



Russell  
McLeagh

Our ESG  
Overview  
2025

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# Contributing to Aotearoa New Zealand

Te Whai Koha ki Aotearoa

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## AT A GLANCE:

25

pro bono hours  
per lawyer  
on average  
(FY24)

3

offices  
New Queenstown  
office opened

91%

believe the  
firm is a great  
place to work

# Contributing to Aotearoa New Zealand Te Whai Koha ki Aotearoa

## Our ESG Overview 2025

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Head of South Island Tony Sycamore and Board Chair David Butler receive a taonga (treasure) for our Queenstown office from representatives from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

## Welcome from our Board Chair and CEO

This year's ESG Overview highlights our contribution to the communities we operate in, how we manage our environmental impact and our ongoing commitment to fostering a culture at Russell McVeagh where our people can thrive.

Over the past year, we have focused on supporting growth for New Zealand through the work we do with our clients, our people and the community. While the broader economic environment remains subdued, slowed by a cautious recovery and global uncertainty, these challenges have also created opportunities.

In April, we opened our Queenstown office, marking a major milestone in our expansion into Te Waipounamu South Island. We are delighted by the welcoming and positive response we have received from clients and the local community. We have also partnered with Technology Queenstown, a not-for-profit aiming to build a \$1bn tech sector in the region.

Alongside this we have advanced our investment in AI and continue to strengthen our cybersecurity and compliance programmes. We are excited by the opportunities AI presents and see it as a long-term strategic capability – one that will drive efficiencies and unlock even greater value for our clients and people.

At our partner conference earlier this year, we finalised our new five year '2030 Strategy'. Central to this is a focus on growth, productivity and innovation underpinned by our culture of inclusion, collaboration and excellence.

We now have 52 partners across the firm, with culture remaining the cornerstone of our success. Our values remain central to decision-making, as reflected in our annual Pulse survey, where our people consistently recognise the firm as a great place to work, express confidence in our future and take pride in our culture. This was recognised at last year's NZ Law Awards, where we were named Large Law Firm Employer of Choice.

After seven years with the firm, Jo Avenell has advised she will be leaving at the end of the year. We thank Jo for her leadership and tremendous contribution and wish her all the very best for what comes next.

We are extremely proud of our firm, our people and the exceptional work they do for our clients and communities. Thank you to our clients, community partners and stakeholders for your continued support.



**David Butler**

Board Chair  
and Partner

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Butler".



**Jo Avenell**

CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jo Avenell".



# Our ESG Framework

## Tā Mātau Anga ESG



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.



# To help shape and support Aotearoa New Zealand's future

We focus on:



## Our Community

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

### We do this by:

Offering legal support through our Pro Bono Programme to those who struggle to access justice.

Providing time for our people to support charity and fundraising 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 flexible working, fair pay and benefits that make a difference 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.

Implementing strategies to measure, manage and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through our Toitū Net Carbon Zero certification.

Adopting new sustainability practices and furthering initiatives to make a positive difference.





# Our Community

## Tō tātou hāpori

Everyone at Russell McVeagh has the opportunity to contribute. Through our Pro Bono Programme and charitable partnerships, we focus on working alongside our local communities to make a positive impact.



Russell McVeagh

## pro bono overview

For more information about our Pro Bono Programme and Framework, see our [Pro Bono Overview](#). Our [video series](#) also highlights the incredible pro bono work our teams are engaged in and why it matters to them.





## Framework for Collaborative Pro Bono in Aotearoa

Launched in November 2024, the Framework for Collaborative Pro Bono in Aotearoa is a profession-led initiative to support and promote pro bono work within New Zealand law firms.

Russell McVeagh is one of the foundation participants, working alongside Te Ara Ture, New Zealand's pro bono clearinghouse, and five other New Zealand law firms to develop the Framework. Inspired by successful models from Australia and the UK, the Framework aims to enhance access to justice for low income and vulnerable people, foster collaboration and a strong pro bono culture across the motu, and advocate for legal reform.

The Framework sets an aspirational target of 25 pro bono hours per lawyer annually, with participating firms agreeing to report against this target annually in an anonymous and de-identified format, allowing for benchmarking and the development of a strong pro bono culture. This initiative aligns closely with our firm's existing approach to pro bono, which continues to evolve.

### Reaching our Pro Bono target

**25** 

#### HOURS TARGET

We are committed to achieving 25 hours per fee earner (per year on average)

 **25**

In 2024, we achieved our target

 **80+**

Pro bono clients

**5,557** 

Total hours of pro bono work

**3,211** 

Hours of Community Law work

# pro bono week 2025



We hosted lunchtime events with Sabrina Muck, Director of Te Ara Ture, on the vital role of community law in Auckland, and Tenby Powell, Executive Director and Chair of Kiwi K.A.R.E Ukraine, on delivering humanitarian aid in Ukraine's Red Zones in Wellington.

**In May, we held our second annual Pro Bono Week to spotlight our 80+ pro bono clients, highlighting the value of this collaborative mahi and showing our people how to get involved.**

## Decades of commitment to community law

For over 40 years, we have partnered with Community Law Centres to improve access to justice across New Zealand, starting with Māngere in the 1980s, as well as supporting Wellington, Hutt Valley, Aotearoa Disability Law and Te Ara Ture.

[www.communitylaw.org.nz](http://www.communitylaw.org.nz)

Each week, our solicitors volunteer at drop-in sessions, offering tailored legal advice on employment, family law, tenancy, consumer rights and other civil matters. We also contribute research and secondees placements, providing valuable learning and development experiences for our people while supporting clients.



## Pro Bono in the Community

We use our skills and resources to make a meaningful impact alongside our pro bono clients. Our pro bono hours are recognised equally with fee paying work and count towards our solicitors targets.

### Helping build sustainable impact

[The Crescendo Trust of Aotearoa](#) empowers youth through free programmes in music production, content creation and wellbeing. Its hands-on training builds skills in engineering, songwriting, live sound and performance. We recently supported the Charitable Trust with its organisational restructure.

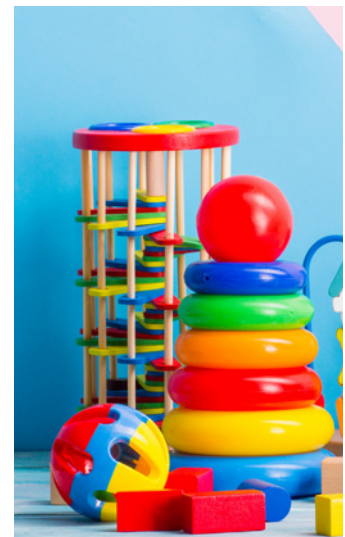


### Guiding businesses with reregistration

We have supported a number of community organisations with reregistration under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. The organisations we have supported recently are:

- [Marlins Deaf Rugby Union](#) is one of three regional deaf rugby teams in New Zealand.
- [Toy Library Federation of New Zealand](#) is the national body for toy libraries, supporting their set up and growth across the country.

Our team prepared new constitutions, advised on governance and guided both organisations through the process.



### FY24 hours in the community

999



Hours with  
Māngere  
Community  
Law Centre

880



Hours with  
Wellington & Hutt  
Valley Community  
Law Centres

766



Hours of work  
referred through  
Te Ara Ture

566



Hours of work  
with Aotearoa  
Disability Law



[www.wellingtoncharityhospital.org.nz](http://www.wellingtoncharityhospital.org.nz)

## Building a healthier future for the Wellington region

The Wellington Regional Charity Hospital Trust is bringing to life the region's first charity hospital, ensuring access to essential surgical and medical care for those unable to receive public or private treatment.

Earlier this year, philanthropists Sir Mark Dunajtschik and Dorothy Spotswood pledged to fully fund the Hospital's build and fit-out (excluding medical equipment). In recognition of Dorothy's support, the facility will be named the Dorothy Spotswood Charity Hospital.

Modelled on successful charity hospitals in Canterbury and Southland, it will offer free surgical day services to patients across Wellington, Kāpiti and Wairarapa.

Our firm has supported the project from the outset, with partners Tim Clarke (a Trust Board member) and Doran Wyatt, with special counsel Gareth Worthington, leading our pro bono legal work and working closely with the Trust board and advisers to help make this vision a reality.





## Strengthening tour standards and safety

The Waitaki Whitestone Geopark Trust is guiding the development of New Zealand's first and only UNESCO Global Geopark, one of just 229 worldwide, located in Te Waipounamu (South Island).

We provided pro bono advice on the Trust's legal obligations, helped develop underpinning policies and supported them to build sustainable relationships and partnerships. Our work contributes to safe, informed, and culturally and environmentally respectful tourism in one of New Zealand's most geologically significant regions.

## Supporting a more accessible Aotearoa

We support advocating for strong, enforceable accessibility legislation that meets the needs of disabled people and others with access requirements.

[www.accessmatters.org.nz](http://www.accessmatters.org.nz)



Image credit: Byron Taylor, Moments Productions.

In response to a proposed Bill that fell short, Access Matters is calling for new legislation that upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi, embeds the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and sets clear responsibilities and timelines for removing accessibility barriers.

Our pro bono support is helping to shape the campaign's Government engagement strategy, which aims to shift public attitudes and drive systemic change for accessibility.

## Our Pro Bono and Community Partnerships

Through our partnerships, sponsorships and memberships, we work with organisations focused on making a positive difference in our communities.

### EDUCATION



Neurodiversity  
in Education  
Project



Tāmaki College  
EAST AUCKLAND

### INCLUSION

Motu



NGĀTI WHĀTUA  
ŌRĀKEI



### HEALTH & EMERGENCY SERVICES



NEW ZEALAND  
RED CROSS  
RIPEKA WHERO AOTEAROA



End-of-Life Choice  
Society of New Zealand Inc



Mahi for  
Ukraine

### ARTS AND CULTURE

Whānau Mārama  
New Zealand International  
Film Festival

TE ATAMIRA



TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI  
AUCKLAND  
ARTS FESTIVAL

### COMMUNITY LAW



Aotearoa  
Disability  
Law



māngere  
community law centre  
te korowai ture o māngere



community law  
free legal help  
throughout aotearoa

### ENVIRONMENT



PREDATOR FREE  
WELLINGTON

### YOUTH



CRESCENDO



TOY Library  
FEDERATION OF NEW ZEALAND



cure kids



SPIRIT OF  
ADVENTURE  
TRUST





*“It’s inspiring to work with social enterprise founders and community volunteers who are passionate about service and making a difference in their communities. I’m proud to have helped them, even in a small way.”*

**Hannah Wilson**, Partner, Corporate Advisory

#### INDUSTRY FOCUS



#### DE&I: INCLUSION



#### DE&I: GENDER



*“Our pro bono work often involves clients and issues outside our usual practice areas, so I saw it as a chance to develop new legal and client skills. Helping a refugee family relocate to New Zealand after a five-year application process has been a highlight.”*

**Emily McCulloch**, Solicitor, Government, Competition & Regulation

## Charity Days, Volunteering and Fundraising

Each year, our teams can spend a day volunteering for a charity of their choice. We also support our people to organise fundraisers and events, and encourage opportunities to get involved in causes they care about.



Wearing pink at fundraisers in Auckland and Wellington offices for Pink Shirt Day.



Running workshops with Tāmaki College students, covering topics like finances, employment, life skills and legal rights.



Supporting 'Movember' for men's health awareness.



Cupcake decorating morning tea to raise funds for Breast Cancer Foundation NZ.





We supported 17 Auckland University Law students in the Waterfront Half Marathon and 10km run.



Our Competition and Regulation team hiked 17km to fundraise for Auckland City Mission.



A charity day spent supporting the Anzac Day poppy collection at the local RSA.



Donning our boldest socks in support of World Down Syndrome Awareness Day.





## Our People

### Tō mātou tira mahi

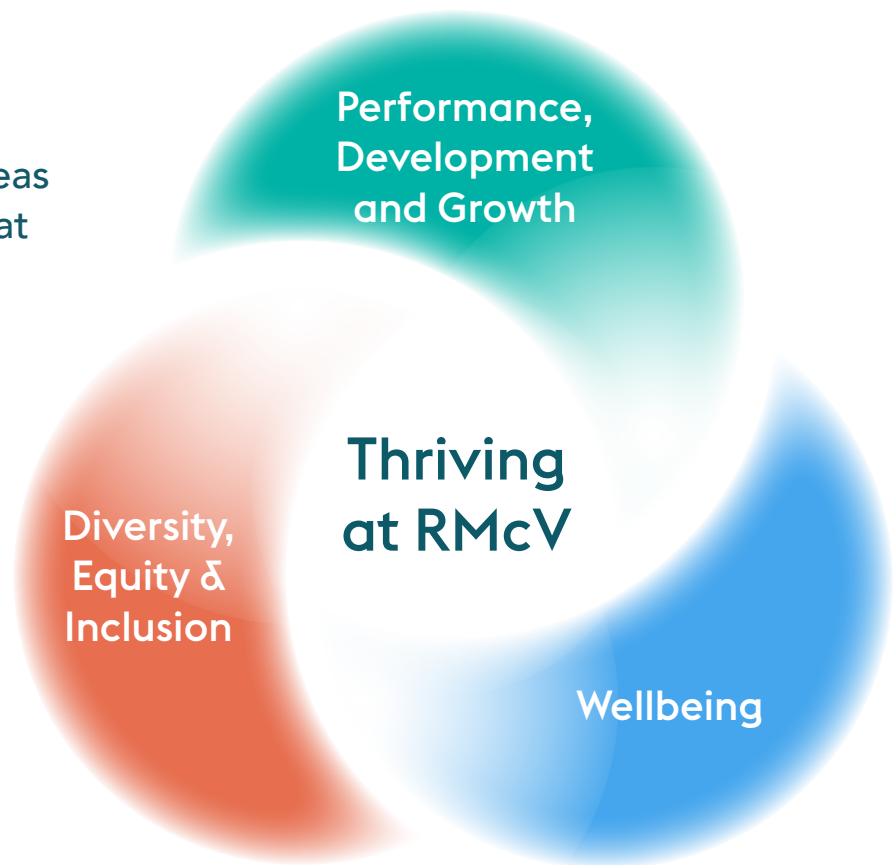
We pride ourselves on providing a culture where our people feel included, valued and supported to be their best.





## Our People Framework

Focuses on three areas to ensure everyone at the firm can thrive.



## Checking in with our People

Our 'Pulse' employee engagement surveys allow our people to give anonymous feedback and share ideas on what's going well and how the firm can progress. This plays an important role in decision-making and the actions we take as a firm by helping us better understand how our people are feeling.

*"I believe the firm is a great place to work"*

**91%**

*"I am proud to work at the firm"*

**91%**

*"I am confident about the firm's future"*

**90%**

(Results from our February 2025 survey. 80% of employees participated in the survey)

# Prioritising Wellbeing

We provide a range of initiatives and resources to prioritise our people's wellbeing:

## Wellbeing support people

Our Kaiāwhina Oranga | Wellbeing Support People are a trained internal network offering mental health support.

## Recognition

Kind of a Big Teal, our 'good sorts' initiative, celebrates people who go the extra mile and live our values through their mahi.

## Benefits

Annual wellness allowance and access to free counselling through an independent EAP provider, as well as free flu jabs and mole mapping. This is in addition to opportunities to connect through team activities, sports teams and running clubs.

## Monitoring working hours

We proactively track hours to ensure time off is taken after busy periods to rest and recharge.

## Wellness workshops

Recent programmes: Alcohol&Me for smarter drinking, Money Makes Cents for financial confidence, and workshops exploring the Imposter Phenomenon.

## Leader wellbeing

Bi-annual wellbeing checks for partners and senior leaders, and targeted learning on holistic health, habit formation and turning anxiety into growth.



Our Wellington office



## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Our strategy is focused on three goals, with ongoing progress on our full workplan including aspects such as recruitment, mentoring and career development, and progression.



### Investing in spaces that support how we work

Our newly refurbished Wellington office was designed with our people and clients front of mind. It features upgraded workstations, larger breakout areas to collaborate and unwind, and a spacious new café that brings our teams together. This project reflects our commitment to fostering a productive, connected and sustainable work environment, and was recently recognised as a finalist in the 2025 Interior Awards. Around the same time, we opened our new Queenstown office. This fresh, flexible space strengthens our presence in the region and provides a welcoming base for both our people and clients.

Together, these spaces reflect our focus on creating long-term workplaces that support growth, wellbeing and exceptional experiences. Plans are now underway to upgrade our Auckland premises later this year.

## Tracking our Goals

### 2025 EMPLOYEE SURVEY FEEDBACK:

“The firm is very inclusive and makes a real effort to acknowledge different events within society and the community.”

“I believe RMcV is welcoming, inclusive and vibrant, with a strong sense of community where I feel valued, respected and heard.”

“It's great to belong to another 'family' at work. There is a sense of 'we are in this together' which is comforting.”

“I feel very privileged and grateful to be supported and encouraged to bring my whole self to work.”

## Gender Representation

We continue to take proactive steps to meet our gender targets, to ensure women are fairly represented, and focus on strengthening our pipeline.

## Gender and Ethnicity

Our stats show that we currently sit in line with national figures\*, and we look across our recruitment, promotion, retention and development to continue moving towards a more diverse workplace.

## Inclusion

We track against our 'Inclusion goal' through specific questions in our firm-wide Pulse Survey.

\*National statistics provided by New Zealand Law Society Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa, as regulator of the practice of law, as at June 2024. There are currently 15,640 qualified lawyers based in NZ. Russell McVeagh figures based on all active lawyers correct as at July 2025. Ethnic diversity for these purposes is anything other than New Zealand European or European.

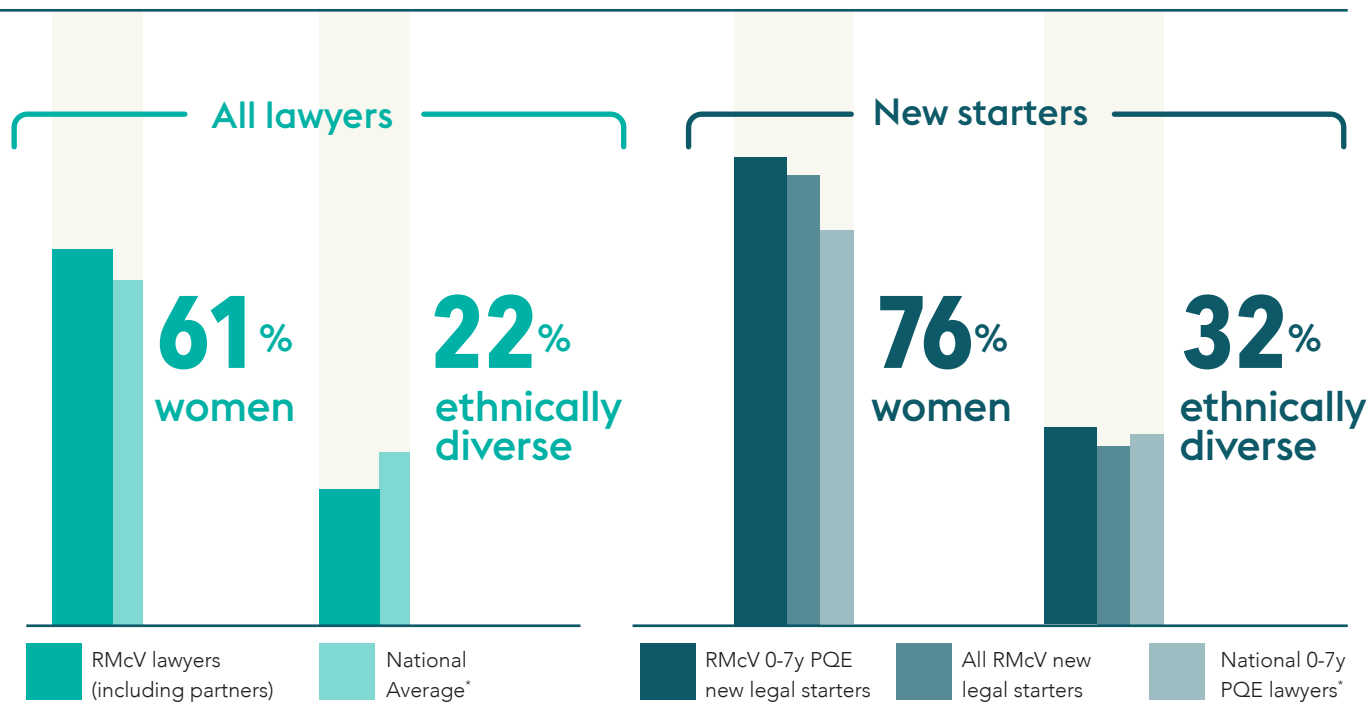




All RMcV people



Board

All RMcV solicitors  
(excluding partners)



## DE&I Initiatives

Connecting with 6,700+ students and sharing pathways into law at the South Auckland Schools Career Expo.

We recognise that achieving true diversity and inclusion requires long-term focus and ongoing commitment. As part of this, we're implementing a broad work programme across recruitment, onboarding, career progression and more to support our goals.

### DE&I Co-leads and Committees

Our five people-led DE&I committees work closely with our HR team and a range of internal and external stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvement, and organise cultural events across five key focus areas. Their work is guided by Board member and partner Marika Eastwick-Field and partner Alex MacDuff who help shape our workplan and ensure our progress aligns with our strategy.

#### Accessibility

##### CO-LEADS:

Ella Marr  
Brittany Majoor

#### Ethnicity

##### CO-LEADS:

Zion Godwin  
Amaani Batra

#### Gender

##### LEAD:

Joanna Trezise

#### LGBTQIA+

##### CO-LEADS:

Caitlin Walker  
Will Worth

#### Socio-Economic

##### CO-LEADS:

Azita Nafissi  
Jasleen Oberoi





Kaiwhakaterere, meaning 'expert navigator', is our mentoring initiative with 11 mentees taking part this year. Piloted in 2024 and launched firm-wide this year, it pairs mentees with a different mentor in two distinct three-month rotations to create meaningful connections, foster growth and development, gain diverse perspectives and encourage shared learning.

## Mentor



**Natalie Steur**

Partner  
Real Estate & Construction

“The programme connects people across the firm in a meaningful way, which means that we collectively understand each other better. It breaks down silos and creates opportunities for people to feel seen and valued.”

## Mentee



**Archana Ekanayake**

Solicitor  
Corporate Advisory

“Being part of this programme has strengthened my sense of connection and community at work. It's reminded me that I'm not facing challenges alone, and has encouraged me to step into new spaces with confidence.”

## 3 Kapu Kawhe

CEO Jo Avenell and Board Chair David Butler act as mentors in 3 Kapu Kawhe, a cross-cultural programme pairing emerging Māori, Asian, Pacific and other minority ethnicity leaders from across New Zealand with experienced executives. Mentees share insights from their mentoring sessions at a storytelling event, with the journey culminating in a graduation celebration held during Race Relations Week.



David Butler and mentee Ayşe Almilli Kilic.

“It gave me valuable insight into the unique challenges young leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds face in the professional world, and broadened my understanding of how we can foster a more inclusive culture and contribute to a more equitable Aotearoa.”

**David Butler**, Board Chair and Partner



## Training and kōrero

Rainbow Tick certified since 2016, we continue to embrace and celebrate diversity in sexual and gender identities. This year, in partnership with Toitū Takatāpui Rainbow Tick, we delivered sessions exploring the intersection of cultural and rainbow identities, along with practical guidance on active allyship. Our ongoing panel series also explores themes of inclusion, representation and life skills such as navigating parenting and partnership.

Board member and partner Marika Eastwick-Field, Kanoa Lloyd, and partners Sarah Blackmore and Natalie Steur, at an event hosted in our Auckland office for International Women's Day.



LGBTQTQIA+ Co-leads Will Worth and Caitlin Walker with representatives from Toitū Takatāpui Rainbow Tick.





## Modern slavery approach

We are committed to ensuring modern slavery has no place in our business or supply chains. As a Living Wage Accredited Employer since 2024, we extend this commitment to our suppliers and contractors. Our approach includes identifying risks, acting with transparency and implementing effective controls.

With the Modern Slavery Reporting Bill introduced to the members bill ballot – proposing mandatory reporting and an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner – we continue to advise clients on supply chain responsibilities and international best practices. [We recently summarised](#) the Bill's key changes, how they differ from earlier proposals and their potential impact on New Zealand entities.

## Reporting pay gaps

We were one of the first law firms to join MindTheGap NZ's pay gap registry in 2022. We monitor pay gaps throughout the year, discuss these with our people and publish on [our website](#). We monitor our gender pay gap, as well as our Māori and Pacific Peoples pay gaps.



## External Accreditations:

**GENDER  
TICK**



## Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embedding Tikanga

We engage meaningfully with Māori, reflecting our role as Tangata Tiriti and our support for Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As one of Aotearoa's oldest law firms, we have a proud legacy in advising on Māori legal matters, including the landmark 1987 Lands case which was the first to apply Te Tiriti principles. Today, we support iwi in a post-settlement world, supporting them to achieve their strategic and commercial goals.

To strengthen this kaupapa, we have partnered with Engaging Well to help us embed Tikanga Māori across our firm. Some of our senior leaders have participated in sessions on cultural intelligence, Te Tiriti and Tikanga Māori, which are helping to inform the co-development of a tailored Te Ao Māori plan. We aim to build the firm's cultural capability, attract, retain and support kaimahi Māori and strengthen iwi relationships.

## Performance, Development & Growth

We focus on developing the best lawyers in Aotearoa and provide opportunities to learn, grow and accelerate their careers in a supportive environment.



# 394

CPD courses  
offered to our people

# 5,411

total  
attendances

# 7,395

learning  
hours

Figures cover the period from September 2024 to September 2025



## A Structured Legal Pathway

Career development begins with our scholar programme, summer and graduate clerkships and induction support.

Early-career lawyers benefit from technical training led by partners and senior lawyers, a buddy system with a junior lawyer and supervising partner, and access to networking events and regular CPD sessions, including our Training Tuesdays series. Continued growth is supported through tailored learning, coaching, career panels and a high-performance framework.

Recent examples of our development programmes include:

**Senior collaboration forum** - A quarterly series for Senior Associates and Special Counsel, focused on deepening practice area knowledge, identifying growth opportunities and strengthening cross-practice referrals.

**Thinking (and speaking) on your feet** - A workshop for clear thinking and impactful communication under pressure.

**Boosting capacity and resilience** – Offers time-management techniques, goal setting and strategies to support mental and physical wellbeing.



### Approach to AI

We are excited about the potential of AI to transform the legal industry, enhancing both client experience and the way our people work. We have adopted a measured but proactive approach, viewing AI not as a one-off initiative but as a long-term strategic capability.

Client confidentiality and privacy remain paramount. We have taken time to ensure these are safeguarded through careful tool selection, training and quality governance. We will continue to invest and develop this programme.

AI is a major opportunity to evolve our value proposition, work more closely with clients on innovation and efficiency, and make law a more attractive career path for top talent in New Zealand.

# Our Culture

We foster a culture where respect, support and wellbeing are embedded in how we work – a culture where everyone can thrive.



Partner Lauren Rapley, Special Counsel Kristen Gunnell, partner Anna Crosbie and Senior Associate Louise Espin attending the Women's Infrastructure Network International Women's Day Lunch.

Our Summer Clerks joining us in November for a three-month placement to gain real work experience.



Accessibility Committee co-leads Brittany Majoor and Ella Marr with Phil Turner, Chief Executive of the New Zealand Disability Employers Network. This year, we became the first law firm to join the Network.





The Auckland Run Club hits the pavement weekly, bringing colleagues together for fitness and fun.



Alumna Justice Rebecca Edwards presented at our admission celebration for 19 newly admitted law clerks. We stay connected with our alumni network across Aotearoa and abroad.



Our LGBTQIA+ Committee organised multiple events to celebrate Pride Month.



Our Corporate Advisory team hosted students from AUT and Waiheke High School through AUT's Shadow a Leader programme.



Celebrating Eid in our Auckland office.





# Our Environment

## Tō tātou taiao

We are actively working to understand and reduce our environmental impact. While progress is underway, we recognise there is more to do, both within our firm and in supporting clients on their sustainability journeys.

Read our latest ESG thought leadership



**ESG Blog**



**Chambers & Partners:  
ESG Global Practice Guide**



**Legal 500: Renewable  
Energy Comparative Guide**



## Progressing our Toitū goals

We have been a Toitū Net Carbon Zero certified organisation since 2022, reflecting our commitment to measuring, managing and reducing our carbon footprint. Each year, we audit and report on our greenhouse gas emissions (Scopes 1, 2, and selected Scope 3), and implement targeted strategies to reduce them.

While challenges remain, principally around travel-related emissions, we introduced a travel policy in 2024 to help manage this impact. We also purchase carbon offsets through Toitū-approved carbon-reduction schemes.



### Our key initiatives include:

#### Travel and transport

Recognising that air travel is the primary driver of the firm's carbon emissions, we created a new travel policy in 2024 to support more sustainable practices. Under the policy, travel must be a business necessity or client requirement. Since its introduction, domestic travel has decreased by 9%. We also continue to operate our improved bike purchase scheme for our people which extends to e-bikes, new or second-hand purchases.

#### Energy efficiency and waste

We work with our Sustainability Committee on initiatives like recycling, compostable bins, reusable kitchenware, keep cup incentives and sustainable gifting. Energy efficiency was a key focus in our Wellington office refurbishment, which features low-carbon, carbon-neutral, low-toxicity and recyclable materials, including return-to-maker schemes to reduce landfill waste. Durability and ease of maintenance were also built into the design to support long-term sustainability.



#### Vero Centre achieves 4.5-star rating

The home of our Auckland office has achieved a 4.5-star NABERSNZ energy efficiency rating - an improvement from its previous 4-star rating. This upgrade reflects the success of Kiwi Property's targeted programme to reduce gas consumption and demonstrates their long-term commitment to improved energy performance.

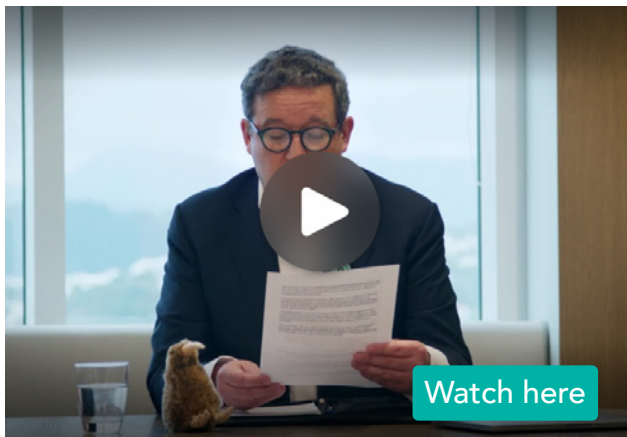


## Getting Involved

Our people are involved in a wide range of sustainability and climate initiatives, and host and participate in events and panel discussions focused on ESG topics, including sustainability, climate change and renewable energy.

### Protecting the Kiwi – a national call to action

Earlier this year, some iconic Kiwi brands dropped 'Kiwi' from their logos in Call Yourself a Kiwi? - a campaign by our pro bono client [Predator Free Wellington](#) and friends, urging support for a predator-free Aotearoa by 2050. Featuring Partner Tim Clarke, the campaign used humour to spotlight the serious impact of predators, which kill 25 million native birds annually.



### Conservation days

We support conservation efforts through team-building activities like tree planting, beach clean-ups and our annual bake sale for Trees That Count, funding 148 trees last year and 557 in total.

Our Litigation team volunteering on Motuihe Island, supporting the Motuihe Project's mission to restore native flora and fauna.



“There’s a vitally important question at stake: Do any of us have the right to call ourselves a Kiwi?”

Tim Clarke, Partner

Call yourself a Kiwi?

Protect our  
namesake  
for Kiwi’ sake.





## Women in Sustainability panel event

We hosted our first Women in Sustainability panel, led by Special Counsel Hannah Bain and partner Hannah Wilson, featuring Anne-Maree O'Connor (Guardians of New Zealand Superannuation), Miranda James (ANZ) (pictured above) and Melanie Baker-Jones (Te Whakahaere Āhuarangi). A full house joined us for kōrero on climate change, ESG and the challenges of rising global anti-ESG sentiment.



## Climate Change and Business Conference

We sponsored the Climate Change and Business Conference 2025, where our Head of Climate Change, Hannah Bain, spoke on the value of climate disclosures and the impact of New Zealand's regime two years on.

See our [ESG Blog](#) for more insights



**Court of Appeal  
considers judicial review**



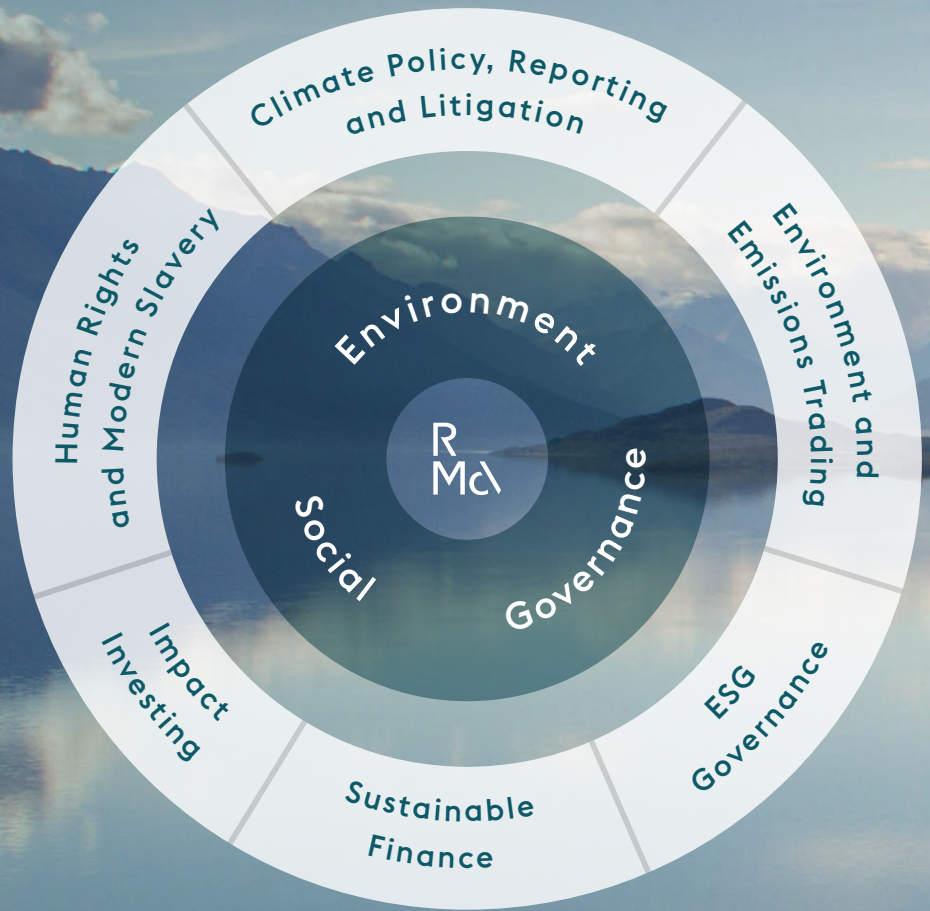
**Submissions open on  
Right to Repair Bill**



**"Woke banking" bill to  
proceed to first reading**

# Supporting our Clients

We offer tailored, practical advice across the full spectrum of ESG issues within both a global and local framework.



## ESG & climate change

2025 has been an interesting year for ESG and climate change. While geopolitical developments have turned the tide against ESG in some areas, we are proud to be working with a range of client organisations that have progressed their ESG goals in 2025, whether it be through maturing their disclosure of climate-related risks and opportunities, setting new ESG targets or investing into exciting new green projects. As a professional services firm, we recognise that one of the most important ways for us to contribute to ESG matters is to work with our clients on the projects that matter most to them and the New Zealand economy.



**Michael Loan**  
Partner and Head  
of Infrastructure

“ I’m thrilled to be working on exciting new projects with key players in the energy sector who are delivering for New Zealand homes and businesses. ”



In 2025, we have worked with a range of clients on renewable energy projects and investment strategies which are a critical component of New Zealand's transition to a low-emissions, climate-resilient future. With energy security also front and centre in public discourse, there has never been a more critical time for rapid investment into, and delivery of, new and reliable renewable energy sources to Aotearoa. Our recent work includes advising:

- Meridian Energy on its acquisition of a 50% shareholding in, and its associated joint venture with Nova Energy to develop, the 400 MW Te Rahui solar farm (expected to power around 100,000 homes), including equity arrangements, electricity offtake, construction asset management and related matters.
- Meridian Energy on its redevelopment project to repower and extend the Te Rere Hau wind farm, including advising on turbine supply and service availability arrangements. We also advised on Meridian's 100% acquisition of NZ Windfarms via a court-approved scheme of arrangement.
- NewPower Energy on the development of solar farms for WEL Networks near Huntly and near Cambridge, and for Papa Rererangi I Puketapu Limited at New Plymouth Airport, including in relation to land, construction, operations and maintenance, regulatory, supply and power purchase arrangements.
- Harmony Energy on its joint venture with First Renewables for the Tauhei solar farm and the offtake and dispatch services arrangements underpinning the debt financing for that project.

Alongside our renewables work, our expert team advises clients on a wide spectrum of issues relating to the transition to a low-emissions, climate-resilient future including mandatory climate-related disclosures, greenwashing risk, the emissions trading scheme and climate-related litigation. With ESG issues being core business priorities for New Zealand businesses, their boards and investors, we help our clients gain value through their ESG strategies while addressing and mitigating risk. Our lawyers regularly advise the boards of New Zealand's biggest companies on governance, supporting them to integrate climate and ESG risks and opportunities across their businesses. We are sought after for our knowledge of regulatory developments and legal risks, including domestic and international developments in climate change and other ESG policies.

Read our insights into the energy sector in our [Energy Blog](#)



# Who we are

## Ko Wai Tātou

We are a leading commercial law firm with over 350 people across our Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, and Te Waipounamu South Island offices.

As a full-service firm, our practice groups work seamlessly to support a wide range of clients, drawing on our expertise across the full spectrum of corporate advisory, competition and regulatory, banking and finance, litigation and disputes, real estate and construction, tax, public law, resource management, technology, employment and environmental law matters.



### Board of Management

Liz Blythe, Nathaniel Walker, Marika Eastwick-Field, David Butler (Chair), Dan Jones, Jo Avenell (CEO)



**Matthew Kersey**  
CHAIR OF PARTNERSHIP  
Partner, Litigation



**Joanna Comerford**  
General Manager, Business  
Development, Marketing  
& Communications



**Ben McLaren**  
Chief Operating  
Officer



**Karen O'Leary**  
General Manager,  
Human Resources





## Governance

Our team works with clients to proactively design governance and compliance solutions and frameworks, as well as responding to crises and challenges as they arise. We advise on joint venture management, dividend declarations and general board and governance matters, engage with relevant civil society and governmental groups on an ongoing basis, and are active supporters of Transparency International New Zealand.

Some of our partners are board members and members of various organisations, including the Competition Law & Policy Institute of New Zealand, NZ Markets Disciplinary Tribunal, Auckland Arts Festival Board, Springboard Trust, Motu, Wellington Regional Charity Hospital Trust, The Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi and Property Council New Zealand to name a few. Many are also involved in volunteering, community participation and act as guest lecturers.

## Our Values

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

### Excellence

Whai hiranga

### Tenacity

Whakapau kaha

### Respect

Manaaki

### Curiosity

Māhirahira

Russell  
McLeagh

## Our Russell McVeagh partners:

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Alex MacDuff

Ben Paterson

Cath Shirley-Brown

Dan Jones

David Hoare

Deemle Budhia

Emma Peterson

Greg Neill

Ian Beaumont

Joe Edwards

Kirsten Massey

Malcolm Crotty

Mei Fern Johnson

Natalie Steur

Sam Nelson

Simon Pilkinton

Tom Hunt

William Irving

Allison Arthur-Young

Bevan Peachey

Chris Curran

Daniel Minhinnick

David Raudkivi

Doran Wyatt

Emmeline Rushbrook

Guy Lethbridge

Jeremy Upson

Joe Windmeyer

Lauren Rapley

Marika Eastwick-Field

Michael Loan

Nathaniel Walker

Sarah Blackmore

Tim Clarke

Tony Sycamore

Anna Crosbie

Bradley Aburn

Craig Shrive

David Butler

David Weavers

Ed Crook

Fred Ward

Hannah Wilson

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