



Resource Management Experts Join CLM's Partnership

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Both lawyers have over two decades' experience in resource management, local government and environmental law, and their appointment reflects both individual achievement and a strategic response to increasing complexity in this sector.

"Kate and Rachael are both outstanding lawyers and experts in their field," acknowledges Managing Partner Paul Tustin. "They are both nationally recognised as experts in resource management law and have nurtured close client relationships, developed new clients for our firm, and are willing to mentor and train others within their team.

"They are exceptionally hard-working and willing to put the interests of CLM and

their team ahead of themselves. They thoroughly deserve this promotion and we are thrilled to welcome them to the partnership.”

Strengthening expertise at a critical time

The appointments come as New Zealand's resource management framework undergoes significant reform, with the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill set to become law before this year's election, reshaping how planning, development and environmental issues are managed.

“We are at a crossroads in resource management law,” explains Rachael. “There will need to be a lot of legal support to help local authorities, developers and private clients navigate the new system. But we are really well placed as a team to help with that.”

Kate agrees.

“It's an exciting time to be practising in the Bay of Plenty. With a diverse range of clients and industries, our work reflects a region growing at pace. Urban and rural pressures, transport, infrastructure and natural hazard challenges all create complex resource management issues.”

Both are closely involved in the legislative changes at a national level. Kate is Secretary of the Resource Management Law Association's (RMLA's) national committee, while Rachael contributes to the New Zealand Law Society's Climate Change Subcommittee and the Bay of Plenty branch of the Australasian Land and Groundwater Association.

Together, they bring vast experience and complementary strengths across planning, environment, infrastructure, local government, enforcement and emergency response matters.

A milestone built over time

For Kate, the promotion is both a personal milestone and an opportunity to contribute more broadly to CLM.

"It has always been my long-term goal to become a partner. It's an exciting opportunity to contribute at the highest level and be involved in the future direction of the firm," she says. "I am motivated by the responsibility and leadership that comes with partnership."

She and Rachael are both touched by the number of kind messages they have received from younger women in the firm following the partnership announcement to staff. "This wasn't expected but has been really heartening," Kate says. "Many firms are seeing higher numbers of female partners than even a decade ago which is really positive."

Rachael says her own path has evolved over time, rather than following a fixed trajectory.

"Professionally, it's a privilege to be trusted with partnership and the responsibility that comes with helping shape the firm's future. Personally, it's a meaningful milestone. It's taken time, support from others, and a fair bit of juggling to get here.

"I don't think a legal career needs to be linear - there are phases where competing priorities, client demands and personal and family commitments can be hard to manage, especially when your children are small or as your parents age and need support. But it's about staying engaged, and continuing to grow over the long term."

Kate and Rachael each have three children and continue to balance the demands of legal practice with family life.

"It's a constant work in progress," says Kate. "Everyone does it differently, and it's important to find the way that works best for you and your situation."

Rachael adds that visibility and culture play an important role in supporting the next generation.

"There's no single 'right' way to build a legal career. Having a respectful, values-driven culture allows people to be themselves, work hard and succeed together."

Looking ahead

Both Kate and Rachael are looking forward to stepping into their new roles with purpose and continuing to work with great clients and colleagues at a progressive firm.

"The calibre of people who work at CLM is impressive," Rachael says. "We have many colleagues who have worked in national firms and overseas, and bring that expertise back to the Bay.

"There's a real opportunity for firms that can combine black-letter legal expertise with practical, forward-looking advice. Clients want trusted advisors who understand both the law and the context they're operating in."

Kate says the work itself continues to be a strong motivator.

"Every day is different, and I enjoy the intellectual challenge of resource management and environmental law," she says. "You get to work closely with specialists from different fields like planners, landscape architects and economists. I really like pulling that all together."

Both lawyers see their new roles extending beyond technical legal expertise, with a strong focus on leadership, mentoring and contributing to the firm's long-term direction.

"Both Kate and I have a genuine interest in mentoring and capability-building," Rachael says. "I feel a responsibility to make sure CLM is a place that supports people to build meaningful careers."