

Jade Tyrrell

Litigation and Dispute Resolution Associate at Johnson Winter & Slattery

Angelina Yurlova, Lawyer at Corrs Chambers Westgarth, sits down with **Jade Tyrrell**, litigation and dispute resolution Associate at Johnson Winter & Slattery, to discuss Jade's career in law and International Women's Day.

Jade has acted in various proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia and in numerous state courts and tribunals, with a focus on proceedings concerning competition and consumer law disputes, defamation, as well as general commercial litigation. She also has experience in employment-related disputes. In addition to her commercial work, Jade has a strong interest in supporting pro bono projects, and in 2020 she completed a Johnson Winter & Slattery secondment at the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. Jade was also the 2017 Tipstaff to the Honourable Justice Michael Slattery AM RAN in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Jade is a Councillor of the Law Society of NSW and was recently appointed as a director of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

ANGELINA YURLOVA: What does a typical day look like for you?

JADE TYRRELL: As all litigators (and lawyers generally) will appreciate, there really is no 'typical day'. On a good day, I might begin with a walk/run before my standard ferry ride into the city, followed by my non-negotiable caffeine boost. By the time I reach my desk, I've reviewed my go-to morning updates (at least the AFR, Lawyerly, LinkedIn, and my BarNet Jade Alerts), and emails - of course.

A 'typical day' could then involve considering strategic aspects of matters with various partners with whom I work, drafting court documents or correspondence, taking instructions from clients, liaising with counsel on the more complex aspects of a case, preparing advice in relation to ongoing disputes, or assisting with evidence preparation for a court deadline. Everything is different if you're swept up in the fast pace of



a trial - I find that one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. Of course, sometimes your anticipated to-do list is thrown out the window if something urgent pops up - the world of LDR keeps you on your toes and you have to stay adaptable.

YURLOVA: Are there any law reforms in your sector that you think are desperately needed? If so, what are they?

TYRRELL: In the class actions space, there are a number of reforms which could be introduced to increase

access to justice and returns to group members. Last year, I was involved in preparing a NSW Young Lawyers submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services (which was referred to a number of times in the Joint Committee's Report released in December 2020). We recommended that the ban on contingency fees be lifted and that the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976* (Cth) be amended to give the Federal Court of Australia authority to grant a common

fund order at any stage of the proceedings, among other things. For those who may be interested, I would encourage you to read the Young Lawyers submission. Unfortunately, not all of our recommendations were adopted in the final Report but the reforms we recommended are needed in my view.

Otherwise, I will adopt a broad interpretation of 'sector' and take this opportunity to say that urgent reform is needed to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14, in line with international standards. I don't work in criminal law, but I think it is incumbent upon lawyers to use their privileged position to voice support for important causes when they see injustices occurring. Organisations in which I am involved have been very vocal on this issue and I am strongly in support of raising the age for the protection of young people and for the proper administration of justice.

YURLOVA: What advice would you give to your younger self?

TYRRELL: There are many things I wish I had known when I started out in this profession. I would tell my younger self at least the following – whether she'd listen to me is a different story:

It's a marathon, not a sprint – a former colleague told me this repeatedly (often when he was leaving the office to go home to his family at a decent hour). If he's reading this, those were wise words and the more I progress through my career, the more I appreciate them (admittedly, sometimes the life we lead as lawyers doesn't make it easy to adopt this approach in practice).

Don't be so hard on yourself – this piece of advice remains relevant as I (like many others) have the tendency to doubt myself or to suffer from imposter syndrome at times. If Jacinda Ardern can feel that way and admit it publicly, we should all feel encouraged to face it and channel it into something more productive to help us succeed – we shouldn't ever allow it to hold us back.

YURLOVA: What's the greatest risk you've taken as a professional?

TYRRELL: The first thing that springs to mind was my decision to run in the NSW Law Society Council elections. As a 'young' practitioner, it can be rather daunting to put yourself out there and to ask your colleagues to trust you with their votes. It so happened that I was also in the process of applying for a new job and I needed to inform the managing partner at Johnson Winter & Slattery that I was a candidate well before the election took place. Luckily, I was successfully elected to Council (and I was offered the job) so that was a huge relief on all fronts. That could have ended very differently.

The Councillor role also comes with all the risks and responsibilities of being a director. While that is always on my mind, the opportunity I've been given to serve the profession is a very rewarding experience and it makes it all worthwhile. The trust the profession has placed in me is something for which I am truly grateful and I don't take it for granted.

YURLOVA: If you could have dinner with any woman – living or passed, real or fictional, who would it be and why?

TYRRELL: This was an incredibly difficult question!

If I really had to narrow it down to one person, I would choose Ruth Bader Ginsberg – the feminist icon who keenly embraced her "Notorious RBG" moniker. Her death last year was a real tragedy.

RBG's work ethic, commitment to justice, and her lifelong advocacy outside her paid work were truly remarkable. She clearly also maintained a sense of humour despite all the challenges she faced.

It would be such a thrill to meet RBG and to hear her discuss her life experiences, landmark cases, and her views on the ways in which the legal and political environments changed during her time as a judge. I am sure she could also offer some

words of wisdom on how we can continue her legacy. I'd no doubt learn a few life lessons in the process (she might even volunteer a few of her famous workout tips). I'd eat my dinner very slowly to maximise the time!

YURLOVA: The 2021 International Women's Day campaign theme is #ChooseToChallenge. What does this mean to you and how would you suggest this is implemented in our readers' work and personal lives?

TYRRELL: We need to constantly push for more tangible action in order to remove systemic barriers to gender equality - in the workplace and beyond. This theme makes it clear to me that everyone has a role to play in order to achieve progress in this area, including to challenge all forms of bias and discrimination against women.

Importantly, one of the key challenges is to ensure ongoing accountability. Depending on the opportunities available to readers, this may include incorporating systems to regularly audit and review progress for gender equality in the workplace or challenging inappropriate behaviour towards women at work or in social settings (which includes addressing any inherent gender biases that may exist). It should also include keeping yourself accountable by frequently asking whether there is more you could be doing to achieve equality in a way that recognises and celebrates diversity, and taking appropriate action to achieve better outcomes.

There is so much more work to do. A huge part of this ongoing challenge is to stay informed about these issues, including how the changing landscape of work may affect women in different ways, so that we may understand how best to tackle gender bias and inequality together.