



st mary's women

## NATASHA PRITCHARD ('08) Obstetrician-Gynaecologist



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I am what they call a 'Survivor' - I went through St Mary's from Year 1 to Year 12, so it has had a great influence. I think one of the greatest things the School gave me was the ability to experience such a variety of subjects and experiences, and keep an open mind to every opportunity. Nothing good comes professionally without an enormous amount of hard work and discipline, and I think that is really encouraged at St Mary's.

After leaving St Mary's, I moved to Melbourne to complete my medical degree at Monash University. It was there I saw my first delivery, and knew I would end up doing obstetrics. After graduating in 2013, I moved to Bendigo, a regional town, to get some hands-on experience and complete my internship, before moving back to the city for my first job in obstetrics and gynaecology.

I have spent the last three years working just in women's health, and am on the training programme to become an obstetrician and gynaecologist. This means that my time is split between clinics, operating theatre, birthing suites and the emergency department, giving me great variety. As a final year medical student, I became involved with my first research project looking at using antioxidant therapy to improve

outcomes in IVF. From there, I've been involved in a wide range of research projects, which have taken me throughout Australia and so far to San Diego, Boston, Birmingham and Tokyo, which have been amazing experiences.

This year I started my PhD, looking at novel treatments for pre-eclampsia, which is one of the major complications of pregnancy which can cause serious problems for babies, including being born prematurely or not growing properly, and for mothers, problems with high blood pressure and liver and kidney issues. I'm lucky to be working with a world-class laboratory, who have already started international trials for the drugs that they have come up with!

The relationships I formed at St Mary's have been really important to me. When you work in medicine, it is easy to end up spending a lot of your time with other doctors because you work such long hours. When I catch up with my St Mary's friends, I am always inspired and reminded that there are so many amazing women out there, in different fields such as architecture, psychology, economics, teaching and law, who are also leaving their mark.

