

# Nicky Corbett

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**I studied archaeology at the University of Sydney and was starting my Honours year in 2010 when I first came to Port Arthur to do a three-week summer archaeology program.** When a job came up for an archaeologist at Port Arthur four years later, I jumped at it. I was really lucky to get the position and moved here in 2014. I had wanted to be an archaeologist since I was five years old.

My job at Port Arthur is quite complex, and every day is different. We are quite a small team, so a day in my job might entail looking after our asset management system, doing some Geographic Information System mapping, overseeing procurement, or helping our interpretation team with some of their plans for the site. The biggest challenge of my job is keeping up with all my tasks. We're all working towards the one goal, which is preserving the site for the future, but there are so many bits and pieces to get there, it can be quite chaotic at times.

Occasionally I still get to do bits of 'real' archaeology and get my hands dirty, although that's not really my role any more. I like finding the really personal artefacts, like shoes or toothbrushes—not necessarily the most glamorous things, but objects that somebody used and were part of their life. They tell the stories of the people who were here. Probably the coolest thing I ever found was a key.

We never figured out where it came from, but I like to think it was one of the prison keys.

I have bipolar disorder and that can sometimes make work challenging. I'm lucky in that Port Arthur has been one of the most supportive workplaces I've ever had. They are so accepting. I've recently started a new scheme where I work from home on a Wednesday and already I'm feeling that's made a big difference in terms of my work-life balance and health. The flexible work arrangement was actually recommended by my Director. It's been a really great place to work.

My advice to a young professional would be don't be afraid to take a slightly crooked career trajectory. I started out my career working for a local council in heritage and town planning, and it was that experience in planning that got me my next job in heritage conservation, which got me my job here in archaeology. While it was a fairly roundabout way to get here, I would say don't be afraid to take those opportunities even if they might not seem at the time like that straight arrow to where you want to be. Just keep your eye out for opportunities and go for them. I didn't think I would get this job at Port Arthur, at all. I'd say just keep putting yourself forward and never stop learning new skills.

This the best job I've ever had. I love it here.

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