

### Media statement

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#### Sunshine Coast scientists seeking gender balance

On **11 February**, the United Nations, partners worldwide, women and girls will mark the **International Day of Women and Girls in Science**, to celebrate women's contributions to the field.

At present less than 30 per cent of researchers worldwide are women. According to the UN, long-standing biases and gender stereotypes are steering girls and women away from science related fields.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) is proud to have many female scientists across a broad range of expertise. One such scientist is Senior Medical Officer Infectious Diseases, Dr Jennifer Broom.

Dr Broom says the combination of problem solving with caring for people was what drew her to medicine.

"I work as an infectious diseases physician but I also run a research program, working with the University of New South Wales, looking at the reasons why antibiotics are overused and how we can optimise our use of antibiotics to preserve them for future generations.

"Antimicrobial resistance is an enormous threat globally. My work involves understanding systems, human interactions in the hospital system, and issues that health professionals face such as balancing risk, fear of adverse outcomes, and how we can address these to give the best possible care to patients in Australian hospitals and internationally," she said.

Dr Broom said: "The balance of women and men in science is an issue. My advice to all people, male or female, is to pursue what you are passionate about, whether that be science or other disciplines.

"If you feel isolated in pursuing science and research as a female, a female mentor can help.

"The more flexible we make our working environment, in terms of balancing family commitments and work, the easier it will be for females to succeed in science. This is also true for men. Increasingly men are also taking significant roles in childcare making the balance of work and home life an issue for both men and women," she said.

**ENDS**

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