

Russell
McLeagh

Our ESG
Overview
2024

Contributing to Aotearoa New Zealand

Te Whai Koha ki Aotearoa



AT A GLANCE:

25.7

pro bono hours per lawyer on average, FY24 year to date

3

offices RMcV Queenstown coming soon

91%

believe the firm is a great place to work

Contributing to Aotearoa New Zealand Te Whai Koha ki Aotearoa Our ESG Overview 2024

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Our firm is committed to making a positive impact on Aotearoa New Zealand. Our people feel privileged and proud to be able to support community organisations in the work they do to increase access to justice and make a real difference for people in need.

David Butler, Russell McVeagh Board Chair

Welcome

We are pleased to share with you an update on our commitment and contribution to our communities, ensuring a safe and inclusive workplace, and managing our environmental impact in this year's ESG Overview.

The last few years have been a tough time for many New Zealanders. We recognise the importance of continuing in our community efforts and making life a little easier for people where we can.

In our last report, we shared our expansion of our Pro Bono Programme and had set ourselves a future target of providing 25 hours of pro bono work per lawyer on average. I'm delighted to report that we have exceeded that goal, achieving 26.6 hours per lawyer - a 66% increase in 2023 from 2022, which equates to 5,793 total hours. This achievement is a testament to all involved, and this year, we are on track to reach our target again, currently tracking at 25.7 hours per lawyer on average.

I want to thank our Board who have shown outstanding leadership and dedication to supporting our people and clients throughout a period of significant challenge over the last few years. We have focused on ensuring the firm is providing the best possible culture and experience for our people, delivering exceptional service to our clients, achieving growth in a sustainable way, and maintaining our contribution to the communities of Aotearoa.

In August we shared that Russell McVeagh will be expanding into Te Waipounamu South Island with the opening of a new office in Queenstown soon. The South Island, and in particular the Queenstown Lakes region, has seen sustained economic growth for a number of years. While for some time we have supported and worked with businesses with interests in the South Island, this move will enable us to increase our support and to help continue the growth story in the region.

The Queenstown office begins an exciting new chapter as we continue to invest in providing a better people and client experience and move towards a more environmentally friendly future. A sentiment further reflected in our investment into the refurbishment of our Wellington Te Whanganui-a-Tara office earlier this year which included upgrades in lighting and air conditioning to optimise energy efficiencies.

I am grateful to, and proud of, our people and the work they do for our clients and our communities. Our teams continue to advise on some of the most complex and significant projects in the country. These efforts haven't gone unnoticed with the firm recognised as Large Law Firm of the Year at the NZ Law Awards 2023 and Pro Bono National Firm of the Year 2023.

I'd like to thank our clients and community partners for their continued support and choosing us to work alongside them.



Handwritten signature of Jo Avenell

Jo Avenell CEO

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:

Providing 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 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

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 educating our people on how to make a positive difference



Our Community

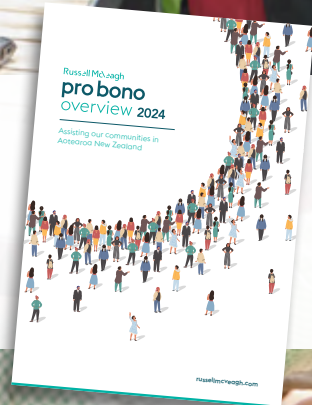
Tō tātou hapori

Everyone at Russell McVeagh has the opportunity to contribute. From our work with social enterprises, to our Pro Bono Programmes and charitable partnerships, we focus on working alongside our local communities to make a positive impact.



Russell McVeagh
pro bono
overview 2024

For more information about our Pro Bono Programme, see our [Pro Bono Overview 2024](#).



Our Pro Bono Framework

Increasing access to justice is at the heart of our Pro Bono Programme and our Pro Bono Framework outlines our key areas of focus for this.



Our Pro Bono targets

We continue to further improve providing access to justice in the community by significantly increasing our pro bono hours, exceeding our target of 25 hours on average per lawyer, per year.

Increasing our support (average per lawyer, per year)

16
hours
FY22

26.6
hours
FY23 achieved

25.7
hours
FY24 year to date*

*FY24 hours is an annualised estimate only, based on current trends as at 31 August 2024, and subject to change at end of FY24 on 30 November.

Pro Bono in the Community

We have a long history of directing our skills and resources towards making a difference in our communities and are proud of our relationships with our clients. Here we highlight some of our recent key work.

5,793+
total hours

of pro bono work in FY23

(66% increase)

222

lawyers
involved in
pro bono
work

60+
pro bono
clients*

(11% increase)

IN FOCUS: kickbackmakechange.org



Tackling Youth Homelessness

Aaron Hendry (pictured right) with our lawyers at the launch of The Front Door project

We assisted in the setting up of the Kick Back - Make Change charitable trust, a youth development and social justice organisation focused on preventing and ending youth homelessness. The team reviewed the lease document for "The Front Door" project premises, Auckland's first immediate accommodation service and safe space for rangatahi (young people), where they can access mental health services, healthcare and housing support.

" We just wanted to extend a huge thank you to the entire Russell McVeagh whānau for your generous support of the kaupapa. You all played an important role in bringing The Front Door to life, creating space in our community for our young people to be safe, supported, and cared for. "

Aaron Hendry
Founder of Kick Back – Make Change

IN FOCUS: pfw.org.nz



Predator Free Wellington

Predator Free Wellington staff check bait stations and traps on Miramar Peninsula

Our newest pro bono client, Predator Free Wellington (PFW), is creating the world's first predator free capital city where native species and communities can thrive together by removing rats, mustelids and possums from 30,000 hectares.

New Zealand is a biodiversity hotspot with 80,000 endemic species, but also has the highest proportion of threatened indigenous species, with an estimated 68,000 native birds killed by introduced

predators every night! PFW's first mission was to eliminate predators in Miramar Peninsula, which is now free of rats, stoats, weasels and possums, and is being actively monitored in case they try to sneak back in. Russell McVeagh is proud to support PFW's mission through our pro bono efforts.

*including subsidiaries

IN FOCUS: communitylaw.org.nz



Law in the Community

Richelle Go Ocao, Ella Marr and Matt Kersey attending the blessing of the newly refurbished Māngere Community Law Centre

We are particularly proud of our long-standing relationship with Community Law centres in Aotearoa, especially the Māngere Community Law Centre which we have been supporting since the '80s. We also support Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law Centre and its Community Law Manual, our newest client Auckland Disability Law, and are registered with Te Ara Ture – A Bridge to Law, which connects volunteers with disadvantaged New Zealanders across the motu. Each week, a group of our solicitors attend drop-in sessions at Community Law Centres to provide legal assistance to members of the community who otherwise might not have the means to access the support they need. In FY23, we spent a total of 1,562 hours of Community Law Centres work.

“ Every Tuesday at the Māngere Community Law Centre, we meet with clients who are dealing with a wide range of issues – from consumer issues and debt disputes, to tenancy problems and fencing disputes. It’s incredibly rewarding for us to be able to use our skills and knowledge to help members of our community navigate the legal system and seek practical solutions to their issue/s. ”

Richelle Go Ocao
Senior Solicitor



“ It was really meaningful to hear from David, Liz and Harry (from the Community Law Centre at our Pro Bono Week event) and for us to share our involvement. And we've had lots of new volunteers join the roster as a result! ”

Ella Marr, Solicitor and Community Law Clinic Coordinator

Russell McVeagh pro bono week 2024

We held our first ever Pro Bono Week in May, shining a light on our pro bono clients and providing information to our people on the importance of this mahi and how to get more involved by hosting special lunch events with Māngere Community Law Centre, our longest standing pro bono client; and Predator Free Wellington, our newest pro bono client.



Our Wellington office hosted Predator Free Wellington for a lunch and learn

Other Organisations We Support

EDUCATION	HEALTH & EMERGENCY SERVICES	HUMANITARIAN
 Neurodiversity in Education Project  BRIDGET WILLIAMS BOOKS	 NORTHERN RESCUE  He Ringa Āwhina Wellington Regional Charity Hospital	 KIWI KARE UKRAINE  Mahi for Ukraine
INCLUSION	YOUTH	RESEARCH/SOCIAL IMPACT
 NGĀTI WHĀTUA ŌRĀKEI  CORALUS	 cure kids  Auckland Disability Law Spiral Collectives	 Motu ākina  SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE TRUST TE WAKA HIRINGA TANGATA
ENVIRONMENT		
 RY  Access Matters Aotearoa  WELLINGTON PRIDE PARADE	 YOUTH CLIMATE COLLECTIVE	 ZEALANDIA TE MĀRA A TĀNE  2ND SUITS  Waitaki Whitestone Geopark

Our Community Partnerships

Through our partnerships, sponsorships, and memberships, we are proud to work with organisations that have a focus on enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in our communities.

IN FOCUS: rainbowgames.co.nz



Will Worth, Will Irving & Sophie Browning at the Games

Rainbow Games Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

We were delighted to be the Official Legal Partner for the inaugural Rainbow Games 2024 held in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. By partnering with the Games, we share in our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the celebration of the LGBTQI+ community and Games participants.

“ Together, we’ve celebrated diversity and empowered our rainbow communities through sports, fun and participation. Most importantly the event encouraged rainbow people to feel safe in sporting environments and become more involved in both rainbow and mainstream sporting groups after the games. ”

Tom Leonard
Rainbow Games 2024 Event Director

IN FOCUS: multiethnicyoungleaders.org.nz



3 Kapu Kawhe™

Three of our people, Quentin Daniels, Varoon Kumar and Nathan Tse – pictured here with Haylee Putaranui (left) and Ranjna Patel (right) from Multiethnic Young Leaders – were recent mentees

We are proud to be one of the first Corporate Impact Investors for the 3 Kapu Kawhe™ programme, which aims to build Aotearoa’s pipeline of ethnically diverse future leaders across business, government, and community sectors.

Our firm leaders, Board Chair David Butler and CEO Jo Avenell, are 3 Kapu Kawhe Mentors for 2024. The programme pairs ethnically diverse young leaders in the formative years of their careers (mentees) with experienced executives and directors (mentors), for three transformative conversations. Mentees then pay it forward with a student mentee.

“ I’m really looking forward to being a mentor and gaining more insight into the challenges and obstacles that young leaders from different ethnic groups face in the professional world. Having a better understanding of cultural and systemic barriers helps to inform our approach to providing an inclusive culture at Russell McVeagh, as well as shaping a more inclusive Aotearoa, which are both incredibly important to me. ”

David Butler
Board Chair, Russell McVeagh

ARTS AND CULTURE

Whānau Mārama
New Zealand International Film Festival

TE AHUREI TOI O TĀMAKI
AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

EDUCATION

Te Papapa School

Tāmaki College
EAST AUCKLAND

DE&I: ETHNICITY

NZ ASIAN LAWYERS

TUPU TOA



DE&I: INCLUSION

TE TĀPUI ATAWHAI
AUCKLAND CITY MISSION



INDUSTRY FOCUS

Property Council New Zealand

AI Forum New Zealand
Te Kōwhiri Ake mā te Kōwhiri o Aotearoa

Arbitrators' and Mediators' Institute of New Zealand Inc
Te Mana Kōwhiri Kōwhiri, Tokawaonga o Aotearoa

Institute of Public Administration New Zealand

DE&I: GENDER

Charter Signatory GENDER EQUALITY CHARTER
NEW ZEALAND LAW SOCIETY

GLOBAL WOMEN

Champions for Change

Dignity.

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 for causes they're invested in and encourage opportunities to get involved.



Law clerks Eve Boister and Sophie Brokenshire supporting the [Pink Shirt Day anti-bullying campaign](#)



Taking part in the [Tāmaki College](#) mentoring programme



Senior Solicitor Tyson Hullena getting involved in [Movember](#)



Fundraising for [Breast Cancer Foundation NZ](#)



Law Clerk Ruby Blake-Manson collecting for [Wellington's Women's Refuge](#)



Partner and Chair of Partnership Ed Crook sailed across the world for [UNICEF](#)



Our lawyers volunteering at [Te Papapa School](#) in Onehunga for RMcV's Homework Club initiative



Our HR Team had a charity day baking for families at the [Ronald McDonald House](#)



Knowledge and Legal Support Manager Jenny Hirst ran 60km on her 60th birthday for [Mental Health Foundation NZ](#)



Running to raise money for [I Am Hope NZ](#), a youth mental health charity



Our People

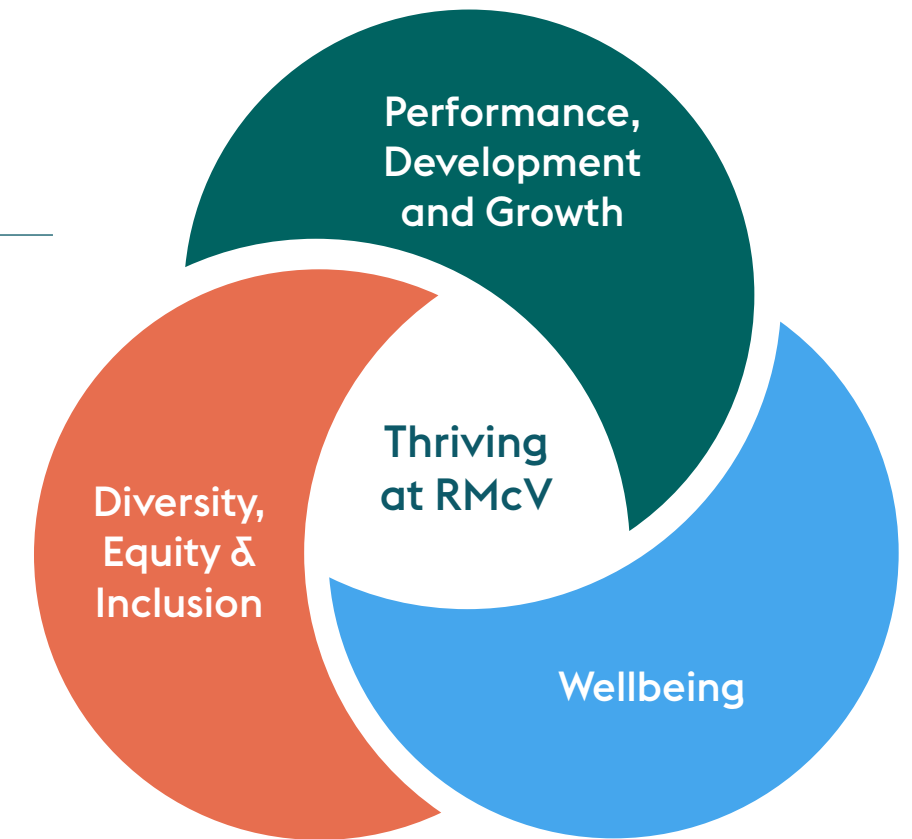
Tō mātou tira mahi

We pride ourselves on providing a culture where our people feel safe, included and supported.



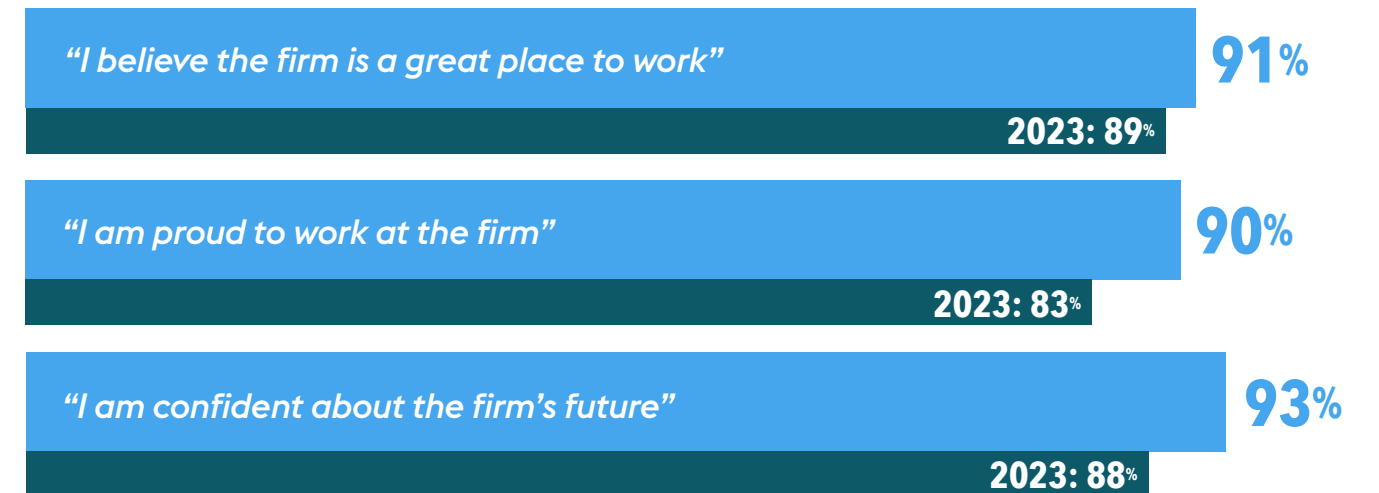
Our People Framework

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



Checking in with our People

Our 'Pulse' staff 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.



(Results from our February 2024 survey. 82% of employees participated in the survey)

Prioritising Wellbeing

We have a range of initiatives and resources available to ensure the wellbeing of our people is prioritised.

Mental wellbeing support

Our Kaiāwhina Oranga | Wellbeing Support People are an internal network of 20+ specifically trained people who help provide mental health support, and we offer an Independent EAP provider for free counselling.

Supporting flexible working

We provide technology to support flexible working, including allowances for home office set up and phones.

Wellness workshops

This included an Alcohol&Me Programme to help people make smarter drinking choices, and the Gut Foundation Speaker Series to learn about gut health and related diseases.

Benefits

Including an annual wellness allowance, free flu jabs and mole mapping. We offer a range of ways to connect including quizzes and running clubs.

Monitoring working hours

We proactively monitor the hours our people are working to ensure time off is taken to rest and recharge following busier periods.

Recognition

“Kind of a Big Deal” is our “good sorts” initiative which recognises some of the amazing mahi our people do around the firm and to celebrate those individuals that are really living our values and going the extra mile.

Our newly refurbished Wellington office



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Our strategy focuses around three goals and we have continually progressed work across our recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and career progression to advance these objectives:

Our DE&I Goals

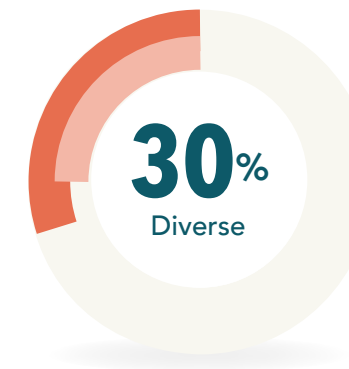


Gender

A partnership with at least 40% women

CURRENTLY: 30%

(Since 2018, 42% of new RMcV partners are women.)



Ethnicity

A workforce where at least 30% are ethnically diverse

CURRENTLY: 25%



Inclusion

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

CURRENTLY: 86%

Legend: Goal (dark orange), Current metrics (light orange)

DE&I Co-leads and Committees

Our five people-led DE&I committees work closely with members of our HR team and other internal and external stakeholders to identify and address areas for improvement, and to organise cultural events, across five key DE&I focus areas. This work is supported by partner and Board member Marika Eastwick-Field and partner Alex MacDuff who are responsible for guiding our workplan and activities and supporting our progress in line with our five-year strategy.

Accessibility

CO-HEADS:
Brittany Majoor
Ciaran Lett

Ethnicity

CO-HEADS:
Ayesha Goel
Nathan Tse
Niranjanaa Ram

Gender

CO-HEADS:
Charlotte Carter
Kieron Creagh

LGBTTI+

CO-HEADS:
Caitlin Walker
Will Worth

Socio-Economic

CO-HEADS:
Eva McRae
Jasleen Oberoi
Nuwan Siriwardena

Tracking our Goals



2024 staff survey feedback:

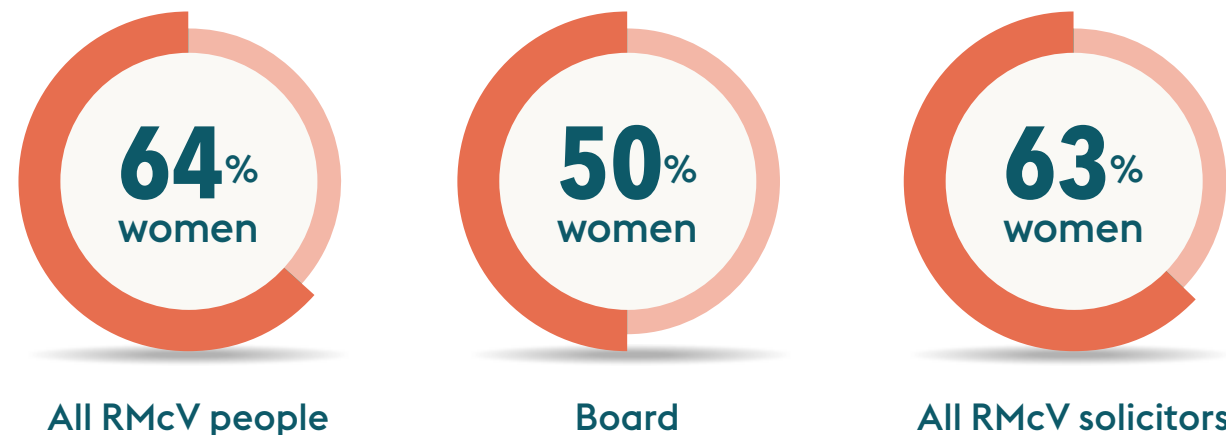
“The workplace is very collegial, and everyone is very supportive. The partners and senior lawyers are very friendly, patient and knowledgeable.”

“The firm is very intentional in building a positive, welcoming and inclusive culture.”

“It’s good to see the firm embracing many cultural/societal challenges. Russell McVeagh has very welcoming staff and an inclusive culture.”

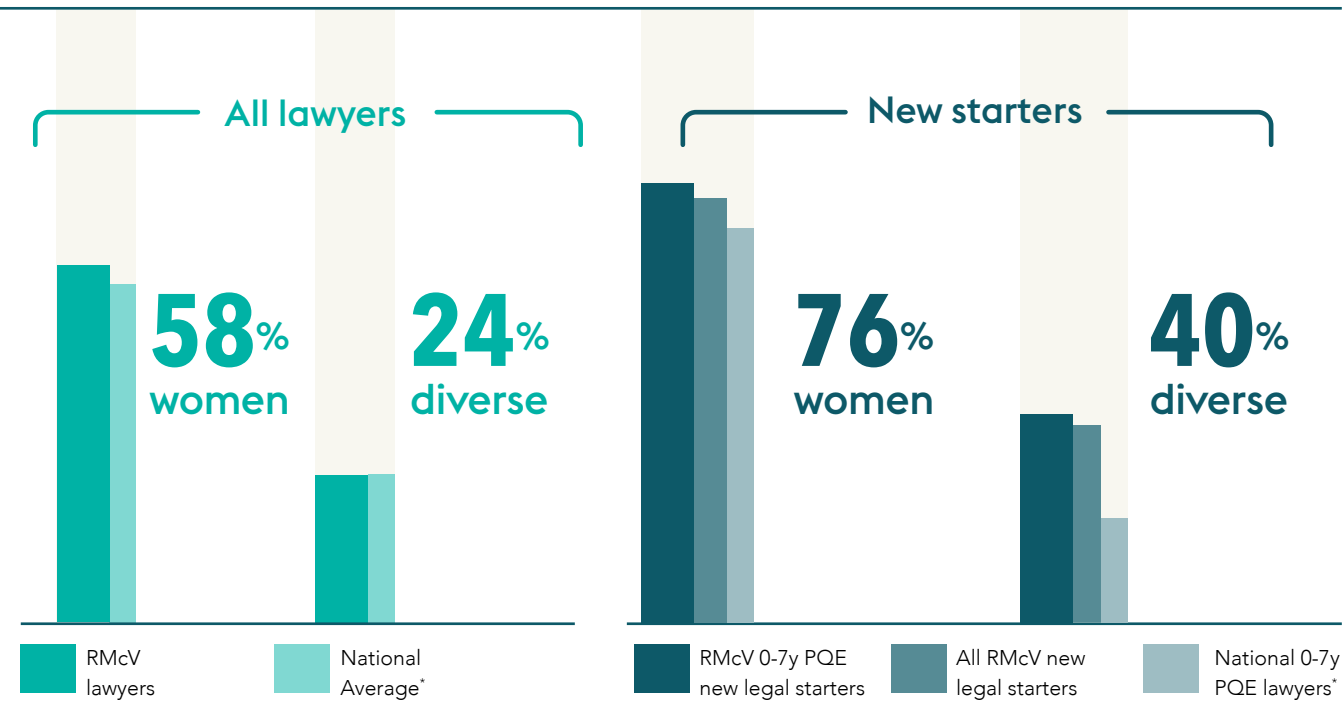
Gender Representation

We continue to take proactive steps to meet our gender targets and to ensure women are fairly represented.



Gender and Ethnicity

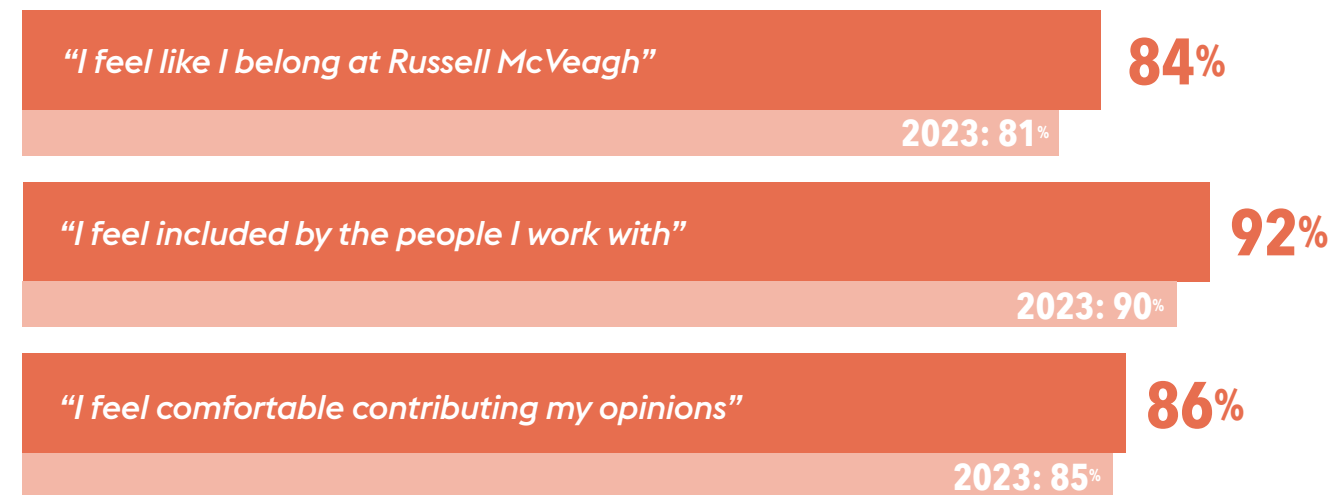
Our stats show that we currently sit in line with national figures*, and we look across our recruitment, promotion, retention and development to continue moving towards a more diverse workplace.



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 2023. There are currently 15,640 qualified lawyers based in NZ. Russell McVeagh figures based on all active lawyers correct as at August 2024. Ethnic diversity for these purposes is anything other than New Zealand European or European.



(Results from our February 2024 survey. 82% of employees participated in the survey)

DE&I Initiatives

GenderTick

We are members of the Gender at Work community and are proud to become the first law firm in New Zealand to achieve Advanced GenderTick accreditation for progressing gender equity in early 2023. We were reaccredited in December 2023.

Rainbow Tick

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

Reporting Pay Gaps

We were one of the country's first law firms to join Mindthegap.nz's pay gap registry in 2022. In 2024, we decreased our firm-wide gender pay gap to 4% (from 6% in 2023). The current national gender pay gap is 8.6%.*

*figure from Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women, as of September 2023

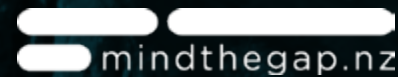
Modern Slavery approach

We are taking reasonably practicable steps to ensure modern slavery is not taking place within our business or supply chains. We became a Living Wage Accredited Employer in February 2024, reinforcing our support for the living wage movement and ensuring our commitment is also recognised for our suppliers and contractors.

We are committed to:

- identifying, and where reasonably practicable, removing any presence of modern slavery within our business and supply chains;
- acting ethically, and with integrity and transparency, in all business dealings; and
- putting effective and practical systems and controls in place to reduce the risks of modern slavery within our business and supply chains.

External Partnerships:



Our Initiatives

Internal Mentoring Programme

Specifically for our ethnically diverse kaimahi, we rolled out a pilot programme pairing 30 mentees and mentors to discuss topics important to them, their career experiences, learnings and insights. Both mentees and mentors reported learning a lot from these conversations, which will help us develop together as a firm. We intend to implement this on an annual basis.

Menopause Toolkit

Developed to educate and enable our people to support those who may be impacted by menopause, to ensure our workplace is as inclusive as possible.

Career Panel Series

These sessions touched on topics such as career journeys, overcoming challenges, flexibility, and more. Some sessions were specific to our women, in conjunction with our gender goal, while others were relevant to all staff.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi

We are 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).

As one of the oldest law firms in Aotearoa, 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.

In September 2024, we supported the Te Hunga Rōia Māori o Aotearoa (Māori Law Society) Hui-ā-Tau four-day conference in Whakatāne.



Solicitors Beth Murfitt, Michael Evans, Timu Wano and Shontelle Grimberg at the Hui-ā-Tau

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.



Our Recruitment team at the University of Otago campus in March

Starting a career with us

We offer:

Scholarships

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

Summer Clerkship Programme

which runs across the summer university break.

Graduate Law Clerkship

a permanent position for students who have finished studying as they transition to full-time work.

During a career with us

We offer:

Learning Pathways

that provide structured, targeted core skills training for solicitors.

Technical Training Programmes

led by senior lawyers in each practice group.

Professional Coaching

accessible whether you are a Law Clerk transitioning to your first year as a solicitor or a senior lawyer looking to develop your career.

Induction Pathways

so new joiners know what to expect in their first months of work and what development opportunities exist.

Junior Solicitor Advancement Programme (Rocky Shores)

a technical training programme for new lawyers, facilitated by partners and seniors, to gain experience working with all streams of law practiced at the firm.

Buddy System

law clerks receive support from a senior lawyer and supervising partner.

Breakfast Club

networking and learning events for junior women.

Career Panels

for lawyers to get insights from partners and other senior lawyers on how they navigate their careers.

A High-Performance Framework

that clearly defines expectations and great performance.

Alumni Network

We continue to stay connected with our extensive alumni network across the motu and abroad.

250+

CPD courses
offered to our people

3,904

total
attendances

7,205

learning
hours



Our Environment

Tō tātou taiao

We are taking active measures to understand the impact we are having on the environment and the steps that we can implement to improve that impact. However, we know there is more to do both internally and to support our clients as they move towards a more environmentally friendly future.

Our Sustainability Initiatives

We are continually progressing towards our goals to reduce carbon emissions and increase sustainable options. Our latest key initiatives include:

New Travel Policy

Recognising travel is the primary driver of the firm's carbon emissions, in July 2024 we created a new travel policy to support a more sustainable approach to travel.

Energy Efficiency and Waste

Our newly refurbished Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington office and our Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland office have timed lighting and air conditioners to optimise energy efficiency. We work with our Sustainability Committee on office initiatives including recycling, compostable bins, sustainable gifting tips, keep-cups and reusable kitchenware.

Bike loan

This year we implemented a cycle-to-work challenge and a new and improved bike purchase scheme for our staff which extended to e-bikes, new, or second-hand purchases.

Tech repurposing

We repurposed 330 laptops over the last year rather than them becoming digital waste. We also donated some of our old monitors to the Wellington and Hutt Community Law Centre while others were sold at a discounted rate to our people.

Greening the City

We support Trees that Count and our annual bake sale raised over \$1,400 funding 140 trees. We encouraged our people to collect native trees to take home and plant, and attend lunchtime planting workshops.

Toitū certified

We are a Toitū net carbonzero certified organisation. From going through an audit process, the insights gained measuring and reporting on our carbon impact will enable us to strategically target opportunities for emissions reduction to meet sustainability goals.



We became a Toitū net carbonzero certified organisation in 2022. Under this programme, we are required to annually measure our greenhouse gas emissions (scope 1, scope 2 and selected scope 3), and develop plans to continually manage and reduce our emissions. We also purchase voluntary carbon offsets associated with schemes that are approved by Toitū.

We recognise that there are challenges associated with reducing our emissions, particularly those associated with travel. While our travel policy is new, we see this as a key lever to support the management of our emissions in future years.



Our Climate Change team at the Sustainability Leaders' Summit

Getting Involved

Our people care about the environment and are involved in a wide range of sustainability and climate initiatives.

NZLS Climate Change Law Committee

Our Head of Climate Change, Hannah Bain, is a member of the New Zealand Law Society's Climate Change Law Committee, which monitors and makes recommendations on proposed legislative reforms relevant to New Zealand's climate change commitments and obligations.

Climate Change and Business Conference

We sponsored CCBC, where topics ranged from how New Zealand can become more resilient to the impacts of climate change through a coordinated approach to adaptation, to how our approach to sustainability positions us on the international stage.

Sustainability Leaders' Summit Tāmaki Makaurau

We supported this event which provided an opportunity to reflect on ways in which sustainability professionals can utilise the law to achieve their ESG goals. Key themes included the need to lead with purpose and being transparent about the sustainability journey that organisations are on.

Climate Action Conference

Hannah Bain joined a climate careers panel, hosted by our pro bono client, Youth Climate Collective, sharing kōrero about the options for young people entering the workforce and how to engage with communities, colleagues and other stakeholders to pursue climate goals.



Supporting local environment

We helped set up the Second Suits Trust in May. The organisation aims to give wetsuits a second life and enables less fortunate Kiwis to live a better life through connection with the ocean.



Conservation days

Our teams often work on conservation projects from planting and clearing trees to collecting rubbish along our beaches as part of team building activities.

Our Real Estate & Construction team planting trees in Tāwharanui



Let's Talk Climate

Together with our alliance partner Te Whakahaere, we produced a [series](#) which examines the key issues organisations are facing in relation to climate change law and policy in Aotearoa New Zealand. [Our ESG Blog](#) also covers a range of topics relevant to clients in relation to climate change and ESG.



“ We engage with clients and broader networks about the impact that climate change is having on New Zealand's businesses, homes and communities, and how we can take a systems approach towards a low-emissions, climate-resilient future. It's important that we also measure our own footprint and put in place initiatives to manage our emissions over time. ”

Hannah Bain, Head of Climate Change

Supporting our Clients

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.

Sustainable Financing

Sustainability-linked and proceeds-based green borrowing including advising:

- LGFA on its inaugural NZ\$1.1 billion issue of sustainable financing bonds. The offer was the first of its kind globally.
- ASB Bank's and Trevelyan's Sustainability linked loans (SLLs) partnership – one of the first bilateral SLLs for ASB.
- The arranger (ANZ) on KMD Brands Limited's NZ\$310m sustainability linked debt refinance, representing KMD's second SLL and first (and possibly a New Zealand first) Sustainability Linked Guarantee (SLG).

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:

- The Genesis Energy/FRV joint venture on the acquisition, development and project financing of the 63 MW Lauriston solar farm – at the time, the largest solar farm in New Zealand to reach financial close.
- On negotiations of a contract to construct five utility-solar farms, New Zealand's largest ever solar power project.



“ We are pleased to have a team of recognised market-leading experts available to support our clients understand and manage ESG risks and opportunities. Our deep experience of navigating change in regulated contexts, and our broad network of relationships with private sector and Government stakeholders, means that we are well placed to support clients with the ESG-transition currently affecting the global and domestic marketplace. ”

Hannah Wilson, Partner, Corporate Advisory

Spotlight on Climate Change

Our expert team has advised clients from a wide range of sectors on legal and regulatory matters relating to climate change including advising:

- A range of climate-reporting entities on the implementation of the mandatory climate-related disclosures regime under Part 7A of the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013, such as application of the regime, climate-related governance, greenwashing risk, compliance with the Aotearoa New Zealand Climate Standards, and regulatory engagement.
- Clients in relation to greenwashing, including claims regarding climate-related targets and certifications, and matters relating to the emissions trading scheme and voluntary carbon markets.
- The Climate Change Commission in connection with its review of New Zealand's net zero target under the Climate Change Response Act 2002 which it consulted on in mid-2024.

Infrastructure with Impact

Led by Head of Infrastructure, partner Michael Loan, we regularly advise on our country's largest and most complex projects with decarbonisation objectives at the forefront. Recent highlights include advising:

- On the Harapaki Wind Farm in Hawke's Bay, which will be the country's second largest, and repowering and extending the Te Rere Hau wind farm.
- Submissions to the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment on the Government's proposed new framework for offshore renewable energy.

ESG Governance

We are well equipped to support in the implementation of our client's ESG priorities. Our lawyers regularly advise the Boards of New Zealand's biggest companies on governance, supporting them to adopt a longer-term horizon in decision-making. We are sought after for our knowledge of regulatory developments and legal risks, including domestic and international developments in climate change and other ESG polices. We advise clients in relation to policy and law reform engagement, legal compliance such as mandatory climate-related financial reporting and disclosures, and legal risk in relation to ESG issues.

Who we are

Ko Wai Tātou

We are a leading commercial law firm with over 350 people across our Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington offices, and will soon be expanding to Te Waipounamu South Island, with the opening of our Tāhuna Queenstown office.

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 and environmental law matters.



Board of Management

Liz Blythe, Tom Hunt, Ian Beaumont, Marika Eastwick-Field, David Butler (Chair), Jo Avenell (CEO)



Ed Crook
CHAIR OF PARTNERSHIP
Partner, Real Estate and Construction



Joanna Comerford
General Manager, Business Development, Marketing & Communications



Ben McLaren
Chief Operating Officer



Karen O'Leary
General Manager, Human Resources

Our Offices



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 are members of various organisations, including Motu, He Ringa Āwhina - Wellington Regional Charity Hospital and Property Council New Zealand to name a few. Many are also involved in volunteering, community participation and act as guest lecturers and debating coaches.

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



Our Russell McVeagh partners:

Alex MacDuff

Ben Paterson

Cath Shirley-Brown

Dan Jones

David Hoare

Deemle Budhia

Emma Peterson

Greg Neill

Ian Beaumont

Joe Windmeyer

Liz Blythe

Matthew Kersey

Michael Taylor

Petra Carey

Tim Clarke

Troy Pilkington

Allison Arthur-Young

Bevan Peachey

Chris Curran

Daniel Minhinnick

David Raudkivi

Doran Wyatt

Emmeline Rushbrook

Guy Lethbridge

Jesse Fairley

John Powell

Malcolm Crotty

Mei Fern Johnson

Nat Steur

Sarah Blackmore

Tom Gillespie

William Irving

Anna Crosbie

Bradley Aburn

Craig Shrive

David Butler

David Weavers

Ed Crook

Fred Ward

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Tāhuna • Queenstown

COMING SOON...



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