



Chief Executive Women

Women leaders enabling women leaders

13 January 2017

Vale Sonja Lyneham

The Board and Members of Chief Executive Women (CEW) have received the sad news of the passing of founding CEW Member, Professor Sonja Lyneham.

Sonja was a renowned and respected authority on urban development and strategy, providing high-level strategic planning and advisory services on property and infrastructure to the private and public sectors, both within Australia and internationally.

She was Chairman and Managing Director of Planning Workshop Australia until its acquisition by publicly listed engineering consultancy Worley Parsons, where she held the role of Director of Strategy and Approvals.

Sonja graduated from the University of Sydney in 1967 with a Bachelor of Economics, and a Master of Town Planning in 1969. She became an Adjunct Professor of the Faculty of the Built Environment at UNSW in 1996. Sonja led several property audits and inquiries into housing and infrastructure – including the Property Audit for NSW Commission of Audit – which led to major reforms in the sector.

Sonja shared her expertise on several councils and boards, including as Chairman of the Australian Heritage Commission, and as a member of the Smart Infrastructure Advisory Council at the University of Wollongong. She was the youngest board member appointed to St Vincent's Teaching Hospital Board and played a key role in the restructuring of the campus model for comprehensive care. Sonja also served on the Sydney and Eastern Sydney Area Health boards.

As one of Chief Executive Women's founding members, Sonja was a trailblazer for women in the property and infrastructure sector and an inspiration to women forging careers in male-dominated industries. Her pioneering spirit and enthusiasm saw her lead fellow CEW members on a trip to Indonesia, which created a forum for Australian and Indonesian government representatives and successful entrepreneurial women to develop and deepen trade relationships.

Sonja personified the values of our organisation and she is remembered fondly for her warmth, courage, insatiable energy and sharp intellect. We are grateful for Sonja's contribution to Chief Executive Women and for the legacy of her wisdom, humanity and leadership.

On behalf of our members, Chief Executive Women extends our deepest sympathy to Sonja's family.
