

Fishing for right career

Landing your dream job can take planning, writes

Shaunagh O'Connor

JULES Biggart had barely started school and was "about five or six" when he decided he wanted to be a marine biologist.

Now a Melbourne Aquarium aquarist — looking after marine life — Biggart, 29, has achieved his goal.

"After school I took two years off and travelled and then did a double degree in marine biology and aquaculture, with a minor in chemistry at James Cook University," he says.

Biggart's role at the aquarium includes research, releasing marine life into the wild and helping new creatures settle in at the aquarium.

He also teaches year-10 students who take part in the aquarium's Aquarist for a Day and Aquarist for a Week programs.

These programs give students the chance to test the waters regarding a career as an aquarist.

The students speak to the aquarium's aquarists, observe them at work, help care for the aquarium's exhibits, dive with sharks and assist with research projects.

But not everyone is lucky enough to know their career as a five-year-

old or spend a week at the perfect workplace to see if their job aspirations really suit them.

Head of Melbourne career consultancy Career Dimensions, Julie Farthing, says some basic guidelines can help people as young as 14 select a career path they will be happy with.

Farthing says the best job research is achieved through real activities.

"It's not looking at the internet and reading reams of stuff about occupations," she says.

"It's work experience, it's talking to people about what they do, it's being involved and getting out there and having a look around at what's going on."

Rather than weighing up the job title, try thinking of the environment in which you will most enjoy it, Farthing says.

You may have been turned off teaching because you can't imagine working in the sort of environment or culture that exists at your own school, but what if you found a school with a different culture once you hit the workforce?

Farthing says she has seen engineers who enjoy their job because it takes them out of an office and on to construction sites. But once they get a promotion and end up desk-bound "sitting there with plans and lots of project-management work



Flip the switch: aquarist Jules Biggart at Melbourne Aquarium.

and attending a lot of meetings", they hate it.

The key is knowing yourself well.

"It's being confidently self-aware and realising it's OK to be someone who doesn't always finish things, it's OK to be someone who gets lots of ideas but doesn't like to follow

through on them, because there is room for all of those people in the world," Farthing says.

Alarm bells should go off when study or work is a real slog.

"Life doesn't have to be hard, you can have fun and enjoy your job," Farthing says.

2010 EXPO

YEAR 10-12 students should take advantage of the *Herald Sun* Melbourne Careers Expo.

It's a one-stop shop for the latest information about apprenticeships, universities, TAFE institutes and independent tertiary colleges.

There's also organisations offering gap-year placements, including the Australian Defence Force, i-to-i Travel and AFS Intercultural Programs.

You can attend a seminar about careers in design, teaching, sport, hospitality and business.

On Friday, July 30, at 11am and 12.45pm, the VECCE is running sessions about many Australian school-based apprenticeships and career pathways.

Herald Sun Melbourne Career Expo, July 30-August 1, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. For more Career Expo details, visit www.careerexpo.com.au

"If you feel as though life is really hard and you're working hard all the time and it's a real chore, you're probably in the wrong course or the wrong job."

Aquarist for a Day/Aquarist for a Week: www.melbourneaquarium.com.au