



Scott Hocknull

Young Australian of the Year

Scott Hocknull, at 24 years of age, has already contributed much to his profession and his country. He has achieved the highest level of academic excellence, while at the same time working to preserve Australia's past and future.

A self-described 'rock-jock', Scott was just eight years old when he developed a passion for dinosaurs and palaeontology. In the ensuing years he nurtured this passion into a profession and was recently appointed Australia's youngest curator in any museum. He is presently Assistant Curator of Palaeontology and Vertebrate Palaeontologist at The Queensland Museum.

In reaching this position, Scott has achieved a great deal. In 1992 and 1994 he won two major BHP Science Awards for his studies in palaeontology. In 1992 on his first major fossil dig he discovered a new site yielding valuable, previously unknown specimens. At just 16 he became one of Australia's youngest scientific authors when a paper he prepared on a new species of freshwater bivalve was published in an international journal.

Prior to his current appointment he spent over ten years in voluntary work with the Queensland Museum. Through innumerable self-funded field trips he has enormously increased the Museum's knowledge and understanding of fossils over the last 3 to 4 million years. One of Scott's discoveries has been hailed as Australia's most valuable fossil locality for 20 to 30 years.

In 2000 he graduated with first class honours in zoology and is presently enrolled in his PhD at the University of NSW. His studies encompass the changing climate of Australia over the past 3-4 million years with the aim of aiding the conservation of Australia's living species.

Outside of his palaeontology career, Scott is keenly involved in his cultural heritage, both his Scottish heritage and family ties to Aboriginal culture. Other interests include cartooning, digital imagery, illustration, models and basketball.

What makes Scott an important role model for all Australians is his passion, his tireless pursuit of excellence and his quest for understanding our past in the hope of preserving our future.
