Jodi Ingham

Jodi completed a Bachelor of Science degree at Murdoch University with a double major in Biological Sciences and Environmental Science and a minor in Conservation Biology. During the course of her degree she organised work experience completing an independent report on Perth’s wetlands and compiling Biological Survey design information for the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). She also undertook remote sensing studies using satellite imagery at CSIRO and was a volunteer at Underwater World (now Aquarium Western Australia), contributing mainly to dolphin behaviour studies. After graduating she gained further valuable work experience by accepting casual appointments at Agriculture WA and at the Marine and Coastal District of CALM before accepting a position with the Rottnest Island Authority. The majority of her work, as an Education Officer in the Conservation Branch, involves the presentation of a variety of environmental and educational activities to primary and secondary school students. These activities focus on the biology and conservation of Rottnest’s terrestrial and marine fauna and flora. She is also regularly involved in the presentation of Environmental Awareness courses to school teachers and other specific groups, including university exchange students and teachers from a variety of different countries. Jodi, wearing the white hat in the photo, considers her Murdoch University degree to have been extremely valuable in her employment because the courses were practical and relevant and provided important ‘hands on’ experience.
After completing a Bachelor of Science degree with Honours in Biotechnology, Victor Ong returned to his native Singapore. He found that the interdisciplinary nature of his training at Murdoch University gave him a distinct advantage in the job market and he was soon appointed Clinical Embryologist at the In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) Centre at the KK Women and Children’s Hospital. There Victor carried out molecular biological research on the androgen receptor, a protein which allows males to respond to normal levels of hormones such as testosterone.

Using the skills and techniques he acquired in his Biotechnology degree at Murdoch, Victor identified a mutation in the androgen receptor gene which prevented a genetically male child born at the Hospital from developing normally. He then helped devise a treatment regime to overcome the child’s deficiency and published his findings in the prestigious medical journal, Lancet. Having developed a keen interest in how hormones work, Victor enrolled in a PhD degree at the National University of Singapore where he is currently researching human diseases associated with mutations in the androgen receptor gene. He is also investigating how these diseases can be treated with drugs derived from plants.

As well as this, Victor has put his biotechnological training to work, commercially, by co-founding two Biotechnology companies in Singapore. One of these, known as Bioleaf Laboratories, conducts research into health supplements and manufactures them using molecular biological techniques. The other, Bioceutica, screens plants for new drugs, evaluates them and assesses their commercial potential. Victor describes his days at Murdoch University as “magical”, the Professors “brilliant and caring” and the lectures and laboratory classes “superb”. He says that the knowledge he gleaned at Murdoch has stood him in good stead, not only in his PhD research, but in his commercial enterprises as well.