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## EXECUTIVE SCHOLARSHIP

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### Mentee

## Jonathon Peatfield

Chief Executive Officer  
Life Education NSW

McCarthy Mentoring is proud to have awarded Jonathon Peatfield the 2019 Executive Mentoring Scholarship. As the scholarship winner, Jonathon was offered an Executive Mentoring Program with Petra Buchanan as his mentor. Jonathon sought to successfully transition into his new role as CEO.

### WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO GET OUT OF THE MCCARTHY MENTORING SCHOLARSHIP?

I was looking for a structured experience and accountability to help better understand and experience the role of a mentor. I was looking for more than just advice on challenges, I wanted to be able to work through career and work scenarios with someone who could challenge and guide my thinking with a different perspective or experience.

### HAS THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP MET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

Yes, I really enjoyed working with Petra and the timing of the program was fantastic as I was transitioning into a new role as CEO. Given Petra's experience as the CEO of a NFP it was fantastic to be able to talk through things that came up. Petra helped to challenge my thinking and guide me through the first 6 months which was a critical time as I found my feet.

### WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF THE MENTORING EXPERIENCE?

The timing of the program was fantastic as I was transitioning into a new role as CEO. Having someone who is independent and not caught in the day to day to be able to use as a sounding board is really valuable. Knowing that Petra understood my situation, but was not emotionally invested in it ensured that we could cut through and work on the real challenges at hand. The experience reinforced the value in having a mentor to talk to outside of the day to day to help keep perspective and open up your thinking. Discussing how to best work and engage the board was a common theme that we spoke about, as Petra has been on both sides of the fence it was great to get her perspective on my approach.

### HOW HAS THE MENTORING HELPED YOU AND LIFE EDUCATION NSW?

The transition from batyr to Life Education was significant, not only due to the change in role but also the different stage each organization was in. batyr is fast paced and constantly evolving as it is still a young organization, whereas Life Education NSW has been around for 40 years and is part of a federated structure. It was great to be able to talk this through with Petra, helping me to take a step back and shift my approach and leadership style. The experience ensured that I was taking time to reflect and plan in a more strategic way, helping to improve my communication to the team and board.

### WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE EXECUTIVE MENTORING PROGRAM?

Yes, especially to anyone who has not had a good mentoring experience or is unsure if it will be valuable, this is a great way to get a structured and impactful experience. The team at McCarthy invest time and energy to ensure both parties get value, this is what makes it work. A huge thank you to Petra who was fantastic, her knowledge and experience is incredible and her relaxed and engaging approach made the whole experience very enjoyable.



JONATHON PEATFIELD

## Mentor

# Petra Buchanan GAICD

Director, PSB Ventures; Shareholder, Sendle; and Advisory Board Member, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation

Petra is the former CEO of the McGrath Foundation, and CEO of pay TV industry body ASTRA in Australia. She was an international executive for Unisys in Asia Pacific and the Discovery Channel internationally. Petra was publicly recognised for her leadership when she was named one of the Australian Financial Review (AFR) Women of Influence.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT MENTORING?

The relationships I form with mentees are meaningful and time well spent. Working on a very personal level with individuals that are striving to achieve, grow and enhance themselves is very rewarding. A career path is rarely without curves and steep hills that require us to be reflective, seek guidance and modify our behaviour. Having a sounding board is important at every stage in our working life and I'm honoured to play that role to inspire and enable senior leaders to perform at their best.

### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING?

Having access to diverse career and leadership experience on a one on one level is empowering. It allows individuals to learn and grow knowing that they can be their most vulnerable, honest and ambitious selves. Confidentiality and trust underpin my approach to mentoring. When an individual can be truly open, and they know they are being supported, they are able to view situations, challenges and opportunities with fresh eyes.

### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BENEFITS OF THE MENTORING FOR JONATHON?

Jonathon recently transitioned into a new role, his first as CEO. This involved joining a new organisation, stepping up to work directly with the Board and chairman and leading the organisation strategically. So the focus of our mentoring sessions was to ensure a smooth transition and to assist him to adapt and be successful in his first months in the new role as CEO. Having a neutral person to discuss his new role and responsibilities assisted Jonathon in determining where he needed to invest time and his energy. He was able to be reflective, share concerns and ask questions about aspects of the role that were new to him.

### WAS IT A GOOD MATCH?

Jonathon has a natural style that is very warm and engaging. We quickly developed a rapport and built the trust I find crucial for a strong mentoring relationship. During our sessions, Jonathon talked about his ambitions and how he was embracing his new role. We focused on decision-making and key priorities for a new CEO. He had lots of questions and was interested in my CEO experience. I was able to share examples and pose questions to assist in his thought process. Being part of Jonathon's career journey has been a pleasure. He has natural leadership attributes, great energy and business smarts that will take him far. I look forward to seeing him grow and evolve in his career.

### WHY WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE MCCARTHY MENTORING SCHOLARSHIP?

If you are seeking to grow and enhance your career I highly recommend the McCarthy Mentoring Scholarship. McCarthy matches mentees and mentors with tremendous skill. They listen to mentees and identify how they can best assist by pairing them with the right mentor based on personality, experience and knowledge. I first started working with McCarthy mentees 7 years ago and each person I have been paired with has been unique, representing different industries, sectors and areas of expertise.

### WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR FUTURE PARTICIPANTS?

Successful mentoring is like any relationship. You need to commit fully, be honest, trusting and positive and you'll be surprised at what is possible.



PETRA BUCHANAN



MCCARTHY MENTORING

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