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## **A Day in the Life: Joanne Moss**

**Interviews and Profiles**



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[Joanne Moss](#)

**Joanne Moss**

Board chair and director

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Various stock exchange listed companies

Sydney, Australia

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As a private practice lawyer, I spent years advising boards on best practice governance and directors' duties. I witnessed firsthand how smoothly a company could run when it was governed by a strategic, focused, transparent, and supportive board. Unfortunately, I also witnessed the impacts of a dysfunctional board which permeated all the way through a company. Those learnings remain with me today.

I subsequently moved into a chief legal officer role, reporting into the chief financial officer. Once I had built trust and credibility with the C-suite, I negotiated a direct reporting line to the board and an executive seat at the board table. I was also invited to join the board's audit and risk committee.

This board-facing experience was invaluable and provided me with the confidence to plan for a future portfolio career as a director sitting on a number of boards. My plan involved broadening my executive skillset into corporate affairs, compliance, and risk, which I find are complementary to legal practice. I became involved in cross-functional team meetings to better understand the operational and financial side of business. I created a board CV for myself, subscribed to a board search listing page, and started to build up my professional profile by accepting speaking invitations at conferences. I completed board director training and accreditation in Australia and more recently in the United States through the National Association of Corporate Directors.

After six months, I secured my first commercial board role and within two years was offered a chairmanship of a company listed on the stock exchange. Being a director involves enormous responsibility and a willingness to make impactful decisions, and so, there is some pressure in the role. However, it is also incredibly satisfying leading the strategic direction of a company and opening doors for aspiring directors coming through.

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**7.00 am:**

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**Woke up feeling refreshed and keen to commence the day.** I was away from home, so I sent messages to my husband and children wishing them a good morning.

Last night I flew into Adelaide [Australia] from Sydney for a board dinner. Due to prior COVID lockdowns, I met one of the directors and the company secretary in person for the first time. The dinner menu was North African inspired — the sauteed mushroom medley with pepper berry dukkah and the chermoula-rubbed lamb backstrap were the favorites of the evening.

Our gathering reinforced my long-held view on the importance of board dinners to build rapport between board directors in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. They also provide executives with much coveted exposure to board interactions and topics of discussion. However, the biggest winners are the directors who get the benefit of organizational and cultural insights from the executives. This helps the directors stay in touch at grass roots level, almost like reverse mentoring.

**8.00 am:**

**Had fruit and coffee for breakfast** at the hotel and looked over the agenda for a busy day of board-related activities.

Decided that my 10,000 daily steps will be achieved by walking to each of my meetings, located around different parts of the Adelaide central business district. I always enjoy exploring Adelaide — it has a unique combination of old-world charm in its heritage buildings alongside a contemporary cultural scene of art galleries, festivals, bustling wine bars, and laneway eateries. I take a moment of gratitude for the opportunities I am afforded as a chair and director.



Adelaide central business district.

**10.00 am:**

**Chaired a formal board meeting.** Three directors were physically present at the board table and another two attended virtually from the United States. Ensured that I facilitated thorough discussion and debate around the table on the topics on today's agenda and materials presented in the board papers. Resolutions of the board were recorded by the company secretary.

Reflected briefly that it would have been lovely to have the US-based directors at the dinner last night. We tackle difficult discussions, ask the hard questions, and ultimately make effective decisions, but its only possible because we feel the board table is a safe space and we trust that our fellow board members will remain respectful despite any differences of opinion.

I made a mental note to reach out to the US directors about coordinating schedules for a face-to-face meeting when I am in the United States next month for work.

That reminded me that I promised my children a white Christmas to cap off the US trip and so I **asked my assistant to draft up a suggested itinerary of family activities for New York City over the festive season.** Top of her list were ice skating in Central Park, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, and the Bryant Park Holiday Market. Sounds good to me!

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**12.30 pm:**

**Chaired the annual general meeting (AGM) of shareholders** where I made a formal address on governance and strategy, introduced the CEO who presented on company performance, announced the resolutions for shareholder vote, ensured due process was followed, and took questions from shareholders.

The AGM ran smoothly, and I then engaged informally with shareholders. They provided valuable insight into what is important to them, and I made a note to ensure that those insights are incorporated into the next board meeting agenda and stakeholder communications strategy.

**1.45 pm:**

Lunch was a spicy sashimi poke bowl and mentoring the CEO on elements of leadership, professional relationships, and strategy. **We swapped feedback from the earlier board meeting and AGM.** I am mindful to regularly check in on a CEO's wellbeing and stress levels, as the CEO role can be a lonely one even for the most resilient. He was doing well and appreciative of the discussion.



Spicy sashimi poke bowl.

**2.30 pm:**

**Visited company headquarters.** First stop was a tour of the innovation lab to view our latest

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technology. I am always blown away by the ability of our scientific and tech gurus to look around corners and future cast the needs of our sector by way of digital disruption in the form of artificial intelligence and workflow automation solutions.

### **3.30 pm:**

Attended an all-employee meeting where I made a formal address and answered questions. Once the formalities were over, **I enjoyed a piece of cake to celebrate recent birthdays and an informal chat with employees.** I learn so much about the tone of a company's culture by engaging with senior and junior team members. It was good to experience the office banter, to learn about family trips and new pets, and feel the buzz when they spoke of their current work projects.

### **4.30 pm:**

Facilitated a Women in Business roundtable with 10 participants and then had one-on-one mentoring sessions with a couple of the participants. We spoke candidly about career goals, areas for improvement, navigating difficult discussions, and confidence building. I was incredibly fortunate to have several supportive mentors and sponsors in my career and this roundtable was a way of giving back and encouraging the women around the table to achieve their full potential. We agreed to hold this roundtable more often and I look forward to the next one – I left it buoyed by each participant's optimism and drive.

### **6.30 pm:**

**Received brief update from the CEO and an executive** on an urgent strategic matter which needed to be brought before the board for approval. I counselled them on the type and extent of information which I believed the board would want to see described and reminded them to include an accompanying recommendation from management.

### **7.00 pm:**

**Headed towards the airport for a quick dinner in the Club Lounge.** Picked up a pack of [Haigh's peppermint chocolate frogs](#) for the kids before boarding my flight back to Sydney. It's a tradition every time I travel back from Adelaide. Used the flight time to reflect on the day's events and create a to-do list. Work-related items featured heavily on the list but a couple of personal ones were on it as well: Tomorrow night I am on homework duty with the kids, and I made a note to brush up on my algebra skills (it has been a while) and I created a shopping list for the dinner we are hosting for my parents and siblings on Sunday, before I leave for the United States. My husband makes an amazing slow roast with brown gravy, so the ingredients for that are on the list. My contribution will be a tiramisu for dessert that I will make on the Sunday morning and refrigerate all day so that the coffee, marsala, and mascarpone flavors meld nicely by evening.

### **9.30 pm:**

Arrived in Sydney. My standard practice is to use the drive home to let go of all the pressures of the day by listening to music that I find soothing. During this trip it was arias including Delibes' "Flower Duet" and Puccini's "O Mio Babbino Caro" both sung by Maria Callas. **I arrived home relaxed and**



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**entirely present to greet my family.**

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[Joanne Moss](#)



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Board Chair, Non Executive Director, and Lawyer

Various Companies Listed on the Stock Exchange

Joanne Moss is a chairman, board director, and committee chair of various companies listed on the stock exchange, and is based in Sydney.

In her most recent executive role, Moss was the chief legal officer and chief corporate affairs officer within a Fortune 500 brand. During that time, Moss was a finalist for a Women in Law Award and two [ACC Corporate Lawyer](#) of the Year awards.

Prior to that, Moss was a senior litigation lawyer at a global law firm. An experienced industry representative, Moss is a conference keynote speaker, lecturer, and round table facilitator on best practice and emerging trends in leadership, governance, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, innovation, and emerging technologies. Moss has hosted ACC industry roundtables and delivered keynote addresses for several ACC national conferences.

Moss is an alumna of the [ACC General Counsel 100](#) and [Global Leaders in Law](#) .