

Celebrating In-House Women *“An equal world is an enabled world”*

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What does International Women’s Day mean to you and is it important that we have one?

For me, IWD is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women and reflect on how far we’ve come while not losing sight of the distance we still need to cover to achieve true gender equality.

What are some of the great things about being a woman in law?

I love being a lawyer. I love making the complex simple; distilling large quantities of information into something easily digestible by the business; developing my team and helping them succeed; thinking fast on my feet; persuading people to do things they don’t necessarily want to do; and learning every single day.

Why do you think there are less women in law?

Historically, the path for lawyers following law school was private practice. And private practice has traditionally been a more difficult place for a primary carer to work. The majority of primary carers, even today, tend to be women. The difficulties of balancing family and law (or life and law) have often seen women look for alternatives to the traditional legal career.

Based on your own experience, what advice would you give to women considering pursuing a career as an in-house lawyer?

I wouldn’t give women different advice from men. To any young lawyer I would say take on everything that is asked of you, even if you don’t think you can do it. I have always said “yes”

to things that terrified me, and I've had a very exhilarating career as a consequence (which I've managed to balance while being a mum to my son and daughter).

What is the driving force behind everything you do...what keeps you motivated and driven on an everyday basis?

Two things: the people around me including my highly talented team and an inner desire to be a little bit better in all that I do, every single day.

Who has been the biggest influence of your success?

There hasn't been one single person who has influenced what I do. I am the product of parents who allowed me to try everything at school, partners who mentored me in private practice, and CEO's who have pushed me further than I thought I could be pushed.

Who are your female icons?

I have a grandmother who was studying law in the 1930's, and a great great grandmother who managed to sneak herself into medical school (and graduate as a doctor) at the turn of the 20th century. If they could manage careers and families in an age when professional women were a rarity, then doing the same thing in 2020 in Australia should be easy! I also had an amazing female CEO at REA (Tracey Fellows) who was one of the smartest people I've ever worked with, but also one of the most empathetic. She was a truly inspirational leader.

How you define women empowerment?

To me it's very simple; the right to be equal in everything. I say "right" deliberately, because it should be every person's choice to be equal, if they want it.

What message would you like to leave for both men and women on International Women's Day?

Men and women need to continue to work in partnership to achieve gender equality and break down the barriers that have so far prevented this. While International Women's Day provides an important opportunity to stop and reflect, to become a truly gender equal world, this issue needs to be a part of our every day.