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Clare Connor to stand down after 18 years at ECB

Clare Connor, ECB Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of England Women, has announced she will leave the organisation at the end of this summer's home ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

In a trailblazing career, Connor has overseen the transformation of women's and girls' cricket in England and Wales for more than 18 years at the ECB.

She has led women's cricket from an amateur game into a professional era, introducing the first central contracts for England Women, and overseeing the

introduction of a professional structure and professional contracts for domestic female players. As well as these game-changing developments at the performance end of the sport, she also led the delivery of a five-year action plan that has resulted in cricket becoming one of the fastest growing grassroots sports for women and girls.

Connor's impact on cricket – and the wider women's sport landscape – has already been recognised and celebrated. She has been awarded the MBE, OBE and CBE for services to women's sport. She served for two terms on the Sport England Board and became the first woman to sit on the ICC Cricket Committee before chairing the ICC Women's Cricket Committee, a role she has held for over a decade. In 2021-22 she was the first female President of MCC and then spent nearly a year as the ECB's Interim Chief Executive Officer in 2022-23.

Clare Connor said: "Helping to grow women's cricket for the past 18 years has been an absolute privilege. Having fallen in love with the game in a quite different era from the one we are in now, my goals as an administrator have been firmly rooted in making cricket more equal for women and girls. For it to be as normal for a girl to pick up a cricket bat as a boy. For a young woman to know – not just dream – that she can become a professional cricketer.

"To have played a part in removing some of the barriers that were preventing those things from being possible and to know that cricket is now a more inclusive and more gender-balanced sport, is deeply rewarding.

"I am so grateful to have worked with many brilliant colleagues and players over the years, many of whom I can call lifelong friends. Their commitment, drive and belief to do the right thing for our sport has been instrumental in getting us to where we are today and working alongside them has shaped my experience in ways I will always cherish. What we've achieved together has exceeded anything I could have dreamed of when I embarked on this journey 18 years ago.

"Of course, a job like this is never 'done' but I am proud to have done my bit. This has been the job of a lifetime so deciding to leave has been an extremely hard decision. This summer's ICC Women's T20 World Cup feels like the right time for me to end this chapter, confident that the momentum we've built will carry women's cricket forward into the bold, bright future it deserves."

As England captain, Connor led England Women to their first Ashes win in 42 years in 2005 before retiring the following year with more than 100 international appearances to her name. She combined her 10-year international playing career as an amateur with a career in teaching.

She joined the ECB in 2008 as the only employee with sole focus on women's cricket. As Director of England Women's Cricket, she oversaw a transformational period for the game including a double triumph by England women in two ICC global events and an Ashes win in 2009, the introduction of professional contracts for 18 players in 2014 and the 2017 ICC Women's World Cup win at Lord's.

After becoming the ECB's Managing Director of Women's Cricket in 2019, with responsibility for grassroots cricket through to the England team, she led the creation of the Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan which secured multi million-pound investment to turbocharge the growth of women's cricket at every level.

After a spell as Interim Chief Executive Officer in 2022, she became Deputy Chief Executive Officer in addition to her role as Managing Director for England Women in 2023, with that year's thrilling Women's Ashes series smashing attendance records. She also co-ordinated the response to the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket report, bringing the game together to formulate a wide-ranging response to the issues raised.

Richard Gould, ECB Chief Executive Officer, said: "Clare has been one of the most influential figures in cricket. Her leadership, vision and determination have transformed the game in this country and laid foundations that will benefit generations to come.

"We will miss Clare hugely and owe her an enormous debt of gratitude for everything she has done for cricket. Having overseen a home World Cup win in 2017, I hope that this year's T20 World Cup on home soil can provide a fitting finale to her time at the ECB."

Richard Thompson, ECB Chair, said: "I'm incredibly thankful to Clare for all she has given, and everything she has achieved. From driving professionalisation to championing opportunities for women and girls on and off the pitch, she has changed the game in ways that are profound and lasting.

“She has made our sport more inclusive and will leave a remarkable legacy, not least that girls growing up today can dream of becoming a professional cricketer and know that it can now become a reality. Thank you, Clare.”

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