



McR

Connect

Alumni newsletter

Issue three
August 2017

Welcome

From our Chairman of Partners



Welcome to the third edition of McRConnect.

I hope you are enjoying our refreshed alumni program and finding opportunities to connect with the team at McR. I had the pleasure of seeing some of you at our recent coffee catch up and enjoyed hearing about what you have been up to in your personal and professional lives.

As we welcome the new financial year I am delighted to announce two new partners, along with the promotions of four special counsel and two senior associates. Our new partners, Aaron Dahl and Peter Williams, both began their careers with us and together add their expertise to strengthen our corporate and commercial offering. I encourage you to read more about them on page 6.

Investor confidence in Australian renewable energy projects is soaring, with close to \$8 billion committed to large-scale wind, solar and bioenergy projects this year. As clean energy generation becomes more cost-competitive and domestic policy develops to support long-term investment, we are fielding an increased volume of investor enquiries around regulatory requirements, project approval processes, funding opportunities, structuring considerations and project delivery methods.

Louise Horrocks, who leads our renewables team, has penned an insightful article outlining the trailblazers in this space. Read more on page 8, along with details of how to obtain a copy of the team's handy renewable energy investor guide.

Over the past year, we've focussed on how we can make McCullough Robertson an even better place to work. Through a series of workshops involving all corners of the organisation, we uncovered common themes around our attitudes and behaviours which we've refined to create a simple statement of our collective purpose.

Like our values, our purpose statement will guide us as we work together to create new opportunities and meaningful partnerships with our clients, community and each other.

Over the coming months we will unveil a series of videos showcasing our people and their unique ideas around what purpose means to them and how they bring this to life in their everyday work. For my part I look forward to seeing what we can achieve as we continue *Unlocking success. Together.*

All the best,

Dominic McGann

Brisbane | Sydney | Melbourne | Newcastle

www.mccullough.com.au

Lawyers | **McCullough
Robertson**

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From Louise

Our alumni champion



Welcome to edition three!

In April's edition of McRConnect, we spoke about our plan to host coffee catch-ups with the aim of providing more opportunities to personally connect with our alumni colleagues.

We launched our first event in July at Rush Express in Post Office Square. The casual 'drop in on the way to work' format worked well and we have received positive feedback on this style of event. Thanks to all who braved the cold July morning, it was great to see familiar faces and hear about what you've been up to in your careers and personal lives. You can view all the photos from the event on our [LinkedIn page](#).

We caught up with alumni and Barrister James Ford at our coffee catch-up. You can read all about James' new career in the Amazing Careers section of this edition. We also catch up with Special Counsel Melissa Hill, who returned to us earlier this year

after taking some time out to work in-house at RSL Care. Read about Melissa's adventures on page 11.

As always we encourage your attendance at our thought leadership-style events and will keep you informed about these opportunities. We're also busy planning our next alumni cocktail party, to be held on the evening of 2 November so please lock this in and stay tuned for further details.

I hope you enjoy this issue of McRConnect and I look forward to seeing many of you at our cocktail party in November.

Louise Horrocks

Diary dates 2017

21
Sept

Luxury tourism: Exploring trends, misconceptions and opportunities for NSW

New South Wales is spending more on tourism than ever before, attracting increased visitor numbers and driving a wave of hotel investment. This event brings together industry thought leaders who will share their insights in luxury tourism trends, misconceptions and opportunities for NSW. Join career professionals and industry leaders in all areas of property to network, learn, exchange ideas and be inspired.

Event partner: Property Leaders Sydney

Venue: McCullough Robertson, Sydney

Time: 5.30pm for a 6.00pm start – 8.00pm

[Click here to register](#)

Alumni Cocktail Party

Join us for a casual evening providing you with the opportunity to keep in touch with our firm, our people and your past colleagues and friends. Invitation to follow.

Venue: McCullough Robertson, Brisbane

Time: 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Enquiries: Samantha Ryalls on 07 3233 8818

2
Nov

6
Oct

Water Conference

A packed half day program focussing on environmental approvals, key procurement risks, workplace health and safety, native title, stakeholder and community engagement and insurance. The program concludes with an expert panel discussion – *Pipes and Dams: Is Queensland surging ahead or going with the flow?* This conference is tailored to individuals acting in a commercial and legal capacity for government organisations.

Venue: McCullough Robertson, Brisbane

Time: 9.45am for 10.00am – 3.00pm

RSVP: Carla van den Hoorn on 07 3233 8883

18
Oct

Construction Law Workshop

Following on from the recent success of our Construction workshops and industry dinners in Melbourne, Perth, Sydney, Mackay, Townsville and Toowoomba, please join us for our second Sydney workshop which will be focusing on legal and commercial issues surrounding construction projects. This workshop will deal with the key issues that are likely to affect projects in the coming years and provide in-depth insights on every aspect of the project life cycle, from procurement and project development through to contract negotiation and dispute avoidance.

Venue: McCullough Robertson, Sydney

Time: 8.45am for 9.00am – 12.30pm with a light lunch provided

Enquiries: Carla van den Hoorn on 07 3233 8883

McR milestones

In this edition of McRConnect we feature a selection of our colleagues who have recently celebrated milestone anniversaries, acknowledging their achievements and contribution to our firm over many years.

Julia Lawrence

Senior Associate, 10 years

Julia started working for McR as a fresh faced research graduate in February 2006. After a brief sojourn in Corporate, she joined the Construction group, where she has remained an integral part of the team. Hailing from the glamorous western metropolis of Moranbah (sometimes known as the Melbourne of the West) Julia started with all the attributes of a first class black letter lawyer – well organised, concise and not taking a backward step when necessary. She has only gotten better with time.



Peter Stokes

Partner, 10 years

Starting as a lawyer in 2006, Peter was appointed to Senior Associate in 2008 and Partner in 2012. Affectionately known as 'Pistol' Pete among his Litigation and Dispute Resolution team they also tell of his aversion to all things meat (described as 'rabid and militant vegan ideals'). Peter is also a star in the pool, holding the 2016 award for the annual partners dash at the MW Recruitment Swimming Carnival. Peter manages a developed practice in the resources space and has helped a number of companies through challenging approvals process.

Amy Hunt

Mailroom Clerk, 10 years

Amy started working for McR as a records clerk in 2006 and remained in that role until 2013 when she went on maternity leave in preparation for the birth of her first child Oliver. On her return to the firm in 2014 she moved into the role of mailroom clerk where she was welcomed with open arms, her wonderful personality and can-do attitude proving a great asset to the team. Amy left in 2015 to give birth to her second child Alexis and returned to the mailroom earlier this year. The team are very happy to have her back!



Sharon Chan

Senior Associate, 15 years

Sharon started working at McR in 2001 as a lawyer and was appointed to Senior Associate in 2005. Sharon is described as the heart of the real estate team and a valued and reliable colleague whose catchphrase is 'no problem'. Sharon's 15 year tenure has benefited McR on many levels, particularly her supervisory skills and her unflappable nature on transactions.



"Sharon is a genuinely kind soul and yet tough as nails. She is ruthlessly efficient and technically accurate in her work and it's a privilege to have worked with her for many of her 15 years at McR".



Kerry Dillon

Legal Assistant, 20 years

Kerry started working for McR as a paralegal in 1997. She transitioned into a legal assistant role and was elevated to coordinator not long after. Kerry now looks after our Property, Planning and Finance team and is widely recognised for her reliability, friendly manner and genuine interest in people. Kerry was awarded the national Legal Support Professional of the Year at the 2016 Australian Law Awards, a well-deserved honour.

"Kerry is the sort of person whose presence makes it enjoyable to get up in the morning and come to work. She is a great contributor to our culture and ethos of not taking ourselves too seriously."

Tim Whitney

Consultant, 40 years

Tim 'the Colonel' Whitney started at McR in 1976 and currently works as a consultant in our estates team. Tim spent more than 25 of his 40 years as a partner and, for many years, headed up the firm's Equity and Private Client team. Widely regarded as Queensland's leading expert on trusts, Tim was one of the first named Accredited Specialists (Succession Law) for Queensland Law Society and authored the QLS Will Precedents Guide, which sits on the shelf of many Queensland practitioners.



"It's Tim's dry wit and willingness to help that we love and admire the most. We are grateful that he continues to play such a significant role in the team and look forward to marking many more milestones with him".

2017 Australian Law Awards finalists

From our senior ranks to rising stars McR has been shortlisted as a finalist in four categories at this year's Australian Law Awards hosted by Lawyers Weekly. These nationally-recognised awards celebrate the legal sector's leading professionals and firms with the winners announced at a gala dinner in Sydney on 1 September.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FINALISTS

LawyersWeekly
**AUSTRALIAN LAW
AWARDS 2017**

IN THE 2017 LAWYERS WEEKLY AUSTRALIAN LAW AWARDS



DAMIEN CLARKE & LOUISE HORROCKS

**Energy and Resources
Team of the Year**



JIM PETERSON & BEN WOOD

**Transaction
Team of the Year**



TRUDI PROCTER

**Special Counsel
of the Year**



MILAN GANDHI

**Law Student
of the Year**

Damien Clarke and Louise Horrocks Energy & Resources Team of the Year

A runner up for this award in 2016, our Resources and Renewables Group Head Damien Clarke celebrates 20 years providing genuine leadership and management to the team, which has dominated the market for mid-tier miners in acquisitions of large mining houses' distressed assets. The Group has recently seen a significant expansion in its clean energy sector work with rising star Partner Louise Horrocks advising on some of the most complex renewables projects in Australia.

Jim Peterson and Ben Wood Transaction Team of the Year

Our transaction team worked with clients across a number of sectors in FY16-17, most notably the merger between RACQ and QT Mutual Bank (QTMB). The novel transaction (involving an Authorised Deposit-taking Institution being acquired by an entity which is not a financial institution) was a world first and a game-changer for the Australian banking sector. RACQ and QTMB aim to create a fresh way to bank, bringing together two mutual, member-focused organisations that are committed to an attractive retail bank offering that provides value for their members.

Trudi Procter Special Counsel of the Year

A senior lawyer in our Corporate and Commercial group, Trudi returned to work from a second round of maternity leave in September 2016 and has successfully combined her role as a mother with acting on major cross-border acquisitions and divestments. Trudi has been a major driver of new business to the firm with an emphasis on resources and renewables and is an active mentor to others, demonstrating that it is possible to be a hands-on parent as well as a successful transaction lawyer.

Milan Gandhi Law Student of the Year

Milan is in his final year of a Bachelor of Laws degree at University of Queensland and will start in our graduate program in 2018. He has maintained a first class honours grade point average, juggling study with his role as a Research Clerk at McR, founding and directing nonprofit organisation The Legal Forecast, and serving on the Advisory Board to the College of Law's Centre for Legal Innovation.

Our future

Jeremy Perier
Senior Associate,
Intellectual
Property and
Competition



Ann Watson
Senior Associate,
Litigation and
Dispute
Resolution



Lydia Daly
Special Counsel,
Employment Relations
and Safety



Melinda Peters
Special Counsel,
Commercial



Lyndon Garbutt
Special Counsel,
Tax



Frances Fredriksen
Special Counsel,
Estates



Aaron Dahl
Partner,
Corporate
Advisory



Peter Williams
Partner,
Corporate and
Commercial



We are proud to announce our 2017 leadership appointments – two new partners, four special counsel and two senior associates.

Our new partners, Aaron Dahl and Peter Williams, are both outstanding lawyers with diverse skills and a tremendous focus on their clients.

Aaron began his career in McR's graduate program in 2006. He rotated through litigation and dispute resolution and aged care before settling on corporate advisory. Aaron specialises in capital raisings, mergers and acquisitions, business and share sales and ASX listings for public, private and nonprofit clients.

Peter also launched his career as a graduate with us, commencing in 2008. Between 2011 and 2015 he spent time working in London before returning to the firm as a Senior Associate in the commercial team. Peter specialises in unregulated mergers and acquisitions, establishment and operation of joint ventures, infrastructure arrangements and long term operating contracts.

Our eight appointments, made across seven practice groups, reflect our commitment to unlocking opportunities for our clients and our people, and aligning our technical and industry expertise to capitalise on emerging markets and opportunities.

Catching up in London

Partner Guy Humble caught up with seven McR alumni while in London in May. The group enjoyed shooting the breeze over a meal at The Oyster Shed overlooking the River Thames.

(L-R) Guy Humble, Sophie Croft, Michael Carroll, Gillian Holmes, Nicola Snell, Sarah Bitomsky, Catherine Dang and Andrew Poulton





by Louise Horrocks, Renewables Lead Partner



A bright future for our renewable energy practice

A relative newcomer to the international renewable energy market, Australia is receiving strong investment interest as part of a longer term national shift from fossil fuel generation to other energy sources.

As renewable energy projects become more cost competitive, domestic policy is developing to help create a supportive environment for long-term investment in Australian renewable energy projects. With 23.5% of our total power to come from renewable energy by 2020, Australia needs to double its current renewable energy generation capacity, creating significant opportunities to fill the gap.

We are helping international companies set up their Australian operations, providing advice around navigating regulatory requirements, funding opportunities, structuring and corporate considerations, project approval processes and preferred project delivery methods.

Most recently we advised a major European hedge fund on its local renewables projects and have assisted a host of local government and private sector organisations around solar and wind project development and financing.

While the Australian market continues to be dominated by conventional sources

of energy, mainly coal and gas, the move towards a more diverse energy mix means that there are opportunities for mature as well as emerging energy providers. For example we are receiving enquiries from our traditional resources clients who are looking at investment opportunities in the renewables sector to supplement their traditional operations. Getting the balance right is a significant issue for both energy companies and governments to ensure constant, stable and secure supply to meet demand.

Who are the trailblazers in this space?

Rio Tinto's 6.7MW solar photovoltaic (PV) Weipa Solar Farm, supplied and owned by First Solar (Australia) connects Rio Tinto's mini-grid at Weipa and delivers electricity under a long term Power Purchase Agreement. The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has described this project as the first application of renewable energy to power critical mining operations in a remote location and without access to Australia's main electricity grids.

Building on the Rio Tinto experience, ARENA has partnered with Sandfire Resources and McCullough Robertson client Neoen Australia to develop a solar plant at the De Grussa copper-gold mine 900 km north of Perth. Comprising a larger 10.6MW solar PV farm and 4MW of battery storage, it is understood to be a \$40m project with ARENA contributing \$21 million. Neoen is the owner of the plant which is integrated with the existing

19MW diesel plant. Importantly, the solar plant is able to power all of the De Grussa solar mine's day time power needs.

These projects highlight the opportunities for developing and operating renewable energy systems in remote off-grid energy locations, such as mine sites, and the economic benefits that are possible.

In fact, Solar PV is rapidly becoming a more cost effective alternative for both remote off-grid mines operating diesel generators and for many grid-tied mines. Installing solar at mines reduces carbon emissions and demonstrates sustainable mining practices.

We are excited about the potential for our clients and lawyers to be involved in these transformative projects and are looking forward to a bright future in the rapidly growing renewables sector.

About Louise Horrocks

Aside from being our Alumni Champion, Louise is a registered migration agent and a commercial lawyer specialising in resources and energy transactions and corporate restructures. She has extensive experience advising on unregulated mergers and acquisitions, providing technical advice around complex commercial transactions to structure acquisitions, disposals and establish new ventures with advantageous stamp duty and capital gains tax outcomes.

Thought leadership

'Investing in renewable energy in Australia' is a useful starting point for investors seeking to capitalise on opportunities in renewable energy.

The guide provides:

- an overview of the industry, its key players, trends and priority areas for future development

- an analysis of the challenges and opportunities, and
- a guide to navigating the legal framework in Australia, including potential hurdles for investors in the sector.

To order a complimentary copy please contact Louise Horrocks
lhorricks@mccullough.com.au



Community



At McR we have a strong community focus and recognise that it's not always about business. In 2009 we established the McCullough Robertson Foundation to support and formalise our engagement with our community partners. Today we work closely with more than 120 community partners, organisations and charities across a range of areas.

Darkness to Daylight

Setting off at dusk on Wednesday 3 May, Team McR joined other Brisbane legal firms and the wider community to run through the night and raise awareness during Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.

Each kilometre of the 110 kilometre Darkness to Daylight Challenge represents a life lost to domestic violence each year in Australia. Some brave individuals take on the whole 110km challenge, representing the isolation victims can feel when dealing with the problem in their own lives.

The event raised \$372,530 for the prevention of domestic violence, which will be used to teach our community to effectively recognise, respond and refer incidents of domestic violence. McR proudly contributed \$9,350, representing the most funds raised in Queensland.

As a Queensland Male Champion of Change and our Chairman, Dominic McGann plays a critical role bringing the issue of domestic and family violence out from behind closed doors, helping to reduce the stigma attached to what is a serious and growing problem in our community.

We offer McR employees who are affected by domestic and family violence access to vital support including up to 10 days paid special leave, counselling, enhanced security measures and help with domestic duties. We also run education and awareness sessions, which help our people recognise the signs of domestic violence and equip them with the skills needed to initiate challenging conversations with their colleagues.



(L-R) Julie Humphreys, Tim Case and Sarah Leuenberger

Jeans for Genes Day



(L-R) Kim Trajer, Karen Ebeling, Rhea Gofton, Peta Dunbar and Michael Bidwell

In August our Brisbane and Sydney offices got their denim on to raise funds for Jeans for Genes. While most babies are born healthy, sadly one in 20 are born with a birth defect or genetic disease. Jeans for Genes raises vital funds for the Children's Medical Research Institute, helping scientists discover treatments and cures and give every child the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. Double denim really is a trend that is so wrong, it's right!



(L-R) Goran Gelic, Saro Boghossian, Kate Clifton, Mark Tzannes and Cameron Dean

James Ford

Started at McR...

in 2010 as a Research Clerk in Corporate and Commercial

Left McR...

in February 2016 to join the Bar

Now works at...

as a self-employed Barrister at Wilberforce Chambers
jford@qldbar.asn.au



When James started his career with us as a research clerk, he worked with a team of other law students (including Senior Associate Jessica Laird) who all hot desked during busy periods. He graduated in February 2012 and was admitted in October 2012. His graduate cohort included Senior Associate James Arklay and well known alumni Stephanie Parkin and Michael Carroll.

Following a stint in Projects and Infrastructure, where he was looked after by Senior Associate Liam Davis and Sarah McBratney, another former McR colleague, he moved to the back end construction team with Partner Russell Thirgood and Special Counsel Alex Power, where he focused on construction litigation.

James never envisaged becoming a barrister but the way a partner once described litigation resonated with him. They said “solicitors are in charge – we find the cases, take care of the client and decide how things will run – barristers just come in at the end and sprinkle some magic on the case.” James decided he wanted to sprinkle the magic and set out on that path. He agrees that solicitors are the ones in charge, but he now thinks of himself as “a weapon in the solicitor’s arsenal in the corporate warfare called litigation”.

While at McR, James once filled in for McR’s silk on the Hayden Royal Commission. Tasked with cross-

examining an adverse witness in a publicly broadcast session, James was sweating bullets. It is one of his most memorable McR experiences and no doubt influenced his decision to take the bar exam. He remembers fondly that McR was always willing to back its junior lawyers and give them a go.

James took his bar exam (in secret, he didn’t want to “look like a goose” if he didn’t get in), completed the Association’s Bar Practice Course and was called to the bar on 27 May 2016. His job combines the two things he likes best – helping people and arguing with people. Between that and running his own business he gets lots of personal fulfilment and, as a result, goes to work every day with a smile on his face.

Since joining Wilberforce Chambers, James has worked mostly on employment law and general commercial cases, including some construction work. He said your speciality tends to choose you at the Bar so it will be interesting to see where his work leads him. His case load is always diverse for example he has litigated against a woman described as ‘Australia’s queen of con artists’ and has worked with someone accused of ‘cattle rustlin’.

While James is unclear about his final career destination, he’s heard from a number of judges that, next to being a barrister, being a judge is the best job they’ve had. He knows there’s a lot of

work between a first call to the bar and an appointment to the bench.

It’s been a hectic 12 months for James with setting up his practice and getting married. His wife Megan has also launched her own business and together they also run a start-up called **TrusTill** which recently received funding. TrusTill is a secure and simple way for legal, accounting and professional firms to process payments and secure cash flow.

With a background on the water (his first job out of school was on a prawn trawler and he has sailed in ocean racing events) James heads to the beach or goes sailing in Moreton Bay whenever he can.

James’ advice to someone starting out in law? Look after your health by exercising and eating well. He also encourages students to get an early foot in the door, citing McR’s mailroom as a great place to start.



Welcome back

Melissa Hill



Started at McR...

as a lawyer in the Construction team in 2006

Left McR...

in 2015 to work as Senior Legal Counsel at RSL Care

Returned to McR...

in 2017 as Special Counsel in the Commercial team

Did you follow a traditional path to becoming a lawyer?

After finishing my law degree I travelled overseas for 18 months and worked as a Legal Secretary in London. On my return to Brisbane I took on a WP role at Clayton Utz and then moved into their graduate program, and was admitted in 2003.

Then you moved to McR?

Yes, I started in McR's Construction team in 2006, working with Darren White, Brad McCosker and Dominic McGann. In 2007 I moved to what was then known as the Business and Revenue team, working with Damien Clarke and Kristen Podagiel and was promoted to Senior Associate in 2008.

And you have children now?

Yes, McR has supported me through two rounds of maternity leave. My first born, Freya (now seven years old) was born at 32 weeks, taking us all by surprise. My colleagues were incredibly supportive with both Duncan Bedford and Peter Williams stepping in to manage my workload. Incredibly I only received two work phone calls over this time! Peter recalls the all-nighter he pulled to complete one of my jobs and I think I'm yet to be forgiven.

It sounds like a stressful time.

Yes. Freya spent a week in a humidicrib

and 42 days in special care before we were able to bring her home. When I returned to McR as a Practice Support Lawyer, I was already pregnant with Xavier (now six years old) who was born at 37 weeks. So I went on my second round of maternity leave six days before he arrived. During this time my husband embarked on a career change, retraining as a carpenter. So life was busy!



Tell us about RSL Care.

While at McR I had started doing some work with Heather Watson for not-for-profit and aged care organisations, an area that had always interested me. I took the leap and spent close to two years at RSL Care (now Bolton Clarke), enjoying a wide range of legal work, including general commercial and areas I hadn't practiced in previously such as intellectual property. In the end I missed working as part of a team and the challenging nature of the work in private practice.



How did you approach returning to McR?

I was still having regular catch ups with Partner Damien Clarke and knew I wanted to return to McR. I liked the people, the camaraderie and the culture. Fortunately the commercial team was looking for someone around that time so I was welcomed back into a team I knew I worked well with.

What about outside of work? How do you spend your spare time?

I started learning the piano 12 months ago, after playing the organ as a child (because, according to my parents, I couldn't be convinced that I would like the piano better). I look forward to my Tuesday night lessons and even have my grade one exam coming up. Freya and Xavier are both showing an interest in music as well so I look forward to sharing this with them as they grow older.



Refer a friend

We are always on the lookout for talented individuals to join us and invite you to refer friends to job opportunities at McCullough Robertson. You will find our current opportunities on our **careers page**.

Be social



with @McRlaw

Find us on **LinkedIn**, **Twitter**, **Facebook** and **Instagram** to stay across our latest news, industry updates, thought leadership, events and career opportunities. Plus you can interact with us, join forums, ask questions and share your feedback.



Stay connected

We've made it easy for you to communicate with us because we want to hear about your life, career and progress since leaving the firm.

Email us at

alumni@mccullough.com.au

Join us on LinkedIn

Stay connected with former colleagues and friends via our **alumni group on LinkedIn**

Register or update your details

Visit the **alumni registration page** on our website or email **alumni@mccullough.com.au**

McRConnect is an online digital publication produced by McCullough Robertson's Marketing and Business Development team. If you have any questions about McR Connect, email **alumni@mccullough.com.au**.

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