

Harris Wheeler's work with Newcastle Airport

Harris Wheeler Lawyers has been providing legal services to Newcastle Airport since 2001.

Matthew Smith, Managing Partner of Harris Wheeler and head of its commercial group, currently manages their work with the Airport. Mr Smith has nearly 20 years experience in commercial law and property and infrastructure projects. He is assisted by one of the Firm's Senior Associates, Katrina Reye, who is the Airport's day-to-day contact in relation to legal matters.

The majority of Harris Wheeler's legal work at the Airport concerns commercial law and property and infrastructure, although they have also assisted the Airport with a range of other matters, including liquor licensing, corporate governance and planning and local government law. Additionally, the Firm's local government expertise assists in their role at the Airport, as both Newcastle City Council and Port Stephens Council are shareholders in the company.

During their time as legal advisors to Newcastle Airport, Harris Wheeler Lawyers has seen the Airport grow and prosper, consolidate and increase in its sophistication, making it the critical transport link and economic driver of the Hunter Region that it is today.

"Throughout the course of our dealings with Newcastle Airport, it has been exciting to be involved in some of the Airport's landmark transactions and development stages, which have been, and continue to be, so important to our region," said Mr Smith.

One of these landmark transactions included the variation of the Newcastle Airport and Department of Defence Head Lease. This included increasing the term of the Head Lease, renegotiating the terms and conditions of the lease and increasing Newcastle Airport's footprint. It was this term extension of the Head Lease and the expansion of the Airport's footprint that opened the door for further development at the Airport, including the 2005 terminal expansion.

Additionally, Harris Wheeler has advised the Airport on the Operating Agreement with RAAF Base Williamtown, which regulates the unique joint user airport arrangement where airport facilities are shared by both civil aircraft and the Defence Force of Australia. They were also involved in the 2005 terminal development and infrastructure expansion—including the new retail leasing precinct, the relocation of the Aeropelican base from Belmont Airport to Newcastle Airport, the lease for Jetstar's A320 heavy maintenance hangar, the introduction of new airlines and the development of the Airport's aviation documentation, and the introduction and consolidation of key stakeholder tenants, such as BAE Systems.

"We have been privileged to work closely with the Airport's committed and passionate management team, who are provided with leadership and strategic direction by the Board and Chief Executive Officer, Mr Paul Hughes. The Chairman of the Board, Mr John Kindler's 36 years of Air Force experience provides vital links with the Air-

port's neighbour and joint user of the airfield, RAAF Base Williamtown," Mr Smith added.

"We are excited about what the future holds for Newcastle Airport, and with our commitment to providing quality work, as well as our extensive experience in commercial law, property and infrastructure, corporate governance and local government, we look forward to continue working with Newcastle Airport in 2009, and beyond."



Matthew Smith



Katrina Reye

