

Profile: Martyn Taylor

Partner at Norton Rose Fulbright and CAMLA President



CAMLA Young Lawyers representative, Calli Tshipidis, recently caught up with Martyn Taylor, to discuss his career, role as Partner of Norton Rose Fulbright in Sydney and his vision as CAMLA President for 2018.

CALLI TSIPIDIS: Congratulations on your recent appointment as the President of CAMLA! How did you initially get involved in CAMLA and what are your goals for CAMLA under your leadership?

MARTYN TAYLOR: I went to an AGM and somehow was elected to the Board. Luckily, they haven't realised yet...

Seriously, my goal is for CAMLA to remain a vibrant, interesting and successful association for the benefit of media and communications lawyers.

CAMLA is a voluntary organisation. CAMLA succeeds because we collectively make the effort to translate ideas into reality. We arrange high quality, relevant and interesting events. We produce a topical publication with outstanding content. We provide a forum for networking and sharing news. The more we each contribute, the more valuable CAMLA becomes as an association for us all.

TSIPIDIS: What would you say to encourage members of the legal profession (particularly young lawyers) to get involved in CAMLA?

TAYLOR: You have absolute control over your own destiny. Part of that is identifying opportunities and creating your own luck in life. CAMLA is one of life's opportunities. It is an opportunity to learn, to meet people, make friends, to have fun, to find out from interesting people what they think about developments in the sector – so go for it.

TSIPIDIS: Could you tell us a little bit about your role at Norton Rose Fulbright?

TAYLOR: In theory, I'm a partner in the Global Competition Team – I head the Telecoms and Media Group in the region, the Regional Trade Group and co-head the Rail Group. My areas of speciality are telecoms/media, energy, infrastructure, utilities, competition and regulatory. However, in practice, I'm a corporate and commercial lawyer who can do any transactional, advisory and contentious work in my areas of expertise.

TAYLOR: A partner wears many different hats, essentially running a business within a business. With 7 direct reports, I manage a large team. My goal is to make sure we work efficiently to meet client deadlines with high quality and commercially astute work. But also to keep everyone smiling and having plenty of fun!

TSIPIDIS: What led you to your current role and practice area?

TAYLOR: To pay my way through university, I worked full time while studying full time. My job was to assist in the project management for the construction of various power stations in the Asia-Pacific. One of those power stations was the subject of a public inquiry into CO2 emissions. I became an electricity specialist, then a utilities specialist, then became involved in the famous *Telecom v CLEAR* competition litigation. While I've been at various times a litigator, finance lawyer, M&A lawyer, and commercial lawyer, I've always remained a specialist in telecoms/media, energy, infrastructure, utilities, competition and regulatory. It is highly complex, super interesting and few people understand it.

TSIPIDIS: What do you consider to be some of the most interesting and challenging aspects of your role?

TAYLOR: The most challenging aspect is managing an unbelievable workload with a sense of humour and yet finding quality time to spend with my two daughters. The most interesting aspect is solving complex problems. Law can be a four dimensional game of chess where creative moves are required, often outside the confines of the chess board. It is the thrill of finding the solution (and winning) that motivates me.

TSIPIDIS: What do you see as the biggest game changer in the telecommunications, media and technology industry?

TAYLOR: Artificial intelligence. It will be a game changer for every industry. But I'm with Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking on the risks. My smartphone is named 'HAL 9000'.

TSIPIDIS: You have been admitted as a solicitor in Australia, NZ, England and Wales – that is an incredible accomplishment. Can you tell us what your highlight was when working as a lawyer in New Zealand?

TAYLOR: Working for the ex-Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon Professor Sir Geoffrey Palmer. I was the second employee in his own start-up boutique law firm, Chen & Palmer, in 1994. We rode an incredible tsunami of the most interesting legal work in the country, often involving government lobbying. As a 23 year old, I was meeting with CEOs and cabinet ministers on a daily basis. Geoffrey was appointed a temporary judge in the International Court of Justice in the Nuclear Tests case, so I also assisted him to research his famous dissenting judgement.

TSIPIDIS: You also hold a PhD in competition and international trade law. What was your thesis and what inspired you to undertake this thesis?

TAYLOR: My thesis was that an international competition agreement should be incorporated into the World Trade Organisation. It was published in 2004 as the book *“International Competition Law: A New Dimension for the World Trade Organisation?”*, which is the first footnote in Wikipedia’s definition of “competition law”! My inspiration came from a paper I wrote on Japanese cultural trade barriers after winning a scholarship to represent New Zealand on a Japan Airlines scholarship to Japan. I was fascinated by the manner in which Japanese private business practices, such as the *keiretsu*, were impeding access by foreign firms into the Japanese domestic market.

TSIPIDIS: Looking back on your career and studies, what do you wish you had known about the legal profession before becoming a lawyer?

TAYLOR: I started off as an architecture student. I won the university prize in architecture, but took an unbelievable risk and switched to law. Everyone

(girlfriend included) thought I was insane. That decision cost me the most beautiful girl on campus! So I’d just like to go back in time to reassure myself that it was the right decision... I’ve had an amazing time as a lawyer...all that emotional trauma was indeed worth it!

TSIPIDIS: In the spirit of CAMLA, media and entertainment law – if a movie were to be made of your life, who would you like to see cast as you?

TAYLOR: Tom Hanks. Not because ‘life is a box of chocolates’ but because I have huge respect for the manner in which he has leveraged his celebrity status to make a difference. Ditto for Leonardo DiCaprio. Ditto for Steven Spielberg as a director. They are people of integrity and substance. We need more people in the world like that.

TSIPIDIS: Finally, as a sports fanatic and working in and around sports every day, I must ask – what is your sport of choice and who is your team?

TAYLOR: I held the New Zealand title in archery in my teens. I still put that to good use each year by winning multiple, huge, stuffed teddy bears at the Royal Easter Show – my two daughters have quite a collection. Beyond that, Team New Zealand in the America’s Cup (sailing). And I won’t mention the All Blacks...



Calli Tsipidis is the Junior Legal Counsel at FOX SPORTS Australia and a member of the CAMLA Young Lawyers Committee.

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