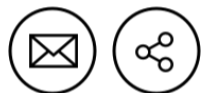


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# Australia Council welcomes appointment of Sam Walsh AO as next Chair

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The Australia Council welcomes today's announcement by Minister Mitch Fifield of the appointment of Sam Walsh AO as the 13th Chair of the Australia Council for the Arts.

Mr Walsh has a long standing commitment to the arts and extensive experience in senior leadership roles, retiring as Global CEO of Rio Tinto in 2016. He has also played a key role in charity, community and business organisations in Australia and the UK. Mr Walsh has served on the Board of the Australia Council since late 2016 and is the current Chair of the Art Gallery of WA. His previous arts roles include Chair of Black Swan State Theatre, Chair and founding member of the WA Chamber of Arts and Culture, and Chair of the Australian Business Arts Foundation.

Rupert Myer AO, whose term as Chair of the Australia Council concludes on June 30, said he, board members and management were delighted that Sam Walsh AO has been appointed by Minister Fifield to be Chair of the Australia Council.

"On behalf of the Australia Council, I would like to congratulate Sam Walsh on his appointment as Chair. With his depth of experience in cultural leadership roles in performing arts organisations, art galleries, cultural philanthropy and arts advocacy, Sam is eminently qualified for the position and will bring local, national and international experience to the role. With his detailed knowledge of and respect for our national arts ecology, Sam will be highly effective in promoting and supporting the arts and artists across Australia and overseas," Mr Myer said.

Mr Walsh said he was honoured to be appointed as the next Chair of the Australia Council for the Arts given his great personal love for the arts and belief in the essential role they play in the life of the nation.

“I am following the heritage of an impressive history of Australia Council Chairs over the past 50 years and I look forward to building on the strong foundations created by my predecessors and the highly capable team at the Australia Council,” Mr Walsh said.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed working with my immediate predecessor Rupert Myer AO and I thank him for his significant contribution as Chair during the past 6 years. I feel very confident about a smooth changeover with Rupert and the support of CEO Tony Grybowski. Tony’s deep knowledge of the arts sector will be invaluable as I take on the role, and we will be working closely to manage the transition as he concludes his five year fixed term as CEO in October following a remarkable decade of leadership in executive roles at the Australia Council.”

Mr Walsh will commence his three year term as Chair from 1 July 2018.

Mr Myer has served as Australia Council Chair for two terms over six years, providing steady leadership through a time of significant change and contributing a wealth of knowledge, commitment and passion to the role.

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## Contact

MEDIA MANAGER

**Brianna Roberts**

PHONE

**(02) 9215 9030**

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