

BAKER & MCKENZIE CAREER JOURNEYS

Liv Berg

Summer Clerk, Melbourne
Graduate, Melbourne
Associate, Melbourne

A great beginning

I did my Clerkship in the Banking & Finance practice group, which was the practice group I wanted. My supervising partner and buddy made me feel comfortable and welcomed into the group, and supported me throughout the Clerkship. My supervising partner really took me under his wing and gave me great insight into the workings of the practice as well as first hand training with a skilled and experienced lawyer. I researched proposed amendments to Australian privacy law and consumer credit legislation and reviewed and updated a compliance program for an international client. I also had direct client contact with one of the Firm's banking clients who needed an update on a legal issue.

I also did work for the Corporate and Dispute Resolution teams as well as for the Employment team in Sydney, as you are encouraged to undertake work from other teams during your Clerkship. I really experienced how the Firm works and met a range of lawyers across Sydney and Melbourne. In particular, it was exciting to be involved in researching and drafting the Firm's International Arbitration Guide for the Dispute Resolution team, a thoroughly researched, highly regarded business tool for our clients.



I never stopped learning

During my Clerkship, I received valuable and constructive feedback from the lawyers I worked with. This often involved probing questions and interesting discussions which really aided my development as a junior lawyer. It was terrific to experience first hand the culture of mentoring and coaching which the Firm promotes.

Further, the development program for summer clerks and graduates at Baker & McKenzie is exceptional. During my first few days, I attended an induction training program covering everything from technology to clear drafting to library skills to soft skills such as effective communication, personal brand, time management and goal setting using the Firm's global Development Framework. Throughout the Clerkship, we were also invited to attend the junior lawyers' Cornerstone sessions, which were really useful in building our knowledge in various areas of law. We were also able to attend Firm-wide professional and personal development sessions on topics ranging from new developments in the law to mental health, to building your profile and brand from a female partner's perspective.

Hot potato!

In addition to the great work and training offered at Baker & McKenzie, we had several opportunities to meet and greet people across the Firm through Friday night drinks, a trivia night, morning teas, the Firm's 'speed networking program' and, of course, the End of Year Party. We were also invited to attend the End of Financial Year party in the following year – this was a definite success as my Clerkship group won the prize for being the "best dressed" - we came as "The Wiggles" as the theme was "what used to be cool".

What stood out to me during my Clerkship experience was the positive and friendly atmosphere and the collegiate nature of the Firm. Baker & McKenzie is a firm where respect across all levels is evident, where there truly is an open door policy, and where every individual is valued.

Överst på listan! (Top of the list!)

I was thrilled to accept a graduate position with Baker & McKenzie as I knew that I would have the opportunity to grow and develop under the supervision of some truly accomplished lawyers. Also, I felt that my Swedish background and education would be seen as an asset and not a liability in the global market in which Baker & McKenzie operates. I was also attracted to Baker & McKenzie's international recognition and global reach, which was incomparable to any other firm, as well as the global working opportunities and training programs offered by the Firm throughout one's career. It's not hard to see why Baker & McKenzie was at the "top of my list"!

I know that I made the right decision to start my career with Baker & McKenzie and I can't wait to see what the future holds.

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Mitchell Thorp

Summer Clerk, Sydney
Graduate, Sydney
Associate, Sydney

And the buzz is... Culture!

One of the most challenging aspects during the Clerkship recruitment process is trying to differentiate between law firms. Every firm talks about their "top clients", "outstanding lawyers", "prestigious awards" and "work-life balance". However, the buzzword that many firms seem to throw around is "culture". So, what is this elusive "culture" about? To me, a firm's culture stems from its values, the nature of its people, its work practices, its sense of community and the factors that make it a unique place to work.

Although you get some insight into a firm's culture during the recruitment process - through meeting people at networking events, attending interviews, and participating in the buddy program - it's only after you have actually started a Summer Clerkship that you get a true sense of a firm's character.

For me, this happened during my first few days with Bakers. By the end of my first week, I found myself to be impressed by the people in the Firm and the values that the Firm stood for. What struck me as most unique was that everyone - no matter what role and what level - was incredibly welcoming, friendly and willing to make time for you. This is truly valuable when you're joining a firm as a summer clerk, and I was very glad that I had made the decision to join Bakers - a genuinely nice place to work.



Non-stop learning!

The outgoing and friendly nature of the Firm was evident from day one of the Summer Clerkship. On the morning of our arrival, we were welcomed by Chris Freeland, the National Managing Partner, and the Talent Management team who had guided us through the recruitment process.

During our first few days, we undertook induction and training where we were provided with information about the Firm - locally and globally, and given technology and library training to support us during the Clerkship. We were also involved in some fantastic professional development sessions designed to help us succeed during the Clerkship. For example, we had interactive sessions on effective communication, goal-setting and time management, and presentations on career progression at Bakers and how to get the most out of a Summer Clerkship. This training gave us a great perspective on the Firm and helped us adapt to the professional working environment we would be immersed in for the following 11 weeks - an environment quite different from university!

After completing our induction, we began work with our practice groups. My first rotation was with the Dispute Resolution team. A typical day for me involved conducting legal research, preparing court documents and client correspondence, and attending client meetings. However, during my rotation, I also had the opportunity to attend hearings and meet with Counsel to discuss strategy on various matters. I was fortunate enough to work on several high-profile matters, including proceedings in the Supreme Court of New South Wales relating to the financial collapse of a large toll-road, and proceedings involving allegations of fraud by a well-known company director. It was really exciting to be able to read about these high profile matters, that I'd been working on, in the media too!

My second rotation was with the Banking & Finance team. This was a complete change of pace from litigation, and I really enjoyed the commercial focus of the banking work. A typical day for me involved preparing and reviewing finance documents, conducting legal research on issues such as the application of the PPSA, and attending client meetings. I especially enjoyed being able to learn about and understand the commercial drivers which inform the decision-making of a company, in the context of a deal.

One of the unique aspects of a Clerkship with Bakers is that you share an office with your supervising partner, which gives you an amazing opportunity to observe what partners do on a day-to-day basis, receive direct mentoring, and learn by shadowing them. For example, the partner that I shared an office with in the Dispute Resolution team was always happy to explain matters to me and give me direction, provide me with opportunities to listen to and participate in conversations with clients, other lawyers and barristers, and give me insights into the day-to-day business of being a partner. She was extremely generous with her time, and I really learnt a lot from her.

“In-house” insights

I also had the opportunity, during my Clerkship, to undertake a one-week client secondment at the Royal Bank of Scotland. I sat with the in-house legal team, and provided assistance with their day-to-day tasks such as reviewing product documentation, giving advice to the various business units, and ensuring compliance with risk management obligations of the bank. I learnt so much from this experience, especially about the role that in-house lawyers play in a large

organisation such as RBS. I was also very grateful for this opportunity because it's not something that many other firms offer their clerks during the Clerkship program.

It's not just about work

One of the other highlights of the Summer Clerkship is the social side - there were so many social and sporting events planned, it's a wonder we managed to fit in any work!

The internal events, such as the end of year party and practice group celebrations, provided a great opportunity to meet people from all different areas of the Firm - and exposed me to the friendly and fun nature of the Firm. One of my favourite memories was the Dispute Resolution end of year party which was held at Luna Park! We spent the afternoon with exclusive access to the rides, and then enjoyed dinner and drinks at a restaurant. It certainly gave me a positive impression of the Firm's culture, with all of the Dispute Resolution staff (including the partners!) jumping on the rides and enjoying the celebration!

The external events also provided an excellent opportunity to network with summer clerks working at other firms. One of the main highlights was the annual inter-firm summer clerk trivia night. The theme was TV shows and Team "Prison-Bake" (we dressed as escaped inmates from the TV show *Prison Break*) dominated the night - managing to beat some 40 other teams from rival firms!

All in all, the Clerkship was a thoroughly enjoyable experience, and confirmed my decision that Bakers was the right firm for me.