

# ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH  
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 20

### MEDIA RELEASE

## ANROWS bolsters strategic governance appointing Joan Fitzpatrick as Board Chair and Nisha Padmanabhan as Independent Director

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) is pleased to announce the appointment of Joan Fitzpatrick as its new Board Chair and Nisha Padmanabhan as Independent Director. These appointments mark a significant step in the next stage of strengthening ANROWS's governance and strategic leadership. Each new appointment brings a breadth of experience and expertise across governance and risk, and in research and non-profit operating environments, alongside their deep commitment to the principles and values that drive ANROWS' mission to deliver high-quality research that influences policy and practice to end domestic, family, and sexual violence in Australia.

Joan Fitzpatrick is an experienced company director and leader of business success. Her executive and director experience covers the corporate, government and not-for-profit sectors and she has a strong track record of working collaboratively across different stakeholders. Joan has an extensive record of achieving successful business outcomes in complex change environments. Through her consultancy, Alvearium Pty Ltd, she advises executives on strategy, governance, and leadership, while also championing women's equality and mentoring future leaders.

The appointment of Nisha Padmanabhan as Independent Director has also seen her appointed as Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit sub-Committee of the Board. Nisha brings two decades of experience leading risk management and governance initiatives across diverse sectors. As the Chief Risk Officer at The University of Sydney, she has pioneered transformative risk strategies that align with institutional objectives. With experience in leadership roles across major charity and financial institutions, Nisha has also previously held board advisory roles with Baptist World Aid Australia, Transform Aid International, and Habitat for Humanity Australia.

**ANROWS CEO, Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine, welcomed the new appointments:** "We are thrilled to welcome Joan Fitzpatrick to the role of Board Chair and Nisha Padmanabhan as Independent Director. Their contribution to the strategic oversight and good governance of ANROWS will support the directions we have been setting, including our focus on impact. Joan brings a wealth of experience in strategic leadership and best practice governance, while Nisha's expertise will further enhance ANROWS's ability to navigate the opportunities and challenges in the work ahead to drive impactful change through evidence-based research.

"We thank Minister Rishworth for her nomination of Ms Fitzpatrick, and our members across the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments for their endorsement of both nominations."

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**Joan Fitzpatrick, incoming Board Chair said:** "I am delighted to join ANROWS at such a critical time. The role for evidence-based decision-making has never been greater in supporting the national commitment to end domestic, family and sexual violence. Now more than ever, we need Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety to point the way in how evidence can best inform and influence decision-making for women's and children's safety. I look forward to working with my fellow board members and supporting ANROWS' executive leadership through good governance and oversight of our strategic impact."

**The Hon Assistant Minister for Social Services and for the Prevention of Family Violence, Justine Elliot,** said how important the appointment is: "The work of ANROWS is critical to the development of effective evidence-base policies that support our shared goal of ending gender-based violence, and I look forward to working with Ms Fitzpatrick in achieving this."

**Nisha Padmanabhan, incoming Independent Director, said:** "ANROWS plays a pivotal role in shaping the national response to ending violence against women and children. I am a strong advocate for evidence-based research, but its true value lies in its application. We must harness the power of this research to implement practical, effective changes in society that help achieve our goal of ending violence against women and children. I am thrilled to join the ANROWS Board and I look forward to collaborating with my esteemed colleagues to drive meaningful change in this space."

These new appointments follow a period of transition, during which ANROWS's immediate past Board Chair, Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC., was appointed as Governor General of Australia. ANROWS thanks Her Excellency for her six years of leadership, during which time she solidified ANROWS' role as the trusted voice of evidence on domestic, family, and sexual violence. Under her guidance, ANROWS strengthened its influence in shaping national policy and public discourse.

ANROWS recognises and sincerely thanks Barry Sandison for his support and guidance as interim Chair during this transition. His leadership, strategic counsel and commitment during this transitional period have been invaluable in ensuring the organisation remained strong and focused on its mission.

With this strengthened governance, ANROWS remains committed to advancing the evidence base to end violence against women and children.

**- ENDS -**

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**About ANROWS**

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) is a not-for-profit independent national research organisation.

ANROWS is an initiative of Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. ANROWS was established by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of

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Australia to produce, disseminate and assist in applying evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children.

ANROWS is the only such research organisation in Australia.