

A resource sheet for women



Introducing Julia Sloman FCA

Julia Sloman recognises the value of mentoring and attributes her rapid career development to the support and mentoring of the first board of directors with whom she worked. Back in 2000 she joined Softlink, a leading Australian library software company, as CFO and Company Secretary.

'My role at Softlink was multi-faceted and while I enjoyed all aspects of the role, the day each month where I learned most was at the Board Meeting'.

Julia considers herself fortunate that her first Board appointment was with experienced non-executive directors, who supported her with her career development. She has continued to be mentored over recent years with a senior company director who has provided a sounding board for her as her career has developed.

Career development

Julia's interesting career began first with an Honours degree in Electronics Engineering from Cambridge University in the UK. She worked as a Design Engineer for blue chip electronics manufacturers for four years before commencing studies culminating in her attaining the qualification of Chartered Accountant in both the UK and Australia, securing national prizes along the way in her studies. She gained practical experience as a Chartered Accountant with Deloitte as both an auditor and a management consultant, before moving into industry.

Having worked as Chief Financial Officer for a couple of ITT public companies, Julia took a strategy role with Skilled Group Limited before moving to her current role, CFO and Company Secretary of Runge Limited, an international mining services group with offices in 10 countries around the world.

'Early in my career with Runge, the company floated on the ASX and it was the largest Australian float in the first half of the year. In what is a very broad role, I am finding the many facets of my previous experience to be invaluable.'

More information on the *Women on Boards* strategy can be found on the Office for Women's website. Visit www.women.qld.gov.au/womenonboards or call 1800 177 577 between 8.00am and 6.00pm.

The circle of mentoring

Julia decided early on that just as she had benefited from the advice of her mentor, she wanted to pass on the benefit of her own experience to others.

'I was recently approached by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (ICAA) to review the course materials for their Directors Online course and it was a significant task to review all eight course modules.

'But it was an opportunity for me to add practical examples into the course material based on my own experience and it was very rewarding. Similarly, occasions when I have presented at ICAA conferences have taken significant preparation time but the interest shown at question time afterwards has made it worthwhile.'

Advice to others

Julia's advice to women seeking to find board positions is to develop a reputation for having a high level focus.

'Board members do not manage the business, they provide oversight and direction, and while ability to manage detail is a great skill, a reputation for being detailed can be a barrier to Board appointments. And the best way to develop a big picture focus? That is where having a mentor with whom you can talk things through makes a real difference.'