

**TESS:** The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2023 is #EmbraceEquity. What does this mean to you and how would you suggest our readers implement it in their work and personal lives?

**CLARE:** We need to take the time and explain to those who don't understand their views and learned behaviours are no longer acceptable, why, and how things have changed and give them the

chance to learn and adapt to a more inclusive working environment. Just telling people they are wrong or out of touch does not lead to positive change.

**TESS:** If there is one thing you would celebrate about International Women's Day in the media industry, what would it be?

**CLARE:** The regulatory field in media has truly #embracedequity. The female regulatory leaders in media are truly

inspiring, and capable women. I am honoured to be working in this field with so many senior female leaders.

**TESS:** And lastly, what advice would you give to the next generation of leaders in the industry?

**CLARE:** Build strong networks. A strong positive network can provide advice, open up new opportunities and become life-long friends.

## Madeleine James

Senior Associate, Corrs

**Madeleine James** is a Senior Associate in the Commercial Litigation and Technology, Media and Telecommunications groups at Corrs Chambers Westgarth, and a former member of the CAMLA Young Lawyers (2018-2022). Her practice is focused on media and technology disputes, defamation and pre-publication advice, as well as general commercial litigation.

**Nicola McLaughlin**, Legal Counsel (Marketing & Consumer) at NBN Co, sits down with Madeleine to discuss her career to date, and her thoughts on International Women's Day.



**NICOLA MCLAUGHLIN:** Did you always want this job? If so, what did you do to position yourself to get it? If not, how did your career path lead you here?

**MADELEINE JAMES:** Definitely not. I was adamant that I was going to work in journalism or television production when I grew up, and would get annoyed when family members suggested I'd make a good lawyer. But when I finished school, I was in a position where I could get into a law degree, and decided to combine it with journalism. It wasn't long before I realised I was much more passionate about my law studies. I had a few jobs in TV and digital media during university, but wanted to try working in law. I got a clerkship, and the rest is history. Having a background and interest in media definitely led me towards the specific role I'm in now, working as a disputes lawyer on a range of matters involving media, technology and defamation.

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

**MADELEINE:** The ongoing review of the Model Defamation Provisions, and the amendments introduced in 2021, have probably had the biggest impact on my role and on many of the digital platforms and technology clients my team works with. Together with some significant decisions handed down by the courts in recent years, such as the High Court's

decision in *Defteros*, the recent changes have impacted nearly every aspect of defamation proceedings.

**NICOLA:** Are there any law reforms in your sector that you think are desperately needed? If so, what are they?

**MADELEINE:** Not too surprising, given my previous answer – I'm eager to see the results of the Stage 2 defamation review concerning digital platforms. We heard late last year that the next stage of reforms should involve conditional exemptions for internet intermediaries, and a new form of innocent dissemination defence, but we've yet to see the specifics.

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

**MADELEINE:** The honest answer is Phoebe Waller-Bridge, who strikes me as a smart, creative woman at the top of her game.

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

**MADELEINE:** I have been lucky to work with several really impressive women in my career, including colleagues, clients and counsel. I won't name and praise them without their permission, so instead I will tell you the standout tips and pieces of advice I've picked up from them: There

is no shame in asking a simple question, especially when it looks like others may benefit from the answer or have lost sight of its importance. It never hurts to have the person on the other side be your friend, so unless there is a reason not to be, be known as someone who is reasonable and accommodating. Be more prepared and five minutes earlier than you think you need to be.

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

**MADELEINE:** I swim laps, and I go to the movies fairly often – basically, forced time away from my phone. People who work with me also know I'm a big advocate of the midday wellbeing walk.

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

**MADELEINE:** I still see myself as being in a formative part of my career, with a lot to learn from women in the industry (many of whom will be interviewed for this edition). But thinking of the next generation of women who are at the start of their careers, I would say – take ownership of (and credit for!) the work that you do; rely on and support the other women around you; and approach every opportunity with the confidence of your male peers.