

Carole Campbell

Deputy-Chair, Council of AFTRS

Lucy Hughes, Senior Business Affairs Manager at Stan, recently interviewed **Carole Campbell**, Deputy Chair of Council of the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), to discuss her career and gain her insights on International Women's Day and this year's theme of 'Inspire Inclusion'.

Carole is an experienced Non-Executive Director, CFO and corporate advisor with more than 30 years' financial executive experience in a diverse range of industries, including media, professional services, financial services, mining and industrial services. Carole currently holds a number of non-executive director positions, including as a Non-Executive Director of the Southern Cross Media Group. Carole is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, held executive positions at such companies as Seven West Media, Macquarie Group and Westpac, and was previously a Non-Executive Director of the Sydney Film Festival.

LUCY HUGHES: Thanks for taking the time to discuss your career, Carole. It's a great pleasure to have the opportunity to interview you for the 2024 International Women's Day Edition of the CLB. Can you please tell us about your current roles, and what a typical day looks like for you?

CAROLE CAMPBELL: In 2018, I transitioned from an Executive career as a CFO to being a professional Non-Executive Director and now have a portfolio of board roles in the media and industrial industries. I'm also a Facilitator of the Australian Institute of Company Directors' (AICD) flagship Company Directors course.

One of the great things about a portfolio career is that no two days or two weeks are the same. Depending on the time of the year, I'm either preparing for or attending various board and committee meetings. I also spend time reading or undertaking professional education on issues impacting my organisations such as industry or economic updates, technology changes, cyber risks, climate change, sustainability, contemporary corporate governance practices etc.

LUCY: After starting your career in financial services, you have gained extensive experience in a vast range of industries including media, professional services, industrial services, and mining. What interested you most about working in these industries, and how did you position yourself to get to where you are today?

CAROLE: I started my career as an Auditor working in the Sydney and London offices of KPMG and that experience set me up very well for my subsequent executive career in CFO and other senior finance roles. I have worked in an unusually diverse range of industries and have always enjoyed learning about new businesses. However, my experience is that business is largely common sense and skills learnt in one industry are readily transferable to other industries. When I start a new role in a new industry, I take the time to listen and learn from my industry specialist colleagues. However, I bring a fresh perspective and can challenge the status quo from multiple perspectives. Being intellectually curious and being prepared to challenge the status quo are great skills for life as a Non-Executive Director.

LUCY: What do you like to do to unplug from work?

CAROLE: I'm a super keen traveller and am constantly planning the next adventure. Last year I went to Uzbekistan and Greece and this year I'm going on a 4WD adventure on the Canning Stock Route in Western Australia. In addition to my role with AFTRS, I was a Non-Executive Director of The Sydney Film Festival for 9 years, and I love going to the movies and especially enjoy Australian films and stories. I also listen to a lot of music and podcasts on SCA's LISTNR App.

LUCY: The 2024 International Women's Day campaign theme is 'Inspire Inclusion'. What does this mean to you?

CAROLE: I'm passionate about Diversity and Inclusion. Inclusion to me means embracing and celebrating different people and different perspectives. The business benefits are obvious – an inclusive culture fosters creativity and innovation, improves decision making and negates "group think". If businesses are not inclusive, they will not be able to attract or retain the best talent, and I fully expect Gen Z's and beyond will demand it. And of course, working in an inclusive culture contributes to the mental and emotional health of employees and social cohesion. It's just the right thing to do and movement on inclusion has been frustratingly glacially slow in my view.

LUCY: What impact have strong female role models had on your personal and professional life?

CAROLE: My first career decision to become an accountant was inspired by a successful woman accountant I knew who in the 1980s went on to become one of the few women sitting on the board of a stock exchange listed company in Australia. I believe women, in general, have a more balanced view of what success in life looks like – it's not just about being single-minded in your career but also having happy and healthy family relationships and friendships as well as taking time for self-care and personal development. Many women from all walks of life inspire me.



LUCY: What have you learned about leadership during your time as Deputy Chair of the AFTRS Council, and while on the boards of multiple organisations?

CAROLE: I've learnt that the culture of an organisation is set from the top and the leadership group of any organisation needs to model the behaviours it wants to inspire and foster in the organisation. If a leadership team is not diverse and inclusive, it's very difficult to achieve it in the organisation generally.

LUCY: What is the greatest risk you've taken as a professional, and how did it turn out?

CAROLE: Ironically working in a diverse range of industries! I strongly believe that it's broadened my skills and experience immensely, but it was often a practical impediment with recruiters who couldn't work out what "box" to put me in. I also took a year's sabbatical mid-career and went to Spain and Mexico to learn Spanish. When I returned some recruiters and potential employers looked upon it sceptically but for me it was an easy way of working out whom I didn't want to work for!

LUCY: What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?

CAROLE: For women coming through their career and aspiring to leadership I would strongly encourage you to have at least one close mentor whom you can discuss your career challenges and decisions with. Finding a great boss who is going to challenge you and give you opportunities is also invaluable. And finally, if you feel that you've plateaued in a role and you've stopped learning, be purposeful and consider making a change.

LUCY: Thanks Carole! Happy International Women's Day!