

Melissa Quinn

Senior Corporate Counsel at Optus

Lornagh Lomax, Lawyer at McCullough Robertson, sits down with **Melissa Quinn**, Senior Corporate Counsel at Optus to discuss Melissa's career and International Women's Day.

LORNAGH LOMAX: Melissa - on behalf of CAMLA's readers, thanks very much for taking the time to talk media and entertainment law with me. In celebration of International Women's Day, this edition we are putting a spotlight on some of the talented women in the media and entertainment industry. Could you please tell us about yourself and the sorts of work you and your team at Optus do?

MELISSA QUINN: I've been working in-house in the media industry for over 12 years, with a particular focus on sports broadcasting and streaming. As an avid sports fan,

it's a dream job! I joined Optus in 2016 to work with its emerging television and content business. I do a broad range of work to support Optus' sport and entertainment services, including negotiating and drafting commercial agreements for sports rights, channel and content distribution, technology, production, sponsorship, advertising, talent and general procurement. I advise on a range of issues including regulatory compliance, rights exploitation, copyright and fair dealing, piracy, competition and consumer law, privacy, production and defamation.

LOMAX: What does a typical 'day in the life' look like as Senior Corporate Counsel for TV & Content at Optus? What's your favourite thing about your role or working at Optus?

QUINN: Like many in-house roles, there's no such thing as a typical day, and that's one of my favourite things about it! On any given day, I may be negotiating a content acquisition deal, drafting amendments to a software agreement, answering questions about advertising regulations and running legal training for the Optus Sport production team. I enjoy working



closely with my business colleagues on complex deals and new service offerings – seeing a project through from inception to launch is very rewarding.

LOMAX: Working in the growing broadcasting video on demand (BVOD) sector sounds like an exciting space to be in the sports entertainment industry. Can you tell us about the past roles you have had leading up to this point?

QUINN: I started my career at Blake Dawson Waldron (now Ashurst) in the Intellectual Property & Communications team. While I was there, I did a client secondment to Telstra's BigPond team which gave me a great insight into the challenges and rewards of working in an in-house media role. I then joined the legal team at Fox Sports Australia and was fortunate to work on some of the most significant sports rights deals in the country during my time there. I joined Optus in 2016 when it was preparing to launch Optus Sport.

LOMAX: What are the biggest legal or industry challenges you foresee for the sports entertainment industry over the next few years?

Quinn: It isn't unique to sports entertainment, but media law reform is long overdue. When I tell my business clients that the same piece of content is subject to different rules depending on whether it is broadcast on television or streamed online, they find it very hard to believe. The current analogue-era laws create undue complexity and we need to move to a platform-neutral approach to content regulation.

LOMAX: Is there a woman in the media industry, perhaps even a competitor, you admire?

QUINN: Rebecca McCloy, Director of Acquisitions and Sport Partnerships at Fox Sports Australia, stands out for me. I was fortunate to work closely with Rebecca when I was at Fox Sports and she is one of the most energetic, commercially astute and hard-working colleagues I have ever come across. Rebecca is also a passionate and authentic leader who champions her team and motivates them to deliver results. Not only that, but she is a pleasure to work with!

LOMAX: We understand you have been involved in Optus Sport's expansion of its sports broadcasting rights, which has included increased investment into the broadcasting of women's sports. Where do you see sports streaming services in 10 years' time in terms of broadcasting women's sports content? (Do you think Australia will ever see regulation around women's sports content quotas?)

QUINN: I've seen the level of interest in media rights for women's sports increase over the past few years and I expect this to continue. There is obviously still a significant gap between men's and women's sports in terms of broadcast and sponsorship revenue, but I think more and more broadcasters and streaming services will see value in investing in women's sports rights. The combination of comparatively lower prices, positive brand associations for advertisers who sponsor women's sports and broader social issues around diversity and

equality make women's sports rights an increasingly appealing investment. The success of domestic competitions such as the Women's Big Bash League, Super Netball and AFLW and international events such as the FIFA Women's World Cup has been very encouraging. I don't think we'll see regulation around content quotas for women's sports – I think investment will increase without the need for regulation.

LOMAX: What advice would you give to any young lawyer aiming for a position in the media and entertainment industry like yours (or to a not-so-young lawyer looking to make the switch)?

QUINN: Get to know people in the industry – going to seminars and events is a great place to start. You'll learn about the different roles people have, industry issues and future trends, and it may even lead to your next job (I found out about my current and previous roles through friends and colleagues in the industry). And volunteer roles in the arts can be a great way to get more experience and develop your skills, while also being very rewarding. I sat on the board of the Screen Culture Association, a not-for-profit organisation that runs the Antenna Documentary Film Festival, and learnt a lot about different governance frameworks, arts funding programs and sustainability strategies.

LOMAX: Thanks once again for your time, Melissa. On behalf of CAMLA's readers, we appreciate your insight and advice.

Contributions & Comments

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