

# Clare Walker

## Director, Business Affairs ANZ - Netflix

**Erin Mifsud**, Senior Legal Counsel, IP Australia, chats with **Clare Walker**, Director, Business Affairs ANZ at Netflix to discuss all things International Women's Day and Clare's career in media and entertainment law.

Clare is an experienced entertainment lawyer, specialising in intellectual property law with an emphasis on television production and distribution. Clare has worked in various Business and Legal Affairs roles at Netflix over the past six years with previous experience at HBO Europe, Beyond International Limited & the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

**ERIN MIFSUD:** Thank you so much for taking part in our International Women's Day issue Clare. We are so lucky to have you! Your career has taken you all over the world working in a variety of legal and business affairs roles. Can you tell me about your career path and how it led to where you are today?

**CLARE WALKER:** Absolutely! I think my career path has been an equal split between 'right place, right time' and jumping into the void. My first job out of university was in the Legal department of the ABC, which I only got by virtue of doing an internship there the year before. I had so much fun, and it made me realise that this was exactly where I wanted to be. I wanted to get some production experience, so I went to Beyond International for a few years, which showed me our industry through a production and distribution company lens. But I always wanted to work overseas, so in 2012 I left Australia and ended up getting an offer from HBO Europe to help lead the Original Programming Business Affairs & Legal team. I had to move to Budapest, but it was an amazing opportunity at a company I'd idolised, so I jumped in and never looked back. That role let me travel and work across different countries and cultures, living in Budapest and then London; allowed me to work on films and series across Europe; and led directly to me getting an offer from Netflix to work across their international content slate in Los Angeles in 2017. Since then, I've worked on Netflix's European content, stand-up and sketch comedy in the US and UK, and as of late 2021 have been back home working as Director of Business Affairs, ANZ working on content dealmaking here in Australia.

**ERIN:** Your role as Director of Business Affairs sounds amazing, what is the best part of your job, and conversely, what part is the most challenging?

**CLARE:** The best part is the ability to access tonnes of information and a huge international network of amazing people who I'm lucky enough to call colleagues. Netflix allows employees a huge amount of trust and transparency, so for curious people who have a genuine interest in how the business works in different places around the world, and how to make use of learnings elsewhere in helping with issues at a local level, it's such a plus. I'm constantly learning and it feels like I always will be, so I'll certainly never be bored.

The most challenging part of my job is probably the same as for most people, which is finding enough hours in the day to do everything! But in a more general sense, there is also a challenge in the global vs the local.

We're part of a global company that operates in 190 countries around the world, but we're also a local team here in Australia, and we have a uniquely Australian perspective and know our local audience better than anyone else – so there's a responsibility for us to make sure we're waving that flag and representing our Aussie members as best we can.

**ERIN:** 2024 is expected to bring a great deal of law reform in the media sector. What do you think is desperately needed and what are you most excited about?

**CLARE:** The thing I think most needs to change is also the thing I'm most excited about seeing change – which is to say the diversity and inclusivity of our industry. Specific industries like film & television often end up feeling quite small in places like Australia, where our relatively small population means that the overall number of projects – and therefore opportunities – is more limited. So it can feel (and is) difficult for someone to break in without already having an 'in'. This leaves a lot of people with real talent at a huge disadvantage just because they haven't had a traditional path in, don't know anyone in the industry, and basically have had experiences other than living and working in an east coast capital city. I'm so happy to see things starting to change, and that there's more awareness of these challenges, and programs and opportunities being set up to counterbalance this. More openness to new and different voices will reap its own rewards through fresh ideas and different kinds of Australian perspectives in our business and on our screens – and will help us keep up with our US and UK counterparts by bringing different and uniquely Australian points of view to the table.

**ERIN:** What has been your 'best day' at work?

**CLARE:** Early in my time at HBO Europe I was visiting our Polish team in Warsaw and happened to be there at the same time as some of the cast of Game of Thrones, who were on a press tour for the season 3 premiere. I was meant to do a bunch of meetings in the office, but my Polish colleagues convinced me to instead see the city with the GOT cast – so I ended up hanging out with them on a whole day itinerary of old city walking tour, Michelin starred lunch, screening event and long dinner. Not sure this properly counts as I did zero actual work that day, but it was definitely a highlight.

**ERIN:** Now that you have had experience in a range of roles, what advice would you give to your younger self?



**CLARE:** I'd say don't spend too much time stressing about whether or not you'll be able to do something you haven't had the opportunity to do yet. I'm still trying to get over my imposter syndrome, but have realised that probably no-one will ever have ALL the answers or know ALL the things, and that's OK. Not having the exact right answer immediately is pretty normal, and most things can be figured out, so be kind to yourself and don't assume that not knowing is equal to failing.

**ERIN:** That is such great advice! Looking at your current role at Netflix, how do you create motivation for yourself and for your team?

**CLARE:** I find motivation in the big picture, but our profession is often focused on details – so for me it's about making sure that I'm feeling engaged in that bigger picture, and see my place in it, and feel like I'm able to be impactful and have agency in working towards that. In real terms, at Netflix ANZ this means reminding myself of the awesome projects we're working on, the great colleagues and business partners I get to work with (both internal and external), and the fact that I have a good amount of freedom to figure out my work in a way that makes sense to me – so making sure I call back to that wider perspective when I get trapped in the minutiae.

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

**CLARE:** Moving to Budapest, Hungary was probably the biggest risk I've taken to date. I had another offer at the same time for a role in London, and so many people in my life thought I was crazy to even consider moving to a country where I didn't know anyone, didn't speak the language, and was going to be working solely on non-English language content – but I am so, so glad I did it. It was a steep learning curve, both in terms of work (hello, civil law jurisdictions) and life, and there were moments of real discomfort. But it also gave me a lot of belief in myself and set me up at a great company, which then set me on the path to where I am now. No regrets!

**ERIN:** Thinking about women in the screen industry, tell me about a woman in your industry who inspires you, and why?

**CLARE:** There are some truly amazing women in the screen industry – and there are more and more amazing women coming through

the door everyday, which is so gratifying. I'm going to highlight someone from the wider entertainment industry here, and will say I find Dolly Parton so incredibly inspiring. I know she's not a media lawyer, but I feel like she absolutely could be if she wanted to be?! Dolly has demonstrated so many admirable qualities that have endured over the many decades she's been in the industry – self-belief, open mindedness, positive mindset, altruism, incredible work ethic, and self awareness just to name a few. She made big moves in her early career because she backed herself. She supports other women and keeps the door propped open for those coming in behind her, and her philanthropy efforts over

the years are nothing short of inspirational (especially her involvement in, and advocacy for, the COVID vaccine). Not to mention she's one of the most talented entertainers out there AND has her own theme park.

**ERIN: The 2024 International Women's Day campaign theme is 'Inspire Inclusion'. What does this mean to you and how would you like to see it applied in your industry?**

**CLARE:** Inspire Inclusion means that we should be taking all the chances we can get to inspire and motivate ourselves and others towards making inclusive choices in all aspects of our lives in order to

further empower those whose voices need amplifying, and to have those voices enrich our experiences. In the screen industry this means seeing more inclusive choices both in front of and behind the camera – making sure we're inviting and including diverse voices into our boardrooms, conference rooms and writers rooms, and telling stories from all walks of life, to ensure we're getting the best possible version of every project we're bringing to life.

**ERIN:** That is such a great message to end on. Thank you so much for joining me and sharing your experiences with CAMLA. Happy International Women's Day!

## Jess Millner

### Legal Counsel, Guardian News & Media

**Georgia Murray**, Lawyer, MinterEllison, sits down with **Jess Millner**, Legal Counsel, Guardian News & Media, to discuss Jess's career as an intellectual property lawyer and beyond, as well as Jess's thoughts on International Women's Day.

Jess started out her career at MinterEllison, where after completing her summer clerkship and graduate rotations she eventually settled and worked in the IP Team for a number of years. Jess advised on a wide range of intellectual property and privacy matters, and acted on several high-profile disputes and matters in the Copyright Tribunal. More recently, Jess has moved to London where she now works as in-house Legal Counsel in the commercial legal team at The Guardian.

**GEORGIA MURRAY:** Jess, thanks for being involved in this special edition of the CLB! Could you tell us what a typical day looks like for you at The Guardian?

**JESS MILLNER:** My day always starts with coffee! After that it is quite varied. I have an endless to-do list that I'm increasingly learning to be flexible with. I'll usually have some more complex advices or drafting to work on but in between that I'll have meetings to discuss the legal advice for new projects or to answer ad-hoc queries as they come up from the business. I'm usually in the office 3-4 days each week as I find it's easiest to resolve problems and get to the bottom of things quickly with a face-to-face chat. I find work is more fun in person! There is also a great energy in the office and always something interesting going on - like Q&As with journalists, screenings of new documentaries, or talks about the issues impacting our industry. These events also really help me see not only how my legal advice contributes to the organisation but also the impact of the organisation more broadly.

**GEORGIA:** What do you like best about your work?

**JESS:** One of the things I like the most about my role is that I get to work with so many really talented people who are genuinely passionate about what they do and how their work contributes to The Guardian. In the commercial legal team, my role is really varied and I get to work with people from across the organisation, whether that's in product development, advertising, marketing, editorial or technology. To provide the best and most meaningful

legal advice, I really need to understand the business, whether that's how our App works, what our brand strategy is or what our editorial values are – this keeps my job interesting! It's also really fulfilling to provide legal advice from end to end on projects within the business and see everyone's hard to work come to life. Everyone in the organisation is really value driven and it's a really nice environment to work in.

**GEORGIA:** Turning from the present to the past, what advice would you give to your younger self?

**JESS:** If I'm being truly honest, it would be to worry less! (Although that's something I'm still working on...) Looking back though I would love to have been able to tell my younger self to remember that my career is not a race and that it's important to find balance. I think that's something I've gotten better at and I actually think it's made me a better lawyer. Some other tips I would give myself are: (1) always be curious and ask questions; (2) step back from a complicated problem (it often makes more sense in the morning!); and (3) work is best when you find time for a laugh with your colleagues, and roll with the chaos!

**GEORGIA:** What's the greatest risk you've taken as a professional?

**JESS:** Most recently it would have to be taking the leap to move overseas and take my first in-house role. It's certainly something I had my reservations about – I wondered whether moving overseas, practising in a new jurisdiction and moving in-house might be a lot of change at once!



It has certainly had its challenges, but in a lot of ways that's been really energising and confidence-building. I've learnt a lot in the past few months but one of the best takeaways has been the reminder that when you really throw yourself into something new, it's surprising how quickly you can pick it up!

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

**JESS:** I don't know that I can pick just one! I was really lucky to work with so many incredible women right from the get-go at MinterEllison. I had some really great female mentors right from my first day and all the way through to my time in the IP Team. They taught me how to intelligently and compassionately tackle problems, how to back myself, how to balance all the competing priorities of work and life and how to support each other! I felt that many of my female colleagues really championed each other and I think that's something that's really important in our industry.

**GEORGIA:** Thank you for these brilliant insights Jess. On behalf of our readers, thanks so much for your wonderful insights. Happy International Women's Day!