

DAMIANO: If you could have dinner with one woman that you really admire, who would it be and why?

ALI: Easy, Michelle Obama. Why? Because she didn't fit the mould of a Harvard Law graduate, but she did it anyway. And when she was easily 50% of the main act alongside Barrack Obama, she chose to use the limelight to give back, in

particular to inspiring girls around the world to go to school and stay in school, amongst many other worthy causes. I'm not sure what we would eat for dinner, but I am sure we could carve up a dance floor afterwards.

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

ALI: Two tips. First, the only difference between you and the person who has the role you aspire to is that they have had the benefit of experience. Have confidence in yourself that you too can get there. Secondly, be really good at the job you are currently doing. You never know where it will take you.

Katherine Sainty

Principal and Founder of Sainty Law

Belyndy Rowe, Senior Associate at Sainty Law interviews **Katherine Sainty**, principal and founder of Sainty Law. Katherine is a corporate and commercial lawyer who is an expert in digital, technology and privacy law. Katherine has more than 30 years' experience and 10 of those years spent as a partner with leading Australian law firm, Allens Linklaters. One of Katherine's key strengths is applying her strong commercial expertise, extensive industry experience, sophisticated project management techniques and broad regulatory skills to deliver innovative and cost-effective solutions for her clients. Katherine has been recognised as a 5-star Cyber Lawyer for her ability to navigate complex technology and data challenges, advising clients across all aspects of their businesses. She has also been recognised in Chambers Global, The World's Leading Lawyers, as pre-eminent in her field.

BELYNDY ROWE: Katherine, thank you for agreeing to be part of this IWD edition of the CLB. You have had a mix of private and in house experience. You were a partner at Allens for many years. In 2007 you founded Sainty Law to provide clients with efficient and smart thinking, and legal and commercial advice. 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?

KATHERINE SAINTY: I would love to be able to say that I had a structured career path that I successfully executed! When I started practicing law I had no idea – generally and about my career direction. It would have been hard to forecast how radically the profession has changed – especially in the last 5 years or so.

How did I position myself? Always do excellent work. Always ask if you don't understand. Always go further – dare to do as much as you can. Always understand your environment. Always look after your team.

BELYNDY: What developments do you see on the horizon in 2022 for the communications and media legal landscape?

KATHERINE: Many and varied! The sector is in play. Some will depend on the outcome of the Federal Election. Some will follow overseas developments. I will keep up to date with CAMLA publications and seminars!

BELYNDY: What energises you about work?

KATHERINE: Solving clients' business problems – not just the ones they can see but the ones over the horizon you can see.

Its combining legal knowledge, industry awareness and empathy to produce a solution that the client embraces, that will endure and benefit their business. We can all spot the legal issues – finding and implementing an effective fix is the hard bit!

The other most important energiser is the people. Working with bright talented lawyers – both on my own team and on the other side. Sharing the hard-won insights of years practicing the law and seeing people grow.

I am also hugely encouraged when people I have worked with go on to do great things.

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

KATHERINE: In hindsight it was starting Sainty Law in 2007. That was very uncommon at the time. Not so much now.

I was looking at what my clients were wanting – direct access to trusted advisers, not necessarily the big firm experience.

Unfortunately, a couple of months after I hung up my shingle the GFC hit – so the move was a little countercyclical – but the firm had flourished!

BELYNDY: How do you unplug from work?

KATHERINE: Legal work is so cerebral that I've always found you need something physical to counteract long days at the



screen. Over the years I've had various passions like running, cycling, sailing, skiing and the gym.

My current passion is rowing. It takes total concentration - performance on the water is as much technical as physical. And you sleep well at night! Crime fiction helps too.

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

KATHERINE: A truly difficult question – there are so many fabulous, interesting women.

So I'll lay out a legal/leadership focused dinner party – RBG, Hillary Clinton, Mary Robinson, Julia Gillard with Katharine Murphy of The Guardian to guide the conversation and wrangle the guests so they all get a chance to speak.

I could sit back, listen and learn. Maybe ask one or 2 friends so I could relive the evening over!

BELYNDY: What's the best work-related advice you've ever received?

KATHERINE: One classic comment passed on when I was a very young solicitor – "you can't win a shitting fight with a skunk".

Possibly why I was never very interested in litigation...

BELYNDY: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us on IWD, 2022.