

Antonia Rosen

Legal Counsel, News Corp Australia

Amelia CausleyTodd, Associate, Thomson Geer, sits down with **Antonia Rosen**, Legal Counsel, News Corp Australia, to discuss Antonia's career as a media lawyer inhouse at News Corp Australia.

Antonia is a media lawyer who has represented some of Australia's largest media and content providers, including major broadsheet newspapers, radio and online content publishers. She worked for a number of years in private practice before making the transition in-house. In 2021 she was named as a rising star by Doyle's in the area of intellectual property and TMT.

AMELIA CAUSLEYTODD: Thanks so much for chatting with us Antonia! Can you tell me about your career path and how it led you to where you are today?

ANTONIA ROSEN: As soon as I finished school I enrolled in arts/law at the University of Sydney. I really wanted to be able to study French, Spanish and Chinese as well as law. I couldn't do them all at once, but I managed to get them all in at some point throughout the degree. I ultimately majored in Chinese Studies.

I initially found the law to be very dry and I always thought I would follow something that allowed me to use my languages. I had spent a semester in Hangzhou, China living with a Chinese family and I enjoyed the adventure of it all. Then I did David Rolph's defamation law elective in my final year. It was like no other law subject I had studied – the cases were fascinating and it sparked an interest.

By chance, at the time I was working at a firm, Banki Haddock Fiora, which specialised in media law. I had the opportunity to work for some of the biggest names in the area, and they were briefed on some of the best media law cases at the time. I worked there for 7 years before being approached by News Corp Australia. I moved there in July 2021.

AMELIA: How have you found the move from private practice to inhouse counsel? What different challenges and/or opportunities have arisen?

ANTONIA: I have really enjoyed the transition in-house. I highly recommend it to all lawyers, particularly media lawyers if the opportunity arises. I have developed a range of new skills. You're at the coal face and you have to be able to make judgment calls in a relatively fast paced environment. I'm definitely more decisive than I used to be. It has also been an opportunity to learn about new areas of the law, as you're constantly dealing with all sorts of issues, and to really develop an understanding of the client's perspective.

AMELIA: What interested you in media law? Why did you decide to focus on that area?

ANTONIA: In short, it's interesting, intellectually stimulating and important. I find the subject matter of media law really engaging. It is in part concerned with current affairs and issues. Defamation

law, for example, is a litmus test of where society stands (arguably more so than other areas of the law). An artist once told me that you can look at the art market to see how the economy is going. I think you can look at defamation suits to see how society is going. Separately, the law itself is also intellectually stimulating. In that regard, media law is unique – it's one of the most complex areas of law and the subject matter is also some of the most interesting.

I also think, for all its faults, the media is fundamentally important to society. In 1891, Benjamin Constant gave a speech about the liberty of the ancients compared with that of the moderns. He said that the danger of modern liberty is that, "absorbed in the enjoyment of our private independence, and in the pursuit of our particular interests, we should surrender our right to share in political power too easily." I believe a robust news media is an important way to allow the individual to remain engaged with society, and the media lawyer is one of the guards of that institution.

AMELIA: Inhouse legal roles are highly demanding, what motivates/inspires/energises you about work?

ANTONIA: The people I work with, both lawyers and journalists. My team is fantastic: they are intelligent, supportive and fun. I also enjoy being close to the newsroom and getting calls from journalists.

AMELIA: What's the best professional advice you've ever received? And what advice would you give your younger self?

ANTONIA: The best professional advice I've ever received is: you don't need to rush and you don't need to have it figured out, but if you're going to do something, do it properly.

The advice I would give my younger self is: you don't have to accept other people's opinions as gospel. Think critically. You're allowed to disagree.

AMELIA: What does a typical work day look like for you?

ANTONIA: I don't have a typical work day! That's what makes my job interesting. There are commonalities in each day: I deal with stories that are about to be published, complaints and litigation, but no two days are the same.



I also keep bees and I train Brazilian jiu-jitsu – I think it's important to have interests outside of work, so I try to fit those things in there some days.

AMELIA: There are so many leading women in the media law space, can you tell me about one who inspires you and why?

ANTONIA: There are many, but if I have to name one, I would say Leanne Norman. She has always inspired me. She works very hard for her clients. I've never seen her lose her cool. She works extremely well under pressure and she knows the law inside and out. She, very deservedly, has the respect of her peers and colleagues.

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

ANTONIA: I would like to celebrate the women who are not afraid to ask the difficult questions, or posit difficult answers, and often these women are fearless journalists and commentators. International Women's Day should not just be about congratulating ourselves on the steps we have taken forward, but an opportunity to reflect on what we are trying to achieve and whether we are actually achieving it. I'm grateful, for example, for women like Bari Weiss, who will broach topics others are too scared to touch – who will host a debate on the success of the sexual revolution, and who will build a platform where these things can be openly discussed. It is the courage of women like this, who spark debates by asking the uncomfortable questions that lead to change that ultimately make IWD possible. Another one of those fearless journalists is Cheng Lei, whom I had the opportunity to interview for this edition and I found her words to be so thoughtful and authentic. If you are reading this, and you haven't already read her interview, you should head there now.