

ASX Release

22 May 2026

2026 Annual General Meeting - Chair's address

Appen Limited (ASX: APX) provides the attached Chair's address to be delivered at today's Annual General Meeting commencing at 10.00am AEST.

Authorised for release by the Chair of Appen Limited.

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About Appen

Appen is a global market leader in data for the AI Lifecycle. With 30 years of experience in data sourcing, data annotation, and model evaluation by humans, we enable organisations to launch the world's most innovative artificial intelligence systems.

Our expertise includes a global crowd of more than 1 million skilled contractors who speak over 500 languages¹, in over 200 countries², as well as our advanced AI data platform. Our products and services give leaders in technology, automotive, financial services, retail, healthcare, and governments the confidence to launch world-class AI products.

Founded in 1996, Appen has customers and offices globally.

¹ Self-reported.

² Self-reported, includes territories.

Chair's Address
2026 Annual General Meeting
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This is my first AGM as Chair of Appen, having been appointed to the role on 1 January 2026 following Richard Freudenstein's retirement from the Board on 31 December 2025.

I would like to take a moment to recognise Richard's contribution. He joined the Appen Board in 2021, became Chair during one of the most challenging periods in the company's history, and stayed the course with discipline and determination. Under his stewardship, we positioned Appen to participate in the generative AI market, and it has created the foundation from which we now grow. I, and the entire Board, are grateful to Richard for his leadership and his support during the transition.

I have had the privilege of serving on the Appen Board since 2020. Over the years, I have seen the qualities that make it genuinely special — the depth of its data expertise, the scale of its global crowd, the strength of its technology, and the calibre of the people who show up every day to deliver for our customers. I take on this role with clear eyes, high expectations, and genuine excitement about what lies ahead, and will continue to work closely with Ryan and the executive team as we continue to execute on our strategy.

Before I invite Ryan to speak in more detail about the performance of the business, our strategy, and the outlook, I would like to reflect on Appen's context in the market, and then our progress over the past year. I will then provide commentary on the items of business we are asking shareholders to vote on today.

We are living through one of the most consequential technology transitions in human history. Artificial intelligence is being interwoven into the fabric of daily life — into the way we communicate, the way we work, the way businesses make decisions, the way scientific breakthroughs happen. The models powering this transformation are becoming more capable, more multilingual, and more autonomous with every iteration.

At the heart of this transformation is a key point: AI models learn from data. Specifically, they learn from high-quality, human-annotated, carefully curated data — the kind that Appen has been creating for nearly three decades. As models become more sophisticated, the data requirements do not diminish. They grow. For AI to be more reliable, the data needs become more complex, more domain-specific, more demanding of genuine human expertise and judgment.

This is a great opportunity for Appen, because we have the scale, the infrastructure, the global crowd, the reliability and the institutional knowledge that this moment requires.



With this context, let's turn to our performance last year. Note that values referred to are US dollars unless stated otherwise.

In 2025, Appen recorded total operating revenue of \$230.8 million, representing growth of 4.5% on the prior year when excluding the impact of the Google contract termination in FY24. Underlying EBITDA (before FX) improved significantly to \$12.2 million, an increase of 250.8% compared to \$3.5 million in 2024.

The Board once again made the decision not to declare an interim or final dividend, to ensure capital is allocated appropriately as we pursue growth opportunities.

Operational Progress

Throughout 2025, the business remained focused on maximising growth while managing costs. We successfully executed against a \$10 million cost reduction program, largely through technology-enabled efficiencies, which contributed to meaningful improvement in gross margins. Revenue from generative AI grew considerably, representing 33% of total revenue by the end of the year, up from 22% in 2024.

We also sharpened our customer focus, which contributed to strong new project wins in generative AI throughout the year and particularly in the second half. The combination of revenue growth, improving gross margins, and disciplined cost management delivered continued EBITDA growth across the year.

We remain committed to managing our cost base in line with the revenue opportunity, while continuing to invest in the technology and talent required to capture the significant generative AI opportunity ahead.

Leadership and Management

Ryan Kolln has continued to lead Appen with strong operational discipline and a clear focus on growth. His leadership has contributed directly to our improved financial and operational performance.

During the year, we strengthened our executive team with key additions across delivery, sales, crowd operations, and legal functions. These additions reinforce our capability in the areas most critical to our future growth – particularly in developing complex data solutions relevant for generative AI - and to delivering consistently strong outcomes for our customers. I want to thank the entire executive team and Appen employees around the world for their continued efforts and commitment.

Non-Financial Metrics

Appen remains committed to delivering strong social, governance, and sustainability outcomes.

Customer satisfaction improved meaningfully in 2025, with customer NPS rising to 68, up from 57 in the prior year. This result reflects the quality of our project delivery and the strength of our customer relationships.

Our Crowd Net Promoter Score (NPS) declined to 22 from 33 in the prior year, primarily due to project availability and earnings stability during certain periods of the year.

We recognise the importance contributors place on having a steady, reliable source of income, and improving the contributor experience remains a priority. We continued to uphold the principles outlined in our Crowd Code of Conduct and our Global Ethical Sourcing and Modern Slavery Policy.

Employee engagement increased to 83%, up from 79% in 2024.

Diversity continues to remain a priority. Women represented 58% of our total workforce, and female representation among our senior leadership team increased to 54%, exceeding our target of 30%.

Governance

As noted, this is my first AGM as Chair following Richard's resignation in December 2025. During 2025, Mini Peiris retired from the Board due to the increasing demands of her executive role in the United States. Mini joined us in 2023 and brought valuable perspective on the digital marketplace in our key market. We thank her for her contribution and wish her well.

The Board currently comprises five independent Non-Executive Directors and our CEO, Ryan Kolln. We maintain 50% female representation at Board level. I am satisfied that the Board has the right skills, diversity of thought, and industry depth to guide Appen through this next phase and we remain committed to maintaining a well-balanced, high-performing Board.

Our governance practices continue to align with the ASX Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations. The People and Culture Committee, chaired by Steve Hasker, continues to carefully consider the skills and composition required to drive the Company's future growth.

This year, Steve Hasker and Lynn Mickleburgh are standing for re-election in accordance with the Company's Constitution and ASX Listing Rules. Both Steve and Lynn will address shareholders on their candidacy later in the meeting. The Board recommends shareholders vote in favour of both re-elections.

Remuneration

Before we cover current remuneration matters, I would like to address the first strike against last year's Remuneration Report. The Board takes shareholder feedback seriously, and we acknowledge the concerns that were expressed. We have reflected carefully on that feedback and, as you will hear from the Chair of the Board's People and Culture Committee later in the meeting, we are committed to ensuring our remuneration framework is transparent and clearly aligned with shareholder outcomes. Appen and the Board remain committed to the highest standards of governance and to demonstrating, through our actions, that executive remuneration is tied directly to the performance we deliver for you.

Turning briefly to remuneration, the 2025 short-term incentive (STI) framework was weighted 80% to financial performance and 20% to non-financial metrics. The final STI outcome for KMP was 10% of target, reflecting a year in which our financial metrics did not meet the minimum achievement thresholds, despite both showing substantial improvement over the prior year.

Customer NPS was a strong result, achieving 119% of target, reflecting the high quality of service and project delivery that our customers experienced. Crowd NPS was below the minimum payout threshold.

Under item 5 of today's agenda, we are seeking shareholder approval to grant 3,024,260 performance rights to Ryan under the FY26 Long Term Incentive Plan, valued at \$1.5m. The number of performance rights was calculated using the December 2025 VWAP of A\$0.746 per share.

These rights are subject to vesting conditions based on Absolute Total Shareholder Return and Revenue CAGR, measured over a three-year period to 31 December 2028.

Ryan's total remuneration includes a fixed component of \$600,000, an STI opportunity of \$600,000, and an LTI opportunity of 250% of fixed pay. The Board believes this structure is appropriately rigorous, competitive for the global technology sector, and aligned with shareholder interests.

Under items 6 and 7, we are also seeking shareholder approval for the issue of deferred STI shares to Ryan. Item 6 relates to 223,777 shares deferred from Ryan's FY24 STI award, and item 7 relates to 15,640 shares deferred from his FY25 STI award. These deferred share issues are consistent with the terms of the STI framework approved by shareholders and



reflect the Board's commitment to aligning executive remuneration with the long-term interests of shareholders.

Later in the meeting, Steve Hasker, Chair of the Board's People and Culture Committee, will speak to the Remuneration Report in more detail.

Closing Comments

In closing, I am pleased with the progress Appen made in 2025. We delivered a materially improved financial result, with underlying EBITDA growing 250.8% and cash generation turning strongly positive. We grew our China business significantly, strengthened our customer relationships, and deepened our position in the generative AI market.

There is much more work to do, but the foundations are strong, and I am excited about the opportunity ahead for Appen. The next chapter of AI is not about bigger models, but about models that work reliably in the real world – across languages, cultures, domains and contexts. Human judgment is more important than ever to make AI trustworthy, safe and effective.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our shareholders for your continued support. We remain deeply committed to building a business that creates genuine, durable value for shareholders. We also thank our executive team and Appen employees around the world for their commitment and contributions during what has been another important year in Appen's evolution.

I now welcome Ryan Kolln to give his CEO address.