

# **New chair appointed at IMPRESS**

**IMPRESS, the independent press regulator, has appointed Richard Ayre as its new Chair to lead the next stage of its development.**

Richard will succeed Walter Merricks CBE, whose term of office ends on 31 March 2022 having led the IMPRESS board for seven years.

He joins IMPRESS following some forty years in journalism, beginning in the early 1970s at the BBC in Belfast and going on to become the corporation's controller of editorial policy and deputy chief executive of BBC News. He is a former member of the Ofcom Content Board and chair of its Broadcast Review Committee, and also chaired Article 19, the international freedom of expression charity. For fourteen years he was the Law Society's freedom of information adjudicator before returning to the BBC as a member of the BBC Trust and chair of its editorial standards committee.

Walter Merricks said: "I am delighted to welcome Richard as my successor. I have nothing but confidence in IMPRESS's bright future under his leadership.

"Richard brings a wealth of experience, a real passion for quality journalism and strong respect for freedom of expression."

Richard said: "Under Walter's chairmanship, and against considerable opposition, IMPRESS has established itself as the independent regulator of almost two hundred publications,

offering readers an assurance of journalism they can rely on. I feel privileged to be able to lead the organisation as online journalism offers the public ever more sources of information and when truth in news has never been so important.”

“I look forward to working with CEO Ed Procter, the Board and the executive staff team to address the ethical challenges facing journalism in a fast-changing digital world.”

Richard was nominated by an independent appointment panel following an extensive advertising and search campaign led by Juliet Taylor of executive research agency Starfish. Strict criteria of independence, openness and transparency were followed as set out in the Royal Charter on self-regulation of the press. This ensures that appointments to the IMPRESS Board are independent of the press industry and political interests.

