

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Newfoundland-based CEO steps into lead role on Board of Directors at Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada

Jennifer Bessell named Board Chair; WEBC CEO Shauna Harper named Vice-Chair

NOVEMBER 16, 2022 – At the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada (WEOC) Annual General Meeting in St. John's, NL on October 28, 2022, Jennifer Bessell was named Board Chair for a two-year term. Bessell is the CEO of [Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs \(NLOWE\)](#).

Jennifer Bessell takes over the role from Marcela Mandeville, CEO of [Alberta Women Entrepreneurs](#), who led the Board through two years of immense growth for WEOC, including the announcement of the [WEOC National Loan Program](#).

“Marcela’s contributions to the women’s entrepreneurial ecosystem in Canada are well-recognized and I am grateful for her years of support as Board Chair. I am thankful that she remains an active member of the Board and I will continue to rely on her insights and experience,” said WEOC CEO Alison Kirkland.

Shauna Harper, CEO of [WEBC](#), was named Board Vice-Chair. Harper will take over as Board Chair when both terms turnover in 2024.

“I welcome both Jennifer and Shauna to their new roles, having benefitted already from their thoughtful leadership and immense knowledge of women’s entrepreneurship in Canada,” said Kirkland. “The perspectives they bring from opposite sides of the country is invaluable in helping WEOC present a truly national perspective. I look forward to working together to address the economic and social barriers faced by women and non-binary entrepreneurs.”

### More about Jennifer Bessell

An accomplished senior leader in the non-profit sector, Bessell has extensive experience in both professional associations and charitable organizations. She has held executive director roles in professional legal education and with the Canadian Bar Association as well as executive positions with the Association for New Canadians and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada . Jennifer has a demonstrated ability to lead and motivate teams with a people first approach to



Women's Enterprise  
Organizations of Canada

Organisations d'entreprises  
de femmes du Canada

607-167 ave Lombard Ave.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0V3

info@weoc.ca  
204 819 7312

[weoc.ca](http://weoc.ca)

leadership. She is an experienced executive leader who enjoys both program and finance management. In addition to her work with WEOC, Jennifer is also a board member with Women in Science and Engineering, Newfoundland and Labrador and volunteers with Junior Achievement of Newfoundland and Labrador as a mentor for their company program.

### **More about Shauna Harper**

Harper is a nationally recognized advocate for women entrepreneurs, gender equity, and a champion for increased access to services, training, support, and funding. Prior to joining WeBC in 2022, Shauna was an entrepreneur for 22 years. In 2015, she was the co-facilitator of the regional Catalyst for Growth dialogues that actively explored how to support economic growth through women and create a greater impact by growing the number of women in senior leadership roles, trades, emerging sectors, and as entrepreneurs. She was also a facilitator for portions of the BC Economic Forum (2015) and the We for She Conference (2016). She was named a Woman of Influence by BC Business Magazine; and Business Person of the Year and Top 40 Under 40 by the Prince George Chamber of Commerce. She was on the BC Premier's Women's Economic Council as an advisor from 2014-2017, and an advisor on the Government of Canada's Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy in 2019.

### **About WEOC**

[Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada \(WEOC\)](#) is an association of organizations that work directly with women entrepreneurs. WEOC members support women entrepreneurs through a variety of services and initiatives, including business training, advising, financing, and mentorship. WEOC supports its members by providing learning and networking opportunities, sharing best practices, and curating a variety of resources so members have the tools needed to support their clients.

**PHOTOS:** [Download headshots](#)

### **Media Contact:**

Lindsay Stewart Glor

Communications Manager

204-296-0544 (c.) / 204-819-7314 (p.) / [lstewartglor@weoc.ca](mailto:lstewartglor@weoc.ca)

