



ROAD TO GOLD MEDAL

began with finding life passion

Historically, WASM Alumni have presented an ounce Gold Medal to the top graduating student from the Perth Campus. This year, the criteria for the award expanded to include a combination of academic and non-academic personal achievements, in the manner of a Rhodes Scholar-style award. This year's winner is Jake Hammelswang and he reflects on his life and achievements.

2016 WASM Gold Medal winner, Jake Hammelswang, puts his success down to two key elements: finding his passion and working hard. He said it meant a great deal to him to be recognised with the prestigious award. "It validates all the hard work and effort I put in over the course of my degree," he said.

"It was a really steep learning curve going straight from a construction site into university study and required long nights trying to figure out what it would take to be successful. "It's a real honour to be one of the first geology students to win the award and I believe that's a testament to the quality of teaching offered by the department of applied geology."

Mr Hammelswang acknowledges "finding your passion" had become a cliché, but he felt it still held true. "I would advise anyone who was debating a career to pursue the interest that you are really passionate about," he said. "For me, success really came about as a by-product of having a keen interest in geology."

Mr Hammelswang's passion certainly didn't appear in his family DNA, except through an oblique relationship. He grew up in Rupertswood, a rural outer suburb in Townsville in North Queensland. "No one in my family has a history in the mining and resource sector although my grandfather, uncles and younger brother all work in the earthmoving industry as machinery operators," Mr Hammelswang said. He, too, worked as a plant operator with earthmoving companies, though trade qualified as a painter.

Mr Hammelswang moved to Perth in 2011 after his partner Veyatie completed a degree in medical science. "Perth gave me a chance to think about what sort of career I wanted."



"While I enjoyed my time in the construction industry I was looking for a long-term career I could be passionate about and one that offered more structured professional development and opportunities for on the job learning.

"I had always had a strong interest in science, specifically geology and geophysics, which made the selection of geology

as a course of study an easy decision," Mr Hammelswang said. He began his studies in 2012. "My primary areas of interest were mainly in the soft rock related subjects such as sedimentology and stratigraphy, basin analysis/tectonics and petroleum geophysics," Mr Hammelswang said. "The research project for my honours thesis involved determining the distribution, timing, impact of igneous occurrences on the Bight Basin and merged a number of the aforementioned fields of study."

Mr Hammelswang nominated key highlights of his time at WASM as being a part of the Curtin Imperial Barrel Award team that won the Asia-Pacific region finals and represented Curtin in Denver at the world championships.

"I also had the opportunity to get involved in a number of great programs such as the Unipass program, lab demonstrating within the applied geology department, and mentoring," he said. "These roles allowed me to experience the dedication and commitment of the staff for delivering engaging content and providing a first class university experience."

Mr Hammelswang has now taken a place in the graduate program at Quadrant Energy where he's been working for two months. "It's been really challenging and rewarding and I feel privileged to be a part of a new Australian energy company with such a bright future," he said.

Other WASM achievements:

- Silver Medal Applied Geology – Academic
- Imperial Barrel Award: Curtin University, Asia-Pacific winner and global finalist
- Chevron petroleum geology scholarship
- Chevron Prize: Top performance, third year petroleum geology
- Outstanding student mentor award by Curtin University
- Apache Geoscience scholarship
- PESA prize: Top performance, first year petroleum geology
- Vice President- AAPG Student Chapter, Curtin University
- Student mentor to first year geology students.