

*Australia's leading media organisations gathered to continue discussions around accelerating DEI efforts*

**30 September 2024**

***Assistant Minister Julian Hill joined media leaders at the Media Diversity Australia 2024 Round Table hosted by Nine***

Media Diversity Australia (MDA) has held its second industry round table at Nine's North Sydney offices on September 20, bringing together the CEOs, Managing Directors and other senior representatives from MDA member organisations including from Nine, ABC, SBS, Seven, AAP, The Guardian, ARE Media, Netflix, Junkee Media, Women's Agenda and Hachette Publishing to continue discussions around a more sustained path to industry-wide improvement.

The event, saw Australian industry professionals and executives once again gathered to reflect on the year that was and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

Notable attendees included **SBS's** James Taylor, **Nine's** CEO Mike Sneesby and Chief People Officer Vanessa Morley, **Seven's** Chief People and Culture Officer Lucinda Gemmell, **ABC's** Chief People Officer Deena Amorelli, **AAP's** Editor Andrew Drummond, the **Guardian's** Deputy Editor Gabrielle Jackson, **Women's Agenda** Publisher Angela Priestley, **Junkee Media's** Editor in Chief Alice Griffin, **ARE Media's** General Counsel & DE&I lead Veronique Maury, **Hachette Publishing's** CEO Louise Stark & **Netflix's** Clare Walker, Director Business & Legal Affairs. MDA's members also include **The Daily Aus**, **The Conversation Group** and the **National Indigenous Times** whose representatives were unfortunately unable to attend in person.



[From left to right Jessica Goldsmith (**Seven**), Louise Stark (CEO **Hachette Publishing**), Veronique Maury (General Counsel & DE&I lead, **ARE Media**), Vanessa Morley (Chief People Officer **Nine**), James Taylor (Managing Director, **SBS**), Hon Assistant Minister Julian Hill, Mike Sneesby (former CEO **Nine**), Mariam Veiszadeh (CEO **Media Diversity Australia**), Alvaro Rodas Fernandez (Deputy Chair **Media Diversity Australia**), Andrew Drummond (Editor **Australian Associated Press**), Deena Amorelli (Chief People Officer, **ABC**) & Gabrielle Jackson (Deputy Editor, **The Guardian**)]

Representatives from across the media sector engaged in conversation over the issues that need to be tackled, and the action needed to meaningfully progress diversity, inclusion, and equity.

The event included industry representatives from a range of organisations including representatives from **Federal and State Government as well senior representatives from Google, Meta, Free TV, the Walkley Foundation, the Kennedy Foundation, Public Interest Journalism Institute PIJI, the AFL, Diversity Arts Australia, the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council, WGEA Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Women in Media, Women on Boards, the Australian Human Rights Commission, Deloitte, Telum Media** & many more.

The first part of the event featured introductory remarks from Nine's CEO Mike Sneesby, a keynote address by Assistant Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs The Hon Julian Hill MP.

Assistant Minister Hill spoke about the *“real concerns that diversity is still not adequately reflected in Australian mainstream media.”* Addressing the one hundred plus strong crowd he said, *“Your presence here today indicates that, like me, we think that needs to change.”* *“What’s said and seen on screen, on air and in print, shapes cultural and societal norms and challenges biases and perceptions,”* said Assistant Minister Hill in a subsequent statement on social media.

His full speech can be accessed [here](#).





The panel, moderated by **Nine's Sarah Abo** featured **AFL DEI Executive Tanya Hosch**, **Nine's Chief People Officer Vanessa Morley** and **MDA's CEO Mariam Veiszadeh**.

The second part of the event featured a **closed round table discussion** for MDA members and provided a platform for an honest and robust discussion around inclusion practices, talent pipeline, cultural safety, retention, navigating lived experience and impartiality, and opportunities for further industry collaboration.

Since the inaugural MDA round table held at SBS in July 2023, there have been **7 working group meetings** held and an **agreement from 3 of MDA's largest employers to share their DEI Survey questions**. MDA hopes to work towards an adoption of uniform metrics and language to enable a 'comparing of apples with apples' across the industry.

The group has collaborated with MDA to develop a school program which MDA is currently seeking funding for. MDA Working group meetings will commence in the next quarter to keep building on the momentum for industry collaboration.

**Mariam Veiszadeh, CEO of Media Diversity Australia** commented on the importance of the event providing a launchpad for shifting the dial on industry-wide change.

“MDA has been described as a **necessary agitator**, an external independent body that can help bring the key media players together to help **accelerate change** in an industry that has faced its share fair of challenges. Our role at MDA is to ensure that when the media turns to us for diverse talent through our TalentHub offering, that we support those candidates not just to land a job but to have a thriving career, **free from discrimination**, ensuring that they feel **culturally safe** and that media companies are empowered with the tools to **support their growth and upward career trajectory**.

While it's vital for each media organisation to take individual action, achieving meaningful, **lasting change requires collaboration** and scaling up our efforts collectively. We must also engage in **open and honest discussions about the obstacles our industry faces as we strive for genuine representation and, most importantly, inclusion.**”



Mariam Veiszadeh  
CEO of Media Diversity Australia

# Communique

**All MDA members (including those members not in attendance) have endorsed the following commitments:**

1. **Annual Round Table:** MDA members will convene annually for a round table to maintain ongoing discussions, agree on actions, and track progress.
2. **Working Group Representation:** Each member organisation will nominate a representative to participate in MDA's working group meetings, held at least four times a year, to actively advance the collective agenda.
3. **Uniform Metrics for DEI:** Members have agreed that MDA plays an important role in creating best practice DEI survey questions for its members to consider adopting within their organisations. In support of this, three of the largest broadcasters have confidentially shared their DEI demographic survey questions to help accelerate these efforts.
4. **Supporting Future Talent:** Members are committed in principle to supporting MDA's Media Mavericks Schools Program to help build a diverse talent pipeline, pending external funding.
5. **Focus on Cultural Safety and Retention:** While recognising that progress has been made in individual DEI efforts, members acknowledged the challenges faced by the industry and the need for continued collaboration to sustain a diverse and inclusive workforce, with a focus on cultural safety and talent retention.

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