

Michael North

Nick names:

None that have really stuck; Norfy and Tricky Micky when I was younger, The Guru when I was problem solving in the lab.

Position with MBS:

Senior Environmental Geochemist

Joined MBS in:

August 2013

First Project at MBS:

Hollandaire Waste Rock Characterisation (Silverlake Resources)



Capabilities:

Geochemistry, environmental chemistry, waste characterisation, water quality and treatment, occupational hygiene, mineralogy.

Education:

After growing up happily in Palmyra and then moving to Wilson primary in year 7 and quickly being involved in a few fights with the local thugs, my parents sent me well outside the local zone to Como Senior High School instead. Despite the hour long bus trips, I finished Dux in years 11 and 12 and went off to University of Western Australia in 1991 only knowing that I wanted to do science with a preference for chemistry and geology. At the end of first year I had to choose between geology and chemistry as the labs and field work completely clashed and would have added another year or two to my degree. I chose chemistry, soil science and metallurgy instead and won the RACI prize as equal top student (along with my future wife) for a BSc. chemistry double major. After this, I completed an honours degree and spent a further four years doing research as part of a PhD in inorganic/organometallic chemistry. The opportunity to travel back to my country of birth (Canada) and get paid for it, saw me take up a postdoctoral research fellowship for a year at the university of Calgary looking at synthetic Bayer liquors. Finally, in 2000, I figured it was time to stop avoiding reality by working in academia and get a job in the real world back in Perth.

Where I'm from and how I ended up at MBS:

I was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia which is on the eastern coast of Canada. My father was doing a post doctorate in chemistry at the time so I very much ended up following in his footsteps. I have been back to Canada three times since for a total of about two years and have never made it back to Halifax but have travelled to lots of other interesting places with hopefully more to come. When I came back to Perth after my post doctorate, I had to work without getting paid for a month with a company my father started (MPL Group), just to prove I was not another overqualified and impractically minded PhD. I was there for five years at MPL doing lots of varied work in analysis, method development, sampling, occupational hygiene and consulting. I moved to the ChemCentre in 2005 doing a similar line of work within the environmental laboratory and being a general problem solver for many things. One of my key involvements during this time was providing technical advice to the government and lead isotopic testing for the Esperance lead dust contamination and cleanup program. After a long service leave trip around the top end of Australia in 2012 with the family, I was probably more receptive to a change of direction with my career when approached by my former colleague at ChemCentre Dave Allen and Kristy Sell in 2013 to join MBS.

Something you didn't know about me:

I spent 6 months living on a remote government research station southwest of Marble Bar (Woodstock) in primary school and got to do school of the air and be flooded out three times by cyclones. I am a keen cyclist, help out with coaching my sons footy team and am a Fremantle Dockers tragic. I still harbour an interest to finish learning German but I never seem to have the time and instead have started doing Tae Kwon Do with the family.

Favourite quote from client:

"Can't we just pump it out to the ocean without treatment - it will get diluted below those (guideline) levels there". More than one client over the years.

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ENVIRONMENTAL