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Keeping your research afloat when your waters break

Kate Brooks

CSIRO Astronomy & Space Science

13 May 2011, Women in Astronomy Workshop



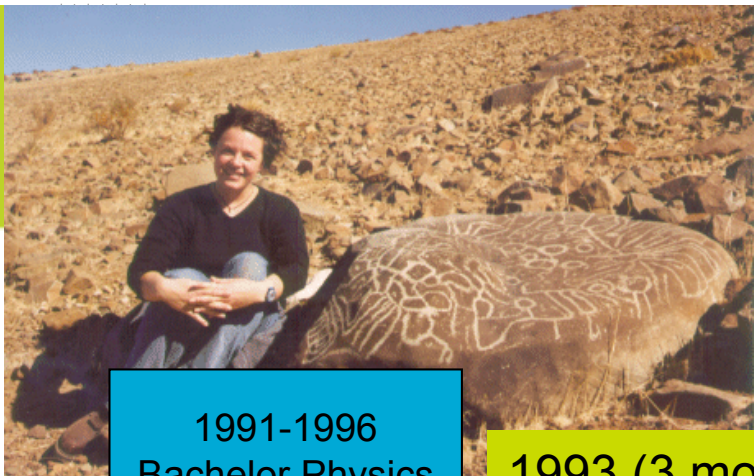
The State of Play 2009-10

- **Women in the Professions Survey**

- The Association of Professional Engineers Scientists and Managers Australia
- Survey of 1100 women in later 2009

- **Headline Results**

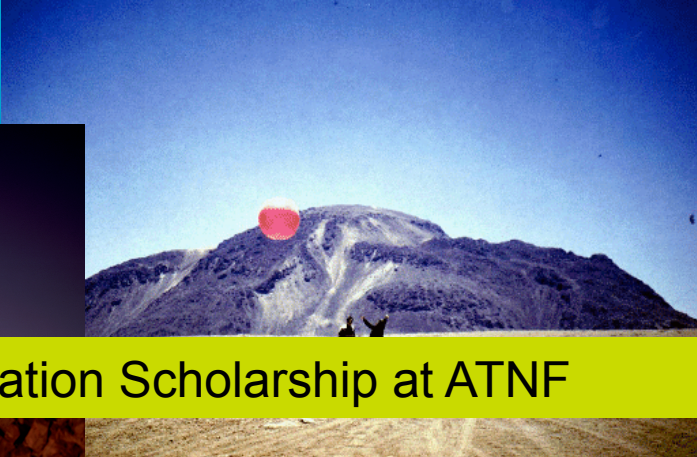
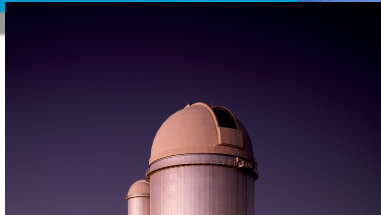
- 67% said that taking maternity/parental leave (including unpaid leave) was likely to be detrimental to their career
- 55.5% said that balancing work/life had impeded their career development
- 43.5% had children. 71% of those with carer responsibilities said that this had affected their career progression
- 74.8% of all respondents believed that working part-time has or would have an impact on their career
- 23.9% expected to have left their profession in five years' time
 - No career advancement (48.2%)
 - No change and/or no gain in experience (43%)
 - No increased challenges and excitement (40.5%)



1991-1996
Bachelor Physics
UoW



1993 (3 months) CSIRO Vacation Scholarship at ATNF

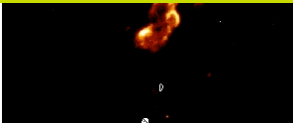
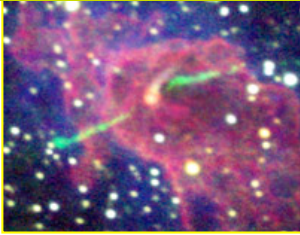


1996 - 2000
PhD Physics
UNSW/ATNF

1999 (9 months) SEST Support Astronomer

2003 (14 months) Maternity Break

2000 - 2003
ESO Fellowship
Chile

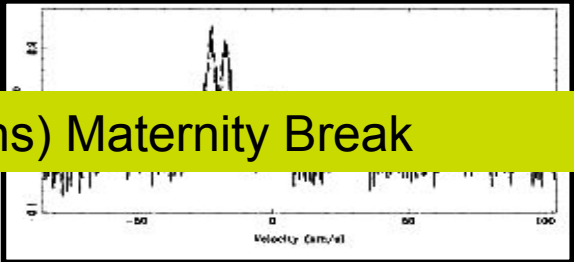


2006 (7 months) Maternity Break

2004 - 2007
CSIRO
Bolton Fellow



2009 (7 months) Maternity Break



2007 - 2012
CSIRO
Research Scientist

A Balancing Act

- Favourables

- Flexible work arrangements
- Family friendly practices
- Paid maternity leave
- Collaborative effort

- Challenges

- Unable to work after hours
- Inflexible (and expensive!) daycare options
- Working Part-time
- Time management
- Keeping travel to a minimum
- Both parents working

Impact on my success indicators

- **Low Impact**

- Invitations to demonstrate expertise
 - Referee articles, committees, interview panels, invited speaker
- Supervising students
- Participating in National conferences and workshops
- Existing collaborations
- Successful observing proposals
- Publications (second author+)

- **High Impact**

- First-author publications
- Participating in International Conferences
- New international collaborations/projects

Tips for staying afloat

1. Get a mentor. Get a champion . Get a network,
2. Get on a committee
3. Get a student
4. Get on a solid collaboration
5. Get a support network in place when you return to work
6. Get organised