

veski board announcement

Dr Leonie Walsh, BSc, MSc, MBA (Exec), GAICD, FTSE, HonDUniv (Swin) has been elected as chair of **veski**.

Since 2004, **veski** has delivered a dynamic program of fellowships, awards and international networks. **veski** plays a unique role by ensuring the people, skills and community are in place to support Victoria's innovation and research ecosystems to sustainably deliver the talent and leadership needed to create maximum impact.

veski is recognising outstanding research capabilities and outcomes, through Victoria's Innovation Awards by:

- (i) encouraging the next generation of young Victorian researchers - through short term study missions - to undertake specialist training and career development not available in Australia;
- (ii) delivering an updated inspiring women program to support, elevate and address intersectional barriers to equality; and
- (iii) recognising and amplifying our talented Victorian innovators to benefit the broader research and innovation ecosystem.

Thus, delivering solid results, fostering innovation, and supporting the Victorian State Government's vision for innovation, future industries, and a stronger entrepreneurial economy.

Dr Walsh is a Board Chair and Industry adviser at the interface of clean technology, data and skills. Leonie's career is built off a broad science and technology base, overlaid with strong business and governance credentials, combined with well-developed relationship management skills. Leonie's current board and advisory board experience crosses industry, government and academia with a sector focus including renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, defence, higher education and the circular economy.

veski is also delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Natalie Hannan to its Board of Directors in the role of Non-Executive Director.

Dr Leonie Walsh, **veski** Chair, welcomed Natalie to the Board, noting "Natalie brings tremendous knowledge and insight across the early- mid academic career path as well as a deep understanding of key nuances faced by groups who experience systemic inequities and disadvantage - particularly in a research setting," Dr Walsh said.

Natalie is Professor and Associate Dean, Diversity and Inclusion (Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS) University of Melbourne), and President and Chair of the Executive Council, of the Australian and New Zealand Placental Research Association (ANZPRA). She is also Chair of the Faculty MDHS Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Deputy Chair of the MDHS People and Culture Committee.

She is also Head, of the Therapeutics and Vascular Function in Pregnancy Laboratory, at the University of Melbourne (as an Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellow and an inaugural **veski** Inspiring Women Fellow). Natalie was also an inaugural competitively selected participant of the **veski** inspiring women STEMsidebyside program.

Her research program aims to develop novel strategies to treat the most serious complications of pregnancy, with a major focus on preeclampsia, for which there is no efficacious prevention or treatment. Natalie is deeply passionate about improving women's and infant health, and enhancing equity, diversity, inclusion & reconciliation across all positions/roles she holds. Having acted in an advisory capacity to **veski** on many programs and activities including its more recent inspiring women grants - bridging the funding gap.

veski MD & chief executive Julia L Page said, "We are delighted that Leonie will lead the **veski** board of directors as we move into a new period of growth, having been a key figure in **veski's** inspiring women activities for more than a decade. We look forward to continuing to work with the Victorian Government newly announced department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions and Minister Ben Carroll appointed to the Industry and Innovation portfolio. I am privileged to be supported by an exceptional independent Board of Directors, and Leonie's leadership will further enhance the strategic direction of **veski** at Board level."

"Leonie is an inspirational leader with a strategic focus. She has an extensive range of experience in technology application and the future skilled workforce. Her insights, passion and expertise in science & business innovation will be instrumental to **veski's** continued success."

On behalf of the newly elected **veski** chair, I would also like to pay tribute to retiring directors Emeritus Professor A. Ian Smith who stepped down as **veski** chair and director on 31 December 2021 and Professor Tiffany Walsh and Dr Pangzhen Zhang who retired at the **veski** AGM on 16 November 2022 having concluded their terms of office.