



## PRESS RELEASE

# MFA CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF BUILDING SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY CAREERS WITH NGEN

**28 February 2023:** The Media Federation of Australia (MFA) is today celebrating the 15-year anniversary of NGEN, its longest-running training and development program for media professionals with less than five years' experience, empowering them to build successful careers through learning, building peer networks, and providing tools and support.

NGEN launched on 28 February 2008 with a mission to foster and develop the future leaders of the industry, following a proposal by then-MFA Board director Henry Tajer. Unanimously backed by the board, the program was the beginning of a unique approach of agencies coming together for industry-wide training and career development. In recognition of the importance of building a peer network with media partners, NGEN was expanded in 2009 to welcome media owners as members.

Over the past 15 years, NGEN has helped build the career of 7 in 10 people working in the media industry today, with approximately 15,000 individuals benefitting from the program.

Among the many notable NGEN alumni are Seven West Media National Sales Director and ThinkTV Australia board member **Natalie Harvey**; This is Flow Founder & CEO and MFA board member **Jimmy Hyett**; Initiative Managing Director **Sam Geer**; Procter & Gamble Senior Sales Account Manager **William Berber**; and Initiative Global Strategy Director **Jacqueline Osborn**.

With 2,800 current active NGENers, NGEN recorded significant growth in 2022, with new members and higher engagement from existing members boosting the NGEN population by 25%.

NGEN's achievements over the 15 years include:

- More than \$255,000 raised for charity through the NGEN Charity Cup and NGEN Award (part of MFA Awards)
- A combined 101,021 hours of training
- More than 650 workshops and training sessions

Seven West Media National Sales Director Nat Harvey was among NGEN's first cohort of 520 individuals in 2008 and the first-ever NGEN Chair. She said: "NGEN is a crucial part of our growing and retaining the amazing talent within this vibrant industry. Being part of the start of NGEN was so valuable for me to build out my network, to learn from diverse and varying voices, and to keep



fuelling my love for this incredible industry. I learnt skills in those first couple of years of NGEN that I still rely on and use today.”

View 15 years of NGEN photos [here](#).

A program of activities will roll out throughout the year in celebration of the 15-year anniversary, with current and past NGEN members sharing their industry journeys and NGEN’s role in their development.

In addition, NGEN has completed a strategic review of the learning and development of the current cohort – in consultation with with MFA members, training experts and NGENers – to ensure the program continues to successfully build careers for the next 15 years. Areas of focus in 2023 will include:

- Ramping up the use of career-building tools and support for NGENers and their managers.
- Additional mentoring and manager training in new hybrid way of working.
- Upskilling new industry recruits on media basics.
- Reconnecting and building peer networks
- Building T-shaped competencies.

Melanie Aslanidis, Head of NGEN, said: “NGEN’s uniqueness is the platform we provide for NGENers to step outside their personal bubble to build successful careers by learning new knowledge and skills, and building their peer networks. Fifteen years is a long time in media and we are incredibly proud to have played such a significant role in providing the backbone of training and career development for our industry’s future leaders, arming them with the tools they need to thrive in our industry. Coming off the back of NGEN’s biggest year yet in 2022, we are excited and inspired to keep delivering for our community.”

Carolyn Maloney, Director of People & Culture at Initiative, added: “I clearly remember the brainstorm session as part of our regular People Committee meetings back in 2008, when we were conceptualising what we could call a program for the next generation of media practitioners. NGEN was born! It’s been my absolute pleasure to have worked with the MFA over that period and a delight to see how far NGEN has come in 15 years, becoming the best industry L&D program. If you want to build your career or develop your people, the best way to do it is through NGEN.”

Henry Tajer, CEO of The Influence Group, said: “Congratulations to the MFA and NGEN for 15 years of genuine support and inspiration to the real heroes of the media industry. So many amazing young media executives have benefited from the program, from all sides of the industry. NGEN was and is still one of the most important initiatives ever launched by the MFA. Happy 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, NGEN. The best it yet to come!”



This year, NGEN is delivering 54 workshops (a mix of in-person and webinars), covering a broad range of areas and skills, including negotiating, presenting, critical thinking, change management, effective communication, leadership, mentoring sessions and more. The NGEN Charity Cup and Halloween social events will once again take place in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

**For more information, please contact:**

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**About the MFA**

The Media Federation of Australia (MFA) is the peak body representing media communication companies. The MFA is a non-for-profit organisation established in 1997 with a current membership base that represents over 90% of all media billings placed by media agencies in Australia. The MFA's vision is to encourage operational excellence in the field of media communication connections and to define and develop best practice standards to support its members and the role they play in servicing their clients.