

Iain Rennie

MANAGING DIRECTOR

WHAT IS YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE?

Corporate and commercial law, with significant experience in various industries, particularly mining, energy, financial services and professional services. The work I do is broad, mainly transactional work, advice based work and the application of general commercial legal principles.

I get to work with engaged clients who know what they want but may not appreciate the various options available. My job is to help clients identify the most efficient and effective solution to their problem, and then help them execute that solution.

It's an area of the law I really enjoy – whilst the law provides the context of my interaction with clients, effectively it is people based.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS?

Since 1987. And in that time I've seen not only my profession change significantly, but also the needs and sophistication of our clients. Whilst online connectivity has given us speed and agility, the practice of law is still about people. The better and longer your relationship with your clients, the better practitioner you are!

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN BASED IN SYDNEY?

Always in Sydney – but this is probably my loss. The more I learn from my Newcastle colleagues the more I understand the great loyalty Novocastrians show to their own people and businesses.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO DO THIS WORK?

It's a mixture of factors. I like helping people solve their problems – it's a great satisfaction. I have several clients I've served for many years. Building the mutual trust and open nature of these relationships is really rewarding. Each interaction gives me an opportunity to learn and to gain from the client's perspective on problem solving. Working with younger lawyers also motivates me. They gain from my experience and I learn from them in many other ways. It's rewarding to watch their growth and see how you've impacted someone's career.

WHAT DO YOU DO BETTER THAN OTHERS IN YOUR FIELD?

I will leave it to others to make judgments about who is better than whom...however, what I try to do well is help my clients clearly define what their problem is and identify the various critical factors that will shape the most efficient solution. What works for one client may not work for another – usually the best solutions have a personal touch which reflects the context of an individual client's needs. I specialise in asking clients a lot of questions.

WHY WOULD A CLIENT WANT TO WORK WITH YOU?

The important part of this question is the phrase 'want to work with you'. Good and long term client relationships are like a partnership. I like clients who want to engage with me and actively work together to solve their problems. That is rewarding for me as a professional and valuable to the client as they own the solution we have helped to create.



WHAT MAKES A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH A CLIENT IN YOUR VIEW?

Honesty, creativity and engagement.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

Success is subjective. In the long term, success is a feeling that you are acting effectively, delivering value and that you are true to your professional obligations. Whilst legal practice may appear to be an industry, at its heart, it is a profession. Being a member of this profession matters greatly to me.

IS ABLA DIFFERENT TO OTHER PLACES YOU HAVE WORKED IN?

In some respects it is – for deliberate and good reasons. ABLA consistently retains professionalism and strong client focus but with a greater sense of accessibility and responsiveness. We are not proprietary in regard to clients – all clients are Firm clients, and don't belong to individual lawyers. This means we are happy to bring a variety of skills together to solve a client problem irrespective of where the engagement started with the Firm. ABLA works really well in project teams.

IF YOU WEREN'T AT WORK, WHAT WOULD WE FIND YOU DOING?

As both my daughters live and work in other cities, you will probably find me visiting one of them!

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