



# st mary's women

## DR JEMMA COLLOVA ('10) Post-doctoral Research Associate



*"It was St Mary's that established the foundation for my passion for science."*

After graduating from St Mary's, I had no idea "what I wanted to be" when I grew up. One thing that I did know, was that I loved to learn, and so I decided to study science at university. It was here that I learnt about the potential to use science to inform what we know about human cognition and behaviour, through the field of psychology.

Inspired by this passion for psychology research, I completed my PhD at the University of Western Australia. Now, I work with a team of researchers at UWA in the Person Perception Lab, as a Research Associate. In this position, I lead multiple research projects, and international collaborations. My research focuses on understanding how people form impressions of children. In particular, I investigate the first impressions that adults form of children based on a glimpse of a child's face. These impressions are critical to understand because they influence our behaviour towards children.

I have been lucky enough to share the results from my research at international conferences, for example, in New Zealand and America. I have also published my research in prestigious peer-reviewed scientific journals, such as the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, which is ranked in the top 2% of all Social Psychology journals. I also spent some time in Canberra, working with the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science. I worked on a national review into the state of innovation metrics in Australia. It was rewarding to see how the skills I had gained through my psychology training transferred to an entirely different industry.

Looking back, it was St Mary's that established the foundation for my passion for science. At school I developed a curiosity to understand why the world is like it is, especially in my Chemistry, Human Biology and Geography classes. I was also lucky enough to be surrounded by teachers who genuinely loved what they did. This was contagious and helped me to realise that I too wanted a career that I loved, and a career which was focused on learning.

St Mary's also harnessed my passion for female education. I love engaging others, especially young girls, in STEM subjects and careers. Inspired by this passion, I have been involved in numerous outreach events. For example, I am a mentor for a national female mentoring program run by Australia Science Innovations.

On more of a personal note, one of the things that I am most grateful for, is the friendships that I established at St Mary's. These friends have helped me to keep an open mind, to dream big, and continuously inspire me today.

