

# Alex Morrissey

Senior Lawyer, ABC

**Alex Morrissey** is a Senior Lawyer at the ABC in the Acquisitions and Productions legal department. She sat down with **Grace Griffiths**, IP Associate at Corrs Chambers Westgarth, to discuss her career and reflect on the 2023 International Women's Day theme, #EmbraceEquity.

**GRACE GRIFFITHS:** What does a typical day at work look like for you?

**ALEX MORRISSEY:** Like most parents of young children, I begin the day early, trying to bring some calm to the chaos that is involved with getting 2 young children out the door, hopefully wearing shoes. Once that's done, I take a moment for a breath and coffee. I'm working in hybrid mode so I could be either heading into the office or sitting down at my desk in my active wear.

The work content of my day can vary wildly with some days full of meetings, others spent steadily working on co-production financing agreements and many spent dealing with urgent matters that are subject to production or publication deadlines including all manner of copyright, contract and pre-publication queries.

My clients at ABC are diverse including ABC News, online, TV and radio, executive producers from drama and comedy genres as well as Children's programs like Play School and the ABC's radio teams like RN and Triple J. While the high value dramas are often my focus, the ABC also provides Australian communities with value through community partnerships and this work is just as important.

**GRACE:** What drew you toward working in the media industry? Was it something you sought out or drifted into by circumstance?

**ALEX:** I've always had a keen interest and involvement in the arts. Prior to studying law, I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Dance at UNSW. This led to a curiosity about IP law once I began my law degree and following some paralegal work it was confirmed that IP and Media law seemed like a natural fit for me. I was fortunate to get the opportunity to specialise

in this area at Baker McKenzie after graduating.

**GRACE:** What recent events in the Australian media law landscape most affect your organisation/role?

**ALEX:** The public interest defence to defamation law being implemented and the ongoing review of the model defamation provisions is relevant to the ABC as a publisher of content across multiple platforms. Our lawyers are assessing stories for publication all day, every day, so any changes in this area can have a real day to day impact.

In addition, it will be interesting to see the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy rolled out in the next three years. The new body 'Creative Australia' will be established as well as Music Australia, the Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces and Writers Australia and a dedicated First Nations-led Board.

**GRACE:** What energises you about work?

**ALEX:** Definitely the variety of work and also contributing to such a valued organisation in the Australian media landscape.

**GRACE:** Can you describe a work-related opportunity that you're glad you seized?

**ALEX:** Any time I've doubted myself and then had the courage to back myself and step up I've always been glad I did. Even if something doesn't work out perfectly there is something to gain by giving it a go and you will always be pleased you tried.

**GRACE:** What is the greatest risk you've taken as a professional?

**ALEX:** Leaving a permanent role to take on a short-term contract role in an organisation I was more passionate about. It worked out and I'm still here.



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

**ALEX:** Be curious and open and always back yourself.

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

**ALEX:** The Hon Dr Annabelle Bennett AC SC for her passion, courage to seize new opportunities and her ability to maintain a great sense of humour.

**GRACE:** The 2023 International Women's Day campaign theme is #EmbraceEquity. How do you think the legal and media industries can work to achieve the goal of gender equity?

**ALEX:** I think the pandemic has shown us that flexible arrangements really can work. I also think it's equally important for organisations to offer and encourage flexible and part time work options for men so that partners can relieve some of the load on working mothers.