

Distinguished Clevertar Chair retires, new Chair announced as company expands artificial intelligence services

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After more than five years in the role, Clevertar's Chair Jim Birch AM has announced his plans to retire from the Clevertar board at the end of January 2023.

Mr Birch said he was proud to have been part of Clevertar's growth over the past five plus years and was leaving the company in good hands.

"From a Flinders University spinout with big ambitions, Clevertar has become a business with national and global reach that has impacted the way millions of consumers interact with major organisations-from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, SA Health, telecommunication providers, health organisations and beyond," Mr Birch said.

"It has been a great privilege to lead the board during this period of significant growth and opportunity. I joined Clevertar's board because I could see its potential to make a real difference to the lives of millions through AI technology. Six years on, I'm delighted how Clevertar delivered on this opportunity."

"I leave the role with Clevertar in a healthy position, with a strong board, an excellent incoming Chair and leadership team, and a clear vision for the future."

Current Clevertar Chief Executive Mark Pitcher has been appointed as the new incoming Chair and will take up his appointment as Mr Birch retires.

"We're thrilled to announce Mark Pitcher as the new incoming Chair," Mr Birch said.

"He is a natural choice having been with the company since 2015 including most recently, as our Chief Executive. His smooth succession will provide valuable continuity for the company," Mr Birch said.

In addition to his period as Chief Executive at Clevertar, Pitcher has over 20 years of experience in finance roles, directorships and advisory positions across technology and industrial sectors.

Mr Pitcher said he was delighted and honoured to be taking on the role of Chair at such an exciting time for Clevertar and wanted to acknowledge the contribution of Mr Birch.

"Jim has been an outstanding Chair and his contribution to the company has been invaluable," Mr Pitcher said.

"Clevertar is at a pivotal point in its journey as it looks to extend its position in artificial intelligence.

"We're entering a new phase of growth to include more complex artificial intelligence (AI) solutions. Large Language Models (LLM), for example, present a new frontier of efficiency, and our current expansion program aims to provide an even better service for our present and future customers."

"We've been offering a range of AI solutions for some time now, and this will be our primary focus moving forward at a time when the global market for Conversational AI is projected to grow at 23.6%, and companies and organisations are saying to us they need help to leverage AI to improve their customer service, reduce costs and increase efficiency- which is where we can really add value.

"It's a privilege to follow in the footsteps of Jim Birch as Clevertar's chairperson, and I wish him well in his retirement."

"We've commenced the recruitment process to find a suitably qualified CEO to take Clevertar into its new phase and we're very excited about the future and what we can achieve with this new direction", Mr Pitcher said.

Clevertar has also announced the appointment of Non-Executive Director, David Sheard to its board. Originally from Canada, Mr Sheard has led global technology-driven companies in the US, UK and Europe, before immigrating to Australia in 2021 having been selected for Australia's Global Talent Visa based on his record of achievement.

"I'm delighted to be appointed to Clevertar's board at this pivotal time in its development," Mr Sheard said.

"Clevertar has been a leader in game-changing improvements for business and enterprise, and I see great potential in its knowledge and brand assets to build products for a new generation of customers".

Incoming Chair, Mr Pitcher said "I look forward to working with our board, the incoming CEO and executive team to continue Clevertar's strong momentum as we enter our next phase of growth".

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Jim Birch AM

Jim Birch AM was appointed Chair of Clevertar in October 2016.

Prior to his appointment, Jim was Chair of Mary Mackillop Care, Chair at the Australian Digital Health Agency and Deputy Chair of Independent Hospital Pricing Authority.

Jim has also held senior executive positions at Ernst & Young, Department of Health, South Australia, Department of Human Services, Department of Justice and Women's and Children's Hospital Adelaide.



Jim is a board member of Australian Red Cross, Chair of the Women's and Children's Health Network, Chair of Calvary Health Care, Chair of Australia Red Cross Lifeblood and Non-Executive Director at Beamtree. Jim holds a Bachelor of Health Administration from the University of New South Wales.

Mark Pitcher

Mark Pitcher was appointed Chair of Clevertar in December 2022.

Prior to his appointment, Mark was Chief Executive Officer of Clevertar alongside his Non-Executive Director roles with Accurate Dosing Systems and Ingredient Innovations, Coppin Capital and Fullbridge Capital.

Mark has also held senior finance roles, directorships and advisory positions at Dream Direct, Shaw Group, Inogen, Taste Master, Milford Industries, EBL Disability Services and Glenunga International High School.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Accounting from the University of South Australia, CPA from Australian Society of CPAs, an MBA from The International Graduate School of Management and is a graduate of The Australian Institute of Company Directors' Company Directors Program.

David Sheard

David Sheard was appointed Non-Executive Director of Clevertar in November 2022.

David is the Founder and Managing Director of Virtca, a business advisory and investment firm focused on supporting technology-driven businesses. Previously, he has held positions as Managing Director of a technology & software company and Corporate Technology Director at one of the largest global independent engineering and inspection technology organisations.

David's qualifications include an MBA in Finance, Graduate of Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), Project Management Professional (PMP), Private Security Professional (PSP), certificates in financial disciplines (Financial Accounting, Alternative Investments, AFSL Responsible Manager, and AFSL Compliance), commercial pilot's license, and numerous technology & industry-specific credentials.

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About Clevertar

Clevertar is an Australian company that helps businesses solve everyday problems using artificial intelligence. Clevertar was born out of research showing that conversational virtual characters are influential and engaging, and it developed a software platform for the creation and delivery of Conversational AI using this innovative technology.

Now, Clevertar designs, builds, and operates effective solutions by leveraging the power of cutting-edge natural language AI, specialising in large language models, natural language processing, semantic search, conversational agents, virtual humans, and speech AI.