



Profile: Lynette Ireland

Chief General Counsel of Foxtel

CAMLA Young Lawyers representative, Maggie Chan, recently caught up with Lynette Ireland, Chief General Counsel of Foxtel, to discuss her role at Australia's largest subscription television operator, and her views on the key issues facing the industry.

1. How and where did your career start?

I started as a junior lawyer at Allens. I was originally in the Trade and Resources area (mining and trade practices) and then I rotated into a general corporate commercial area that included film and television. I was also doing volunteer work at the Arts Law Centre and trying to do as much film work as possible.

At the end of my second year at Allens I was offered a secondment to the Australian Film Finance Corporation (now Screen Australia) for a few months. I really enjoyed my time at Screen Australia and it gave me my first taste for working in-house. I worked as part of a small legal team that was supported by a number of external law firms including Allens. It was very fast moving and I enjoyed working closely with the commercial teams.

This opportunity really helped me when I went back to Allens as it made me better appreciate the issues that are important to clients. I was offered another secondment, this time with Foxtel. Foxtel proved to be very addictive and I knew at the end of the 12 months that I really wanted to stay. Twenty years later, I am still here! I have been lucky that new opportunities have opened up for me at the right time. When I first moved to Foxtel, I was a 3 PAE lawyer. I became Senior Legal Counsel after another 3 years and then General Counsel a few years after that.

2. What is the scope of your role and your major responsibilities?

I manage the lawyers and the classification team within Foxtel. The legal team has an incredibly broad brief and we cover all areas

from broadcasting, telecommunications and technology, general commercial, intellectual property, competition, company secretarial, employment and work health and safety. The classification team is responsible for the classification of all programming that is broadcast by the Foxtel produced channels.

I am also part of the Foxtel Executive team and I sit on a number of boards including the industry organisation, ASTRA and the Intellectual Property Awareness Foundation.

3. How big is the team you manage and how is the work organised?

I manage a team of 27 people and everyone is essentially allocated to a particular stream. Those streams are compliance and regulatory; telecommunications; engineering, information technology and marketing; programme acquisitions and production; channels and wholesale; and classification.

While the team is organised in this way to help the business and manage workloads, I am a big believer in working across the teams. This allows people to build up their skill base and get to know other areas of the business.

4. What are some of the most interesting and challenging aspects of your role?

As part of the Executive team and a participant in board meetings I am very involved in business strategy in addition to the legal function. This has the benefit of ensuring that I can better anticipate legal issues and en-

sure that the business appreciates any risk that may be associated with a particular course of action.

My main clients are the CEO and other Foxtel Executives, so I need to be fast-thinking. One of the benefits of being there for so long is that I know how the business works and this allows me to provide a better service to the business.

5. In your opinion, what are the biggest legal issues facing the broadcasting and media industry in the next 2 years?

I think one of the biggest legal issues facing our industry is the growth of online piracy and the extent to which people are illegally downloading content.

The new Copyright Amendment (Online Infringement) Act 2015 should assist in reducing access by Australians to sites such as The Pirate Bay. Similar legislation exists in a number of other jurisdictions including the UK and there is evidence from those jurisdictions that injunctions blocking access to sites that are primarily intended to provide illegal access to programming and music do reduce traffic to those sites.

I'm hoping that this is something that rights holders will make use of soon. As a subscription business, we need to try to manage online piracy but also educate people about legal options available to access content.

We are also working with ISPs to introduce a notice scheme that should also assist in educating Australians about legal options for accessing content. We hope that the combination of these 2 things together with the continuing availability of great affordable content will help to reduce the current levels of piracy.

I also think the issue of data management is going to become even more significant for media businesses over the next few years as the opportunities for digital transactions continue to grow. Being able to harness the wealth of data within our business to improve our services while continuing to meet the privacy expectations of our customers is a growing challenge for us, as it is for all digital businesses. What you love to watch can say a lot about you! It is our job to treat this information with respect but also use it to provide you with a better entertainment experience.

6. How has Foxtel dealt with the rise of digital content and in particular online subscription providers such as Netflix in Australia? Has this made negotiations regarding content exclusivity more difficult?

Foxtel significantly reduced the price of our entry level product in 2014 from \$50 to \$25. We have also changed the way we package our products and have given existing customers additional content as a reward for loyalty.

We also launched Presto which, like Netflix, is a streaming subscription video on demand service. We initially launched with Presto Movies and then entered into a joint venture with the Seven Network to produce a general entertainment offering known as Presto Television which compliments Presto Movies. Customers can buy either product separately or as a bundle.

Presto uses subscription video on demand rights (ie SVOD rights) and those rights were often bundled in with the linear rights years ago. The main value used to be put on the ability to broadcast a particular programme as part of a linear service. However SVOD rights now have a price of their own and there is a lot of competition for key titles.

Services like Netflix and Presto, contain a lot of library content supplemented by tent poles which are the hook for these services. The negotiations for these titles have become incredibly competitive.

7. Having worked in both private practice and in-house, what do you think are the key differences?

In private practice, the client is more removed and you have multiple clients. You can obviously still have a very close relationship with your clients however *as an in-house lawyer, your client is typically standing in your office or waiting outside to talk to you.*

8. What skills and attributes do you look for in junior lawyers wanting to join your team?

I look for people who are enthusiastic about joining Foxtel. I love to see skills that are relevant to a particular position, but if I am choosing between 2 candidates and one has shown real enthusiasm for Foxtel and an understanding of our business then that usually weighs in their favour.

Good communication skills and being able to adapt are also important. For example, some clients in-house want an answer, whereas other want an analysis. You need to be perceptive about what your client wants.

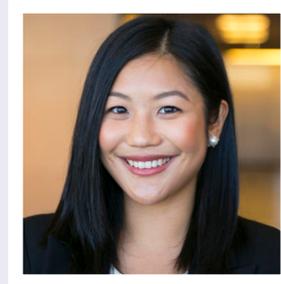
The Foxtel in-house team is very much a mix as to where people have come from. We have a couple of graduates straight from uni, some lawyers from private practice and some lawyers from other in-house roles.

9. What advice do you have for young lawyers who would like to pursue an in-house role in the media industry?

People shouldn't hesitate to be proactive. Don't feel like there has to be a role advertised to make an approach. Most businesses have HR teams where they keep CV databases.

They may not have a role immediately but one may come up in the future and I like to reward that initiative.

I also think volunteering is a great way to build up your skill base and I know the Arts Law centre, for example, really appreciates volunteers.



MAGGIE CHAN
Maggie Chan is a lawyer in Sydney at King & Wood Mallesons.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST SOMEONE TO BE INTERVIEWED BY THE CLB,
PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO THE EDITORS AT EDITOR@CAMLA.ORG.AU.

CAMLA CUP 2015 AND THE WINNER IS...

CONGRATULATIONS TO WEBB HENDERSON WHO TOOK OUT THE 2015 CAMLA CUP TRIVIA NIGHT. A SPECIAL MENTION GOES TO CLAYTON UTZ COMING IN FOURTH AND ALSO WINNING TWO TABLE QUIZ PRIZES.

WE ALWAYS HAVE A BALL THANKS TO OUR WONDERFUL MC AND QUIZ MASTER, DEBRA RICHARDS. RYAN GRANT MADE AN EXCELLENT 'SOUS MC' AND A BIG THANKS TO RAESHELL TANG FOR WARMLY MEETING, GREETING AND SEATING OUR TEAMS.

THE CAMLA CUP WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROUS DONATIONS FROM OUR SPONSORS.

THE PRIZES WERE AMAZING THIS YEAR AND WE'D LIKE TO THANK GULLEY SHIMELD FOR TAKING CARE OF THE LOOT AHEAD OF THE NIGHT.

A VERY BIG THANKS FROM CAMLA TO:

ALLENS
ASHURST
AUSFILM

BAKER & MCKENZIE
BANKI HADDOCK FIORA
BIRD & BIRD
CLAYTON UTZ
COPYRIGHT AGENCY
CORRS CHAMBERS

WESTGARTH
FOXTEL
FREE TV
HENRY DAVIS YORK
HOLDING REDLICH
IICA
MINTER ELLISON
NETWORK TEN
NEWS CORP

NORTHERN PICTURES/
RACAT GROUP
NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT
PAN MACMILLAN
SAINTY LAW
SBS
UNSW
WEBB HENDERSON
YAHOO!7

CAMLA LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS FINE TRADITION NEXT YEAR.