

**Name:** Susan Leahy

**Location and role:** I am the Head of Internal Audit responsible for managing an internal audit shared service for Ku-ring-gai, North Sydney, Lane Cove, Mosman, Hunters Hill and Strathfield Councils in the Sydney metropolitan area.

I have a second job as a sessional academic at Charles Sturt University where I lecture in forecasting and risk management.



**Community role:**

I am a Director of two not-for-profit organisations that provide out-of-home care services and residential care to the aged in my local community. At the last AGM, I was elected to the IIA–Australia Board and am looking forward to serving the members and internal audit community.

**How did you get a start in internal audit?**

I first came across internal auditors early in my career in a branch of a major bank. I thought to myself “they have a great job” and decided I’d like to become an internal auditor too. My first internal auditor role was in the Bank’s Head Office.

I have been fortunate to have worked with some great mentors and leaders in the internal audit professional that have guided me both personally and professionally. Internal Audit has also provided me with a fulfilling career in sectors and industries that I would not have ever been exposed to and more importantly some lifelong friends I have met along the way.

**With coronavirus, are you working from office or home?**

At the moment the majority of my time is working at home and connecting with my stakeholders via teleconferencing. However, as restrictions ease I have been attending Audit Committees and more face-to-face meetings.

**How has coronavirus changed the way you work?**

Not a lot really, very much business-as-usual but it has meant being more creative in the way we approach the testing phase of an internal audit.

**What is the biggest challenge facing internal auditors?**

To be thought of and then sought after as a trusted advisor – it takes a long time to build trust and confidence hence why relationship building is so important. Internal Audit has much more to offer than just providing a ‘tick and flick’ service and needs to show that they can bring value to having a ‘seat at the table’.

**What has the IIA–Australia been doing lately?**

Running lots of webinars and holding its first on-line SOPAC. I personally have been enjoying the flexibility of attending on-line webinars and more recently SOPAC.

**What is your most memorable internal audit moment?**

Travelling to many places I would not otherwise have visited and the camaraderie from a team that goes with it has created many memories and laughs along the way.

Establishing an inaugural internal audit function in the not-for-profit sector for the first time was probably the most memorable and challenging project I have undertaken. I soon learnt that the biggest challenge was demystifying internal audit and taking away some of those perceptions that Internal Auditors are unfortunately tagged with. I think I achieved this when I overheard the staff discussing prospective controls for a process amongst themselves without any prompting.

### **What are you working on at present?**

I am working in various stages on 6 different internal audits in each Council such as contract management, facility management, development applications and payroll, so it's never a dull moment.

### **What are you reading at present?**

Cooking and Home magazines – I'm building a house and I love cooking so these times have been perfect for experimentation, research and dreaming. As an academic I am also researching a variety of risk management articles.

### **What is on your desk right now?**

On my desk at work I have this amazing photo I took of an elderly lady I'd guess to be in her late 80's taking a breather under a tree in a rice field she was ploughing by hand on a trip I took to study microfinance in rural India a few years ago. She has farmed all her life so when I think I am having a tough day; I look at her photo and can't help but admire her grace and resilience.

### **Concert or event you would most like to attend?**

I feel very fortunate to have seen Elton John pre-coronavirus earlier this year – I don't think another concert will surpass his for a very long time.

### **What would you change if you could?**

I'm pretty happy with the way things are and have the view that we can always learn.