

Our Contribution to
Aotearoa New Zealand

Tō tatou ki Aotearoa

ESG Overview 2023

1863 2023
160
YEARS

Russell McLeagh

Our Values

Our values reflect who we are, what we stand for, and how we work together.

Excellence | Whai hiranga

Respect | Manaaki

Curiosity | Māhirahira

Tenacity | Whakapau kaha

Welcome

“ We are dedicated in our commitment to ensuring we are positively contributing to a thriving Aotearoa New Zealand. We do this through the work we deliver for our clients, the way we support our people, and the investments we make in our community. ”

Allison Arthur-Young
Board Chair and Partner



We are pleased to provide our 2023 ESG report which aims to share the many ways in which we are investing and contributing across our environmental, social and governance responsibilities.

This year has presented challenges for all New Zealanders, from the devastating impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle, the floods in Auckland and other regions throughout the motu, to the rising cost of living for all households. We also can't forget the very real global challenges that exist as a result of the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, climate change and the war in Ukraine.

Our focus has been to continue to do what we can to make a positive difference and I am proud of the work we do and all our people for their energy, passion, and commitment to making a difference, despite the difficult circumstances.

For our report this year, we have placed a spotlight on our 'Community' contribution. In particular we have expanded and enhanced our Pro Bono programme: working with over 50 pro bono clients, providing over 4,000 hours of free legal assistance to those in need, and committed to an aspirational goal of 25 hours per lawyer per year for pro bono support.

2023 marks the firm's 160th anniversary. This milestone has been an opportunity to reflect on the ways we have contributed throughout this time, as well as to look ahead towards what we can do to contribute to the health and prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand. We have come a long way from the firm's origins as a 'one-man' practice in 1863 to the modern firm we are today.

Over the years, we have assisted clients with some of the most influential cases and projects in our country's history. From the growth of the Auckland Harbour port in the late 1800s, shipping rights in the early 1900s, the seminal Waitangi Tribunal Lands case in 1987, to the creation and evolution of New Zealand's largest company, Fonterra – our story is intertwined with the history of modern day Aotearoa.

I hope you enjoy our 2023 ESG report. I want to thank all our people for their hard work, dedication and genuine commitment to all that we do, as well as our clients and community partners – for allowing us to work alongside you on important matters and projects shaping our country.

Jo Avenell
CEO





Page 8.
Our Community
Tō tātou hapori

We contribute to the community through our Pro Bono programme, our community partnerships, charity days and fundraising activities.



Page 20.
Our People
Tō tātou tira mahi

We are committed to creating a culture where everyone can thrive. Our focus is on ensuring we have an open, inclusive and collaborative workplace.



Page 30.
Our Environment
Tō tatou taiao

We are committed to understanding and managing the impact we have on our environment.



Page 36.
Who We Are
Ko tātou

We are one of New Zealand's leading corporate commercial law firms. We have over 350 people across our two offices in Auckland and Wellington, and work with our clients across the motu.

Contents

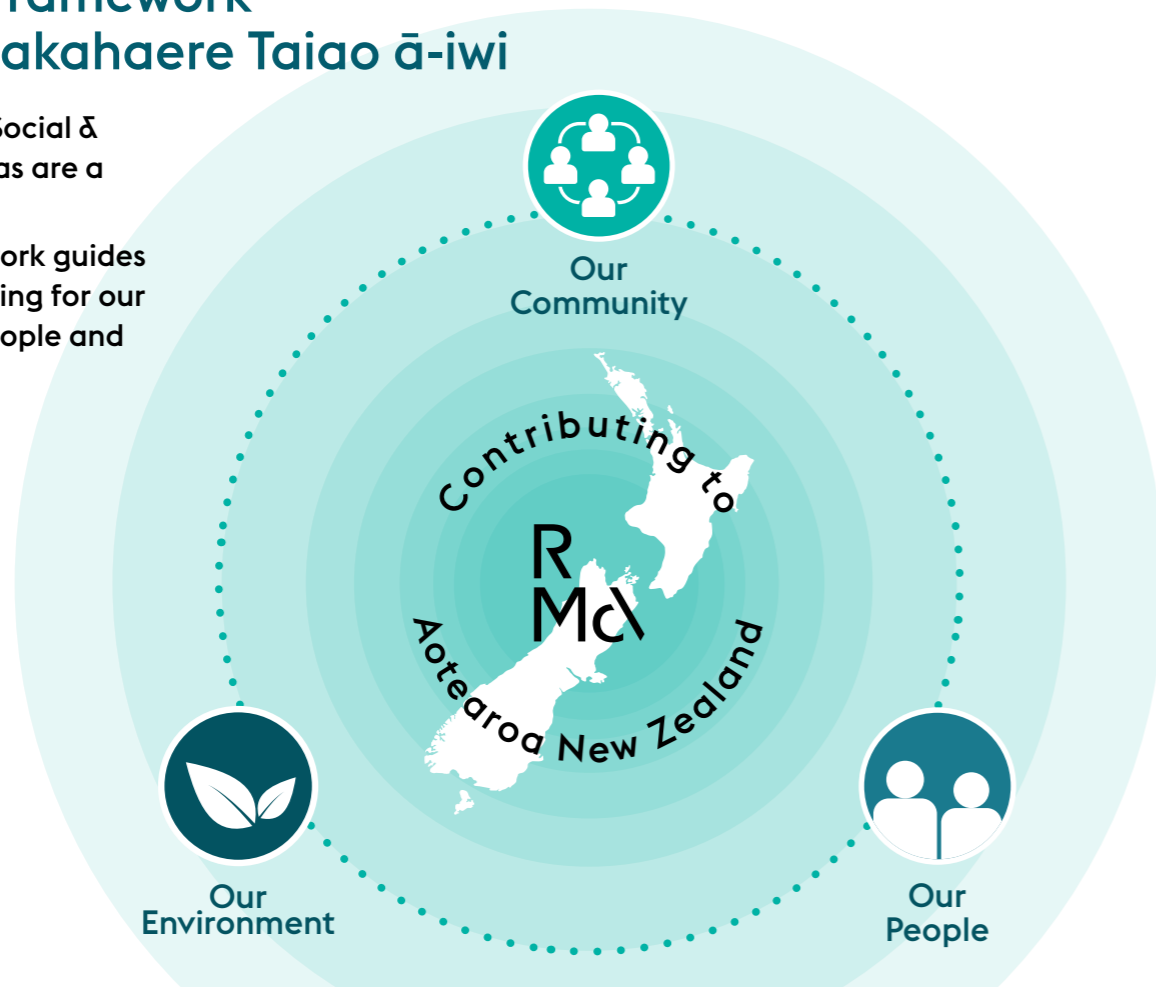
Our Contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand Tō tatou ki Aotearoa ESG Overview 2023

Our ESG Framework Mana Whakahaere Taiao ā-iwi	6
Our Community Tō tātou hapori	8
Our People Tō tātou tira mahi	20
Our Environment Tō tatou taiao	30
Who We Are Ko tātou	36

Our ESG Framework Mana Whakahaere Taiao ā-iwi

Environmental, Social & Governance areas are a key focus for us.

Our ESG Framework guides our efforts in caring for our communities, people and environment.



4000+
total hours
of pro bono
work in FY22



89%
of our people believe
Russell McVeagh is a
great place to work



100%
of our partners
took part in our
Inclusive Leadership
Programme

To help shape and support Aotearoa New Zealand's future

We are very aware of our obligation and opportunity to make a positive difference to the prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand. Our ESG Framework guides our decision-making to ensure we are having a positive impact on our communities, people, and environment.



Our Community

We contribute to the community through our Pro Bono programme, our community partnerships, charity days and fundraising activities

We do this by:

Providing free legal support through our Pro Bono programme to those who struggle to access justice

Providing time off for our people for charity and fund-raising opportunities

Enabling our people and our firm to establish meaningful relationships, connections, and partnerships in our community



Our People

We are committed to creating a culture where everyone can thrive. Our focus is on ensuring an open, inclusive and collaborative workplace

We do this by:

Investing in opportunities to support career goals and develop leadership capabilities

Continuing to create and embed practices that promote a diverse and inclusive workplace

Offering support for wellbeing, including a better work-life balance, fair pay, and a full range of benefits that make a difference and matter most to our people



Our Environment

We are committed to understanding and managing the impact we have on our environment

We do this by:

Identifying opportunities to help reduce carbon intensity and support a smooth transition to a net zero carbon economy

Our Toitū net carbonzero certification measures greenhouse gas emissions, and helps us to put in place strategies to manage and reduce impacts

Adopting new sustainability practices and educate our people on how to make a positive difference



Our Community Tō tātou hapori

We contribute to the community through our Pro Bono programme, our community partnerships, charity days and fundraising. This year our key focus areas have been expanding our investment in our Pro Bono programme, supporting those impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle and increasing our community related activity.



50+
pro bono
clients



36
years
working with Māngere
Community Law Centre



4000+
total hours
of pro bono
work in FY22



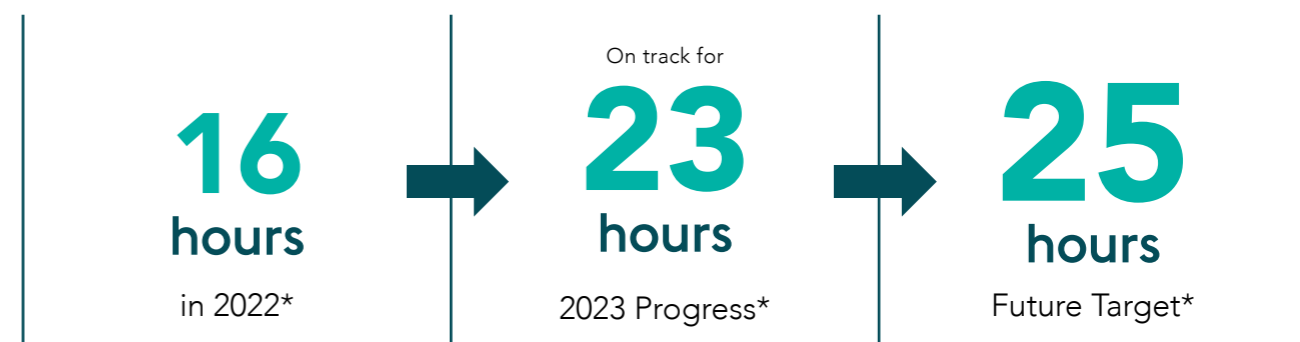
Our Pro Bono Framework

Increasing access to justice is at the heart of our Pro Bono programme. We also focus on pro bono work that aligns with our values including projects that support diversity and inclusion.



Increasing our support

Our aim is to continue growing the firm's Pro Bono programme, increasing and improving access to justice in our communities. We have set an aspirational target of an average of 25 pro bono hours per fee earner per year. We are targeting areas of the greatest unmet legal need.



(*per fee earner, per year)

Our Pro Bono Clients

We are committed to making a demonstrable difference within our communities and are proud of our relationships with our pro bono clients.



We support Access Matters Aotearoa in its law reform initiative around the regulatory and legislative framework for disabled people. In March, our Public Law team in Wellington attended Parliament with its petition on the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. The Bill's purpose is to accelerate progress towards a fully accessible Aotearoa New Zealand.

ākina

For almost 15 years, we have provided legal support to The Ākina Foundation, assisting in the organisation's mission to transform Aotearoa's economy by putting positive social and environmental impact at the heart of how we do business.



TE WAKA HIRINGA TANGATA

We have a long-standing relationship with the Trust and support its mission to empower young New Zealanders to reach their full potential through the challenge of the sea. The Trust has taken tens of thousands of young people on voyages of personal discovery through sailing.



Our solicitors have been volunteering for Māngere and Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law Centres for decades, offering free legal advice to members of the community.

This year, we also provided three virtual secondments to the Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law Centre, each involving 30 hours of support across six-weeks.

In recognition of our relationship, MCLC presented us with two taonga, titled 'The Waves of Whangamata' and 'Koru Sunrise'.



Te Ara Ture are a recently constituted entity run by Community Law. Our work with them began in 2022, and is focused on individuals who would not be able to access legal advice privately or who are vulnerable.

“ Russell McVeagh is a really active partner of Te Ara Ture. They work across all areas of our programme and did a brilliant piece of work after the floods and cyclone. The legal information they produced is now available to all New Zealanders and will be there ready to go, should they need it again. ”

Darryn Aitchison, Director, Te Ara Ture



We provide extensive support to Bridget Williams Books (BWB), an award-winning independent publisher. BWB's influential books span history, Māori experience, climate change and other topical policy issues for Aotearoa New Zealand.



A global community of women + non-binary people that help businesses working on the world's to-do list. We have been offering our help since 2020 to the handful of impact-driven ventures that are picked each year.



Raise funds to support big research so big breakthroughs in child health can happen. We have supported them for two decades, including helping to fundraise.



We have been assisting since 2022 with the design and implementation of Mahi for Ukraine's government relations strategy, advocating for various immigration and humanitarian aid measures to support Ukrainians in New Zealand.



One of NZ's leading independent research think tanks, their experts endeavour to shed light on the forces that shape Aotearoa's economy, inform policy decisions, and improve the lives of New Zealanders.



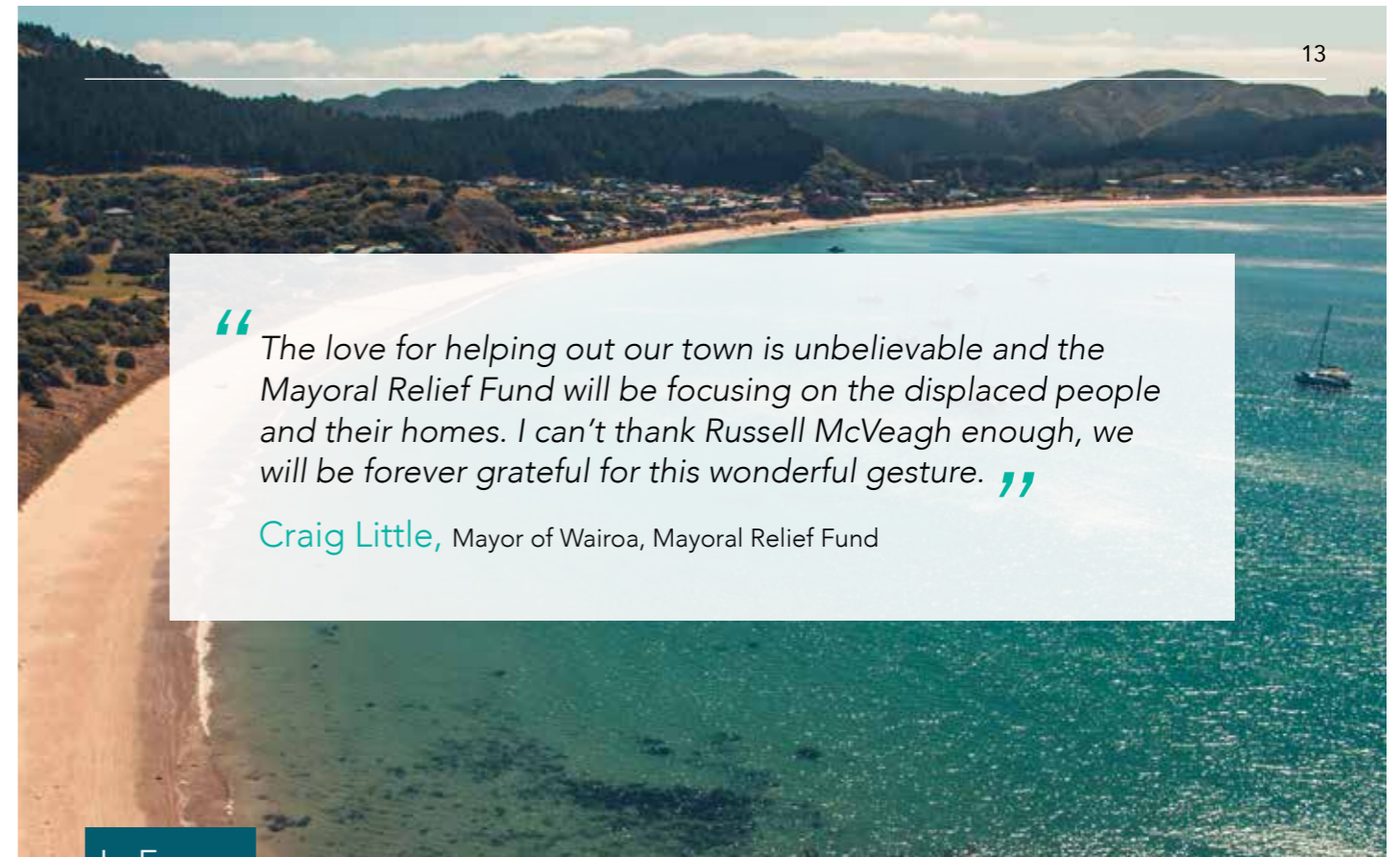
We have worked with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei on its latest housing development to assist whānau into home ownership in the Ōrākei Papakāinga (where whānau live together communally) on iwi land.



RainbowYOUTH work towards creating social change by providing support, information, resources and advocacy for queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex young people across Aotearoa New Zealand.



We act for the Karori Sanctuary Trust (trading as Zealandia | Te Māra a Tāne), which operates the world's first fully-fenced urban ecosanctuary, home to some of Aotearoa's most rare and extraordinary wildlife.



“The love for helping out our town is unbelievable and the Mayoral Relief Fund will be focusing on the displaced people and their homes. I can't thank Russell McVeagh enough, we will be forever grateful for this wonderful gesture.”

Craig Little, Mayor of Wairoa, Mayoral Relief Fund

In Focus:

Supporting Aotearoa through the hard times: Auckland Floods and Cyclone Gabrielle

Active support for our communities, our clients and our people, after a challenging start to the year with the unprecedented weather events:

- **Firm donation** to East Coast Rural Trust and the Wairoa Mayoral Relief Fund, some of the hardest hit communities.
- **Worked closely with Te Ara Ture** to support the Community Law network by preparing online information regarding a wide range of topics for those affected.
- **An additional day of paid leave** for all staff in April to reconnect and spend time with their loved ones.
- **Fundraising initiatives** such as a bake sale and food bank drive with all proceeds donated to the Kindness Collective, a charity who worked hard to meet needs that had arisen as a result of the floods.
- **Provided legal advice and special leave** to our people affected by the floods.



“Many of our people, clients, whānau and friends have either been directly affected by the weather events or know someone who has... we encourage everyone to continue to connect, ask for help, and support each other.”

Allison Arthur-Young
Board Chair and Partner

Our Community Partnerships

Through our partnerships, sponsorships, and memberships, we are proud of our work with organisations that have a focus on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the communities we live and work in, as well as the advancement of our profession.

DE&I Inclusion



We are the Official Legal Partner for the inaugural Rainbow Games 2024 which will be held in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland next April. The Rainbow Games 2024 is an inclusive multi sporting event that brings together participants from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities, centred around four core values: Turangawaewae, Manamotuhake, Hauora, and Manaakitanga, representing a sense of belonging, a holistic approach to health, and fostering a culture of inclusivity.

“Crafting a brand-new sporting event is a formidable undertaking and we are delighted to join forces with one of New Zealand’s esteemed law firms to curate a memorable and meaningful Rainbow Games experience next April.”

Tom Leonard,
Rainbow Games 2024 Event Director



Each year our firm provides Christmas gifts and food to the Mission. We contributed a donation last Christmas which was spent on feeding families in need and providing Christmas lunch at the Mission on Christmas Day.



Rainbow Tick is about accepting and valuing people in the workplace, embracing the diversity of sexual and gender identities. We have been certified since 2016 and are audited on an annual basis.



A charitable trust with the goal of supporting and enabling students who have financial need to take up studies in the property construction sector. In FY22, the Trust awarded 22 scholarships and a total of 51 students received pastoral support.

DE&I Ethnicity



3 Kapu Kawhe is a mentoring programme pairing ethnically diverse young leaders with executives and directors. Our CEO Jo Avenell is a mentor, and our firm is a founding Corporate Impact Investor, with 3 of our people, Nathan Tse, Varoon Kumar and Quentin Daniels (pictured) selected to participate as mentees.



We are a Support Sponsor of TupuToa who are working to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce by providing opportunities for Māori and Pacific taurira to learn and develop. We have supported students since 2016.



We support Pacific Lawyers Association and two of our members, Senior Associate Varoon Kumar and Senior Solicitor Aleisha Robertson, recently volunteered as judges at the University of Auckland’s annual Moana Issues Moot, in conjunction with PLA.



Five of our solicitors are Young Lawyers Committee members and we recently hosted NZ Asian Lawyers’ event ‘Bamboo Ceiling in the legal profession’ with the Dean of Law at Oxford University, Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart.

DE&I Gender



Russell McVeagh is a member of Champions for Change, where chairs and CEOs of major New Zealand businesses commit to D&I as the catalyst for the change they want to see. Jo Avenell, our CEO, represents the firm.



Committed to increasing D&I in the workplace and across Aotearoa. CEO Jo Avenell, Board Chair Allison Arthur-Young, and partners Mei Fern Johnson, Polly Pope, Kirsten Massey and Cath Shirley-Brown are members.



We are committed to improving the retention and advancement of women through active leadership and actions.



Working to end Aotearoa’s period poverty by providing period products at workplaces, schools, and community and youth groups. We have contributed 486 boxes since our partnership began in 2019.

Industry Focus



Our partnership supports public sector professionals in their skill development. We often host IPANZ New Professionals, engaging them with expert speakers and providing a platform for young professionals to network and develop their skills, so they better contribute to the future of the public sector.



We support AMINZ through promoting dispute resolution in Aotearoa. This year we hosted their Mediation Skills Intensive courses and sponsored the AMINZ Conference 2023 - 'Access to Justice'.



Brings together the AI ecosystem in Aotearoa to help harness the power of AI technologies. Louise Taylor, Special Counsel in our Technology, Digital & Strategic Sourcing team, is the Deputy Chair of the AI Forum.



Partner Anna Crosbie is on the National Board and we sponsored their Seismic Solutions event earlier this year. The Property Council helps Aotearoa's property owners and developers shape cities where communities thrive.

Education



Since 2008 we have delivered regular presentations to Tāmaki College students on subjects such as budgeting, applying for university scholarships, and CV writing.



In conjunction with the Who Did You Help Today (Homework Club) Charity, our people support Ōwairaka School's after-school provider, Kelly Club, by interacting and reading with their students.

Arts & Culture

TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI | AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

We have been a sponsor and legal partner for AAF since 2016. AAF is a globally recognised international arts festival that takes place every March in Tāmaki Makaurau, featuring world class Aotearoa artists alongside renowned international performers.



We are the legal partner of Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival (NZIFF) which annually presents the best in global and local cinema to audiences across Aotearoa.



We support Kiri Nathan's 'Te Kuneroa' NZ Fashion Week 2023 runway - she is the first Māori fashion designer to open the NZFW - Kahuria, a moment forever forged in NZ fashion history. We first supported Kiri in 2021 when she held the inaugural Kahui Collective mentorship programme, one of the many initiatives that Kiri runs to champion emerging Māori fashion entrepreneurs and creatives both nationally and internationally.

Charity Days and Fundraising

Each year, our teams can spend a work day volunteering for a charity of their choice. We also support our people to organise fundraisers and events for causes they're invested in and encourage opportunities to get involved. Here are some examples...



1



2



3



4



24 Hour Team Challenge

Russell McVeagh took part in the Rebel Sport 24 Hour Team Challenge for the Cure Kids fundraising event at Eden Park in August. For 24 hours, our team battled it out against 17 other organisations to keep an exercise machine moving continuously. The inaugural challenge helped raise over \$160k for our amazing pro bono client, Cure Kids. Members of our HR Team and partners including Dave Butler, David Raudkivi and Matt Kersey (pictured right), took part in the challenge.



5



6



7



8

1. We organised a bake sale and food bank drive to help those affected by the Auckland floods in February.
2. Our solicitors Angela Yang and Nina Pinkerton-Bennett organised a clothing drive in support of Gattung Foundation's Fashion Sister initiative.
3. Our Real Estate and Construction team planted native trees in Masterton alongside students from Wairarapa College and the Masterton Trust Lands Trust board of trustees.
4. We contributed to the production of the 2023/24 Community Law Manuals for the Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law Centre.
5. We collected donations for Wellington Women's Refuge.
6. Our Real Estate & Construction team spent the day polishing boats for Sailability Auckland, a charity which offers sailing to people with disabilities.
7. 171 Kiwi lives were improved by the donations made to NZ Blood Service Blood Drive at an event held at our Auckland office.
8. Our summer clerks volunteered at Cure Kids.



Our People Tō tātou tira mahi

We are committed to creating an open and collaborative culture where every person feels valued and included so we all can thrive. We support and develop our people through programmes and initiatives that focus on wellbeing, performance and development, and building a sense of belonging.



350+
people
across both offices



85%
feel they belong and
can thrive at RMcV



20+
specifically
trained employees
who can provide mental
health support to
colleagues

Our People Framework

Our People Framework is focused on three areas to ensure everyone at the firm can thrive.

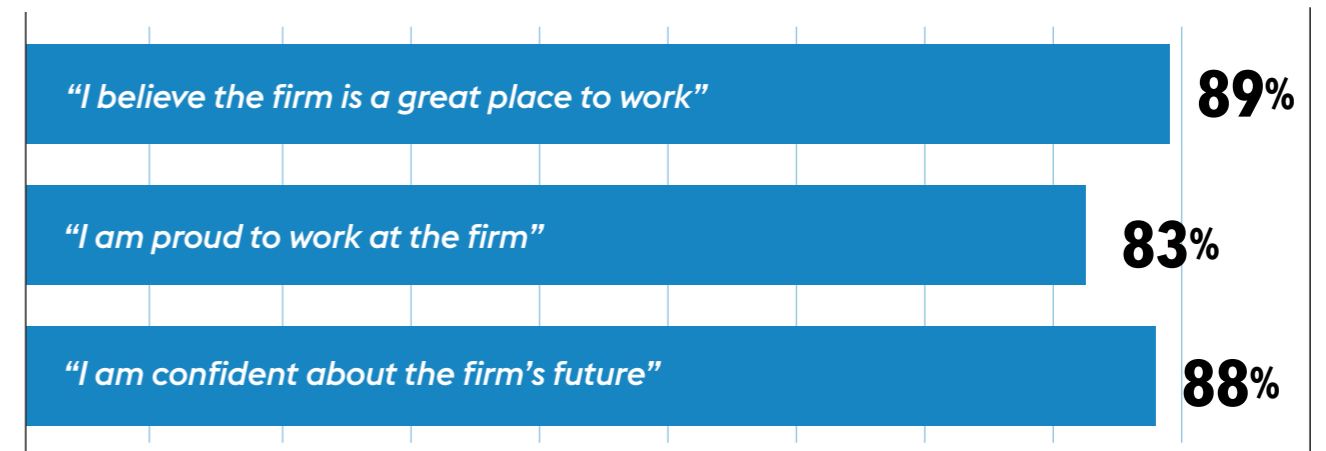


Wellbeing

Our people make us who we are, and we know that listening to feedback will contribute to a positive culture and set the direction for the future of our firm.

Checking in with our people

Our 'Pulse' staff engagement surveys give our people the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback and ideas on how the firm can progress. High-level May 2023 survey results are shown below:



(*78% of employees participated in the survey)

How we work

- We support an approach to flexible working based on what works best given client and team workload, and team member development needs. We provide a home office allowance so our people have the right tools to work seamlessly from home.
- We proactively manage our hours with our overtime system, allowing people to take time off in lieu after working extended hours to meet client needs.



Other ways we support our people’s wellbeing:

- **Kaiāwhina Oranga | Wellbeing Support People** – an internal network of 20+ specifically trained people (in a range of different levels and roles) who can provide mental health support to anyone at the firm.
- **Groov digital app’s** premium content is available for all our people and can be confidentially downloaded to their phones. Groov helps people deal with workplace stress, anxiety and poor sleep.
- **Health, Safety and Wellness Committee** which meets monthly to explore opportunities to support our people and their wellbeing.
- **Mental Health Awareness Week** is celebrated with a range of activities including sessions on creating personal wellbeing plans, and facilitated discussions on mental wellbeing.
- **Independent EAP provider** offers free, confidential counselling and psychological support.
- **Parent/Baby Room** to provide privacy for parents.
- **Wellness Clubs** such as Book Clubs, Sports Teams, and a Peacefulness Club.

Our approach to Modern Slavery

Although New Zealand is not currently subject to modern slavery laws, some of our overseas clients are, and we take all practicable steps to ensure modern slavery is not taking place within our business or supply chains. We pay the Living Wage to all our employees and monitor minimum wage compliance. We have recent confirmation all our core suppliers are paying Living Wage and we are progressing accreditation which is due to be confirmed in December this year.

We are committed to:

- remove any presence of modern slavery within our business and supply chains;
- act ethically, and with integrity and transparency, in all business dealings; and
- put effective and practical systems and controls in place to reduce the risks of modern slavery.

Performance, Development and Growth

We focus on growing and developing the best lawyers in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Solicitor Nathan Tse (opposite) and Partner Liz Blythe (above) took part in our 2023 ‘hobby’ graduate campaign video, highlighting our people and their diverse lives outside the office.

Career support programmes

- **Breakfast and Supper Clubs** facilitate connection, where junior and senior women can network and share their experiences.
- **Continued Professional Development** supports learning to help develop exceptional solicitors. Our solicitors spent almost double the number of required hours by the New Zealand Law Society on CPD in 2022-23.
- **Recruitment and Successions & Admissions committees** play key roles in ensuring diversity and inclusion is at the forefront of our recruitment processes.

Clarity and transparency

- **Sharing our Strategy** a full-day induction for all new team members covering our firm’s values, practice areas and diversity and inclusion.
- **Regular communications** from our leaders and across the firm, including Town Halls, firm-wide calls and regular updates.

“ Throughout my time as a scholar and a summer clerk at Russell McVeagh, I have received nothing but endless support and guidance. Starting as a scholar, I always felt included within the firm, and this sense of community has only increased over time. ”

Angelica Quiat, Summer Clerk: 2022-2023.



In Focus:

Developing the lawyers of tomorrow

Russell McVeagh Scholarship Programme

Each year, we offer scholarships to a number of third-year law students to help them get ahead in their careers. Participants receive financial assistance, work experience, mentoring, and the opportunity to summer clerk in their penultimate year of study.

Scholars are matched with a solicitor from the firm who supports the scholar’s career development by providing practical advice and guidance. Mentors become a valued source of support when the scholar joins the firm as a summer clerk in their penultimate year of study.

Graduate and Summer Clerk Programmes

Our three-month **summer clerkship programme** runs across the summer university break and is for students in their penultimate year of study.

A **graduate law clerkship** is a permanent position for students who have finished studying and ensures they are fully supported as they transition to full-time work.

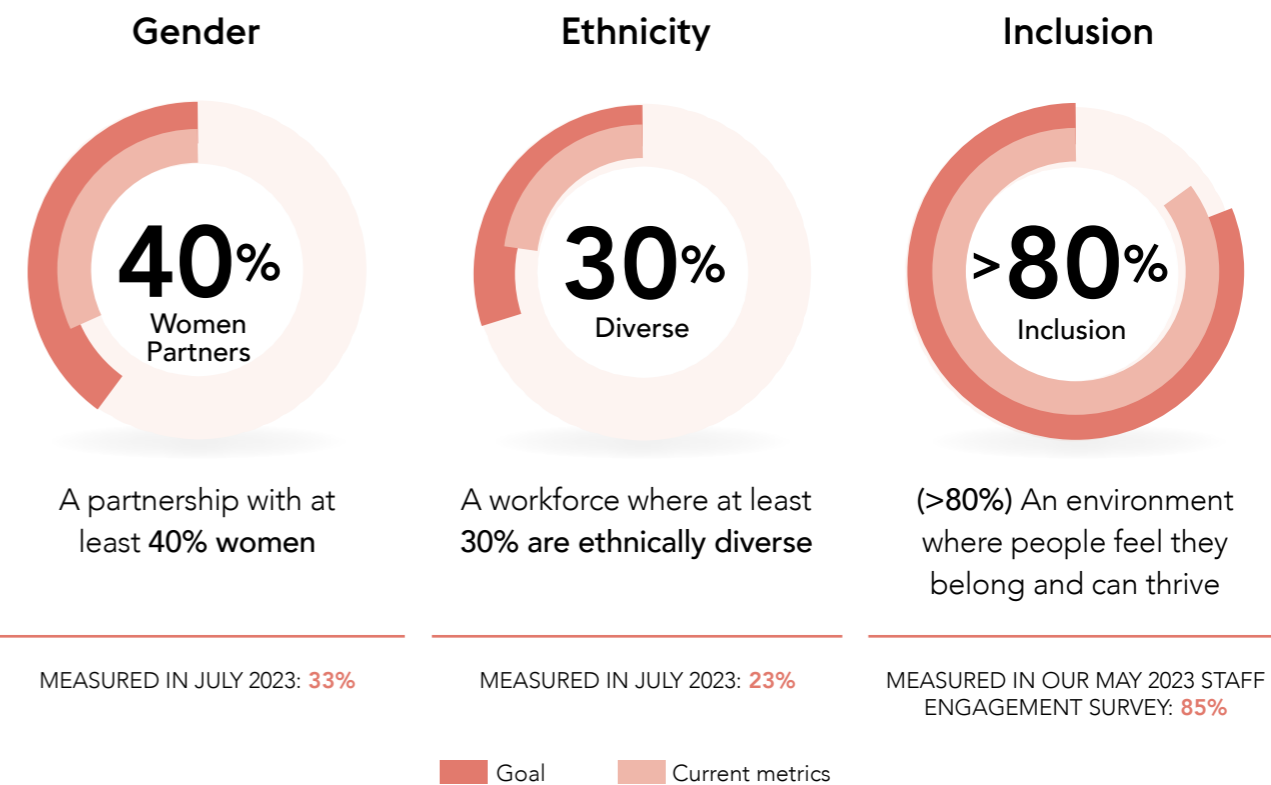
Junior Solicitor Advancement Programme (Rocky Shores) is a technical training programme for new solicitors, facilitated by partners and seniors, in a case study/simulation-based learning process to gain experience working with all streams of law practiced at the firm.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Our values centre around enabling a supportive and inclusive workplace for everybody regardless of their gender, sexual orientation or cultural identity.

Strategy, progress and goals

Recognising that true diversity and inclusion requires a long-term focus, we refreshed our firm’s D&I strategy and work programme in 2022 to look ahead to the next five years. The strategy focuses around three goals and we have continually looked across our recruitment, hiring, onboarding and career management to advance these goals:



A partnership with at least 40% women

A workforce where at least 30% are ethnically diverse

(>80%) An environment where people feel they belong and can thrive

Our five, people-led committees work collaboratively across our business to identify and address areas for improvement across the following areas:

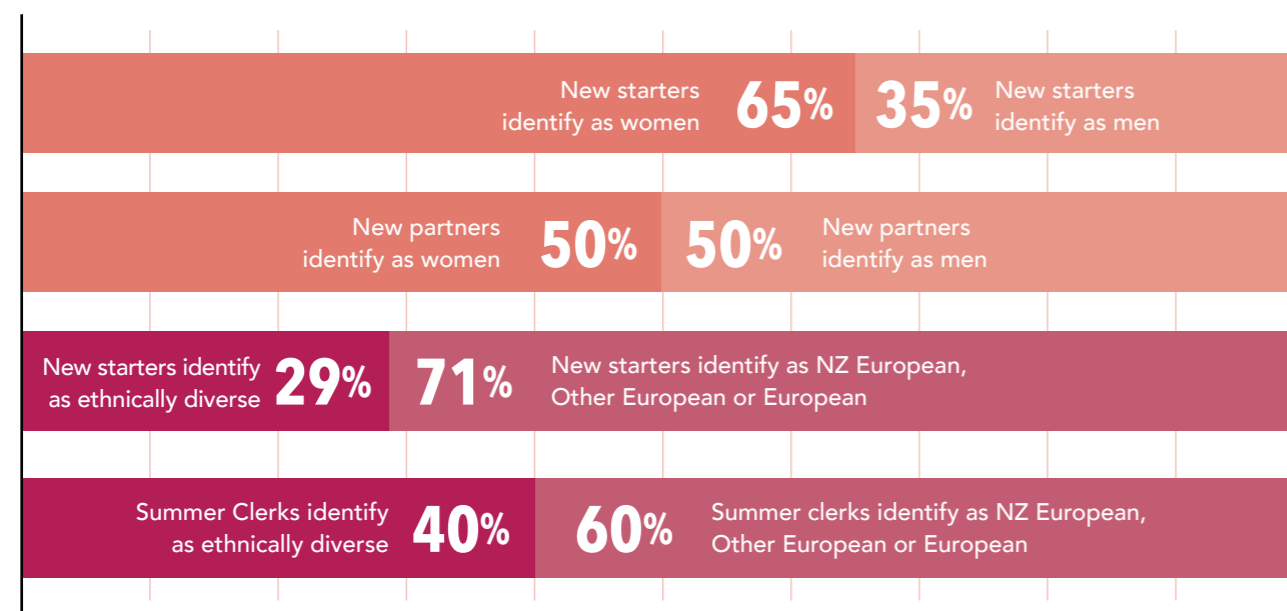




Tracking our Goals: Ethnicity and Gender

To track against our gender & ethnicity goals, we continue to look across our recruitment, hiring and onboarding.

2023 gender and ethnicity balance of new employees:



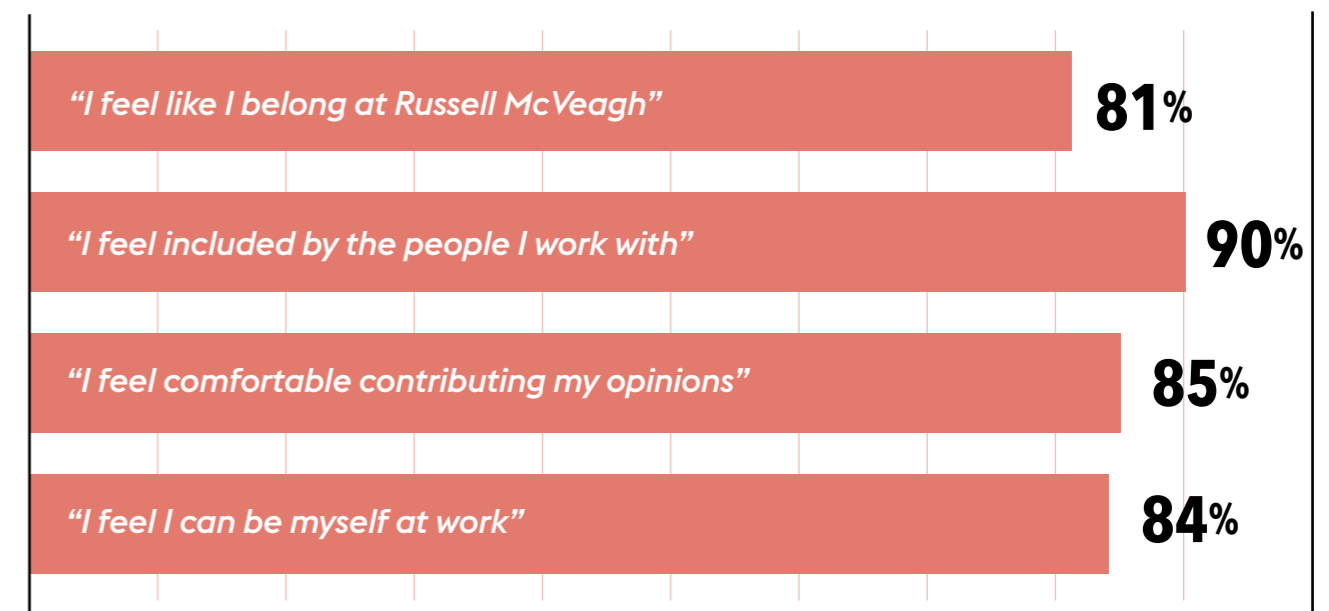
(All data is based on active employees as at July 2023. Ethnic diversity for these purposes is anything other than NZ European, Other European, European (not further defined))



Tracking our Goals: Inclusion

To track against our 'Inclusion goal', we introduced four questions into our staff Pulse survey.

Firm-wide inclusion scores:



(All data is based on results from May 2023)

Embedding Tikanga Māori

Developing cultural competency and ensuring we are further embedding Tikanga into our firm's culture is supported by a range of programmes including:

- Te Reo Māori lessons and cultural competency workshops.
- Support for various celebrations, events and initiatives, including Te Wiki o te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week), Matariki, Hui-ā-tau conference.
- Te Reo Māori Court Procedures training available for our legal teams.



Feedback including:

- “There is good inclusion in letting people be themselves. What is going really well is the presence of women in senior leadership positions, something that is rarely seen in law firms.”
- “It's great to see more diversity of people coming through the recruitment process. I think the D&I committees do a great job at pushing D&I initiatives.”
- “Publishing the pay gaps on Mind the Gap was really great to see!”
- “The training being provided to partners in respect of diversity and inclusion is great.”

Our 2022/2023 Initiatives

Reporting our pay gaps

We were one of the country's first law firms to join Mindthegap.nz's pay gap registry last year, which aims to help close pay gaps by increasing transparency around them.

The workplan that sits behind our D&I strategy is key to closing the gap. As of 2022, our firm-wide gender pay gap is 6% and our Māori pay gap is 4%. We are committed to reporting our gaps annually, and actively monitoring these.

Inclusive Leadership programme

Having an inclusive culture starts with our leadership. All of the firm's partners undertook a new 9-month Inclusive Leadership programme (began in August 2022) involving a mix of workshops, assessments and tailored coaching to continue building our capability and advancing conversation and action.

Kōrero Workshops

We recently invited everyone across the firm to Kōrero sessions to engage and discuss five key areas of importance to us (featured below). The feedback shared will inform our action plans across People & Culture for the next five years.



We have continued our significant support programmes, such as:

- Being a **UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)** signatory – and were awarded the prestigious White Camellia Award in 2022 for work in promoting equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- **Respect** workshops for all new joiners to our firm.
- Celebrating **diversity, equity and inclusion events**, for example, Te Wiki o te Reo Māori, Pride, Diwali and International Women's Day celebrations held at our Wellington and Auckland offices.



A landmark first for a NZ law firm: Advanced GenderTick accreditation

Last year we joined Gender at Work, a membership community that invites all organisations to be part of a movement to progressing gender equality at work, and in a landmark first for a NZ law firm, we were granted Advanced GenderTick status in 2023.

This recognises the major moves we have made to progress demonstrating gender equity across five key areas:

- a gender inclusive culture
- a safe workplace
- flexible work and leave
- leadership representation
- equal pay



“Achieving the GenderTick is a visible sign of our commitment to, and recognition of, our work towards greater gender equality in our workplace.”

Jo Avenell, Russell McVeagh CEO

Our Environment Tō tātou taiao

We are committed to understanding and managing our environmental impact, as well as helping to support our clients to do the same. We take active measures to improve our firm’s ecological footprint, from providing recycling bins to energy efficient timed lighting and air conditioning.



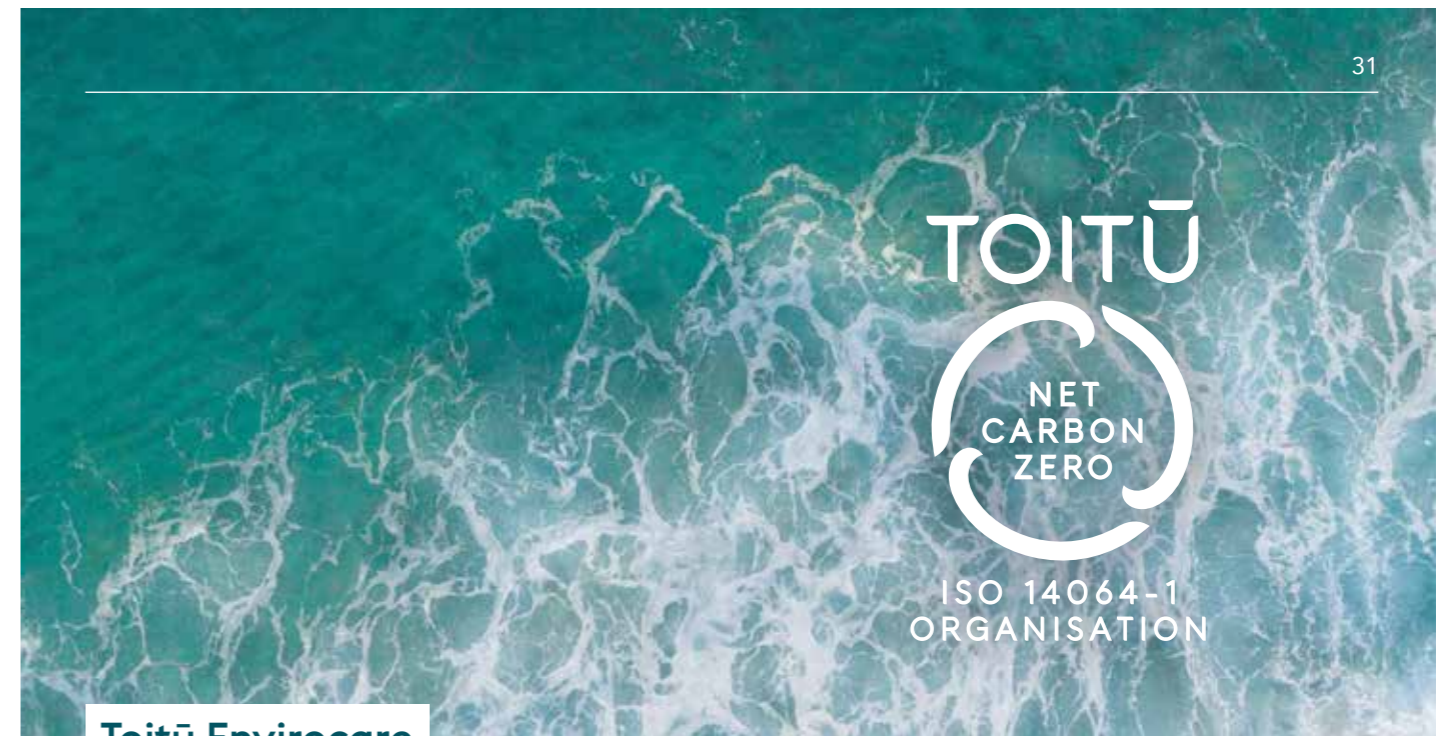
31%
reduction
in non-air travel
& accommodation
emissions by 2027



increasing
sustainable
options
↑



↓
reducing
carbon
emissions



We achieved Toitū certification in November 2022 which involved measuring the firm’s greenhouse gas emissions and committing to strategic initiatives and best practice principles that will improve the sustainability of the firm’s operations.

Through undertaking the audit process, we gained insights into measuring and reporting on our carbon impact which will enable us to strategically target opportunities for emissions reduction to meet our reduction goals.

We are working to achieve our Toitū goals by taking responsibility for and reducing carbon emissions resulting from our firm’s activities, such as reducing non-essential travel and including more sustainable options such as energy-saving timed lighting as part of our Wellington office refurbishment.

During FY22 our main emission source was air travel, followed by electricity and natural gas distributions.

5
areas of
focus

To ensure we are helping to drive sustainable change in our business, we have identified five areas of focus that matter to our people.

- Travel emissions
- Recycling
- Reduction in energy
- Food wastage
- Community impact

Our Sustainability Initiatives



Hard and soft recycling

We arrange quarterly drives for our people to bring their hard-to-recycle items where we recycle them on their behalf. We also participate in the soft plastic recycling programme, enabling the firm to recycle soft plastics.

Greening the City

We encouraged our people to collect native trees from Takutai Square in Auckland to take home and plant, and attend lunchtime planting workshops. We run an annual bake sale to contribute funds to Trees that Count.

Reusable kitchenware

We supply and encourage our people to use reusable kitchenware such as keep cups and compostable bowls to limit the need for single-use containers from local food retailers.

Staff events and engagement

Our Sustainability Committee regularly engages staff on initiatives such as cycle-to-work challenges and provides fortnightly "Sustainability Made Simple" tips to encourage embedding sustainability practices in day-to-day life.

Other highlights include encouraging our people to use the keep cups that we have provided in our offices and inviting our people to donate to Dress for Success.

Sustainable technology repurposing

This year we donated some of our technology to Digital Wings for redistribution among the NZ charitable sector, and a number of surplus monitors to Wellington and Hutt Valley community law centres. We are also working with Maia Financial which will see our technology equipment gifted to charitable trusts at the end of our lease term.

In Focus:

The Chancery Lane Project

This is the largest global network of lawyers and business leaders using the power of contracts focused on climate change to deliver fast and fair decarbonisation. Together with other law firms, we supported New Zealand Green Investment Finance's development of climate related clauses suitable for contracts in the New Zealand market, which are now featured on the Chancery Lane Project [website](#). The clause bank includes clauses relating to boilerplates or shareholder, supply, or commercial lease agreements.



“ Contractual drafting is an important lever for organisations seeking to measure and manage their emissions. We see these clauses developed with NZGIF as a handy tool in the climate toolbox, for example, when looking to drive impact through an organisation's supply chain. ”

Hannah Bain

Russell McVeagh Head of Climate Change



Supporting our Clients

With ESG issues being core business priorities for companies, their boards and investors, we help our clients gain value through their ESG strategies, while addressing and mitigating risk. Below are some examples of how we are doing that:

Russell
McVeagh | Te
Whakahaere

Climate change

To further support our clients in this fast-moving area, we formed an alliance with climate change advisory firm, Te Whakahaere. Together, we can support clients with a range of climate advisory and legal services, including by providing integrated climate and legal advice and supporting clients in navigating their transition to a low-emissions future. Amongst other things, Russell McVeagh and Te Whakahaere have worked with organisations to prepare for reporting on their climate-related risks and opportunities under New Zealand's mandatory climate-related disclosures regime.

Given the centrality of climate change to many of our clients' strategies, we have looked for opportunities to support through the facilitation of a range of climate change events and thought leadership throughout 2023, including:

- Launching our ESG Blog, covering a range of topics relevant to clients in relation to climate change and ESG.
- Hosting and sponsoring climate related events and conferences including the Climate Change and Business Conference and Sustainability Leaders' Summit.



Infrastructure with impact

We regularly advise on our country's largest and most complex infrastructure projects including advising:

- **Meridian** on the Harapaki Wind Farm, a NZ\$395 million wind farm in Hawke's Bay which will be the country's second largest, with 41 turbines, generating 176 MW of renewable energy annually – enough to power 70,000 households.
- **KiwiRail's** NZ\$350 million loan facility to purchase passenger and freight rail ferries as part of a NZ\$1.45 billion investment programme which will also see redevelopment of the ports in Wellington and Waitohi Picton. This was the first shipping loan in the world to be certified under the Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI)'s framework.

Rebuild projects following the North Island weather events and Cyclone Gabrielle include advising:

- **KiwiRail** on its role in relation to the East Coast Recovery Alliance, to deliver a resilient recovery and rebuild effort of the rail network for the people of the Hawke's Bay region.
- **The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)** in relation to the distribution of funding to support the recovery of rural communities affected. The funding is available to all parts of the primary industries, including horticulture, agriculture, fisheries, and forestry.

Renewable energy

Across the renewable energy life cycle, we help clients with planning and consenting, design and construction, generation, distribution, and user consumption, including advising:

- **Infratec** on the development of a solar farm for Eastland Energy and a portfolio of five solar farms for Lodestone Energy across the upper North Island.
- **Meridian Energy** on its proposed Southern Green Hydrogen project, a significant and pioneering project in New Zealand to develop one of the largest hydrogen facilities in the world.
- **WEL Networks** on the development of a 35MW battery energy storage system - NZ's first utility scale battery energy storage system.
- **Genesis Energy** on its Solar-Gen JV arrangement with FRV Australia to develop up to 500 MW of solar generation in New Zealand, and advising the Solar-Gen JV on the development of a 52 MW solar project in Lauriston, Canterbury.
- **Oceanex Energy** on preparing submissions to the New Zealand Government's proposals for 'Developing a Regulatory Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy' in NZ.

Sustainable financing

We assist on sustainability-linked and proceeds-based green borrowing, frequently working on cross-border transactions and offshore funding programmes for large corporate borrowers and banks.

Recent highlights include advising:

- **Genesis Energy** on its issuance of its NZ\$285 million 30-year unsecured, subordinated, NZX listed green capital bonds.
- **T&G Global** on its inaugural NZ\$180 million sustainability linked loan.
- **Goodman Property Trust** on its inaugural NZ\$150 million green bonds.

Who we are

Ko tātou



Board of Management

Allison Arthur-Young (Chair), Tom Hunt, Ian Beaumont, Marika Eastwick-Field, David Butler, Jo Avenell (CEO)

We have over 350 people across our Auckland | Tāmaki Makaurau and Wellington | Te Whanganui-a-Tara offices and offer our clients a collaborative, one-firm approach. Our practice groups work seamlessly to support a wide range of clients, drawing on our expertise across the full spectrum of Banking and Finance, Competition, Corporate Advisory, Litigation, Public law, Real Estate and Construction, Tax and Environmental & Planning law matters.

Governance roles & community contributions

Many of our partners are board members, and advise and support the boards of numerous institutions across the motu including Auckland Arts Festival, Motu Trust, Property Council New Zealand and Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand to name a few.

Our firm and people are members of various organisations, with some examples including Global Women, Society of Construction Law, Health Informatics, Financial Services Council, AI Forum NZ, NZ Markets Disciplinary Tribunal, Offshore Wind Working Group (a committee of the NZ Wind Energy Association), and the NZ Initiative.

Many are involved in volunteering and community participation such as assisting with sports teams, local Surf Life Saving Clubs and acting as guest lecturers and debating coaches.

Chair of Partnership



Ed Crook
Partner, Real Estate
and Construction

Our Management Team



Joanna Comerford
General Manager, Business
Development, Marketing
& Communications



Ben McLaren
Chief Operating Officer



Karen O'Leary
General Manager, Human Resources



Back in 1863, the firm began as a one-man practice having been established by John Benjamin Russell. He was joined by various partners over the years, including Robert McVeagh in 1904. Our firm has held the 'Russell' and 'McVeagh' names ever since.

More than 160 years on, we haven't strayed far from our roots in Tāmaki Makaurau with the current Auckland office just metres from its earliest location on 'Shortland Crescent'. Our firm's tradition of providing outstanding legal advice to clients has continued from its foundation up to the present day, and our values are at the heart of our firm's culture and reflect who we are, what we stand for and how we work together.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi

Russell McVeagh is dedicated to engaging with the Māori community in a way that demonstrates the firm's commitment and support to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, as Tangata Tiriti (people of the treaty).

The firm will do this by developing its understanding of all aspects of Te Ao Māori, so we can better reflect, engage, partner, and communicate more fluently and appropriately with Māori businesses, clients, candidates, and communities we serve.

We have a proud history of being involved in some of the most significant developments in Māori legal, including the seminal Lands case in 1987 – the first case to articulate and apply the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Today, we work with iwi in a post-settlement world, helping them achieve their strategic and commercial goals.



**Russell
McVeagh**

Our Russell McVeagh partners:

Allison Arthur-Young
Craig Shrive
David Weavers
Fred Ward
Joe Windmeyer
Marika Eastwick-Field
Petra Carey
Tom Hunt

Anna Crosbie
Dan Jones
Deemle Budhia
Greg Neill
John Powell
Matthew Kersey
Polly Pope
Troy Pilkington

Ben Paterson
Daniel Minhinnick
Doran Wyatt
Guy Lethbridge
Kirsten Massey
Mei Fern Johnson
Sarah Blackmore
William Irving

Bradley Aburn
David Butler
Ed Crook
Ian Beaumont
Kylie Dunn
Michael Taylor
Simon Pilkinton

Cath Shirley-Brown
David Hoare
Emma Peterson
Jesse Fairley
Liz Blythe
Nat Steur
Tim Clarke

Chris Curran
David Raudkivi
Emmeline Rushbrook
Joe Edwards
Malcolm Crotty
Nathaniel Walker
Tom Gillespie

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