

# Sophie Malloch

## Director of Legal for Facebook Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific

**Justin Kardi**, Lawyer at Clayton Utz, chat with **Sophie Malloch**, Director of Legal for Facebook Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific about Sophie's career and her thoughts on International Women's Day.

**JUSTIN KARDI:** Could you explain your role and what a typical day looks like for you?

**SOPHIE MALLOCH:** My role is Director of Legal for Facebook Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. I am part of the wider APAC regional team and I work with business stakeholders in Australia and New Zealand (**ANZ**) and legal colleagues beyond on all legal matters touching the ANZ markets and across our family of apps and products. There's really no typical day at Facebook, which makes it incredibly interesting. However, most days will involve working within cross-functional teams to help navigate our approach and response to both typical legal risks (like litigation and regulatory requests) as well legal counselling around advancing our company objectives to give people voice and build community. It also could include collaborating on how we'll respond to new laws or the submissions we'll make on a relevant inquiry; or involve working with commercial teams on the roll out of new products. At the heart of a typical day will be collaboration with my colleagues, so there is always lots of face to face time (mostly virtually now days!)

Facebook has a democratic and open culture where people are encouraged to voice their views and to challenge existing ideas. Against this backdrop I try to make sure that I'm connecting with my team regularly and we're discussing relevant issues and prioritising. Increasingly, my role is about anticipating future risks, developing news processes and setting ourselves up for success. Many of the matters we're involved in are not well traversed and can



involve novel legal issues. Taking the time to look around corners and connect the dots on different legal risks is often interspersed in my day.

**KARDI:** What recent events in the Australian media and communications law landscape have most affected your Facebook and your role?

**MALLOCH:** Like most companies, we deal with a wide range of factors in the legal landscape that impact our business and mission. There's been a lot of focus on the role of digital platforms recently. This has evolved as we all engage more online and as the internet becomes the place

to search, to engage in commerce and to connect – it’s a ubiquitous space and it’s obviously impacted the development of laws in the media and communications landscape as well. This means the regulation of traditional business models versus new business models are being looked at more closely. We really see a lot of this playing out economy wide in Australia at the moment.

**KARDI:** What’s the best work-related advice you’ve ever received?

**MALLOCH:** I feel so lucky to have worked with many supportive, talented and thoughtful colleagues over the years. There are many characteristics that I have encountered that I really try to emulate; like being an ally to others, and being an authentic leader and creating a culture of trust and support. There are two main pieces of advice that I have received that I keep coming back to: (1) Always keep challenging yourself. It’s the uncomfortable experiences that make you and keep you learning. I have to keep reminding myself of this one when I am really feeling at sea (2) Take the time to acknowledge the contribution of others. I’ve always felt most grateful

and more empowered when I’ve been acknowledged by others – sometimes it’s as simple as asking someone’s opinion on a particular topic at a meeting to show that you care about their contribution. I try to remember this when I work with my peers by calling out the great work that others do.

**KARDI:** The 2021 International Women’s Day campaign theme is #ChooseToChallenge. What does this mean to you and how might that be implemented in our readers’ work and personal lives?

**MALLOCH:** I love this theme! It’s a reminder that we cannot coast and should always be challenging ideas and ways of doing things. I think it also means creating a culture that gives people the space where they can challenge the norms – in the workplace and outside it. It could be as simple as taking the time to celebrate our success – as women are promoted or career milestones achieved as reminder that we need to keep acknowledging the inroads. It also means challenging bias when we think it exists, even if it’s unconscious, by asking ‘why’ more often: why am I briefing this barrister and not another? why are some women less inclined to speak up in a meeting?

**KARDI:** Who is one woman in the industry whom you really admire, and why?

**MALLOCH:** I’m going to state up front that I’m ducking a bit and not naming one particular woman! There are so many of us doing great things that are less widely known and there are women across the media and communications industries and that making headway today that are not necessarily in a leadership roles, but they are forging a path for the next generation of women lawyers – they are dealing with imposter syndrome, returning from parental leave, discovering their voices, managing work and family. Their successes are something we all can admire. I have had the great benefit of meeting women in law firms, within Government, at our regulators in and within businesses that I admire – too many to name. And I look at the amazing women that I work with at Facebook and I think so many of them are breaking the mould in their own ways.

## 2020 CAMLA Essay Competition Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the 2020 CAMLA Essay Competition who were celebrated at the CAMLA Young Lawyers Networking Event earlier this month.

**First Place:** Isabella Barrett (Sydney University): Comment is free, but at what cost?: An evaluation of the impacts of Voller on the concept of defamatory publication

**Second Place:** Kate Mani (Monash University): Social media and suppression orders: the end of e-secrecy?

**Third Place:** Anna Kretowicz (University of Queensland): Don’t Ask Journalists To Keep Your Secret: Source Confidentiality In Australian Media.

Congratulations to all our winners for their outstanding submissions, and to everyone who entered the competition!