

*At Women's Circus we are privileged to meet, train and create on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, communities and culture. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.*

## **CHAIR OF THE BOARD: Position Description**

### **About Women's Circus**

Women's Circus is a not-for-profit arts organisation offering a year-round social circus program and producing socially engaged circus works. We work with individuals and communities and foster collaborations between community participants and professional artists. Our social circus and creative programs celebrate the physical and imaginative potential of the human body and nurture self-awareness and self-esteem.

Women's Circus is bold, dynamic and confident, leading the way in intersectional feminist community arts cultural development practice to empower people of marginalised genders to shape community and culture through circus.

We have a small team of core staff, working alongside experienced circus trainers, and supported by a volunteer board. We have over 200 current members who range in age from 18 to 70+. We operate in our own fully equipped circus venue in Footscray, with the support of Maribyrnong City Council.

To learn more you can read our [Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026](#) and [Annual Report 2023](#)

### **All Women's Circus roles take an active part in our vision to empower people of marginalised genders to shape community and culture through circus. By:**

- Championing genuine and meaningful engagement, participation and representation of marginalised individuals and communities.
- Participating in the creation of a robust, sustainable, and healthy organisation and working culture.
- Creating programs and partnerships that create positive lasting and reverberating impact.

### **Role Overview**

The Board Chair of Women's Circus plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective governance and leadership, collaborating closely with the Executive Director to realise the organisation's mission. Key responsibilities include chairing board meetings, optimising relationships between the board and core staff, leading performance evaluations of the Executive Director, and ensuring adherence to governance policies. The Chair also holds authority to represent Women's Circus publicly, sign necessary documents, and make urgent decisions in consultation with the Executive Director and board members.

## **Responsibilities**

Women's Circus is a company limited by guarantee. All Directors of Women's Circus are bound by the company's constitution, relevant rules and legislation, including the Corporations Act 2001.

The role and responsibilities of a director are described in the Women's Circus Board Charter and include:

- Participation in, and contribution to, approximately 6 – 8 Board meetings per year
- Oversight of effective governance of the organisation
- Formulation of the strategic direction
- Recruitment and oversight of the Executive Director
- Reviewing, approving and monitoring the business plan and annual budget
- Meaningful engagement in fundraising
- Contribution to the development of board and organisational policies
- Involvement on board sub-committees
- Promote and represent Women's Circus in a professional capacity

## **The Role of the Chair**

The role of the Chair is to work with the Executive Director to enable the Board to fulfil its governance and leadership function.

- Support the Executive Director to achieve Women's Circus's mission.
- Optimise the relationship between the Board and management (Executive Director and core staff).
- Chair meetings of the Board, ensuring that it functions effectively and fulfils its duties.
- Ensure contributions from all Directors, to maximise the effectiveness of the Board.
- Together with the Executive Director, develop Board meeting agendas.
- Reflect any concerns management has in regard to the role and functioning of the Board or individual Directors.
- Reflect to the Executive Director the concerns of the Board and other key stakeholders.
- Lead an annual review of the performance of the Executive Director.
- Recognise that it is common practice and desirable to establish a close working relationship with the Executive Director, but that this does not usurp the Board's collective responsibility for instructing and assessing the performance of the Executive Director.
- Honour the Board's governance policies and remain aware that the Chair has no authority to change such policies without the endorsement of the Board.

- Annually focus the attention of the Board on matters of institutional governance and ensure that all responsibilities are fulfilled.
- Act as an alternative spokesperson for the Company.
- Lead the Board Evaluation process.
- Fulfil other assignments as agreed by the Board and in consultation with the Executive Director.

### **Chair's Authorities and Delegations**

The Chair has authority to:

- Represent Women's Circus to government, media, and other public bodies.
- Sign documents that require the signature of the Company Chair once endorsed by the Executive Director (e.g. funding applications).
- Work with the Executive Director to respond to urgent decisions outside the Executive Directors' delegation and when the Board cannot practically be convened. If appropriate and possible, endorsement from a Board quorum should be obtained by email.
- Determine the agenda for Board meetings, with input from the Executive Director and other Directors.

### **Selection Criteria**

- Extensive Governance / Board Director experience
- Strong facilitation and leadership skills
- Public speaking experience
- Familiarity with not-for-profits, community organisations and/or purpose led organisations
- Proven experience or interest in fundraising and/or philanthropy.
- Risk management experience
- Passion for or interest in arts & culture
- Alignment with Women's Circus mission and values

**Please email [gm@womenscircus.org.au](mailto:gm@womenscircus.org.au) to find out more or express your interest.**

- **To find out more** - request a copy of the Board Charter, setting out the responsibilities, governance procedures and other matters relating to the operation of the Board.
- **To express your interest**, send a copy of your CV and a cover letter describing your motivation to contribute to our great organisation, as well as your relevant skills and experience.