

Turia Pitt

Turia has achieved so much in her short life. She was named the NSW Premier's Woman of the Year, she was a finalist for Young Australian of the Year and she has also graced the cover of the Australian Women's Weekly.

The road to such success has not been easy, however. Attending her first undergraduate engineering lecture, a fellow student told Turia she was 'in the wrong class'. Challenging assumptions and prevailing against the odds was to become a theme in Turia's life. Not only did she carve out a successful engineering career in the traditionally male-dominated mining industry, but when the catastrophic Kimberley fires of 2011 almost took her life, she survived and refused to be limited by her injuries.

Turia earned a double degree (with honours) from the University of New South Wales and was working in her dream job as a mining engineer at Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond Mine. Turia was soon managing challenging multi-million dollar engineering projects and became involved in an impressive range of philanthropic and community programs, such as volunteering with the St John's Ambulance team and the Argyle Diamond Mine's Emergency Response Team.

On 2 September 2011, Turia and five other runners were participating in a grueling outback ultra-marathon when they were trapped by a raging grassfire. Receiving burns to 65% of her body and recovering from more than 200 operations, Turia has accepted the change this incident has made to her life and 'moved on'.

Turia's drive, determination and persistence are best shown through her athletic pursuits. Since her accident, she has swum the 20km Lake Argyle Swim and rode her bike from Sydney to Uluru. Turia will be taking on the Oxfam 100-kilometre walk, but is currently focused on training for the Melbourne Iron Man. She's also currently studying for her MBA.

Turia is also a committed philanthropist, lending her time and energy to causes that she is passionate about. She is an Ambassador for Interplast, helping to raise \$200,000 for them in 2014 and raising \$400,000 for them in 2015.

These days, Turia is a popular guest-speaker who shares her story of survival and achievement through adversity with businesses leaders and community groups. This engaging and refreshingly candid young woman will astonish you, inspire you and leave you in stitches. Her enthralling message of overcoming adversity and the need to never EVER give up will motivate you ... out of your chair, and into life.

The standing ovation Turia was given at her TED talk is a testament to her skills as an orator. She is a speaker that truly stands out from the crowd and her 'never ever give up' motto is an anthem for women everywhere striving to close the gender gap.