of tools, and would be much less effective and pre-emptive without these skills,” she says.

A post-grad qualification may give you more skills on the job but it is up to you to ensure that these advantages are recognised.

Also look at the cost of the course and be realistic about post study salary expectations. Think about your interests, research available courses and see where previous graduates have gone in their careers, in order to find the course most valuable to you, Guthrie suggests.

Post-graduate studies provide a ticket to ride, they are not the end of the journey. Research shows that around five years after graduation a graduate's performance in the labour market starts to be affected by the person's performance and not so much by their studies, Guthrie says.

“It is important to choose something you enjoy and that reflects your interests and you as a person.”

Visit [www.postgradexpo.com.au](http://www.postgradexpo.com.au).

**By Donna Bartlett and Emma Field**

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Meet staff and students to find out about study options in Sydney

**When:** Tuesday 26th August 2008

**Where:** Westin Hotel – Main Exhibit Room  
205 Collins Street, Melbourne

**Time:** 1pm – 7pm