Dr Airlie Chapman ‘01

After finishing her studies at Kambala in 2001, Airlie attended the University of Sydney to complete a BSc (Mathematics, Physics), BEng (Aeronautics Space) and a MEng (Robotics). She then went on to complete a MSc (Mathematics) and a PhD (Aeronautics & Astronautics) at the University of Washington (UW) in 2013. In 2017, she was the first female to be appointed as a Mechatronics lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Melbourne.

Her research is in autonomous systems with applications ranging from robotics to aerospace and from social networks to brain neuronal networks. She has worked on pioneering projects with leading aerospace companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin and NASA’s JPL.

In recognition of her research, at UW she was awarded an Outstanding Female Engineer Award and a College of Engineering Dean’s Fellowship. Internationally, she is a twice recipient of an Amelia Earhart Fellowship. Her PhD thesis was awarded the prestigious Springer Thesis Prize. She is currently a L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Fellow for her work connecting humans and robots. Her robotic work has shown broad appeal with interviews appearing in the Age, Domain, the Herald Sun, Vogue Australia, Mamamia, Futurity News, ABC Radio and on ABC News Breakfast.

Airlie is a strong advocate for STEM education with a particular interest in under-represented groups such as women and students in rural and remote areas. She has been involved in Young Women in Science, Girls in Science, and Science and Technology in Agriculture forums across Australia.