



Take on Board

Transcript – Ruth McGowan

Speaker

Helga Svendsen 0:00

Today on the take on board podcast, I'll be speaking with Ruth McGowan that getting elected to government, local, state or federal government, to my mind is just another board. So we'll be talking about the governance challenges in councils will be talking about office politics and more. Now, I should note that I recorded this interview in late 2019. Since then, we are of course in the middle of the Australian bushfire season. And I've been doing this series on climate change bushfires, and it's impacting the boardroom. So I thought revisiting this discussion with Ruth would be helpful. In my updated conversation with her we find out how she and her community are. And we also gain some additional insights from her about how getting elected can help to ensure that the science of climate change is heeded in government. It's a call to action for us all. If we care about these issues, we need to be part of the solution and go get elected. We'll start with the update and then go into the main interview. So you might notice a change in the audio as we chop and change between the two interviews. But I know that that additional information that we got from more recently will be of incredible value to you. First, let me tell you about Ruth. Ruth assists leaders in the local government and public sector to learn how to become more politically astute at work in the community and engaging with elected representatives. She trains leaders in the public sector to boost their political intelligence, which helps them understand office politics. And she also works with counselors to plan develop and review co performance plans. And she's written the book on campaigning for political office. She's passionate about gender equality and improving opportunities for women, and she co founded honorable men and organization to advance equality in Australian honors. She's also a member of the board member of the Victorian women's trust. Welcome to the take on board podcast group.

Ruth McGowan 1:58

Hi, Helga. Hello.

Helga Svendsen 2:00

You're a Gippslander. And I've already said to people that we recorded this interview a few months ago but are now doing an update and obviously Gippsland has been impacted by these bushfires, and so on over the last month or so. So firstly, I just wanted to check how are you, how is the community?

Ruth McGowan 2:18

Awakened pretty well where we are, I live in West Gippsland and Gippsland is that 22% of the state it's very large, and it's got a number of local government areas and particularly in East Gippsland where they been hit very hard. But over Western South Gippsland it's still actually been quite a relaxing summer because we haven't had the threat of bushfires this end. And I mentioned that because I encourage people to come traveling to get land there's lots of tourism and businesses that rely on tourists to visit to keep the economy going. So don't avoid Gippsland and even those affected areas come autumn will need a lot of visitors and winter. So make your holidays, destination those places and help the economy.

Helga Svendsen 3:04

Absolutely. I had Nicola Pero on last week from Destination Gippsland, she had exactly the same message, visit Gippsland it is such a beautiful place. So for those listening from Victoria or anywhere in Australia, head on down to Gippsland. Not only is a beautiful spot, it needs your help. When we spoke a few months ago, it was around how to get elected to councils to states to federal levels. And you know, seeing those organizations almost like the boards, I guess, of those areas. So I'm wondering, in these times in times of bushfires in times of crisis, how might having communities with these types of skills, really help those elected representatives or how might having elected representatives that, you know, maybe better represent the community help to manage these times of crisis.

Ruth McGowan 3:55

I think it's a really great opportunity for people that are concerned about the changing climate to get elected and make a difference. You can be outside the tent complaining or you can be inside actually making a difference. And no one gets that more effectively than those on the front line, which are the communities and the local councils that represent those communities. And why I say that is because local councils have to manage the risks facing their communities. Now that might be something if you're a coastal community, such as 130, or interlocking South Gippsland, you find the sea encroaching on the council assets, which is the streets and the boardwalks by the beach. And they've been washed away by increasingly devastating storms. So the council has to respond to that. And it might be protecting community assets from bushfire. So the local governments are responding to those risks. Insurance companies are responding to it, everyone knows that the climate is changing, and local councils have to get on with the job. So it's not some toxic debate about whether or not climate change is real local councils nowadays. That's why so many have declared a climate emergency. And I encourage people that are passionate about doing something to get elected, particularly in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland in 2020. There are local council elections coming up. And it's where you can also you know, waste management if you concerned about plastic then you can bring in systems to manage plastic and waste and might be encouraging, you know, better recycling. So, it's really practical response you can do on the ground as an elected representative.

Helga Svendsen 5:44

Yeah, such an important way of getting involved in having an impact and it's, it's on everyone's minds at the moment because of the bush fires and climate change. To me, it seems obvious that it's part of the speaker bushfires. So it's the same such an amazingly practical way of being able to make change, get involved, get involved at your local level, get involved at your state level, whatever it may be.

Ruth McGowan 6:06

Yeah. And the my plug here, I'm actually a trained agricultural scientist is where I started off. So I believe in looking at the evidence of things. So climate change isn't a belief. It's either the evidence has validity, or it doesn't. Let's stop talking about do you believe in climate change the evidence from a lot of things happening, and the scientists show that it actually is changing? You know, it's going up one degree Celsius every couple of decades. So where are we headed? I hate to think that we can make a difference and we can stop it. We're not powerless.

Helga Svendsen 6:44

All power to you Ruth and getting more people elected so that they these types of conversations can really change. And speaking of those conversations, I'm just wondering from your experience, and you know, the people that you deal with, if you've got any speculation about the conversation things that are happening around climate change, either at that federal, state or local level?

Ruth McGowan 7:05

Look, I think it is a complex issue. And people tend to gravitate towards black and white answers. And so therefore, you find some of the narrative around Well, if only we could do more back burning in the bush, and people just don't get it. And I bet burning isn't even the term that's used it so far as fuel reduction, and the window for the government to do that is getting less and less now because of the changing climate. The weather isn't conducive, because if you do it too soon, it becomes a risk for bushfires. If you do it too late, it's too wet. You can't do any spring because all the animals being the bush and nesting and they got baby animals, they don't want to burn all them up. So there's, it's a very complex discussion to have. So I would encourage people to not rushing to easy solutions that they think are right because It's not going to be that easy to fix, it actually takes a lot of people thinking about the right response. And again, looking at the evidence or what he's going to work. And sometimes it might be, well, we just can't let people build in those areas that are buried in the forest, unless their house is underground in a bunker. So actually been smart about where we're heading and things are going to have to change. So I'd encourage conversations to be open and curious about well, what can we do to keep people safe, rather than jump into so called answers, which aren't necessarily going to solve it.

Helga Svendsen 8:33

Before we wrap up, I just wanted to touch on something else. And that is you are also one of the founders of the fabulous honorable woman movement and having just had the Australia Day awards announcements in Australia. We are moving closer to 50/50. Can you just give us a little update on that as well?

Ruth McGowan 8:51

Three years ago, I co founded an organization called honor a woman with two other women, Elizabeth Hartnell Young and Carol Keenan, and we will frustrated that for decades, only a third of the Australian honors had been allocated to women. And we believe them. Recognition matters. And you can't be what you can't see all those signs. So when you see women recognized as leaders, and acknowledged for their outstanding contribution, then it encourages other women to step up. And with the Australian honors, it's fantastic to have this movement because it is lifted people's awareness that they too can nominate a woman. Anyone can nominate a woman on the Governor General's website any day of the there's no closing date, and twice a year those honors are announced. And since 2017, when we started our work, we've been pushing orient Australia for more people to nominate a woman, but also for governments to be proactive in how they seek out women of marriage. And what we found that when we started it was about 30% of the owners going to women now it's 42% nationally, and particularly in Victoria, which the government has made a commitment to actually have a program called recognition matters, where they have a full time public servant, seeking out women and marriage and nominating them and this all has to be done confidentially. Victoria is almost at parity yet on the straightaway announcements. It was really fantastic to say that Victoria had reached 49.6% of the people awarded nominees were women. We still have a way to go because most of those were at the so called lower end of honors Alliance. And as you go up this AM's, AO's and AC's and they are very top heavy with men, but we're getting there. So it's just fantastic to see how a movement with support and there's 60 or so ambassadors behind us around Australia and movement can change things.

Helga Svendsen 10:58

It is so fantastic. Thank you so much for your work in supporting women in getting those honors. I was incredibly proud to say that how a local governments managing risk and how might their current experience in what they're working on, be useful to them in managing risks around climate change.

Ruth McGowan 11:18

Its local councils, bread and butter is managing the risk of their communities. They do this all the time. So for instance, local councils lead the vaccination programs across Australia, because those contagious diseases measles, mumps, rubella tacitus. Council know that that can affect community

so they have vaccination programs, and it's similar with climate change. They know that the evidence shows it's affecting their community. So that's why they're taking steps

Helga Svendsen 11:45

but before we get into exploring getting elected, can you tell me just a bit more about you and what I would love to hear is something that you're proud of from the last month or so?

Ruth McGowan 11:57

Well, in the last month, I have updated my book called get elected a step by step campaign guide to winning public office. And I read this book last year because there's a big gap in the market for an instruction manual basically on how to run for politics. So unless you're under the wing of a major political party, and been mentored by the party elders, it's very difficult to know what you have to do to get elected. So I wrote that book. Specifically, it's focused on encouraging independently minded candidates to get elected to local councils, state Parliament or federal parliament. And I've written with women in mind because most of our Parliament's dominated by males, and I wanted to encourage more women to run for office. So I'm really proud that this book sold out its first print run in five weeks when it was launched in April and I've updated get elected following the federal election in May 2019.

Helga Svendsen 13:05

Oh, fantastic. So I really want to talk about Get Elected. But just before we go there, tell me about your upbringing. And you know, the lessons you learnt there and maybe some of the leading influences on you.

Ruth McGowan 13:17

I grew up in country Victoria near a little place called Yackandandah, which listeners might know is now Wodonga and Beechworth in northeast Victoria. And I grew up on a big family farm got quite a big clan up that way, the McGowan's sort of settled in in the valleys up there. And I was actually the 12th child of 14 kids. I grew up in a family where it was very important to have your voice because if you didn't speak up, you wouldn't get heard. And mom had a 11 girls and three boys. So it was a family that you expected to pull your weight, whether that was in the household or in the community, and also the was the atmosphere that you could be wherever you want it to be mom and dad were very supportive of us all having a great education and contributing to the community. And growing up my, I guess you could say politics running the family, certainly at the local government level. So my grandfather was a shy president, which the mayor's recording those days, as was my great grandfather, to rules around radical NY and I had an uncle who was mayor of Yackandandah. And my dad was also local Councillor. So I used to help him in the election campaigns

going around and shoving leaflets in the mailboxes. So it was in my blood, that level of politics. So often, I distinguish as I've grown up, learned that there's two types of politics is raw politics, which is public office. And then there's politics of how people get along and how you get stuff done. And I certainly learned about that level of politics. Which is often known as workplace politics or organizational politics. I learned about that in my birth family, that you needed collaborations you need to communicate well, and you needed to influence to get things done.

Helga Svendsen 15:13

Well, with that many kids in the family, your household was the size of many small businesses in a way. So negotiating around that would be very like office politics, I imagine.

Ruth McGowan 15:25

Certainly bigger than your average board.

Helga Svendsen 15:28

Absolutely, yeah, they talk about, you know, the benchmark being, you know, seven plus or minus two, you will exceed that number. As I said earlier, whether it's federal government, state government, or local council, they're the governing bodies of our country or our regions or our state. So in some ways, operate like a board, although in some ways, don't at all. Yet, having more women involved and more of the community involved in those organizations is going to be incredibly important and as you say, no one written the secrets to getting elected until you did. So thinking about getting elected and getting involved in those sorts of organizations. What are some of your tips for people?

Ruth McGowan 16:10

I'd like to start from thinking about why you would run for politics. And if we go back to the very beginning, politics is about resource allocation and decision making. And whether it is at the local council level or in the federal parliament in the Senate, and looking at the whole of Australia, or local council, looking at your ward. Politicians are the ones who decide what needs to happen, the priorities and where the resources go. And that's everything from funding schools, hospitals, fixing potholes, on roads, to managing defense and our policies on climate change, or lack thereof. So this saying by the ancient Greek statements, Pericles, I think his name was I don't know how to pronounce it because it was Latin. But he said "*you may not take an interest in politics, but politics will take an interest in you*". And unfortunately, many women choose not to take an interest in politics and young people and quite a lot of fellas as well. So the ones that do get elected often have different views that might not represent the population. So when you look at their population, 51% are women. But our parliament, overwhelmingly older white men with a background in business and

or politics or trade unions or law, and most of them over 50. And they come from Anglo Saxon background, so they don't actually represent the public. Some try and do a good job. But I think democracy works much better when the people you see around the chambers and the boardrooms and the parliaments represents the diversity of the community. So similar I know You talk a lot about like in your board, Kickstarter, how valuable it is to have diversity of opinions and views for decision making. Yep. And, for instance, if your company making baby milk para, you probably want a woman who has used milk powder to feed her baby on the board to give that perspective. So similarly, in our Parliament's, if you're making decisions about kindergarten funding, it would be great to have some politicians there that actually know about kindergarten funding because they've been presidents or secretaries of the local kindergarten. So one of the reasons that I wrote get elected was to simplify and sort of unpack the steps that you might need to take to run for office and make it easier to understand in the arcane secret business of political parties that Unless you're a member, they don't actually let you in and show you how to do it.

Helga Svendsen 19:04

You know, again, it's the similarities between a board. I know they are like boards in some ways, but the similarities between boards and knowing why you want to get involved in that. And boards deal with resource allocation boards are doing the decision making. And knowing that why of what it is you want to get involved in and having that diversity in that decision making is absolutely vital. So that makes perfect sense.

Ruth McGowan 19:29

Yeah. And I think in some way, councils getting elected to local government can be easier than getting on a board. So for some of your listeners that thinking Well, how do I build my skill set, if they're in a smaller Council, for instance, in rural regional Australia, it's often easier to get elected to council than it might be to get to corporate board, but this will build the skills in governance, team working, understanding all those things that will help you if you eventually apply to Donna board. The beauty about local councils let's start with that is that there's 533 councils across Australia, and about five and a half thousand roles for counselors. So there are plenty of opportunities and once you do get elected to council after you've read my book, which has helped you do that, then you can get access to training and training and governance in reading financial documents. All of those things are provided when you're a counselor that's post election training. And it can be a really great stepping down so Yeah, a little bit more egalitarian because you don't necessarily need to be an accountant or a lawyer. The pace not as good when you're a counselor has been on some of those high flying boards. But it is a fantastic training ground, particularly for women that have great community engagement skills and good networks to get on Council and they In the future, think about what boats would love to apply for.

Helga Svendsen 21:05

I love that it's, it's proactive, it's not sitting back and either waiting to be asked or even applying for board roles and, you know, maybe getting them maybe not getting them to putting your hand up and getting elected. So it's taking it out of the hands of just a couple of people about choosing whether you should be on that board or not. And putting it in the hands of many people about whether you are elected to that role. You know, you'd mentioned some of the skills there beyond being a lawyer beyond being an accountant, those skills around community engagement and communication and bringing people along and change management and all of those sorts of things are vital in the boardroom. So if we can get women elected the council, build the skills and then hopefully leverage those skills into some boards as well, which is not to say councils not important, but for me, it's about boards. So that's fantastic. Hopefully, that has you know, piqued the interest of some people that are listening and go Ah, Council. I hadn't thought about that before? Maybe that is a way that I can get involved. Where should they begin? What are the secrets?

Ruth McGowan 22:07

It's perfect timing at the moment. So why is this important right now to be talking about this subject is in October next year, the Victorian local government elections are happening. So that means in 11 months time, there's that opportunity to get elected to one of the 79 councils around Victoria. Similarly, in New South Wales, local government elections are happening in September next year. So across New South Wales right now people are starting to kick into gear and thinking about their campaigns. Also in Queensland, so all along the eastern seaboard part from Tasmania, which was last year, along the eastern seaboard, elections are happening so the Queensland local government elections are in March and for every other state and territory except for the territories, ACT area, but Northern Territory has local government elections. So they happen on a regular cycle. They're not just called at when, like the federal elections, so people can start to plan now for when they're running, they can get their action plan happening. And I do unpack how to do all this and get elected. And they have an opportunity to run for counciling 2020. Well, half the country does. So it's really great timing. We do know that looking at, as I mentioned before, most levels of government, there are way more men than women. In Victoria 38% of councilors are women. So we still have a little ways to go to get a quality there. But interesting. Victoria is leading the country. So you look at New South Wales and only 23% of councilors there are women. So there's a huge opportunity for women to run for local council. And there's plenty of reasons why they should say that is what's really important to be talking about running for Council. Now, state elections come and go, they can be a little bit harder to get elected as an independent. But that's not to say some of the people listening to this may be members of political parties and thinking on now's the time for me to give preselection a crack and see what it's like to run in, maybe become a member of parliament.

Helga Svendsen 24:23

I imagine there are other opportunities, particularly in local government that possibly even within the other levels of government as well that even not necessarily as an elected person, but around say council committees or advisory committees and so on that might also build some of that experience for council roles. What's been your experience there?

Ruth McGowan 24:46

Nearly every local government I've come across have subcommittees or committees that they invite community representatives to join. And these are fantastic opportunities or guess if you want to start flexing your voice in that arena, but also to understand how governance works from a local government perspective. So, considering the issues making recommendations, which are then taken to a former council meeting, and look I now live in Gippsland. So I love rural Australia and that's, that's my home. So I look around where I live, and there's plenty of opportunities, whether it's the local whole community to help manage that really important community asset, or whether it's the cemetery trust. So lots of local communities have cemetery trusts and these are semi government organization. So they come under the auspice of government departments. So there is governance training there as well. But a lot of these sort of organizations are always looking for community members. And then you have the volunteers and not for profits, everything from school councils and kindergartens, and you know, Landcare, CFA (country fire authority), all those opportunities. So I think they're really important to build your experience and also to help you understand what's going on in the community. So then when you do come to run for public office, you have a solid platform on which to run because you understand the issues and understand your community.

Helga Svendsen 26:23

I'm imagining people listening to this, and particularly given you've said there's opportunities coming up in the next 12 months across the eastern seaboard for being elected. Let's say, I'm convinced that's it. Fantastic. I'm going to run for local council in 12 months time in my local area. What should I be doing now? What are the steps that I should be taking over the next 12 months to get elected?

Ruth McGowan 26:47

Great question. Can I just take you back five seconds and say, Well, why would you be running? Because I think one of the really important things is to understand why would you run for office I've heard you when you're interviewing some of your past participants here, common time again, people say make sure you do due diligence. You understand the board you're about to join, you even perhaps go along and listen to some of the board discussions, read the annual report. And importantly, the purpose of the board also needs to be aligned to your purpose and values and behaviors. So I would suggest that people do a considered, it's almost like a desktop analysis of why

would you run for council? What's your motivation? And where would you run for council? So I'm talking about that level of local government at the moment. Where would you run which Ward so a lot of councils are broken down into different wards, you don't necessarily have to live in the ward that you're going to run for. So which Ward where's the best chance of getting elected? So you do the really careful analysis, the environmental scanning if you like, go along to council meeting, sit down. Listen, look at the community Facebook group, see what are the issues that people talking about when it comes to your local council. So in the NSA, there's basically three reasons why people run. And it might be that they're really annoyed about something Council is done. So I called that. I hope this isn't a dirty word, but I say peace. So often people run for politics because they're pissed off about something that governments done. So they're angry and they want to change it, or something the government isn't doing so they're angry, and they want to change that. The second reason they run is because they're passionate about something. And these two things are often closely aligned. So I'm trying to refine that a bit more positively. So be passionate about having more opportunities for young people, and they say everyone in the council's over 65 I'm going to run as a 22 year old. The third reason people run is because they love politics. And they say politics is a career path that we talked a bit earlier about local government is a stepping pathway, potentially to state or federal and also boards. So it's good to get clear in your mind, why are you running, because that helps you to develop your key messages. So for instance, I'll go back that example if you're young and you're running UK messages might be around freshness and different point of view. So it all feeds into then planning your campaign. So once you've really clear on why you're running, where you're going to run and your timing, then that's when you start planning your campaign but put the bedrock in place first. And for some people they get there might decide I'm not really sure if councils for me. Well, I would encourage those people to get on a campaign for someone else. And next year in 2020. volunteer to go on a campus 19 for someone else that's running someone who supports their values, and do everything you can to help get that person elected. And then in four years time when local government elections come around again, you'll be better place to run yourself. So yeah, I've got lots of tips about how to actually plan the campaign. But I think the bedrock getting that in place, which is your why, why you're going to run is really, really important.

Helga Svendsen 30:26

And I love that angle of doing your, as you said, the due diligence, and lots of councils and again, I know we're focusing on councils and it could be other areas, but lots of councils will webcast their council meetings or, and communicate through social media and so on. So it's a really great way I've sat down and watched our local council meetings when they've been discussing things that I've been interested in. So it's a great way of getting across and finding out exactly what happens if you were elected.

Ruth McGowan 30:54

Sometimes you often hear this thing hey, yeah, councils, just roads, right? rubbish, which if you didn't know, council you think or how boring it is. Sometimes I think that's designed to keep it boring to keep women away. I'm going to be a little bit provocative here because if you think about roads,

roads is actually about infrastructure, helping people get from A to B. Now, wherever that cycling pass or making footpaths mode, disabled access, or you know, putting ramps in subprimes can get up and down the curb. When you reframe roads to infrastructure, women become more interested. When you talk about rights. I mean, that's how to go to sleep very quickly talking about rights. So when I switched and talk about finance, and understanding resource allocation, and we're talking millions and millions of dollars, even the smallest ones are over \$10 million, but some of them are half a billion bucks. So if you can learn the world of finance and resource allocations and audit and risk then that immediately becomes much more attractive and sexy when talking about rights. And the third thing people talk about rubbish. Well, we know this year what's happened with the sustainability, the waste recycling crisis, that it's so much more it's actually about sustainability. How do we building sustainable products and use patents in our community? And I know many, many people and women in particular are interested about how we can make our environments more sustainable for the next generation. So instead of roads rights and rubbish, I talk about infrastructure, finance, sustainability, connectivity, community engagement, and suddenly you're talking about an opportunity it goes, yep, I want to get this sounds fantastic. Take me to the nearest local government elections.

Helga Svendsen 32:51

So then it begs the question, when are you running? Whether it's for local, state or federal?

Ruth McGowan 32:57

Well, that that's a good question because I live years ago, I did run you and I ran because I was annoyed at something our council was doing. And my community was up in arms about a planning application and asked me if I could advocate to the Council on behalf. So I went to the council chamber was my first time and spoke loudly and clearly on why we didn't want this planning thing to go ahead. And we won that night. But I looked around the room and it was all men, all the counselors were men, all the executive team CEO are all men, 14 men making decisions on behalf of our community. And there's that saying Be the change you wish to see. So a couple of months after that there was a by election, put my hat in the ring and I got elected. And it was it was really tough. Oh yeah, just being the only woman there in the room and working hard to advocate for the issues that I felt passionately about and hitting some quite strong resistance from Some of the older men there. And at times it was very, very challenging. But the next election I worked hard out in the community with some other women to encourage diverse women to run. And five of those blokes got kicked out. More women got elected couple of other young fellas and that Council which is barbershop Council, which has never gone back to all male, and the next time I got elected me, so I've had my stint at local government and I also and this is what I write about in my book, I was also involved in helping my sister Kathy McGowan get elected to federal parliament as the first female independent representative in the House of Representatives for the state of India in northeast Victoria. So I helped coordinate Cathy's campaigns in 2013 and 2016. And that was just groundbreaking stuff for a woman to get elected as an independent to in Parliament and a lot of work. I learned on that campaign, I also translate into accessible tips in get elected.

Helga Svendsen 35:07

And it's, you know, it's often held up and from the outside, so and it looked like an incredible campaign in terms of engaging the community. So really getting the community involved in that rather than potentially taking them for granted.

Ruth McGowan 35:20

It was because the community voters after all, and when you're talking about boards, they're the ones that purchase the products and the services. So it's not too different in that aspect.

Helga Svendsen 35:31

Okay, well, then I might let you off the hook then because you have got elected previously in and out of your own right, and you've got your sister elected in an incredible campaign of involved in the community. So

Ruth McGowan 35:41

yeah, and I do work a lot in running seminars and workshops, particularly for women to support them to get elected. So I work with organizations around Australia, the National Rural women's coalition, alcohol, the strain local government Women's Association, and Women for election in another group suck wild who women in local democracy down to long way.

Helga Svendsen 36:06

Oh Ruth we have covered a lot of fabulous tips here both your own experience but also your tips of how to get elected and why people might want to get elected and the things that they should think about in that process. One of the main things you want people to take away from the conversation that we've had today?

Ruth McGowan 36:24

I would like people to realize that politics is everywhere, you're actually stepping in it literally the moment you walk out your door, if there's a road or a pathway there, you're stepping in politics. And if you're not happy with it, or you want something to change, then it is really really important to have your voice heard more than once every four years ticking a box in a ballot booth. And I would encourage people to have your voice heard. Firstly, by talking to your local member, if you're unsatisfied with something and you can just ring them up they've all got mobile phones and office

staff or councils don't have office stuff, but they have emails and mobiles. So ring them up, get your voice heard. And if you're not happy with the response, then even think about running yourself or supporting someone else to do it. back to my original quote, you know, you might not be interested in politics, but politics takes an interest in you. And I think we've all got a voice that we need to use when we're unhappy about something because you don't really get anywhere with just complaining. And I learned that very much growing up, there's no point in complaining you Buckton in your health or you try to change something.

Helga Svendsen 37:40

Is there a resource that you can suggest a book or a TED talk or a podcast that you might suggest that might be helpful for the take on board community, other than, of course, your magnificent book, which will put a link to

Ruth McGowan 37:53

One of the things I talk to people when I'm running my political intelligence training is the importance of networking. And again, your guests have mentioned that it's not just what you know, it's who you know. And networks are really powerful for recommendations and understanding different boards. So often someone will put your name forward. And one way to build those networks is through LinkedIn. And when I look at women's LinkedIn profiles, and I'm connecting with some really amazing kick ass LinkedIn profiles, others are just really bland, there's an old photo, and the blue billboard bit doesn't even have any pictures up there not like your one which is stunning. And I would encourage people to think about LinkedIn as a way to build their networking and even if they know someone that's a chair of the board, connect with him, if she don't need to know everyone that you asked to connect with. Also add a message about why you want to connect with them. And one resource that I reckon is fantastic in this space. is a great little podcast as well by two Australian women. I love to share podcasts. And it's called jack and jill on LinkedIn. And these women are funny, they kick-ass and they give some great tips on how to build your LinkedIn profile.

Helga Svendsen 39:14

Fantastic. I love a good podcast recommendation, I might tune into that one as well. So again, I'll make sure I put a link to that one in the show notes. There is so much fantastic fodder here for people who are listening, I think around thinking about governance broadly, and having that voice and getting involved in some of that change. And then of course, actually putting the hand up and getting elected. So thank you so much for your time today and your wonderful wisdom about getting elected Ruth, I appreciate it. And I know the people listening in will as well. So thank you for your time.

Ruth McGowan 39:49

Thanks. Oh, yeah, and good luck. Anyone who's ever considering running for politics. The world needs you.