

A word from our new Chairperson Kate Symons

09 September 2019

Corporate



The commission has welcomed the announcement of our new full-time Commissioner and Chairperson, Kate Symons.

I am delighted to be appointed as the Essential Services Commission's chairperson as it embarks on its next phase.

Over my career I've been fortunate to have the opportunity to work in a variety of fascinating roles, including at a Commonwealth Royal Commission, the Federal Court of Australia, a university and law firms both in Australia and overseas. The commission is no exception and I know I am not alone when I say it is a privilege to take part in decisions that affect most Victorians in some way in their everyday

life.

It is one month shy of three years since I was appointed as a part-time commissioner. Over these three years, I've been impressed by the capability and dedication of the commission's staff. I have been inspired by our varied work program that spans [a number of sectors](#): water, energy, transport, local government, energy efficiency to name a few. I've enjoyed the challenge of the journey so far and learnt so many things along the way: from the staff at the commission, from the work we do and from [our stakeholders](#) including regulated businesses, consumers and community advocates.

The commission is Victoria's independent economic regulator. That independence is paramount in today's environment when regulators are increasingly being challenged to take effective and proportionate enforcement action.

I believe our new commission comprising myself, and my fellow commissioners [Simon Corden](#) and [Sitesh Bhojani](#) is well positioned to support and lead the commission to be the strong and fair regulator our community expects us to be.

In 25 years of economic regulation in Victoria, I am proud to be appointed the first female chairperson.

This has made me reflect on comments made by Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, following her own appointment a few years ago. She said at the time, one of her top three priorities was to focus on the lack of diversity at decision making levels, and that 'gender equality will never be achieved without women having meaningful and truly representative roles in decision making and leadership'. This role falls squarely in that category, and what a privilege that is.

It is a pivotal time to be leading the commission, as the nature of our work program continues to grow, our legislative remit expands and community expectations on regulators to be effective is firmly on the agenda. I believe my appointment reflects the trust and confidence placed in the commission as a whole.

I am confident the commission is well-positioned to embrace these future challenges and opportunities. I very much look forward to being part of the team as the commission embarks on its next chapter as an independent regulator that promotes the long-term interests of Victorian consumers.

For general enquiries

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Read a speech by Chairperson Kate Symons on how we are working to support Victorian consumers affected by family violence.

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