

# DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

CAITLYN TOUZELL



**CURRENT ROLE: RESEARCH & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, NSW CIRCULAR NEW SOUTH WALES**

**PAST ROLE: PROJECT OFFICER, NSW CIRCULAR NEW SOUTH WALES**

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

Caitlyn knew that she wanted to work in an area that was purpose lead and would make a difference to the environment. When she learnt about circular economy, she strongly resonated with the alternate economic system. She followed her passion in the area and now works for an organisation strongly focused on shifting NSW to a circular economy.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

Our current dominant economy system is linear economy – *take, make and dispose*. Raw materials are taken, processed into something and then generally disposed of into landfill at the end of their use. Circular economy (CE), and the company that [Caitlyn](#) is now employed by, [NSW Circular](#) (NSWC), is about changing the way resources are valued and looped around in the system instead of being disposed of. CE is more than just recycling, it is about shifting the mindset of society and our relationship with finite resources. NSWC is a NSW-government funded body that was set up by the NSW Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer and hosted by [UNSW Sydney](#). The major focus of the company is to accelerate the transition from a linear economy to a CE by targeting specific supply chains where waste is problematic. They work to provide current and potential future waste solutions. The company works collaboratively across several sectors including government, research and industry.

Caitlyn was first exposed to the concept of circular economy during a NSWC [conference](#) she attended whilst completing her work placement as part of her [Work Integrated Learning](#) course. Caitlyn undertook her placement with [Plastic Police](#). This concept really clicked for Caitlyn and she knew she wanted to delve deeper and chose to complete her honours on CE.

Throughout the process of completing her honours, Caitlyn interviewed various people and organisations, which happened to include NSWC. Whilst in conversation with NSWC, Caitlyn discovered they were looking for an intern and that was her first role with the company. From there Caitlyn progressed to Project Officer and is now the company's Research and Communication's Manager.

“It goes to show it really pays off to make those connections.”



Image: Caitlyn Touzell (right) attending a NSWC conference during her placement with Plastic Police.

As the Research and Communication's Manager Caitlyn is responsible for managing NSWC with research organisations particularly through their recent [Rapid Review Research Funding](#), coordinating NSWC events as well as project management and administration of projects with other organisations such as Sydney Water where they are planning on [transitioning Western Sydney to a CE](#). On top of being heavily involved in the NSWC research, Caitlyn is also responsible for all of the company's social media including their [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (give them a follow!). Caitlyn sends out all the communication that goes out about the company including newsletters and emails. With over 2000 recipients, Caitlyn needs to produce content that is accessible and digestible across a variety of audiences.

## HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

Along with a wealth of new knowledge, Development Studies provided Caitlyn with a new mindset that encouraged her to consider 'the bigger picture'. When taking in new information or looking at a problem, Caitlyn reflects that she now will take the time to consider whatever she is looking at from a variety of different angles and perspectives.

Caitlyn's work placement was also an important aspect of her undergraduate degree as it brought a different way of learning, and a way to apply and solidify what she had learnt in the classroom.

Her degree also provided her with many opportunities to develop her professional network. Caitlyn volunteered at a circular economy business event that was hosted by [Go Circular](#), an opportunity that she saw on the [Development Studies Facebook page](#). At the event Caitlyn met many of the people that she had interviewed as part of her honours. In her current role with NSWCC, Caitlyn is frequently in contact with many of those same people.

As an undergraduate student Caitlyn also volunteered with [Project Everest](#), a social enterprise organisation that runs overseas placements for university students. As a volunteer, Caitlyn travelled to Siem Reap in Cambodia and was involved in a regenerative farming practices project. The program provided training which helped to develop many of Caitlyn's soft skills which have been transferrable in her subsequent roles.



Image: Caitlyn and fellow 'Trekking' members whilst in Cambodia with Project Everest.

## ADVICE: TRUST THE PROCESS

Caitlyn's advice is simply, 'trust the process'. Development Studies gives you such a wide breath of knowledge, opportunities and transferrable skills, all of which can be used across many different professional fields. What you do now, is not necessarily what you will be still doing in the future. Finally, work on developing those soft skills, they will be incredibly valuable to you because they are so transferable.

**"Don't spend time stressing about where you're going to end up."**

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

NSWC is still a relatively new and growing company, and Caitlyn sees lots of potential for new roles and new experiences. Caitlyn can also see herself going back to study in order to further specialise in an area once she has gained more experience.

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

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