

# A MISSION FOR THE *future*

As she prepares for her first trade show as IABM CEO, Saleha Williams sits down with **Jenny Priestley** to discuss her vision for the organisation, how it can support its members, and plans for the future

It's safe to say Saleha Williams has had a long and storied career in the media and entertainment industry, with over 30 years experience working with vendors, broadcasters, and filmmakers. Now, as the new CEO of the IABM, she is advocating for broadcast and media technology suppliers.

Throughout her career, Williams has worked with and been a part of the IABM, including producing its conference. Since joining the organisation at the beginning of 2025, she has been working on shaping its vision for the future.

Williams describes her new role as the perfect way to bring both sides of her career together. "It just felt at this stage in my career, having lived and worked in the industry all over the world, it was exactly the right time to be considered. I'm excited about what the IABM as an organisation is doing. I'm excited about where the industry is going, and therefore how the IABM can genuinely support our members in navigating that future landscape both business and technological.

"It's not often, genuinely, you get the opportunity in an industry you love to lead an association that is so pivotal into its next chapter," she continues. "That's why I'm here, and I'm super excited about what we're going to do going forward."

Despite new leadership, the IABM's mission remains the same: to connect, support and inform its members. As the industry continues to evolve in the way it innovates, collaborates and integrates, so will the IABM, says Williams. "We're a not-for-profit, we're neutral, we're independent, so everything we do gets put back into the IABM as an international global association, and it's really about the impact we can have for our members across the industry from the business, technology and talent viewpoints, as well as standards, etc.

"There is an amazing team at the IABM. I'm quite lucky, if I'm really honest, to have inherited some fantastic people, and there's a lot of hidden talent that hasn't quite been brought to the surface. What attracted me was empowering that team and really elevating IABM and the story of who it is, how it supports, and how it moves forward, and also utilising the knowledge of our members, because there's a wealth of experience."

## **Knowledge and power**

Williams wants to develop the way the IABM connects and supports its members further, delivering insights and information in a more innovative and dynamic way by utilising its digital platforms and opportunities at the industry's various trade shows. "We want to support members with information, research, and insights," she states. "I think it really is about trying to give members the knowledge and power to enable them to make the decisions in their businesses, supporting them with the information and insights to drive businesses forward, to do deals, to be able to understand the landscape as well as insights on the technological level and regional geographic focus with that as well."



Once a company joins the IABM, any staff member, whether the CEO, CTO, or lower, can utilise its business intelligence platform, Vantage, and gain access to research and insights. “We also do briefings and bespoke research for members if they’re looking at particular markets,” she says.

Another membership perk is the IABM Lounge at various trade shows. For the 2025 NAB Show, the IABM will have a 3,000 square foot lounge space which will include the IABM Impact stage, IABM TV and areas for members to hold informal get-togethers. Members will be able to attend briefings as well as a series of lunchtime talks covering key topics such as business transformation, AI and sustainability. “We’re also doing a ‘Meet the CEO,’ which is for members to meet me and the whole team,” adds Williams. “It gives members the opportunity to be interviewed by some of the experts from our business insights team, as well as our CTO office.”

### AI is the future

AI is likely to be a big topic of conversation in Las Vegas, as it was in Amsterdam last September. While machine learning and artificial intelligence have been part of media tech vendors’ roadmaps for some time, generative AI is becoming increasingly widespread and, for some, that’s causing concerns around regulation. Would this be something the IABM could become involved with? “The IABM works and collaborates very closely with the standards bodies like SMPTE and the EBU,” says Williams.

“Part of our role is to disseminate the information from a standard and regulatory perspective. Our analysts attend events and bring insights back to our members. So again, we’re connecting them to information, particularly where they don’t have time or aren’t able to go to those events or to go through specific research reports that are being presented. We are looking at how we can connect members to those

insights by working and collaborating with the standards bodies and regulatory bodies that are responsible for that around the world.”

Another key area where the IABM can help its members is the skills gap. It’s well documented that both the production and technology sides of the media and entertainment industry need to bring in a new generation of talent. One of the biggest challenges is that many people are not aware of the opportunities available within media technology. This is an area where Williams believes the IABM can work with the likes of Rise, #GalsNGear and Women in Streaming to help them reach a bigger audience. “I’ve been an advocate for Rise since it first started, but there’s no point in IABM trying to duplicate what’s already working well with those organisations.

“What we are doing, and AI is a good example, is launching a series of AI courses which have been put together by experts. They’re structured, considered courses that our members can use for free, and they will look at the incorporation of AI into the whole workflow, how media organisations are processing and using AI, as well as just getting a better understanding of it.”

The aim of these courses, says Williams, is to help build awareness for younger people and talent that want to enter the industry. “For example, we’re working with universities and putting together programmes to take students to IBC. I want to keep building and expanding on that. We had an event at Sky that IABM supported in February for students and young people in their first jobs.”

Since being appointed, Williams has been asked by IABM members about her message for the industry as it and the organisation continue to navigate ever-changing waters. “It’s a really tough time out there right now with redundancies, cutbacks, etc,” she states. “My key message is the IABM has no other agenda than to support our members. We are neutral, we are independent, we are not for profit, we are global. Our focus is on supporting, enabling and empowering our members to try and navigate what is a really tough landscape, both economically and technologically, given the industry’s technological advances that are happening at the speed of light.

“So I think for me, it’s all about the impact we can have for our members globally, across the industry. We’re all about our members, that is where the passion of my team, as well as me, comes from.” ■

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**SALEHA WILLIAMS**