

MONEY TALKS – THE NFP FINANCE LEADERS SERIES



PERPETUAL IMPACT

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At any not-for-profit (NFP) organisation, CFOs and other finance leaders have a crucial role. It's clear that operational and financial decisions affect whether the organisation achieves its mission. With their crucial role in mind, Perpetual's NFP Finance Leaders Series brought together some of the best financial minds in the NFP sector to talk about how better financial management can help organisations have more impact.

DIAMONDS ARE FORMED UNDER PRESSURE - LISA GRIFFITHS

Lisa Griffiths has spent more than 30 years working with non-government and other community-based organisations. She is the CEO of OzChild, where she has helped turn around the organisation's financial position, expanded its programs across three states and steered its mission towards the future.

Lisa cited several lessons relevant to any NFP leader, whether they are financial controllers or not.

- **“Don't be a problem looking for a solution.”** Focus is crucial, says Lisa. With a clear understanding of your stakeholders – customers, communities,

government, philanthropists – you can clearly define the problem you’re trying to solve.

- **“Do 100 things 1% better.”** Lisa believes that consistent, incremental improvements focused on core problems yield the biggest results – and do it most efficiently.
- **“Diamonds form under pressure, but they are not formed overnight.”** As a NFP leader (finance or otherwise) clear communication and a strong moral sense is essential in bringing staff on the journey of change.



Gillian Larkins, CFO of Perpetual and Lisa Griffiths, CEO of OzChild

DISRUPTION & PRESSURE CAN BE POSITIVE – GILLIAN LARKINS

Gillian Larkins is CFO at Perpetual, having joined the company in 2012. She has 20 years’ experience in finance, strategy and management across multiple industries.

As a financial professional at the highest level, Gillian has deep experience managing the financial pressures facing big organisations. At the recent Finance Leaders Series, she talked about some of these issues and went on to break down the nuance of what makes a good CFO.

In one example, she pointed out the positives that can come from disruption – including better organisation focus and a refreshed alignment towards the end 'customer'.

She suggested that to turn disruption and pressure into better outcomes you need some key factors:

- A comprehensive plan – and a back-up plan
- The ability to discern the difference between the achievable and the unachievable
- A commitment to managing stakeholder expectations
- Emotions that are kept in check

Gillian also highlighted that in the current climate, where all organisations face heightened scrutiny, truly transparent communications are more important than ever.

She shared a crucial lesson she learned from one of her early mentors - *the best CFOs look beyond the numbers*. They can analyse and dissect reams of data to pull out vital insights about the organisation and its environment.

The key is using those insights to drive positive change within the organisation –

before that change is forced upon it by a crisis.

Are you in a CFO, CEO, finance or board role?

[Register your interest here](#) to receive invitations to NFP Finance Leaders events.

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