



# Careers in Governance

## Gillian Meller FCIS FCS

### *What is your role as a governance professional?*

'In my day job, I am MTR Corporation's Legal & European Business Director with responsibility, on the governance side, for our legal, company secretarial and risk management functions. I am also currently President of The Hong Kong Institute of Chartered Secretaries (HKICS) and so have a role to play in leading our profession in Hong Kong and the Mainland, and helping to ensure that we remain relevant and fit for purpose and that our members are prepared for the challenges ahead.'

### *What was your career path to your current role?*

'I started my career as a corporate lawyer in the UK and then joined the MTR legal team 16 years ago, since when I have been very fortunate to take on different roles at MTR and to focus on different aspects of governance.'

### *What value does governance bring to organisations and to the wider society?*

'Huge value! Stakeholder and societal demands on businesses and other organisations are only increasing. In this context, good governance has never been more important as it allows organisations to engage with and understand the views of their different stakeholders; to balance these views in their decision-making processes; to effectively manage their key risks; and to communicate and disclose information in a transparent way.'

### *What qualities do you think are needed to be a successful governance professional?*

'Governance needs to be agile and able to respond to the changing nature of a business or an organisation, the changing regulatory environment and changing stakeholder and societal expectations, and so governance professionals need to be agile too. They have to be able to add value to their organisations beyond just compliance and they need to be able to work with hard internal controls, such as an effective three lines of defence, but also softer aspects of internal controls such as culture.'

### *How do you think governance will evolve in the future?*

'I see governance evolving in two ways, both of which will bring new opportunities for governance professionals. Firstly, governance will increasingly be seen to be important for all organisations, not just companies. And secondly, I believe the shift to stakeholder-led governance, in which all stakeholder

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*Gillian Meller FCIS FCS, Legal & European Business Director, MTR Corporation Ltd, and the Institute's current President*

groups (shareholders, of course, but also employees, customers, suppliers, the environment and the local community) are seen to be important, is only going to continue.'

### *What inspires you in your life and work?*

'I think the quote that best encapsulates that would be one from Maya Angelou, American author and civil rights activist: "My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive, and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style".'

### *How do you fill your time outside work?*

'Keeping fit – I captain my hockey team and hike, and take yoga, pilates and boxing lessons – and travelling. My favourite recent trips were to Azerbaijan and Georgia, to Shangri-La (Yunnan Province, the Mainland) and to Canada to see polar bears.'

