

Terrence (Terry) Cutler FTSE FAHA

1948 - 2020



In the depths of Melbourne's COVID-19 lockdown, on 3 July 2020, Australia lost one of its leading industry consultants and strategy advisors in the information and communication technology sector and a major contributor to public policy across the humanities, arts, telecommunication, science and innovation and design: Dr Terrence (Terry) Cutler. What stands Terry Cutler distinctively apart in this country is that he was intensely interested in and committed to building relationships across

these compartments of knowledge, industry, and life.

He was elected to the Academy as an Honorary Fellow in 2010, having before that been elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. He was also a member of the Australian Institute of Management and the Australian Institute of Public Administration. In 2003 he was awarded Australia's Centenary Medal. Dr Cutler was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of the University by Queensland University of Technology in 2002 and an honorary degree of DKnowSci by the Multimedia University, Malaysia, in 2013.

Terry Cutler was born on 16 April 1948. An outstanding student, he was named dux of Box Hill Boys High School in Melbourne before going on to graduate with an honours degree in history at the University of Melbourne in 1970. He completed his PhD on the history of a labour organisation in 1976 at the Wollongong University College, then a College of UNSW.

Dr Cutler's career started with Telecom Australia (now Telstra), where he remained for fifteen years. During the 1980s he was part of Telecom's management team, heading up major

corporate restructuring around a customer focus. He was part of a team that produced the report *Telecom 2000* (1978), an exploration of the long-term development of telecommunications in Australia. He was Executive Director, Corporate Strategy, from 1988 to 1990, before leaving in 1991 to establish his own advisory company, Cutler & Company, through which he made numerous major contributions to Australian and international public policy and corporate advice and development.

Throughout his career, Dr Cutler held a number of high-profile leadership positions within the ICT sector and in science policy and governance. He was Chairman of Australia's Information Policy Advisory Council from 1996 to 1997 and Chairman of the Industry Research and Development Board from 1996 to 1998. In 1999 he chaired Australia's National Bandwidth Inquiry, and was Deputy Chairman of the Australian Information Economy Advisory Council from 1998 to 2001. In 2002 he became a Director of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and served on its board until 2012. In 2008, Dr Cutler chaired the Australian Government's Review of the National Innovation System which culminated in the report, *Venturous Australia*. Following the release of this report he delivered the first Pearcey Oration in 2008 in Sydney.

Dr Cutler had an abiding commitment to bringing together technology and science and the humanities and arts, evident from his wide range of leadership, governance and strategy roles focused on the humanities and arts. He was Chairman of

the Australia Council (having previously chaired its New Media Arts Board), Chair of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Chair of the Board of the Australasian CRC for Interaction Design, Chairman of the Advisory Board for the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, a Director of Cinemedia, Opera Australia, the State Library of Victoria, the Council of the Victorian College of the Arts, Multimedia University Malaysia, Chunky Move, Design Research Institute Advisory Board, RMIT and member of Queensland University of Technology Council and the International Advisory Panel, Multimedia Supercorridor, Malaysia.

Deeply immersed in the traditional humanities through an honours degree and a doctorate in history, he also made critical contributions to the new humanities and design disciplines through his Chair roles in two 'firsts'. He was Chair of the Board of the Australasian CRC for Interaction Design, the first Cooperative Research Centre based in the design disciplines, and Chairman of the Advisory Board for the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, the first ARC Centre of Excellence based in the humanities.

As Director of the latter Centre, I worked closely with Terry for eight years through to 2013. Terry's commitment to our project of embedding the contributions that disciplines such as media, communication and cultural studies can make to innovation policy and practice greatly strengthened our hand as John Hartley FAHA (as Centre Research Director) and I led the bid. The depth of

experience, acuity of advice, and calming assurance he brought to bear throughout the life of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation was of immense value. He would tease us regularly, seeking assurance that we were not ‘postmodernists’. Asking him to define what he thought a postmodernist was usually brought the teasing to an end.

In a memorable speech given to the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Academy of Social Sciences Summit in 2001, Terry outlined his position on the humanities: ‘We need to remove our technocratic “black eye patch” view of history, our short sightedness. The humanities are key to our collective memory, our sense of a journey and of discovery.’ It is this powerful and deep commitment to our disciplines and their place in an innovative, well-rounded society that will be sorely missed, not only within the humanities community but across all industries, sectors and organisations to which he gave his time, support and encyclopaedic intellect.

Stuart Cunningham AM FACSS FAHA