



women's work | men's work

Great careers are for everyone

Climbing up into the canopy of an old growth forest near the glaciers on the West Coast of New Zealand has been one of the highlights of Margaret Barbour's career in science.

"I've worked in some awesome locations and travelled to some really neat parts of the world," says Margaret, Associate Professor and Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Agriculture and Environment and Deputy Director, Centre for Carbon, Water and Food at the University of Sydney.

To reach her current position Margaret completed a three-year undergraduate degree, a two-year master's degree and a PhD at the Australian National University.

Margaret says what she likes most about her job is being the first person ever to have an idea, and then being able to prove that the idea is right.

In one example, she thought it should be possible to measure the stable oxygen isotope composition of leaf water directly, without having to extract it first, by measuring the isotope composition of carbon dioxide that has exchanged with the water.

In proving this, she has been able to save a great deal of time for researchers, who can now take their measure in a few minutes, rather than a couple of hours; and feed into research used to help farmers improve crop production and save water.

"Understanding how the world works is what drives you."

"I really enjoy stretching my mind to come up with new ideas... There's nothing like having a result that tells you 'yes, I was right'."

Margaret Barbour | Scientist

Across Australia, women and men tend to work in different industries and occupations.

Health care and education industries are dominated by women; who are

89.1% of preschool education staff

82.5% of workers in residential care services.

Scientific and technical roles are dominated by men; who are

79.8% of employees in engineering design and consulting services

74.9% of computer system design staff.

Stereotypes about the kinds of work women and men 'should' do stop people from pursuing satisfying careers in non-traditional areas.

Businesses and the economy also miss out on valuable skills and experience.

Think again about the kind of work you might love. **Great careers are for everyone.**