

CEW Strategy

FY27-29

Women leaders
empowering all women



A message from our President



**Helen Conway AO,
President
Chief Executive Women**

Chief Executive Women marked its 40th anniversary last year. Forty years ago, a small group of women looked at Australian corporate leadership and believed it could be different. In response, they set out to change it. Every subsequent generation of CEW members and leaders since has carried that work forward.

This strategy honours this history by making sure CEW remains strong, relevant and ready for the work ahead. Progress towards gender equity is not inevitable. We cannot take it for granted.

That is why the Board has set a clear ambition for this strategy: for CEW to be more active, more inclusive, and bolder in the role it plays. We want to build on what makes CEW distinctive, while being deliberate about where we direct our energy and influence in the years ahead.

This strategy also recognises that lasting impact depends on a strong organisation. We will continue investing in CEW's people, governance, building capability and infrastructure so that CEW is equipped to deliver on its purpose, not just today, but into the future.

CEW's greatest strength has always been its community. This strategy is how we build on that strength, for our members, and for future generations of women leaders for the next 40 years.

A message from our CEO



Lisa Annese,
Chief Executive Officer
Chief Executive Women

When I stepped into this role in early 2025, I made a commitment to listen closely to CEW members and make sure CEW's next phase reflected what was important to them.

Through the CEW national survey, member consultations, and individual conversations across each chapter, members told us what they value most about CEW and where they want us to do more. We also spoke with partners, government stakeholders and the CEW team.

We were looking for areas where there was a consensus amongst members. We found members value being part of a community of senior and influential women, but want more ways to build stronger connections. They want CEW to remain a strong and credible voice for gender equity. And there is an enthusiasm for helping the next generation of women leaders progress.

This strategy has been built entirely from this feedback, and I am excited to share it with you.

Over the next three years, we will be deliberate about where CEW puts its effort and time. We will strengthen the member experience, invest in the leadership pipeline and focus CEW's advocacy where our expertise and influence can make the greatest difference.

Delivering this well also means continuing to strengthen the organisation behind the work, including our people, systems, technology and governance.

This strategy reflects what we heard, and we now turn our focus to putting it into practice.

A strategy for CEW's next chapter

For more than 40 years, CEW has brought together Australia's most experienced and influential women leaders.

Following a period of growth and leadership transition, and amid an increasingly complex social and economic landscape, CEW is entering an important new phase.

Our strategy focuses on three ways CEW will make a difference: strengthening our community, accelerating women's leadership journeys, and driving change across the systems that shape women's opportunities. Sustainable growth will support this work.



The strategy was shaped by members and partners

A national consultation process identified consistent priorities across CEW's members, chapters, partners and stakeholders.



Sep 2025

National member survey



Nov-Dec 2025

12 in-person focus groups



Dec 2025

Online focus groups and member interviews



Jan-Mar 2026

Partner and stakeholder interviews



Mar - July 2026

Strategy refined with the Board

What we heard:

Members

Stronger connections, more flexible ways to contribute, clearer ways for members to get involved in CEW's leadership and advocacy work, and a more visible national CEW.

Partners

A clear, measurable partnership experience, with strong alignment of values and better reporting of impact.

CEW's direction

A single, focused strategy that brings together member value, leadership development, advocacy impact and organisational sustainability.

Purpose and ambition

Purpose

**Women leaders
empowering all women.**

Ambition

**To be a powerful, engaged, inclusive community of
Australia's most influential women leaders,
successfully driving gender equity, strengthening the
leadership pipeline and delivering lasting impact.**

Three areas of impact, enabled by the foundations CEW needs to grow sustainably.



01 Community

Members are the heart of CEW. We will create inclusive opportunities that help members connect, contribute and grow professionally.



02 Accelerating leadership journeys

We will accelerate the professional growth of women leaders and strengthen the leadership pipeline through education and investment at critical career stages.



03 Systemic impact

Using CEW’s evidence-based, expert insights, member influence and partnerships, we will shape public policy, corporate practice and culture.



04 Sustainable growth

We will realise opportunities, manage risk and build the revenue, brand, partnerships and organisational capability needed for long-term impact.



Opportunities and risk



Funding, revenue and costs



Partnerships



Brand



High performing, inclusive culture

01 Community

Members are the heart of CEW; we create inclusive opportunities that help our members connect and grow professionally.



Deepen member connection

Deliver a renewed member value proposition and create more ways for members to connect, contribute and build trusted relationships.



Strengthen member insight

Build ongoing member listening and use insight across the member journey to create a more relevant experience.



Grow the CEW Connect Women Community

Create clearer pathways for a broader community of women leaders to engage with CEW and connect into our community over time.

Key benefits: Clear pathways for member engagement | Enhanced value for members | Improved inclusion and accessibility | Stronger, more connected community.

02 Accelerating leadership journeys

CEW accelerates the professional growth of women leaders and grow the leadership pipeline through education and investment at critical career stages.



Expand leadership programs and offerings

Broaden CEW's leadership offering to support women leaders at critical career stages, including core programs and new development opportunities.



Grow reach and participant experience

Strengthen the visibility, accessibility and participant experience of CEW's leadership programs so more women and organisations can benefit from them.



Strengthen access and pathways

Expand scholarships, partnerships and pathways that help more women participate in CEW's leadership programs and progress into senior leadership.

Key benefits: Accelerating the growth and development of women leaders | Stronger value proposition for CEW Connect Women Community | Commercial growth and sustainability.

03 Systemic impact

Using CEW's evidence base, expert insights, member influence and strong partnerships, we shape public policy, corporate practice and shift culture to accelerate gender equity for all women.



Drive corporate advocacy

Build a clearer corporate advocacy practice that mobilises CEW's members, evidence and partnerships to influence corporate Australia and accelerate practical change.



Influence public policy

Strengthen CEW's public policy voice by bringing expert insight, evidence and member perspectives into legislative and policy reform.



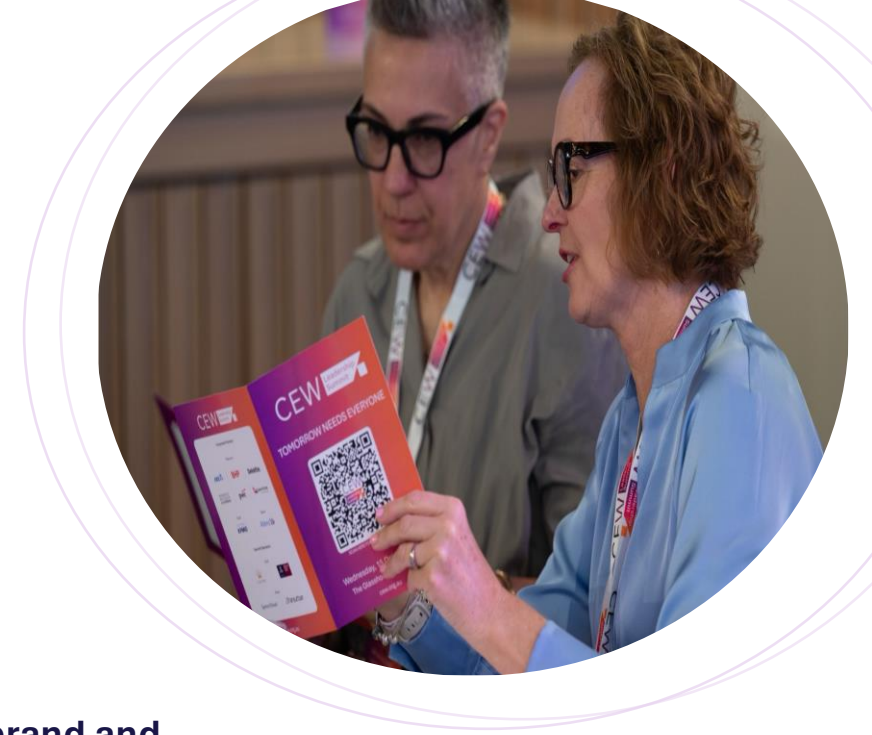
Build strategic alliances

Grow alliances and coalitions that amplify CEW's voice, extend our reach and increase impact through collaboration and shared resources.

Key benefits: Clear and strategic advocacy agenda | Greater influence on corporate practice and public policy | Amplified voice and reach | Increased impact through collaboration and shared resources.

04 Sustainable growth

CEW realises opportunities and manage risk. We create sustainable revenue and manage costs. We build our brand, expand our partnerships and foster a thriving, high-performing and inclusive organisation.



Strengthen governance and infrastructure

Invest in the governance, systems, technology and infrastructure CEW needs to operate effectively, manage risk and support long-term delivery.



Optimise revenue and partnerships

Strengthen funding, revenue and partnership approaches to improve financial resilience and support CEW's long-term sustainability.



Build brand and organisational capability

Invest in CEW's brand, people and internal capability to foster a high-performing, inclusive organisation that is fit for purpose.

Key benefits: Operational and financial stability | Enhanced relationships with partners and sponsors | Team that is fit for purpose, working in a highly collaborative manner | Team operating within capacity

What this means for members

The strategy is CEW's organisational commitment. For members, it translates into one clear proposition:



A trusted community of Australia's most influential women leaders.

Access to relationships, experience and influence you can draw on, and opportunities to contribute.



What members can do with it:



Connect

Build trusted relationships with senior women leaders across chapters, industries and career stages.



Grow

Learn from the experience of peers and access opportunities that support your leadership journey.



Contribute

Share your expertise, support emerging leaders and participate in the CEW community in ways that matter to you.



Influence

Add your voice and experience to CEW's collective efforts to advance gender equity.

How CEW will deliver

CEW will deliver the strategy progressively across FY27–FY29, building capability, learning from what works and scaling the initiatives that create the greatest value and impact.

Horizon 1

FY27

Build

Strengthen foundations

Establish priority initiatives and build the capability to deliver them.

Horizon 2

FY28

Develop

Build momentum

Launch and expand pilots, campaigns and infrastructure.

Horizon 3

FY29

Grow

Embed what works.

Scale what works and embed for long-term success.

The strategic direction is enduring; the initiatives underneath it will evolve as CEW learns and responds to changing needs and opportunities. Horizons 2 and 3 are indicative and subject to Board budget approval each year.

What success looks like

By the end of this strategy, success will be felt across our community, partners and wider influence.



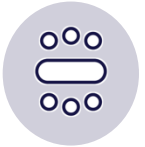
Members

Experience clear value from membership, build meaningful peer connections, contribute to CEW's advocacy and receive support throughout their leadership journey.



Emerging leaders

Progress in their leadership with access to CEW's programs and community, building the networks and confidence to step into more senior roles.



Partners

Experience a clear, mutually-beneficial exchange, where their investment in CEW translates into demonstrated outcomes, consistent delivery, and visible impact on gender equity.



The sector

Sees CEW as an authoritative, evidence-based voice for gender equity in Australia, one that moves policy, shifts corporate practice, and invests in the next generation of women leaders.



Together, we will build a stronger, more connected community, accelerate women's leadership and drive lasting impact.

Women leaders empowering all women.



CEW Strategy FY27–FY29

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