Dr Mel McDowall

Director of Defence Artificial Intelligence Research Network (DAIRNet)

Dr Mel McDowall is the Director of the Defence AI Research Network (DAIRNet), an initiative of the Department of Defence and hosted by the University of South Australia. This draws on her experiences in transdisciplinary research and operation roles.

Having worked in many industries, such as clinical, agriculture and Defence, Mel has experience with many steps in the "bench to bedside/farm -gate/capability" journey. This includes basic and applied research, business improvement and governance, advocacy,contract management, territory management, and clinical support.

Transdisciplinary teams, science communication and outreach are critical for research. Highlights of Mel's career include receiving a Young Tall Poppy Award (2005), attending Science Meets Parliament (2014 -2016) as an advocate for reproductive medicine research, and participating in the CSIRO Nonprime program (2016). More recently Mel was the 2023 winner of the Technology category of the Women in Technology awards and a finalist in the Defence Connect "Women in Leadership" award (2023). Mel holds a PhD in M edicine (2005) and Master of Business Administration (2018) from the University of Adelaide.