

Claire Brandenburger

0400 313 852 | claire.brandenburger@gmail.com
<https://clairebrandenburger.com> | www.linkedin.com/in/clairebrandenburger

PROFILE

- PhD in plant ecology with multiple awards and publications
- Track record of successful collaboration with staff, students, colleagues and volunteers
- Outstanding skills in written and oral communication for diverse audiences
- Experience in curating large collections of plant specimens and digital data
- Strong interpersonal skills and experience managing and developing people

EDUCATION

PhD: Rapid evolution in introduced plants 2012-2019 (part-time)

Evolution and Ecology Research Centre, UNSW Sydney

- Designed and led four years of successful glasshouse and laboratory experiments
- Developed and maintained large data collections including dried plant material, digital leaf images and seed collections
- Delivered high-quality academic reports, publications and presentations
- Hands-on experience in handling and preparing significant biological specimens
- Efficient prioritisation of multiple competing tasks resulting in successful research outcomes
- Proficient in the use of technology and communication software
- Winner of the prize for 'Most Outstanding Evolution and Ecology Thesis'

MSc Conservation Biology Jan 1999-Apr 2000

University of Cape Town, South Africa

- Graduated with distinction and won the award for top student
- Coursework and research-based program

BSc (Hons) Zoology 1997

University of Cape Town, South Africa

- Attained a first-class pass and won the award for top honours student
- Conducted research on the biological control of prickly pear in South Africa

BSc Zoology 1994-1996

University of Cape Town, South Africa

- Graduated with distinction in zoology and won the award for best zoology graduate
- Won the UCT class medal for marine ecology

EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant Oct 2019-present
Evolution and Ecology Research Centre, UNSW

- Conducting research on several concurrent projects taking place across our team
- Providing communication and research support to the head of The Big Ecology Lab

National Tree Day campaign - weekly volunteer Nov 2019-present
Planet Ark environmental organisation

- Developing resources for the 2020 National Tree Day campaign
- Implementing strategies to assist National Tree Day volunteers facilitate their events

Demonstrator for biology practical sessions Aug-Oct 2017 & 2018
School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW

- Employed to teach the first-year biology course 'Evolutionary and Functional Biology'
- Demonstrated and explained biological specimens and ideas during practical sessions
- Graded assignments and provided feedback

Front-of-House Volunteer May 2018-Aug 2019
Australian Museum

- Facilitated 'touch table' sessions with visitors to the museum
- Provided visitors with hands-on interaction with items from the museum's collection
- Explained the value of historic specimens, and methods for collection and preservation

Science Communicator 2016-2019
CSIRO's STEM Professionals in Schools voluntary program

- Presented ten talks in primary and high schools as a representative of UNSW Science
- Designed two presentations: 'Plants, Science and Girls' and 'Sustainability'
- Encouraged school children to understand and appreciate plants, nature and science

Environmental Scientist Feb 2005-Feb 2006
Sinclair Knight Merz, Sydney

- Employed in the Environmental Planning and Management team
- Prepared environmental impact assessments for public and private sector clients

National Survey Coordinator Jan 2002-Aug 2003
The Bat Conservation Trust, London

- Coordinated 900 volunteers in 10 different survey types across the UK
- Curated the national database of bat information
- Managed, analysed and reported field survey data

Molecular Systematics Research Officer May-Sept 2001
Royal Botanic Gardens, London

- DNA sequencing and phylogenetic analysis for conservation of *Babiana* plant species
- Independent fixed term post funded by a grant from the National Geographic Society

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LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Appeared in an episode of *Gardening Australia* which explored the controversial topic of weeds evolving into Australian natives. Oct 2019
- Invited to write an article for the popular science magazine *Australasian Science*: *Daisy Chains Unshackle Evolution's Speed Limit*. May/June 2019
- **Interviewed** on ABC Radio National for the *Future Tense* program; discussed evolution of introduced plants and implications under climate change. May 2019
- Coordinated and led tours of the UNSW glasshouse for 90 Year 5 students as part of UNSW's Science STEM Engagement Day. Dec 2017
- Devised, compiled and ran a two-day interactive plant display at the Australian Museum's expo for Sydney Science Week. Aug 2017
- Co-supervised three UNSW honours students. Supplied training, mentoring, and feedback via weekly meetings. All the students attained first-class passes. 2014-2017
- Recruited and managed three undergraduate students as long-term volunteers. Integrated them into our lab and provided instruction, motivation and guidance to help them develop their capabilities. All the students enrolled in further research degrees after their volunteer experience. 2014-2017
- Co-supervised two UNSW summer scholars in six-week research programs involving one-on-one training and mentoring. 2014 & 2016

AWARDS

- Winner of Outstanding Evolution and Ecology Thesis 2019
- Winner of Outstanding Evolution and Ecology Postgraduate Researcher 2018
- Winner of Outreach and Communication in Evolution and Ecology 2017
- Winner of the Three-Minute Thesis Competition 2017
- Ecological Society of Australia student prize for Outstanding Spoken Presentation 2015
- Best Ecosystem Science presentation at annual postgrad forum 2015
- Best Evolution presentation at annual postgrad forum 2013

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Research Training Program Scholarship - Dept of Education (\$93 300) 2012-2019
- UNSW Research Excellence Award (\$17 500) 2012-2019
- PhD writing scholarship - UNSW Science (\$6 000) 2019
- UNSW Postgraduate Research Student Support Scheme (\$2 200) 2016
- Student Conference Travel Grant - Ecological Society of Australia (\$130) 2015
- Student Research Award - Ecological Society of Australia (\$1 500) 2014
- Postgraduate Start-up Grant - Evolution & Ecology Research Centre (\$1 000) 2012

PUBLICATIONS

Journal articles

Brandenburger CR, Cooke, J, Sherwin WB and Moles AT. 2019. Rapid evolution of leaf physiology in an introduced beach daisy. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* **286**: 20191103.

Brandenburger CR, Sherwin WB, Creer SM, Buitenwerf R, Poore AGB, Frankham R, Finnerty PB and Moles AT. 2019. Rapid reshaping: The evolution of morphological changes in an introduced beach daisy. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* **286**: 20181713.

Rollins LA, Moles AT, Lam S, Buitenwerf R, Buswell JM, Brandenburger CR, Flores-Moreno H, Nielsen KB, Couchman E, Brown GS and Thomson FJ. 2013. High genetic diversity is not essential for successful introduction. *Ecology and Evolution* **3**: 4501-4517.

Hoffmann JH, Impson FAC and Volchansky CR*. 2002. Biological control of cactus weeds: implications of hybridisation between control agent biotypes. *Journal of Applied Ecology* **39**: 900-908.

Volchansky CR*, Hoffmann JH and Zimmerman HG. 1999. Host-plant affinities of two biotypes of *Dactylopius opuntiae* (Homoptera: Dactylopiidae): Enhanced prospects for biological control of *Opuntia stricta* (Cactaceae) in South Africa. *Journal of Applied Ecology* **36**: 85-91.

*Volchansky is my maiden name

Conferences - spoken presentations

- Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, St Johns Canada July 2016
- Ecological Society of Australia, Adelaide Nov 2015
- Phylogenetic Variation and Evolution Symposium, UNSW Sept 2014

REFEREES

- Professor Angela Moles - Director, Evolution & Ecology Research Centre, UNSW
a.moles@unsw.edu.au
- Simone Horder - National Tree Day Coordinator, Planet Ark
simone@planetark.org
- Isobel Kindley - Volunteers Coordinator, Australian Museum
isobel.kindley@austmus.gov.au