

# 2020 Annual General Meeting

## Incoming National President's address

First let me start by thanking you, Chris, for your dedicated leadership of Engineers Australia over the past year. Despite the challenges of a 'virtual' presidency, you've kept EA moving forward with purpose. Indeed, you can and should be proud of your achievements and contribution to the profession not just over the past year, but over many years. Thank you.

Thanks also to you, Bronwyn, for your earlier comments and to the Directors of the Board for electing me to the role of National President & Chair for 2021.

It is an honour to serve amongst a talented board of directors, an outstanding executive team and alongside the best of profession, such as we have honoured tonight. I particularly extend congratulations to our new Honorary Fellows.

### **The focus for 2021**

The priorities for Engineers Australia are set by the governing board, aided by the CEO and her team, with the advice and counsel of National Congress. These priorities are reflected in our 2020+3 strategy, described in the Annual Report.

As National President and Chair, I will maintain our strategic direction, while accelerating the transformation of Engineers Australia for the benefit of the profession and community.

In a world where information is largely free and trust in institutions is greatly diminished, I am particularly committed to modernising the Learned Society and unleashing its potential.

### **The challenge to demonstrate benefits**

I will also be laying down the challenge to staff, office bearers and volunteers to demonstrate how we collectively are delivering benefits for members and the community.

I firmly believe that we can only elevate the attraction and status of the profession - to be called upon as trusted advisors - through action, not words. Indeed, practical action to enable genuine, inclusive progress in society has never been more critical.

### **A new golden era**

I believe we are in the early stages of a golden era for engineering. Engineering is pivotal to a successful energy transition, to enabling the circular economy, expanding the frontiers of space and developing digitally-enabled products and services that enrich peoples' lives. The scale, complexity and significance of these challenges cannot be understated.

But if, as a profession, we are to make the scale of contribution that the community needs from us, we cannot afford to be shy, ambivalent or reactive.

Nor can we be naïve. Engineering must fit and enhance the social and economic context in which it occurs.

Technical solutions must be designed so that they are humanly possible to embrace and use. The engineering mindset must continue to evolve from delivery of outputs to enabling outcomes that people love.

This is the approach to the future of engineering that EA can champion.

### **Engaging people from all walks of life**

If we are focused, clever and ambitious in our approach, we will engage the imagination and energy of leaders of all ages and backgrounds that are the future of our profession.

We will be a professional community that mirrors and models their values, identity and ambitions, and which enables them to play an expanding role in creating the world they want to live in.

### **We can do it together**

Of this can only occur if we work together with a purpose ... as I know we can.

We can draw inspiration - as I do - from the spirit of community service that is so intrinsic to our profession, and the thousands of volunteers and office bearers that 'are' Engineers Australia. To the volunteers here tonight, I thank you for your contribution and invite you to imagine what we can achieve together in the years ahead with focus and collaboration.

I look forward to working with you all to advance the science and practice of engineering for the benefit of the community.

Thank you.

Dr Nick Fleming  
Incoming National President and Chair 2020 – Engineers Australia  
2 December 2020