

ON SECONDMENT

Secondment starts Emily's White & Case journey

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When Melbourne Senior Associate Emily Martins agreed to join the Firm in July 2021, she didn't envisage starting her White & Case career on secondment.

But, when Melbourne Partner Alan Rosengarten and Sydney Partner Kate Perumal asked her if she'd be interested in a secondment with major toll-road operator, Transurban, she jumped at the opportunity.



Emily explains: "I knew Transurban having previously been interested in joining their legal team, so the opportunity appealed, especially as I'd enjoyed a secondment at my previous firm."

"It was also a great chance to get to know one of the Melbourne office's major clients from the inside, which allowed me to fast-track my knowledge of Transurban and gain important insights and learnings the team could apply to the relationship going forward."

Emily's primary role at Transurban was to work on the West Gate Tunnel project. She joined the commercial team reporting directly to the legal and commercial director.

Emily says: "At the time, Transurban was trying to get a long-running and very challenging dispute resolved, which was complicated by issues relating to delayed works and contamination."

"White & Case had already been working with the client on this deal since the beginning, involving people from almost every team with the support of other offices across the Firm. Together with Partners Alan Rosengarten and Kate Perumal, we helped Transurban every step of the way to achieve a fantastic result."

"It was great to show them that we can bring a strategic approach to the negotiations and could support them on an important dispute that was highly visible to their Board, the market and other key stakeholders."

Emily began her secondment while Covid-19 was still causing restrictions in Australia, which posed extra challenges.

She says: "It was tricky because I didn't get to know the team quite as quickly due to remote working. I had to find innovative ways to connect with my team deliberately when it may have otherwise happened organically."

"But it helped that Transurban had embraced agile working long before Covid-19, so the infrastructure was in place and everything worked smoothly."

"Their culture, particularly in the legal team, is fantastic and the office design clearly has employee wellbeing at heart."

Emily believes her secondment gave her a unique perspective on the client that will be of benefit to the Firm, her and Transurban.

She says: "I have a greater appreciation for what Transurban does and how well it does it. The business is run like a well-oiled machine and it was great to get an insight into the many moving parts of the company."

"I also grew to appreciate what matters to them and what they need from external counsel. It was so valuable to see the bigger picture and that they need to view everything from a commercial viewpoint knowing that what they do has an impact on so many stakeholders."



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EMILY MARTINS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE,
MELBOURNE



"From a personal point of view, I learnt the benefit of getting out of my comfort zone and learning new things.

"Changing my environment and being 'the new kid' builds character and reminded me what can be achieved when you step up to the plate, work hard and have the right attitude.

"For White & Case, I hope the secondment played a part in continuing to develop our already strong relationship with Transurban and will help us in our efforts to provide a distinctive client experience that sets us apart.

"I saw the benefits the Firm's global network brought to Transurban and I believe we're well placed to help them with anything and everything project related in Australia and elsewhere."

Emily finished her secondment in March 2022 and has since settled into her regular role at the Firm.

She says: "I was attracted to White & Case by its international coverage and reputation, which offers so many exciting career opportunities and a great culture.

"That perception was proved right during my secondment and particularly since I started at the Melbourne office.

"My advice to anyone considering a secondment is 'go for it'. You have nothing to lose and so much to learn.

"It would be easy to forget that clients are people with the same motivations, deadlines and time pressures as us, so it is an invaluable chance to see things from their perspective.

"Going on secondment helps build an understanding of what clients value most, so we can better focus on what they want and need.

