



Chief Executive Women

Women leaders enabling women leaders

MEDIA RELEASE

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Townsville science teacher has keys to brighter future in STEM

Sarah Chapman, Head of the Science Department at Townsville State High School, will head to Sydney this week to talk to leaders in business and government about getting more young people – particularly girls – interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Sarah will present the results of research she conducted as part of the Barbara Cail STEM Fellowships awarded last year by the Minister for Women Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash and Chief Executive Women (CEW).

Along with another fellowship recipient, Dr Rebecca Vivian of the University of Adelaide, Sarah spent five weeks travelling overseas, looking at how some of the world's best organisations are promoting STEM education and careers to young people.

“As a teacher, I know it can be challenging to engage students in science and maths, but it's essential we do, as so many future jobs will require these skills.”

“What Australia as a nation is doing simply isn't working. The number of youth choosing these pathways is low – and falling, and participation is much lower for girls than it is for boys,” said Sarah.

Her research found that Australia would do well by adopting a coordinated, national approach to engaging young people in STEM, providing greater support to STEM teachers, collaborating with industry and making sure information is targeted specifically to today's young people.

“The STEM ecosystem in Australia is complex, and we'll only get traction by making sure all the parts work together better.”

“When it comes to girls, we need to promote positive stereotypes and perceptions, provide girls-only opportunities to connect with STEM and do a much better job at demonstrating the link between STEM and future opportunities,” Sarah said.

A report of Ms Chapman and Dr Vivian's research, *Engaging the Future of STEM*, will be launched at an event hosted by Commonwealth Banks and Chief Executive Women in Sydney on 30th March.

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For more information, please contact:
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Background

Chief Executive Women (CEW) www.cew.org.au was established in 1985 by eighteen influential Australian women and now represents over 420 Australian women leaders from the corporate, public service, academic and not-for-profit sectors. Through its advocacy, targeted programs and scholarships CEW works to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity.

Barbara Cail AO was the Founding President of CEW in 1985 and has been a constant advocate for women and for STEM participation. Recipients of Barbara Cail STEM Fellowships will be known as 'Barbara Cail Fellows' in her honour.

CEW's partnership with the Office for Women will help to improve equal economic participation and secure opportunities for Australian women.