

LEGAL AFFAIRS

AVIATION INSIDE

COLIN BIGGERS & PAISLEY The firm that grew fast despite itself { P30 }



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Growth not the brief, but CBP can't help it

CHRIS MERRITT

HAVING expanded faster than its competitors, Colin Biggers & Paisley insists the core of its business plan does not focus on growth.

"The strategy is not to grow," said managing partner Dunstan de Souza. "The strategy was not to achieve 43.6 per cent growth. The strategy was to become a specialist law firm serving clients nationally.

"And if as a consequence of that growth becomes necessary, that is a natural consequence."

In the past year, the firm has expanded beyond its Sydney base by merging with Melbourne's Monaghan + Rowell, and it is already considering how to enter the Brisbane market.

Partner numbers at CBP have grown from 28 this time last year to 40. Fee-earner numbers have moved from 62 to 95, an increase of 53.2 per cent.

The merger with Monaghan + Rowell, which led to the addition of six partners, was a full financial integration that took the CBP brand to Melbourne.

It was followed by the recruitment of more partners in both cities.

CBP has been a feature of the Sydney marketplace for 110 years. But things started to change after the partners considered what space the firm should occupy in a rapidly changing market for legal services.

"We decided we needed to be a specialist law firm servicing clients nationally," Mr de Souza said.

That target was close to where the firm had found itself.

It then chose the areas of law in which it wanted to specialise,



RENEE NOWYTARGER

Dunstan de Souza says that, within months, Colin Biggers & Paisley is 'likely to be 40-something in three cities'

based on market opportunities, the firm's history and the expertise of the firm's lawyers.

Those practice areas are construction, insurance, property, commercial litigation, insolvency and restructuring, workplace relations, corporate and planning.

"We decided we wanted to be based in other cities because it would be a better way of servicing clients nationally by having people on the ground in Melbourne and, in due course, in Brisbane," he said.

Some inside the firm have been

startled by the pace of change. "I called the partners together one day and said, 'I just want to remind you what we are doing. Today we are 20-something partners in one city. Within months, we are likely to be 40-something in three cities'," he said.

"It's an enormous change, but they were all on board."

The next step is Brisbane. However, in order to meet the firm's strategic goals Mr de Souza said the Melbourne office would also need to grow — but not as an end in itself.

Fastest-growing legal employers: Where the jobs are

Firm	% growth since		Non-partner fee earners		
	Jan 2012	Jan 2013	Jul 2012	Dec 2011	Jul 2011
CURWOODS*	98.9%	90	51	45	42
COLIN BIGGERS & PAISLEY*	53.2%	95	89	62	56
GADENS LAWYERS	32.1%	453	354	343	315
HOLDING REDLICH	30.0%	143	124	110	114
JACKSON McDONALD	29.5%	94	73	72	64
MADDOCKS	29.0%	218	205	169	167
PIPER ALDERMAN	22.2%	121	113	99	104
GRIFFITH HACK	21.1%	76	70	63	66
MORAY & AGNEW LAWYERS	16.4%	149	134	128	112
LANDER & ROGERS	15.8%	161	148	139	139
MIDDLETONS*	15.7%	221	235	191	211
DIBBSBARKER	13.8%	147	126	129	134
SPARKE HELMORE LAWYERS	13.8%	242	220	213	218
M+K LAWYERS	11.3%	97	86	87	86
ARNOLD BLOCH LEIBLER	10.1%	87	78	79	82
HOPGOODGANIM*	9.9%	84	82	76	75
DLA PIPER AUSTRALIA	9.5%	385	373	352	351
HWL EBSWORTH LAWYERS	9.5%	241	252	220	221
MINTER ELLISON	8.0%	639	639	591.6	634.5
ASHURST AUSTRALIA	6.8%	637	668	596	598
MILLS OAKLEY LAWYERS	6.7%	104	114	97	98
HALL & WILCOX LAWYERS	6.5%	97	90	91	93
CLAYTON UTZ	5.2%	715	726	680	682
CORRS CHAMBERS WESTGARTH	4.5%	456	453	436	440
HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS†	4.5%	776	792	743	764
GILBERT + TOBIN	2.9%	209	225	203	199
HERBERT GEER	2.4%	96	106	94	99
COOPER GRACE WARD	1.5%	68	63	67	69
HENRY DAVIS YORK	1.5%	152	151	150	152
THOMSONS LAWYERS	0.2%	179	172	179	175
NORTON ROSE AUSTRALIA	-1.2%	426	434	431	397
HUNT & HUNT	-4.6%	109	137	114	107
ALLENS	-4.7%	655	725	687	706
KENNEDY STRANG LEGAL GROUP	-6.3%	130	134	139	145
BAKER & MCKENZIE AUSTRALIA	-7.5%	176	184	190	193
McCULLOUGH ROBERTSON	-7.7%	146	161	158	154
WOTTON + KEARNEY	-9.2%	55	62	60	45
KING & WOOD MALLESONS AUSTRALIA†	-12.1%	650	674	740	775
TRESSCOX LAWYERS*	-12.9%	115	106	132	120
SQUIRE SANDERS AUSTRALIA	N/A	42	34	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	6.3%	9733.9	9662.3	9155.9	9202.0

Tier summary figures exclude Herbert Smith Freehills and King & Wood Mallesons

TOP TIER	6.0%	1809.8	1818.5	1707.6	1756.5
MID TIER	12.6%	4177.5	3958.8	3709.3	3661.5
INTERNATIONAL	2.8%	2319.8	2418.6	2256.0	2245.0
TOTAL	8.3%	8307.1	8195.8	7672.9	7663.0

Figures are for full-time equivalent fee-earners, excluding partners/principals and paralegals, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Fastest-growing legal practices: Partner numbers

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COLIN BIGGERS & PAISLEY*	43.6%	40	36	28	28
MILLS OAKLEY LAWYERS	21.2%	40	36	33	32
HOPGOODGANIM*	20.8%	31	26	26	26
CURWOODS*	18.2%	13	11	11	11
MORAY & AGNEW LAWYERS	15.3%	68	65	59	60
TRESSCOX LAWYERS*	12.0%	39	35	35	37
MADDOCKS	11.5%	68	63	61	63
ARNOLD BLOCH LEIBLER	8.6%	38	38	35	33
MIDDLETONS*	8.0%	70	67	65	67
HOLDING REDLICH	7.7%	56	58	52	50
THOMSONS LAWYERS	7.1%	60	58	56	56
SPARKE HELMORE LAWYERS	6.9%	58	53	54	49
HWL EBSWORTH LAWYERS	5.8%	145	146	137	124
M+K LAWYERS	5.4%	53	53	50	54
GRIFFITH HACK	5.2%	33	33	31	31
LANDER & ROGERS	4.3%	53	53	51	51
GILBERT + TOBIN	3.7%	67	66	65	61
McCULLOUGH ROBERTSON	3.7%	50	50	48	48
MINTER ELLISON	3.4%	200	198	193	187
GADENS LAWYERS	2.5%	137	135	134	128
CLAYTON UTZ	0.5%	203	198	202	201
ASHURST AUSTRALIA	0.4%	186	188	185	182
JACKSON McDONALD	0.0%	30	28	30	29
CORRS CHAMBERS WESTGARTH	-0.1%	122	122	122	123
DLA PIPER AUSTRALIA	-0.6%	108	111	109	110
HUNT & HUNT	-0.7%	55	59	55	51
PIPER ALDERMAN	-2.2%	53	52	54	56
COOPER GRACE WARD	-2.6%	22	23	23	24
NORTON ROSE AUSTRALIA	-2.6%	140	143	144	144
KENNEDY STRANG LEGAL GROUP	-3.7%	68	68	71	71
DIBBSBARKER	-3.9%	44	45	46	47
BAKER & MCKENZIE AUSTRALIA	-4.4%	85	91	89	89
HENRY DAVIS YORK	-5.5%	52	53	55	57
HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS†	-6.0%	181	191	193	197
ALLENS	-6.3%	167	176	178	181
WOTTON + KEARNEY	-7.1%	13	13	14	14
HALL & WILCOX LAWYERS	-9.1%	30	33	33	29
HERBERT GEER	-14.7%	40	42	47	47
KING & WOOD MALLESONS AUSTRALIA†	-17.2%	152	156	184	175
SQUIRE SANDERS AUSTRALIA	N/A	14	12	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	0.9%	3085.4	3084.7	3058.0	3023.2
Tier summary figures exclude Herbert Smith Freehills and King & Wood Mallesons					
TOP TIER	1.4%	524.4	518.6	517.0	511.0
MID TIER	4.7%	1527.3	1497.8	1459.0	1434.2
INTERNATIONAL	-0.7%	700.0	721.0	705.0	706.0
TOTAL	2.6%	2751.7	2737.4	2681.0	2651.2
Figures for M+K Lawyers, an incorporated practice, are for the company's principals. Figures for DLA Piper, Norton Rose, Baker & McKenzie, Herbert Smith Freehills, King & Wood Mallesons, and Squire Sanders are for the Australian practices of these international firms.					

The biggest intakes of graduates

Firm	Male Jan-Dec 2012	Female Jan-Dec 2012	Jan-Jul 2012	Jan-Dec 2011	Jan-Dec 2012	Jan-Jul 2011
ALLENS	33	62	95	95	93	91
KING & WOOD MALLESONS †	33	60	93	89	90	82
ASHURST AUSTRALIA	35	51	86	74	81	65
CLAYTON UTZ	27	45	72	59	77	63
CORRS CHAMBERS WESTGARTH	22	36	58	59	65	66
HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS†	20	29	49	46	83	66
MINTER ELLISON	16	26	42	42	71	41
DLA PIPER AUSTRALIA	16	25	41	41	27	32
NORTON ROSE AUSTRALIA	11	29	40	39	35	20
GADENS LAWYERS	15	16	31	42	38	29
HWLEBSWORTH LAWYERS	9	19	28	28	19	18
BAKER & MCKENZIE AUSTRALIA	8	17	25	18	17	12
MIDDLETONS*	11	13	24	23	27	27
GILBERT + TOBIN	8	14	22	12	12	16
MADDOCKS	8	12	20	20	11	12
THOMSONS LAWYERS	7	12	19	18	15	15
PIPER ALDERMAN	8	10	18	13	11	9
McCULLOUGH ROBERTSON	7	10	17	14	14	12
ARNOLD BLOCH LEIBLER	9	5	14	14	13	13
HOLDING REDLICH	5	9	14	13	14	16
LANDER & ROGERS	2	12	14	14	15	15
HENRY DAVIS YORK	3	10	13	8	9	3
KENNEDY STRANG LEGAL GROUP	5	8	13	11	12	9
MORAY & AGNEW LAWYERS	5	8	13	10	8	6
HERBERT GEER	5	7	12	12	12	12
SPARKE HELMORE LAWYERS	4	8	12	8	12	6
HALL & WILCOX LAWYERS	4	6	10	10	8	8
HOPGOODGANIM*	4	6	10	10	6	6
GRIFFITH HACK	5	4	9	1	8	6
COOPER GRACE WARD	5	3	8	4	10	9
HUNT & HUNT	3	5	8	8	10	4
MILLS OAKLEY LAWYERS	3	5	8	7	9	9
COLIN BIGGERS & PAISLEY*	3	4	7	2	10	8
JACKSON McDONALD	4	3	7	5	8	8
TRESSCOX LAWYERS*	5	2	7	4	6	8
SQUIRE SANDERS AUSTRALIA	2	3	5	5	N/A	N/A
DIBBSBARKER	4	0	4	7	6	8
M+K LAWYERS	1	2	3	6	7	7
CURWOODS*	1	1	2	2	1	0
WOTTON + KEARNEY	1	1	2	1	1	1
TOTAL	377.0	597.2	974.2	893.4	971.0	838.0

Tier summary figures exclude Herbert Smith Freehills and King & Wood Mallesons

TOP TIER	65.0	107.0	172.0	160.0	213.0	170.0
MID TIER	154.0	214.6	368.6	326.4	332.0	300.0
INTERNATIONAL	105.0	187.0	292.0	272.0	253.0	220.0
TOTAL	324.0	508.6	832.6	758.4	798.0	690.0

Figures are full-time equivalent positions rounded to the nearest whole number.

* Figures include growth from mergers in the last 12 months † Firms that have changed to reporting only Australian figures in the last 12 months

Source: The Australian's partnership survey, conducted by Beaton