

**MEDIA RELEASE
7 May 2018**

AICD ACT's Bright Young Stars Leading the Way for Future Female Directors

The ACT division of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) has been leading the charge in creating educational and networking opportunities for female board directors, as well as for those just beginning their careers as directors. With its new National President and diversity champion, Elizabeth Proust at the helm, the AICD hopes to encourage more young women to join the organisation and help open boardroom doors which may have been closed to them in the past.

Well-known for its prestigious director training programs, the AICD offers a range of courses and events to enable sector-specific and organisation-specific issues to be covered in-depth. One of the key focuses of the AICD ACT is providing increased opportunities for the public and not-for-profit (NFP) sectors and young directors.

'Many peak bodies and national offices are based here in the ACT, not only those of NFPs but also across every sector,' said Suzanne Schultz, ACT State Manager, AICD. 'We are also very proud of the fact that we have the highest proportion of female members out of any state branch.'

The AICD is committed to understanding more about its members and how it can assist young people starting out on their director journeys. A 'Generation X, Y, X' event was recently held in Canberra, where over 20 AICD members under 45yrs were invited to come and tell their stories about directorship and what it means to them.

'What we have found through hosting events like this is that, for our young directors, access to mentors is key,' added Schultz.

Thilini Perera, Kate Waterford and Corinne Wallis are three young ACT-based women who have been making leaps and bounds in their company director careers. Sharing impressive resumes spanning the engineering, finance and legal industries, along with a passion for philanthropy, the three women have each completed the AICD's highly-regarded Company Director Course, along with other AICD courses and now each hold board positions within the not-for-profit sector.

At only 29 years old, Perera sits on the board of Carers ACT and is also Company Secretary and Executive Director, Governance and Membership at Lifeline Australia. 'I found the Company Director's Course really helpful because it opened my eyes to the different hats board members must wear when making decisions in business. After that I was tapped on the shoulder by the Carers ACT board as they said I had the skill set they were looking for. The AICD provides some really valuable insights into the subtleties and nuances of governance which are vital for directors to understand,' Perera said.

Kate Waterford is a Board Director of Amnesty International Australia and also serves on a number of other human rights committees including for the ACT Law Society's Human

Rights and Access to Justice Committee, as well as various committees for Australian Lawyers for Human Rights.

'The AICD course, the journal and database of articles are very helpful. But the networking has been incredible – I have met a fabulous bunch of people through the course and have connected with people after AICD events who have actually helped me navigate some of the challenges I was facing,' said Waterford, Special Counsel at Canberra's Maliganis Edwards Johnson, and Board Director of Amnesty International Australia.

In 2016, Corinne Wallis won the Telstra ACT Business Women's Corporate and Private Award. Inspired by her time spent volunteering with refugees while working in the mining industry, Corinne decided she wanted to give back in a full-time capacity, volunteering in Timor Leste with Engineers Without Borders. She has since been involved with the organisation at board level and has been integral to overseeing its expansion into a joint venture with 'Live and Learn'; what is now ATEC Biodigesters International (ATEC). Wallis now also sits on the board of ATEC, chairing the finance committee, and is passionate about empowering communities both here in Australia and overseas.

With an impressive new cohort of young female directors like this coming out of its ACT chapter, the AICD is set to maintain its reputation as the leader in corporate governance here in Australia.

The Australian Institute of Company Directors is committed to excellence in governance. We make a positive impact on society and the economy through governance education, director development and advocacy. Our membership of more than 41,000 includes directors and senior leaders from business, government and the not-for-profit sector.