

Executive Profile



**Narelle Clark, President
Australian Chapter of the
Internet Society**

What is your current role and what is your scope?

Right now I effectively have three roles: my day job is that of Deputy CEO at the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) where I am responsible for the operational side of things in a very active consumer advocacy organisation, and in a voluntary capacity I am the President of the Australian Chapter of the Internet Society where we work on a range of Internet matters across regulation, education, technology and infrastructure. I was also just re-elected to its board at the global level, too.

What attracted you to a career in ICT?

I more or less fell into it - I really enjoy technology and making technology work for people. I love figuring out how things work, and when the Internet came along the potential just blew me away. I wanted to connect everyone and everything! So I made the switch from biomedical technology to communications technology and the rest is history.

Tell us about the highpoints and lowpoints of your career?

Yesterday was one real high point - the news came through that I had been re-elected to the worldwide board of the Internet Society. The sorts of people that are nominated to that board are just extraordinary.

People with the most amazing CVs, and mine really just does not compare! I find it utterly fascinating to work with people from all over the world on matters important to making a better Internet: getting more people online, improving affordability and digital literacy, and finding technology that enables people. The Internet Society is the home for the technology standards for the Internet through the Internet Engineering Task Force so through it and the policy work it does there is a fabulous balance of technology and policy. That I have the confidence of people from the Pacific through South America, Asia, Africa and Europe to act on their behalf for the betterment of the global Internet is truly humbling.

The downpoint I remember the most is coming back from maternity leave after baby number one, and thinking I was a complete idiot, with no idea of anything! The technology had changed so much, and I had gone from comfortably knowing what memory chips went where on a range of computers (main frames to desktops) to not being sure how to open the lid. It was tragic. By the time baby number three came along it was a lot easier! I was far more adaptable.

What does work life balance mean to you?

Making time for myself and my family. I am a mad keen netballer and play a couple of times a week. These days, too, while I usually work back, I rarely take work home, so it has to be really important to disturb my weekends. When I'm home, I'm home.

What attracted and kept you in the ICT industry throughout your career?

The potential for technology and the effect it has on people's lives is just extraordinary. Through all this I have had a career that is both intellectually exciting and personally fulfilling.

What ambitions personal or professional do you still want to achieve?

On the professional front, the global Internet development, policy and technology areas are really fascinating me, so I am keen to follow that through some more. That will probably mean working internationally more in the future. Personally, I would like to play in a goal shooting netball position before I retire from the game! That might be at least another ten years off.

What's the one piece of advice you'd give to yourself starting out on your career?

Take the opportunities that present themselves. Some won't come again, so if something comes along that you want, give it a go. Then be prepared to learn and reflect, and make sure others know you are.



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