



st mary's women

DR NIKKI STAMP ('97) Cardiothoracic Surgeon



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I remember, just prior to starting Year 7 at St Mary's, I was reading the prospectus and I'm sure my little eyes were falling out of my head. Swimming pools, gymnastics, music, drama, tennis courts and the list went on. I could not believe the number of opportunities that St Mary's offered – after all this was supposed to be school, not a place for fun and frivolity. As an adult, I can wholeheartedly say that the opportunities to 'have a go' and experience different things were the best part about being a student at St Mary's. I think I tried just about anything I could at school and it has made me a very well-rounded person, always willing to try my hand at new adventures and opportunities.

After leaving St Mary's, I studied medicine at the University of Western Australia. I graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery with Honours. During my time at university, I was always keen on a career in surgery. I just loved being 'hands on', with the opportunity to make a real difference to someone's life. I completed specialty training in cardiothoracic surgery with a focus on transplant surgery and paediatric and congenital heart surgery. My job is so special – I feel very privileged to share people's pivotal life moments, both good and bad.

Being a surgeon has opened an incredible number of doors for me and allowed me to do international outreach work, mentoring women in surgery and indeed, in many male-dominated careers. Outside of my clinical work, I'm a host for ABC's flagship science programme *Catalyst* and have written a book, *Can You Die of a Broken Heart?* which aims to teach people how wonderful our hearts are and how to look after them. This will be released around the world in early 2018.

I am grateful for the strong start in life my parents were so wise to give me. I hope to be able to repay the favour to my own children one day.

