



ashurst

Firm *friends*

ALUMNI YEARBOOK

2021

Contents

Click on the links below to view an individual article or browse through Firm *friends* using the navigation tabs.

Welcome

Ben Tidswell, Chairman

Welcome to the 2021 edition of our alumni yearbook, *Firm friends*.

This yearbook goes live during a period of significant global challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on us all and it is during times such as these that we look towards our networks and communities for support.

I feel very fortunate to be part of the Ashurst community and I have thoroughly enjoyed reading about the successes and passions of our people in this yearbook. I would like to give special thanks to each of our alumni contributors for taking the time to share their experiences with us and helping us to create a publication that is both entertaining and inspiring. Your support of the alumni programme is greatly appreciated.

While the pandemic has impacted our global alumni reunion plans, we hope that our communications help keep you connected with fellow alumni, and the firm, until we are able to meet in person once more.

I hope that our yearbook provides you with a welcome distraction and helps to reinforce your connection with the Ashurst family. Please get in touch with any comments you may have or suggestions for future content. We are always delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes and stay safe.





Life after law

John Watson

Retiring from the legal world has allowed former London Partner John Watson the time to merge his love of writing with his interest in current affairs.

Here, John reflects on his time at the firm and recounts how the simple question “Could I?” resulted in the launch of his weekly eMagazine, the [Shaw Sheet](#).

All Ashurst partners have nerves of steel but I confess it shook me a bit when a year or two shy of my 60th birthday I received an email from the Senior Partner requesting my presence at a seminar on life after retirement. Had I inadvertently begun dozing off in meetings? Had clients begun to demand someone younger and wiser for their tax advice? It was with some nervousness that I looked at the other recipients. Fortunately they were such eminent legal luminaries that no one could possibly have wanted to lose them. Perhaps the invitation was not so sinister after all.

Actually the seminar was run by a headhunting guru who explained at length how we should go about collecting non-executive directorships. Start with charitable appointments and get some unpaid experience for a year or two and then, with a little luck and his organisation’s assistance, you might make it on to a commercial board. After outlining this inspiring route to Valhalla, he asked for questions. There were not many; indeed the room was largely comatose. So to get things going he asked everyone to state their ambitions for their retirement. If he was expecting us all to talk about our ambitions for board membership he must have been sadly disappointed. “Open a restaurant”, said one. “Make wooden furniture,” responded another. “Take a degree in philosophy” intoned a third. One by one the audience came out with ways of exploiting

talents which they had never had the opportunity to use. And that is what retirement is about: testing underused talents or using talents in different ways. “Could I?” is the great question, and to die with it unanswered is ungrateful and wasteful.

That is how the [Shaw Sheet](#) was born. I always loved writing. I was interested in current affairs and politics. An online magazine was the answer. But not just any magazine. The world is full of political blogs, most of them fairly bigoted and uninspiring; the game was to create something a little different; also something which would draw on the lessons Ashurst had taught me over the years.

Ashurst has always been a firm with a difference, focusing on its clients’ commercial needs and going well beyond the mere supply of legal services. The firm you would want at your side; that is Ashurst in a nutshell. Not for nothing did everyone from the banks to the Beatles want Martin Lampard’s advice. “You have to instruct him” as one eminent merchant banker put it “otherwise he might be hired by the other side”. Not for nothing did the first chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation insist that if he was to take the job he must have Laurence Rutman as his lawyer. He was looking for something much wider than conveyancing expertise.

That broader perspective has always run through the firm and showed itself in other ways too. Tax lawyers are not generally glamour boys. They lurk among the deep technicians of the legal world, scruffy fellows with beetle brows (this of course does not apply to the ladies), puzzling late into the night over obscure statutes and endless cups of coffee. They do not often get the chance to appear in court. Imagine my excitement then when a point arose on enterprise zone trusts and a client offered to pay £10,000 if I would argue a test case on behalf of the industry in front of the Special Commissioners.

The trouble was that it would involve a lot of time and £10,000 would not begin to cover it at my charge rate, so I went to see Ian Nisse, then Managing Partner, to ask what the firm thought I should do. Needless to say his first question was how much chargeable time we were investing in earning this £10,000. I replied that it would be between £100,000 and £200,000 but that I thought that it might look rather good to take the case. “There is only one question, then” he said, after a moment’s pause. “Would you enjoy doing it?” The result? I fought the case, became a solicitor advocate to argue the appeals and eventually was able to confront the astonished tax community with the picture of a firm of solicitors winning a tax case against the Revenue in the Court of Appeal without using Counsel. It certainly did not do our profile any harm.

The team which set up the Shaw Sheet was small, about half a dozen in total, with a variety of experience. It includes retired City professionals; a novelist; an oil executive, and we gave very careful thought to why we were doing it. After all, there are loads of blogs out there and the published press is gradually failing. What was the point of a free weekly news magazine?

We began by asking ourselves the question Ian Nisse had asked me: “Would we enjoy it?” but the affirmative answer to that was not really enough. We needed to take a more holistic approach and to think about the gap we hoped to fill. Our conclusion was that newspapers, being short of money and not able to pay for much research, were becoming increasingly superficial. Accordingly, there was room for publications which approached analysis in a different way, by using people from outside journalism who could apply their knowledge and intuition to cut to the centre of issues. In keeping with that, our writers’ guidelines required, and still do require, that every piece should reveal something, whether fact, analysis or a new argument, and leave the reader feeling that he or she had learnt something interesting.



“All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.”

THOMAS EDWARD SHAW

That left us with the question of what we should call ourselves. Any marketing expert will tell you that the name is an important part of the brand and to match our aspirations we needed to name ourselves after someone who was both a distinguished writer and had big achievements in the world outside. In the end we settled on Lawrence of Arabia. It is quite unnecessary for me to praise his military achievements in the Middle East – after all we have all seen the film – but perhaps the reader will be less familiar with his astonishing abilities as a writer, not merely as the author of a brilliant standard translation of the Odyssey, but as the author of one of the most elegant passages in the English language:

“All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.”

Wow! It had to be Lawrence and, as he changed his name to Shaw after his return to England, we named the Shaw Sheet in his honour. If you look very carefully at the top left-hand corner of our banner, you will see his image faintly imprinted.

The pandemic has been good to the Shaw Sheet, pushing the weekly circulation to the mid-200s and introducing new writers. We now, as part of a menu which contains comment and feature articles, cartoons and crossword, publish authoritative pieces on the statistical side of COVID, US politics and economics. It has also charted a way

forward. As the debate opens on the shape of post-pandemic society, it is important that those with experience outside politics and the media should contribute to it. The Shaw Sheet, appearing weekly and independent of party politics, is well placed to provide a vector for such contributions and we would like to develop it into a source which others can use. So if you feel that you would like to contribute to the debate, come and write for us or help us to develop the profile of our magazine. Alternatively, of course, you can take the different course of smothering your talent, putting your feet up, watching Netflix and complaining that no one seems to be advocating your views. That is a perfectly good approach to the declining years but, let us be honest, not quite in line with what we all learned to expect of ourselves at Ashurst.



Being a Voice for Change

Emma Minimbi

Port Moresby alum Emma Minimbi (Lawyer until 2019) recently completed a Master of Public and International Law at the University of Melbourne after winning an Australia Awards Scholarship (AAS) for Intake 2019. In addition to winning the scholarship, she was awarded the prestigious Allison Sudradjat Prize for AAS Intake 2019. She has now returned to PNG and is working with Voice for Change, a provincial women's organisation, to tackle human rights and gender equality issues.



We caught up with Emma to find out more about the work she is doing and her ambitious plans for the future.

Tell us about your time at Ashurst.

I still remember joining Ashurst on 4 June 2016. Everything was so new and the technology was way more advanced than most of the Papua New Guinea (PNG) law firms. This was very exciting for me as I am the type of person who loves technology and enjoys using IT systems and keeping everything on computers.

I really enjoyed my 2 years 8 months with Ashurst and only left after winning a scholarship to further my studies. I was given the opportunity to defer my scholarship but, given what happened with COVID-19, I am glad I didn't.

You recently completed your Master of Public and International Law at the University of Melbourne after being awarded the Australia Awards Scholarship. How was that?

If I am honest, I spent a couple of weekends crying because of the exams which involved writing 6,000-word essays in two days and research papers of 10,000 words (laughs). I was so used to doing procedural law and litigation that, when it came to international law and how it affects the public domain, I was mindblown. It was definitely a bit of a struggle at first.

Thankfully the first two subjects I took eased me into the challenges of studying at postgraduate level and developed my understanding of how international law differs from litigation and commercial law.



In the end, I enjoyed my Master's programme and I made a lot of friends in Australia as well as from all over the world.

Now that you have completed this study, you have returned to PNG and are working with an organisation called Voice for Change. Tell us about this.

As part of my scholarship contract with the Commonwealth of Australia, I have now returned to PNG to undertake 2 years of developmental work in the law and justice sector.

Voice for Change is a women's human rights organisation that represents women with many types of legal issues, especially relating to domestic violence and gender-based violence. They help with issues such as obtaining protection orders for women against their partners and family members, and sorcery-related violence and deaths.

While we assist in gender-based violence and domestic violence issues, we also go further and address these issues with a more holistic approach. We try to empower women by running economic empowerment programmes and women's leadership programmes. Personally, I am attached to the elimination of all forms of violence against women (EVAW) response desk as a volunteer legal intern/officer.

I attend the District Court on behalf of all clients who come to our office, mostly women and girls, and I advise women and young girls on their rights and responsibilities according to domestic and international law. I try as much as possible to translate legalese into layperson's terms, and explain the law in a simple way that a layperson can understand.

I think the most important impact I have had in the community in Minj, Jiwaka Province is the ability to change the perception of people, especially menfolk. By being present in the community, not only as a lawyer, but as a woman with a postgraduate qualification volunteering in a rural setting, for lack of a better term, has opened the eyes of menfolk in the community. In one month, my presence alone as a volunteer legal officer has reduced domestic violence in the neighbouring villages and communities. Furthermore, menfolk are now seeing the importance of equal opportunity for women and girls. This has brought me so much satisfaction in the work I am doing, changing lives in a holistic manner by being involved in a sphere where PNG's law and justice system are barely accessible.

Where does your passion for this type of work come from?

Growing up in the Highlands of PNG, I saw first-hand a lot of violence within marriages and within the community more broadly. The Highlands of PNG has a very strong patrilineal society where men have so much power over women and growing up watching this made me say "No - I am not going to stand for this!" I want to return and educate people that women have equal rights to men and represent those who have little or no access to the law and justice system.

What is next for you - what are your future aspirations?

In the next 10 years I hope to be in one of two places.

First, I hope to work to persuade the government to set up a National Human Rights Commission in PNG. There was a draft Organic Law on the Papua New Guinea Human

Rights Commission drafted by the National Legislative Council in 2013; however, to date, there has been no political will to push for the passing of this Organic Law to establish a Human Rights Commission. It is a massive and pretty difficult task but I am determined to see this through.

If I am not working on setting up a Human Rights Commission, then I am hoping to be working with UN Women and running programmes focused on ending all forms of violence against women in PNG.

What do you hope will have changed in 10 years in this space within PNG and what is the biggest obstacle to this change?

First of all, I hope that all women know their rights. A lot of women in villages think they are second-class citizens and secondary to men and that men hold all of the power. We need to empower women to let them know they can make decisions to protect themselves. Secondly, on a wider scale, I hope men's mentality towards women changes, and that they recognise and respect women's rights.

I think the biggest barrier to this is custom. Custom really does play a big role in determining how the village courts and peace mediators make decisions. For instance, when a woman is beaten by her partner or husband, the village court magistrate will almost automatically ask "What did the woman do wrong?" The magistrate can say that according to custom the woman is probably in the wrong and deserves whatever has happened. The husband is then usually ordered to pay compensation to his wife and she is forced to go back to him even if she doesn't want to.

Did you always know you wanted to be a lawyer?

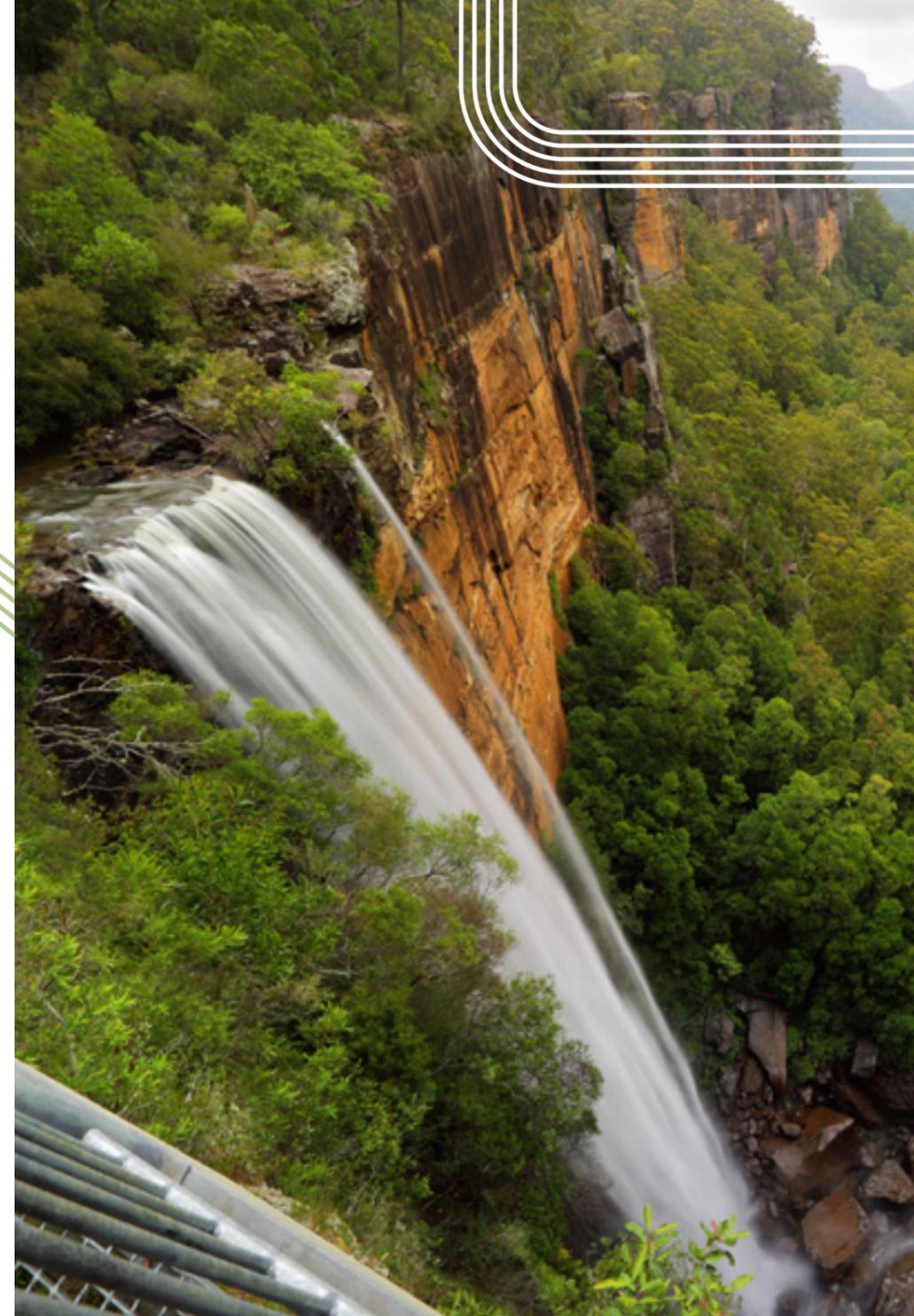
At one point I wanted to be an archaeologist (laughs).

I was 12 when I decided I actually wanted to be a lawyer. I witnessed police brutality first-hand when I watched police officers beat up my eldest brother who was only 16 years old at that time. They then arrested him with no charges and detained him in jail with adult males for 6 months without acknowledging that he was a juvenile, and furthermore, denied him medical attention for all the injuries he sustained. At that point my family couldn't find a lawyer who would help us get him out and I thought, you know what, I am going to be a lawyer and help people who are in situations where there is serious injustice.

How has your time at Ashurst helped you to succeed?

Ashurst shaped me as a lawyer in terms of being diligent in my work, creating in me the work ethic of attention to detail and encouraging me to be a bit of a perfectionist, especially in terms of drafting documents.

When I started at Ashurst I felt like I had no idea of what I was doing and when I left I knew how to identify and address any legal problem or issue that arose, and most importantly to think quickly on my feet. I am forever grateful that I spent my 2 years, 8 months with Ashurst.



Are there Ashurst colleagues who had, or continue to have, a significant impact on your life and career?

My Supervising Partner at Ashurst was [Ian Shepherd](#) and he is still a big part of my life. He sometimes calls and messages to see how I am doing and he even asked me if I would consider coming back. He was very supportive of my application for the Australia Awards Scholarship and he has always been very supportive of my dreams and aspirations. He told me if I really wanted to get anything done I could and if I needed help he would always be there.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

I recall a colleague at Ashurst saying "If you can do something today, get it done today. Don't leave it until tomorrow." This advice is the reason I don't have work piling up for me every day and is some of the best advice I've ever received.

What is your favourite Ashurst memory?

The 2017 Christmas party!

What do you love about living in PNG and what do you do on weekends?

There a lot of things I could say I don't like about PNG in terms of the government, politics and society generally, but I do love that PNG has really beautiful scenery especially up in the Highlands. My personal favourite scenery is waterfalls. On weekends I love to go and find new waterfalls - I call it my chasing waterfalls weekends.

Looking back

Joss Dare



Partner and Global Co-Head of Projects [Joss Dare](#) celebrates 22 years with the firm this year. Joss joined as a fresh-faced Associate in August 1999. He became a Partner in London in 2007 before moving to Dubai later that year; eventually returning to London in May 2019.

Who or what inspired you to become a lawyer?

I think my main motivation for signing up to law school was really a desire to spend a couple of extra years as a student after feeling that university went by far too quickly. Within a few days of starting (on 30 September 1993 in fact), I met the woman to whom I have now been married for 22 years. The first time I really became “inspired” as a lawyer was in 1995 when I did a trainee seat in projects (alongside my fellow Global Co-Head of Projects, [Lee McDonald](#) – although we were at a different firm at the time). It was here that, for the first time, I got excited by working on a tangible “project” – a real piece of infrastructure that would serve a function for generations once created. I have always loved that about projects work and still do. My first project as a qualified lawyer was the project financing of the London Eye!

What is the biggest change you have seen during your time with the firm?

The scale and reach of our firm is almost unrecognisable from 1999. In those days we had a small European offering and bits and bobs in Asia and not much else outside of London. In the past 20 years, the firm has developed a much more truly global footprint. It pleases me greatly that our projects practice has been at the forefront of that.

What did you enjoy most about your time in Dubai?

Dubai is a great place to live and I thoroughly enjoyed raising my young children there for a dozen years; it was a brilliant experience for the whole family. In addition to this personal aspect, it was also a particularly fulfilling professional experience because I was given the freedom (and responsibility) to create our projects practice in the region from a standing start (and then later the job of running the Dubai office and then, later still, the whole region). At times this was daunting and very often involved back-breaking work with little obvious progress. But, over time, we built one of the best projects practices in the region, regularly taking on the most high-profile jobs for the best clients across the full range of industry sectors. At first it was just me, then we added partner after partner as we grew the team from only about half a dozen in total when I first arrived to the powerhouse it is today. I found the sense of family and camaraderie that you get from being part of a team of that compact size that you built with your own hands truly satisfying and I am still very fond of the many alumni who were part of the team from those early days.

Who has inspired you during your career?

Lots of great Ashurst partners have inspired me over the years: [Philip Vernon](#) (my first Ashurst roomie!) who is still one of the best “pure” lawyers I have ever met; [Geoffrey Picton-Turbervill](#) (aka “GPT”) for showing me how it’s done in the Middle East (and India before that); Mark Elsey for his vision – and his ability to manipulate deal timetables around his holiday schedule (something he elevated to a genuine art form); [Lee McDonald](#) for his dress sense.

What’s the most unusual request you’ve ever had from a client?

My first-ever client meeting did not start well and went downhill from there. I was unable to work the coffee dispenser until I panicked and pushed far too hard causing piping hot coffee to eject onto my brand new suit, striking me in a highly sensitive, not to say inappropriate, area. I recall that the client was a woman whose legal problem concerned a shipment of vegetables that had been left on the quayside and gone bad.

Straight out of law school, I was delighted to be able to jump to the assistance of my supervisor with a detailed account of various shipping terms learned only weeks before (I recall the term “free on board” now and not much else, so I sympathise with my more “mature” former supervisor). As the meeting drew to a close, I was pleased to have redeemed myself from the coffee debacle at the start. Then, at the last minute, the client announced that there was one other thing I must help her with. “Oh yes of course”, says I, hoping for more vegetable questions. Leaning in and lowering her voice to a whisper she said, “My husband is trying to kill me. Can you help me hire a hitman to get him first?” I have to say “Know Your Client” checks have come on a long way since then...

What has been your greatest achievement at Ashurst?

The creation and growth of the firm’s Middle East business: from one office with half a dozen people in Dubai that, in 2007, nobody had ever heard of, we now have four offices staffed by eight partners and over 50 staff with a premium reputation and which have often delivered greater profitability than some of our larger offices. As part of this, the transformation of our fortunes in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi have been particular highlights. All achieved, of course, in partnership with many other talented people – many of whom became, over the years, friends as much as colleagues including, from the current team, such notable luminaries as [David Charlier](#) and [Faisal Baassiri](#).

Is there anything you would do differently?

No, I don’t think so. There have, of course, been numerous mistakes, bumps and wrong turnings over the years, but these are all part of the journey.

On reflection, possibly the Nebuchadnezzar of champagne at 3 am in a nightclub after the 2009 Dubai office Christmas party was ill-thought through.

What are you most looking forward to?

My second sabbatical – only eight years to go!

The future of classical music

Tahlia Petrosian

Sydney alum Tahlia Petrosian has forged an amazingly successful career as a musician and creative producer. She plays viola with the world-famous Gewandhaus Orchestra in Germany, has produced and consulted globally, and founded the very successful KLASSIK Underground concert series.

While **Tahlia** is very well known in the classical music world, few would know that she has a legal background having completed degrees in Arts and Law at the University of New South Wales and studied German Law and International Law at Humboldt University in Berlin. She completed her graduate year with Blake Dawson in the Sydney office in 2007.



Combining these dual music/law experiences and interests, Tahlia is reinventing the classical music space and even a global pandemic can't slow her down.

Photography by Gert Mothes

You have had an amazing career as a musician – what are some of your personal highlights?

I am a member of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Germany, which is one of the best orchestras in Germany and in the world. As a performer with that orchestra, I've had so many opportunities and enjoyed so many concerts. I have gone on tour, played in famous concert halls to sold-out audiences and played at the most prestigious festivals around the world. As an Australian playing at these major concert halls and festivals, in an orchestra that came into existence before Australia was even on many maps, means there are a lot of highlights and it's a particularly treasured experience.

From the creative producer side, I would have to say my major highlight was working as producer on [Harrison Parrott's 50th anniversary celebration](#) at the Southbank Centre in London in October 2019. The celebration involved a massive day of concerts with 21 major solo artists, 4 well-known conductors, the Philharmonia Orchestra, 2000 invited guests, the general public and all of the media surrounding the day. It was a great day!

As well as playing with the Gewandhaus Orchestra and the work you do as a creative producer, you also founded KLASSIK Underground. Can you tell us more about this?

KLASSIK Underground is a concert series I started in 2016. The Gewandhaus Orchestra is extremely traditional and we don't really move out of the traditional conservative classical music vein. It just so happens, however, that our concert hall is located next door to an underground venue. It is a really cool space and historically and architecturally extremely interesting as it is the last remaining part of the old city

walls of Leipzig. The venue is used for many different performances but had never been used, or thought of, as a venue for classical music concerts, so I enquired whether they might be interested in a collaboration of some kind. After this suggestion was positively received, I began approaching solo artists who were coming to perform with the Gewandhaus Orchestra to ask whether they might like to come next door after the formal concert to perform an "aftershow" in this venue. And so began KLASSIK Underground.

Part of what helped the series grow, and what encouraged high-level solo artists to be involved, was our use of videos and social media. At the time, there was a real demand for these solo artists to show that they were doing interesting things and to create material for their social media channels. One aspect of the arrangement with the guest artists performing at KLASSIK Underground was that we would produce short video clips of their performances specifically for use on their social media channels. That became a big draw card for them and also got the name of the series out there.

The series was met with a lot of interest and curiosity and really took off – the shows sold out and it became well known worldwide.

In addition to these aftershows with guest solo artists, KLASSIK Underground also experiments with combining classical music with different art forms. For example, I started presenting shows bringing classical music and live street art together, or combining classical music with modern video installation – combinations that you wouldn't necessarily expect would go together. KLASSIK Underground started as an experiment which then became a way of rethinking new concert formats. The series was really the beginning of where I am now because other orchestras started asking me to develop new concert formats and to advise them on how to develop new projects.

I think these days people want access to really high quality classical music concerts which are not necessarily two hours long and not necessarily where they have to be stuck in their seats. The debate on how to make classical music more appealing to young people is one which has been going on for ages but I think that it's not even just young people anymore. Classical music needs to become more accessible for a 21st century audience whether that person is 80 or 8 because I think that the demands at



Image by Kiss & Tell Communications

both ends of the age spectrum have actually changed. We have become much more interested in having visual activity and stimuli, mainly due to technology and screens pervading many aspects of our lives. Perhaps many people might not be interested in going to a traditional orchestra concert because of a perceived lack of visual stimulus this may entail. Our lives have changed so much and while I recognise and respect the tradition of the classical music concert, I think that there still needs to be greater experimentation and risk-taking with new concert formats.

Did you enjoy your time as a lawyer, or did you always feel that your future lay elsewhere?

I really enjoyed my time working as a lawyer and seeing what life as a lawyer in a big firm was like. I was always 50/50 law and music and in the end I chose music because the opportunity to live overseas and continue studying music was too great to pass up. At the same time, I was very sad to leave Blakes because I met a lot of very interesting people and I really did enjoy my time there.

I still see myself as a lawyer and have not ruled out perhaps returning to the law later on in life.

How did you find the time to keep your music up while studying law and working as a law graduate?

I had an advantage because I played the viola and not the violin. While there were hundreds of violinists, there were not many viola players and, as a result, there were many chamber ensembles in need of a viola player. So, while I was at law school, I was playing a lot of chamber music with people who were studying music degrees and I always found myself racing backwards and forwards from law school to chamber music rehearsals. That is how I kept playing while I was at law school. When I was at Blakes, I practised every evening when I got home.

What did you learn while at Ashurst that has helped you in your current career?

I learnt a great deal which has been very advantageous in my career. Especially recently, as I have moved into consulting and the role of creative producer, the impact of studying law and the opportunities that were granted to me by Blakes are becoming more and more apparent. While consulting has always existed in the business and legal world, in the arts world and especially in classical music, it is relatively new and a real area of growth. My experience as a lawyer is a big advantage to my work in this developing area. Obviously there are not many musicians who have had experience in the legal world!

Last year, along with performing with the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Germany and working in London, I consulted on a major project with a Norwegian arts organisation. The project involved setting up a whole programme of international partnerships with other arts organisations. That was actually a really interesting project for me as it was the first time I actually returned to business writing on a significant scale. The last time I did anything similar to this was while working at Blakes and I was so glad to have had some experience doing this.

Working in a highly professional office environment is, on its own, also a significant advantage. Having experience working in top tier law firms like Blakes and Ashurst is a big advantage no matter what you end up doing.

The global pandemic has had a massive impact on the entertainment industry – how has your life changed in the last year?

Before the pandemic hit, I had already organised to be in Sydney for a year starting in October 2019 but the current situation means that there has been a major change in the nature of the projects that I am working on. For example, I am currently working on a number of projects that will be presented in Germany in 2021 that explore new kinds of online concert formats, as well as live concert formats where social distancing elements are built in. At the moment, we are seeing a lot of concert halls where the audience is significantly reduced, there are many empty seats and everybody is 1.5 metres apart. This significantly impacts the atmosphere. I am working with theatres to look at how we can rethink our use of the concert space to create immersive experiences for the audience where we are observing the 1.5-metre distance rule but this does not necessarily disturb the atmosphere. In other words, instead of adapting the old set-ups and formats to the new rules I am actually taking these new rules and utilising them as the basis for creating something new.

As much as this is a crisis, it's also a big opportunity to rethink a lot of things. There are so many bridges that we've crossed in so many aspects of our lives that there is no going back even if there were to be a vaccine tomorrow.

I really don't know how COVID is going to impact my industry in the long term. There may well be a need to take more risks and to experiment more broadly in classical music, but at the moment many arts organisations are just looking at how they are going to survive.



Photography by Christian Rothe

What does the future hold for you – if we spoke again in a year, what would you like to have achieved?

COVID has basically accelerated things 25-30 years – the future is suddenly here. A very large and critical area now for arts and culture is going to be how to fully exploit the capabilities of the internet. The live event, of course, remains irreplaceable, but I think we have a way to go in exploring the potential of the internet as a forum for artistic performance, particularly seeing as both the medium itself and the manner in which it is utilised are constantly evolving. This is something I would like to examine further in the next year, in addition to continuing to explore collaborations that bring classical music together with diverse art forms.

What is your favourite Ashurst/Blake Dawson memory?

I really enjoyed my time at Blakes. I had a lovely cohort and we were a very diverse group. I also enjoyed doing the College of Law course at Blakes and of course the view from Level 36 of the old Sydney office in Grosvenor Place!

Visit [Tahlia's website](#) for videos of KLASSIK Underground performances.

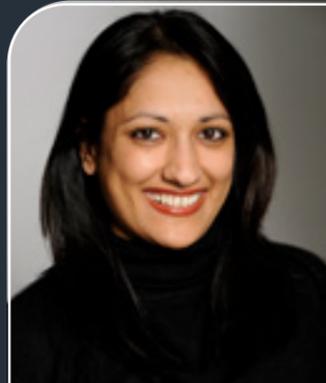
Meet our newest partners

Reflecting the strength and depth of Ashurst talent and the firm's commitment to continually investing in the future of the business, Ashurst promoted 15 partners in 2020. Meet them here.



VICKI ARON

Vicki Aron is a partner in our real estate practice based in Sydney. Vicki has over 17 years of experience in the area of commercial property and started with Ashurst in 2017. She works with government and private sector clients and specialises in major property projects, development transactions, commercial, industrial and retail leasing, and acquisitions and disposals.



NAVDEEP BENNING

Navdeep Benning is a banking and finance partner in the Ashurst global loans team. She has been a Fund Finance lawyer since the inception of the market and, with over 15 years' experience, is a recognised expert in her field. Based in London, she has also spent time working in our Hong Kong and New York offices since joining Ashurst in 2006.



JANE HALL

Jane Hall is a partner in our projects practice. She has been with Ashurst her entire career and is based in Melbourne. She delivers, and provides advice on, infrastructure, energy and resources, utility and city-shaping projects involving various environmental, planning, heritage and water law issues and approval requirements. Her practice encompasses all Australian jurisdictions and the Asia-Pacific region.



LUCINDA HILL

Lucinda Hill is a partner in our dispute resolution practice in Melbourne and joined Ashurst in 2010. She has significant experience in large and complex disputes, with particular experience in regulatory investigations and disputes, compliance investigations and class actions. Lucinda acts for a wide range of clients, including in the financial services, energy and transport industries.



LORRAINE HUI

Lorraine Hui is a partner in our dispute resolution practice and first joined Ashurst as a graduate in Sydney in 2009. She relocated to Hong Kong in 2015 to work as in-house counsel at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, returning to Ashurst in 2018. Now in Sydney, Lorraine advises on general commercial dispute resolution, with a particular focus on financial services disputes, contentious regulatory investigations, class actions and arbitration.



ANDREW KIM

Andrew Kim is a partner in our corporate practice and joined Ashurst in 2012. Based in Sydney, he specialises in public mergers and acquisitions, and equity capital markets transactions for ASX-listed companies. Andrew's M&A experience includes off-market takeovers, schemes of arrangement and trust schemes for ASX-listed companies and investment funds, and his ECM experience includes IPOs, rights issues and offers of hybrid securities.



DR. KARSTEN RAUPACH

Dr. Karsten Raupach is a partner in the finance department and a member of our global restructuring and special situations group. Based in Munich, Karsten practises primarily in the area of banking and finance with a focus on domestic and international restructurings, and on leveraged and project finance transactions. He has been with Ashurst since joining us as a senior associate in 2015.



ELEANOR REEVES

Eleanor Reeves is a partner in our real estate practice and joined Ashurst in 2016. She leads our London environment and safety practice, advising clients from the public and private sectors on a wide range of contentious and non-contentious environmental and safety matters. Her practice includes advising on legal risk management, incident response and crisis management, regulatory obligations and compliance, regulatory investigations and enforcement action including civil and criminal sanctions.



BRADLEY RICE

Bradley Rice is a partner in our financial regulation practice in London and joined Ashurst in 2017. Brad provides clear, commercial advice in an area of law which is often complex and subject to unprecedented change. He specialises in all aspects of financial services regulation. In particular, he acts for some of the largest fund managers advising on the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive (AIFMD) and collective investment scheme (CIS) issues.



DONALD SLATER

Donald Slater is a partner in our competition and EU law practice. Now based in Brussels, he has specialised in EU law since 2000, mainly working in private practice but also in EU institutions and academia. He has a broad and deep experience of litigation before the European courts. Originally joining in 2003, Donald returned to Ashurst in 2018 after spending three years in the European Court of Justice.



ANDREW SMITH

Andrew Smith is a partner in our projects practice. He focuses on energy, transport and infrastructure projects, particularly public-private partnerships (PPP/P3) projects and project finance. He has advised sponsors, procuring authorities and funders on many major projects in the US, Asia and the UK. Now in New York, Andrew started with Ashurst in our Singapore office in 2010 and also did a one-year secondment with the Japan Bank for International Corporation (JBIC) in Tokyo.



LARISSA TOOZOFF

Larissa Toozoff is a partner in our projects practice in Canberra. Larissa primarily advises on procurement and commercial contracting, focusing on construction and infrastructure projects. She also advises on general commercial law, acts as probity adviser on major commercial projects, and advises on funding grants and statutory interpretation. Larissa Toozoff was a judicial associate with the Family Court of Australia before joining Ashurst in 2006.



MYFANWY WOOD

Myfanwy Wood is a partner in our dispute resolution practice in London. She specialises in international arbitration and litigation, with particular experience in the oil & gas sector, broader energy disputes, Africa, Australia, and also class actions. Her clients include public and private multinational oil & gas companies, global mining companies and other leading infrastructure and energy corporations. Myfanwy joined Ashurst in 2014.



SILVANA WOOD

Silvana Wood is a partner in our financial regulation practice based in Sydney. She joined our Australian regulatory team in 2017. Silvana has spent the past six years as a senior lawyer and manager for the UK FCA enforcement division in London, leading a number of significant and high-profile enforcement investigations into the conduct of retail and investment banks and their senior management individuals.



TIHANA ZUK

Tihana Zuk is a partner in our competition practice. Based in Sydney, she has been with Ashurst for her entire career. Tihana specialises in Australian competition law/anti-trust law and consumer law. She has a strong background in advising parties on merger control issues, and obtaining merger clearance from the ACCC for complex domestic and international transactions.



The importance of partnering

Fiona Forrest

As Principal Advisor HR at Rio Tinto's Oyu Tolgoi mine, one of the largest copper and gold deposits in the world, Brisbane and Singapore alum Fiona Forrest certainly had her work cut out when the global pandemic took hold.

We caught up with Fiona to find out what impact COVID-19 had on her role, what it's like working on the client side and the importance of "partnering".

Please tell us about your role as Principal Advisor Human Resources at Oyu Tolgoi Underground Project for Rio Tinto.

To give you a bit of background, Oyu Tolgoi is a combined open pit and underground gold and copper mine located in the South Gobi Desert in Mongolia. The true value of the mineral deposit is 1.3 km underground, so Rio Tinto is currently building a significant underground mine, with first sustainable production projected to occur between October 2022 and June 2023. The mine will be one of the largest in the world once completed. The underground mine is a multi-billion dollar project with around 8,000 employees and contractors on site at any given time. Around 95% of our workforce is Mongolian, with the rest of the workforce made up of expatriate employees who come from all over the world bringing key skills and expertise to the project. It's a really significant project for both Rio Tinto and Mongolia. Oyu Tolgoi currently accounts for 70% of all Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Mongolia, and when running at full capacity will contribute 20-25% of gross domestic product (GDP).

Since 2019, I've lived in the capital, Ulaanbaatar (or UB as it is known), and split my time between the project office in UB and the OT site. Site is a 1-hour (often bumpy!) flight from UB. My role is to provide HR support and advice to the project leaders and deliver the HR strategy for the project. I work closely with our fantastic HR team in Mongolia, as well as my HR colleagues in other Rio Tinto offices. One of my accountabilities is

managing the expatriate employment life cycle, which can involve quite a lot of work due to complex remuneration structures, different contractual arrangements and various home contract jurisdictions. I also coach and advise our leaders on a wide range of HR matters, which is actually very much like being a lawyer in that I act as a trusted advisor and provide a safe environment for the leaders to come and bounce ideas around. I carry out quite a number of workplace investigations. I frequently get asked to do policy review and drafting work, because of my employee relations and legal background.

Do you think your background as a lawyer has helped you in your current role?

Yes, absolutely. Although I've probably had to wind myself back a bit because I think, as lawyers, we tend to focus just on providing the right advice directly to our clients. I've had to adapt as my role now is much more about bringing the business leaders along on the journey, and helping them to understand the issues so that we can develop solutions together. We are very much a leader-driven business so it's not HR's role to have the difficult conversations when needed. Part of my role is to make sure our leaders fully understand and are comfortable to sit in front of our employees and deliver these messages themselves. It's less about "telling" and more about "partnering".

What is it like being on the client side of things?

Well, I think it is a big advantage for me having been on the lawyer side in that I know how to properly brief our external law firms. One of my biggest frustrations as a lawyer in private practice was clients who would drip feed documents and information through. I know how painful that can be so I'm always careful and make sure I brief everything properly. I also know what questions to ask our external advisers and I'm aware of what exactly needs to be addressed, which can save a lot of time and is more cost-effective for the business.

It's also good to have the confidence to know that not everything needs to be "briefed out". I know there are some clients who take comfort in having everything checked off by legal, but sometimes it's just not necessary so it's good to be able to manage that risk as well.

How did COVID-19 impact your role?

Like a lot of people, COVID-19 completely upended my world. When Mongolia closed all of its international borders in early 2020, we had to re-design how our entire project would run because we had less of our skilled expat workforce in the country (we are a fly in/fly out workforce with most of our expats working a four weeks on, two weeks off rota). We sent all of our residential expat families out of Mongolia, with only a core group of expat employees remaining in country. We had to actively manage all of our people who were out of the country and figure out who could and couldn't work remotely. There was a complete re-design of our remuneration model. We did everything we could to ensure that we kept our skilled workers employed and ready to remobilise to Mongolia when borders re-opened. It's difficult to get certain types of skills into Mongolia so our fundamental objective was to keep a hold of them. We also had to ensure that we were supporting those expat employees who had remained in country to keep working on the project, as they were separated from their families for long periods of time. In addition, there were a number of internal border closures and government measures which impacted our Mongolian workforce and which we had to manage to keep the project running.

In July 2020 we worked with the Mongolian and Australian governments and the Australian embassy in Mongolia to bring a group of our expat employees and contractors on a charter flight from Western Australia to Mongolia on a flight operated by the national Mongolian airline, MIAT. That was the first time there had ever been direct flights from Mongolia to Australia and it has opened up a whole host of opportunities for us as a business. So, whilst it was a very (very!) challenging time, it's good to be able to recognise that achievement.

Did you learn anything about yourself, personally or professionally, in 2020?

Something I have learnt is that "resilience" is not just a fad word, it's real. With all of the challenges I have faced this year I have definitely discovered how resilient I can be and witnessed the same sort of behaviour in those around me. For example, when Rio Tinto decided to reduce the number of people working in our offices globally we had to move to a working from home model. For our Mongolian employees, that was

a massive cultural shift and not something they were used to. A large number live in apartments and with schools being closed since February a lot of our employees were home schooling their children as well, so it was not an ideal work environment. However, they embraced it and got on with it without complaint and it demonstrated to me how resilient we can be when faced with new challenges.

Also, when the lockdown happened I was one of the small group of Rio Tinto expats who chose to stay in Mongolia and we were there, without our families, doing very long hours and really hard work in quite isolating conditions, but we really came together as a group and supported each other through it. I even came to like the local yak cheddar as cheese options became more limited the longer the borders remained closed!

What do you enjoy most about your work and what has been your most rewarding achievement?

Since I joined Rio Tinto in 2016 I've been lucky that I've been able to travel to so many of our sites and offices in Australia and internationally. It has been a real privilege to go to some of our remote sites and see the contribution that we make to communities. I have spent a lot of time in Cape York supporting our operations in Weipa where we have a high level of local and Indigenous employment. That's a really fulfilling part of my role. I've also been lucky to live in Mongolia, and that in itself has been an amazing experience, particularly during 2020 when I have been able to explore more of the country.

In terms of my most rewarding achievement, I was involved in developing Oyu Tolgoi's domestic and family violence policy. Domestic violence is a significant social issue in Mongolia but it's not widely dealt with or talked about. OT and Rio Tinto are at the forefront of Mongolian companies in bringing in this policy to support our employees and contractors who are impacted. Under the policy, we provide measures such as flexible working arrangements and special paid leave to victims of domestic and family violence should it be needed. To me, that is a really special thing to be involved in as I genuinely believe it will make a difference to Mongolian society. As the biggest employer in Mongolia, people look to our business to see what we are doing and

emulate our behaviours.

What new skills do you think lawyers need to develop for the future?

I think that lawyers should focus more on the skill of "partnering" and being able to connect with people in a human way. Being curious, and spending as much time as possible with clients to truly understand their business, has great benefits. To me there's nothing worse than getting guidance from an adviser who doesn't actually "get" what my challenges are. Taking every opportunity you can to get out there and get in front of clients in person, at their business site, not just on the end of the telephone, makes such a difference.

Another thing that I think is critical is to really understand the communities in which the business operates. This is particularly true in mining. The interaction with the communities around our operations very much underpins our business. We, rightly so, spend a lot of time getting to know the towns and communities around us to better understand what's important to them. Taking that time to genuinely understand the surrounding community really helps us to identify risks and opportunities in those environments.

What were the most valuable lessons you learnt while at Ashurst?

The most valuable things I learnt were to exercise considered thinking, and not to rush into providing an answer. There can be a lot of expectation that when someone contacts you, you have to respond immediately. I don't think that does anyone any favours. People come to you for the right answer, not just an answer, so it pays to step back a moment and give your response some proper thought.

Are there Ashurst colleagues who had, or continue to have, a significant impact on your life and career?

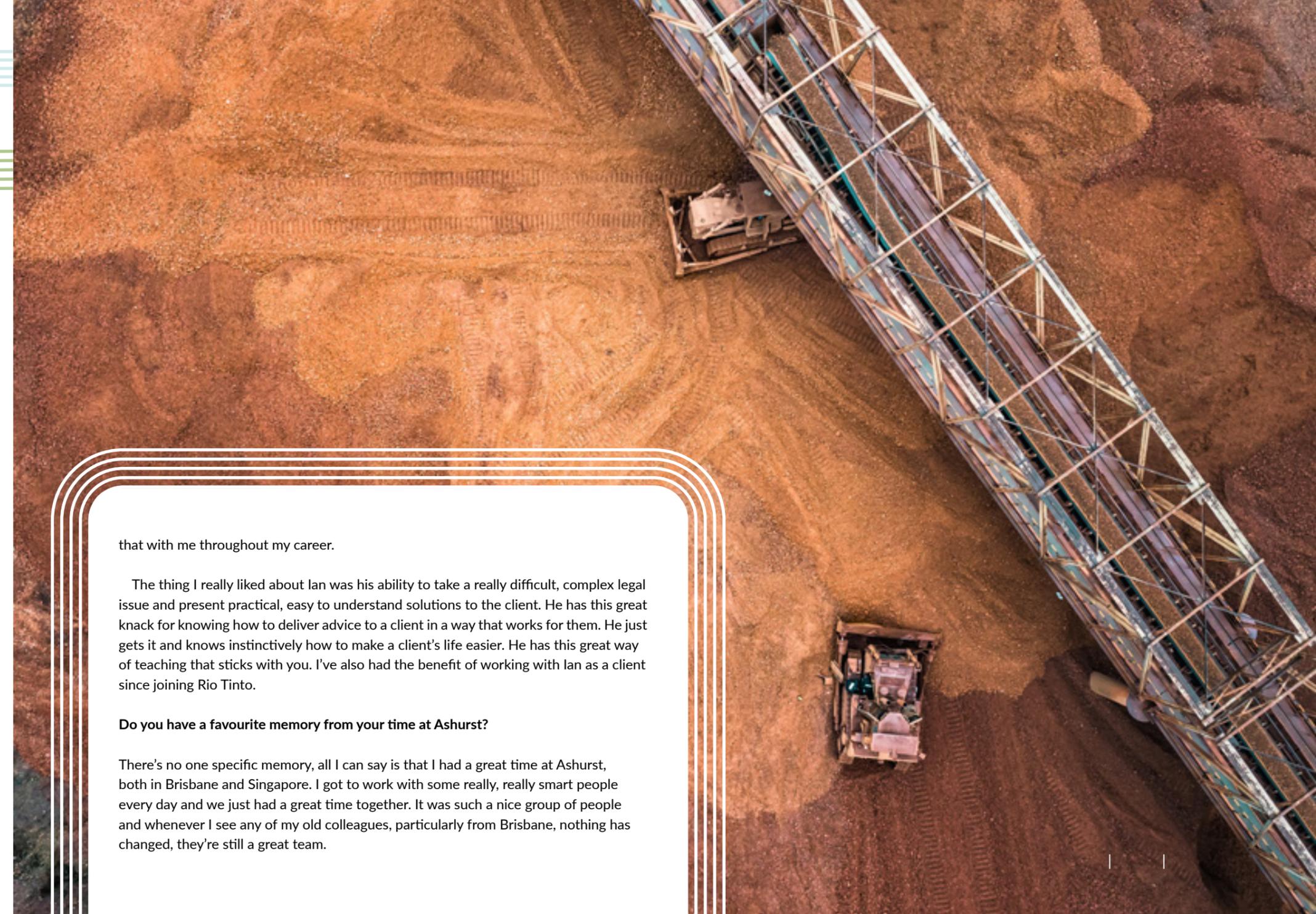
There are two, [James Hall](#) and [Ian Humphreys](#) in the Brisbane employment team. James taught me how to perfect the art of a good witness interview, how to get the most out of a witness and how to connect with them as a real person rather than as a city lawyer. I really took a lot from working alongside him and I've definitely carried

that with me throughout my career.

The thing I really liked about Ian was his ability to take a really difficult, complex legal issue and present practical, easy to understand solutions to the client. He has this great knack for knowing how to deliver advice to a client in a way that works for them. He just gets it and knows instinctively how to make a client's life easier. He has this great way of teaching that sticks with you. I've also had the benefit of working with Ian as a client since joining Rio Tinto.

Do you have a favourite memory from your time at Ashurst?

There's no one specific memory, all I can say is that I had a great time at Ashurst, both in Brisbane and Singapore. I got to work with some really, really smart people every day and we just had a great time together. It was such a nice group of people and whenever I see any of my old colleagues, particularly from Brisbane, nothing has changed, they're still a great team.



Paying it forward and advocating for change

Evan Lam

Partner [Evan Lam](#) joined Ashurst in mid-2020 as part of the financial services regulatory group based in Singapore and recently joined the Ashurst Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group. Since starting with the firm he has generously and openly shared his experience of his gender affirmation journey. We caught up with Evan to discuss his time at Ashurst so far, the challenges faced by LGBTI+ people and his work to drive change.



You joined Ashurst in May 2020. How has your time at Ashurst been to date?

It's been amazing! It has definitely been an interesting challenge trying to set up a new practice from home during COVID lockdowns. But the Ashurst team really pulled together – I've had nothing but incredible support from colleagues, legal and business services. I'm particularly grateful for the support of our HR and BD teams in Singapore, who have been nothing short of extraordinary, as well as my teammates who have really made me feel welcomed and integrated.

What is your favourite thing about being part of the Ashurst family so far?

It really feels like a family. There is a huge effort to work together, cross-refer work, and help out a new partner. There's also a real feeling of engagement and enthusiasm to grow and innovate.

Did you always know you wanted to be a lawyer?

Not at all! I wanted to be a pilot, but my eyesight precluded that. I was actually on track to become a molecular biologist when I decided that lab work was not for me, and did a fairly abrupt 180-degree turn and applied for law school instead.

You have been open about your gender affirmation journey and your advocacy work in the LGBTI+ community. How does it make you feel to be such a positive role model?

For me, it's really about paying it forward – I would never have had the courage to start out on this journey if I hadn't had others who quietly led the way and were there when I needed help. Starting my gender affirmation journey was simultaneously the most rewarding and most terrifying thing I have ever been through, and a process that was

held back for far too long due to fear and a belief that it just wasn't possible. Being open about my experience is born out of the hope that someone in the same position might be encouraged to find that it isn't impossible after all.

You have recently joined the firm's Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group. What excites you most about being part of this group?

I'm actually really excited about the work that's already being done! There are so many great projects in the pipeline to make the workplace more inclusive and help our LGBTI+ co-workers feel more at home.

One of Ashurst's strategic goals is to put diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do. With this in mind, how important is it to have our D&I employee networks and groups such as Spectrum who work to support the LGBTI+ community at Ashurst and in the community in achieving this goal?

Spectrum serves two incredibly important roles. The first is as a support network for LGBTI+ employees, and the second is representation of the voices in the community.

One thing that I've learnt on this journey is that the most important thing in D&I is to empower the community in question to be able to lead the D&I efforts – it is only through listening to those who have been affected that we can become aware of subtle issues like privilege and unconscious bias.

In particular, the LGBTI+ community is incredibly diverse. Within the trans umbrella alone, trans women, trans men and non-binary persons face different challenges that also intersect along lines relating to age, race, sexuality, economic status, and disabilities amongst others. Being able to represent all these different perspectives is incredibly important but also incredibly difficult, and that's where groups such as Spectrum fit right in.

When we look at issues impacting and affecting the LGBTI+ community, what changes would you like to see in both the corporate world, and more generally in society, over the next five years?

As a starting point, I'd love to see a world where LGBTI+ persons don't have to fear coming out or being themselves. There are still immediate life-threatening issues that confront LGBTI+ persons, ranging from denial of access to healthcare, threats of physical violence, inability to find employment, denial of education, homelessness and increased suicide rates due to discrimination (various studies in the US reported that between 22% and 43% of trans persons had attempted suicide, with suicidal ideation rates being even higher). Being LGBTI+ still means facing institutional discrimination, ranging from criminalisation to lack of legal protection, or human rights violations such as legal gender changes being tied to forced sterilisation requirements. These are issues that affect the community in both developed and developing countries.

Find out more about the firm's LGBTI+ network, [Spectrum](#).

As part of our commitment to further raising awareness and understanding of LGBTI+ issues outlined in our latest [Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan](#), Spectrum has published a short guide to LGBTI+ terminology.

[Download our LGBTI+ Inclusive Language Glossary](#)



Sydney alum Professor Michael Adams (Consultant until 2007) has a passion for inspiring and educating the next generation of lawyers. An internationally recognised specialist in corporate law, governance, securities markets regulation, and legal education, his career in law has included highlights in both the academic and practical worlds.

In 2019 he became Head of the University of New England Law School in Armidale, New South Wales. His amazing work was also recently recognised when he was awarded Academic Lawyer of the Year at the Lawyers Weekly 20th Australian Law Awards.

Inspiring the next generation of lawyers

Professor Michael Adams

What does being named Academic Lawyer of the Year at the Lawyers Weekly 20th Australian Law Awards mean to you?

I think it is a reflection of how seriously I take my mentoring and reflects my investment in the next generation of lawyers. I have been investing in this for 30 years and have won a number of awards for mentoring.

My daughter challenged me recently asking me if I'm actually a mentor or a champion, because I do tend to champion young lawyers. Having a daughter go through the field means I have a particular soft spot for female lawyers because I sometimes think they get a rough trot, so I spur them on to get the results they want to achieve.

One of the things I have actually been doing recently is free LinkedIn sessions, where I make myself available for career advice for lawyers, which I find really rewarding.

Two of my nominee referees for the prize were actually students, the current president of the Law Students Society and the past president. I invested in their leadership skills, getting them to national conferences and supporting them when they had internal political problems. They always knew they could phone me to get advice, help and suggestions, and bounce ideas around. One who graduated last year has become my research assistant this year and it has been lovely to work with her at a different level as well as a graduate.

On a more personal level, my daughter's team was nominated for an award at the Lawyers Weekly awards for the Employment and Industrial relations team of the year. She was watching the awards with her team at the partner's house and all of a sudden she saw my wife, Melissa, and our lounge room, and said "That's dad!" She knew I was being nominated but neither of us thought I would win because I am not from the [Group of Eight](#) universities and if you look at the history of the award, mostly it tends to go to these. I was genuinely surprised, and for Lucy to comment that it was such a funny thing to be sitting around with all of these other lawyers and see her dad win an award - that was very cute.



You have had an amazing career – what are some of your personal highlights?

Twenty years ago, in 2000, I won the Federal Government's Australian University Teacher of the Year, for Law and Legal Studies. When you think of all of the academics in Australia, that was genuinely amazing! It also came with a nice cheque!

Another career highlight was winning a major Australian Research Council (ARC) research grant for the ASX Corporate Governance Principals. That was pretty major because, in law, people don't tend to win big research grants and I won about AUD 350,000 to research governance.

While predominantly my job has been as a Professor, a lot of the practical work I have done has been through the Governance Institute of Australia. I chaired its Education Committee, then the State Committee and finally became President of the national body. I was also on the Law Society Specialist Accreditation Board. These roles were both a great service back to the community and I also learnt a great deal.

What do you love most about working in academia?

I think the number one is freedom and the independence you get in academia. I can teach what I want, within some parameters, and undertake research. I also get to deal with some great partnerships and some really good people.

When the Australia government was making reforms to the *Corporations Act* back in the 1990s, I drafted a number of submissions and some legislation. That involvement is a real honour. I can actually open the *Corporations Act* and say "I wrote these words", and that brings a strong sense of satisfaction. I have also done a few presentations with lawyers and they have commented on a section of the Act and I am able to say "I actually wrote that and this is what it means".

What areas of law are you passionate about?

One of the particular criteria of the Academic of the Year award was around technology. Although I teach corporate law and securities markets, one of my real passions is getting students to see that they need to understand technology - what is blockchain,



"I am also passionate about corporate governance and the good corporate citizen. Apple has just topped over 2 trillion dollars, which means its value is now higher than the GDP of Italy and numerous other developed countries. That means they have a lot of clout – they can change the world."

what is artificial intelligence, what is big data and drones and everything else within the innovation space? If the lawyer doesn't have a rudimentary understanding of these technologies, how can they advise on them? I do quite a lot of work in this space and I recently changed the curriculum here at UNE to reflect this. I love teaching it!

I am also passionate about corporate governance and the good corporate citizen. Apple has just topped over 2 trillion dollars, which means its value is now higher than the GDP of Italy and numerous other developed countries. That means they have a lot of clout – they can change the world. My feeling is that corporations, particularly big corporations, should be good corporate citizens, whether in relation to climate change or good industry practices. They need to lead by example and support government. That is my real passion and I do a lot of work helping directors come to conclusions on what is right or wrong.

What is next for you?

I will finish as Head/Dean of UNE Law School in 2023 and I look forward to working a few days as a Professor, a few days on charitable boards and one day per week with a firm. This will provide a more interesting mix of consulting and mentoring junior lawyers through their careers. I have been appointed to a few boards with charitable purposes and this is an area in which I would like to invest time and resources. It is going to be an exciting time, without the additional stresses of management responsibilities.

What is your favourite Ashurst/Blake Dawson memory?

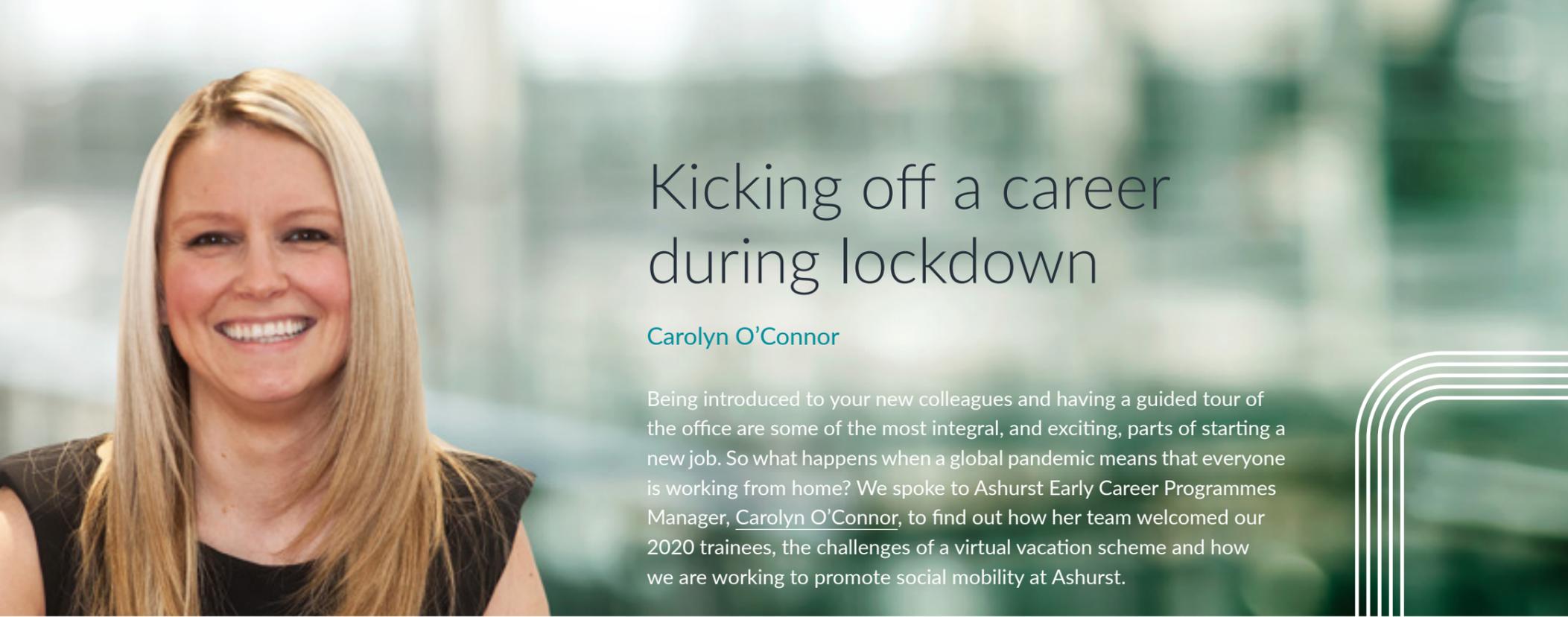
I have many great memories. I started working with Blakes through a mutual connection I had with Michael Vrisakis (Partner, Sydney office, until 2006). One highlight was when Michael and I presented at a breakfast on superannuation to about 100. He and I did a lot of workshops and seminars together and at this particular one we were really firing off each other. I took the more general principles and broad commentary and Michael had wonderful examples of how it applied to the clients in the room, which resulted in really good interaction. As a professor I was able to say things about the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) that Michael couldn't as a practising solicitor. I loved the fact that I could be a cheeky academic and say the things that everybody else was thinking. Superannuation can be a pretty technical, dry subject and I think between us we really made it come alive. You could see that the clients were enlivened and that we were adding great value. That was a

"My daughter challenged me recently asking me if I'm actually a mentor or a champion, because I do tend to champion young lawyers. Having a daughter go through the field means I have a particular soft spot for female lawyers because I sometimes think they get a rough trot, so I spur them on to get the results they want to achieve."

real highlight.

Another highlight, again with Michael, was a case where the financial services regulators ASIC and the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) wanted to hold one of our clients liable. At the time one of my students was actually doing a PhD in this area, which meant I was able to bring data to the table that the regulators didn't have and we got a much better outcome for the client as a result. I think that real balance between Michael's practicalities and my objectivity allowed us to work with the regulator, not against them, and this actually made a big difference.

Finally, I used to do monthly sessions with all of the new lawyers on technical areas of the law. At one session I was explaining what we mean by corporate governance, what we mean by compliance and what we mean by due diligence as a lot of these young lawyers really didn't understand the interconnection. I made quite a difference and then went home and wrote it all up as an article. Even though it is quite a short article, it has become quite a famous article in corporate governance literature because it made the connections. It has since been republished hundreds of times and I even



Kicking off a career during lockdown

Carolyn O'Connor

Being introduced to your new colleagues and having a guided tour of the office are some of the most integral, and exciting, parts of starting a new job. So what happens when a global pandemic means that everyone is working from home? We spoke to Ashurst Early Career Programmes Manager, Carolyn O'Connor, to find out how her team welcomed our 2020 trainees, the challenges of a virtual vacation scheme and how we are working to promote social mobility at Ashurst.

Carolyn, what are your responsibilities as Early Career Programmes Manager?

I look after all Early Careers programmes on a national basis and cover all stages of our processes from attraction and recruitment through to programme management. It's an incredibly varied role as I oversee a well-established and well-known programme in London, where we recruit and induct around 60 vacation students and 40 trainees a year, as well as our Solicitor Apprentice programme. I also oversee all Legal Analyst recruitment in Glasgow and all Business Support apprentices.

How did the pandemic shape your team's approach to welcoming new joiners?

One of the benefits of being a global firm is the ability to collaborate with colleagues from all over the world. I was lucky to be able to discuss the impact of COVID-19 with our Asia Pacific offices at the beginning of last year and it allowed me to consider how my team might prepare if things changed in the UK. Whilst we didn't think the changes

that followed would last for so long, I do feel fortunate to have had that head start.

My team and our stakeholders spend a lot of time attracting and investing in the best talent so we didn't want our efforts to go to waste, but, more importantly, we didn't want to let down the students or future trainees. There were also many lessons learned from the global financial crash in 2008, where law firms deferred and cut recruitment only to suffer from a shortage of expertise and talent coming through the pipeline, so it was important to us that we took the necessary action to ensure the firm didn't suffer in the long term.

Working closely with some of our existing trainees and graduates we developed virtual solutions for our vacation schemes and trainee inductions. I set up various focus groups with supervisors and trainees to discuss what worked well and what didn't; I wanted to make sure that when we moved these programmes online the user experience would be as smooth and authentic as possible.

"Ashurst and the Early Careers team have made the onboarding process both welcoming and informative by organising game nights, virtual socials and interactive classrooms with new technologies. This made the daunting experience of starting a new job much easier."

ROBERT PARATORE, TRAINEE SOLICITOR, LONDON



In the vacation scheme, our objective is to allow students to get a real flavour of the work and culture at Ashurst. We knew it just wouldn't be possible to offer virtual work shadowing so we set up content creation teams to simulate on-the-job experience and created exercises and tasks that could be completed online but would still give students a taste of what they could expect.

It's really important for the students to get facetime with our trainees and stakeholders and we would normally have done this by hosting team-building activities and networking events. These types of large group activities can be quite difficult to run virtually so we created some smaller groups and used a breakout room function within our online platform to recreate a similar experience in a more comfortably sized forum. We were also able to host virtual escape rooms, yoga classes and quiz shows to inject some fun into the proceedings!

Whilst the pandemic presented some real challenges for our team I'm glad to say we rose to those challenges and took full advantage of the opportunity to embrace a new way of working.

Ashurst aims to be renowned for its diverse workforce. How does your team contribute towards this goal?

We work towards ensuring there is a level playing field for all talent who apply to us by removing barriers that could cause any bias. In 2020 we removed minimum A Level requirements in our early careers process as we recognise that academic performance is not an accurate predictor of success in a role. We also introduced gamified assessments in 2019 to test cognitive ability, problem solving and emotional intelligence. These tests have been proven to be a much better predictor of job performance rather than relying on academics alone and we feel this is a more inclusive approach as it increases the diversity of the candidates we make offers to. I'm very proud to say that we were the [winners of the Recruitment Programme of the Year award at the 2020 UK Social Mobility Awards](#) where our submission focused on our collaboration with the Social Impact team and the introduction of our gamified tests to remove academic hurdles.

We also work closely with our Social Impact team on the firm's [Access Ashurst Work Experience Programme](#). This programme is designed to increase access to law for young people experiencing disadvantage and it has been great to welcome some of our Access Ashurst alumni onto our Vacation Scheme. My team collaborates with our Social Impact Manager to find ways in which we can pipeline the amazing talent she finds on Access Ashurst into other opportunities we have available.

A positive side effect of the pandemic, and our switch to home working, has been the ability to reach a wider pool of talent. When you have a relatively small team such as ours, it is difficult to physically be on every campus across the UK and reach every student. By offering virtual work experience and events we are now in a position where we can connect with every candidate, no matter their location. In our vacation schemes we sometimes find that not all candidates are able, or have the means, to travel to London, however the virtual experience removes that barrier and opens the opportunity up to a whole new audience who would have missed out in the past. Last year we were able to increase placement availability on our winter vacation scheme by 50%, which was fantastic.

What's in store for your team in 2021?

Our team continues to be incredibly busy navigating our way in a virtual world. As the government restrictions are ongoing we will continue to offer our programmes online and ensure we are supporting our trainees and future joiners in the business as best we can. I am also excited to start our partnership with the University of Stirling. The [Ashurst Advance New Law Programme](#) is the first of its kind and will form part of the curriculum for BA in Law and LLB students at Stirling University Law School. It really is exciting to be part of this, not only is it incredibly innovative, it also allows us to educate the next generation of students in the rapidly changing legal industry.

To find out more about early careers at Ashurst, visit our [careers page](#) or reach out to carolyn.o'connor@ashurst.com

"When I joined Ashurst for a vacation scheme at Broadwalk House three years ago, I knew that I would be starting my training contract in a new office – however I didn't expect this to be my own home! The Graduate Recruitment team has done an excellent job in making sure we have access to everything we need to be confident in starting our training contracts remotely. The remote support has made working from home better than expected; however I'm looking forward to the day I can meet my new colleagues in person!"

EMILY JONES, TRAINEE SOLICITOR, LONDON

"Starting a training contract in the midst of a pandemic was, at the very least, surreal! We had an online induction and the Early Careers team did a fantastic job at ensuring all sessions went smoothly. The online treasure hunt was definitely a highlight – it was fun and allowed the trainee cohort to strengthen friendships."

AYESHA SAYEED, TRAINEE SOLICITOR, DUBAI

Where it began

Everybody has to start somewhere, and no matter where you are in your career path, looking back can yield some valuable lessons. We asked some of our yearbook contributors to share their wisdom by telling us about their first job and what it taught them.

Ben Tidswell
Ashurst Chairman



THEN: Truck Driver
NOW: Ashurst Chairman

My holiday job throughout university was working on the roads for Tasman Asphalt, in Nelson. I had needed to get a heavy vehicle licence in order to get the job, but I was still surprised when, early on in my road maintenance career, they gave me the keys to a large truck and sent me off round the district with a big trailer, carrying about 40 tonnes in total. It was an interesting lesson in what people will trust you to do, if you are moderately confident and credible. Luckily, nothing went too badly wrong (at least after I had destroyed a gearbox in an ill-advised gear shift).

Professor Michael Adams
Consultant, Sydney, until 2007



THEN: DJ
NOW: Professor and Head of School, UNE Law School

My first two jobs at 14 to 18 years old were a DJ with Odyssey Disco when you actually spun vinyl records and changed the playing speed (bpm) to slow down or speed up the next song! My lesson from being a DJ is that one person can have the best night of their lives and another the worst, irrespective of what the DJ does - consumer roles open your eyes to the variety of humans that exist from the good, to the bad and the ugly! I also had a Saturday job I loved at a sports shop in Eastleigh, Hampshire.

Magnus Brooke
Lawyer, London, until 2000



THEN: Clock seller
NOW: Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs, ITV plc

In between school and university I worked in the Selfridges clock and watchstrap department, selling clocks and straps. Above all it taught me not to make assumptions about people based on how they look, or what your preconceptions about them might be. I served a few famous people there and my preconceptions about them were, on occasion, completely confounded!

Sarah Chambers
Head of Strategy & Engagement,
Ashurst Advance Digital



THEN: Shoe shop assistant
NOW: Head of Strategy & Engagement,
Ashurst Advance Digital

I had a lot of jobs as a teen in order to be able to fund some of the far-flung school trips I wanted to go on. My first paid gig was babysitting, which essentially meant I got paid to do my homework and eat the nice treats left out for me to graze on. My first proper job was in a shoe shop for an atrociously low salary but it taught me about customer centricity and the value of money: both important lessons for a 15-year old!

Fabrizio Esposito
Lawyer, Milan, until 2013



THEN: Summer camp volunteer
NOW: Assistant Professor, NOVA School of Law

I was a volunteer in a summer camp for kids with special needs. It taught me empathy, kindness and that 'kids with special needs' is an unfair expression, because the emphasis shouldn't be on their needs, but on the many ways in which they are special.

Rachael Falk
Lawyer, Sydney, until 1999



THEN: Junior clerk
NOW: CEO, Cyber Security CRC

A junior law clerk in chambers. It was during my gap year before university and, looking back, I was pretty clueless. I learnt that you can't put dishwashing liquid in a dishwasher (I thought I was using my initiative) and annotating dusty law reports (with those stick-in annotations) was pretty boring. It made university look like a breeze!



Fiona Forrest
Lawyer, Brisbane and
Singapore, until 2014

THEN: Court reporter
NOW: Principal Advisor HR, Oyu Tolgoi
Underground Project, Rio Tinto

My first “proper job” was a court reporter for the justice department in Brisbane where I used to do court transcripts. It was fascinating and it gave me a real insight into the justice system, but it also made up my mind that I didn’t want to go into criminal law. I can still churn out a quick transcript when I need to, so it taught me a useful, lifelong skill!



Evan Lam
Partner, Singapore

THEN: Molecular biology intern
NOW: Ashurst financial regulatory and OTC
derivatives Partner

It was actually interning in a molecular biology lab, working on trying to figure out zebrafish brains! I accidentally injected myself with modified zebrafish DNA, but I haven’t developed superpowers yet. Working in research taught me that there is truly no such thing as a stupid question – asking questions is in fact the first step on the road to discovery.



Kylie Lane
Ashurst Board Member and
Partner, Melbourne

THEN: Cashier
NOW: Ashurst Board Member and Partner

Supermarket cashier at Woolworths. I started just before I turned 15 – the money I saved helped with an exchange year to Japan during high school. It also gave me extensive knowledge of different types of apples.



Emma Minimbi
Lawyer, Port Moresby,
until 2019

THEN: Shop assistant
NOW: Legal Intern Volunteer, Voice for Change

I was a shop assistant at a supermarket for one week at a company I would later find out to be one of Ashurst’s big clients in PNG – Rimbunan Hijau (RH). I was saving up money to buy my formal dress in year 12 and after my first paycheck I had enough, so I was done. I have been much more committed to all of my jobs since!



Carolyn O’Connor
HR Manager, National Early
Careers Programmes, Glasgow

THEN: Avon Lady
NOW: Ashurst HR Manager, National Early Careers
Programmes

When I was 14, I was keen to earn some extra pocket money and wanted to do something other than the usual paper round. I convinced my mum to allow me to become an Avon Lady, going door to door selling Avon products. In all honesty, being a teenager, I loved makeup and found the discount and commission appealing! I also thought it sounded fun making up the orders and delivering the products. That was the easy part, having to go out and brave the Scottish elements knocking on doors and trying to hard-sell was perhaps the part that wasn’t fun. It did teach me to be responsible and I learned a lot about people. Having the door slammed in your face does teach you a lot especially when not making sales means no money and no makeup! Needless to say it wasn’t quite the career I was cut out for!



Tahlia Petrosian
Graduate, Sydney, until 2007

THEN: Holiday camp supervisor
NOW: Violist, Member of the Gewandhaus Orchestra
Leipzig and Director, KLASSIK Underground

My first job was while I was a student in Year 9. I was a supervisor at a holiday camp run by a maths teacher to introduce younger students to computers and the basic idea of the internet. It was fascinating to see how very young minds responded to the idea of a digital network connecting people, and it showed me how important both openness and creativity are to utilising new technology.

Trent Wallace
First Nations Advisor and Lawyer,
Pro Bono & Social Impact



THEN: Hairdresser
NOW: Ashurst First Nations Advisor and Lawyer,
Pro Bono and Social Impact, Brisbane

I was in sales and hairdressing – it taught me how to work with a variety of people. I learnt how to deal with their unique idiosyncrasies and I enjoyed navigating people with difficult personalities. I also loved the idea of people feeling great about themselves due to my time and effort. It taught me to be client-centric in my approach and to continually assess the user experience to ensure results are being delivered impeccably.

Tara Waters
Partner, Head of Ashurst
Advance Digital, London



THEN: Filing assistant
NOW: Partner and Head of Ashurst Advance Digital

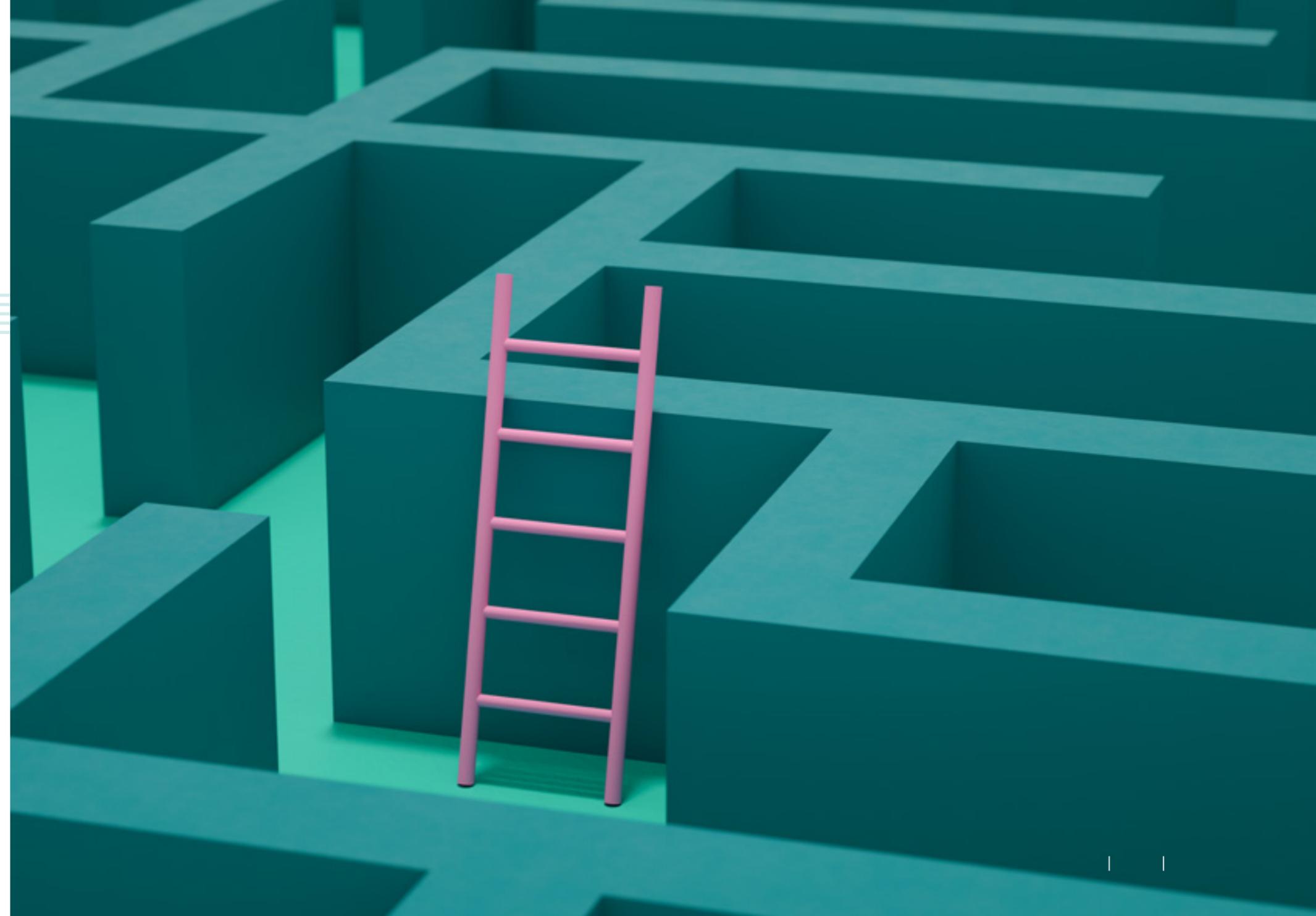
My first job was doing filing for my mother's office. She worked in the accounts payable department at a local university, which processed all supplier payments and payroll payments. I filed paper records into rows of filing cabinets, and then eventually also did data entry to submit records for payment. The experience definitely taught me about the dynamics of working in an office environment, as well as the importance of data-keeping and storage. I don't think that it really influenced me in any deep way, but it was very good experience to have at a young age.

John Watson
Partner, London, until 2013



THEN: TV transmitter tuner
NOW: Retired Ashurst Partner and Editor, Shaw Sheet

My first job (aged 18) was with pYe in Cambridge and included helping to tune tv transmitters. One interesting thing was that those who were best at it were not the mathematicians and engineers who understood why it worked, but people, usually without degrees, who had developed a "feel" for it by experience. There is nothing like having done it all many times before, and that goes for negotiating deals every bit as much as it goes for electronics.





Leading Ashurst's First Nations journey

Trent Wallace

Trent Wallace is the First Nations Advisor, Pro Bono and Social Impact (admitted as a Solicitor in NSW), for Ashurst, based in Australia. As an Aboriginal person, he brings lived experience to his role and provides a strong First Nations voice to our commitment to reconciliation.

We caught up with Trent to chat about what he has achieved in his first year at Ashurst, what he hopes to achieve in the future and his journey to becoming the first Aboriginal lawyer to hold this position in a global firm.

Tell us about your role as First Nations Advisor and Social Impact lawyer for Ashurst?

Some fifty years ago, lawyers at what is now known as Ashurst assisted in the creation of the [Aboriginal Legal Service](#); fifty years later, I am an Aboriginal lawyer leading the First Nations initiatives at the firm. I am the first and only Aboriginal person in this role in a global law firm. As the years progress, I believe more law firms will create similar hybrid roles; therefore I want to set the pace and tone for this work. Being in a hybrid role allows me to blend pro bono and social impact, thus creating a holistic

approach for First Nations Peoples. I thoroughly enjoy working with our commercial clients to develop social impact initiatives and education around First Nations Peoples in Australia. The open minds and hearts of our clients furnishes my future with hope – through building a community of care, we are more than a law firm, we are an influencer of change in the societies in which we operate.

The role has spread out from my teams of Pro Bono and Social Impact, so every day there is something new and exciting to tackle whether it's yarning with HR or with BD. I describe my job as Tina Turner performing the fast section of Proud Mary!

Your first year with Ashurst has been busy. Can you tell us about some of the things you have achieved that you are most proud of?

I started in January and was locked down in March! The INFJ (introverted, intuitive, feeling, and judging) in me gets a little uncomfortable about discussing achievements, but [Sarah Ross-Smith](#) (Partner, Canberra) has given me the sage advice of just needing to peacock every now and then! I am incredibly proud of every single thing I've achieved, big and small – ranging from creating an [Acknowledgement of Country](#) in signatures to the seven-fold increase in First Nations grad applications (during a pandemic and at the crescendo of the Bla(c)k Lives Matter movement, which has been incredibly tough for mob – sidenote: I refer to First Nations communities and individuals as mob) to creating the first-ever secondment to a First Nations women and children's community legal centre that is First Nations run and led. I'm also thrilled that, during 2020, we had 23 cultural learning activities/events. I refused to bow my head to any of the difficult circumstances – I was not giving in, nor giving up. This is merely the beginning of the First Nations-led journey at Ashurst – my ambitions are broad and far-reaching, I'm blessed to be with a team that is so supportive and for [Sarah Morton-Ramwell](#); without her leadership and vision, I would not be here today. It's nice to reflect, but I don't wish to get caught up in the achievements of yesterday – there are a couple of hundred years of oppression to sort out!

There is so much that needs to be achieved in this space in Australia. What changes do you hope to see over the next three to five years?

Commercially, I've been very interested to see the emphasis placed on work in the First Nations space. Some hard-hitting questions have been posed in the Bids and Tenders process, the level of interrogation was spectacular and much needed. It will trigger First Nations employment initiatives, as the only way such information can be answered authentically is through internal First Nations leadership. However, in order for that First Nations leadership to occur, a strong cultural foundation must be laid to act as the appropriate infrastructure to support the rise of First Nations Peoples. I grew up in an era when reports were being released continually – with little to no action taken. Things have not gotten better for my people – not from us enjoying the various deficits we live through, rather our solutions are rarely listened to. First Nations solutions must be designed, implemented and monitored by First Nations Peoples. The commercial seriousness of the reporting requirements will force companies to examine and address any possible current inadequate infrastructures and, through that, we will see a shift socially. First Nations work is no longer a feelgood activity, it's a serious requirement and I feel in three to five years, should this continue, we will see First Nations Peoples in positions of leadership – in the C-suites, in the boardrooms, making the decisions, but this can only occur if there is support.

What can we all do to help to effect this change?

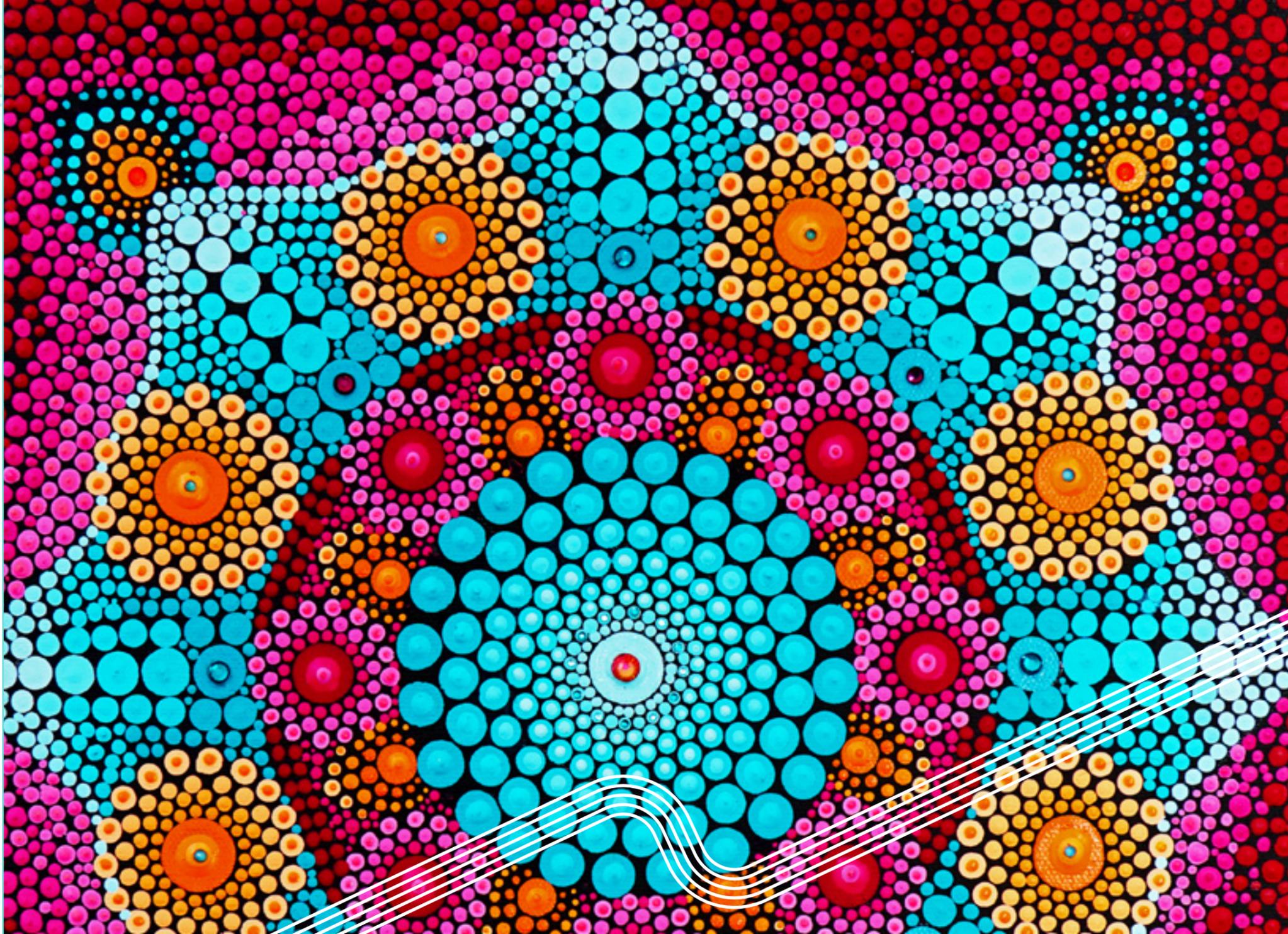
Utilise your platforms to promote and carve out space for First Nations voices. Educate yourself through reading materials outside of the mainstream media. Support First Nations in pop culture through film/music/art. Listen to First Nations Peoples. Walk beside or behind us – not in front of us. True change needs to come by stepping outside of Eurocentric models of solutions. Hear our truth – without truth, there is no change. We must examine the antiquated policies and think creatively and collaboratively with First Nations Peoples to truly bring about change. The future is female, and the future is First Nations!

Could you tell us a bit about your journey to law as a First Nations person and did you always want to be a lawyer?

I grew up on Darkinjung Country (Central Coast, New South Wales) and I always wanted to become a lawyer. However, people had already assigned an identity to me purely because of my Aboriginal heritage – it certainly was not perceived as a strength, rather, it was a limitation appointed to me. Staying faithful to rebellion, I did not listen to the naysayers. Law was in my sights from an early age – on my mother's side, she had barristers and doctors in the family, and on my father's side, he was the first in his family of five to go to university. My poor health as a child (when I was born, I went six minutes without oxygen and I had a hole in my heart – my medical history has been complicated ever since) meant that my family did not want to place pressure on me to achieve academically – I also found school to be terrible – wearing an awful private school uniform wasn't for me, nor was the negative attitude of the teachers I had. A few years after I graduated from school, I came to the law. I had to study via distance learning as I was caring for my mother – my parents divorced at the beginning of my law degree. I also had to cope with three deaths in my family and two bouts of pneumonia, but I completed my Bachelor of Laws in three years instead of the prescribed four. Indeed, I stand true to my stubborn Taurus nature.

What do you enjoy most about your work and what is your favourite thing about being part of the Ashurst family so far?

As I turn on my laptop each morning, my mind is screaming "it's showtime!" and that's what I love – each day brings about new obstacles that I get to creatively tackle. I also thoroughly enjoy working with both pro bono and commercial clients on First Nations initiatives – this position has given me a wide sphere of influence and I seek to use it to address the problems I've witnessed. I see Ashurst as the Joe to my Kamala – I've received so much love and support from so many. Whether it's [Dennis Scott](#) (Consultant, Sydney) yarning to me about lawyering when he first started, or receiving



words of wisdom from people like [Lea Constantine](#) (Partner, Sydney) or

[Jennie Mansfield](#) (Partner, Sydney), I do feel like I'm in a large family. Particularly in my own team – we are all so close. Jilly Field (Senior Associate, National Pro Bono Manager – Australia) has really listened to me and developed amazing projects around my cultural knowledge. It's a testament to Sarah's role as Partner and Global Head of Pro Bono and Social Impact – she knows how to make us all feel like family.

What's the best career advice that you've been given?

Gina Liano (Barrister, Real Housewife of Melbourne) was the first person in the law I saw and could relate to – she has always emphasised the need to remain authentic to yourself – I never thought I'd fit in to the profession due to my background and how I looked. Gina demonstrated that your authentic self is the only way forward and it's true, I don't fit into the profession, so I carved out space for myself. It has been continually reinforced whether from Judges or Partners: you must be authentic to yourself.

If you weren't a lawyer, what do you think you would be doing?

I'd be Australia's answer to Oprah Winfrey or I'd be a writer – I've found some success in that. My literary hero is Roxane Gay.

What's your favourite thing to do on the weekend?

I'm a major fan of brunch – I consider it a sport. Other than that, it's going for long

Find out more about our [Global Pro Bono practice](#).



Fabrizio Esposito was a Lawyer in our Milan office until 2013 as part of the Dispute Resolution team. Since leaving the firm, Fabrizio has pursued a career in academia and was appointed as Assistant Professor of Law at NOVA School of Law in Lisbon in September 2020.

Catch-up

Fabrizio Esposito

Congratulations on your appointment as Assistant Professor of Law at NOVA law school. What made you switch to a career in academia?

I joined Ashurst before having finished law school and learned what it means to be a lawyer from Ilario Giangrossi, Chiara Bicci, Daniele Iorio and many others. This invaluable experience is always with me when I research and teach. However, I had the opportunity to pursue an academic career, which gives a degree of intellectual freedom that the practice obviously cannot.

What does a typical day look like for you?

Right now, I am spending a lot of time preparing lectures. Having just joined NOVA, I have my courses for the first and second semesters to build. Not much research these days, which is normal when you have new teaching obligations. I have plans for next year, starting with the publication of my first monograph with Edward Elgar.

Has the pandemic had a profound effect on the way you work?

Of course! I work essentially from home, and I meet the students only online. The same goes for seminars, conferences, etc. But it is not all bad, honestly. Thanks to the chat and cameras off, more students participate in the lectures. Group activities are also more manageable. Organising seminars and conferences online is easier, allows broader participation, and is environmentally friendly. In sum, I believe that these are best practices that academia should strive to carry on when this is all over.

NOVA's mission is 'to make diversity a starting point for adapting to the challenges to which the Law responds'. Why do you believe diversity in legal services is so important?

A lawyer's mind must be first and foremost open, curious, imaginative and flexible. Without this attitude, legal skills cannot be fully exploited. NOVA does an excellent job in creating a diverse academic environment, which is instrumental in making sure that our students will exploit their legal skills to the fullest extent possible.



What new skills do you think lawyers need to develop for the future?

Digital skills, of course. We need to make the most out of the opportunities created by software and apps for legal research and drafting. But also, lawyers must become more familiar with the use of scientific expertise in legal argumentation. This goal is central to my academic activity.

What's the best career/life advice that you've been given?

"If it takes less than five minutes, do it now". Try it. It helps to get rid of a lot of post-its.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Right now the plan is promotion to Associate Professor, one or two kids, winning a research grant and writing another book. It will be a busy, but surely exciting, time!

Meet our newest Board members



We caught up with Ashurst's newest Board members Phil Breden (Partner, Sydney) and Kylie Lane (Partner, Melbourne) to find out more about them and get an insight into their lives and hopes for 2021.

Phil Breden is a partner in the corporate team in Sydney. Specialising in M&A and corporate advisory, Phil advises large ASX-listed companies as well as US-based and European multinationals across a variety of sectors and has particular expertise in energy, utilities, construction and manufacturing. Phil joined the Ashurst Board in November 2020.

Kylie Lane is a partner in the corporate team in Melbourne. She specialises in M&A, equity capital markets, corporate advisory and governance. Kylie joined the Ashurst Board in November 2020.

Congratulations on joining the Ashurst Board. What are you most excited about in this new role?

PB: Two things: first is the opportunity to contribute to the continued growth and success of the firm and the second is the opportunity to elevate the client lens in our strategy and decision-making.

KL: The opportunity to engage in strategy discussions and how best to achieve our goals with our talented executive team and partners. I like to ask questions!

2020 was an interesting year – what is one thing you have learnt personally or professionally?

PB: It truly is amazing how adaptable people and our communities are when faced with challenges. Also those who embrace and are excited by change have a natural advantage in most situations.

KL: In both spheres, I have learnt to give people more room to take on challenges and stretch themselves. It has been rewarding watching lawyers step up and take ownership of ensuring high levels of client service when we switched to remote working. And my 6-year old can now make scrambled eggs for breakfast.

What do you hope 2021 will bring for Ashurst?

PB: A continued passion to work with our clients to solve their most important challenges.

KL: Continued success in digital connectedness, which has accelerated during the pandemic, and has increased our ability to bring together global expertise for the benefit of our clients. As a Melbournian I also look forward to re-establishing in-person camaraderie with colleagues and clients, which is the glue that makes the long hours on major, high-stakes matters not only sustainable but enjoyable.

What is the best piece of career/life advice you've been given?

PB: If you work hard and do your best the rest should look after itself. Hard to argue with in my view.

KL: Advice from my father – the old proverb: measure twice, cut once. Essentially, prepare well.



Demystifying cyber security

Rachael Falk

As CEO of the Cyber Security Cooperative Research Centre, Sydney alum Rachael Falk (Lawyer until 1999) leads an organisation whose aim is to develop effective collaboration between industry, researchers and governments to deliver outstanding cyber security research.

Since leaving the law, Rachael has forged a career as one of Australia's leading cyber security experts, is a regular commentator on cyber security issues and was recently appointed to the Federal Government's Cyber Security Industry Advisory Panel.

Tell us about your role as CEO of the Cyber Security Cooperative Research Centre (CSCRC).

The CSCRC is an organisation that is all about industry-led cyber security research. Our aim is to build capacity and capability and to play a key public role in cyber security advocacy, providing evidence-based commentary around relevant policy issues. The CSCRC has 25 participants, comprising Commonwealth and State government departments, large multinationals and smaller organisations. Fostering collaboration and innovation is at the heart of what we do. The CSCRC has a seven-year lifespan (we are in year three) and is facilitated by \$50 million of funding through the Federal Government's CRC Program (operated through the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources) and the significant contributions of participants. Aside from having a great team that do a lot of the heavy lifting, being a CEO comes with all the usual governance and corporate obligations.

What does a typical day look like for you?

There isn't a "typical" day at the CSCRC. It depends on what is going on with our research, in government and in the media. If there has been a cyber-related announcement or incident, I might be asked to do a media interview and, like all good former litigators, I have a jacket handy in my room for that occasion. It could be having meetings with my team, talking about research opportunities or preparing to meet a prospective member of the CSCRC.

What do you enjoy most about your work and what has been your most rewarding achievement?

I enjoy seeing the team I have built running with ideas and really making them greater than I could have imagined. My most rewarding achievement is going from being employee number one – literally flicking on the lights – to having a great team, a wonderful office environment and watching it all grow and prosper. For me professionally, it has been growing into the role and working with my Board and Chair. No one teaches you about the nuances of working with a Board but I have to say that I have been incredibly fortunate to have a generous Chair, David Irvine AO, as well as very strong Board.

You were previously Telstra's first General Manager of Cyber Influence. What is "Cyber Influence"?

Cyber influence is an odd name but it means to influence an organisation about key cyber security risks, be it to influence the Board about enterprise risk or the workforce. A lot of my role was turning what most people believe is an intangible risk into a tangible risk with consequences. And "influence" is all about shaping behaviour. People don't like to be told what to do but if you can shape behaviour and warn about consequences, people will try to do the right thing.

2020 was a crazy year – how did lockdown affect you personally and professionally?

We very much had lockdown "lite" here in Canberra, so I feel that we have not suffered as much distress and inconvenience as others. For me, while I was working full time from home, both my teenage kids were home too. We had two birthdays and, while they might have felt "trapped" with me every day, I liked the time together, simple pleasures like sitting down for lunch and talking. Professionally, given my team is spread from Perth to Canberra, everyone just banded together and got on with things. But it was totally okay to work at a different pace. I have to say, I don't miss active wear!

Where do you see your industry heading – what are the key issues or changes you see on the horizon over the next three to five years?

The Federal Government recently released a draft of the proposed changes to the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018*. The proposed changes, if passed in their current form, will be significant and will potentially impact up to 80% of ASX companies as well as other companies in the relevant supply chains. There are both operational and security changes that will become necessary but all boards will need to identify and understand their cyber risks and how they effectively manage them. Boards don't need to be technical experts but they will need to know the right questions to ask, understand the answers and satisfy their obligations with respect to the cyber risks unique to their sector. I spend a lot of time demystifying legal issues and talking publicly about the need for certainty around cyber-related risks. This is not dissimilar to the days when other physical risks were being assessed by the courts

(we all remember our early days of law school and endless cases about terrible golf ball injuries). Due to the interconnectedness of how we live and how much of our lives are dependent on digitally connected systems, we do not have time for common law to shape an accepted position on these sorts of risks. I expect we will see legislation attempting to set some sort of acceptable duty of care and benchmark, which will be shaped by common law in years to come. While I no longer practise law, it very much informs how I approach my advice and how I explain this legislation to stakeholders and in the media.

What new skills do you think lawyers need to develop for the future?

It will be vital for lawyers to understand their clients, the business they are in and the risks unique to that industry (see my answer above if your clients fall into the categories above). Lawyers also need to understand they are keepers of secrets and it is important they protect their valuable data in a digital world just as well as they do in the physical world. Large law firms like Ashurst are great targets for nation states and cybercriminal syndicates because they often have a great deal of strategic information about a deal or their clients.

What are you passionate about outside of work?

Spending time with my family and travelling – I can't wait to get overseas again! I'm also a geek at heart and I'm always hungry to learn new things, so I've just started a

short course in Artificial Intelligence.

What were the most valuable lessons you learnt while at Ashurst?

I was relatively junior when I was at Blake Dawson Waldron (now Ashurst) so for me a valuable lesson was around teamwork and respect. I spent way too many hours in rooms doing discovery or preparing for a large court matter but attention to detail and working with a supportive team was something I valued and still do.

And learning that attention to detail is critical when you are a lawyer and a great life skill!

What is your favourite Ashurst memory?

There are many but [Robert Todd](#) moving my admission clearly was a highlight of my time at Ashurst. I have many other memories but they are in the vault.

I am sure I am supposed to talk about winning some case and having a client ship over crates of vintage champagne but, alas, no. I do seem to recall abseiling down the side of a large hotel in Terrigal as part of a "team building" exercise. I recall thinking this was either a really bad idea and would go badly wrong or I was going to be okay and live to tell the story. I also recall my colleague Ben Houston being way too chipper about the whole experience.





Judging the Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize

Magnus Brooke

Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs at ITV and Ashurst London alum, Magnus Brooke, was our alumni guest judge on the 2020 Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize panel. Here, he talks us through the rather strange experience of judging an art prize online and offers some practical advice for artists entering the competition in the future.

How was your experience as a judge on the Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize panel?

Well, the most challenging aspect was definitely the fact that the judging was all done online. When I agreed to take part I thought a lot of the viewing would be done in person and I'd get to see some of the work up close but sadly that wasn't to be. This meant that we had to be as imaginative as possible. In a way that probably helped some artists – those making a very clear visual statement for instance - but might have been slightly more tricky for other more subtle work which might have fared better in person for instance.

What I enjoyed most, by a country mile, was doing something completely different to my day-to-day work. It allowed me the luxury of stepping into a different world. One which I haven't stepped into properly for 20-odd years.



What do you look at when determining the winners?

For me the first thing is, whether the work is trying to say something new or saying something in a distinctive way. That's the critical thing – is it new and innovative and exciting, in whatever medium the person's working in, or is it a bit stale, or a slight copycat of an existing artist or style. I'm looking for innovation, challenge and difference because that's what I think the purpose of the prize is.

And what did you think of the overall winning piece by Pippa El-Kadhi Brown (above)?

I thought it was really strong. It was a kind of domestic scene, but not. It had an imaginative and attractive use of colour, but a rather disturbing image which jarred with the apparent domestic backdrop. I thought it was a clever combination of different elements which added together into a really powerful, and actually genuinely distinctive, piece of work.

James Hayes' Wanderer beneath the Sea of Cloud won the Ashurst Choice Prize, as voted for by Ashurst employees and alumni. What did you think of this piece (below)?

It's one of those pieces which I think super-trendy metropolitan art people would slightly turn their noses up at, if I'm honest. But I really liked it, partly because I was born in the Yorkshire Dales and I looked at that picture and I could almost see myself walking on the moors. So I did anything but turn my nose up at it and it was on one of the lists that I put forward. I think there's more than a place for pieces like that, as it gives you a bit of variety. The world would be a very boring place if you just had a set of "right-on" work that was specifically designed to please a certain curator in London. I think that piece was very powerful and it added enormously to the variety of the show.



**You used to write for some art magazines when you were at Ashurst.
How did you get into that?**

I've always been interested in art. When I was at university there was a wonderful scheme in place where you could actually borrow pictures from Kettle's Yard gallery in Cambridge and take them back at the end of the year. I was able to borrow some really quite valuable works of art, carry them out of the door of the gallery and across Cambridge and hang them on my wall. That was definitely an inspiration! I used to go to the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge a lot too.

When I left university I started going out with my now wife, who at the time was working for The Royal Academy and subsequently went to the Tate. We knew a lot of artists between us and I started going to lots of shows and met various people, including the artist Martin Maloney, who was also a critic at the time. He said "why don't you do some writing?" and he helped me get my first break with the publication, Flash Art. I wrote for them freelance and also wrote for a few other publications. All somehow fitted round working as a competition lawyer at Ashurst...

In order to find somebody you wanted to write about you often had to go to between five and ten shows at the weekend, which was straightforward back in the 1990s and the early 2000s when I was living just off Brick Lane and it was the centre of the art world. It was a really exciting hobby and a fun thing to do in my spare time. Of course, that changes when you move away and have kids and you're no longer at the heart of where the artistic action is. I also think, to some extent, the intensity that we experienced in the 1990s and early 2000s in the East End gradually dissipated as the artists became richer and more famous and newer artists had to find cheaper places to live.



ASHURST EMERGING ARTIST PRIZE 2020

Is it something you would like to go back to?

Part of me feels that my time might have passed in terms of having the time to find cutting-edge/young graduates. I think that's quite a hard thing to get back. I also think the art world has changed a lot. Now, so much is being done online and through pop-ups – the whole middle-ranking tier of galleries that take on new artists is finding life quite difficult. It feels like a stage in my life that I really enjoyed but I might not go back to. Having said that, I still love art and I see as many shows as I can but that's now constrained from a time point of view by work and kids mostly. You can take the kids to some shows but there's a limit to how many they will put up with, and there are limits to which ones are suitable, frankly!

Do you have any favourite artists?

I've always enjoyed Jock McFadyen's work. He's a Scottish painter who lives in the East End of London near where we used to live, and also happens to be the godfather of my daughter. He's a terrific artist. I also like Simone Martini who was a 14th century Sieneese artist, and Caspar David Friedrich, a German romantic artist. I also love the work of Jeff Wall and Catherine Yass, both of whose work is really strong, and George Shaw – the Constable of the Tile Hill Estate in Coventry.

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing artists today, and how important are awards and competitions?

That's a good question. I think the biggest challenge is getting noticed in a very crowded market where galleries are not doing quite the same job that they used to. The place where a young artist would launch their career is the degree show, because that's the moment they get a real stage in a proper gallery. Sadly that didn't really

happen this year as the degree shows were all online and that's really tough for artists. Also, quite a lot of the galleries that were taking on and nurturing younger artists have started to struggle, and I suspect that's down to the internet. I think it's becoming harder and harder therefore for less-established artists to build a reputation and get into a rhythm in their career, which is what the gallery used to offer. Therefore, I think awards and competitions are now really important places to get noticed and to get the exposure that helps establish a career. So, in a funny way, I think they are probably more important now than they were when the Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize was first launched.

Do you have any advice for artists out there who are thinking about entering the Ashurst Emerging Artist prize in future?

The first thing I would advise is just do it. The second is think very hard about which pieces you put in. Think about boring things, like, how is it going to look online. Will it look its best or is there another piece that would make more impact? You've got to grab people's attention. There's an awful lot of work submitted and people won't spend vast amounts of time trying to engage with the poetry of what you are trying to say when they first look at it so pick a piece that will turn heads online. Another thing to think about is how practical a piece is. The prize organisers do their best to accommodate all types of artwork but sometimes it's just not possible, so keep that in mind when submitting. Not that you should constrain your ambition, but you might have to be realistic about certain elements.

For more information about the art prize and to see the 2020 winners visit artprize.co.uk

Insights from an Ashurst consultant

Michal Kovac

The ability to shape business decisions, work as part of multidisciplinary teams and add real value to clients are what drew London office alum Michal Kovac (Associate until 2018) into the world of consulting. Starting out with Ashurst as a trainee, Michal is now a corporate and commercial lawyer, working as an Ashurst Advance Reach consultant. One of his recent assignments included working for a consortium of Virgin Group and Stagecoach.



Why did you first go into law?

When deciding what to study at university, it was a choice between law, international relations and medicine. Law somehow won. During my law degree I did a few placements at London law firms, which allowed me to see what it would be like to work as a junior lawyer at a corporate law firm. It was the buzz of the City and the work hard, play hard culture which eventually made me apply for a training contract.

Tell us about your journey from working at Ashurst to consulting for Ashurst.

Back in 2014, I started as a trainee in Ashurst's London office and did a combination of finance and corporate seats including a secondment to the firm's Madrid office.

I then qualified into the corporate projects team in London and worked on a range of infrastructure, transport, energy and oil and gas projects. Gradually, I became more and more interested in being involved in decisions about how businesses operate rather than exclusively advising clients on legal aspects of transactions. I started looking for an opportunity to move into a role where I would be able to influence business decision-making. An opportunity then came through one of Ashurst's partners to work for one of the firm's clients Keolis, an international public transport operator. I first joined Keolis on secondment, bidding for infrastructure and transport projects in the UK and abroad and supporting its operating subsidiaries. Later, an opportunity arose to work for West Coast Trains Limited, a consortium of Virgin and Stagecoach, which was at the time operating intercity train services in the UK. Since then I have continued to work on various assignments through Ashurst and enjoy the variety it offers.

Why did you decide to work as a consultant?

I was attracted to in-house roles as I wanted to have the ability to shape business decision-making. Working as a consultant is usually fast-paced and often project based so I could also really see myself as adding value. I also saw this as an opportunity to create lasting relationships with different stakeholders and as a chance to work as part of multidisciplinary teams.

What do you enjoy most about a career in consulting?

I would say it is being in charge of my own career progression and being much closer to business decision-making. With the changing legal landscape and as we navigate ourselves through the current pandemic, I can see even more demand for integrated commercial and legal roles.

"It was the buzz of the City and the work hard, play hard culture which eventually made me apply for a training contract."

What would you say to others thinking about becoming a consultant?

If you are looking for a role with a more varied remit and would like to have more flexibility over the direction of your career, then give it a go. The hours can still be demanding at the peak of a project but on average consulting has allowed me to pursue other activities outside of work/in between the projects. It has also provided me with an opportunity to develop relationships with senior stakeholders and across different industry sectors.

Do you have any top tips for success?

As you are never perceived as just a legal adviser but as a person who is there to help with business decision-making, it is important to understand the wider issues and keep your advice practical.

What is your fondest memory of your time at Ashurst and what do you think distinguishes Ashurst from its peers?

There are many memories from my time at Ashurst. If I were to pick one, it would be attending events such a Spartan Race with my colleagues and the firm's clients (mud involved!). On a serious note, it is probably the people and relationships that have lasted beyond my time at the firm. I have been fortunate enough to work with various Ashurst teams on numerous occasions after I moved into consulting and many of my ex-colleagues have also become my friends.

It is good to see that Ashurst has made an investment in an alternative platform to deliver legal services, including setting up a bench of external consultants sourced from the firm's alumni. Businesses are currently likely to demand more flexibility when it comes to resourcing their legal teams so it may also be a good time to move into consulting.

If you are interested in becoming an Ashurst Advance Reach consultant, or would like more information about the service, please visit [Alternative resourcing – Ashurst ADVANCE Reach](#).

The digitalisation of everything

Tara Waters and Sarah Chambers

Ashurst Advance Digital is dedicated to designing, developing and delivering technology-based solutions to meet the ever-evolving needs of our clients.

We caught up with Partner and Head of Ashurst Advance Digital, **Tara Waters**, and Head of Strategy & Engagement for Ashurst Advance Digital, **Sarah Chambers**, to discuss the digitalisation of legal services and the development of ESG Ready, the firm's digital solution for clients looking to get ready for the new EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation.

What has led to the demand for digitalised legal solutions?

TW: Ultimately, it's about the digitalisation of everything. Our clients consume digitalised services in all manner of their lives and they have grown to expect this type of service. As legal services providers, we need to keep up with the times and deliver in the way our clients want to consume our services. Digitalisation has the added benefit of enabling us to be more time and cost-efficient and more accurate, and being able to offer those benefits is increasingly important for our clients.

SC: It's also the case that our clients are expecting a digital offering to be part of our service offering as a law firm. Our clients are asking whether we have digital solutions to help them, having got so used to consuming digital solutions in every other aspect of their non-working life and increasingly as part of their working life. That "as" is driven by the need to manage cost, risk and resource and the drive for data-driven insights as part of smarter decision-making.

What do you think the law firm of the future will look like?

TW: I like to imagine it will be very different from today. Firstly, I think a successful law firm will need to be digitally native – with technology at its core and a digital strategy driving decision-making. Secondly, I think the line between the practice of law and the business of law will evaporate, necessitating a move away from traditional structures, hierarchies and practice delineations. Law firms will need multi-dimensional people and teams clustered around market-centric offerings, and all staff will be considered value creators. Finally, I think there could be a move to a "plug-and-play" ecosystem, as we have seen happen in the financial services industry, where all industry participants need to be able to interface with one another at some level – I refer to this as an L2L (law-to-law) model – in order to provide the best experience for our clients.

SC: Tara and I share a huge amount of optimism and excitement about the law firm of the future. Law firms have traditionally been reactive institutions, only acting on instructions rather than taking the bull by the horns and focusing deeply on the client problems that really exist (as opposed to the pieces of those problems that clients present to us at the moment). My hope is that with all the changes Tara references above, we'll have more ability to really proactively focus on solving those problems

both at a client level and at an ecosystem level. To do this, law firms will need to be more flexible, creative, multidisciplinary and collaborative, all qualities that I think will continue to mean that we attract the brightest and best talent of the next generation.

What are the most common questions you are asked by clients?

TW & SC: At present, many of our clients are asking for advice on how they should approach digitalisation of their legal operations, not only to improve the in-house legal function, but to increase direct connectivity with their external advisers and to provide better support for their business teams. It's a very interesting area and unfortunately there are no magic bullet solutions.

The other question we hear a lot is more of a request than a question. Many clients want us to talk to them more, find out what their problems and needs are, and to proactively approach them with ideas on how we can work together to solve or address them. And this is usually not solely about delivering technology solutions, but about being more curious, better listeners, and more proactive in our approach to client service delivery.

Please tell us about ESG Ready.

TW: ESG Ready is our first digital product offering aimed at simplifying clients' regulatory change programmes in relation to the new EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR). Clients can use ESG Ready to obtain automated legal advice as to how the SFDR applies to them and what steps they need to take to be in compliance – covering not only the obligations set out in the regulatory text but also the practical decisions and actions that will inform their approach to ESG compliance going forward. We believe it is the first fully digitalised legal advice product on the market.

SC: ESG Ready is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when subject-matter experts and digital experts work hand-in-hand on a problem. From sign-off of the business case to launch of the product to the market was less than two months, an effort made more remarkable by the fact that we did almost the entirety of the work remotely from our respective homes during lockdown. The reaction from clients has surpassed our expectations and has also driven increasing amounts of "traditional" legal work into the ESG practice groups – demonstrating how taking digital solutions to clients is part of the full service offering of today's law firm.



What's next for Ashurst Advance Digital?

TW & SC: We have a growing pipeline of ideas on how we can use technology to better support practice groups, empower lawyers, and transform the way we deliver our legal services to clients. It is important that we take a portfolio and building-block approach to ideas which are being progressed at any given time. At present we have a few strategic projects in train – building out key technology-based infrastructure to enable secure user authentication, customisation, content delivery and integrations. We are also looking at technologies that will enable the firm to fast-forward progress in new service delivery models, for example through automated workflow technology and enhanced AI-powered document review and management, and by putting more tools directly into clients' hands. Naturally, we always work closely with a range of practice groups regarding specific needs and areas where technology can accelerate and support their practices, and produce accretive value.

Visit our Innovation pages to find out more about [Ashurst Advance Digital](#) and [ESG Ready](#).



Getting together

While the global pandemic meant we could not proceed with our full schedule of alumni events in 2020, we were delighted to welcome some of you to our Frankfurt, Sydney and Canberra reunions at the start of the year.



"I loved catching up with colleagues from my time at what was a fantastic place to work, where I learnt so much and where I had a great time in my years there."

CANBERRA, MARCH 2020



"It was wonderful to see old colleagues still at the firm and those that have moved on. Great memories and connections were refreshed."

"A very good combination of meeting former colleagues, a nice location and good food!"

FRANKFURT AND MUNICH, FEBRUARY 2020



"I absolutely loved the recent event at Sydney Opera House. It was so delightful seeing everyone and I have caught up with a few people since whom I previously had not seen for over five years."

"There was so much joy in the room - at seeing old friends and honouring what were really formative years for us all. I loved that Ashurst is humble enough to see the value in bringing everyone together - whether at competitors or not. That sense of belonging is something you should be SO proud of."

SYDNEY, MARCH 2020

We hope to be able to reconnect with you at face-to-face alumni events soon. Please keep an eye out for information about our reunions on our [alumni events page](#) or join the [Ashurst Alumni LinkedIn group](#) for updates.

Watch the Global Reunion event video [here](#).

2020 year in review

2020 certainly wasn't the year we anticipated; however there were some positives. We are proud to share a selection of our achievements. Click on each of the highlights to read the full story.

Jan/Feb

NEWS AND AWARDS

[Partners recognised in The Lawyer Hot 100](#)
[Relocated Abu Dhabi office to Abu Dhabi Global Market](#)
[Expanded offering in US with launch of new office in Los Angeles](#)

March

NEWS AND AWARDS

[Launched the COVID-19 Hub](#)
[Law Firm of the Year Europe at the 2019 Private Debt Investor Awards](#)
[Ashurst Consulting launched](#)

July

NEWS AND AWARDS

[Collaboration with five other international law firms to accelerate tech adoption in international arbitration](#)
[Ashurst signs Race Fairness Commitment to combat career obstacles faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic lawyers](#)
[Results for financial year ending 30 April 2020: Revenue of £644 million](#)
[Ashurst joins major cross-sector consortium to deliver AI-driven data access platform for regulated industries](#)

May

NEWS AND INSIGHTS

[Powering Change: Energy in Transition Research Report launched](#)
[Luxembourg team moved into new premises in La Dome](#)

April

NEWS AND AWARDS

[Stronger Together programme launched to ensure the firm's financial resilience during and beyond the COVID-19 health crisis](#)
[Recognised in Best Lawyers Australia 2021](#)

August

INSIGHTS AND AWARDS

[The Future of LNG and Natural Gas Infrastructure Report launched](#)
[Won six awards in Australasian Law Awards 2020](#)

September

NEWS AND INSIGHTS

[New Board appointments: Phil Breden \(Sydney\) and Kylie Lane \(Melbourne\) elected and Karen Davies \(London\) re-elected to the Board, with effect from 1 November](#)
[ESG Ready launched: Solution to simplify readiness and compliance with new EU ESG regulation](#)

October

NEWS AND AWARDS

[Hilary Goodier appointed as Partner and global Chief Operating Officer of our NewLaw division, Ashurst Advance](#)
[Paul Jenkins named Management Partner of the Year at the Legal Business Awards 2020](#)
[CSR Innovation \(Collaboration\) and the CSR Innovation \(Multi-Firm\) awards at the Legal Week Legal Innovation Awards 2020](#)
[Greece Collaborative Project wins Innovation in Social Responsibility award at the Financial Times Innovative Lawyer Awards Europe 2020](#)
[Ashurst wins Recruitment Programme of the Year at UK Social Mobility Awards](#)
[15 appointed to partnership - 67% of the partners promoted were female](#)
[Modern Slavery Action Plan launched](#)

December

NEWS AND AWARDS

[Collaboration with Social Mobility Commission on launch of first sector-specific toolkit](#)
[Ashurst wins Silver Legal Adviser of the Year at the Partnerships Awards 2020](#)
[Ashurst advised on four prize-winning deals at PFI Awards](#)

November

AWARDS AND EVENTS

[British Legal Technology Awards: Most Innovative Firm of the Year in recognition of role advising Santander on the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme \(CBILS\)](#)
[Ashurst partners with the 5th Annual Australian FinTech Awards to Celebrate FinTech Success Stories](#)



Get in touch

Your feedback is always greatly valued and we'd love to hear your thoughts about the yearbook. Please get in touch to share your views or to register your interest in appearing in the 2022 edition. We look forward to hearing from you.

alumni@ashurst.com

Join our [Alumni LinkedIn group](#)

Our LinkedIn group provides a great way of connecting with our global alumni community and features updates on our alumni events. Make sure your current profile reflects your past employment at Ashurst or Blake Dawson so we can confirm your membership.



Disclaimer

Firm *friends* is published by Ashurst. The opinions expressed in it are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the firm and any information contained in it is not intended to constitute advice. Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this publication is correct at the time of upload.

The next edition of Firm *friends* will be published in early 2022.

© Ashurst LLP 2021 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without prior consent of the publishers.