

# An Island of Pathways:

## Research and results of multi-faceted studies into attracting and retaining Tasmanian women in ICT education and careers

### Collaborate

Industry mentors, professionals, educators and students consolidate relationships and plan future partnerships

### Retain

Students continue lifelong learning, find employment through connections made and become mentors themselves

### The Problem

Tasmania faces unique issues within Australia with regards to its STEM workforce. Less than 27% of the workforce that has any form of tech component is represented by women. Underrepresentation of women in STEM fields such as ICT in the somewhat isolated state of Tasmania presents a compounding problem. Geographical isolation creates a closed system, one that women find difficult and unappealing to break into and forge careers within. To address this, researchers from Tertiary, VET and industry backgrounds have teamed up to design evidence-based programs designed to create culture-driven pathways from education to careers to mentoring and role modelling for women, especially mature aged women and women entering from non-traditional pathways, who may have not considered ICT as a path for them. Initial findings have provided the basis for a sustainability and growth pathways model for Tasmania.

### Attract

Inclusive and appealing education offerings at Tertiary and VET level ICT

### Support

Provide industry and education mentors to build relationships

### Include

Student driven involvement in networking and public events and science communication

### Women in ICT Pathways Model

KEEP GOING  
KEEP GOING

Meredith Castles is a researcher with the Australian Computer Society (ACS) and a PhD Candidate at The University of Tasmania. Along with her research, she is heavily into science communication, co-hosting and producing the nationally award-winning podcast and radio show *That's What I Call Science* and appearing on panels and MC-ing events regularly.

Her PhD research is in the intersection of the fields of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and educational technology, specifically exploring how informal information sharing and the design of the technologies that support this behaviour can be used to design a more inclusive and supportive tertiary ICT learning environment for Tasmania.

She also works as the lead researcher on a joint 2-year pilot project with the ACS and TasTAFE, supported by the Tasmanian State Government, to provide an evidence-based approach to supporting women entering ICT through the VET pathway to remain in the state rather than having to leave to find work opportunities. She uses her SciComm contacts to enable the students to experience public speaking and to become comfortable as role models.

This presentation is an early representation of the model emerging from results captured by the above studies.



@meredithcastles



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@meredithcastles



Meredith Castles

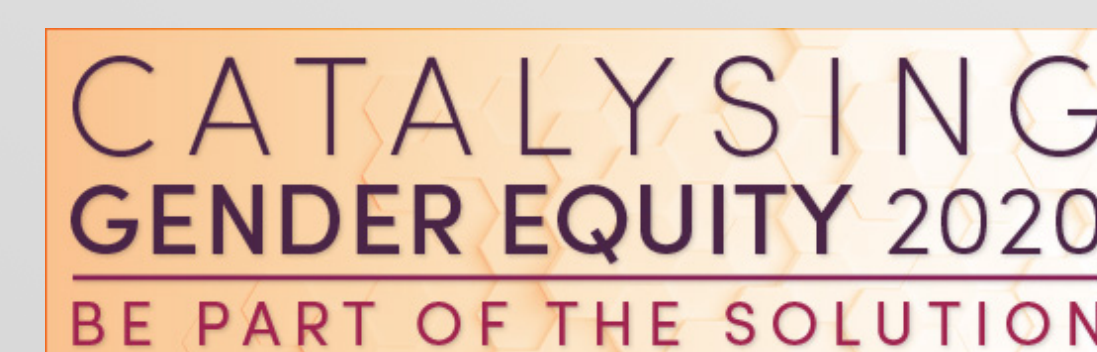


<https://www.stemwomen.org.au/profile/meredith-castles>



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