

ABOUT ASHURST ALUMNI

Alumni news

Catch up on the latest news about Ashurst and Blake Dawson alumni.



If you are an alum of the firm who has started a new position, won an award or perhaps moved into a different career path then please let us know, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at alumni@ashurst.com.

Achievements and appointments

Congratulations to our alumni on their recent achievements and new appointments.

LONDON, SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG - GEMMA SAUNDERS APPOINTED SENIOR PURSUITS SPECIALIST AT KBR



Congratulations on the new job. Please tell us about it.

I have joined KBR as part of their sales team to support the business on strategic pursuits and growth strategies. It's an exciting time to join the team and a great opportunity for me to share my experience across a range of sectors. I'm particularly excited about the opportunities in Queensland both now and in the future. If the 2032 Summer Olympics come to Brisbane it will be a great boost for Queenslanders, and I hope to work on a few bids for the infrastructure work that will be needed!

What are you looking forward to most about this new role?

The new role is a new challenge, and that really motivates me. But to be honest, the thing I'm most looking forward to is exploring Brisbane and settling in. My husband and I moved here over Easter so I'm still very new to the city. We have been lucky enough to buy a house near his family so it will be great to be able to spend more time with them. After the past few years in Canberra, I'm super-keen to spend time on the river and on the coast.

What do you enjoy about the work you do and do you have a career highlight?

I think the things I enjoy about my work can be summarised into three Ts:

- Travel
- Teams
- Teaching

Travel: The great thing about strategic sales is that it is a transferable skill. Be that across sector, industry or geography. I love the diversity in the role – no two weeks are the same.

Teams: Those of you who have worked on tenders know they can take an army of people, working long hours and managing to find time among other work and life commitments. It is great working with new people and bringing new teams together. Although hard work, it's great seeing how people work together and how it can bring fresh thinking and ideas to the business.

Teaching: For me, there is nothing better than learning a new skill or a smarter, more effective way of doing something. I love sharing what I've learnt and incorporating it into my normal working day. I've had some great mentors throughout my career and I want to do everything I can to promote an inclusive work environment.

You worked in a number of offices during your time at Ashurst. Did you have a favourite office and what did you enjoy most about your time with us?

To be honest all the offices I worked at had great people and I have fond memories. I started out in the London office working as a Marketing Executive in the ETI group. Helping host events at Tower Bridge and working on tenders for major infrastructure work was a real highlight. Of all the places I've lived, London remains my favourite city, so the London office will always be a firm favourite.

Saying that, while at Ashurst, I was very lucky to have lived and worked in Singapore and Hong Kong, with regular trips to Tokyo. This was an exciting time for the firm which was expanding and growing in the region. I learnt about new areas of law (Corporate, M&A, Banking & Finance), and helped onboard new partners to the firm while supporting existing ones to grow their practice. That was my first time living abroad and also my first time in Asia, so it was a real adventure!

I left Ashurst before the merger with Blake Dawson but continued my journey east and arrived in Australia at the end of 2012. Although I've not worked for Ashurst for over a decade, I have met and worked with many Ashurst Alumni in Sydney and Canberra and we all agree the people at Ashurst helped us make great memories.

SYDNEY - PAUL PYANIC PROMOTED TO MANAGING LEGAL COUNSEL - MASTER TRUST AT IOOF HOLDINGS LTD 



Congratulations to Sydney alum Paul Pyanic (Senior Associate until 2010) on his recent promotion to Managing Legal Counsel - Master Trust at IOOF Holdings.

Tell us about your new role.

I am the Managing Legal Counsel - Master Trust for the IOOF group. This business incorporates the former ANZ Banking Group superannuation and investments business acquired in January 2020 and the MLC business acquired from National Australia Bank in May 2021. I lead a team of 12 lawyers across Sydney and Melbourne, all with significant experience across financial services and dispute resolution. We provide legal advice to a range of internal clients across the business, including product, compliance, complaints and risk, all with their own varied and discrete legal issues.

What are some of the challenges you face on a day-to-day basis?

The biggest challenge is the volume of work in financial services and the pace of regulatory change. The work is varied and on any one day includes advising on product development initiatives, customer remediation, working on responses to regulatory notices, managing class actions and considering the impact of government reforms on the business and customers. Managing multiple external law firms also has its own unique set of challenges.

What's the best career advice that you've been given?

Wait for your sliding door moment and take it.

Do you keep in touch with Ashurst colleagues?

I keep in touch with a number of former colleagues, and I turn up to the odd CLE event when time permits.

What is your favourite Ashurst memory?

Working with exceptional lawyers across the firm was the highlight for me. I had the opportunity to work for Barbara Phair, Bill Cannon and Geoff Mann who were excellent mentors, and I am forever grateful for their support. I also fondly recall my first instructions on day one from a young senior associate by the name of Jamie Ng. I was impressed on day one and it's great to see him succeed and go on to great things at the firm.

LONDON - SUNDIP BISWAS, HELPING WITH THE INDIAN COVID-19 CRISIS 



Watching the COVID-19 health crisis unfold in his home country of India was too horrifying for former London Associate Sundip Biswas to bear.

As calls for help from family, friends, former colleagues and the wider community filled his social media feed, Sundip decided he needed to take action and signed up to volunteer with two organisations working to provide relief.

[Read the full story.](#)

MILAN - CATCH-UP WITH GIULIA GIORDANI



Milan alum Giulia Giordani (Lawyer until 2014) is the Director of International and Regulatory Affairs at Italy's largest bank, Intesa Sanpaolo.

We caught up with Giulia to discuss how the pandemic has impacted her role, what she learnt from 2020 and the skills that she believes lawyers will need for the future.

[Read the interview.](#)

Forums and events

We are delighted to welcome our alumni to participate in Ashurst forums and events.

BRISBANE REUNION

It was wonderful to welcome our Brisbane alumni to the first reunion event of 2021. Thank you to everyone who joined us.

Check out our video and photos in the [Alumni events section](#) to see if you recognise some familiar faces.



VOTE FOR THE ASHURST EMERGING ART PRIZE 2021 - CHOICE AWARD

As part of the 2021 Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize, we are delighted to invite our alumni to vote for their favourite artwork in the Choice Award. The winning artist will receive a solo exhibition at Ashurst's London office, as well as support from Ashurst and art consultancy Oaktree & Tiger.

Voting for the Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize Choice Award closes on Friday 6 August. If you would like to vote but haven't received your invitation, please get in touch with the [alumni team](#).

[View the shortlist >>](#)

In memoriam

We are very sad to share the below news about the loss of a member of our Ashurst family.

HILARY JORDAN (NEE GRAHAM)



We are very sad to share the news that Hilary Jordan, one of Ashurst's first female articulated clerks, has recently passed away.

Hilary grew up in Yorkshire and joined the firm in 1975. She worked at Ashurst for ten years, the last eight in the litigation department, before joining BT in 1985. We were pleased to be able to interview Hilary for Ashurst's First Women project in 2019 and her article about her time at the firm can be found on page 32 of the [First Women publication](#).

Our deepest thoughts and sympathies are with Hilary's family and friends at this sad time.

Firm Friends yearbook

Our yearbook contains a selection of articles and interviews with alumni from across our global network. If you would like to feature in our next edition please get in touch with alumni@ashurst.com.

[READ FIRM FRIENDS 2021](#)

Alumni contacts

If you have any questions or you need to update your contact details, please email alumni@ashurst.com or get in touch with our alumni team.



Nikki Spence
GLASGOW
+44 141 375 4433
nikki.spence@ashurst.com



Emma Pope
BRISBANE - ANN ST
+61 7 3259 7314
emma.pope@ashurst.com