

Dr Jonica Newby

Science Presenter, Host, Facilitator & Author

Dr Jonica Newby is a science reporter, author, one time veterinarian, TV presenter and director best known for her two decades on ABC TV's popular weekly science program, *Catalyst*. She has twice won the Eureka Award, Australia's most prestigious science journalism prize, and is a recipient of a World TV Award. Known for presenting stories with a rare honesty and intimacy, Jonica's new book, *Beyond Climate Grief: a journey of love, snow, fire and an enchanted beer can*, charts her struggles navigating the emotional turmoil of climate change.

The warmth, gentle humour, enthusiasm and professionalism Jonica brought to the screen is also evident in her live appearances, where she creates a relaxed yet stimulating and enjoyable vibe as an interviewer, facilitator or host.

What's more, having brought more than 200 diverse and fascinating science stories to the public over the years - from the future of Battery Powered Homes, to the World's Oldest Beer - she's always got a thought provoking insight or anecdote up her sleeve.

Jonica has twice won Australia's most prestigious science journalism prize, the Eureka Award, has been a regular contributor to radio, print and News 24, and is author of the ABC book *The Animal Attraction*, about how the domestication of animals created human civilisation.

Jonica is the author of *Beyond Climate Grief: a journey of love, snow, fire and an enchanted beer can* (New South Publishing). She talks about the themes of the book, which is a magical and deeply moving personal story that explores how to navigate the emotional turmoil of climate change. After researching what global warming will do to the snow country she loves, she plummeted into a state of profound climate grief. And if she was struggling, she wondered, how was everyone else coping? What should parents tell their anxious kids? How might we all live our best lives under the weight of this fearsome knowledge? Then reality outstripped imagination as her family was swept up in the apocalyptic 2019-20 fires. *Beyond Climate Grief* provides guidance and emotional sustenance to help us face the uncertainties ahead.

At a pinch, she could probably still castrate a horse or de-bollock a dog, but fortunately, this is rarely called for at live events. (Still, when managing an enthusiastic crowd a sound background in



medicine and animal behaviour never goes astray...)

More about Dr Jonica Newby:

Dr Jonica Newby grew up in Perth, WA, where phase one of her professional career was a first class honours degree in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery and a few years in mixed veterinary practice. It was a solid and practical grounding in medicine and science which would prove invaluable for phase 2 - professional science presenter.

In 2001 she became a founding member of ABC TV's flagship science program, *Catalyst*, clocking up an astonishing 200 plus TV stories over the years and an impeccable reputation for the quality of her science journalism and her courageous approach to story-telling.

This courage has often been literal. Known for her "throw yourself in at the deep end" approach to presenting, she's been tested by the FBI for her ability to lie, thrown herself into a bungee jumping swan-dive (which did result in a black eye), been tested for "depression genes", exposed her issues with low libido and testosterone on camera to encourage other women in the same situation, jumped out of a plane to see what "panic" does to the language centres of the brain, had her brain scanned for advertising appreciation, and had herself struck with a racing whip as part of scientifically testing the assertion that whipping race horses does not cause pain.

Over her time, she has researched and presented films on an extraordinary array of topics - literally something to interest everyone - all of which she enjoys sharing with a live audiences. Recent examples include:

- The widely viewed Battery Powered Homes which introduced Australians to home batteries and how they will change our world&
- Making Dogs Happy, a "water cooler" program which helped Australians better understand and communicate with their own dogs by teaching them to sniff out a missing phone in just two weeks!
- Exercise and Cancer; a profoundly moving and influential program which included her own partners near death chemotherapy experience to show how exercise can transform our cancer survival odds - a program which was described by one medical expert as a "gamechanger".
- The Female Sex Drive: where she exposed her own struggles with disappearing libido to lift the lid on the taboo topic of the loss of female sex and what, if anything, can be done about it.
- Don't Panic: Surviving Extremes: A must watch program for all Australians that tackled the huge issue of the rise of extreme fires and cyclones due to global warming, and why the human brain wont react they way you hope it will. This film is still being used by emergency services.

Jonica's impressive body of work has also had a substantial and ongoing impact on the upcoming generation. Her video stories are used across the country in schools and universities, inspiring

kids and adults alike to engage with the wonders and importance of science.

Dr Jonica Newby talks about:

- Science
- Human behaviour - neurochemistry, genetics, evolution
- Animal Behaviour
- Medicine
- Climate change and the impact on Australia
- Science education
- The energy transition and our future.

Client testimonials

“ We particularly sought out Jonica for this role (as MC), because we recognised her gift for making technical issues not merely accessible and informative, but positively entertaining. We were not disappointed. A consummate professional, Jonica performed the role with grace, style and humour. Jonica shared her insights, and some hilarious anecdotes, from her roles as a professional communicator, science journalist and TV producer... (She) was a delight to deal with and she went out of her way to make sure she understood and met the needs of our organisation.

- 2016 Australian Summer Study on Energy Productivity

“ I had the great pleasure of working with Jonica on the very prestigious 2017 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science - the Academy Awards night of nights for the Australia Science industry. Having produced and directed these awards for the past 10 years, it was evident the amount of preparation Jonica put into the evening in her role as MC. Her delivery was seamless combining intelligence, humour and style with complete professionalism. Jonica brought a warmth and entertaining atmosphere to the room and I would very readily work with her in the future.

- BDW Special Events

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