

2021 ACC Top 10 30-Something: Marisa Muchow

Interviews and Profiles



The ACC Top 10 30-Somethings awards recognize in-house counsel between the ages of 30 and 39 for their innovation, global perspectives, proactive practice, advocacy efforts, and pro bono and community service work.



As a young child in the small Queensland town of Bundaberg, Marisa Muchow would hide among the furniture on display in her parents' store and listen as they spoke with entrepreneurial zeal. It was

growing up watching her parents in business that led to Marisa's decision to be in-house counsel. "Being in-house allows legal counsel to be a strategic business partner to the company they advise, having an in-depth knowledge of the business, its mission, and how to advance that mission," she says.

Now general counsel at Metricon Homes, Australia's largest home builder, leading a small and experienced in-house legal team, Marisa combines entrepreneurial interests with generalist skills in a dynamic legal field.

Marisa's background as head of legal and product certification at the Australian Building Codes Board helped prepare her for her current position. It was Marisa's unique mix of government and industry experience that led the Australian Technical Evaluation Network (ATEN) to seek her assistance in contributing to their scoping paper, bringing together building specialists and testing laboratories to evaluate building products. A core strength in her diverse background is understanding legislative changes and their impacts on the industry. In her role at Metricon, she is constantly considering "what legislation is on the horizon and how can we adapt as a business?"

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When Australia introduced legislation to ban unsafe building products in response to the UK Grenfell Tower Building fire and the Docklands fire, Marisa advised Metricon on the potential operational impacts of the legislation and reviewed their supply chain for compliant building products.

Construction is Australia's third largest industry and is highly regulated. Keeping up with and advising on legislative changes is a core part of Metricon's legal team's role. "We are a small dynamic legal team and enjoy the diverse mix of work inherent in a highly regulated industry," Marisa says. As a partner to the business, one of the legal team's key roles is developing tools to help internal clients.

So, when Metricon's medium density building brand Townliving needed assistance with an internal restructure and interpreting newly introduced stamp duty legislation, Marisa was there to help with the redesign of its business model and mitigate risks. She worked with Metricon's directors and other senior leaders to create a simple yet robust business model to continue to grow the Townliving brand.

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Marisa also supported Metricon's response to government COVID-19 initiatives in 2020. Australia's federal government announced the HomeBuilder Grant, and within 24 hours of the announcement, Marisa created a Smartsheet "Homebuilder Hub" that compiled information and links on how grants were being implemented through each state's respective revenue office and the accompanying requirements. The hub also included tools for the business, legal letters, emails, and FAQs for communicating with customers about the grants.

The hub increased cross-departmental communication and eliminated the risk of repetitive emails and out-of-date information by consolidating resources. Marisa's innovation allowed Metricon to proactively assist customers in taking advantage of the grant scheme.

"Many people's homes became their sanctuary during the COVID-19 pandemic," Marisa reflects, even if it was often hard to separate work and home life. "Plan for the balance," she recommends, whether it's making time to get outside or just take a break. But she understands that everyone's home situation is different, especially for her colleagues home-schooling children during the pandemic. She regularly asked what she could take on for her team to lighten their load.

Helping others comes naturally to Marisa. Outside her role with Metricon, she established Motion Athlete Management to give back in another area she is passionate about: sports. Through this management company, Marisa provides pro bono advice and legal assistance to athletes on negotiating sporting contracts and sponsorship agreements and complying with international and national anti-doping laws. The athletes she supports practice swimming, surfing, golf, rugby union, and boxing at the grassroots, Olympic, and World Champion levels.

Marisa also provides pro bono advice to several start-ups in fields as varied as medicine, firearms, cybersecurity, and alcohol. As long as they are led by "entrepreneurs with a dream," she will support them.

Read more about the 2021 Top 30-Somethings

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