

# Franklin Women

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## August 2018 Newsletter

Now, to be completely fair, I love all our Franklin Women events. However, I am particularly excited about our [September event](#) as it's on a topic very close to my heart – career opportunities across the health and medical research sector. The start of my own medical research career followed a very traditional pathway (lab-based honors, PhD, post-doc) but then I had a career pivot moving into public health policy and, more recently, another pivot working for the charitable arm of a health insurer. Oh, and founding FW somewhere in between! The decision to leave the lab and a traditional academic career was one of the hardest things I have done, met with much judgement from my peers as well as my own feelings of failure. However, one of the blessings from Franklin Women is that I have had the opportunity to see many amazing researchers pursuing a wide range of rewarding career pathways.

I know firsthand how easy it is to continue along a conveyor belt of perceived success. However, doing so does not acknowledge that we each have different values, skills and personal needs that should be fulfilled through our individual career journeys. I hope this event brings to light the many pathways to success, and that it is ok if yours is different to the person next to you. For those of you who cannot join us for the event, this newsletter is dedicated to women who are trailblazers in their own career paths!

Happy reading!

Melina and the FW team

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## What happened this month

- Physicist Dr Cathy Foley was appointed as [CSIRO Chief Scientist](#)
- The NHMRC released Road Map 3, its 10-year strategy to [improve the health of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population](#)
- Applications opened for the second round of the hugely successful [Superstars of STEM](#) program – get your applications in!
- Applications also opened for the [CSIRO Indigenous STEM Awards](#)
- [The Conversation](#) reported that fewer women than men write science and technology stories and they want to narrow the gender gap
- [WiSPP](#) proposed the development of a [Victorian Centre for Gender Equity in](#)

Science. Congratulation on this awesome initiative!

- After almost a year without one, Karen Andrews was recently sworn in as the new Minister for science
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## Career Profile

Meet Andrea Cowley, Senior Consultant at Health Technology Analysts. She is passionate about her work, which focuses on improving health outcomes by ensuring patients gain affordable access to medicines.



**What is your training in the health or medical science field?** I left research after completing my PhD and spending 7.5 years as a post-doc, and became a medical writer. After a short stint as a freelancer, I worked as a full-time medical writer at NPS MedicineWise and then at Clinical Research Corporation. I have done a few short courses on critical appraisal, data visualisation, biostatistics, the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct and Health Technology Assessment. I am now doing a Master of Public Health and loving it!

**How did you get to be the Senior Consultant at Health Technology Analysts?** I have been lucky enough to work with some great recruiters

and even now maintain a connection. People may disagree with me, but a great recruiter can be an invaluable source of advice and guidance particularly when you are navigating your way into a new career outside research. Networking and making professional connections have also been critical in my transition and growth from Health Economics and Outcomes Research Consultant to Senior Consultant. You get to meet some great people who are more than willing to give you advice into the diverse roles in the health and medical industry and mentoring to help you develop your career.

**What is one of your favourite projects you are currently working on?** I can honestly say that every project I have worked on while at HTAnalysts has been interesting (dare I say fun) and challenging. I am lucky enough to work in a great team with fantastic managers and directors who recognise my need for diversity in my work. Every project has pros and cons, but my favourite projects are ones where I can be involved in developing the strategy, the economic modelling and financial impact models in reimbursement applications. While this takes me outside my comfort zone, it's also provides me with a great opportunity to learn and develop my career.

**What are some of the major 'outputs' from your work?** Over the last 20 months at HTAnalysts I have worked on many diverse projects, including feasibility studies, systematic

literature reviews and government reports, advisory boards, and multiple reimbursement submissions including the Pharmaceutical Management Agency NZ, Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee and the Medical Services Advisory Committee. I am also involved in business development activities such as seeking new opportunities and developing proposals and tenders.

**How do you think your work contributes to the field and/or the overall health of the community?** The work we do at HTAnalysts is critical to ensuring patients gain affordable and equitable access to the medicines and medical tests they need, directly improving patient outcomes and healthcare. We are uniquely placed to work collaboratively with industry and the Government to help make healthcare more affordable for the community.

**Who do you collaborate with and how did those work relationships come about?** I get to work with so many different people, including those working in industry, government and non-government organisations, as well as clinicians and patients. My network has been an important part in establishing my collaborations and partnerships, it's the six degrees of separation in industry. Conferences play a key role in extending my network and establishing new work relationships.

**Do you have any side interests or passions that you are looking to develop?** I am particularly interested in how health policy and health technology assessment may change to accommodate genomic technologies and personalised medicine in healthcare. As you can tell I also love to ski but have yet to convince my company to let me work remotely in a cabin on a snowy mountain. So in lieu of that I cook, bake and decorate cakes. These activities help me de-stress, and it doesn't hurt that I also get to eat the fruits of my labour.

**What food have you eaten too much of in your life?** What haven't I eaten too much of in my life? If you take my GP's advice then I'm eating too much truffle salami and other cold meats, cheese (especially French triple cream) and drinking too much full cream milk. I am also a pasta fiend and can eat bowls of it for breakfast, lunch and dinner (carbs are not the enemy!).



## Upcoming FW Event

*At Franklin Women meet-ups over the years, we often hear how women in our sector require more support in identifying, entering and thriving in roles not traditionally considered by researchers. This was the inspiration behind our upcoming FW event [Lessons from Leaders: insights across the health and medical research sector](#).*

*Below, recent PhD graduate (and your FW newsletter curator!) [Amy Vassallo](#) tells us why this event is so important to her at this stage of her career.*

My PhD was officially awarded in July. After years of work and months of waiting it was finally done. I had looked forward to this moment for such a long time. But a scary realisation dawned on me in the days after I got that 'Congratulations' email...now I really need to decide what to do with my career. I had been hiding under the safety blanket of 'oh,

I'm just a PhD student' throughout my candidature. How could anyone expect me to have the answers while I was still in the midst of thesis writing? But that excuse was gone now, I'm the real deal, an ECR, and I'm expected to have a career direction. As I watched many of my PhD colleagues slide naturally into their next step, I began to feel envious that my career trajectory was not so clear-cut. While doing my PhD I felt an increasing pull to leave the university environment, but didn't know what other options there were. I would speak to my supervisors and other senior academics only to be told 'you have lots of transferrable skills ('like what' I would wonder to myself!), you will be fine whatever you choose to do'. I know this was intended to be encouraging, but it had the opposite effect on me. I'm a heavily *green* personality type: I don't need motivational speeches, I need practical plans and actions.



Unfortunately, in the current structure of research training, there aren't many opportunities for exposure and practical advice on the breadth of opportunities for health science trained individuals. If it wasn't a teaching or research role at a university, I wasn't likely to see it. And this situation is not unique to the fresh PhD graduate. Transitions can be expected at any career stage, but we're often not sure what positions we are eligible for. Or what skills we need to be competitive or successful in those transitions.

That's why I am so excited about the next Franklin Women event. Having the opportunity to meet and informally chat with leaders from diverse organisations across the sector who value skills of

PhD graduates will be invaluable for me. I am looking forward to leaving the breakfast with a newfound understanding of the myriad of opportunities available to me as a health science trained PhD graduate, what skills are valued by non-academic employers, and practical advice on how to work towards a career transition into these organisations. Who knows, maybe this 'jack of all trades, master of none' may just find her renewed career direction!

**Our Lessons from Leaders event will be held on Wednesday 26 September at the Primus Hotel. For details and to register, see the [event page of our website](#).**

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## Tell your STEMM story

*In the last few years Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths & Medicine (STEMM) has leapt from the research lab and into the public eye. To tell us more about this shift, and how current women in STEMM can contribute, here is one of our [event Table Leaders](#), Heather Catchpole from Refraction Media:*

A renewed focus on skills as well as knowledge in preparing students for future careers, rapid changes in technology, and advances in science and medicine have all contributed to

a new idea of what STEMM means to society. This is evidenced in policy changes as well as shifts in education. At the same time, the way that we communicate is changing. From sharing news on social media to the rise of citizen journalism, we've suddenly all become part of the conversation – opening up the way that we understand and report on STEMM to a broader base of expertise.



[Careers with STEM](#) is a platform that includes a website, e-newsletters, social media and magazines. Over 1 million magazines have been distributed free to schools across the United States, New Zealand and Australia, and newsletters sent out across the world to communicate the shift in careers, the way in which STEMM skills and knowledge can contribute to career change, and the many ways in which we can learn, teach and understand these careers.

With many challenges facing us globally – from the place that AI will play in our decision-making processes, to personalised medicine, new energy and transport, and the challenge of sustainable food security, it's critical that we get the biggest picture possible of what is happening in STEMM research, industry and education. That's why we've opened up the Careers with STEM platform to citizen journalism.

We want to share your ideas, your career stories, and your activities in mentoring, teaching and leading this next generation into the STEMM careers of the future. Contributing is easy – simply [register and add your blog](#) and images on your personal story, your thoughts on the future of STEMM, your research and your daily work. We'll share it with hundreds of thousands of students who will be the ones that build our future.

The way in which we will be travelling, working and communicating may alter in ways we can't image in the future. What's certain is that STEMM will be a big part of that conversation – we'd love for you to join us in telling that story!

[Heather](#) co-founded STEM-specialist media company [Refraction Media](#) in 2013 with a view to creating a smarter future – one in which everyone has access to the skills they need to make a better planet. Heather will also be one of the Table Leaders at our upcoming [Lessons from Leaders](#) event.



## We are loving right now...

***Inspiring women!! Nothing cures a serious case of the post-PhD blues like women killing it in STEMM careers. Here are some of our current favourites:***

- [A/Prof Madhu Bhaskaran](#) is a multiple (and I mean multiple!) [award winning scientist](#), who has some helpful words about living with [imposter syndrome](#)
  - [Dr Dharmica Mistry](#) is a trail blazer – [groundbreaking scientist, entrepreneur, fashionista](#) – who doesn't hesitate to donate her time and experience to inspiring the next generation of women in research
  - [Dr Caroline Ford's STEMMinist Book Club](#) took the world by storm earlier this year, and she has recently appeared in [Marie Claire magazine](#) for her devoted work in ovarian cancer research
  - [Dr Astha Singh](#) is a talented science communicator who funded a community for Australian Indian and South-Asian youth, [YUVA Australia](#)
  - Scientist [Dr Jess Wade](#) wants women to get the recognition they deserve, starting with a dedicated [Wikipedia entry](#)!
  - Dear readers, I hope you're now more motivated to believe that [anything is possible](#) ☺
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We want to include your contributions in our newsletter. If you are doing something, or know about something, that you think other women in our field would be interested in, drop us a [line](#). We are all about sharing, promoting and collaborating between women in our field. Don't be shy, it might bring about a great opportunity! Want to receive our newsletters directly to your inbox? [Subscribe here](#).