**Shortlist online –– published the following article, 25th October 2017**

[Executive Women Shortlists](http://www.executivews.com.au/) has merged into [Selection Partners](http://www.selectionpartners.com.au/).

Executive Women Shortlists was the first firm to be awarded an exemption under the Equal Opportunity Act, allowing its founder **Amy Cato** to focus on recruiting women into executive and senior roles.

"We needed to make a stand and do something different to support our clients who wanted to employ more women into senior roles but didn’t know how to do it," says **June Parker**, director of Selection Partners and vice president of the Equal Employment Opportunity Network. "Traditional ways of recruiting just weren't cutting it anymore."

With a culture of diversity and inclusion already embedded at Selection Partners, Parker says merging with Executive Women Shortlists made perfect sense. "We were referred to Amy through one of our other consultants," she says. "She is very much aligned with our values and approach to recruitment."

The merger will see Cato delivering her niche search service under the Selection Partners brand.

"At all levels, in all areas, there are senior, experienced women that are very capable and that want to perform in these senior roles in Australian business. It just is a harder search," she says.

Cato and Parker also write on gender-based topics within diversity for publications such as [Women's Agenda](http://www.womensagenda.com.au/), their own blogs and LinkedIn, to help boost brand awareness. "Through that we get a pretty good channel of referrals in," Cato says.

"But then you need to do your traditional search for some of those more difficult to place roles," she adds. "It is about networking, it's about global search, it is about working with women to look at what their career pathways are and looking at those transferable skills into other industries."

This is where Parker, a qualified executive coach, steps in, to guide executives through career transitions. "Often what's made somebody successful in their particular role," she says, "isn't what makes them successful in a new position. Men and women, particularly women, have to learn to navigate that more effectively."

Selection Partners cofounder **Danny Busija** hopes Cato's strong networks of executive women will bolster the organisation's commitment to working with clients to create gender-balanced shortlists.

"We've always done this and we've been very mindful of a diverse and inclusive workforce and the candidates we work with," he says. "This just happens to sharpen our direction a bit more – having that expertise and giving us broader and deeper networks that we probably exploited to date. From a commercial point of view, from a competitive point of view, I'd like to think this puts us slightly ahead of the curve."

Cato will specialise in global search for executive and senior roles within ASX200 companies, especially across STEM, property, superannuation, construction, engineering and professional services industries.

According to [Chief Executive Women's senior executive census](http://cew.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CEW-Executive-Census-2017.pdf), just 5% of current CEOs in the ASX200 are women. Additionally, 21% of ASX200 companies have zero women in their leadership teams, and 63% have zero women in line to step into leadership roles.

"Competition is therefore going to be fierce to improve these statistics by employing the highest calibre senior women in the market," Cato says.