



st mary's women

TRESS WALMSLEY (Smith '89) Chief Executive Officer



"St Mary's instilled in me a 'can-do' attitude and the view that if you approach life with a positive outlook you will be rewarded."

Immediately after Year 12, I went on Rotary Exchange for 12 months to Brazil, an amazing life-impacting experience that kick-started my love of travel. Returning home, I studied Environmental Science (Honours) at Murdoch University and then accidentally landed my first job with the Department of Agriculture in the small country town of Three Springs. Starting out as an agronomist, I soon moved into management roles and then across to a commercial/legal role, managing grains intellectual property. In 2007, I assisted in setting up the spin-off company InterGrain and became their first employee. I am now the CEO of this national wheat and barley breeding company.

I've landed the perfect role that combines my passions (agriculture/science, food and travel). My role involves working with scientists to breed new wheat and barley varieties. One of the most enjoyable parts of my role is the direct engagement with the supply chain from farmers to grain traders, flour millers, bakers, maltsters and brewers. As most of the Australian grain crop is exported, this requires frequent travel into Asia and across Australia to visit these customers.

My husband and I have jointly shared the parenting responsibilities of our two children. It has required the family to build strong communication skills and lots of calendar

scheduling to ensure that we can all blend our work, school, extra curricular and travel commitments together.

My love of science was developed by Mrs Yeo and Mr Staniforth, two very different teachers but they opened up my mind to the joys of science. The person who had the most impact on my broader life was my maths teacher, Mrs Christie. With the benefit of a very small class of five girls and a double period of maths most days, Mrs Christie became a mentor to us all and gave us permission to dream that girls can do anything if we worked hard. And then there was Mrs Jackson. Not that I ever admitted it to anyone whilst at school, but I always admired our Principal and it wasn't rare for me to think 'When I grow up, I want to be just like Mrs Jackson and carry myself with calmness and strength, and treat people fairly'.

St Mary's instilled in me a 'can-do' attitude and the view that if you approach life with a positive outlook you will be rewarded. Whilst not all rewards are immediate or directly identifiable, if you are prepared to put in the hard work, in the end it pays off.

