

Meet Siobhan McGinnity

What do you do?

I'm an artist and audiologist, splitting my time across creative endeavours and hearing health.

How did you get into that job?

For the scientific side, it was a Bachelor degree, where I majored in psychology and minored in neuroscience. For the latter I focused my research time on the phenomenon of Perfect Pitch.

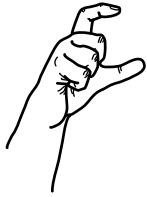
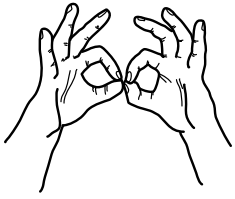
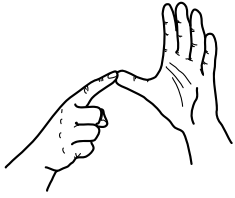
After this, I stumbled across an audiology office in a hospital one day and asked to come in. The audiologist was inspiring. She spoke about her love of sound and helping people, how the job was a great match of both. For a musician who also loved science, that was enough for me. After this I completed my Masters in Clinical Audiology, and then went on to do a PhD titled Preventing Hearing Injury in the Music Industry.

As a musician, I've worked as a performer, song-writer and a creative producer in the disability space. As a disabled artist myself, it's been a real treat to support initiatives that create more accessible arts practices in Australia.

What do you love about your job?

Across everything I do there is creativity, problem solving and learning, but at its heart is communication. When I lecture, the challenge is to help every student feel they can grasp the information. When I see a patient, the challenge is to listen deeply and help them feel understood. When I write a song, the challenge is to translate an experience that uplifts, connects or soothes. When I sign (Auslan), the challenge is to keep up and remember I'm still learning the language ;)





How does your job help people/the community/the world?

Through audiology, I can help people access hearing care and prevent hearing injury from happening. For musicians specifically, I try to help adjust to the impact of any hearing injury so they can continue doing what they love.

Through art, I try to bring joy. I believe joy can be as healing as almost anything else in this world.

What are two things you're not good at?

Cleaning my room. My workspace, office, and everywhere else is immaculate, but at home my clothes live on the floor. It's always been this way, and I don't think it's about to change!

Running. I've tried I promise, but it's really not for me.

What are two things you are good at?

Problem-solving - being creative is incredibly helpful in the scientific world as you get to bring across new ideas and perspectives. Sometimes if I'm stuck I'll repeat in my head, "What am I not seeing?" to invite new ideas. It's a small mantra but it can help broaden my awareness.

Learning - my brain seems to be a sponge for things I'm interested in. I deep dive, taking as much information on the topic as I can, and unapologetically fact-bomb my very patient friends.

What makes you happy (outside of work)?

Sewing. Fast fashion frightens me for all the reasons it hurts our world and women in particular. I bought a sewing machine in 2017 and have tried to sew most of my clothes since. It's taught me so much about the true cost of a garment and what to look for if buying (e.g. quality, ethical labour etc.). I love being able to turn a \$2 piece of discarded fabric from an op-shop into something special.

Where do you want your career to take you?

Right now I'm trying to figure that out. Covid presented a hurdle and opportunity by disrupting our industry, so I made the choice to side-step and start learning Auslan. I am now in my final year! If lucky, I could go on to study interpreting and integrate that into both my audiology and music work. It would be incredible to care for Deaf patients more directly, with cultural sensitivity and language, and at the same time, interpret music on stage for others. I best keep practising...

