

Vale Noreen Coulton FPRIA

Noreen Coulton was a leading light of our Institute and of the profession. Her enthusiasm for the work and her skill in building relationships with colleagues, with journalists and with clients was of the highest order. She was a NSW Branch Councilor of the Public Relations Institute of Australia and a long-time valued member of its College of Fellows. Sadly last week Noreen died of a heart attack after a brief illness.

Born on a wool-growing property in Walcha and educated at Armidale, Noreen worked in public relations for the Royal Agricultural Society, for the Wool Corporation and for the Australian Cotton Foundation. Indeed, her interest in all things rural made her one of the best-known writers and publicists in the rural sector. She was especially happy when working for any client associated with fibres, wool and cotton being her primary interests.

Noreen Coulton spent many years as a Senior Group Manager at Professional Public Relations, where she led PPR's rural division. Her work for the Australian Cotton Foundation (now Cotton Australia), for the Leather Institute and for Dalgety was seen as a model for creating and maintaining productive and mutually rewarding client programs.

Noreen was part of the PPR team which launched a new sheep drench at Australia Square Tower in central Sydney. Lunch-time shoppers were surprised to see a sheep farmer, his dog and a mob of sheep demonstrating how to rid sheep of parasitic worms by drenching them with a veterinary medicine. "We wanted to reach Pitt Street farmers," Noreen explained. The campaign won a Golden Target Award.

In 1993 Noreen formed her own consultancy, which continued to work in fibres and fashion. For some years she managed fashion promotions and publicity for Ermenegildo Zegna.

Noreen was also a Life Member of the Farm Writers Association of NSW, serving on its Management Committee for more than 25 years. She was the first woman to be elected President and led the Society from 1998 to 2001.

For PRIA she judged the Annual State and Golden Target Awards and she served as a mentor to young practitioners.

Noreen Coulton will be remembered by her colleagues for her sunny nature and her positive attitude to work and to life. She was a true professional. The thoughts of Noreen's colleagues are with her husband, Keith Newhouse.

Peter Lazar AM FPRIA