

CITATION Ms Mary Jo Capps

Mary Jo Capps has worked in the Australian cultural industry for more than 30 years after graduating with an MA in Musicology from the University of Toronto in her country of origin, Canada.

She began her professional career in Perth WA working with symphony orchestras and ABC Radio production on both sides of the continent. In 1987 she established her own consultancy practice, focused on facilitating strategic planning, board development and fundraising plus overseas touring in several major Australian arts companies including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Company B Belvoir Theatre, Bangarra Dance Theatre, National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Subsequently she became Deputy Managing Director and Director of Development for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Ms Capps was appointed CEO of Musica Viva in 1999, where she has worked to broaden access to and understanding of music throughout Australia, supported by strong community partnerships. She is particularly concerned with arts education, both live and digital, and providing professional development for emerging musicians, composers, classroom music teachers and arts administrators. She works nationally as a professional mentor with McCarthy Mentoring, with a particular focus on arts philanthropy, and is actively engaged in supporting emerging talent on both a formal and informal basis.

Beyond her role at Musica Viva, Mary Jo became the first female President of the Sydney Business Chamber since it was founded in 1825. She is currently Chair of the Advisory Board of the Faculty of the VCA and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne, Chair of the Peggy Glanville Hicks Composers Trust, a Board Director of the Community Council of Australia, and of Green Music Australia, and a Council member of the Centre for Social Impact. She was also awarded a full scholarship by the Harvard Club of Australia to attend Harvard Business School in Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management in 2004.

Mary Jo was awarded the inaugural Arts Leadership Award by Creative Partnerships Australia in 2016.