



WOMEN IN MEDIA 2023 NATIONAL CONFERENCE SHOWS MOMENTUM IS REAL FOR GENDER EQUALITY

More than 400 delegates gathered in Sydney to hear from over 70 leaders and disruptors of the media sector during the annual event

Sydney, 11 September 2023

The Women in Media National Conference, which was held in Sydney for the first time on 8-9 September, was the largest gathering of female media professionals from across the country.

More than 400 delegates participated in thought-provoking topics, knowledge-building workshops and opportunities to engage in discussion about issues of importance to women working across the diverse fields of media. Influential business leaders, media industry personalities, entrepreneurs, and those just starting out in their careers, delved into crucial issues of gender, media, and society.

Petra Buchanan, Strategic Advisor to Women in Media said, “from journalism to technology, politics to film, the lineup was dynamic, the personalities powerful and the discussion meaningful.”

Petra added: “This event uniquely brings women together from various realms of the media industry and from all career stages; each who are passionate about what they do. These are women focused on their careers and craft that want to enhance their networks, knowledge and contribute to the success of others and the media sector. In their hands we know the future is bright.”

IN THEIR WORDS – quotes from the Women in Media National Conference 2023.

Ita Buttrose AC, OBE, Women in Media patron and arguably Australia’s original female media disrupter, said:

“Don’t wait for others to open doors for you, open them yourself and sometimes knock them down!”

“I like to climb mountains and when I get to the top of the mountain, I see another mountain.”

“You won’t always be made to feel welcome, but don’t give up.”

“I say to women all the time, realise how good you are.”

Sam Mostyn AO, Chair of the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, discussing productivity said, “women needed to play an equal part in all aspects of care, work, education, tax and government.”

Mariam Veiszadeh, CEO of Media Diversity Australia spoke of the barriers that still exist in the workplace for women and especially women of colour, “with many corporations still employing a sprinkling of women and a dab of colour.”

Kirsty Muddle, CEO Dentsu Creative, spoke about challenging gender norms and the power of advertising to influence our perceptions. “Media and advertising has more impact on human

behaviour than policy now ... we have such an ethical responsibility to make sure what we are putting out in the world has got a positive impact," she said.

Australian of the Year **Taryn Brumfitt** shared her story and discussed the importance of body acceptance and self-compassion in the media, urging the audience to reframe their thinking about their bodies and make the choice to be kinder to themselves. "I think: 'I am lucky to have these arms that I can use to hug my loved ones and I am really lucky to have these legs that have run two marathons,'" she said.

Editor-in-Chief of Missing Perspectives **Hannah Diviney** spoke of the need to change the rhetoric around women's storytelling through the incorporation of lived experiences and allowing women to be more in control of their own narratives. "People who discount women's storytelling and discount the value that we have need to get with the program," she said.

Former Matilda's player **Moya Dodd AO**, referred to men's sport as the story of 'uninterrupted myth making'. "Where is the myth making, where are the legends in women's sport, where are the narratives?" she asked. "There are stories to tell. Tell them!"

Bruna Papandrea, producer of the current top rated TV series, *The Lost Flowers Of Alice Hart*, spoke of her experience in the Australian film industry as well as in Hollywood. "People take less risks with women. You'll get one shot [and] there's a lot of pressure to achieve on that first go and, in particular, with feature film ... mediocre men get way more opportunities than brilliant women do at the moment."

ABC's Australian Story anchor, bestselling author and hit podcaster **Leigh Sales AM** opened up about the genesis of her new book *Storytellers*, her career's memorable moments and the qualities that define a great storyteller, of which she is considered to be one of Australia's best. "One of the biggest barriers to making a genuine connection to another human being is going into conversation or interaction with a judgemental mind set... Nothing will give you a poorer experience of life in the world than going through it with that kind of attitude," she said.

Karen Eck's popular workshop, *The Power of Visibility* was packed with practical tips and advice on how to step forward in promoting your personal brand, it was an epiphany for many to hear her say, "The first killer mistake is to think your work speaks for itself. It doesn't."

Lauren Finestone, founder and executive coach of Nudge Coaching and her colleagues **Bindi Newman** and **Fiona Russell**, provided a tool kit of resources to frame how best to work through challenging environments. She reminded us to fight "the temptation to do what you've done in the past when dealing with decision-making" instead embracing patience and reflection and to not assume that things are simple.

Please find the full program here <https://womeninmedia.com.au/conference-2023#program>

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC)

Chief News Presenter for Network Ten's flagship news bulletin, **Sandra Sully** MCed the first day of the conference (8 September 2023). Co-host of Nine Network's breakfast program *Today*, **Sarah Abo** MCed the second day of the event (9 September 2023).

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Ita Buttrose AC OBE, Women in Media patron and arguably Australia's original female media disrupter, shared her remarkable journey as a trailblazer for women. Her efforts to lead by example are numerous and she made it very clear that she won't be silent about issues that matter and those that can make positive social change.

2023 Australian of the Year **Taryn Brumfitt** was 'in-conversation' with **Natalie Barr**, Seven Network's *Sunrise* co-host. Taryn, who rose to international fame with her Body Image Movement campaign and documentary *Embrace*, shared her story and discussed the importance of body acceptance and self-compassion in the media.

Award-winning journalist, ABC anchor, bestselling author and hit podcaster, **Leigh Sales AM** was centre stage talking all things journalism. Caroline Jones Women in Media Young Journalist's Award recipient for 2022, **Samantha Jonscher** led a Q&A with Leigh following her remarks.

EXPERT PANEL DISCUSSIONS

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

This panel brought extensive expertise to the table, representing various sectors and institutions dedicated to advancing gender equality. Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner, **Kate Jenkins AO**, Chair of the Women's Economic Equality Taskforce, **Sam Mostyn AO**, Federal Minister for Communications **Michelle Rowland**, CEO of Media Diversity Australia **Mariam Veiszadeh** and CEO of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, **The Hon Mary Wooldridge participated** in a moderated discussion led by award-winning journalist and commentator on women and the workforce, **Catherine Fox AM**.

MYTH BUSTING IN ADVERTISING

Leaders in advertising and marketing discussed myth busting culture change and driving female narratives facilitated by **Sunita Gloster AM**. Bringing their creative, agency and marketing expertise to the discussion about advancing gender norms were Seven West Media's Chief Marketing and Audience Officer, **Melissa Hopkins**, CEO Dentsu Creative, **Kirsty Muddle**, Senior Strategy Director at Special Australia, **Abbie Dubin-Rhodin** and Clemenger BBDO Senior Copywriter, **Phoebe Sloane**.

VIEW FROM THE PACIFIC

Rosi Doviverata is the founding convenor of Women in Media Fiji and President of the Fijian Media Association. In her role as convenor, she has overseen the development of a regular series of networking events, expert panels and a mentoring program for Fijian women working in the media which she shared with the delegates. She is currently acting in the role of Publisher/CEO for the Fiji Sun, one of two news publishers in Fiji.

BUSINESS OF MEDIA

The changing business of media was highlighted by women leading broadcast, print, online and platform businesses. Executive Vice President, Chief Content Officer and Head of Paramount+ at Paramount Australia and New Zealand **Beverley McGarvey**, Are Media CEO **Jane Huxley**, Chief Commercial and Content Officer of Foxtel Group, **Amanda Laing** and Co-founder and Chief Creative Officer of Mamamia, **Mia Freedman** discussed evolving platforms, commercial realities and consumer expectation in a moderated discussion led by **Anita Jacoby AM**, Co-Chair of Women in Media and one of Australia's most distinguished television producers.

REMAKING THE RULES

Entrepreneurship and new media offerings are changing the media landscape. This panel addressed how these women are remaking the rules including Editor-in-Chief of Missing Perspectives, **Hannah Diviney**, founder, The Squiz, **Claire Kimball**, and co-founder and CEO, Cheek Media, **Hannah Ferguson** in a moderated discussion led by **Kathy McLeish**, a director of Women in Media and an award-winning ABC journalist and producer.

TECH IMPLICATIONS, ADVANTAGES AND ALARM BELLS

Academic and media industry experts dismantled the issues of technology that we are most curious about. UTS Senior Law Lecturer **Dr Evana Wright** addressed how the law can help preserve creativity in an AI and tech-led world. Research fellow at the UTS Centre for Media Transition **Michael Davis** delved into generative AI addressing concerns of misinformation and disinformation as this technology becomes more sophisticated. Former journalist and award-winning producer **Lisa Main** discussed the future of journalism with AI and how we protect our democracies amid rapid and profound technological change. The session was moderated by **Monica Attard OAM**, Co-Director of the UTS Centre for Media Transition and a Professor of Journalism at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

INDUSTRY PROGRESS

Women in Media is dedicated to gathering and sharing impactful data that addresses issues and supports women working in the sector. Our belief is that a well-articulated research agenda will enable us to communicate and represent women to stakeholders, peers, and the general public, fostering transparency and accountability. This discussion was presented by **Petra Buchanan**, non-executive director and strategic advisor to Women in Media.

SPORT'S OUTSIZED IMPACT

Sport has an outsized impact, with more media coverage than other topics, funding and broadcast rights in the billions, and a spotlight on the inclusion of women. This session included **Ellie Cole OAM**, Australia's most decorated female Paralympian and winner of 17 Paralympic medals, **Moya Dodd AO**, a trailblazer in women's football as a Matildas player and sports administrator, including on the successful Bid Committee to host the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, and **Jane Flemming OAM OLY**, two-time Olympian. These amazing women are leading efforts to create a more inclusive future for Australian sport. **Amanda Shalala**, co-lead of ABC Sport's 50:50 Equality Project, moderated this discussion.

DRIVING FEMALE NARRATIVES

Film and television influences how we see ourselves and others. You'll know the work of Emmy and Golden Globe-winning producer **Bruna Papandrea** (*Pieces of Her*, *Anatomy of a Scandal*, *Big Little Lies*, *Gone Girl*, *Wild*) and we heard how she amplifies distinctive voices to tell unforgettable stories. **Sally Riley**, former ABC Head of Drama, Entertainment and Indigenous, is known for her impressive body of screen productions and for fostering and supporting key talent at all stages of the creative process. She has played a key role in developing and bringing to audiences' programs that are entertaining, thought provoking and reflective of Australia's national identity. Co-founder of Storyd Group, Chair of AI-Media and producer **Deanne Weir**, led the discussion with Brunna and Sally about how film and television influence the way we see ourselves and others, and why female narratives matter.

A RATIONAL FEAR

They always say you should end on a joke — and boy did they! *A Rational Fear* is an award-winning comedy podcast hosted by Dan Ilic and Lewis Hobba. Together with a superstar panel of the funniest women in Australian media today, they'll ripped apart the contemporary anxieties of being a woman in the media in 2023. Participants included **Hannah Ferguson** (Cheek Media), **Nayuka Gorrie** (*Black Comedy*), **Lewis Hobba** (Triple J), **Nina Oyama** (*Deadloch*) and **Vidya Rajan** (*Aunty Donna's Comedy Cafe*) and DJ **Dylan Behan** in a very special live recording of *A Rational Fear*, presented by Australian Ethical.

WORKSHOPS - 8 September 2023

RELAUNCH YOUR CAREER

How to reframe, redirect and relaunch your career when you're feeling stuck, need a change or are returning from a career break. We heard from women that have taken a leap in a new direction and from those offering assistance including lessons learned, tips and advice. Women in Media Relaunch Project Leads **Michelle Francis** and **Jacinta Rose** were joined by 2023 participants **Selina Joseph**, a freelance field, post and series producer and **Sarah Elks**, senior reporter for The Australian newspaper in the Brisbane bureau. **Amanda Margariti**, who leads LinkedIn's advertising technology partnerships in Australia and **Patricia Powell-Hughes**, Managing Director of specialist executive search firm EP Australia, added their expertise to the discussion.

THE POWER OF VISIBILITY

How to create career-defining opportunities and avoid killer mistakes when promoting your work. Communications strategist, talent manager and publicist **Karen Eck** shared with delegates the benefits of a culture where visibility is everyone's business, including tips to curate personal and professional success at any life stage.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF STORYTELLING

AI as a tool to accelerate human creativity and content creation. **Renece Brewster**, CEO & Co-Founder of Visual Domain and Co-managing Director of Girls in Tech Australia, shared how AI is playing a role as a co-creator of content.

WORKSHOPS - 9 September 2023

POWERFUL DECISION-MAKING

How to make better decisions and solve tough problems in a rapidly changing media landscape. Nudge Coaching and Consultancy founders, **Lauren Finestone**, **Fiona Russell** and **Bindi Newman** shared a few simple but powerful techniques to utilise as a leader and in your personal growth.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

How to target the trends and make empowered choices about your online engagement. **Suzie Shaw** CEO of We Are Social shared which platforms are trending, and why.

BREAK-THROUGH IDEAS AND TARGETED CONTENT

How to create meaningful impact with audience-relevant content. **Bobbi Mahlab** AM, chair and founder of Mahlab Media and co-founder of Mentor Walks, hosted a discussion with **Georgie Robertson** (PR Lead for buyfromthebush and Regional PR) and **Sasha Kutabah Sarago** (founder of *Ascension*, Australia's first Indigenous lifestyle magazine) about building connections and businesses from the bush to beauty.

ABOUT US

ABOUT WOMEN IN MEDIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Women in Media National Conference is supported by Major Media Partner, ABC and Presenting Partners, Seven and University Technology Sydney (UTS). The event takes place in Sydney on 8-9 September 2023. Attendees can expect an engaging and dynamic event that will leave them inspired and empowered. Find information about the event and speakers on the [conference website](#).

ABOUT WOMEN IN MEDIA

Women in Media is a not-for-profit registered charity that exists to help women in media excel, learn, contribute, and connect. With over 6000 members nationwide and branches in each state and territory,

members work in all facets of the media including journalism, communications, production, public relations, advertising, marketing, publishing and digital media. Our initiatives aim to increase gender equality, extend leadership and economic participation opportunities for women, and build a safer, more respectful culture in Australian workplaces. www.womeninmedia.com.au.

Media Contact: eckfactor 0438 532569