

**Currently working as a Defence Scientist, Christina volunteered as a Peer Mentor in 2005.**



At La Trobe University I studied a Bachelor Biotechnology and Cell Biology with Honours in Chemistry. In 2007 I completed the first semester of the Diploma in Education (Secondary). I was motivated to study Biology when I was in year 10 and treated to an incursion by CSIRO. They created a murder mystery and we had to identify the culprit using DNA electrophoresis and other forensic methods. I became interested in Biotechnology at school when I learnt about genetically modified became enthralled about how biotechnology could assist in genetically inherited diseases.

I applied for the **In2science** program after finding out about it at the end of my 2nd year from a genetics lab class demonstrator who was already a Peer Mentor. I always had a love for teaching and was not only passionate about "my" science but passionate about inspiring the next wave of students to study science. I felt students need a fresh look at how science can be fun. With this in mind, I hoped that I could inspire students to entertain the idea of choosing a science subject in VCE and beyond.

My first mentoring placement took me back to my old high school; East Doncaster SC. Here I was challenged by mentoring a discipline I was not familiar with - Physics. However, the teacher was accommodating and by reviewing the practicals prior to each class I was able to help students with questions they had.



My second placement was at St. Helena SC where I was completely in my element with an advanced Genetics/Chemistry class. Working closely with the class teacher, my role was to plan and execute experiments and to support the students in their learning of this interesting field of science. Many of the concepts are difficult to understand and it was rewarding to know that I was able to pass on my knowledge and understanding to the students in an interesting and engaging manner. With the aid of the genetics department at La Trobe University I took the liberty to replicate the same experiment that initially got me hooked on science. I arranged for one of the academics to visit the school and run an electrophoresis session to show the students

the principles of DNA separation. The students were extremely enthused by this and it was great to show the students how to use the equipment I use on a daily basis such as micropipettes.

My involvement with the **In2science** program and the training I undertook has helped me immensely with my current career path. The skills of communication and the ability to explain concepts and scientific ideas that I developed were invaluable

during my teaching round placements as part of my Graduate Diploma in Education. I felt much more confident when talking with students and explaining science at an appropriate level.

Currently I am working as a Defence Scientist in the Human Protection and Performance Division of the DSTO (Defence Science and Technology Organisation). Although I am not actively teaching I still utilise those communication skills I developed every day. In addition my current workplace has a record of my involvement with the **In2science** program and has recognised my volunteer work. I have also found it has been of value allowing me to seek roles which will enable me to actively teach my peers.

**Christina**