

Sydney, New South Wales



TERRI JANKE & COMPANY

Terri Janke is a Sydney based lawyer, and the Solicitor Director of *Terri Janke & Company* – the only firm in Australia to specialize in Indigenous Intellectual Property and Law and Arts and Culture Copyright issues. Terri has focused her skill, passion and education to improving the knowledge and rights for Indigenous artists. Taking the bold step in 2000, Terri established her own legal firm *Terri Janke & Company* – a move that was not without its risks financially and professionally.

The Story So Far....

At university, Terri Janke knew she wanted to make a career in social justice. Terri was committed to improving the rights and knowledge of Indigenous people. Like many law students, Terri was unsure which field she wanted to specialise in - taking a break from law allowed Terri to find her inspiration. Terri began working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board. She became inspired by the creativity and passion of her people, but the experience also opened her eyes. Terri witnessed first hand the issues pertaining to copyright and intellectual property rights. Complex issues that without knowledge of the law, left Indigenous artists vulnerable and without control over their property. Terri had found her direction.



Terri Janke

To gain experience, Terri began work at the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Organisation. First as a volunteer, then employed as the Copyright Information Officer. Politically, this was a time when Indigenous issues relating to ownership and rights were being tested. The Mabo case was underway, but rather than having a negative impact on Terri, she saw the potential to make changes. Terri explains ‘...I was amazed how the law could be so positive.’ At the time, Indigenous intellectual property rights were being

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tested by artists, under the Copyright Act. It was clear the law was inadequate. Terri found herself at the forefront of the policy and writings that were happening at the time. She had the chance to shape the area she was so passionate about.

After completing her degree, a cadetship and gaining experience within the industry, Terri began considering her future. She was ready for a new challenge. At that stage Terri had two young children and thought of having her own practice would give her more flexibility. It would offer her choice and freedom. Terri had faith that if she started her own business the clients would come. In 2000, Terri started her own firm - *Terri Janke & Company*.

While Terri was confident in her ability as a lawyer, she had limited business skills. Terri recalls - *'When I first started out with my own practice, it was just me and a desk in a tiny office... I had one client and a computer and that was it.'* The early stages of the business took a lot of planning. There was professional compliance, establishment costs, business location and how the business would fit in with her life. Fortunately Terri had the strong support of her husband Andrew. She also quickly realised that getting good advice was



The Team - Anastasia Charles, Andrew Pitt, Terri Janke & Sonia Cooper

crucial. Terri worked with ATSIK to develop a business plan and received advice in putting accounting and management systems in place.

The Impact

Terri Janke & Company now has over 150 clients and the company has lodged over 350 client matters. Over the past five years, the business has grown and continues to do so. The number of queries and potential work continues to grow and the work load is often more than the business can handle. *Terri Janke & Company* employs three people. Keeping the business small lets the company have more choices over the type of clients and business direction.

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One of the members of the team is Sonia Cooper. Sonia is a Yorta Yorta woman, raised by her Grandmother on an Aboriginal mission 'Cummeragunja' in New South Wales. When Sonia moved to Sydney at the age of 19 with her two small children, she gained employment with *Terri Janke & Company* as Terri's Para Legal. With Terri's support, Sonia was accepted into a Bachelor of Law Degree at the University of New England, Armidale and is currently in her first year. Like Terri, she is passionate about her culture and actively involved in the Indigenous community. She will one day make her own mark in the legal field as a successful, female Indigenous lawyer.



Sonia Cooper

Terri Janke & Company has created an awareness of intellectual property and copyright entitlements. Now when artists are being approached to be filmed or have their music played, they know to ask more questions about their rights. Terri breaks down the legal issues and gives people an awareness of their position in relation to the law.

The firm delivers *'...culturally appropriate advice in a manner the client understands.'* Negotiations between Indigenous artists and marketers are not always on a level playing field. Terri empowers Indigenous artists with the knowledge that they have the right to negotiate. Indigenous rights are fundamental to maintaining ownership over knowledge, culture and property. Terri feels her company is making *'...small steps in changing the culture of what is okay within the arts industry.'*

Terri is a role model to many. As an Indigenous person, she is proud of her culture and who she is. She has dedicated her career to lifting the capacity of the Indigenous community. As a lawyer, Terri has taken the bold risk of starting her own practice. She has received self-fulfilment by using her career to make a difference. Terri is a role model as a career woman, business woman, mother and community leader.

Success Factors

As Terri reflects on the consistent growth in her business over the last five years, seven factors have been important.

Drive and Passion

Passion needs to be at the heart of every business. Terri explains - *'You have to have drive and passion for the area you focus on. Business is a long journey. It requires a lot of fuel and a lot of energy.'* Terri has discovered *'...that something more in life- the connection with why you are doing what you do to achieve that something more.'* Terri has found that sometimes drive and passion are not always easy things to keep hold of, especially when political and social realities operate.

Business Values

Terri has discovered the value of identifying and articulating a set of values. Her company has adopted the following-



- *Our practice operates according to the belief that people and processes are just as important as outcomes. That knowledge is as important as culture. That life is as important as place.*
- *We are accomplished at seeking solutions to complicated legal matters. Our advice is based on knowledge, understanding of Indigenous perspectives, legal expertise and having travelled and consulted widely.*
- *We work with sensitivity and respect in all our dealings with clients, referrers, legal adversaries and the wider community.*

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Drive and Passion
- Business Values
- Flexibility
- Know Your Strengths
- Continual Learning
- Life Balance
- Product Uniqueness

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- *Our client relationship management and service delivery are articulate, dependable, well-informed, presentable, solutions-based, quality driven, approachable and professional.*

Flexibility

A willingness to embrace change, and *'seize the opportunity'* has been a hallmark of Terri's business experience. In Terri's words - *'Remember the path that you are on can change - be ready to move with opportunities as they present themselves to you. Take advantage of experiences and opportunities that may arise or you can create.'*

Know Your Strengths

Terri very early in her planning and business establishment discovered her strengths and built upon them. In her words - *'Talk to people, write about it, and build on your opinions. Do what you do best and be the best at what you do.'*

Continual Learning

Terri has been a continuous learner. In her words - *'Don't set up in business thinking that you have to know everything – you don't. Seek advice from other people in the business and learn from them. Continually educate yourself on ways to improve your knowledge and capacity.'*

Life Balance

Balancing family, business and life interests has been essential for Terri. In her words – *'Build your business around your life and not the other way around. Set priorities in your life and try to maintain a balance – this means making choices. Life can become overwhelming, so set boundaries which will help to reduce burn out.'*

Product Uniqueness

Terri's success is in part due to her ability to discover and develop a niche area within the legal market. She simply offers a unique legal product.

Advice for other Indigenous people contemplating their own enterprise option

To anyone considering starting their own business Terri says,

'You need to find that connection between yourself and the business. Look at the resources you have available to you, not just within business, but also in life.

Remember that business is an enormous strain on your entire life. Don't be afraid to ask for help, take the initiative to ring someone you admire. It is important to find a mentor.'

For Further Information

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