



Keynote Addresses 2023

For Conferences and Leadership Forums

Presenter Biography

Maria Brett is a leadership and organisational development expert who helps others live and lead courageously - from the inside out - for impact that really matters.

Maria has more than 20 years' experience as a leader in the non-profit sector. For ten years, she was CEO of the Counselling and Psychotherapy Federation of Australia where she achieved substantial organisational growth and built a purpose-driven culture based on ethics, resilience and wellbeing.



As a psychotherapist and mindfulness teacher, and as former CEO, Maria brings a unique approach to her work as a trainer and coach. She has integrated a lifetime of learning about mindfulness, resilience and leadership, and her own personal growth journey, to design programs to inspire others to grow, both personally and professionally.

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Putting People at the Centre of Culture Change



Is your organisation's culture holding you back from success? You could have a clear vision (your Why), great systems and processes (your What), but if your culture isn't healthy (your How), you'll never bring people with you. That's why Maria Brett puts people at the centre of her approach to culture change. Culture change starts at the top, so Maria offers strategies for leaders to model a people-centred culture through mindfulness and emotional intelligence. This gives them the courage to lean in and tackle the leadership issues they're facing, but which they sometimes avoid.

In this keynote address, Maria goes deeply into what a healthy, people-centred culture looks like, and emphasises the critical importance of psychological safety. Maria explores how leaders can create a work environment where people feel safe to speak up, acknowledge and learn from mistakes, and have courageous conversations. This is essential learning for any courageous leader who wants to create an engaged and thriving team, and to lead culture change.

Change the Way You Lead, From the Inside Out



Courageous leadership, as conceived by Maria Brett, is a way of leading that challenges leaders to change the way they lead, from the inside out. Maria's approach to leadership transformation begins with awareness, which supports the development of four other internal leadership capacities: purpose, courage, presence and resilience. Awareness then turns outwards as leaders are invited to develop their emotional intelligence and their integrity as leaders. As leaders reach the outside of their leadership growth process, they will need to learn how to build employee engagement, to have courageous conversations, and to lead culture change.

In this keynote, Maria explores the nature of change, and how to tackle resistance to change which will inevitably arise when we try to change. Maria will help leaders identify their most pressing leadership challenges and map out a plan to lead themselves, and their organisations, through the change process. In doing so, this keynote will get to the very heart of courageous leadership.

Transforming Leadership for the Age of Disruption



How do organisations adapt to the disruption, challenges and uncertainty of the 21st century? How prepared will you be when the next pandemic hits? How will climate change impact your organisation? In this keynote address, Maria Brett radically re-thinks resilience and presents her vision to transform organisations by creating courageous leaders with the capacity to adapt to the Age of Disruption, and the skills they need to create resilient teams.

Drawing on neuroscience and key learnings from post-traumatic growth and mindfulness, Maria explores how we are fundamentally wired for resilience and suggests practical strategies to build a growth mindset and a resilient workplace culture. The presentation is thought provoking and engaging, including case studies from Maria's time as a CEO and the experiences of other leaders who have built resilient organisations. This keynote will provide inspiration for leaders who want to transform the way they lead, and have an even greater impact in these challenging times.

Leading with Purpose, On Purpose



In the wake of the pandemic, many leaders and their teams are feeling exhausted and worn down by the many challenges COVID has brought. Being aware of your purpose, and taking that awareness into your life and work, is an essential aspect of mindful leadership. When leaders embrace mindfulness, this includes committing to their true purpose, and taking responsibility for aligning the way they work with that purpose.

In this keynote, Maria Brett will encourage leaders to understand and embrace their personal and work purposes through a deep exploration of values. She will share strategies to align your leadership with your purpose, and to put values into action in the way you communicate and behave as a leader. This keynote is an opportunity to re-engage with the reasons you chose to do the work you do, and to lead others to commit to your organisation's purpose. It will also offer leaders a deeper understanding of the significance of mindfulness to leadership.