

## The Right Environment for Women

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) staff comprises 53% women. On International Women's Day, Sunday 8 March 2020, we profile and celebrate four of the extraordinary women who work at the North Central CMA.

### Cass Davis

Cass Davis is a champion of women in science.

Cass joined the North Central Catchment Management Authority in 2009 and is now the driving force behind two community citizen science programs – North Central Waterwatch and the statewide River Detectives.

In 2013, Cass completed a Graduate Certificate in River Health Management, University of Melbourne. “The course helped me gain a deeper knowledge as a professional practising waterway management.

“I never saw myself as a leader. My perception was that leaders were the ‘executive team members’, people that made the big decisions, and that wasn’t me.

“After participating in the Compass Women in Leadership program, my beliefs were challenged. It was here I realised that I was a leader. I played an important role in the community. I knew that for things to change, I needed to change.

Cass released the first citizen science river health snapshot report in 2016. “It’s exciting that as a result of this work and finding my voice, I now lead five citizen science monitoring programs.

In 2017, Cass expanded the River Detectives program across Victoria. The program was nominated for a River Basin Management Society Award in 2019 and was a finalist for involving community in waterway management.

“I feel inspired when I go to work every day, knowing that I work alongside people who feel a deep connection to caring for our waterways.

Cass’s networks, knowledge and leadership have seen her join the City of Greater Bendigo’s team to work on the ‘Reimagining Bendigo Creek’ plan. “This role has been very special for me in both my personal and professional life. I have always cared for the Bendigo Creek and wanted to help make people see the creek for its beauty.

“What I’ve learned is to stay true to your passion and values and great things will happen.”

### Trephina Marek

Trephina Marek is the Human Resources (HR) Manager at the North Central CMA. As a HR specialist Trephina exemplifies the theme of IWD 2020 ‘take action for equality’. Trephina is passionate about creating inclusive and enabling workspaces where people can participate, where they are encouraged to always be learning, and to take ownership of their own careers.

On the home front Trephina describes herself as ‘Dance Mom’, but one with strong aspirations for her daughter. “I want her to always feel supported and encouraged to pursue her interests and learn more. I want her to have the opportunities

where she can use her talents, and the strength and courage to follow these opportunities when they arise. And finally, I want a healthy planet, both environmentally and socially.”

### **Robyn McKay**

Robyn McKay supports the delivery of the North Central CMA’s Reconciliation Action Plan and several projects with the North Central region’s seven Traditional Owner groups.

Robyn says some of the best aspects of her role involve spending one day per week with the North Central CMA’s two young Aboriginal school-based trainees and sharing days with Aunties on Country.

“One of the simplest ways we can honour women is to listen to older women’s stories and learn from them,” she says.

### **Mandy Coulson**

Traditionally a male dominated industry, Mandy Coulson has been a trailblazer in the agriculture sector for more than 20 years.

Mandy leads our Sustainable Agriculture team and has a commitment to helping farmers in north central Victoria improve their agricultural practices for the benefit of both the environment and economy.

She has many accolades under her belt including the Victorian State Landcare Coordinator Award and a Women in Resilience Award. Mandy was invited to speak at the International Soils Conference in New Zealand about the North Central Soil Health Guide she developed in 2016. Of all the awards she gives tribute to her late Mum who taught her the importance of helping others.

“I enjoy working with people and have dedicated significant time to encouraging youth and farmers which fills me with a great sense of community and achievement.”

## **For more information**

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