

Suzie Leask

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



WHAT IS YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE?

I specialize in corporate and commercial law, with particular expertise in corporate governance, commercial contracts, regulatory compliance including privacy law, IT and intellectual property, and business transactions (mergers and acquisitions).

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS?

Over 10 years.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN BASED IN NEWCASTLE?

I grew up here and studied at the University of Newcastle but I started my career in Sydney at a top-tier international corporate law firm. I also spent some time seconded to Singapore, then in-house where I was Acting General Counsel (Asia Pacific) for a global company, before returning home to Newcastle in 2013.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO DO THIS WORK?

First and foremost I'm motivated by helping people and also the pursuit of excellence. Professionally it's a real privilege to be a company or a business owner's trusted legal advisor and I find it very rewarding to play a small part in someone's business, whether solving problems, getting deals across the line or helping clients get out of a tricky situation or resolve an issue.

WHAT DO YOU DO BETTER THAN OTHERS IN YOUR FIELD?

I have one client who says I "read her mind" as far as knowing what they need and the best commercial strategy to achieve results and get deals done in line with their goals and risk appetite. I think my time in-house has given me a very commercial, solutions oriented approach that is unique and (hopefully) client friendly.

WHY WOULD A CLIENT WANT TO WORK WITH YOU?

Clients want to work with me because they trust my advice is technically sound but also commercial and they know I'm always looking out for their best interests. Ultimately I think it's about not just doing exceptional, quality

legal work but also being responsive, prompt and going above and beyond for clients. I'm also pretty approachable and I try to make legal concepts accessible and relevant in a business context which helps clients make important decisions and be empowered to negotiate the best outcome for their business.

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

Trust and communication. Clients need to be able to rely on their lawyer to deliver results on time and on budget. The best client relationships in my view are the ones where I am able to know their business in detail, including all of its challenges and mistakes, so I can add value, share my expertise and experience and ideally, be proactive in preventing issues before they arise.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

I prefer not to focus on reaching a particular measure of 'success' and just constantly push myself to improve and excel at whatever I take on professionally and personally, while always looking for the next challenge.

IS ABLA DIFFERENT TO OTHER PLACES YOU HAVE WORKED IN?

Yes. The fact that we are owned by a not-for-profit private business organisation and not a partnership is very different and encourages collaboration and focus on what businesses need.

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

Doing work for local not-for-profit Boards, spending time with my husband and two little girls, playing the piano or going to the beach.

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