

Annabelle Herd

CEO, ARIA and PPCA

Laksha Prasad, Lawyer at Marque Lawyers, chats with **Annabelle Herd**, CEO of the Australian Recording Industry Association (**ARIA**) and the Phonographic Performance Company of Australia (**PPCA**), about Annabelle's career in the media and entertainment industry and her thoughts on International Women's Day. Prior to heading up two key organisations within the Australian music recording industry, Annabelle held a number of senior positions at Network Ten and worked in the policy and government relations sector.

LAKSHA PRASAD: Annabelle, thank you so much for chatting with us. Can we start you're your career? What were your career aspirations as a child? Are they similar to where you are now?

ANNABELLE HERD: From about age 7 to 15 I was determined to be a paediatrician - I liked kids and I thought that working as a doctor for children would be a noble and rewarding pursuit. However, one week of work experience at the Accident and Emergency Department of Canberra Hospital in year 10 quickly put an end to that aspiration. Hospitals were not for me! I think the human interaction and empathy element has stayed with me through my career though. All the roles I've held have involved a lot of stakeholder management and relationship building and being interested in people helps a lot with that.

LAKSHA: What were some unexpected career challenges that you have faced over your career? And how did you handle them?

ANNABELLE: There have been a couple of points in my career where I have felt undervalued (often in favour of men) or faced a crisis of confidence. This can happen quite quickly and for a range of reasons and seems to happen a lot to mid-career and senior women. In these situations, you have to determine whether it is better to fight through or whether you are better off removing yourself from a bad environment. I have done both depending on the circumstances. Finding a good career coach is also super helpful to give you perspective on what's happening and strategies to deal with it.

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

ANNABELLE: Leaving a good and well-paid job without having another job to go to because I knew that it wasn't right anymore. I've done that a couple of times over my career and of course it is very scary; but I think that despite my fears I knew that leaving was the right thing to do. I am lucky that my financial circumstances allowed me to do that, but it is still a big call.

LAKSHA: What do you like to do to unplug from work?

ANNABELLE: I spend a lot of time hanging out with family and I love planning holidays. I am also a big music listener, of course, as music is such an amazing mood changer. I do love TV, mostly funny or uplifting stuff from reality shows like Below Deck (current obsession) to Derry Girls and Ted Lasso. Aussie drama Wakefield from a couple of years ago was wonderful and had some great Aussie tracks in it.

LAKSHA: What recent events in the Australian media law landscape most affect your organisation?

ANNABELLE: The recently released National Cultural Policy which has music front and centre and includes the establishment of Music Australia and the Office for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces is potentially a game changer for how music is supported at a government level. If well executed, these organisations will form a focal point for the creation of a proper contemporary music strategy with structured plans for industry and audience growth and global export of our amazing and talented artists.



LAKSHA: The 2023 International Women's Day campaign theme is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you and how would you suggest this is implemented in our readers' work and personal lives?

ANNABELLE: To me #EmbraceEquity is about everyone doing their part. Having women at the table is not diversity, we are more than half the population - it is equity. Equality won't happen without both men and women embracing equality particularly in tackling parenting and childcare issues. I get so annoyed every time I see childcare being referred to as a women's issue - it is a parent issue. In terms of implementing: if you are a manager then think about fathers in the workplace the same way you think of mothers. If you are a parent, then ensure your parenting plan is equally reliant on both partners.

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

ANNABELLE: Make sure that you choose a partner that supports your career and is not intimidated by or sensitive about your success. If you want to have children, choose a partner that will be an equal parent in all ways and then make sure you share the mental load with them. If you do have a family or need to support others, your choice of partner will be a key determining factor in whether you will be able to manage a demanding and successful career. Also, take up boxing, it makes you feel physically strong and is definitely a good way to vent some of those big feelings that will inevitably come over your career.