

**A summary of @MarieMcInerney's Twitter thread from a presentation by Bronwyn King at #GiantThreads19. From the ward to the United Nations.**

**This seven-page compilation was produced for Croakey News, November 2019.**

Next up at [#GiantSteps19](#) is oncologist [@DrBronKing](#), founder & CEO of [Tobacco Free Portfolios](#) - she has just been named Melburnian of the Year for her global campaign to achieve tobacco-free finance.

Her address is titled: From the ward to the United Nations [#GiantSteps19](#)



[@DrBronKing](#) won the Open Women's Pier to Pub at the age of 16 - couldn't go to the pub to celebrate [#GiantSteps](#) (was offered free entry to mark anniversary this year - "no thanks!"). [#GiantSteps19](#)



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Dream to be Olympic swimmer for [@DrBronKing](#) slipped away, she headed into medicine, then also worked as team doctor for swimming team at Olympics for 10 years. Watching records break again and again “challenged my view of what is impossible”. That’s stayed with her [#GiantSteps19](#)

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"My big aha moment that changed my life": [@DrBronKing](#) talks re working at [@PeterMacCC](#) - so many of her cancer patients were smokers, began as teens, and nearly all died. Her job was to ring families, and to have "front row seat" at a terrible show. [#GiantSteps19](#)  
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. [@DrBronKingsat](#) met with representative of her super fund to talk general household finances. He said she was in the "default option". He rolled his eyes, said there is a "greenie option for people who have an issue with investing in mining and tobacco". [#GiantSteps19](#)

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"The whole global finance sector looks at tobacco companies like any other company. " [@DrBronKing](#) knew was a big moment she couldn't ignore, given her work was involved in treating people with cancer, 4 of the big 5 tobacco companies were part of her super portfolio [#GiantSteps19](#)

It's estimated 8 million people die each year from tobacco: could that happen in anything else and not make the front page of newspapers around the world: [@DrBronKing](#) [#GiantSteps19](#) And about 100,000 children start to smoke each day.

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16 years 2 months, that's the average age Australian smokers begin smoking. It's the oldest in the world but still a big problem. Tobacco farming is carried out by children in 16 countries. "What a dreadful start to life, what a crazy scenario we allow."

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We will reach 1 billion deaths by tobacco soon, according to [@WHO #GiantSteps19](#)

[@DrBronKing](#) said she had no knowledge of finance as she headed down path as CEO of Tobacco Free Portfolios, had to learn new language. Finance sector also needed to learn more about health. [#GiantSteps19](#)

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Advice from an Uber driver: if you don't say something in the right language, you're not going to get it across.

[@DrBronKing Nov 22](#) Now 45 Australian super funds are tobacco free - \$1.3 trillion in funds "now tobacco free", says

[@DrBronKing](#)

- and it's doing well. "A beautiful case study: you can make money from being tobacco free". [#GiantSteps19](#). Now big global mainstream players also joining....

[@DrBronKing](#) began to see that people who were trying to create big change were all at the UN in NY....she reached out, got significant interest, told would need a PM or President to sign off on it ...told that French President Macron would, if the PM did too...[#giantsteps19](#)



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Hearing about how hard was for [@DrBronKing](#) to get Australia's then PM [@TurnbullMalcolm](#) to engage, with President Macron on the way to Australia and planning to raise tobacco finance pledge.... "45 miracles later THAT happened" [#GiantSteps19](#)



"That is the missing piece of global tobacco control." The verdict from [@DrTedros](#) on tobacco-free finance work by [@DrBronKing](#)

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"It's worth thinking about the power that a clinician has. The whole world is crying out for people to trust. Every business conference talks about fake news. But clinicians are trusted. Nurses the most trusted in the world."

[@DrBronKing](#)

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"Sometimes I see clinicians advocating for change, sometimes with a picket and a sign. Why not try to walk through the front door. The 'doctor thing' I have exploited for all it's worth, has opened doors that otherwise be closed."

"Have a crack" urges [@DrBronKing](#) - change doesn't happen because the cause is right, it happens because people make it happen [#GiantSteps19](#)

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Was a lot of pushback including from health peers to [@DrBronKing](#)'s advocacy, but she got important support from Professor David Ball [@PeterMacCC](#) "By this action you will save more lives than in an entire lifetime as a clinician. Keep up the great work." [#GiantSteps19](#)

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"If you say it's impossible to do this today, I'll say OK. But if you say it's impossible, I really challenge you." [@DrBronKing](#)

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Quit services are vital. Doctors need advice on how to encourage people to quit, "even as a cancer specialist I didn't know":

[@DrBronKing](#) taking questions at [#GiantSteps19](#)

Q: Have you had pushback from tobacco industry? "Not direct", but advised that communications been monitored for years. [@DrBronKing](#) warns has been pushback to global tobacco free finance pledgees, being urged/feted to drop out: [#GiantSteps19](#)

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Excellent question: are you worried that PM [@ScottMorrisonMP](#) talk re taking action on "secondary boycotts"? [#GiantSteps19](#)

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"This is a global trend and I don't think it's going to stop," says [@DrBronKing](#) on issues around "secondary boycotts". She talks re oil, human rights, ocean plastics etc with finance orgs, they're building sustainability frameworks. [#GiantSteps19](#)

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Before she did this work [@DrBronKing](#) didn't know was only one treaty on tobacco control: it's an incredible piece of policy, Australia is widely regarded for top implementation - but the \$ in tobacco control is still so small given catastrophic impacts of product. [#GiantSteps19](#)