

Ingrid Silver

General Counsel, ABC

Katie Walker, paralegal at Paramount Network 10, sits down with **Ingrid Silver**, General Counsel at ABC, to discuss her career path as an international media lawyer as well as Ingrid's reflections on the 2024 International Women's Day theme "Inspire Inclusion".

Ingrid is an international senior media industry legal executive with over 25 years' experience, including 15 years as a partner in top tier global law firms. Prior to joining the ABC in 2021, she advised clients ranging from blue-chip corporates to early-stage innovators and disruptors, including broadcasters, streamers, studios, production companies, social media platforms, advertisers, talent, sports rights owners and distributors, and tech companies active in the entertainment ecosystem.

KATIE WALKER: Hi Ingrid! Thanks so much for chatting with us. I'd like to first ask you a bit about your career. Can you tell me about your career path and how it led you to where you are today?

INGRID SILVER: I often semi-joke that I learned a lot more about my day job waitressing than I did at law school, so I guess my career started with working in various cafes on the lower North Shore of Sydney while I was in high school.

I can't say my career path has been entirely conventional.

Like many Australians, I'm lucky enough to have been raised bilingual and that opened up a lot of opportunities for me, including working at the European Commission and the European Parliament on convergence regulation and intergovernmental policy. That focus on how the telecommunications, media and technology (TMT) sectors might evolve and be regulated really set the scene for the rest of my career.

I had a stint working in international arbitration in Geneva with a leading lawyer who happened to be one of the first female partners in a Swiss law firm. The first time I met her, she was wearing a pink dress and lots of jewellery and perfume. She had a big career and a wonderful husband and children. She was a great mentor to me and taught me that it was OK to be ambitious as a woman and to aspire to have it all.

Before joining the ABC, I was based in London. For the last 15 years there, I was a partner in two global law firms, specialising in media. I got to work with amazing clients across the media ecosystem, ranging from blue chip corporates to disruptive startups. The work was incredibly varied, mostly international and often involved challenging and cutting-edge legal issues, working with large teams and being very agile and innovative.

Unlike a lot of private practice lawyers, I was always very closely engaged with industry. I'm especially proud of being the first lawyer elected to the board of the Mobile Ecosystem Forum and of my appointment to the International Broadcasting Convention Council. I spent time with a lot of media organisations and did a lot of public speaking around the world. I won't lie, speaking at Mipcom in Cannes in 2009 and being on the same page of the conference program as Jerry Seinfeld was definitely a career high point!

I never consciously planned for my career to lead to where I am now, but when I look back at the journey I've had so far, it all sort of makes sense and I can't imagine being anywhere else.

KATIE: What is the best part of your job, and conversely, what part is the most challenging?

INGRID: The best part of my job is working with a truly amazing team. ABC Legal covers areas including rights, content deals, intellectual property, technology, contracts, regulatory advice, privacy, freedom of information, prepublication advice, disputes and property.

My direct reports are all true subject matter experts and thought leaders who have successfully developed, attracted and retained great talent in ABC Legal. They also happen to be fabulous human beings who teach me so much and are a great support – I'm always telling them how lucky and grateful I feel to be working with them.

The challenges we face as a team, which is what I think we all relish, are that we deal with a wide range of often complex and new issues in a fast-paced and sometimes unpredictable ecosystem. We need to make sure our contribution and the way we work with our stakeholders is efficient, timely and collaborative. We encourage our team to be creative and innovative in their approach and to aspire to excellence and continuous improvement.

KATIE: What is the best work-related advice you've ever received?

INGRID: It's a marathon, not a sprint.

KATIE: 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?

INGRID: Over my career, I've seen notions of diversity and inclusion evolve. For me, acknowledging each person's uniqueness and the role of intersectionality – the interplay of different aspects of a person's identity and experiences – is key to achieving inclusion.

My own identity and experience include the fact that I come from a migrant and refugee, multilingual background, I'm a member of a minority faith group, I was the youngest qualified translator in Australia when I was 12 (French to English), the youngest person to do the HSC in my year, I was married at 20 (and still am), I was one of the first lawyers at my firm to return from maternity leave after my first child was born and the youngest woman



(and mother) to make partner at the firm I was at. I suffer from an autoimmune condition and have recently been told I have dyspraxia (which for me means I have a terrible sense of direction and spatial awareness and I really struggle with things like driving). Like many women, I've grappled with imposter syndrome.

In my early career, I worried so much about the consequences of sharing my personal identity at work that I was afraid to even have a picture of my husband and kids on my desk at work. These days, as a leader I make a point of being really open and comfortable about who I am in the hope that others will also feel safe, and hopefully inspired, to do so. I think there's something really powerful about celebrating an inclusive and respectful workplace. I also think it can be really empowering to realise that as long as you are prepared to work hard, have a growth mindset and a positive attitude, you can make a meaningful contribution and have a fulfilling career, no matter who you are.

KATIE: Tell me about a woman in your industry who inspires you, and why?

INGRID: There are so many women who have inspired me through my career. In my current role, I've had the privilege of working with Ita Buttrose, the outgoing chair of the ABC. Women encounter conscious and unconscious biases and stereotypes throughout their lives and Ita has done so much to challenge those. She embodies so many traits and behaviours I admire. Even in her eighties, she has a phenomenal work ethic. She has incredible attention to detail but she also sees the big picture. She's a strategic thinker, always thinking several steps ahead. She's supremely feminine with a strong personality and the courage of her convictions. She is always curious and interested to learn. Best of all, she has a great sense of fun.

KATIE: What advice would you give to your younger self?

INGRID: I really struggle to answer that sort of question. I generally feel very lucky and grateful for the journey I've had so far, including the tough bits which I know have taught me the most and given me the greatest opportunity for growth. Looking back, I was always juggling so many things and worrying about what came next so I guess if there was anything, it would be to be in the moment and trust that it will all be alright in the end...

KATIE: That's great reassurance, Ingrid. I love that. Thank you so much for chatting with us, and happy International Women's Day!