

Katrina Rathie

Non-executive Director of SBS and
Former Partner in Charge, KWM

Alana Callus, lawyer at Gilbert + Tobin, chats with **Katrina Rathie**, non-executive director of SBS and former Partner in Charge of King & Wood Mallesons, about her career, leadership and International Women's Day. Katrina is a business leader, lawyer and advocate for gender and cultural diversity. Katrina was Partner in Charge of King & Wood Mallesons in Sydney, where she led the Media and Entertainment Practice. Katrina is currently a non-executive director on a range of boards including the Starlight Children's Foundation, ASX-listed Bubs Australia, NSW Rugby Union, SBS and Cranbrook School. In 2019, Katrina won the AFR 100 Women of Influence Award for the Board and Management category. She also serves on the UNSW Law & Justice Advisory Council and is NSW Patron of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association.



ALANA CALLUS: Drawing on your diverse range of professional experiences across law and corporate governance, what interested you in intellectual property, media and entertainment?

KATRINA RATHIE: I started my love of intellectual property, media and entertainment at law school, but ultimately when it came to joining boards after my legal career was over, I came full circle, back to a media directorship at SBS. For me, it is such a perfect role that combines my love of media with my passion for diversity, inclusion and belonging, making it an ideal fit.

I have always been fascinated by the currency, topicality and ever-changing nature of the media and entertainment industries – the interesting people, the events that happen 24/7 across the news cycle, the excitement, unpredictability and never really knowing what tomorrow will bring. I love the intellectual challenge of working in the world of IP, particularly in the digital world where copyright, social media and defamation law need to be radically reformed to keep pace with the ever-changing technology, AI, 24/7 online world and social media. My favourite areas are brands, trade marks, copyright, advertising/marketing, celebrity rights, media and sports rights – what's not to love?

ALANA: What does a typical day look like for you?

KATRINA: These days, I never know what a typical day will involve, but it usually starts with a work-out with my trainer (who keeps me

accountable!) and taking Scout, my Maltese Shi-tzu out to the park for a run-around. Then it's usually board meetings, coffee meetings, emails, work lunches, speaking engagements, dinners with family and friends, reading or watching the news.

ALANA: What is the greatest risk you've taken in your professional life?

KATRINA: Walking away from a stimulating job that I absolutely loved at the peak of my professional career and deciding to change course to a Non-Executive Director career.

ALANA: What have you learned about leadership during your time as Partner in Charge at King & Wood Mallesons and now on the board of multiple prominent organisations?

KATRINA: Great leadership is about how you make people feel – inspired, uplifted and empowered to do their very best for the organisation, hopefully where passion, purpose and meaning collide. It's about connecting with people genuinely and authentically, making them believe and feel that they are part of a special journey together, where everyone's contribution matters and counts. Regular communication is critical and the simplest messages cut through best. As a leader, I subscribe to the maxim that culture definitely eats strategy for breakfast. Even though strategy is important, businesses flourish when there's a great culture with impeccable execution by great people. You can feel a great culture as soon as you walk into a place and see happy people busily buzzing around doing amazing things.

ALANA: The 2023 International Women's Day campaign theme is #EmbraceEquity. As an advocate for gender and cultural diversity in Australian media, what does this year's theme mean to you and how do you think the industry can better promote and embrace equity?

KATRINA: The media industry can better promote and embrace equity by adopting production principles that require diversity and having more programs that showcase diverse and multi-cultural communities in Australia. We need to see our screens reflect and mirror the audiences in our communities and on boards, including media boards. I think that's what #EmbraceEquity is all about.

I serve on the Board of SBS and on the Advisory Board of Media Diversity Australia, and both of these organisations are leading the way to promote gender and cultural diversity in the Australian media industry. At SBS, 65% of employees are female, 59% have culturally diverse backgrounds, 15% are LGBTI and 5% are indigenous. They have so many amazing programs to support diverse groups such as flexible working, anti-racism, targets for women in tech and programs designed to place people of colour in frontline leadership roles. But the one that I am most excited about is the SBS Menopause Program which supports women during peri-menopause and menopause, a subject that has often been taboo in many workplaces. The symptoms of menopause affect many women for several years in their 40's and 50's, just as they are in their prime in the workplace. We need to talk more about this phase of life and help women through, rather than have women suffer in silence, pretend it's not happening or leave the workplace.

Media Diversity Australia is celebrating its 7th birthday. I have been on their Advisory Board since the get-go. It's been great to be a part of a kick-ass NFP that has made some noise and punched above its weight. Their loud advocacy and cadet programs have created a strong awareness of the need for greater cultural diversity on mainstream television networks, news and current affairs programs as well as behind the scenes in production and newsrooms.

ALANA: Who is one woman in your industry (or rather, industries) whom you really admire, and why?

KATRINA: I must say that Amal Clooney is one woman that I really admire. A fiercely intelligent barrister and international advocate for human rights, a mother of twins, married to one of the world's leading men whom she effortlessly manages to upstage every time they are photographed together. She is beautiful, glamorous, smart and never seems to put a foot wrong.

If I can be greedy and have two, then I have got to say that I adore Michelle Obama – she's inspirational, relatable and very real. Close to home, I admire my former King & Wood Mallesons partner, Her Honour Jayne Jagot's recent rise to the High Court of Australia and Her Honour Julie Ward's Presidency at the NSW Court of Appeal. Both are lawyers and former colleagues at the very top of their game.

ALANA: What advice would you give to the next generation of female lawyers and leaders?

KATRINA: Always support other women – mentor them, sponsor them, teach them, bring them through, brief female barristers, join female leader networks, support the sisterhood! As the late Madeleine Albright said, *"There's a special place in hell for women who don't support other women"*. Leave the ladder down behind you, be a role model so that other women can be who they can see.

It's the big *and little* things that matter. When you check in and say "how are you?", really listen to the answer, teach people on the job in the moment, acknowledge people's contributions, say thank you, treat everyone with respect, have impeccable manners. Know that it's never too early to speak up on the issues that really matter, or put your hand up for a role that might seem a bit of a stretch. Use your voice, be heard, never leave a room wishing you'd said something you should have. Live in the present and have no regrets.

Use your negotiation and tactical skills to step up and try to make a difference in the world. Give back, volunteer, donate and support your community. Engage and cultivate broad networks both inside and outside the law – the non-legal networks will become more important to you as your career progresses. Don't be siloed or too narrow. Think and read broadly and keep abreast of emerging trends in areas such as AI, digital intelligence, cyber, robotics, space, environment, ESG, but ultimately, do what you love.

Meet the CAMLA Board for 2023!



CAMLA recently held its AGM and the following positions were filled on the CAMLA Board for 2023:

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