

Warwick La Hood

DIRECTOR - PROPERTY

WHAT IS YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE?

Property Law.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS?

Since 1986, I worked as a law stationer for several law firms throughout my university days. Back then my duties were to exchange sale contracts, attend settlements, payment of stamp duty and complete registrations.

When I started as a lawyer, I worked in property transactions and litigation matters concerning property.

I guess over 25 years as a lawyer but 30 years generally. One could even say my lifetime given I helped out in my family's hotels and land ownership business.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN BASED IN SYDNEY?

Yes. It would be hard to drag me too far from Sydney's beaches.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO DO THIS WORK?

I got hooked on property at a young age. I have carried that fascination and passion for property ever since and I always knew it would be my career.

All property issues are unique. Helping a client sort out a legal issue by advising them to manage what are often emotional decisions (property, whether residential or commercial always has an emotional element) and focus on what needs to be resolved is challenging, and it is this challenge I find motivating.

WHAT DO YOU DO BETTER THAN OTHERS IN YOUR FIELD?

Having empathy for a client's situation and explaining difficult concepts of interest in land in a simple and easy to understand way.

I started out as a sole practitioner in my late twenties and being so young, I needed to obtain the confidence of clients. One of my goals when working with a client is to educate and mentor the client on the legal issues involved. This helps the client engage in the strategies I put forward. It also means they are better equipped themselves in the property space as our relationship grows.

WHY WOULD A CLIENT WANT TO WORK WITH YOU?

I'm empathetic to their needs. I seem to do well balancing the passion with the rational which is critical to property clients.

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

Time and energy. I take the time to understand what they want to achieve and help them get there. Great relationships need to be nurtured and that's what I like to do.

IS ABLA DIFFERENT TO OTHER PLACES YOU HAVE WORKED IN?

Yes. ABLA is focussed on businesses but not in a dry manner. ABLA is collegiate, we all know each other as people and focus on the best experience for the client so we are much quicker to involve other team members if they are best suited to solve the problem, which was not my experience working in a traditional partnership.

ABLA's way of "lawyering" is to help support and guide businesses through the commercial decision making processes with the law as

the sub text. A big difference with ABLA is it is part of something bigger, the NSW Business Chamber, which drives a different focus and culture from day one.

Our lawyers are aware that resolving legal issues is only one aspect a business will traverse in its path to success. At ABLA our priority is the commercial success of the business not the amount of fees we generate. Again this stems from being owned by the Chamber.



HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

When the client is happy, the matter is resolved and there is certainty for them in their business.

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

If you could find me, it would be babysitting my grandson, drawing (I am ABLA's artist in residence) or swimming far out in the ocean; did someone say shark?

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