

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

EMILY HEMSWORTH



**CURRENT ROLE: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT, REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**PREVIOUS ROLE: POLICY OFFICER
DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CITIES**

**DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**

After graduating Emily moved to Canberra for a government graduate position. Emily has remained working for the Federal government and has enjoyed the diversity of her roles over the years and the people she has worked with.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

In the last year of her degree, Emily began to apply for graduate program positions. During the interview process Emily worked with a group of applicants to problem solve a set of scenarios. Emily displayed qualities that government recruiters look for including alternative ways of thinking, considering stakeholder engagement, leadership and teamwork. Emily's Development Studies courses allowed her to identify, and consider how to manage, the impacts of proposed developments at the national and local scale. This helped Emily secure her place in the graduate program.

After finishing her degree, Emily began working as a Graduate with the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. This provided her with the opportunity to work across a range of areas, develop experience and build relationships. An example of one of Emily's diverse roles includes evaluating the health and education services on Norfolk Island in order to determine what support was needed as Norfolk Island transitioned to NSW standards.

Emily currently works as an Assistant Director at the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. Emily is involved with two large projects around freight railways. The first is the development of the [Moorebank Intermodal Terminal Precinct](#) which involves the construction of a terminal in Western Sydney that will be an interface between rail and road and will also host significant warehousing. She also works with the Australian Rail Track Corporation which manages the existing Interstate and Hunter Valley rail networks and is developing the [Inland Rail](#) project which is a new freight rail line connecting Melbourne and Brisbane.

This is a diverse role which includes reviewing company finances, determining what support the government can provide to its companies, communicating with legal teams to

ensure project delivery is aligned with legal obligations and stakeholder engagement. At the core of what Emily does is to prepare briefings and advice to keep Ministers informed of project progress and have them sign off on decisions so that Emily and her team can implement the strategies.

Communication is important in Emily's role as she works in a small team who need to collaborate efficiently to identify policy solutions, as well as engaging with and creating close relationships with companies and other levels of government.



Image: Emily at the Institute of Public Administration Australia.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

Development Studies supported Emily to make recommendations based on research and think more critically to address problems in new ways. During her career Emily has seen the importance of effective stakeholder engagement across government and with industry and the community. Emily has also found there is an interesting challenge in addressing community perceptions of what legitimate stakeholder engagement looks like, particularly

when projects are at an early stage of development and there are no clear answers to questions.

Considering new ways of thinking and effective stakeholder management have been valuable skills that Emily initially developed during her degree. Development Studies provided her with a broad perspective and encouraged her to look at problems in a new ways rather than applying common approaches.



Image: Emily at a Department presentation.

While Emily was studying, she was employed by [The Mai-Wel Group](#) as a Support Worker. This role was relevant to Development Studies as Emily was working with disadvantaged people to support them to live more independently. Emily developed her management, people and communications skills in this role. Emily needed to empathise with people and view issues through their perspective which is still a useful skill in her current role.

Emily also developed critical skills during her placement in the [Work Integrated Learning in Development Studies and Human Geography](#). Emily completed her placement at [Compass Housing](#), reviewing ways of delivering affordable housing. Emily developed her research skills as she looked at international case studies and identified their advantages and disadvantages. This allowed Emily to consider broader implications of decisions, which aren't always immediately obvious. Emily completed her placement one day a week over ten weeks, which included site visits where she met with residents. Emily found her placement interesting and enjoyable.

ADVICE: FOCUS ON YOUR INTERESTS

Emily was not sure what she wanted to do after graduating. Emily advises that you do not need to get caught up in where exactly you want to go and what you want to do. If you are interested in a role like Emily's, there are many government agencies and many pathways to gain employment. Study courses that you find interesting and you will find work to suit you.

The social aspect of university is important and can help you as you study and work through the content together. Emily was able to create a strong network of friends within the degree. The Development Studies Pizza Events that are organised biannually by the Program Convener were also helpful for Emily. Past graduates and teachers attend these events, which allows current students to connect and explore people's different experiences and ideas in a casual setting.

When you start your first job after graduating, you will not have much experience. It is helpful to reflect on what you have learned in Development Studies, including techniques for effective stakeholder engagement and project management. Your perspective and approach to addressing challenging tasks can set you apart.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Emily enjoys the diversity of her current role and is working in a collaborative team, where she learns from people with different experiences and shares her own perspective. Emily is planning on remaining in government as there are many opportunities to change roles and continue developing her skills and expand her knowledge.

“You learn from others and you teach others.”

To find out more about Emily and our other Development Studies graduates please visit;
facebook.com/DevelopmentStudiesatUON/

For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:
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