**NAPCaRN Leadership Series**

Breakfast with Peter Wilson

Anne Walters:

I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, which for us in the room is the Larrakia people and pay my respects to elders past and present.

In terms of today's session, I'm here to welcome Peter. But before I begin, I just thought I'd take a moment to reflect on something that's really important to me. The network, the Women's Leadership Network and we also have the NAPCaRN people joining us today as well, which is the Northern Australia People Capacity and Response Network, which is what I do in my day job. And that both of the networks were established to create an opportunity for people to meet other people, to connect with other people and to share stories and to inspire others and to be inspired by others.

Connection for me is something that's really important, and anyone that's come to these events before will know that I'm the first person to say, hey, at the end of the meeting, go and meet someone, go and talk to someone else in the room that you don't know. Because every new connection is so important. And I know that that's really difficult for people online, but there's probably someone that you see that comes to these events regularly, and perhaps you can shoot a quick chat message to them to connect with them and perhaps even e-mail them or call them later.

So that you are actually setting up a new connection.
And the reason that connection is so important to me is that personally, it could be really important for support, but it can also be really important for stress release.

And there's lots of research that actually shows the value of relationships and connection for us both professionally and personally.
And from a professional perspective, it's really important that we have support networks around us when we're in the workplace.
And it can be really important for personal brand. It can be really important for project outcomes.
It can be really important for how we present and we work in the workplace.
And it can be really important to have that person that we can talk to you about some of the things that we're facing.
And I guess that's really why I wanted to bring that up for you today because the presentation that we're about to have from Peter is about ethical dilemmas in the workplace.
And this is where these sorts of things, like connections and relationships, can be really important for us both personally and professionally.
Because, when we're facing something that's really difficult for us, it's really good to have somebody else that we can lean on and talk to and have support around us.
So, I would like to leave you with an idea to have a think about connecting with one other person in the room or online at today’s event, because that person might be someone that you really want to.

And when I think about it from my own personal perspective, when I was doing my MBA, which was largely online, at the end of one of our topics, a lady reached out to me and she said, I really enjoyed the reflections that you brought to the course, that connection into that being with friendship.
And every time she came up to Darwin, I was able to connect with her and that became a really important friendship for me at that time.
Another fairly recent relationship that came about, was about a year ago, when I went to a breakfast and I met a man there whose stakeholders I really wanted to engage with.
And it became a really valuable relationship for me and resulted in a lot of personal and professional growth. So, it is something that's really important and valuable and it can create these really long-term valuable relationships for us.
But I think everyone in the room would also be able to say, hey, I'm a person. I perhaps never connected with them, but their organization came up not long after. And so, I decided to reach out to them and find out a bit more about the organization. I may never ever have spoken to them again after that, it gave me a connection and a way to find out more information that I otherwise wouldn't have had.
So please take this opportunity either online or in the room to meet someone that you don't know.
And it is scary, but that other person is also feeling the same way. So keep that in mind and perhaps approach someone that you don't know.

On that note, I'm going to introduce Peter, who is our speaker for today.

Peter is the Chair of the current Water Corporation Board in the Northern Territory. Pete's previous roles include being Commissioner on the former State Electricity Commission of Victoria, CEO and Managing Director of Energy 21, and he had four terms as Chair at Yarra Valley Water.
He was also the Chairman and National President of CPA Australia, the world's fourth largest professional accounting organization, until his retirement from that board in December 2021.
A former head of this Victorian Government Department of Industry, Peter has also held senior executive roles in the Commonwealth and Victorian Treasuries, a group executive role for Ampol Limited and the ANZ Bank where he was responsible for operations in 40 countries with 22,000 employees. He's held non-executive director appointments on the representatives’ boards of Dalgety Farmers Limited, Kimberly-Clark Australia and the Commonwealth Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission.

Peter was Chairman of the Australian HR Institute from 2006 to 2020 and a non-executive director and past Chair of Vision Super from 2012 to 2022.
During this time he released your bestselling book making mentoring work, which some of you may have been at Peter's presentation late last year.

He was made a member of the Order of Australia in 2005 for services to workplace relations and safety and community service and was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2004.
Welcome Peter.

**Peter Wilson**

Thank you, Anne, and good morning everybody, it's great to be here and I've got a few objectives today. One is to talk about something we all identify with, but also to crack the code for it.
Ethics is often put forward as something that's quite complex and I hope after today you'll check it isn't the harder part of ethics is actually practice, but the principles are quite simple.

So, I think the good thing about ethics is as Anne was saying, we all need someone to talk to.

That is very important and how you do that is a very positive hard life. But we also journey alone.

So, ethics is very important and the issues that come up with each of us confront, how to confront and how we work our way through that.
So, it's both, it's how you move forward in work and life and work through those in my method for the peaks of life to make sure your journey is a positive one.

So, ethical dilemmas do mean like this little cartoon, we face different directions we could go.

There are forks in the road, sometimes many. The question is, which way do you go?
What do you think about, to do that? And there's a lot of ethics training.

Yeah, so a lot of ethics training, but people find it a bit bewildering and of course, it's classroom ethics one person's got it free of cheating.
So it's because it's actually complex, I think, and, and the whole I'll be moving forward as to why that's not appropriate.

And I think the point of today is we can do a lot of talking about ethics.

But as Walt Disney said, sometimes you just got to start moving. You have to undertake trial and error.

And so, today I'll cover a couple of case studies in my own life and encourage you to think about the dilemmas you faced in yours.

So, when we get to question and answers, we can have some discussion about that, if you're confident or comfortable in volunteering something up for general discussion.

One thing we'll start with, and ethics and integrity get confused, but there is a simple distinction.

Ethics is about what ought I do?

I've got a problem, what ought I do?

What are the choices?

Not the same as integrity.

Integrity is where you really know what you should do but you have trouble doing it.

They're often interchanged, but they're actually quite different.

So, we're going to spend a lot of time on the first question and then we'll move into the second and some of the case studies.

So this picture here, can anybody identify the people in the picture?

OK, yes.

The other one recognizable.

Yes, that was 30 years ago, still easily recognizable.

So that was 94.

I was an executive at the ANZ Bank and as you know, Hawke and Keating were saying Australia needs to get out into Asia and do business there.
So, he was very excited because we actually got a license to open a commercial branch banking operation in Shanghai.

So, he arrived, we cut the ribbon and it was a very exciting time recruiting the people starting the bank.

We had a lot of businesses with expatriate firms, embassies. It's a good, it's a good little business.

So, 94 was a great year, but then we moved into 95.

Now you can see a bit of trauma in this photo.
The law in 1979, the then Premier of China, Deng Xiaoping opened China up to foreign trade and commerce and foreign investment. And there was a basic law that he introduced which had one clear message.
Chinese people employed by foreign firms, should not steal from them.

Anybody know what the consequence of stealing from a foreign firm was?

Still is in a way, certainly very strong the first 20 years after that, capital offence.

So that woman had been found guilty of stealing a foreign firm and within two minutes of that photo being taken should be taken around behind the court and executed by firing squad.

Are those two things related? Hold on, you'll find out soon.

So, I'm going to do a 2 minute guide to 2 1/2 thousand years of ethical development.

And there are three major schools.

Ethics really started around 500 BC with this gentleman Socrates.

And he developed the concept of Sakradian circles, a bit like today, groups of people together talking with a teacher, a wise elder who instructs them.

But tell me, does anybody know how many books Socrates wrote in Greek civilisation?

Have a guess. None. Exactly right. He wrote none, but he became the foundation stone for modern ethics.

So people like Aristotle and Plato, one of whom he taught, wrote books about what they've learned from him that the power he distinctly moved out and people decided to capture it and write it down.

And essentially what he tried to do in Greek civilization and carried on into the Roman civilization was within the discourse of the times within the course of life, he developed principles and stories of what made a good life, what made a cooperative society, one that that worked well together.
So very important part, that it was within the limits obviously of that style of living and came under pressure later.
So if we move forward 2200 years, two major schools emerged in the 1700s after the end of empires, and the power of the king or the emperor to run a society.

And the first one was a guy called Emmanuel Kant.
And he had a very simple theory for life, which you should have, you should oblige the core values of life, like honesty, truth, cooperation. So, he said you never go through life by having core values that drive who you are.
And of course, we know organizations have had values, you talk about them and they're very important and they're the core principles, that cover most of what you do. But I think he got a bit carried away with the importance of values. And another school arose later on.

That's Jeremy Bentham, and he developed the utilitarian school, which is that values are important, but ultimately you determine strong ethical behaviour by the greatest good for the greatest number.

So who here is an honest person? Put your hand up.
Always honest?
No. And I'm a murderer and I know that you know the identity of my next victim. Can you tell me?
So you're not immediately honest?

Audience:
No.

Peter:
Because the consequence of being honest is too confronting. And there are variations of that, which I'm sure you've felt in the workplace dealing with the boss. You know, we all face the push of wanting to be honest, wanting to be truthful. But then you're confronted by the consequence of that and you balk.
So, ethics really can be reduced to what we call the Golden Rule.
I'm sure you've heard which is ultimately putting values and utilitarian or greatest good for the greatest sum of principles together.
Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.
That works most of the time.
So there you are. That's the key to ethics going forward, the golden rule.
But as we know, power and ego and money can get in the way.
Excellent.
That's the golden rule, whoever has the gold makes the rules.
Yeah.
So, the golden rule is sensible. It's like the point of honesty. It's a sensible place to start.
And you can you find something that confronts you, the challenges that the simplicity of that is something you just can't carry forward on.

Let's move on.
OK, Let's come back to this photo.
So, a couple of this in my book, which is shown in bottom left quarter, Make Mentoring Work.
And I got a call from a year after Paul Keating was there for the opening.
I got a call from my branch manager who said that on a Friday night, and picture this, the branch was in a high commercial building in Shanghai and you came out of the lift well area and the through the front door and there were three tellers, much like you would have in a bank in Australia.

And so, expatriates and others on people on Friday night, they bring their cash in, deposit it, we take it into the back of the branch. There's safe deposits and we do reconciliations.
And after doing reconciliations, my branch manager said we seem to have had 30 thousand U.S. dollars go missing and we're doing more reconciliations overnight, but it certainly looks like we've lost the money.
The next morning, I caught a plane to Shanghai and as I was going up, on the front page of China Daily, which is the English-speaking newspaper put out of China and certainly in Hong Kong. There on the Dragonair flight was that picture.
And that woman had been worked for Persia and she'd been found guilty of stealing money from Peugeot, so convicted, no right of appeal and was dead within a couple of minutes of that photo being taken.
So I remember thinking to myself as I went up, I hope the same isn't the case for me.
And it was, or it certainly had the prospects of that.

So I arrived in Shanghai and the branch manager, who was an expatriate Australian, had interviewed most of the staff who were local Chinese and they couldn't find out what had happened to the money.
The money had certainly gone, and we had discussions with the group of staff and we weren't getting anywhere at all, and it was clear that the money been stolen.
It seemed to come down to one of the three tellers, who were allowed to take large personal bags into the telling area and it's probably one of those had stuck the money in the bag and one of them seemed, the rumour was, had a partner who was caught up in the drug trade.
That's as far as we got.
So but we were getting nowhere in terms of trying to get the money back. And certainly my boss who was a head of international main board director on ANZ and was extra certain that we had planned.

So, we were unsuccessful in doing that and called in the local Constabulary of Shanghai's finest.
It's a gentleman by the name of Sergeant Wu who was very threatening looking man.
He had a big scar across his face, obviously had some rough stuff that he'd done in his lifetime.
And we involved him in the investigation and he brought the staff together, spoke to them in Chinese, ranted and raved, got very angry, interviewed some of the people individually and he went away and nothing happened.
So we called him back and he said to me in the conference room, he was irritated in being asked to come back, he said to me, “look, we've made some inquiries, but we can't take it much further. You, you have a choice. You can let the matter rest; in which case you and I will get on about our business.
Or you can ask me to proceed, in which case I will find the guilty party, meaning I will pick someone.
That person would be found guilty next to you”.

What would you do if you're in my position?
So, what would you do?

Audience:
Yeah. Especially if they're not actually. Like the way you've described it to me, then we're going to find someone. So, it wouldn’t necessarily be evidence based. So that's a problem for me.
And then also the second problem is the consequence for that doesn't match the consequence I believe they should get, correct.

Peter:
Our societal values do not match China's basically, even though we're in there doing this together, that's just not that. But the consequences of that that you're thinking about is that you're perhaps establishing yourself to be a soft touch The market was red hot for people, just like the territory now.
Skill shortages, hard to contain with people. You know, either you'd become a soft touch, or the morale would drop, and people would start to leave.
And I've got the committee of the bank down my neck, wanting to find out and not caring about that.

Audience:
Is the committee Australian or Chinese?

Peter:
The person is Chinese. Yeah

All three tellers were Chinese women and in their 20s, you know, first job out of what university. Good people, but really under pressure.
So other thoughts? Don't be afraid.
Yes.

Audience
I'd go back to the golden Rule and apply that. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.
And if I was one of the tellers.
It's a really yeah, it's a dilemma because obviously risking someone's life potentially for something they didn't actually do, versus, I think potentially you have the opportunity for further proof.
So career progression in other areas versus actually committing someone to being executed. Maybe I'd take the hit and you know, the risk of being this, the perception of having a soft touch, but it's sort of that valuing human life over career and interpretation.

Peter
Yeah, well, I tried something first before getting to the point of doing nothing.
We decided to try and relate to the start of the branch and say and then in that group, and I'm sure it's the same here, there was an informal leave to action in the branch of about 30 people.
So we went to those two and said look this is terrible thing, we’ve lost a lot of money.
Now we want to provide good employment, the right conditions.
We want people to be positive, we will not take the matter further if the money's returned, you know, and I had a suspicion that they knew taking the money, but they weren't saying.

So, I appeal to their better self and say we won't take that action if we can get the money back, you know, we'll move on with life.
And we nearly got there, but not, it just didn't budge.
So, I did take the rap from the audience committee over my bonus click, you know, and we moved on.
But the branch wasn't happy.
And it, it basically deteriorated.
It didn't perform well until parties have been changed and it refreshed itself, which we know in disaster in an organization, it takes a while to regenerate and heal and move on.

So that happened. And I raised it with my ethical teacher, my mentor.
And he said, Peter, the issue that you could have tried is in dilemmas like that where you have a clash of values between one civilization and another, is to try and find a way to reconcile those values so you're not surrendering who you are, but you're finding a win, win solution.
And I said, well, it's fine in theory and went through it all again painfully with him.
He said, no, no, no.
What you need to understand is that Chinese people are based on Confucian values and the powerful thing there is community and they work very much for the greater good, greatest good, greatest number. They take that in a collective sense personally.
So he said what you should have done, and I wish they had, is to go to the Chinese, the informal leaders, and say, look, if the money's returned, we'll put it on deposit.
We'll hold it in trust for five years and they'll add 5000 a year to it and at the end of the that five years if for those that are here today and still there, we'll divide them evenly.
So I think that's the challenge because and we're now in a global world, we have different groups, you know, we have our own great indigenous society and nations.
We're trying to understand elements about that.
We have our own reconciliation program, very positive.
It's moving into a different value system and can I find a big win solution?
So, that's part of the challenge and ethics will help you get there. And I did raise that with both the chair of the audit committee and the chair and they said, yeah, the money would have, we would have done that.
He would have actually signed on to that because the money was gone, you know, so if we got it back, put it in trust and held it for them, it's the status prior, you know, we're sitting by that money.
But it actually would have transformed the operation with the organization.

So, there is the 4th player that's joined these schools of ethics and that is this guy, you know who is here? Confucius, yes.
So having read a bit of Confucius, quite a bit actually, he's a bit of a mixture of the above schools that drive Western society.
But you find his blind spot, if I could say that, is that within their value system, very similar to ours, is that there's the constant statement that the emperor, the big dog should rule with give, with virtue.
Well, what happens if he stuffs up?
That's the point.
And there's a protected species characteristic around the emperor, which over the last two and a half thousand years, until the great Long March with Chairman Mao, the top person was sacrosanct.
They were protected.
So in Confucius's writings, there are a lot of inconsistencies of the standard that he sets for the rest of society. And watch how you treat the big dog.
And the difference of course, from Socrates through Kent and Bentham is that around 1260 I think, we had the Magna Carta, which is the foundation of parliamentary democracies.
And over the next 500 years to Oliver Cromwell in 1600, I think, there were fights between what the king did and was responsible for, and what the Parliament did, and took us about 500 years to work that out.
So these guys emerged really because we were in a society where there was parliamentary democracy, there was a lot of common freedom and people needed some navigational skills and help to get through life.
And in a way, that's the tension between the West and the East.
You still have a lot of these tensions being navigated by the Golden Rule.
But still in China you have a lot of similarities.
But there's still this protected nature of the big dog, which happens to be the head of the Communist Party, not the emperor.
Same thing, same principles.

So, this is, this is another train wreck in my journey after being at ANZ for quite a while.
I had a fallout with my CEO and that only ever ends up one way. So I left ANZ & went to Amcor.
And I had a couple of jobs there. I was head of HR and operating risk.
So I was chair, sorry, I was secretary of the audit risk committee, that the board has and also secretary of the HR and remuneration committee and Amcor had 11 businesses, had 26,000 people and one of those are right around the world.
We know it mainly for corrugated boxes, which is where the problem started.
So part of my job was to look at the data going on in each business and to try and detect with skills available then, now we have moved into the whole forensic era, patterns in the data which are looking a bit odd.
There's some very odd patterns in the corrugated box business when I got there, some mid-sized executives had their pay go up a hundred, 150%.
I'm sure many of them would think that's a good thing, but quite odd.
And there were also asset sales of box production equipment which had been bought as part of a series of acquisitions. That looks to be a vintage that would still be performing well.
And they've been sold off to parties outside the organization and doing a corporate search, I found one name was seemed to be related to one of the names in that business.
So a bit spooky stuff.
So I went to the auditors chair and I said I found these things.
People have massively gone up in their pay and a number of assets being sold at bargain based values to parties that look like they're related.
What do I do?
But you know, as I was saying with, with June yesterday, we love the problems at the board, but I think the obligation, if you bring a problem is bringing a solution to it. You know, that's an obligation we all have.
We've got a problem that you just take that up to your boss.
You should have at least one idea on how to sort it out.
So my suggestion, foolish as I was, was to do a forensic accounting and IT audit, but I found preliminary signs.
But anyway, we needed to do the thorough job, which we did.
And in the course of that, the results coming back for the forensic IT audit which were actually Deloitte forensic, they are the ones who did it.
I remember receiving the report and the statement was there's evidence here that Amcor is involved in a cartel.
In other words, the cartel instead of selling arrangement, not just the drug cartels in Mexico and Colombia, it's actually a selling syndicate where producers join together to force the price up.
And at that stage, that was a civilian offence.
Yeah, but because of this case, the seller was then a treasurer made it a criminal case.
So if you're involved in a cartel now, you can go to jail.
So here I have the recommendation.
Pretty strong evidence of a cartel.

What do you think I did?
What do I do?
What would you do?

Got this. The place you're working with, the people that you love, you know that you've enjoyed being with, what do you do?
And you're not sure who you are going to trust in the organization?
I think about as long as I did have to call it out. But how? That’s the difficult part.
Yeah, it's interesting comparing the two like your China example and this example for me, it's like that call it out straight away this time. So, it's a very different feeling.
But in terms of how, I'm not sure of the structure of the business or anything like that.
So I can’t really answer on that one.
And if you do call it out you are being complicit but who in the business is involved, you know, who can you talk to?

Peter
That's right. And that like, like a good movie, are they going to stitch you up?
It's, you know, all these thoughts go through your mind.
And I was lucky in a sense that, I mean, I had reported it to the chair of the audit and risk committee that they look to be anomalies. I wasn't completely sure about me.
I did tell my boss, CEO Russell Jones, who at that stage was identified as one of the three most highly respected ASX listed CEOs in the country.
So terrific brand, great guide to work for
I didn't know what he knew, so I was really troubled. But fortunately, the company had an externally council as well as an internal council. And so I went to him.
His name is Bob Santa Maria and he looked at the material and he said, Peter, we have to go.
We have to go to Russell's house and tell him what we've found, with the clear advice that we need to go to the chairman of the company with a recommendation to take it to the chair of the ACCC because that at that stage and still in breaking a cartel, this first mover protection. If you're a cartel participant and you go to the ACCC, you get immunity from prosecution.
So you're ratting on the other part in the cartel.

So we went.
He had a beautiful Tuscan house in leafy Canboil.
I remember going there on a Sunday and Bob and I went through the script. We scripted what we were going to say and I just remember, you know, one of the healthiest, fittest, 50 year old men I've seen, blood drained out of his face and I thought you do know about this.
He did and we found out subsequently.
You've all heard of calculations on the back of an envelope?
Well, he met Richard Pratt who you might recall and his son Anthony now runs the museum path.
And whilst they met at the place called the All Nations pub in Richmond and they didn't have the back of an envelope, but they had a back of a white paper napkin and they drew A ‘Amcor’ and B - they listed the customers on the napkin that each of them would keep and stay away from bidding against each other.
So anyway, we went to Graham Samuel and he gave us provisional immunity, because what they do to catch you in a way, because they know you know a lot about the cartel and they need data for a case.
So you're given provisional immunity from prosecution as long as you get material evidence started to make the case for the most. Really, really ugly.

So it happened. Richard Pratt, he was personally fined 32,000,000.
His company was fined 300 million, but what it didn't provide either us immunity from were class actions.
So there were class actions of customers against both companies and both companies lost.
And in looking through the material we sent to the ACCC, we actually presented the Clayton's cartel because the evidence was it didn't move the price very much.

And that's what you find in a lot of these schemes, people think they've been very smart and are dealing with something that's going to make them a lot of money and it doesn't, but the cost for the horrendous cost.
And the Pratt family said that this whole case caused a resumption of cancer in Richard Pratt and he lost his companion in the order of Australia and he died within a year.

So that's what I did.
But there was that long moment where I didn't know what to do.
I didn't know what to do.
In a way, I was lucky we had an external legal counsel.
But I think all of us, we now know whistle blowing is a formalized procedure.

There are people we can go to, to talk to.
But yeah, the consequences in any whistle blowing arrangement, what's been your role?
You know, if you service it, what are the implications for you and colleagues around you?
There are a lot of people negatively brought into those things, which can be quite dramatic.
Giving yourself time to think about it is very important.

So Q&A, is that OK?
So questions from the audience or if you have a dilemma you're working with or have worked with or know someone that has worked with it if you want to describe on a non-attributable basis. Let's hear it now.
Happy to answer any questions.

Audience:
Example while people think of all their wonderful questions.
So you talked about what action you took and the consequence for the people involved, but what were the consequences for you?
So in terms of how it did affect your working relationships or your career or your immediate role in that business?

Peter:

It’s huge.
That CEO Russell Jones was extremely, he was my boss, but we were very good friends.
My marriage did deteriorate and during the time I was there, he was very supportive of me.
And he said I've got a holiday house up on the Sunshine Coast if you want to go there just sort of chill out for a while.
So he was very strongly and personal, good relationships.
And yet the last time I saw him, we had the board convene the meeting and our solicitors Arthur Robinson and Edwards, they were then, at midnight and I was outside the border and he was outside the border and looking cash and post.
I was called in there just to clarify a few things and they called him in and sacked him on the spot and I remember at the time in his share option arrangements. I remember putting in a clause that they could be forfeit for any matter of course, which is for lawful misconduct or negligence.
And on that clause that I remember putting in and talking to him about, of course, this will never arise.
He had not only lost his job, lost his career reputation, had all his shares and share options cancelled but at that stage $24,000,000 of money.

So, I left before he was called in to be sacked.
I wished him the best.
And we never spoke. And I regret that.
But then you think about one of the things he said to me when it was coming out, he said, Peter, you realize this is fairly normal in this reduction.
You know what I was supposed to do with that?
Yeah.
And I decided that research associate for the ACCC because I had to be the Hub of interviewing.
There were six people involved and in a cartel it's quite pernicious because very little is written down.
It's all on which and people talk and they talk in code like Matthew Co and one normally in a cartel, someone loses their nerve, someone loses their nerve and there was one guy who actually had in his bag a tape recorder and a mic he made recordings and discussions with his boss and one of the conversations sort of laugh and cry, and one of the conversations about how they had to go and get Russell to talk to big fella.
You know, it was funny in a way but sick.
So you go through all of that and these are across all the relationships you have.
So basically the CEO changed.
I've worked with the new CEO quite well as a consultant, and I thought not I want to be, I want to be a director.
I was that was my last executive role.
Yeah, yeah, really but probably about the right time.

Audience:
Following on from that point about this is normal in our industry.
At the beginning of your presentation, you mentioned that corporations have values and it's sort of begs lots of questions because from a consumer point of view and a lay person's point of view, you know, you hear, Yes, our values are.
And to me there's a lot of fluff and lip service, and I think it’s a little bit of crap, to be quite honest.
I just wanted your contrary.

Peter:
Yeah, look well, that's true.
There are a number of values I've seen in organizations that are brought up by a consultant and nailed to the wall and people don't have much else to do with that.
Again, this is a this is a prompt.
We had my first day as chair along this year from Juna and they were our organization values too.
And I remember asking her, how are they put together?
And they were put together by people in the organization meeting and talking about the things that we think are important for us.
So the key for a value system of organization is how was it created?
That to me said it came the right way.
And then I looked for the action against it, the same as the principle of evidence.
So I've said show me how that value lives, show me what we're doing to advance that and because of the powerful measuring arrangements we are now highly measuring our progress objectively and in that sense the value system can be very powerful.
But I'm afraid you walk into many places and that's where the cynicism comes because you see that they are nailed to the wall and they're as good as the picture next whatever they.
So I think they're very important, particularly today and expects that we live.
But if they created the right way.

Audience:

If they had been commercially exploited because you see that's that lip service, you know, company X says, you know, we are green, we are whatever we are.
And I I just wonder how they demonstrate that, or actually you know, I have no idea.

Peter:
No. Well, there's a lot of companies that are proud of their values and they've published what they mean on the website, and they mainly report as we do, we're going to provide some measures, say the value, you know, career development is we are encouraging people to be their best. We want people to enter awards as apprentice of the year from top to bottom.
We want to celebrate successes, so you'll find there are ways of measuring that those values are working and they're usually something that organisations are proud of.
But Rio Tinto and the Duke and pose absolutely important.
What on earth would they be?
The other thing you touched on about green and there have been posts about this greenwashing patient. Companies that say we are green, we are sustainable and you probe down and you see their practices are other than that. Some of them templating the court in class action because the record doesn't match the substance. Certainly exists. It's not pervasive, but there is high profile that have done. So, these days too communication is so powerful.
Social media.
I mean, I I've developed with the all the company directors and the Business Council mentoring programs to develop women much similar like these groups getting them attached to mentors.
And one of the very senior directors said to me Peter, the way things have moved, and this was only 15 years ago, the boards of Australian companies feel f quite hugely if their customer, their society, feel they're doing wrong
We take that very seriously now because we know we can be helpful.

Anne:
Peter we have a question online.
So the question is from Leah.
Why do you think whistleblowers get punished so severely?
They have a social fallout and a career fallout after coming out with the truth.
Do you think that that there should be more protections for whistleblowers?

Peter:
Yeah, Look, I do know a number of cases where whistleblowers have been punished, either in terms of their career or the sort of discrimination where nothing is said, but you don't move on.
You can't find a new place.
S,o if that is part of the journey of this ethical template that I think we need to strengthen ways to protect whistleblowers.
And I think what the whistleblowing that we encourage the organization I'm involved in here, but elsewhere is let's deal with it vigorously within the organization.
If you take the whistleblowing out of the organization, you're in the hands of a giant social system with different value sets on what's the right and wrong thing to do.
And your name to a whistleblower is out there.
So my hope is that there's an organizational maturity where you can deal with the supplying, thank the person that did it and deal with it, whether its bullying or some point of discrimination, deal with it, put the matter behind you and have the maturity to say lets move on together. Let's not make this a form of victimization.
It's where it moves outside the power of the organization to deal with, you get those bad effects.

So that's a challenge for society.
I mean, from time to Socrates through Middle Ages, people doing the right thing were killed or executed or falsely imprisoned.
So those consequences over the present business, I think it's important to maintain the journey and try and find ways to say, you know, positively construct some lines a good thing.

I have had a couple of cases where whistleblowing’s been, an opportunity for someone to target another person unfairly.
And their organization should also be very tough with the survival because that is unplanned fair.
And no one has a right to diminish another person in their stature or their career by attacking them unfairly.
So it's something I think it's a last resort, not a first resort.
Like the Amcor situation I was in, I didn't know who to go to and I had to go to someone outside the organization to be a safe haven to go through.
So that's still a work in progress.

Anne:
I have a question.

My question is, the examples that you've given us today have largely had fairly negative outcomes as a result of it.
Have you got any examples when it has been a positive outcome?
Because to be honest with you, I guess if you have a look at that, you can understand why people wouldn't actually do anything with the information that they've given because the fallout is so significant either in terms of, you know, someone's life or in terms of, you know, cost and reputation to a company.
Have you got any examples where it's actually been, you know, good outcome that it was worthwhile?

Peter:
Yeah.
I think the, the probably 1 repeated hunting times, bullying in the workplace, persons being bullied or discriminated against goes to a, you know, I should say if I haven't in the company or close friend with that person in front of the bully.
And, and basically it gets a recognition that that type of behaviour is not OK.
And I need an apology and we need a commitment from you not to do that anymore.
Now that's a mile away from where we were 30 years ago or 40 years ago, where bullies were in particularly those that had higher positions, they were terrible.
And we've seen all the assault cases, the armed forces, certain Church of people that use power to oppress others.
I think there's huge courage happening now where people think that's not OK in terms of fair treatment, and we will speak up, we will seek to eliminate it.
So yeah, that's where I'm seeing great progress.
But they're the small things in life, not trivial.
Actually, if you put a number of shocks in the system to that to stand up against that, you're a better organization and the issue on values, you know, the power and water we have, we've made some terrific improvements in engagement and buying.
And a lot of it's about the circles of a people, group of people working together, talking about the way we get things done around here, what works, what doesn't work, and having the comfort and the confidence to say, I don't like the way we're doing this.
That's a really good thing.
And that's where the path occurs.
It's in small groups, a lot of it, and you'll move society by encouraging that to happen.

Anne:
Do we have any other questions online in the room?
Well, I'll ask you to thank Peter for us for coming today.
He's obviously from Perth, so this has been a huge thing for him to stay and to come and speak with us.
So thank you very much, Pete.

And a huge thank you to all of you who have given up your time both online and in the room for joining us today.
It was an absolutely inspiring presentation and I'm sure gives us all a lot to think about as we go into our day, for the rest of the day, keep your eye on the emails for the next event, which will be coming up soon.
And if anyone wants to know more about the events and isn't receiving those emails, feel free to reach out to me at any time.
Happy to connect you into the e-mail distribution list.
So thanks again, enjoy the rest of your day and thanks for coming.