

Overview

Property is New Zealand's largest non-export industry. It is constantly having to evolve in response to current and anticipated influences – globalisation, market forces, new technology, legislative developments and the risk of natural disasters. Property transactions must take account of the big picture as well as the detail.

If you are buying a house, negotiating a multi-million-dollar lease on a commercial building, or acquiring land for a large development project, you need help from experienced property lawyers who know what they are doing.

Businesses acquiring or disposing of property interests need input from advisers who know the industry as well as the law – advisers who can identify the many risks, and manage them in a way that is commercially appropriate, legally sound, and cost-effective.

We have a substantial practice in the buying, selling, developing, subdividing, unit titling, financing and leasing of all types of property – especially office, industrial, retail, rural, residential and mixed-use properties. Our clients include overseas and local investors and developers, multi-national tenants, Crown agencies, shopping centre owners, and lessees of high country stations.

Our work for central and local government agencies covers the acquisition of land interests for roading, power and other public works, related compensation issues, disposals, construction and infrastructure, large-scale development and leasing transactions, treaty settlements, and the management of Crown property portfolios.

Our team works closely with clients to get a good understanding of their business and their present and future needs. We are supported by colleagues in other teams, such as planning, construction, infrastructure, health and safety, public law, finance, and dispute resolution.

Representative Experience

Commercial Leasing

Commercial leasing can be complex and difficult. We have expertise and market knowledge to help you maximize the value of your assets and avoid costly disputes.

Experience includes acting for:

- The Crown in the rationalisation of its Wellington office accommodation.
- Ministry of Social Development (and its predecessors), advising for 20 years on its national lease portfolio including recent new office premises in New Plymouth and Whanganui, and its new head office accommodation in Wellington.
- Victoria University, advising on the Civic Music Hub project involving the establishment of the New Zealand School of Music in the refurbished Wellington Town Hall in conjunction with the NZSO and the WCC.
- an institutional investor in a substantial redevelopment of a 14,000m² CBD office tower in the context of a leasing arrangement in favour of a central Government agency.
- Viaduct Leasing Limited as it restructured the lease for the building occupied by Kensington Swan and KPMG on

the Auckland waterfront. The process was complicated by the fact that both the landlord and the tenants were undertaking substantial refurbishment and the tenants needed to be able to occupy the building during this process.

- Cornerstone Investments as it negotiated simultaneously with two potential tenants for the same nine floors of an office tower in Wellington.
- Auckland Transport on the lease of 20 Viaduct Harbour Avenue (previously known as the Vodafone building) comprising approximately 14,000m² for 1,600 staff and involving extensive refurbishment.

Commercial Property and Development

We have extensive experience in the sale and purchase of commercial properties and subdivision of commercial land. We are skilled in handling multi-tenanted commercial properties and act for many institutional investors. In recent years, we have acted on the sale and purchase of over NZ\$500 million worth of office buildings and land in Auckland and Wellington.

Our experience includes acting on:

- the sale and purchase of SAS House, Datacom House, Harbour City Centre, Bowen House, Bowen Campus, the Freyberg Building, Plimmer Towers and Plimmer carpark building and the Kirkcaldie & Stains complex in Wellington.
- Waterfront Theatre Limited on its \$36 million development of the ASB Waterfront Theatre involving a ground lease for a term of over 100 years and dealing with multiple stakeholders.
- land acquisition for Auckland Transport in relation to the City Rail Link project.
- land acquisition for Auckland Transport in relation to Te Atatu Road widening project.
- the purchase of non-urban land for a significant residential development in Auckland for an overseas person requiring OIO consent. This OIO application involved both sensitive land and significant business assets.

Public Works Act

Public works and infrastructure projects require expert advice and insight into the different legal, political, financial, and strategic issues involved. We have acted on every significant State Highway project in the upper North Island in the last 12 years. We have recognised expertise with the Act, the acquisition and disposal of land, compensation and valuation issues, and wider Crown land law issues

Unit Titles

Major changes to the unit titles legislation and regulations have turned the way unit title developments are administered on its head. The changes are many and complex. It is essential to get early legal advice to avoid unnecessary expense and delays. We have substantial experience in dealing with the multitude of issues.

Earthquakes and Other Disasters

We have considerable expertise regarding earthquakes and other disasters. We provide advice on landlord / tenant issues (insurance, repairs, rent abatement, lease termination and cordons), health and safety, construction, building standards, legislative provisions, and the powers and duties of local authorities. We also provide advice regarding the legal duties relating to asbestos.

Our experience includes acting for a number of Wellington and Christchurch tenants affected by earthquakes, and providing advice on compensation and termination rights.

Your Key Contacts

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