

Natasha Eves

Regulatory Affairs Manager, Free TV

Akmal Chunara, Senior Associate, Clayton Utz, speaks with **Natasha Eves**, Regulatory Affairs Manager, Free TV Australia (**Free TV**), about her career and thoughts on International Women's Day. Natasha has substantial experience representing free-to-air media (having previously worked for SBS) across policy, government relations and industry engagement, and has a background in media policy and arts and cultural policy. Natasha is a member of the committee of the International Institute of Communications Australian Chapter and has previously held roles at the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, and the Australia Council for the Arts.

AKMAL CHUNARA: On the occasion of International Women's Day 2023, what does the campaign theme #EmbraceEquity mean to you? How do you suggest readers implement that theme in their work and personal lives?

NATASHA EVES: I think this year's theme is so important because it's about recognising and embracing individuality and supporting each person in a unique way. Whether you're talking to someone in your personal or your professional life – ask questions. What is the outcome that they want to achieve? Why do they want to achieve it? Without knowing this, you won't know how to support them. Being able to express an outcome (a goal, a dream, a way of envisioning a life) is incredibly important in understanding how you might work with them to achieve that. Secondly, it's about identifying challenges to achieving this outcome and how to overcome them, for that individual. These might be conversations you have with your team, with your friends, and might even be something you want to consider for yourself.

AKMAL: What impact have strong female role models had on your personal and professional life?

NATASHA: Over many years, I have had the pleasure of being surrounded by strong women, and that has meant that I have very rarely seen barriers in my professional life from that point of view. I have worked for four female CEOs throughout my career – across the arts and media – one of whom started the organisation herself. I have been able to watch them manage boardroom conversations; balance cultural differences across international borders; and perhaps most importantly, to experience how they lead others.

Seeing people with whom you can identify, taking a leadership role in their chosen career and/or achieving goals in their personal lives, gives you confidence. It allows you to take inspiration from the aspects you admire most and implement that into your own working and leadership style, and into your own life more broadly.

AKMAL: How did you come into your current role?

Like most people, it wasn't a linear path! I started working in arts and cultural policy straight out of university, and then after about ten years, I moved to media policy, taking on a role at SBS. When the role at Free TV came up, I was excited for the opportunity to learn about commercial media, and to contribute to public debate on issues also relating to rural and regional broadcasters.

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

NATASHA: I work on a hybrid model – 3 days in the office, and 2 from home, which is a good balance, and also means I rarely have a 'typical' day. Our office is based in North Sydney, so I head over there first thing and have a coffee, catching up with colleagues. Then it's straight on to looking at the upcoming policy priorities – at the moment, there are quite a few inquiries and reviews in progress, to which Free TV is submitting (for example, National Cultural Policy, news diversity, privacy). We have regular meetings with the policy directors of metropolitan and regional networks to talk through these priorities and the Free TV positions on them, and that engagement continues throughout the process. We also have discrete Free TV projects to work on, and projects with other industry partners. I am likely spending the afternoon meeting with



colleagues from other organisations, looking at how we can work together. Media policy and regulation is a relatively small world so it's always lovely to connect with others who are working on similar issues.

AKMAL: How do you unplug from work?

NATASHA: I am currently doing an online cooking course, so I'm busy in the kitchen. The most recent dish I made was a braised pork belly with coconut, pineapple and chilli – I halved the amount of chilli in the recipe, and it was still burning! I'm also lucky enough to live near the beach, so I'm doing lots of walking and swimming at the moment – a sunrise swim really sets me up for the day.

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

NATASHA: Balance stability with trying new things – which is probably an annoyingly contradictory piece of advice. I have seen the benefits, though, of staying in a role and/or an industry for a number of years, so that you can create connections and relationships and to be able to see and analyse trends. Often, it is these connections, or those skills you have built over years, which will provide you the opportunity to take the next step. At the same time, though, there are incredible benefits to dipping your toe into new areas – taking a course in an unrelated topic; reading and keeping across developments in other industries. If you ever do want to make a major change, those taste-testers will help you to settle in quickly.