

## MEDIA RELEASE

11<sup>th</sup> February 2019

### **Celebrating International Day of Women and Girls in Science: Centenary's Associate Professor Jodie Ingles is leading the way!**

*International Day of Women and Girls in Science* is held on 11 February every year, as part of a United Nations General Assembly resolution to officially recognise the critical role women and girls play in science and technology communities.

Statistics show that while women make-up more than half of science PhD and early career researchers, they account for just 17 per cent of senior academics in Australian universities and research institutes.<sup>1</sup>

The Centenary Institute's **Associate Professor Jodie Ingles** is proving it's possible to change those figures. She is a cardiac genetic counsellor, an award-winning scientist, a widely-published researcher, as well as a wife and a mum. All this, and she's only 38 years old!



Jodie grew up in a small town in country New South Wales, where at the time, only a handful of her high school cohort would go on to study at university. Jodie admits she didn't know a lot about women in science growing up, but says she was lucky to grow up in a supportive home.

"I used to think there was no way a country girl could make this a career. I never had a career plan. I just followed the path that made me happy, and eventually ended up where I am," says Jodie.

Jodie went on to complete a Bachelor of Biomedical Science, a Master of Public Health, a Graduate Diploma in Genetic Counselling and a PhD. Most recently, she was promoted to Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health at the University of Sydney.

Since 2003, Jodie has been working at the Centenary Institute in Professor Chris Semsarian's Molecular Cardiology Program. As part of her PhD, Jodie co-established the Australian Genetic Heart Disease Registry in 2008, and in 2015, she became Head of the Clinical Cardiac Genetics group at Centenary.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender Equity, Australian Academy of Science - <https://www.science.org.au/supporting-science/gender-equity>

“I do what I do because for 15 years, I’ve been lucky to meet so many amazing families in our clinics and I want to find answers for them. We are there for families when they’re at absolute rock bottom, and being able to help them through that is our goal,” says Jodie.



On top of being a highly-successful young scientist, Jodie is also a mum. She had her almost 10-year-old son during her PhD and admits while it can be difficult, having a family means she has to make it work.

“Centenary has a great attitude towards working mums. I’m a total workaholic, so I am sure I would burn out very quickly without being forced to leave the office by 4PM. It’s impossible to stress about a grant or research paper being rejected when you have this amazing little human who wants to tell you about his soccer game.”

While Jodie says it can become particularly tricky when she’s required to travel overseas for conferences, it’s important to surround yourself with supportive family and friends. She has also found a great mentor in Professor Chris Semsarian, who was “able to help guide me in building a track record that is now competitive in the fellowship and grant schemes.”

As winner of Centenary’s 2017 Bank of Queensland Gender Equity Award and mentee in the 2018 Franklin Women’s mentoring program, Jodie is a champion of women in the scientific and academic sectors. She says while it’s positive to see that gender issues are gaining more public recognition, she also believes there is much room for improvement.

“It can be easy to blame any rejection on the fact I am female. I think that wondering how it is impacting on how people perceive me and my applications isn’t overly helpful. I would really like to see how blinding of applications would go, like the NHMRC.”

Jodie offers the same advice to anyone looking to enter the world of science – that it’s a career for people who are “curious, hard-working, creative and determined.”

But looking back on her own career to date, she also believes it’s crucial to be confident.

“I wish I had believed more in myself. I haven’t had a typical career path, and at some level, I still feel like the country girl who needs to always prove herself. That can be exhausting! I’m trying to better accept those insecurities as who I am, but I think it’s important they don’t hold you back.”

[Read the full profile piece on Associate Professor Jodie Ingles.](#)

**To arrange an interview or to request images, please contact:** Centenary Institute Media and Communications Manager, Laura Parr, [l.parr@centenary.org.au](mailto:l.parr@centenary.org.au), 0435 530 537

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