



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY



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## **THE TOP 5 UNDER 40 ANNOUNCED**

### **Australia's brightest emerging science minds**

*Sydney – 8 June 2017:* As US sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* continues to make even the nerdiest science cool, we've tracked down the real-life faces of Australia's top early-career science communicators: the **Top 5 Under 40**.

Following a nationwide search, The University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney) and ABC RN are delighted to announce the Top 5 Under 40 – the **next generation of Australian science minds** under the age of 40, who will embark on a two-week residency at RN, the ABC's national ideas network.

Now in its third year, the Top 5 Under 40 initiative gives voice to Australian science researchers across the country, who contribute to the betterment of society in Australia and around the world. Providing an in-house incubator based at RN, the program nurtures the communication skills and media awareness of the Top 5 Under 40 to bring their knowledge and expertise to content hungry audiences seeking information, entertainment and debate.

Supported by UNSW Sydney, one of Australia's leading universities, the Top 5 Under 40 will work alongside some of Australia's best science journalists to train in the craft of radio and TV interviews, and develop content to engaged audiences across the ABC.

This year's Top 5 Under 40 are:

- **Dr Sophie Calabretto** (Macquarie University), an applied mathematician who studies fluid dynamics – the way that fluids move. Her work has applications as diverse as aerospace engineering and climate modelling.
- **Dr Denton Callander** (UNSW), a medical science researcher who studies the intersection between sex, sexually transmitted infections and technology.
- **Dr Tom Raimondo** (University of South Australia), a geoscientist who's interested in unlocking the secret history of Australia's ancient landscape with a particular focus on its relationship with Antarctic geology.
- **Dr Ursula Sansom-Daly** (UNSW), a 'psych-oncologist' – someone who studies and treats the psychological effects that cancer has on its sufferers. She has a particular interest in the effect cancer has on adolescents and young adults.
- **Dr Gemma Sharp** (Curtin University), a psychologist and medical science researcher. She's trying to work out why so many Australians are opting for genital altering cosmetic surgery these days and what it says about our collective body image issues.

An overwhelming number of quality applications were submitted to the 2017 initiative. Presenter of ABC RN's *The Science Show*, **Robyn Williams** co-adjudicated this year's entries, alongside **Professor Fiona Stanley**, epidemiologist from the University of Western Australia and founding director of the Telethon Kids Institute, and **Professor Merlin Crossley**, UNSW Deputy Vice-Chancellor and former Dean of Science.

"The standard of both the science and the communication skills of the coming generation in this country is superb," says Williams. "A secret to succeeding in this space is enthusiasm, and taking the media and scientific practice seriously – and above all, understanding the importance of science in the community. This year's candidates were brilliant, and proof of this is that we are already working with not only the Top 5 Under 40, but also some science thinkers from outside of the final five, to produce stories and content. Australia should be proud."

Top 5 Under 40 alumni **Niraj Lal** credits his ABC residency for propelling him to recent appearances across Australian screens, including as Guest Physicist on ABC TV's *Todd Samson's Life on the Line*.

"I was exposed to the magical cauldron of story-telling that bubbles and flames every day at the most respected broadcaster in the country," says Lal. "I learnt the finer points of the art of capturing attention, from the sharpest journalists in Australia and had my scientific stories crafted, framed and broadcast to all corners of Australia and beyond."

Following their mid-year residencies, the Top 5 Under 40 will be among ABC'S representation during National Science Week, 12-20 August 2017.

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TOP FIVE  
**40**  
**5**  
UNDER 40

**Top 5 Under 40: A national search for early-career researchers who have a flair and passion for communicating their work with five winners to be 'Scientists in Residence' across ABC RN.**

Supported by [UNSW](#), one of Australia's leading science and technology universities and [ABC RN](#), the ABC's ideas network. #top5under40

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## **ABOUT THE TOP 5 UNDER 40:**

### **Dr Sophie Calabretto**

Dr Sophie Calabretto is an applied mathematician, fluid mechanist, and lecturer in the Department of Mathematics at Macquarie University. Physics and Mathematics were amongst her majors in her undergraduate degrees and, after the completion of a PhD, she undertook a Postdoctoral Fellowship at ETH Zürich. Dr Calabretto's research in fluid dynamics seeks to understand and predict the behaviour of rotating fluids, exploring fundamental questions in fluid physics, with the potential to impact fields as diverse as aerodynamics and climate science.

### **Dr Denton Callander**

Dr Denton Callander is a Research Fellow with the Kirby Institute for Infection and Immunity in Society at UNSW Sydney where he researches sex, sexuality and sexual health. Denton works with diverse communities, including drug users, gay men and sex workers. His research focuses heavily on the role of technology on sex, including how technology can be harassed to improve sexual health and well-being.

### **Dr Tom Raimondo**

Dr Tom Raimondo is currently the Program Director of Environmental and Geospatial Sciences at the University of South Australia. He completed his PhD in 2011 at the University of Adelaide, and has since been employed as a lecturer in Geoscience, teaching students from a range of backgrounds including Science, Engineering, Education, Arts, Journalism and Law. Dr Raimondo currently leads research projects investigating the role of fluids in weakening the Earth's crust and producing seismic instability, improving exploration models for mineral deposits in South Australia, and assessing the impact of subsurface heat flow from hot rocks on ice loss in Antarctica.

### **Dr Ursula Sansom-Daly**

Dr Ursula Sansom-Daly is a clinician-researcher and a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School of Women's and Children's Health, UNSW Medicine, University of NSW. She leads the mental health research team within the Behavioural Sciences Unit, Sydney Children's Hospital, the largest research group dedicated to psychological aspects of paediatric/adolescent cancer in Australasia. Reflecting her dual clinical-research roles, Dr Sansom-Daly focuses on applying evidence-based psychology to both understand, and address, mental health issues among adolescents and young adults with cancer from diagnosis through to survivorship and end-of-life. Career highlights to date have included travelling to Washington DC in 2012, to train with experts at the National Cancer Institute in best-practice psychosocial care for adolescents with cancer.

### **Dr Gemma Sharp**

Dr Gemma Sharp was awarded her PhD in Clinical Psychology in 2017 from Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia. Her PhD research focused on women's motivations for female genital cosmetic surgery and the psychological outcomes of these procedures. She is now an Academic at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. She is also a Clinical Psychologist Registrar focusing on the treatment of eating disorders and body image concerns. Before becoming a psychological scientist, Dr Sharp was a medical scientist and obtained a Master of Science degree in Oncology from the University of Cambridge, UK in 2010.