

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 22 July 2021



Volunteering Australia announces new Chair, Professor Michael E. Drew

The Volunteering Australia (VA) Board is pleased to announce Professor Michael E. Drew as newly elected Chair. Michelle Ewington hands over the role after being elected Chair in 2018. Ms Ewington joined the Volunteering Australia Board in 2013 and will remain on the Board until the end of her term later this year.

Board Chair, Professor Drew said, "I would like to acknowledge Michelle for her contribution and service to Volunteering Australia and as an advocate for our nation's millions of volunteers. Michelle's leadership as Chair of the Board was instrumental in guiding VA during the transition to an independent Board of governance. This considerable change has shaped the future of the national peak body for volunteering."

"I also acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Peter Lucas who leaves the Board today after seven years of service," Dr Drew said. Peter Lucas was elected to the Board in 2014 and saw the transition to a skills-based Board as Treasurer for six years.

Outgoing Chair, Michelle Ewington said, "What a privilege it has been to contribute to the strategic governance of the volunteering sector over the past 13 years. I am grateful for the opportunities my role with Volunteering Australia has availed me and the role I have played leading a journey of change for the organisation."

"2018 was a significant year that saw VA transition its governance model from representative to a skills-based independent Board. This undertaking is probably one of my proudest achievements and a catalyst to the strength and success we now see for VA."

"As a strong advocate for the voice of volunteers, the act of volunteering and those that support the work of volunteering, I am immensely pleased to see the current Board demonstrating such passion and commitment to creating a contemporary and forward thinking organisation."

"As I step away from my role of Chair, I've had the pleasure of helping shape the next strategic plan and I look forward to seeing the organisation - and sector - thrive," Ms Ewington said.

At today's meeting the Board endorsed Volunteering Australia's Strategic Plan 2021-2024. A culmination of hard work and collaboration between the Board, Leadership Team, and stakeholders, the Strategic Plan will inform the direction of VA over the next three years.

"Research undertaken by Volunteering Australia shows that the global pandemic has impacted volunteering in many ways. This includes fewer opportunities for people to participate in their community, challenges for community-facing organisations reliant upon volunteers, and the risk that many of those who have stopped volunteering during the COVID-19 period will not return to voluntary work and at least some will be volunteering less. It is out of our research agenda that this strategic plan has been developed," Professor Drew said.

ENDS

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Professor Drew is a Director at Drew, Walk & Co. and a Professor of Finance at Griffith University. Michael received his Ph.D. in the field of economics from the University of Queensland and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community. Volunteering Australia's vision is strong, connected communities through volunteering. Our mission is to lead, strengthen, promote and celebrate volunteering in Australia. We work collectively with the seven State/Territory volunteering peak bodies to deliver national, state/territory and local volunteering programs and initiatives in accordance with the Government's priorities.

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