

# Emily Jackson

Head of Legal Australia and New Zealand  
FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and  
New Zealand 2023™

**Emma Johnsen**, Senior Associate at Marque Lawyers, chats with **Emily Jackson**, Head of Legal (Australia and New Zealand) at FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023.

Prior to joining Women's World Cup 2023, Emily worked at firms in New Zealand before moving to Westpac in the digital, marketing and sponsorship team. She then spent three years at Cricket Australia before she was headhunted to join Expo 2020 in Dubai, before moving into her current role in 2021.

Ahead of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, Emma and Emily discuss Emily's career, the sporting industry and her thoughts on the success of women's football globally. Emily is a key part of the team working to deliver the Women's World Cup, across Australia and New Zealand in July and August of this year.



**EMMA JOHNSEN:** What does a typical day look like for you?

**EMILY JACKSON:** No day is ever the same, which is a great thing as that means I am never bored and you never know how your day will turn out.

In a general day, the common issues that arise are contract negotiations for the tournament, corporate governance issues, engaging with external counsel for advice, potential breach of contract claims, however it is ever-changing and ever-shifting.

It's for this reason I really try to focus on relationship building within the business so that I can communicate the business' priorities effectively.

**EMMA:** What's the best work-related advice you've ever received?

**EMILY:** When I first started my career in law, my first role was in "Big Law". Big law is often seen as the 'be all and end all' for young lawyers. However, I was presented with an exciting opportunity to move to a smaller entertainment law firm. At that time, I was really unsure if I should leave my then-current role. I spoke to my Dad and he said "is there anyone at your place of work now that you want to be like?" I realised there wasn't anyone whose career I wanted to replicate, and he encouraged me to take that risk, and now, I don't have any regrets about the career path I have taken.

**EMMA:** How do you unplug from work?

**EMILY:** This may be a slightly boring answer, but I love to share a bottle of wine with my husband and watch 'The Last of Us' (or whatever TV series we are watching at any moment!). I also really enjoy dance classes. I make a point of putting my phone away as it is really important to have a separation between components of work life and home life. It is really important to spend quality time with your partner, friends, family or whomever is important to you. I also think it is key to balance your activities, as, particularly in a post-COVID world, it is very easy to just stay working at your computer all night.

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

**EMILY:** I'd have to say, Beyonce as I think she is a fantastic role model. Or Stevie Nicks.

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

**EMILY:** Women need to be changing the industry in a way that makes it better when you leave it than it was when you entered it. I would say to make sure you do everything you can to bring that lens to your leadership and participation within the industry.

It is easy to think you've made it and worked hard on your own merits; but it is important to remember your own worldview and take into

account how your role impacts other people. Continue to be supportive and encouraging of other women that aren't represented in your workplace. It's important to continue to be conscious of hiring choices and ensuring diversity.

I think it is very important to remember that women (or anyone) shouldn't have to change themselves – they should bring every part of themselves into their roles. Women leaders do have a big responsibility to ensure this.

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

**EMILY:** Belinda Clarke – she is an amazing woman and complete trailblazer. She quietly worked to break down barriers in a male culture, she is very inspirational. In fact, to add to that, I had an amazing time at Cricket AU and an amazing female GC, Christine Harman, who set up the whole team for success.

**EMMA:** If there is one thing you would celebrate about International Women's Day in this industry, specifically, what would it be?

**EMILY:** This is an easy one for me! I am really excited that women's sport is gaining traction and starting to be taken seriously in respect of its commercial prospects. There is some very positive growth and the success is such a feel good story. Women's

football in particular is gaining real commercial value. The Australian women's soccer team is one of the most successful in the world.

At women's football games there are now huge and diverse crowds. The Rugby women's world cup in New Zealand gained real grassroots popularity, out of that there are some real heroes emerging.

For so long the story has been *'wouldn't it be great if the women's team would make some real money,'* and it is so exciting to see that now be a reality. The narrative has changed such that women's sport is now a tangible, commercial proposition.

**EMMA:** Why do you think women's football has become so popular on a global scale?

**EMILY:** It's important to point out this has not been an overnight success story even if it appears that way. I would say that football is working towards addressing the historical underinvestment in the sport, and

this has been the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of women.

Cricket Australia was very focused on pay equality, to give players the same financial opportunities. Women in sport are now working towards receiving similar economic status, benefits and increased skill and success as men, and you see this happening where that underinvestment is being addressed. For example, FIFA has a dedicated women's football program and are also focused on restructuring commercial programs to reflect the women's game as its own commercial proposition. Large sponsorship deals for women's football are also on the rise. Previously, a sponsorship of women's sport was seen as an 'add-on', however now there is a conscious effort to sponsor women's sport in its own right.

**EMMA:** Do you think the success of the Women's World Cup will flow into other women's elite sports (if that hasn't happened already)?

**EMILY:** Yes and no. I say "yes" as when you prove success on a commercial basis, that will always be appealing for other sports because sports are looking to be profitable and to grow the game. If there is a new element of the game that can be popular/sell tickets/grow popularity at a grassroots level, other sports will find this hard to ignore.

Unfortunately, I also say "no", as change does need to start at the top and not all sports will get that level of change because they won't see the same value in the women's game. I do think there needs to be a sea change at leadership level to ensure opportunities don't go to waste.

At a leadership level, they may not wish to invest in women's sports because those in charge don't see as much value, however, hopefully that won't always be the case.

**EMMA:** Thanks Emily. Great to speak with you. Thank you for your insights, and happy International Women's Day!



## THE CAMLA PODCAST



EPISODES 1 - 4 NOW STREAMING

| Available at [camla.org.au/member-downloads/](https://camla.org.au/member-downloads/) |