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Breaking the boys' club: SA's top 20 female founders, CEOs

From trailblazing entrepreneurs to top corporate CEOs and leaders of family dynasties, high flying South Australian women are shattering the glass ceiling. See the list.



Giuseppe Tauriello

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@gtauriello 2 min read June 26, 2026 - 4:30AM National Business Network

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SA's top female founders and CEOs.

From trailblazing entrepreneurs in space, finance and retail to top corporate CEOs and leaders of some of the state's iconic family dynasties, a growing number of high flying South Australian women are shattering the glass ceiling in corporate Australia.

Whether it's running their own business or heading up South Australia's largest and iconic brands, they share common attributes – drive, ambition and a deep passion for their industries.

Take Flavia Tata Nardini, who arrived in Australia with limited job prospects, but went on to build an \$800m empire.

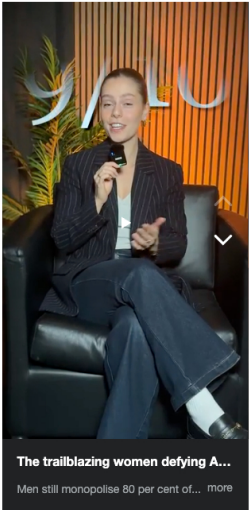
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Or reality TV stars-turned-entrepreneurs Alisa and Lysandra Fraser, who have grown their personal care brand, alive body, into a \$30m-plus revenue business in just over five years.

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Recognising the success and achievements of South Australia's leading women in business, The Advertiser has compiled a list of the state's Top 20 female founders and CEOs, who feature on a list of the Top 100 female founders and CEOs across the country.

Donny Walford has broken barriers over her decades-long career, including becoming the first woman appointed to senior management at the former State Bank of South Australia in the 1980s, before going on to an impressive career holding CEO and senior management roles in government and the private sector.

AUSTRALIA'S TOP

100*Female*

FOUNDERS & EXECS

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Maggie Beer Products
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Founders



48 & 46 years old · SOUTH AUSTRALIA

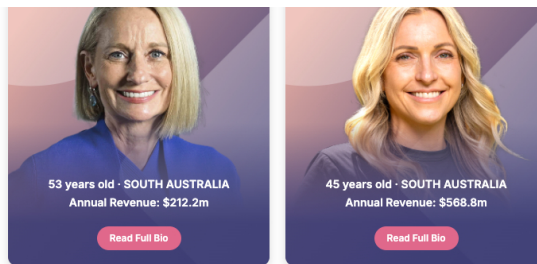
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Avril Baynes
SkyCity Adelaide
Managing director



Amelia Pedersen
Celsus
Chief executive





She now spends much of her time championing women in leadership through Behind Closed Doors – a program that connects Australia's aspiring female entrepreneurs and business leaders, and develops their leadership potential through coaching, mentoring and leadership programs nationally.

She says the growing number of women running their own ventures or climbing to the highest levels of corporate Australia reflects a decade of progress in improving diversity at the very top of the business world.

"A lot of them are now giving back by way of helping other women get there as well, and I think that's the important thing – I think we owe it to other women to give back," she said.

"And that's why I started Behind Closed Doors 18 years ago, because I realised there was a gap in the marketplace for women.

"We've noticed that there are a whole lot more women either owning and scaling their own businesses than ever before, and at the same time we're getting more women into those executive and board roles than we've ever had before – so there is a change. Is it fast enough? Probably not, but at least there's a change on the upward."

Ms Walford says Behind Closed Doors was initially set up to support aspiring executives, but in response to the growing number of female founders, later widened its focus to include budding entrepreneurs.

And that's where significant challenges remain.

"Only 1 to 2 per cent of available funding from venture capital goes to women, and those stats haven't changed in decades," Ms Walford said.

"From the entrepreneurial side, if we really want to keep scaling our businesses here in South Australia, we need greater access to capital for women-led businesses."

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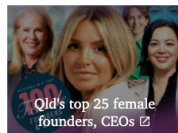
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Jesse 2 days ago

some of them no longer live in SA. so shouldn't be on list

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Erica 3 days ago

Is that same. Linda Feldt that sold off over 90 ACH Retirement Units to Aspen Group with little or no consultation with the residents. Left them with less services and anxiety. Definitely does not rate as a trustworthy CEO.

Like 1 Reply

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Jenny 4 days ago (Edited)

A lot of these women began their companies in partnership with husbands/fathers/male partners, often inheriting their businesses. Of course, those who have gone down a corporate path are a different story. It's a bit disingenuous to pretend otherwise.

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Funds 3 days ago

@Jenny 100% Jenny, but those minors are not going to get in the way of a good story!

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PENDING 4 days ago

So, boy's club bad, girls club good. That's it isn't it?

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The glass ceiling broke years ago.

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Can't we celebrate successful women without insulting men.

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