

# All at Sea

Most people take holidays to see Australia. Danielle Hodge went to work to see it. *Smart Start* reports.

## Danielle's key career steps

- Good at maths and science and loves the sea.
- Career counsellor suggests naval architecture (marine engineering).
- Goes for specialised education and loves it – it comes with huge employment potential.
- Grabs graduate program which gives her exposure to all areas and opportunities galore.

**A**t high school in Melbourne, it had been Danielle's plan to join the defence force so she could work near water, but her school pointed her in the direction of naval architecture.

Danielle studied naval architecture in Tasmania at the Australian Maritime College. Since then, her maritime engineering career has been going places!

During breaks from her studies, Danielle worked in Adelaide and Melbourne. Since graduation she's found herself in Sydney, Darwin and Canberra. Now she's back in Adelaide. To this point she's done everything from sailing tall ships to working with submarines. She couldn't be happier with her career.

"I'm working for the Defence Materiel Organisation (the procurement & materiel support part of the Department of Defence). I joined them on their graduate program in 2007. That was 18 months in three different job areas which for me was three different states," Danielle says.

"In the program I worked in Sydney on in-service vessels; Darwin was bringing the new patrol boats into service; and Canberra was with the new amphibious ships which are not even detailed in design yet. Now I'm with submarines in Adelaide. In the next few years, Adelaide will start building the new air warfare destroyers – they are the next big project for the Navy."

It's turned out to be a dream career choice, despite the fact female naval architects aren't exactly common.

"In the two years I've been with DMO, I've only had a handful of bad days. I enjoy going to work. I've been spoiled. I get to see a lot of defence, I've got to play with a lot of vessels that I wouldn't have if I was out doing commercial work, and I get to deal with the end user so it's a lot of fun. To want to go to work rather than stay home suggests I must be enjoying it," she said.

What about the future? Given the enormity of some the projects and the health of the maritime sector, Danielle can see herself sticking around for some time.

"For the next few years I'm happy where I am. I'm being given hands-on engineering work for an in-service vessel which is building my knowledge. Ten years from now I'll be happy to stay with Defence but looking at designing and bringing into service a next generation submarine or another surface vessel. Defence and the whole maritime sector in Australia is so strong you can do almost anything you want to."



## Yes, that's all fine, but what is naval architecture?

Fancy name for the engineering discipline dealing with the design, construction and repair of marine craft.