



A YEAR IN INTERVIEWS

How we engaged and
connected with New Zealand's
legal industry through NZ Lawyer.

NZ | LAWYER



Introduction

The following interviews and articles were promoted in NZ Lawyer Magazine throughout 2024. Collectively they illustrate the significant transformation occurring within the legal profession due to technological advancements.

Legal professionals like Mark Ford, Claire Tyler from Rainey Collins and Richard Little emphasise how tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), digital workflows, and audio-visual links (AVL) are reshaping how lawyers operate, enhancing efficiency, accessibility, and client interaction. A common theme across these articles is the necessity for law firms to adapt to these technological changes while maintaining the essential human element of legal practice.

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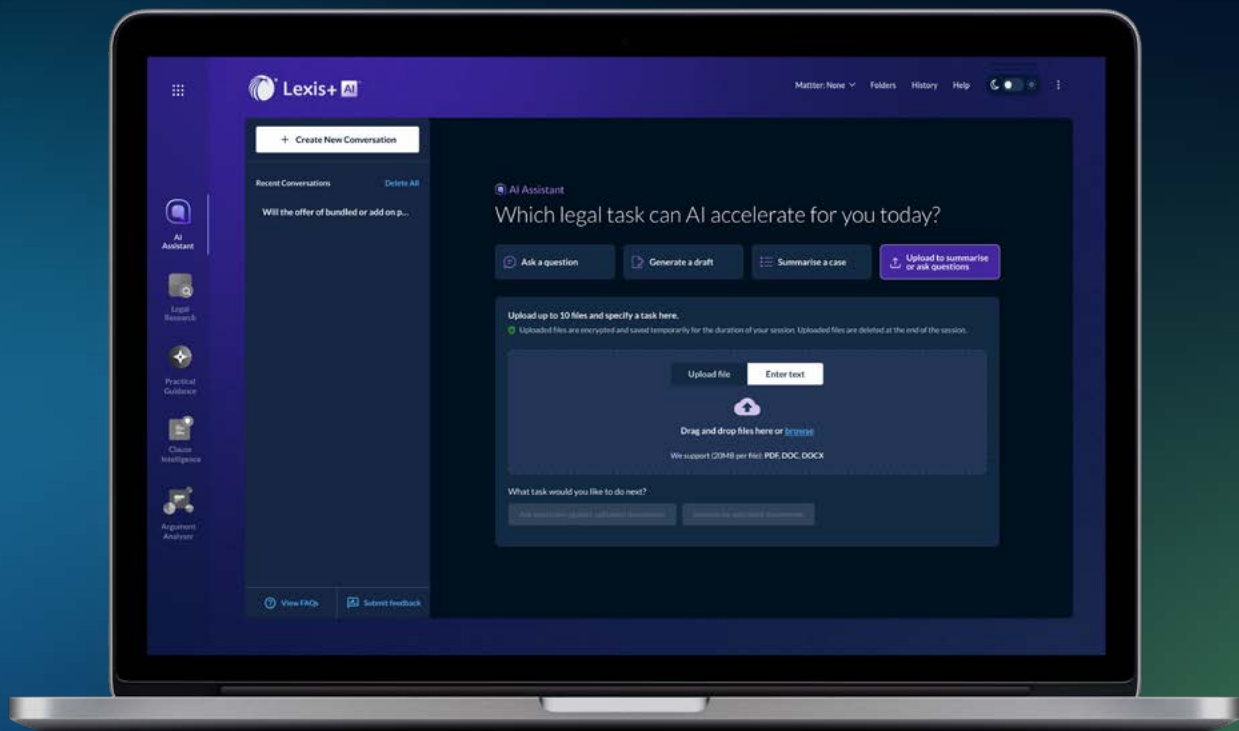
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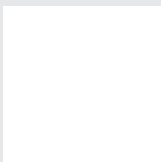
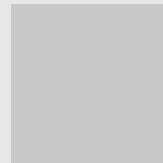
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LAUNCHING MID 2025



REQUEST PREVIEW

Contents





NZ|LAWYER January

**Interview with Senior
Marketing Expert Gerald Chait**

Marketing Guide for Law Firms

You may be a great lawyer, but how well do you market your value? Senior marketing expert reveals top tips for law firm marketing

Lawyers are known for being well-educated experts in their fields – but when it comes to marketing, many aren't as confident.

According to Gerald Chait, a highly skilled senior marketing expert with extensive experience in providing marketing services for legal firms, many lawyers find themselves outside their comfort zones when it comes to marketing. It's not something they learn at law school, and many simply don't know where to start. But with high levels of competition, it's not an area that any law firm can afford to ignore.

"The industry is experiencing a level of disruption," Chait tells NZ Lawyer.

"This is being driven by rapid advances in technology, structural change and increasing competition. The rich traditions and customs of the legal industry are being challenged. Today, marketing is significantly more strategic than simply placing some ads saying 'we provide this service, call us' – it's about creating value for clients and communicating that value to potential clients in a way that no-one else is doing it."

Differentiating yourself in a crowded market

For Chait, his first experience of the legal industry was when he found himself needing a personal injury lawyer in 2017.

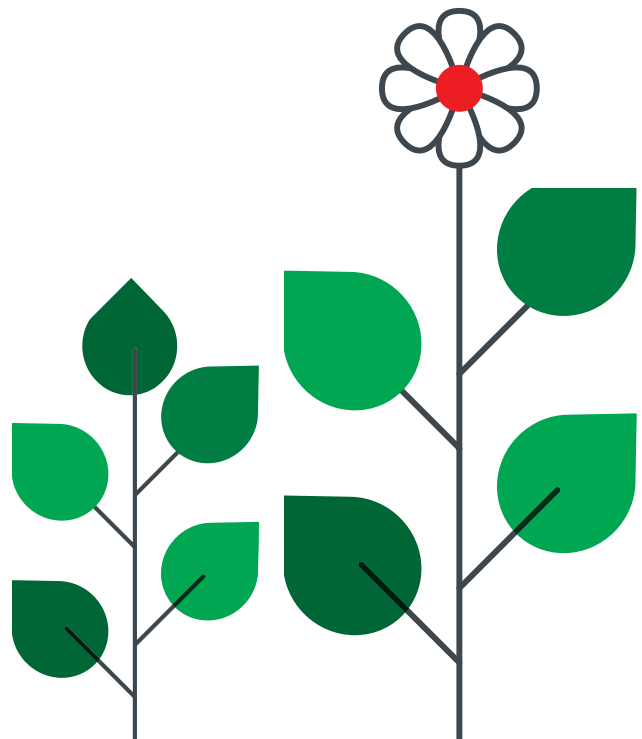
Personal injury is one of the most crowded areas of Australia's legal market, and finding the right lawyer became an extremely difficult task. This made him realise that while there are many excellent lawyers out there, many of them simply weren't communicating their expertise and value in a manner that differentiated them and created confidence that they were the best option.

For law firms looking to stand out, Chait says the first step is to look at your business, and understand who you are and what you provide.

"Look at your company, your customers, your competitors, your collaborators, and the climate/external environment in which you're working," he explains.

"Then you can articulate your business strategy, mission, unique value proposition, your competitive strengths and your brand positioning. These are some of the drivers that will then inform your advertising and promotions strategy and messaging."

It is very important that law firms are crystal clear on exactly what value they deliver to clients. For example, it may be functional value like simply helping with a document, economic value such as lower fees, or it might be life-changing value – something which is particularly relevant for areas like injury compensation or family law.



For law firms looking for marketing guidance, Chait's eBook offered for free by LexisNexis New Zealand is the best place to start.

Once this is done, firms should look at who is offering similar services and do a strengths and weaknesses analysis on each. Creating a competitor comparison table can be a helpful guide, and firms can then start working out how to differentiate themselves.

Maximising opportunity for small firms

While global heavyweights might be able to sponsor the All Blacks or release endless television ads, small law firms usually won't have that luxury.

However, Chait says there is ample opportunity for firms with smaller budgets – they simply need to go about it differently.

"In fact, smaller and more agile firms can often have the advantage with faster decision making, and they might not be as risk-averse," he notes.

"A smaller firm can absolutely be more laser-focused and still enjoy substantial growth."

According to Chait, one of the best ways to market yourself as a smaller firm is to identify a niche. The impact of this was demonstrated brilliantly through his work with Advantage Legal, a personal injury compensation firm in Sydney, Australia, that originally worked across a broad range of practice areas.

Chait proposed a bold new strategy that involved zeroing in on a very particular section of the market, and the firm took a leap of faith.

"What we did was niche down into exclusively personal injury, and then niche down further into cyclists," Chait says. "For them, it was very daunting to go from a big market into something so niche – but they did it."

With this newfound focus in place, Chait approached Bicycle NSW on Advantage Legal's behalf, and offered to become their legal compensation partner to represent members who have had accidents. This was the start of an exceptionally strong relationship, and one of Advantage Legal's Principal Solicitors has since been elected onto the board of Bicycle NSW.

"They're now seen as the go-to firm if you've had a bicycle accident," Chait says. "That's a good case study because it's not about advertising at all, it's all about the strategy."

Marketing methods: the pros and cons

Law firms have a number of options when it comes to their marketing. They can employ external agencies, hire in-house marketing specialists, or lawyers in smaller firms can take a shot at doing it themselves.

Each approach comes with its own advantages and pitfalls. External agencies generally have vast resources at their disposal, as well as a wide range of experts from web developers to copywriters, SEO experts and automation specialists. They can also be more cost effective than having fixed salary costs, and are able to scale up your strategy when required.

"The cons are they might have a lack of in-depth knowledge of your law firm's specific practice area, and they might not have enough time or scope to learn that in a short time," Chait explains.

"Coordination and communication will also be more challenging, and you'll potentially have less control of the day to day execution of strategy. An in-house specialist may have a more in-depth understanding of the business and the practice area, as well as

your culture, values, services and target audience.”

Lawyers also have the option of handling marketing themselves – however, Chait warns that this is no easy task. But if they are determined to do it, there are several things they should focus on getting right.

“The key is to promote yourself as an individual expert in a particular field, and that might mean speaking at conferences, attending media events or building a personal online presence,” Chait says.

“It can also involve networking, encouraging online reviews, presenting educational webinars and joining industry associations.”

For law firms looking for marketing guidance, Chait’s eBook offered for free by LexisNexis New Zealand is the best place to start. It provides practical advice on all aspects of law firm marketing, and includes a helpful infographic that provides a step-by-step guide on each stage of the process.

“It’s a high-level path that firms can follow, and it’s a great place to start,” Chait says.

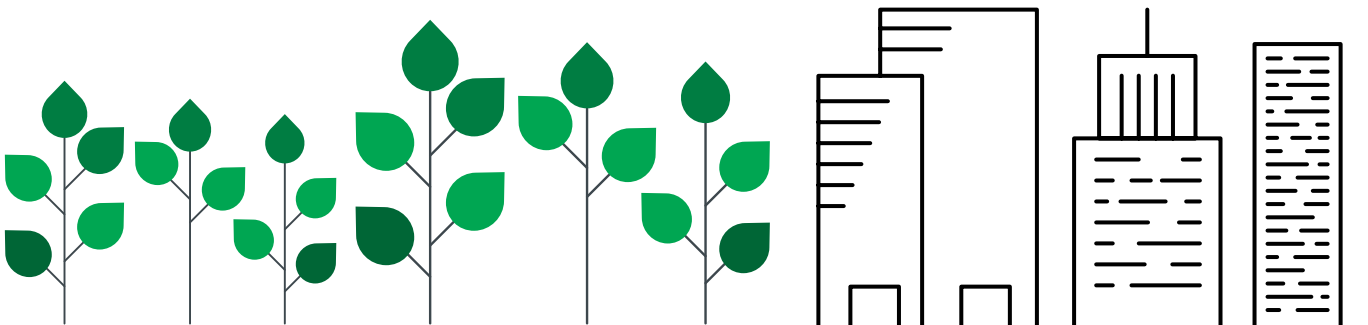
“That information will give you a really solid understanding of the fundamentals, and it’ll give you an idea of how to get started.”

In Summary

This article addressed the marketing challenges faced by lawyers and law firms. It highlighted that while lawyers are experts in their legal fields, many struggle with marketing due to a lack of training and confidence. It also emphasised the importance of effective marketing in a highly competitive and disrupted legal industry. The article drew on insights from Gerald Chait, a senior marketing expert specialising in legal services. It outlined key strategies for law firms to differentiate themselves, including:

- Understanding and articulating their unique value proposition
- Analysing competitors
- Identifying niche markets
- Leveraging partnerships and associations.

The piece also discussed various marketing approaches available to law firms, weighing the pros and cons of external agencies, in-house specialists, and self-managed marketing efforts. It concluded with recommendations for firms looking to improve their marketing strategies.



A portrait of Dr Brenda Midson, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white polka-dot top and a necklace. She is standing in front of a wall with various notices and a sign that says 'NZ LAWYER'.

NZ LAWYER February

**Interview with General Editor
of NZLJ, Dr Brenda Midson**

Centenary of New Zealand Law Journal

General Editor of the leading industry publication shares her thoughts on its 100-year journey

Picture this: the year is 1925, you are a practicing lawyer, and in a moment of spare time you pick up a copy of Butterworths Fortnightly Notes. It contains some brief notes on recent case law, typed on a page of faded brown paper.

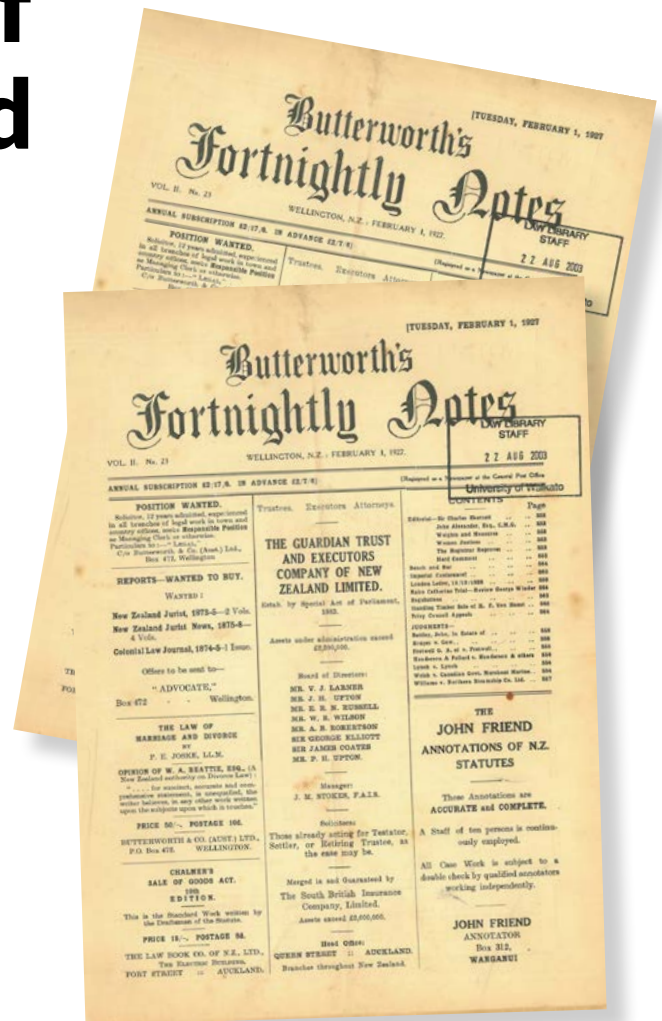
Almost 100 years on, and Butterworths Fortnightly Notes still exists – in fact, it is one of New Zealand's leading legal publications by LexisNexis. However, you might know it as the New Zealand Law Journal (NZLJ).

The NZLJ will be celebrating its 100th anniversary next year, and its general editor Dr Brenda Midson says it has evolved hugely since its humble beginnings. Today, the journal is published eleven times a year with articles up to 5,500 words long, and its contributors include some of the most high-profile and influential names in the industry.

"We publish a very wide range of material, and our authors aren't just limited to legal practitioners," Dr Midson tells NZ Lawyer.

"We've had psychologists and psychiatrists writing on mental health law, and we've had journalists writing about the mosque killings and the subsequent media response. If the content is relevant to New Zealand law, then we're interested!"

Dr Midson is currently in the process of putting together the February edition of the NZLJ, and readers can expect a treasure trove of insights from leading voices. These include Sir Geoffrey Palmer,



who regularly publishes with the NZLJ on a range of issues including last year's election results, democracy, MMP, and the uniqueness of the current coalition.

It will also contain a piece from Sir David Baragwanath, who will talk about essential fresh water and the Treaty – a very relevant topic in light of the government's recent talks around Treaty revision.

Sir Baragwanath is also a regular contributor to the publication on issues of international law and justice and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Other highly distinguished authors include Sir Andrew Tipping, former Justice of the Supreme Court.

“Because we publish every month, we’re very up to date and we’re the only journal that publishes in-depth articles on a quick turnaround time...

For Dr Midson, the NZLJ has been an excellent opportunity to bring together New Zealand’s brightest legal minds, but also to contribute her own writing on subjects that she’s passionate about.

Before becoming editor of the NZLJ in 2014, Dr Midson was an academic for 20 years researching on criminal law and evidence. She writes a monthly editorial on the NZLJ on a broad range of topics, but she particularly enjoys re-visiting her field of study.

“I’ve just written my February editorial on the Australian case of a diabetic man who drove into

a garden bar and caused five fatalities,” Dr Midson comments.

“He’s been charged with culpable driving causing death, and the issue is that he was allegedly ignoring his continuous glucose monitor. We’re asking questions about the nature of liability of people who suffer from conditions like diabetes, and what kind of defence he might have.”

“We’ll also have Professor Warren Brookbanks talking about sentencing for murder when the defendant has a mental impairment which may not meet the insanity definition,” she adds.



When it comes to finding contributors, Dr Midson says there's no shortage of interest – however, the biggest issue for many practitioners is simply finding the time to write.

However, she notes that many people may already have excellent material ready to go, whether it's an article on a blog, or a graduate-written university paper.

"Often people have things sitting around that they've already written, they don't need to start from scratch," she says. "We're also always interested in hearing ideas that people might have for regular contributions."

With its centenary fast approaching, the NZLJ will also have a chance to look back at its archives and explore what was happening in the legal industry in earlier decades. Dr Midson says the Journal still plays a significant role for academics and practitioners, and that 100 years of publishing is a "significant achievement."

"I'm always so pleased to hear people telling me they've read it – and we always know when an edition is late, because we'll have people asking about it!" she says.

"Because we publish every month, we're very up to date and we're the only journal that publishes in-depth articles on a quick turnaround time. If you want to get the most relevant, up to date analysis on the most current social developments – subscribe to the NZLJ!"

In Summary

The New Zealand Law Journal (NZLJ) celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2025, marking a century of significant evolution and influence in New Zealand's legal landscape.

Originally known as Butterworths Fortnightly Notes in 1925, it grew from brief case law notes to a comprehensive monthly publication featuring in-depth articles up to 5,500 words long.

We approached Dr Brenda Midson, the general editor, to share the journal's diverse content and contributors, including legal practitioners, psychologists, psychiatrists, and journalists.

Essentially, the NZLJ published articles from prominent figures such as Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Sir David Baragwanath, and Sir Andrew Tipping, covering a wide range of legal topics. The journal played a crucial role in providing up-to-date analysis of current legal and social developments, with a quick turnaround time for publishing relevant content.

As it approached its centenary, the NZLJ continued to be a valuable resource for academics and practitioners, maintaining its position as a leading legal publication in New Zealand.

NZ|LAWYER

March

**Interview with
Mark Ford,
Founder of
Ford Sumner
Lawyers and
Executive
Director of
Law Plus**



Empowering small firms with big ideas

Highlighting the importance of knowledge sharing, collegiality and access to resources for small firms

In New Zealand's ever-evolving legal landscape, it can be easy for many law firms to feel isolated in their challenges. Whether it's accessing the right suppliers, workshops and resources or simply networking with fellow professionals, smaller firms often have a much tougher time than their larger counterparts.

To navigate these challenges, some firms will choose to join consortiums – but others prefer to operate completely autonomously. Mark Ford, counsel at Ford Sumner and chairman of Law Plus – a nationwide network of 25 law firms – says there are pros and cons to each strategy, and finding the right network for your business is key.

The power of networking

For all firms, and particularly regional ones, the opportunity to exchange ideas and strategies can be limited. However, Ford notes that having access to other lawyers with a range of knowledge and solutions is invaluable in today's environment.

He highlights that knowledge-sharing is particularly important for junior lawyers and practice managers, who are often dealing with their unique challenges single-handedly.

"One of our Law Plus workshops is specifically directed at practice managers, which we've often regarded as the loneliest job in the profession!" Ford tells NZ Lawyer.

"Our practice managers can meet face to face once a year, but they also have monthly Teams catchups where they discuss 'live' issues. It's very highly regarded by those participants for the knowledge and benefits that they get."

Ford notes that smaller firms also tend to rely on publicly available workshops and resources, and lack access to 'big firm' knowledge. Law Plus's annual conference and yearly schedule of workshops aims to provide this knowledge, and to tailor resources to what lawyers actually need.





“I’ve always had the view that even if you’re a small business, you should still be able to run with the big dogs,” he explains.

“Clients don’t say ‘I’m going to a small firm, so I’m happy to get a lesser service.’ As lawyers, we owe it to our clients to provide the best service we can – and to do that, you need access to a wide knowledge base.”

Navigating supplier relationships

Another major hurdle for smaller firms is getting through to the right people with suppliers, from banks and insurers to tech platforms and information providers. Ford emphasises the strength of collective bargaining in this scenario. With 25 firms in its ranks, Law Plus members represent a larger group of legal professionals than any single law firm in New Zealand.

When it comes to establishing connections and getting direct access, this collective buying power becomes incredibly powerful.

“A firm will generally deal with a broker for its PI insurance, but with Law Plus the members actually get to meet the underwriters at the conference,” Ford says. “That’s a small example of the level of connectivity that we can drive.”

Ford adds that a common mistake smaller firms will make is relying on historical relationships with suppliers. A firm that’s been dealing with the same supplier for many years can be reluctant to evaluate that relationship objectively – but as a result, it can leave a lot of potential benefits on the table.

“It’s not just about price,” Ford says. “Has the supplier moved with the market, or has the market overtaken the supplier? We look at our suppliers objectively, and we have regular reviews of what our suppliers are offering.”

Resources, education and empowerment

LexisNexis, Australasian Law Practice Management Association (ALPMA), Diversity Works – these are just some of the organisations that Law Plus works with to provide access for all its firms.

Ford points out that the cost of subscriptions like these quickly mounts up for smaller firms, and so having this offering is a vital part of its value proposition. He says its collaboration with LexisNexis has been particularly impactful for Law Plus members, as it’s important for every business to access the best legal content and tools available in the market. Under its consortia umbrella, Law Plus’ members enjoy access to a heavily discounted comprehensive library collection by LexisNexis, and

He says its collaboration with LexisNexis has been particularly impactful for Law Plus members, as it's important for every business to access the best legal content and tools available in the market.

that includes a suite of key local and international titles and renowned online practitioner text books.

Similarly, Law Plus' partnership with Diversity Works provides members with access to the full suite of its workshops and published materials at no cost. Ford says that by raising awareness and having these resources readily available, it makes it much easier for firms to enact meaningful change. "If you want to do business with people, you need to understand where they come from, what they're about and what they need," Ford says. "If you're not able to accommodate that, you're operating under a handicap."

Law Plus is always open to new members, and Ford highlights the supportive, collegial environment that they can expect to be part of.

"You'll have a great support network around you, a safe place for conversations, and a level of collegiality that you won't be able to experience anywhere else," he says. "You'll also have reliable, connectible and contactable suppliers for the services and goods that your firm needs."

To find out more about Law Plus and how it can benefit your firm, [click here](#).

In Summary

This collaboration allowed us to support Law Plus in its membership recruitment drive as well as showcase our commitment to supporting the entire legal ecosystem, including boutique and smaller law firms; which aligns with our sponsorship of the Boutique Law Firm of the Year award at the NZ Law Awards as well as our ethos to advance the rule of law, ensuring that legal information is transparent and accessible to all, including legislators or legal practitioners in all segments, big or small.

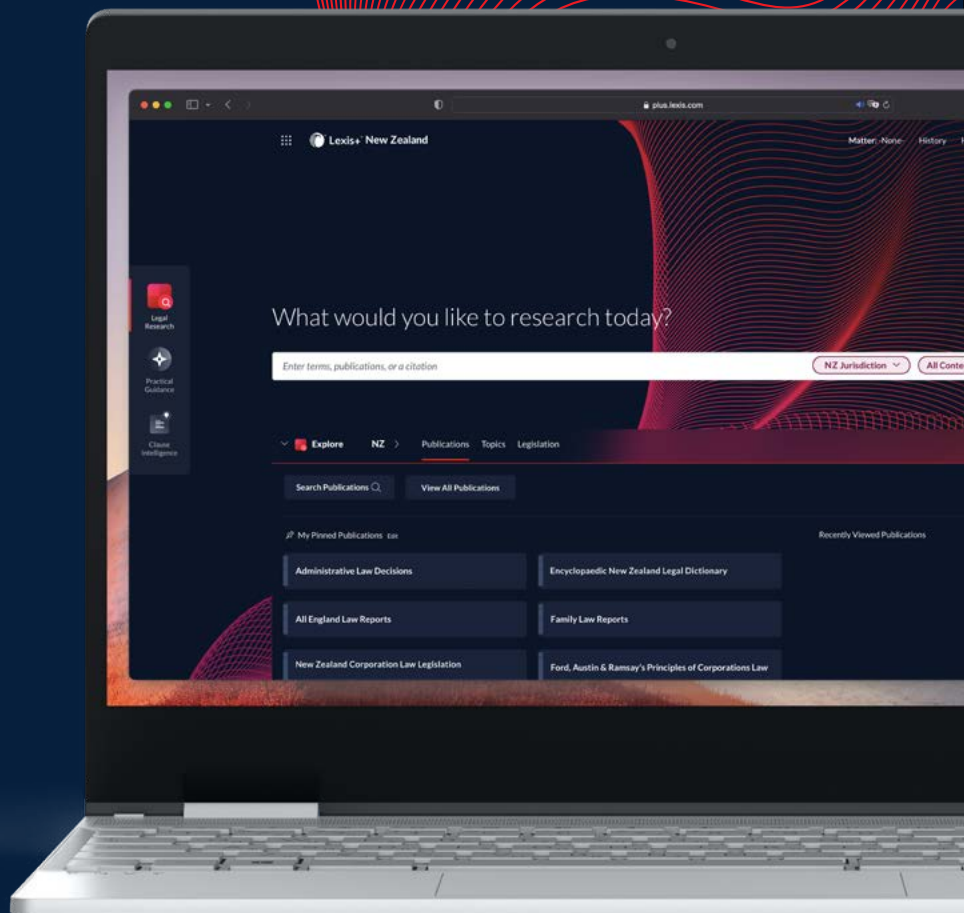
Our collaboration with Mark on this front was evident in several key aspects of the article:

- **Resource provision:** We were mentioned as one of the organisations that Law Plus partners with to provide access to valuable resources for its member firms. This collaboration allowed smaller firms to access LexisNexis's products and comprehensive library collection at discounted rates.
- **Supporting knowledge sharing:** By providing our content and tools to Law Plus members, we contributed to the importance of knowledge sharing and access to resources for smaller firms.
- **Technology and innovation:** As a legal technology solutions provider, our collaboration with LawPlus supported Mark's emphasis on the need for firms to stay current with market developments and technology.
- **Promoting legal industry development:** By supporting networks like Law Plus, we have positioned the business as a key player in the development and support of the legal industry in New Zealand.

NZ|LAWYER

April

**Interview in
promotion of
Lexis+**



Introducing a new era of Legal Research

Implementing Extractive AI to help lawyers strategise more wins and deliver better client outcomes

The boundaries of technology are advancing at an unprecedented rate, particularly in the realm of AI. The legal industry is on the cusp of a new, transformative era – and LexisNexis New Zealand will soon be launching the next evolution in legal research.

Gone are the days where lawyers have to spend hours researching relevant cases, comparing legislation and trawling through documents to find the most relevant precedents. With the launch of Lexis+, lawyers will be able to save hours (or even days) of their time, freeing them up to focus on anything from billable hours, networking or simply maintaining work-life balance.

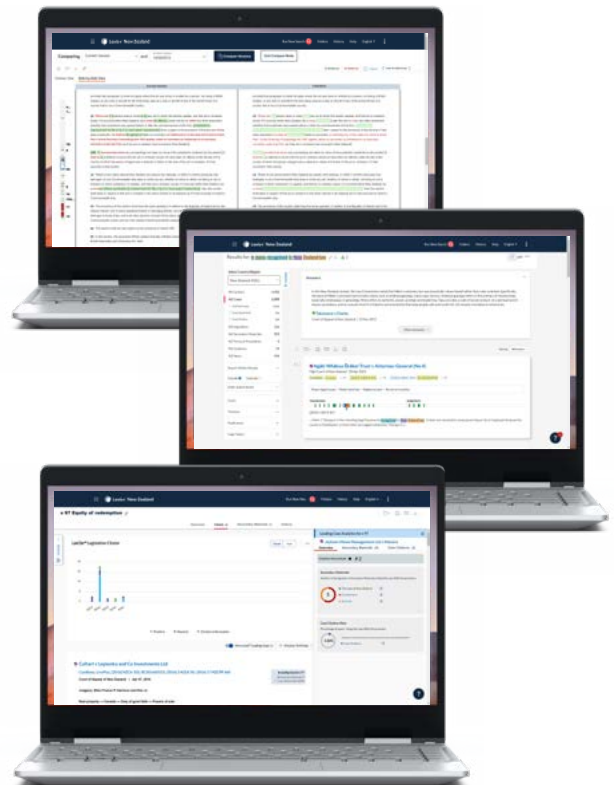
According to the marketing team at LexisNexis NZ, the key aim of Lexis+ is to build upon the wealth of legal tech and information that LexisNexis already offers and ultimately to provide legal professionals with more time to do what matters most to them.

"We launched Lexis Advance in 2015, and it was the next evolution in research technology at the time," LexisNexis tells NZ Lawyer.

"Technology has grown exponentially in the last decade, and the advent of AI, extractive AI and generative AI, Lexis+ is the natural evolution of the next generation of legal research tools."

Lexis+ and all the other advanced legal tech AI offerings you see from global LexisNexis businesses has been developed by our in-house global technology team for several years.

The new interface will hinge on the wealth of research content already available in Lexis Advance, but with new extractive AI technology overlaid on top of the content set. Using this technology,



Lexis+ is able to surface highly relevant results in a much faster timeframe than ever before. Lexis Advance will continue to be available but with Lexis+, users will now have a choice to select which legal research platform is the right choice for their firm.

Lexis+ will offer three key features: Lexis Answers, Legislation Compare and Leading Cases. Lexis Answers is a natural language technology that provides users with a succinct response to legal questions. Using powerful machine learning and advanced language processing technologies, Lexis Answers transforms legal research by analysing your query and delivering clear, concise and informative answers.

LexisNexis highlights that this is a significant technological improvement where you no longer need to manually filter out what is relevant, which cases are leading and which aren't. Lexis+ eliminates this, and the Leading Cases capability will enhance this even further.

"From the feedback we've had, it may take a legal researcher up to two hours to find a leading case. With Lexis+, they've managed to complete the search in under two minutes. We know that this is saving legal professionals hours of time."

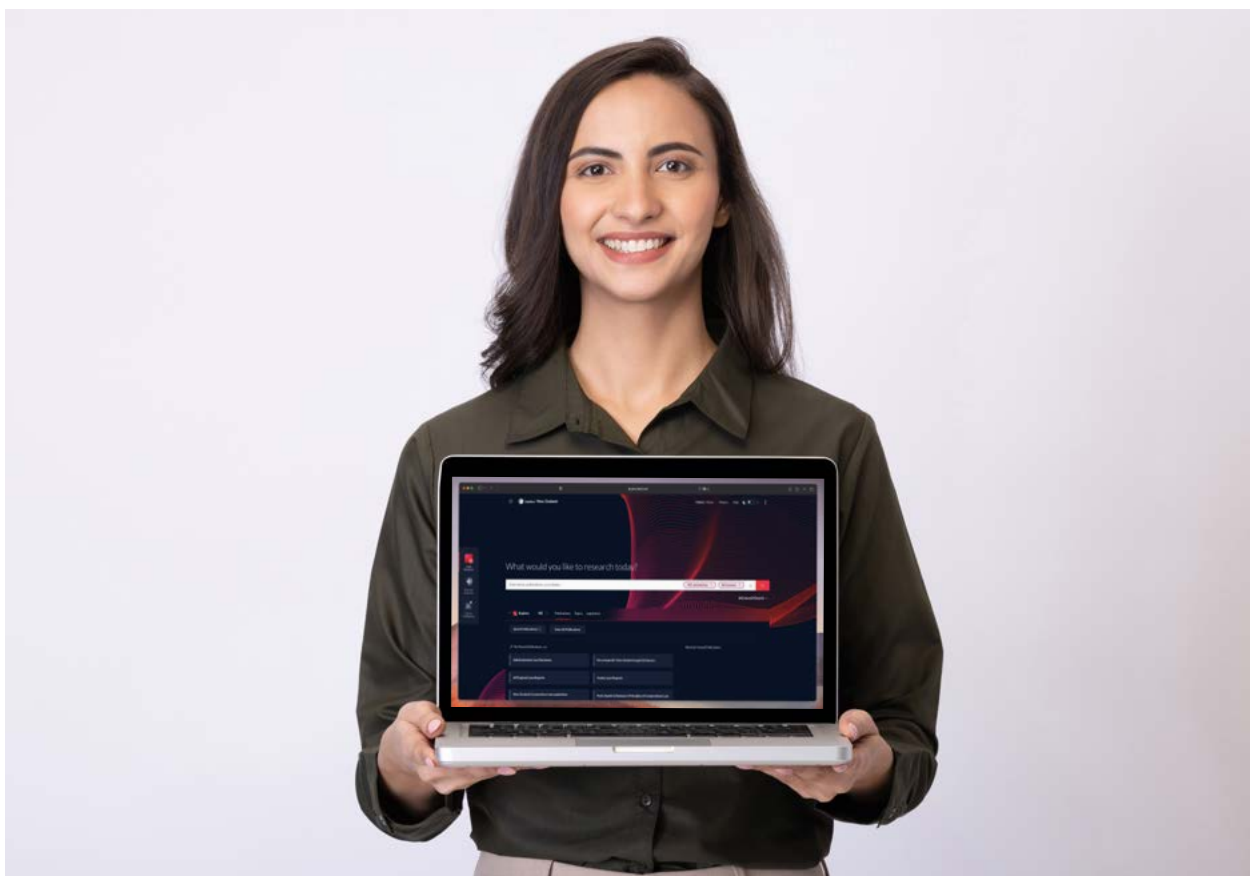
Leading Cases provides contextual and objective citation analytics to help support the user's strategic decision-making to give them more

control and increase their confidence in the research. When it comes to accuracy, LexisNexis notes that every answer provided by Lexis+ is reliable and accurate as it's drawing from the vast amount of data and the millions of documents within the exclusive LexisNexis environment.

Last but not least, the Legislation Compare function will allow lawyers to quickly find key updates in new and amended legislation.

Legislation Compare provides an easy way to compare two versions of the same legislation to see what changes have been made and how the law has evolved over time. Legislation Compare speeds up your research and provides clear visibility

"From the feedback we've had, it may take a legal researcher up to two hours to find a leading case. With Lexis+, they've managed to complete the search in under two minutes. We know that this is saving legal professionals hours of time."



of exactly what additions and deletions have been made. According to user feedback, it has reduced a task that would normally take between hours and days to just 2 minutes.

Ultimately, the team at LexisNexis notes that Lexis+'s biggest goal is to save lawyers valuable time and resources. A recent study conducted in the UK among Lexis+ users revealed significant time savings for legal professionals. Over a week, with an average workday of 10 hours, users saved a total of 8 hours and 28 minutes. That's over an hour a day in time gained back.

"Imagine what lawyers could do with an additional hour a day," LexisNexis concludes.

According to Phil Goodacre, Head of Commercial Sales NZ "The legal industry is under pressure, clients want more value and reduced costs while the complexities of matters keep increasing. Technology is a process enabler and Lexis+ is an essential investment to help create advantages in this increasingly competitive industry".

"That could translate into being able to spend more time on billable hours, maximising fixed-price matters, networking with colleagues or focusing on work-life harmony. We're very excited to be launching this next generation of technology into New Zealand's legal market."

Lexis+ launched in New Zealand in 2024. Learn more and contact our team to be among the first to experience the power of Lexis+ by clicking [HERE](#).

In Summary

We announced Lexis+ in NZ Lawyer to tease and introduce a next-generation legal research platform that addresses evolving technological needs in the legal industry.

The key features in this announcement included:

- Lexis Answers: Natural language processing to provide concise responses to legal questions.
- Legislation Compare: Quick comparison of different versions of legislation..
- Leading Cases: Contextual citation analytics to support strategic decision-making.

In this article, we reiterated that Lexis+ aimed to significantly reduce research time, with user feedback indicating tasks that previously took hours could be completed in minutes. A UK study showed Lexis+ users saved an average of 8 hours and 28 minutes per week.

We further emphasised that Lexis+ would allow legal professionals to focus more on billable hours, networking, or work-life balance. We positioned Lexis+ as an essential investment for law firms seeking a competitive advantage in an increasingly complex and cost-conscious legal market.

NZ|LAWYER

May¹

**Interview with
Michael Weatherall
Partner at Simpson
Grierson**



Weatherall on Construction Law

Simpson Grierson partner Michael Weatherall is one of New Zealand's pre-eminent figures in construction law, and he's made it his mission to help clients simplify what is often an overly complex area of law.

Weatherall also co-authors New Zealand's definitive online publication in this space – Kennedy-Grant and Weatherall on Construction Law in New Zealand, published by LexisNexis New Zealand – and his expertise is frequently sought to navigate the nation's constantly evolving legal standards in construction law. In one of the most significant updates to date, 2023 saw the release of the updated NZS 3910:2023 standard form construction contract. For those navigating this change, Weatherall has released his latest updates and practical commentary in the online publication, which is available by subscription to all construction law practitioners.

Weatherall became a co-author of the publication in 2015, and he says it's a "privilege" to be involved alongside Tomás Kennedy-Grant KC. The online commentary is regularly updated as the law around construction evolves, and Weatherall notes that the pace of change can be very fast.

"From a legal perspective, all aspects of construction law are changing month to month, let alone year to year," Weatherall tells NZ Lawyer. "Standard form contracts are continuously being updated, and there's constant legislative change – and of course, the underlying law that feeds into construction law develops too.

"I don't think the online publication can be up to date for more than a few months after release, and we always endeavour to update it as frequently as we can to keep up with the key changes."

Developing NZS 3910:2023

Weatherall has been on the drafting committee for Standards New Zealand since 2003, and has seen the main standard form of contract undergo a

number of revisions. However, he notes that 2023 saw NZS 3910 – conditions of contract for building and civil engineering construction – undergo its most substantial revision yet.

"There were some really fundamental changes this time around," Weatherall notes.

"Since time immemorial there's always been an engineer to the contract, and that person has always had a slightly ambiguous dual role, partly acting as a fair and impartial decision maker and partly acting as the expert adviser to and representative of the principal.

"The industry had become concerned that the distinction between these two roles was not being effectively carried out."

One of the key decisions made by the committee was to divide all the functions of the engineer to the contract into expressly distinguished functions. In order to reinforce this distinction they elected to change the nomenclature from 'engineer' to two distinct roles – 'contract administrator' when you're acting as the representative of the principal, and 'independent certifier' when you're performing fairly and impartially.

"I think it's something that'll hopefully have a positive effect on the industry," Weatherall says.

Other changes to NZS 3910 included updates to the nature of pricing, the nature of obligations between the contractor and the principal, and updates to dispute and review processes. Weatherall says that overall, the industry is well prepared – particularly as most of the changes came out of consultation as being required by the industry.



When it comes to his role as a co-author, he says contributing to Kennedy-Grant and Weatherall on Construction Law in New Zealand has given him a great vantage point as a practitioner in construction.

“Although it’s a lot of work to keep the publication and commentary up to date with industry developments, it’s a really great position to be in,” he explains.

“Because I was fortunate to be on the Standards New Zealand drafting committee for that standard, that enabled me to get some advance warning as to what was changing so I could update the online publication as quickly as possible.”

“The construction team here at Simpson Grierson is also reading and absorbing information on changes to the industry on a daily basis, and it’s really great to be able to pinpoint what’s significant. It’s a real highlight to be able to translate something that you’re doing in professional practice into something that has a broader benefit.”

Bringing construction law into the modern age

While the revisions to NZS 3910 mark a significant step forward, they also highlight a broader challenge for the construction law sector – the urgent need to modernise outdated legal frameworks, and embrace technological advancements.

Weatherall notes that construction contracts are currently “stuck in the old ages,” relying mostly on Word documents or pdfs, and sometimes even hand-annotated photocopies. With rapid digitisation happening across all industries and areas of law, he says construction law needs to keep up – particularly as we see an increase of tools tailored specifically to the legal sector.

“What’s happening now is the digitisation and automation of construction procurement processes, requests for proposals, requests for tender and all construction contracts,” Weatherall explains.

“The way we use Word documents is one of the worst things in construction contract preparation. Someone will just cut and paste

from a previous project, and that contract will have lots of irrelevant conditions. It could be 50 pages of special conditions, less than half of which you actually need.”

Weatherall says that contract automation in the construction sector is going to have a “huge impact,” and will allow contract and procurement documents to be prepared quickly and accurately. Lawyers will also be able to easily select the special conditions which are relevant to the project at hand, eliminating chunks of unnecessary and irrelevant text.

He notes that the flow-through of documents to other parties in a project will also be impacted. If you have 100 subcontractors on a project, you’ll be able to have a contract that’s automatically populated with all the relevant information and easily tailored to each individual.

“It’s going to revolutionise the process for everyone, whether you’re a principal, contractor, subcontractor or consultant” Weatherall says.

Ultimately, Weatherall highlights that simplicity is key for all construction lawyers – old and new. He notes that clients are looking for solutions, not overly dense contracts with irrelevant conditions, and lawyers need to be prepared to give the industry what it wants and needs.

“Construction is a great industry to be involved in, it’s a fascinating and multi-layered industry,” Weatherall says.

“You’re getting involved in an industry that’s worth hundreds of billions of dollars in New Zealand alone. My advice would be to remember that you’re part of a solution focussed construction sector that’s looking for lawyers to deliver solutions as well. Make yourself a specialist in doing that, rather than delivering long-winded legal advice or bloated contracts. Embrace it, but also embrace what the industry wants.”

Customers subscribed to “Kennedy-Grant and Weatherall on Construction Law” can gain access to practical commentary on the new NZS 3910:2023 contract standard, as well as the latest legislative and case law developments, written by two of New

Zealand’s pre-eminent construction lawyers Tomás Kennedy-Grant KC and Michael Weatherall.

Download the Free Checklist to verify you’re up-to-date with the new edition of New Zealand’s most used standard form construction contract: NZS 3910:2023 Conditions of contract for building and civil engineering construction.

If you’re a lawyer specialising in construction law, this checklist will help you verify that you’re fully informed about the changes in the new contract standard, enabling you to provide your clients with the most current advice.

For construction industry professionals, the checklist outlines the most significant changes from the previous version, assisting you in staying current with industry requirements and maintaining excellence in your profession.

Download the NZS 3910:2023 FREE Checklist by clicking [HERE](#) and submitting the form.



In Summary

The interview with Michael Weatherall, Partner at Simpson Grierson, dived into the latest updates to the NZS 3910:2023 contract standard to showcase Michael’s expertise; and interest readers to purchase the latest copy of the Kennedy-Grant and Weatherall on Construction Law publication.

The article highlighted the regular updates to the online commentary, aligning with the rapidly changing nature of construction law, and access to practical commentary on the new NZS3910:2023 contract standard and other recent developments.

NZ|LAWYER

May²

**Interview with
Dushan Delic**



Transitioning from partner to barrister and embracing AI in law

Dushan Delic reveals his journey from solicitor to barrister and his adoption of AI in law

After fifteen years as a litigator and over a decade as a director and partner at boutique law firm SD Legal, Dushan Delic has bid farewell to his role as a solicitor. Driven by a desire for independence, autonomy, and a deeper focus on his areas of expertise, Delic has struck out on his own to become a barrister—a move he describes as providing a “unique sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.”

However, a solo journey is not always an easy one, and Delic says there have already been plenty of challenges to navigate.

“At the start, the biggest challenge was being mindful of the new intervention rule for barristers around taking direct instructions versus taking instructions from a solicitor,” Delic tells NZ Lawyer. “But also, being independent means exactly that – you’re on your own, and you need to be completely on top of things.”

As a solicitor used to working as part of a larger team, Delic was used to an all hands on deck approach – something most barristers don’t have the luxury of. However, the work satisfaction is second to none, and Delic notes that a recent Court of Appeal case has highlighted exactly what attracted him to being a barrister in the first place.

“It’s a perfect blend of performance and intellectual challenge, which I find very fulfilling,” he explains. “You get involved in a broad spectrum of cases as a barrister, and each one is unique and challenging in its own way.”

Innovation in law: the role of AI

With his transition to becoming a barrister, Delic also recognises the potential for artificial intelligence to provide a supporting role in the legal sector, and describes AI as the ‘ultimate next step.’

He notes that there is still some hesitancy when it comes to adoption, and many legal professionals have valid concerns – ‘hallucinated cases,’ for example, as well as copyright and confidentiality issues. But on the flip side, the wealth of opportunity offered by these tools can be unparalleled, and the key to using them successfully is to ensure you have the most tailored and specialised tools available.

He says the role of extractive AI in legal research is particularly exciting, as it has the potential to cut down on hours of intensive labour. This includes tools like the upcoming Lexis+, which promises to make legal research more intuitive and efficient – particularly for complex queries.

“I do a lot of research, and an area that litigators aren’t very fond of are the protocols, discovery, indexing, etc. It’s very time consuming but not very intellectually challenging,” Delic says.

He says the role of extractive AI in legal research is particularly exciting, as it has the potential to cut down on hours of intensive labour.



“We need to ensure that what we’re sending to clients is accurate and fit for purpose. Lexis+ as a tool would be far superior to anything else available, because the content would be so targeted and accurate. I’ll absolutely jump on board whenever it is available.”

“Specially-trained AI could speed up those tedious tasks, so that’s an area where I’d definitely want to use these tools.”

Lexis+ promises to be a cutting-edge tool tailored for the legal industry in New Zealand, and uses powerful extractive AI to search within its vast existing library of resources. The content is entirely ringfenced, guaranteeing complete confidentiality and no hallucinated cases.

“At the end of the day as litigators, the buck stops with us,” Delic says.

“We need to ensure that what we’re sending to clients is accurate and fit for purpose. Lexis+ as a tool would be far superior to anything else available, because the content would be so targeted and accurate. I’d absolutely jump on board whenever it is available.”

Looking to the future

Despite AI’s various ‘teething issues’ in the legal industry, Delic says he’s very optimistic about the integration of AI into legal practice. While many of the existing tools aren’t yet perfect, Delic plans to stay at the forefront of these advancements and embrace the opportunities they offer – all while keeping a close eye on the frontrunners in this space.

To other lawyers thinking of making a major change, whether it’s adopting new technology or making a major career move, Delic’s message is simple – if you feel prepared, take the leap.

“Being a barrister has allowed me to focus on a broader spectrum of cases, it offers significant benefits for work-life balance, and you’ll have the opportunity to build a personal brand in the legal market,” Delic says.

"You also have the unique opportunity to work on cases that shape the jurisprudence of New Zealand, so there's a sense of contributing to something bigger than yourself.

"My advice is if you're prepared to step into a world where no two cases are the same, where your efforts are directly linked to your accomplishments and where your ability to make a difference is unparalleled, then I'd say take the leap and embrace the challenge."

Dushan Delic specialises in civil and commercial litigation, relationship property and employment law, having a very successful track record. To contact Dushan for more information about his legal services, kindly email at dushan@delic.nz or call 021 840 840.



In Summary

The interview featured Dushan Delic, a former solicitor with 15 years of experience, and his transition to barrister after leaving his role as director and partner at SD Legal.

Delic's journey offered valuable perspectives as it reflected a broader trend in the legal industry where professionals sought greater independence and autonomy while adapting to technological advancements.

The article shared Dushan's journey, challenges and rewards of being a barrister, his views on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the legal sector and discussed the potential of AI tools like eLexis+ in enhancing legal research efficiency.

NZ|LAWYER

June

**Promoting the Future
of Legal Research in
New Zealand - Lexis+**



Lawyers Applaud AI Tool for Enhanced Research Capabilities

Lawyers worldwide have had the chance to trial the next generation of AI research tools

Lawyers across New Zealand, Australia and Singapore have been given an exclusive look at the next generation of legal AI tools, powered by LexisNexis - and the results are already game-changing.

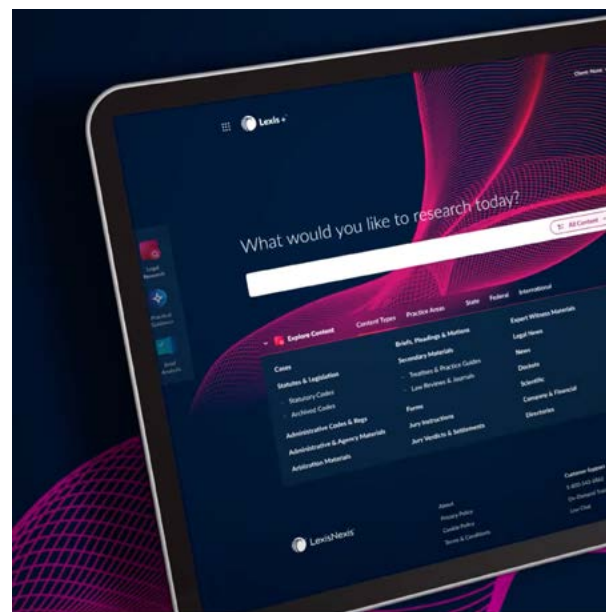
Lexis+ is quickly making its mark as the definitive research tool for the legal industry, with lawyers stating that it has already saved them hours in research time per day*. With its simple interface and powerful search capabilities, Lexis+ is able to find those gems of information among tens of thousands of pages, and it does so quickly and accurately. Its ultimate goal is simple - to allow lawyers to spend less time researching, and more time focusing on their client's strategy.

One of Lexis+'s early users is Alex Collie, senior associate at Carroll & O'Dea. He says that while the platform no doubt improves efficiency, it's about much more than just the hours saved.

"The mark of a good product is not necessarily that it saves time, but rather that it improves results," Collie says.

"The focus and clarity that Lexis+ provides allows me the space to look at things differently and go a bit deeper. With Lexis+, I uncover things that I might otherwise have missed."

Lane Neave Lawyers law clerk George Brougham is already familiar with the LexisNexis suite of products, having used Lexis Advance frequently throughout his law studies. He notes that Lexis+'s Leading Cases feature has been particularly useful in his research, and has



allowed the process to be a lot quicker and more focused.

"It's really helped me when I'm not looking for specific cases per se, but just for any relevant material or judicial comment on a particular area of law," Brougham explains.

"I'd previously run searches for specific key words and see if anything came up, but the 'leading cases' function gives much more relevant results."

The praise for Leading Cases is echoed by another fellow lawyer and beta-tester in a large national firm, who notes that traditionally, finding relevant cases could take an extensive amount of time. Now, tasks that typically took several hours can be completed in under an hour.

Experience Lexis+

A new era of Legal Research

“The comprehensive nature of Lexis+ ensures that when I conduct these searches, I cover all necessary bases, thus reducing the need for multiple searches and cross-referencing across different platforms,” the beta-user says.

“This consolidation of resources has saved me between one to two hours daily, which translates to an extra day’s worth of productivity over a week.”

The user adds: “These time savings not only boost my productivity but also allow me to delve deeper into each case or legal issue, enhancing the quality of research and advice I provide. Lexis+ has proven to be an invaluable tool in achieving a more efficient workflow in legal research.”

Natale Ricciardi, practice director at Frichot Lawyers has been a firsthand witness to the evolution of LexisNexis products over the last five years. Ricciardi made an early decision to invest in LexisNexis, and says that this investment has more than paid off.

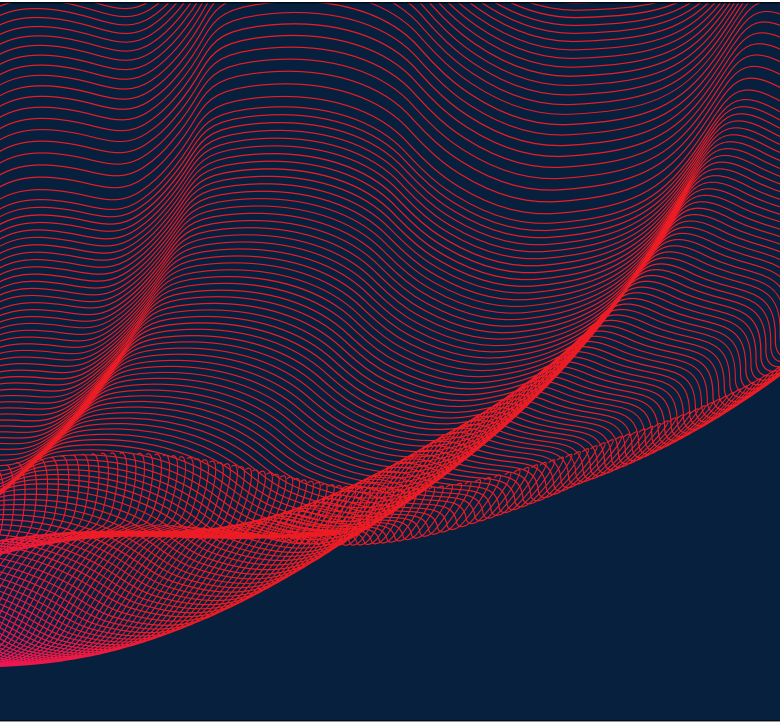
“LexisNexis obviously listens to customer feedback, and have made their tools far more intuitive and accessible,” Ricciardi says. “I feel our investment has leveled us up against much larger law firms.”

“It’s going to be important to work with AI rather than against it, and I think it’s going to be a very effective tool to make jobs more efficient,” Brougham concludes.

With AI quickly making its way into the toolkit of lawyers worldwide, Lane Neave Lawyers law clerk George Brougham says it’s vital not to be left behind. However, he highlights that the relationship-focused nature of lawyering isn’t going anywhere - in fact, it’s only going to become more important.

“At the end of the day, the legal profession is a very personable one,” Brougham says.

“People like to talk face-to-face if they have concerns or questions, they want to have someone there to reassure them. I think lawyers advising clients will always be a service that’s in demand, and the key difference will be how we gather the information we need.”



"It's going to be important to work with AI rather than against it, and I think it's going to be a very effective tool to make jobs more efficient," Brougham concludes.

Lexis+ is now available in New Zealand! Experience a new era of legal research powered by our revolutionary, advanced Extractive AI. Transform how you manage your time and resources with this innovative platform.

Book your Free Demo of our most advanced legal research tool in a decade [HERE](#).

In Summary

This article further highlighted Lexis+, which had garnered positive feedback from early users in New Zealand, Australia, and Singapore.

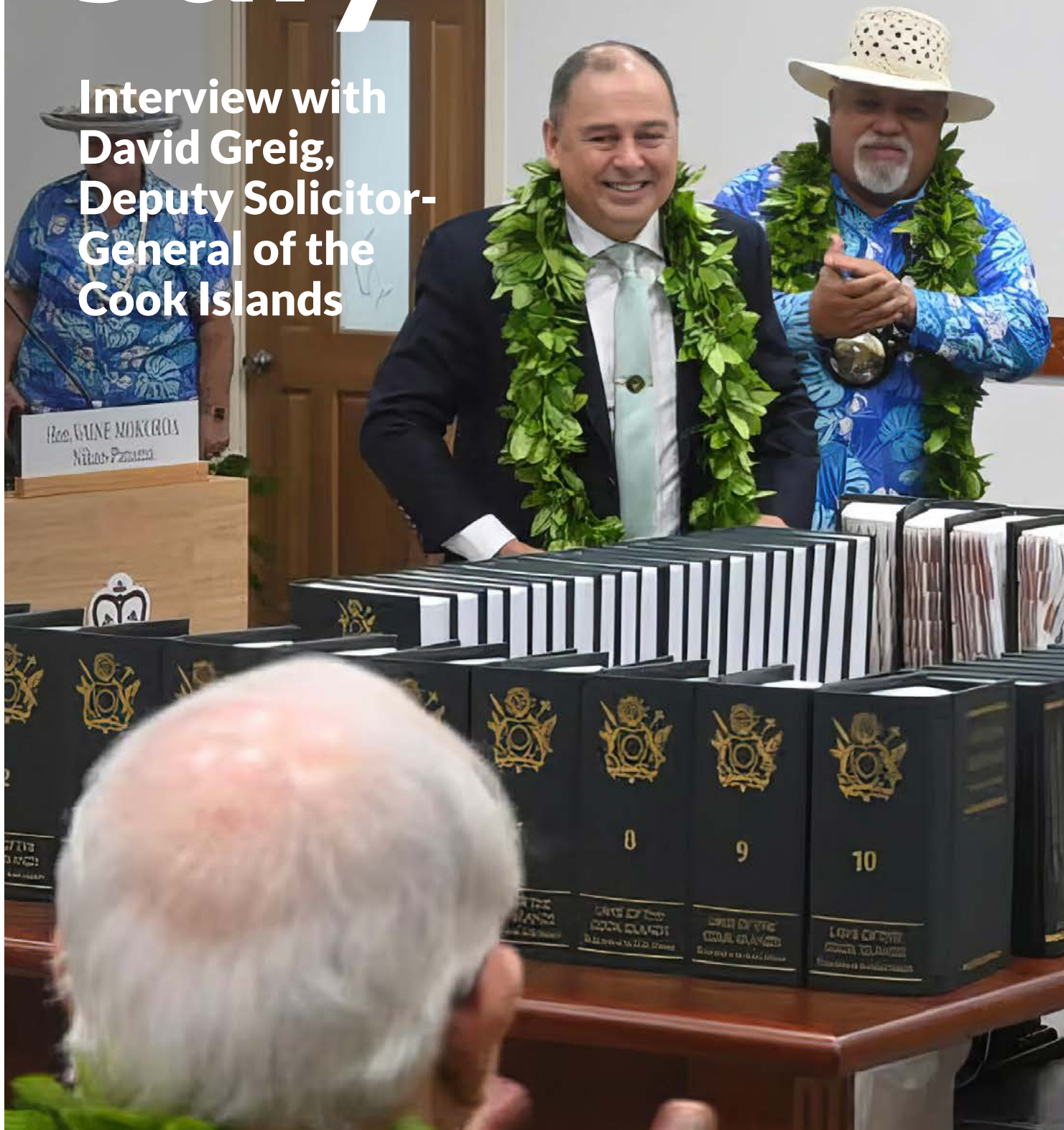
In this read, lawyers reported significant time savings in research, with features like the Leading Cases function enhancing the relevance and quality of results. Users appreciated Lexis+'s intuitive interface and comprehensive search capabilities, which boosted productivity and allowed for deeper analysis of legal issues.

While the tool was reviewed as a game-changer for efficiency, users emphasised the enduring importance of personal interaction in legal practice and highlighted the need to embrace AI while maintaining client relationships.

NZ|LAWYER

July

Interview with
David Greig,
Deputy Solicitor-
General of the
Cook Islands



Cook Islands enters a new era of legal transparency

In a landmark law project, Cook Islands laws have been consolidated and made freely available online. Deputy Solicitor-General David Greig discusses the groundbreaking project and its impact on the rule of law.

The project is a huge step towards making the legal system transparent and accessible to everyone, from citizens and local lawyers to the wider global community, and was made possible with generous funding from the High Commission of Aotearoa New Zealand. It has been conducted in collaboration with global publisher LexisNexis, which contributed its technological and editorial expertise throughout the project.

As a result, the Laws of the Cook Islands website was launched on 24 June 2024 as a free, globally accessible resource providing access to Cook Islands legislation. David Greig, Deputy Solicitor-General of the Cook Islands says the resource will be a “game changer” for practitioners in the country, and will go a long way to demystifying the legal system for its citizens.

Consolidating 30 years of legislation

The last consolidation of Cook Islands laws was done in 1994, and published in hard copy. Since then it has remained largely untouched, and the possibility of doing another consolidation was not considered until 2018.

Deputy Solicitor-General David Greig says the project was ‘a new experience’ for the Cook Islands and Crown Law Office, and what started as a relatively small project quickly grew into a substantial undertaking.

“Once we blew the cobwebs off, we found that we had a hard copy that wasn’t fantastically well organised,” Greig tells NZ Lawyer.

“It was also expected to be in hard copy by default, but given what’s happened over the last few years, everyone has gotten online and started working remotely. Now, the emphasis is that this will be an online global resource, and we’re very excited for it to go live.”

One of the key aims of the project was to enhance the transparency of the legal system by providing easy access to Cook Islands laws. When it comes to access to information, Greig notes that the Cook Islands has experienced some unique challenges.

“There’s been an expectation that lawyers are the ones who deal with the law, and it’s a mystery for everybody else,” he explains. “When it comes to basic legislation, there’s never been an ability for anybody to go to a library and use common sense to find what they’re looking for.”

He notes that part of the reason for this was simply a lack of resources. The legislation would sit in a room, and if a lawyer needed it, they’d go and pay \$2 to get a small hard copy. Then in 1992, the main courthouse and government buildings suffered a devastating fire where many of the country’s legal resources were lost and never properly recovered.

Greig notes that as a result, many practitioners simply do their work based on their own experience, and the experience of their peers – a practice which has made the legal system very opaque. As the 1994 consolidation got further and further away, it became very apparent that the Cook Islands needed to have proper, up to date legislation.



When LexisNexis entered the picture to begin supporting the project, its mission was clear – uphold and promote the rule of law.

“For LexisNexis, advancing the rule of law is our mission – and one of the components of that is very much the transparency of law,” says Hannah Lim, Strategic Partnerships Lead at LexisNexis.

“Laws have to be transparent for people to understand their rights and obligations, and to be able to participate in the governance of their communities.”

Hannah notes that these types of projects leverage on LexisNexis’ unique capabilities, and the goal is to support partners and governments in fulfilling their obligations to their citizens. When governments are willing to collaborate, LexisNexis comes in to lend its technical expertise to make these projects come to life – and the Cook Islands has been a hugely successful example of this.

“Transparency of law is something we see as a key foundation for a functioning and healthy democratic society, and we’re very pleased to have the capabilities to be able to directly support this mission,” Hannah says.

Cook Islands takes its place on the world stage

The Cook Islands is becoming an increasingly active player on the world stage. Prime Minister Mark Brown is currently the chairman of the Pacific Island Forum, and Greig notes that having open information available globally will send a clear signal to the rest of the world – the Cook Islands is outward-looking and open to engagement.

However, Greig highlights that maintaining these standards doesn’t end with one project.

“We’re conscious that we have to work every day to keep ourselves as strong as possible to exercise equity and fairness,” Greig explains.

“Keeping things lawful and ethical doesn’t happen by accident, and one of the components is having a clear and transparent set of laws. But it’s an enormous leg-up to have clear and current information that you can rely on as a starting point.”

The need for a culture of transparency, integrity and accountability was highlighted by former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who recently made a visit to the Cook Islands. “Helen Clark said that a strong reputation is an intangible asset, and that’s so true,” Greig says.

“This is a window to the world, it’s money in the bank, and it’s an asset that will benefit the Cook Islands across the board. It’s incremental, and there are other things that may be done in the future – but this is one small part of trying to have an informed country and community.”

Hannah Lim, Strategic Partnerships Lead at LexisNexis, says that going digital is a particularly important part of maintaining accessibility. She notes that people’s expectations of government services are increasing, and governments have an obligation to continuously meet these expectations.

“As technology advances, the public is going to question why they can access all kind of information online, but can’t do the same with the law,” she says.

“The law is a public good, nobody should own it – so the challenge for us is to equip and resource everybody whose responsibility it is to get the laws out there.”

Safeguarding the future

The Laws of the Cook Islands launched on the 24th of June, and the project has been a true labour of love from everyone involved. David Greig notes that it's been a significant challenge in resources, both in terms of skills and pure numbers, and everyone on the team has had to be innovative in how they approach different tasks.

"Our skills sets were phenomenally stretched, but in a good way, because there's nowhere else that I could have had this experience of doing all the things I got to do," he explains. "The work was extremely diverse, and we've all had to develop our skills to be able to deal with anything and everything."

Now, Greig is looking to embark on a similar project to curate Cook Islands case law. The Cook Islands is a common law jurisdiction, but nothing akin to law reports exists yet. The use of precedents is largely based on the knowledge of individual lawyers, so a project focused on case law would be a substantial boost to the country's legal community.

Reflecting on the Cook Islands' progress as a nation over the last sixty years, Greig says the country has made some extraordinary strides forward. This means that the Crown Law Office is incredibly busy, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future – however, that can only be taken as a positive sign.

"We've gone from being a colonial offshoot of an offshoot up until the 1960s, and things have evolved since then," Greig says. "Now, we have to do what every other country does, and sort out everything from civil aviation to international shipping. To cover our bases as best as we can, we have to be well resourced."

"I'm so pleased that we've had the relationship with LexisNexis and its team," Greig concludes.

"I would like to continue the momentum that we've gained with this consolidation, and move onto other projects that can be put online and make the system more transparent for everybody."

Consolidated Laws of the Cook Islands, published by Parliamentary Services, can now be accessed via this [link](#).

In Summary

This article highlighted LexisNexis' involvement in the Cook Islands' legal consolidation project, which aimed to enhance legal accessibility and digitise the laws of the Cook Islands. The project was driven by several key factors:

- **Commitment to Legal Accessibility:** To improve access to justice by providing free online access to the consolidated laws of the Cook Islands. This initiative reflects our mission to advance the rule of law, ensuring that legal information is transparent and accessible to all, including legislators, legal practitioners, scholars, and the general public.
- **Technological Expertise:** The collaboration leveraged our editorial and publishing expertise, to create a user-friendly and comprehensive legal database that enhanced the efficiency and transparency of legal resources in the Cook Islands.
- **Strengthening Rule of Law:** By facilitating easier access to legal information, LexisNexis contributed to reinforcing the rule of law in the Cook Islands, aligning with our goal of promoting democratic governance and empowering communities.
- **Global Engagement:** The project positioned the Cook Islands as a more transparent and engaged player on the global stage, showcasing its commitment to modern governance practices. LexisNexis' involvement helped enhance the country's reputation as a reliable jurisdiction for legal and financial services.



Helen Macfarlane



Stephanie Corban

NZ|LAWYER

August

**Interview with Practical
Guidance Insurance
co-authors Helen Macfarlane
and Stephanie Corban
from Hesketh Henry.**

What's next for Insurance Law in New Zealand?

Practical Guidance Insurance co-authors share their insights on the industry's recent updates.

Insurance law is undergoing significant changes in New Zealand. Long-awaited legislative reforms are finally gaining traction, and the industry has a slew of emerging issues to keep its eye on – from highly anticipated court decisions to the ongoing impacts of climate change.

To help legal professionals navigate this landscape, LexisNexis is releasing Practical Guidance Insurance. Co-authored by special counsel Stephanie Corban and partner Helen Macfarlane and the insurance team at Hesketh Henry, this highly practical how-to guide covers the latest industry changes and developments, as well as the fundamentals that underpin insurance law practice.

Corban and Macfarlane sat down with NZ Lawyer to offer a comprehensive overview of the current state of insurance law in New Zealand, its future direction, and how this is reflected in the new Practical Guidance Insurance resource.

Anticipating the Contracts of Insurance Bill

One of the most highly anticipated reforms is the Contracts of Insurance Bill, currently at the Select Committee stage. Duty of disclosure reforms are high on the agenda, as insurers are currently able to avoid a contract in cases of innocent non-disclosure.

Stephanie Corban explains that most of the industry already operates under the Fair Insurance Code and has been careful to take a 'fair and appropriate' response in non-disclosure cases. However, the Code is not legally binding (unless the policy wording contains an express agreement by the insurer to comply with the Code), and a key question is what specific remedies will be applied under the Contracts of Insurance Bill.

"We will see a range of remedies based on whether or not the non-disclosure was reckless, and the Bill sets out a matrix to apply," Corban tells NZ Lawyer.

"The remedy will depend on whether the insurer would have entered into the contract regardless, or entered under different terms – for example, charging a higher premium. As the Bill is currently drafted, if the premium would have doubled, the remedy would be to halve the insurer's liability."

Corban notes that the Contracts of Insurance Bill is a crucial reform for the industry, as current legislation is very dated.

"We have Acts ranging from the early 1900s to the 70s and 80s," she says. "I think there's strong cross-party support for this Bill, and so once it comes back for the second reading, we can expect to see some traction."

Helen Macfarlane adds that the overall focus of the bill is to be more protective of insureds – something that is already present in legislation in many jurisdictions globally.

"Our current legislation is out of sync with many other common law jurisdictions, such as the UK and Australia," Macfarlane says. "These reforms should bring New Zealand more in line with these jurisdictions."

Where is the industry heading?

The last few decades have seen substantial shifts in New Zealand's insurance landscape, and Macfarlane notes that climate change will be a key issue over the coming years. The industry is already seeing this play out, with several insurers introducing risk-based pricing over fixed nationwide premiums.

“In the space of the last 15-20 years, New Zealand has started to view itself as a ‘disaster-prone’ region,” Macfarlane comments.

“Insurers are looking at that and are adapting their approach. That starts with regional differences, and with the data available to insurers now, they can become more and more nuanced in how they price risk. Inevitably, this will result in some legal challenges and may impact legislative or regulatory response as well.”

Insurance disputes are another area of constant activity, and both Corban and Macfarlane have seen a number of recent cases posing complex questions. Updating case law has been a key part of their work on Practical Guidance Insurance, along with providing commentary on the impacts of recent decisions.

Corban notes that the insurance industry is currently awaiting a Supreme Court decision – a particularly interesting case, as the settlement amount has already been significantly reduced by the Court of Appeal.

“The case looks at liability when someone relies on incorrect information when making a decision,” Corban says.



Practical Guidance Insurance has now launched in New Zealand and is a subscription resource providing expert guidance, checklists and tools for the practice of insurance law.

“In the High Court, \$2 million was awarded – but the Court of Appeal reduced this to \$300k. Supreme Court decisions on civil cases always involve some very important issues, so that’s a decision that insurers will be awaiting very keenly.”

Macfarlane says that another interesting recent case concerned a life insurance claim for a terminal illness. The case focused on a perceived ambiguity around the phrase, ‘regardless of treatment’, with the insured claiming this meant, ‘without regard to any possible treatment,’ and the insurer saying it meant ‘despite any possible treatment.’

“The High Court found in favour of the insurer, and so did the Court of Appeal, which decided the only reasonable interpretation of the phrase was the one proposed by the insurer,” Macfarlane said.

“What was interesting is that the Court of Appeal took a look at the established rule of contra proferentem, which means an ambiguity is construed against the party that drafted the contract. The Court of Appeal did not apply this rule, because it concluded that the insurer’s interpretation was the only reasonable one.”

Another key decision came in a case related to the Christchurch earthquakes, where an insured argued that an insurer was obliged to accurately assess damage. The insurer disagreed, stating that would be a huge extension of their obligation of good faith, and it would undermine the fundamental principle of insurance – which is that the insured needs to prove their claim.

“The High Court found in favour of the insurer,” Macfarlane explains. “However, it still left some leeway for future cases to potentially have a different outcome.”

Writing Practical Guidance Insurance

Practical Guidance Insurance has now launched in New Zealand and is a subscription resource providing expert guidance, checklists and tools for the practice of insurance law. The resource covers a comprehensive range of topics, from insurance law basics to disputes about cover and regulation of the industry. There is also a topic covering issues arising from natural disasters, prompted by Cyclone Gabrielle and the Auckland Anniversary floods. Ongoing updating by the Hesketh Henry insurance team allows subscribers to keep up-to-date with legislative developments and case law.

Corban notes that Practical Guidance Insurance has been designed to be easy to navigate, whether or not you have an in-depth knowledge of insurance law. This means it can be used by anyone from lawyers to insurance companies, broking firms, or loss adjusters.

"You don't need legal knowledge to understand the content," Corban says. "Having said that, it also has lots of practical information and references to cases, so lawyers will have the most up-to-date information at their fingertips."

"We're all sharing the satisfaction of putting out an excellent product and using everybody's skills to make it happen."

"We've taken a really deep dive into the law, which has been so fun to do," Macfarlane adds.

"It's been a really collaborative project, and I've really enjoyed seeing our lawyers – and particularly our junior lawyers – becoming really knowledgeable on multiple aspects of insurance law."

For lawyers and other professionals working in insurance law, this checklist will help you verify you have a complete set of the correct policy documents and work through those documents when assessing whether a claim might be covered.

Download the free Checklist by clicking [HERE](#) and submitting the form.

In Summary

This article tied in with the announcement of the Practical Guidance (PG) Insurance launch, a subscription resource offering expert guidance on various insurance law topics.

The article featured insights from two of our co-authors. To pique interest, Helen and Stephanie shared on legislative changes, interesting cases, emerging issues and challenges in the insurance legislative space, amongst others.

It also highlighted their expertise, experience, and journey in contributing to PG Insurance.

NZ|LAWYER

September

Interview
with renowned
Employment Lawyer
Susan Hornsby-Geluk



How to tackle tough HR issues with confidence

Expert offers tips on handling disciplinary processes, investigations and performance issues

The field of human resources and employment law is dynamic and rewarding – however, there are undeniably aspects of the job that nobody enjoys. Disciplinary processes, disputes and performance issues can leave businesses in a difficult position, particularly if they are not properly handled from the outset.

According to Susan Hornsby-Geluk, employment law specialist and managing partner at Dundas Street, knowing how to handle performance and disciplinary processes is especially vital today. The flow-on effects

from COVID-19 are still being felt, and many businesses are struggling financially. This has led to redundancies, and to increased scrutiny on conduct and performance.

Government agencies are also having to do more with less. As of June 2024, over 5800 public service roles have been (or are proposed to be) disestablished. In this environment, Hornsby-Geluk says that knowing how to handle processes properly is crucial – and if you don't, then you should know when to seek guidance.





Navigating employment investigations

Employment law has evolved significantly over the last decade. Processes have generally become more complex, best practices have changed, and an employer's understanding of 'good conduct' has also matured.

"What may have been acceptable conduct 10 or even five years ago, may not be now," Hornsby-Geluk tells NZ Lawyer.

"The processes required in undertaking disciplinary investigations have become increasingly complex, and at the same time there has been a clear creep upwards in the levels of compensation awarded by the Authority and Court when employers get it wrong."

When initiating processes like investigations, Hornsby-Geluk says the starting point is to clearly articulate the issues and allegations, as well as the process that will be followed in dealing with them.

"A terms of reference will assist in achieving this," she explains.

"The employee must then be given a full and fair opportunity to respond to the allegations in a way that demonstrates that the investigator has not pre-determined the matter and has an open mind."

As an employment law expert, Hornsby-Geluk has seen firsthand what happens when the process goes wrong. She notes that the most common pitfalls in such processes include the employee not being given all relevant information before being asked to respond, introducing new allegations during the process, and the decision maker failing to establish the evidential basis for their views.

She notes that there will be instances where seeking guidance at the outset will likely save cost down the track. This is one of the topics that



Hornsby-Geluk will be exploring in her upcoming webinar on 24 September, Mastering Performance and Disciplinary Processes in Employment, run in partnership with LexisNexis NZ.

The webinar will explore various challenges that businesses may face with regards to disciplinary processes; for example, handling anonymous complaints, the non-negotiable steps in investigations, and when to bring in external investigators. It has been designed to give businesses confidence in dealing with potentially tricky situations, and to understand the latest regulations and best practices.

“The webinar will highlight the difficult issues in processes of this nature and provide practical advice about how to address them,” Hornsby-Geluk says.

“It will also identify key decision points and how to reduce legal risk and costly consequences.”

In Summary

This article written to drive awareness of our first paid webinar “Mastering Performance and Disciplinary Processes in Employment” highlighted the importance and complexity of employment law in the current business environment.

It emphasised the need for proper handling of disciplinary processes, investigations, and performance issues, especially in light of the ongoing effects of COVID-19 and government agency restructuring. The article was produced to create interest in the webinar by showcasing the expertise of Susan Hornsby-Geluk and previewing some of the key topics that will be covered.

The article underscored the value of the upcoming webinar by discussing common pitfalls in employment investigations and the evolving nature of acceptable conduct in the workplace. It positioned the event as an opportunity for businesses to gain practical advice on navigating complex employment law issues, reducing legal risks, and avoiding costly consequences.

A portrait of Mark Ford, a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a blue and white striped shirt. The background is a blurred office interior with vertical wooden slats and glass panels.

NZ|LAWYER

October

**Interview with
Mark Ford, Founder
of Ford Sumner
Lawyers and Executive
Director of Law Plus**

Pitfalls to avoid when adopting Legal AI

Learn how AI is revolutionising legal work, improving research speed, and increasing law firm profits.

Mark Ford, a founder of Ford Sumner Lawyers and Executive Director of the Law Plus collaborative law firm group, has seen the legal profession change dramatically over the course of his career. From the days of faxes and pen-and-paper workflows to today's cutting-edge AI tools, technology in the legal sector has evolved at an unprecedented pace.

However, according to Ford, the real shift is only just beginning. The improved automation and research capabilities of AI technology mean two things – lawyers can get things done faster than ever, and as a result, they can enhance profitability without compromising on quality of service.

“Some of the most exciting possibilities of technology are for law firms as a business,” Ford tells NZ Lawyer.

“This is particularly true for smaller firms who don't have the ability to install an expensive CRM system, for example. AI tools provide a real opportunity for these smaller firms to operate more professionally, effectively, and therefore profitably.”

Boosting productivity through automation

Law firms are notoriously tricky businesses to manage, with much of their productivity tied directly to human effort. Lawyers often struggle to carve out time for non-billable tasks like business development and administrative work—but automation is quickly emerging as the answer. Tools like Copilot simplify everyday admin by automatically creating timetables, crafting daily action points, and managing diaries.

When it comes to legal work, AI has faced its fair share of scepticism – particularly due to high-profile cases where tools like ChatGPT were used to generate flawed legal arguments and

hallucinated cases. However, Ford notes that the issue lies not with AI itself, but rather, how it's used.

While general AI like ChatGPT may not yet be ready for complex legal applications, more specialised, proprietary tools like Lexis+ offer a “safer space” for firms to integrate AI effectively into their practice.

“If you look at Lexis+, it gives you a whole new level of analysis,” Ford explains.

“That allows the experienced lawyer to treat it as if it's come from a junior lawyer. That means checking, measuring, and adjusting. These dedicated and proprietary AI tools are definitely the ‘safer space’ at the moment, and I think investing into this kind of development is really important.”

AI's impact extends to legal analysis, where it can sift through extensive data to offer a thorough case review. However, Ford cautions that these tools should still be seen as a “first run,” not a final answer.

“I would regard these tools as being akin to a very quick and thorough legal graduate,” he says. “Not necessarily bringing the kind of experience or business acumen to the research that you need, but still doing a thorough job.”

“AI-enhanced research is also more likely to pick up things that may be outside of the lawyer's own past experience, and therefore provide more holistic options for clients,” he adds.

“Clients expect competence and expertise in lawyers, but the one thing they really value is industry experience. I think AI gives lawyers an opportunity to present that far more quickly through these research tools.”



The various applications of AI in law

Beyond research, AI is also transforming other areas of law firm management– from helping junior lawyers to become more confident in their work, to providing comprehensive business analysis.

With its ability to analyse how time is spent on specific tasks, AI can identify inefficiencies, highlight roadblocks, and pinpoint areas where team members may need additional training. It can also pinpoint which areas of the market might be growing or falling in demand, allowing law firms to make more informed business decisions.

AI can also play a crucial role in supporting junior lawyers as they transition from academic environments to the realities of legal practice. Ford highlights the pressure young lawyers feel when their work suddenly impacts real clients' lives.

"Opinion work or research at university doesn't have any consequences, aside from their personal marking and degrees," Ford says.

"When they start practicing, it's the first time they have to actually deal with other people's lives in their hands. If an AI tool can give them the confidence to start learning how judgements are made, that's a fantastic progression that will allow them to develop faster."

Ford notes that this should also help younger lawyers to become more attuned to the client's state of mind, and what their 'hot buttons' or pressure points might be.

"Client empathy is such an important skill for lawyers, and I think that'll be enhanced with these technological aids," he says.

Looking ahead, AI is likely to reshape the future of legal services entirely. Ford envisions a segmentation of services, where minor legal issues are handled through automated, telehealth-style platforms, while more complex cases still require personal, high-touch legal counsel.

"The 'de minimis rule' has always been a problem in law, which is the idea that law is not concerned with small things," Ford says.

"But now, access to civil justice and civil disputes is going to be enhanced by AI. The human contact side is going to become a kind of luxury model, and there will always be a demand for personalised relationships with a trusted counsellor."

Ultimately, these developments all highlight a major shift in how legal professionals will approach their work. Ford notes that he's already started 'under-promising' to clients, simply due to the incredible speed at which AI now processes tasks.

AI can also play a crucial role in supporting junior lawyers as they transition from academic environments to the realities of legal practice. Ford highlights the pressure young lawyers feel when their work suddenly impacts real clients' lives.

This allows lawyers to achieve results faster and with more precision, breaking away from the slow, methodical approach that has traditionally defined the profession.

Ford encourages lawyers to get on board the AI train now, and to take some calculated risks. With the flexibility of cloud-based tools, transitioning between systems easier than ever – so if one tool doesn't work, you can always 'change at the next station.'

Most importantly, AI tools present a much-needed opportunity for a better work-life balance.

"This is a great opportunity for lawyers to have a bit more of a life!" Ford says. "So my advice would be to grasp that with both hands, and take it."

To enquire about the AI-based solutions LexisNexis offers to legal professionals, and to Book a Free Demo for your law firm, click [HERE](#) and submit the form.

In Summary

In collaboration with one of our closest consortia allies, we shared Mark Ford's insights on the transformative impact of AI on the legal profession, particularly for smaller law firms. Mark, a founder of Ford Sumner Lawyers and Executive Director of the Law Plus collaborative law firm group, discussed how AI tools revolutionised legal practice.

Key points from the article included:

- AI's potential to boost productivity through automation of legal research and administrative tasks.
- The importance of using specialised AI tools like Lexis+ for legal applications, rather than general AI like ChatGPT.
- AI's role in supporting junior lawyers and improving client empathy.
- The potential for AI to reshape legal services, creating opportunities for smaller firms to compete with larger ones.
- The opportunity for lawyers to achieve better work-life balance through AI-driven efficiencies.

In the article, Mark encouraged lawyers to embrace AI technologies, viewing them as tools to enhance their practice rather than replace human expertise. He emphasised the need for lawyers to adapt to these changes and leverage AI to improve their services and overall quality of life.

A portrait of Richard Little, a man with short brown hair, smiling. He is wearing a grey suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a blue striped tie. The background is a blurred green hedge and trees.

NZ|LAWYER

November

**Interview with Richard Little
Partner at Eagles Eagles
& Redpath**

The Digital Transformation of Law: A Lawyer's Perspective

From remote hearings to cutting edge AI research tools, here's how tech is revolutionising the legal industry.

Technology is rapidly reshaping the way lawyers work, and for Richard Little, partner at Eagles & Redpath, it's an exciting evolution.

Little specialises in conveyancing, civil and private law, and has a significant interest in mental health proceedings – an area that has benefited hugely from the technological changes of the last four years. Little has seen firsthand how tools like artificial intelligence, audio-visual links, and online portals are transforming accessibility for clients.

Today, as the legal industry stands on the brink of the next big tech revolution, Little believes the impact is only set to become more transformative.

"The AI side of things is going to be really interesting," Little tells NZ Lawyer.

"There have been some major changes that haven't been fully embraced yet, particularly with regards to things like AVL (audio-visual links) and electronic signing. It's all very exciting, but we're still at an early stage. We're going to see lawyers who don't know a time without AI, and it'll be interesting to see how efficient they can become."

Bringing efficiency to the courtroom and beyond

Little's interest in technology goes back to his days at Otago University, where his double degree included a number of computing-related topics. This interest has only strengthened over time, particularly as the legal industry started to go increasingly digital.

He particularly highlights the impact of remote technology and digital tools. Audio-visual links (AVL)

have become more common, for instance in urgent mental health hearings, streamlining processes that once required in-person appearances.

"This technology allows judges to be present at short notice," he explains. "It's also common in the criminal court to see 5 or 6 lawyers trying to work in a courtroom, waiting for their matter to be called – and that's just inefficient. AVL can alleviate some of that."

For Little's conveyancing practice, recent changes now permitting a greater ability to witness Authority and Instruction forms by AVL and use electronic signatures are game changers. New Zealand has been a world leader with its land registration system for some time and LandOnline just keeps getting better.



“Finally, research is becoming a lot quicker and easier,” Little adds.

“The first few years of your legal career used to be particularly tough, writing opinions for senior lawyers on the most recent and relevant cases, where finding those could take hours. Now, tools like LexisNexis’ Argument Analyser can recommend what you should be looking at and can bring that process down to a few minutes.”

Balancing innovation with the human element

Despite its efficiency, Little is clear that technology won’t replace the personal connections that are often central to legal practice. Emotional and complex cases, such as those in criminal law, still require human judgment and empathy.

Even in transactional work, Little sees technology as a complement rather than a replacement for human expertise. While AI and digital tools will streamline processes like conveyancing, the value of professional guidance remains irreplaceable.



In the meantime, platforms like Lexis+, which are intuitive and deliver insights on legal research coupled with Lexis® Argument Analyser offered by LexisNexis, will help firms stay ahead of the curve.

Still, he says that the ability for clients to do more for themselves has opened up significantly, and this is a positive for accessibility.

“For example, if you want to draft a will, clients can go through an online form and fill out most details themselves, rather than attend two or three times to get basic information to the lawyer,” he explains.

“It’s similar with relationship property matters, there’s a lot of time that’s being saved, and I think that’s just going to keep opening up. Over the next 15-20 years, clients will go to lawyers to ensure that what they have has been done properly, and to bounce their ideas off an expert to ensure they’re not missing anything.”

On the AI side, Little notes that it will be easier to understand and analyse recent acts and case law. Combined with more powerful client portals and information storage, you can compare those against a client’s unique circumstances very quickly.

“I think we’ll see some increased competition in terms of client ability to access lawyers throughout the country,” he says.

“For more technical or tricky situations, that one-on-one support will remain invaluable. What sets Eagles, Eagles & Redpath apart I believe is that we ensure we keep the clients well informed through frequent and transparent communication which is only further assisted by technological advances which permit secure storage of information that is client accessible. Additionally, a lot of transactional matters can easily be handled remotely, and that means a client’s options open up significantly, even to reach us down here in Southland.”

Embracing the next wave of change

Looking to the future, Little is optimistic about how technology will continue to shape the legal profession. While digital tools and AI have already transformed how lawyers conduct research, interact with clients, and manage cases, he believes the real impact is yet to come. As tools become more sophisticated and widely adopted, lawyers will have more opportunities to focus on the nuanced, human aspects of their work—building trust, solving complex problems, and providing expert guidance.

In the meantime, platforms like Lexis+, which are intuitive and deliver insights on legal research coupled with Lexis® Argument Analyser offered by LexisNexis, will help firms stay ahead of the curve.

I value the relationship we have as the LexisNexis team will talk us through the new products, and offer training,” Little says. “We find that really helpful, and we’re looking forward to seeing the new products they have set for next year.”

Lexis® Argument Analyser enables legal professionals to achieve in-depth case law research results in minutes. Learn more and Book Your Free Demo by clicking [HERE](#) and submitting the form.

In Summary

This article featuring Richard Little emerged to showcase the transformative impact of technology on the legal profession, particularly in areas like conveyancing and mental health proceedings.

A partner at Eagles & Redpath, and a member of Law Plus, Richard’s insights reflected his first hand experience with the advancements in legal tech, such as artificial intelligence and audio-visual links (AVL). The article also highlighted how these tools enhanced client accessibility, streamlined processes, and improved efficiency within legal practices.

Additionally, the article served to inform legal professionals about the ongoing evolution of technology in their field and its implications for future practices. By discussing both the benefits and limitations of AI, Richard emphasised that while technology can facilitate tasks, the human element remains crucial in areas requiring empathy and judgment.

This balanced perspective aimed to encourage legal practitioners to embrace technological advancements while maintaining the essential personal connections that define effective legal representation.

In conjunction with the launch of Lexis Argument Analyser, the article also subtly mentioned the new product and how Richard values his relationship with LexisNexis.

A portrait of Claire Tyler, a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing black-rimmed glasses, gold hoop earrings, and a black blazer over a floral top. She is smiling and has her arms crossed. The background is an outdoor patio area with a closed patio umbrella and a building in the distance.

NZ|LAWYER

December

**Interview with Claire Tyler,
Managing Partner at
Rainey Collins**

How smarter tools can transform legal work

The legal industry is evolving fast—here's how smarter tools and AI are changing the way lawyers practice.

For Claire Tyler, managing partner at Rainey Collins, the legal industry is a landscape of tradition – but also, an exciting frontier of technological transformation.

With nearly two decades of experience specialising in property and commercial law, Tyler has built a career around providing pragmatic advice to her clients. Over the years, her interest in how technology can enhance legal practice has grown, particularly as tools like artificial intelligence (AI) and digital workflows have become increasingly central to how law firms operate.

“When I started in property law, they'd just phased out paper transfers where people used to physically walk them to the Land Transfer Office,” Tyler tells NZ Lawyer. “Now of course, everything is done electronically – we push a button, and the titles are transferred within a day.”

The evolution from manual to digital has transformed the profession in profound ways—but Tyler sees this as only the beginning. With advanced AI tools and automated systems now emerging, she believes the legal industry is standing on the brink of another major shift, one that could redefine how lawyers manage their time, interact with clients, and approach complex matters.

The role of AI in streamlining legal work

Tyler has kept a watchful eye on how legal technology has evolved over the decades, and Rainey Collins has already embraced a number of enhancements. The firm already uses software to collect information on client enquiries – something she says saves a lot of time.

“This is where some of our ‘triaging’ tools have come in really useful,” she explains. “The software

collects details from the client, asks follow-up questions, and helps us assess whether we can assist and what the next steps might be.” By automating this initial stage, the firm can focus its time and resources on adding real value.

Tyler is also enthusiastic about the progression of AI-driven research tools, like Lexis® Argument Analyser. By absorbing vast amounts of information and coming back with the most relevant points, these tools have the potential to significantly cut down on hours spent by clerks and junior lawyers on research.

For Tyler, these tools exemplify the next stage in legal technology: smarter, more targeted solutions that don't just make processes faster, but also elevate the quality of legal work.

“I've already seen a trial of Lexis® Argument Analyser being put to use on one of our matters where it was able to give us a contrary view, which is what we wanted,” she explains. “It's not just about making things easier – it's about helping us see angles or details that we might not have noticed otherwise.”

A people-first approach in a tech-driven world

Technology has undoubtedly transformed the legal profession, but Tyler notes that it has also brought challenges to lawyers – particularly around stress levels and accessibility. The speed and immediacy of modern communication have fundamentally changed how lawyers work, and how clients engage with their legal advisers.

“We used to open letters first thing in the morning, and people wouldn't expect a response until days later,” Tyler recalls. “There's definitely a lot more immediacy to what happens now.”



Lexis® Argument Analyser

While this shift has improved responsiveness and client satisfaction, it has also increased the pressure on lawyers. Being ‘away from your desk’ is no longer a valid reason for not being accessible, and everything is treated with more urgency.

“This heightened pace means lawyers need to be especially mindful of setting realistic expectations for their clients—and for themselves,” Tyler says.

Addressing inefficiencies in non-billable time has been one of Tyler’s strategies for managing this new reality. She notes that Rainey Collins has always recorded and kept a close eye on what non-billable time is being spent on. That helps the firm to work out where the inefficiencies are, and what other resources it can use to help re-allocate those tasks.

Time management tools also play a crucial role in maximising productivity.

“There are many time-recording systems and tools already available out there, and that’s something I think lawyers should embrace more,” Tyler says. “It’ll allow them to get as much as possible out of their daily hours, and will help them work out where any ‘wasted’ hours are.”

Tyler says AI, like all technology, when well applied has the capacity to reduce large amounts of time spent on files. Tyler comments that she is interested in the effect that this will have on pricing, especially for many firms who price work based on time spent only.

Even as Rainey Collins incorporates advanced tools into its operations, Tyler is clear that technology should never replace the personal connection

Tyler is also enthusiastic about the progression of AI-driven research tools, like Lexis® Argument Analyser. By absorbing vast amounts of information and coming back with the most relevant points, these tools have the potential to significantly cut down on hours spent by clerks and junior lawyers on research.

between lawyer and client. “Ultimately, the lawyer’s job is to keep up a relationship of trust and confidence,” she emphasises.

“The technology allows us to get all of the background in front of us so that we can properly consider it against the client’s actual situation. We’re really looking forward to tools like Lexis+ and having the full suite of legal AI technology. It’s been so exciting to look ahead and see what the technology is going to be capable of.”

Lexis® Argument Analyser enables legal professionals to prepare stronger case arguments in minutes. Learn more and Book Your Free Demo by clicking [HERE](#).

Lexis+ is an online legal research tool powered by extractive AI, that saves time and helps you deliver better client outcomes. Book your free demo [HERE](#).

In Summary

The article featuring Claire Tyler was written to showcase her insights on the evolving role of technology in the legal industry, particularly in property and commercial law. As the managing partner at Rainey Collins and a consortia member of NZ Law, Claire’s extensive experience and interest in technological advancements made her an ideal voice to discuss these changes.

The article explored the benefits and challenges of integrating advanced tools like artificial intelligence (AI) into law firms, highlighting examples of how innovations such as Lexis® Argument Analyser improved efficiency and client interactions. Claire shared how her firm utilised AI-driven tools to streamline processes like client triaging and legal research, saving time and enhancing the quality of work. She also emphasised the importance of balancing technological adoption with maintaining personal connections between lawyers and clients, ensuring trust and confidence remained central to legal practice.

Additionally, the article aimed to inform legal professionals about the ongoing transformation within the industry and encouraged them to embrace technology as a way to improve services while addressing challenges like increased immediacy and stress in modern legal work. Tyler’s perspective underscored a balanced approach to adopting technology, blending innovation with the human elements essential to effective legal practice.



How we engaged and connected with New Zealand's legal industry through NZ Lawyer.

This booklet contains interviews and articles promoted over the year collectively illustrate the significant transformation occurring within the legal profession due to technological advancements.

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