

Lyndelle Barnett

Barrister at Level 22 Chambers

Antonia Rosen, Senior Associate at Banki Haddock Fiora, sits down with **Lyndelle Barnett**, Barrister at Level 22 Chambers about to discuss a career in media law and International Women's Day.

Lyndelle was called to the Bar in 2010 and specialises in media, defamation and intellectual property. Lyndelle regularly appears unled and is often briefed as junior counsel in significant media and defamation matters. Prior to being called to the bar Lyndelle was a solicitor at Blake Dawson, specialising in media and defamation. Lyndelle was the recipient of the Blashki Award for the highest aggregate award in the NSW Bar Exams July 2009.

Lyndelle has been repeatedly recognised as a recommended junior counsel in Doyles Guide Leading Technology, Media & Telecommunications Junior Counsel – NSW 2016, 2019 & 2020. Lyndelle has also lectured in Media and Defamation at the University of New South Wales.

ANTONIA ROSEN: Did you always want to be a barrister? If not, how did your career path lead you there?

LYNDELLE BARNETT: Being a barrister was never really something that entered by mind. At school in particular I was incredibly shy, so the idea of being a barrister and having a speaking role was not something that I had initially considered.

As a solicitor, it was something that sort of crept up on me slowly and organically. I found that more and more I was enjoying preparing pleadings, and helping barristers with submissions, and I bizarrely formed an itch to be the one doing the talking. It was suggested to me by a couple of people that I should consider a career at the bar. It was an idea that I liked and so I went with it.

ROSEN: Did you find that oral advocacy came naturally to you?

BARNETT: Yes and no. My mother would certainly say that it came to me naturally – she would probably think I was quite argumentative as a child. But no, in the sense that to prepare for an argument in court, you still have to put in a lot of work. I think it's dangerous to rely on a natural ability because so much of the job involves seeking to persuade based on particular facts and a particular application, which requires a degree of preparation.

ROSEN: What does a typical day look like to you?

BARNETT: Waking up when my three-year-old wakes me, which

could be anywhere from 5.30am to 7.30am – if it's 7.30am it's normally a panic because I need to be at work sooner and I didn't expect to sleep in! I've stopped using an alarm clock. Then getting to work – I'm pretty bad with routines, so it's normally breakfast on the go. Then it could be anything from conferences, court, document review, chamber work – there isn't really a typical day in terms of workload. Certainly, the days in court are the ones that are an equal mix of being the most stressful and the most exciting. I usually head home at about 6:00pm, and have dinner with my family (which my lovely husband has cooked for me). Sometimes I have time to watch TV, other times it is back to work before bed.

ROSEN: What energises you about your work?

BARNETT: It's definitely the court work. It was something that really struck me with COVID this past year and being at home and appearing in online court. The first time I was in a physical court this year and on my feet again, I just remember walking out thinking that felt good – I think I had forgotten the exhilaration of being on your feet in a live courtroom.

ROSEN: What is the best work-related advice you've ever received?

BARNETT: I think one of the best pieces of advice I received was when I was a junior barrister. I was told not to be afraid to ask for work and to remember that, at the end of the day,



as barristers we are still a business, and sometimes that means you must have uncomfortable conversations. Junior barristers can go through quiet patches and you can worry about when the next brief is going to come. It is nerve-wracking to admit sometimes that you're not busy. But you never know if someone is looking for an extra pair of hands, and if you ask, the next brief will come. So being brave enough to have difficult conversations – to ask for help or for work – that is probably one of the best pieces of advice I have received.

ROSEN: What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders in the industry?

BARNETT: My advice is to be bold and to not feel that you need to be held back by your gender. There will always be times where you will be treated differently because of your gender and I think we should be brave and not let people treat us like that. If it happens, just crack on, don't let it deviate you from your course. At the end of the day, we can do amazing things as women and we should just forge forward and keep doing it.