

King & Spalding Launches in Australia

By Christopher Niesche

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International law firm King & Spalding has entered the Australian market with the launch of an office in Sydney to serve Australian multinationals and other multinational clients doing business in the Asia-Pacific region.

"We have been active in the Sydney market for some time, collaborating across our offices and practices worldwide to open doors to global opportunities for Australian clients," Robert D. Hays, King & Spalding's chairman, said. "Establishing an official foothold in Sydney solidifies our commitment and enables us to build on it."

The office is led by Darren Gardner, leader of the firm's global human capital and compliance team, and has four other partners—Damien Bailey, Jennifer Chambers, Luke Edwards, and Darren Murphy.

"Given the extensive relationships we have in Australia, the large number of Australian lawyers we have firm-wide, and the successes we have achieved for our clients here by opening them up to our practices around the world, fully integrating Sydney into our full-service global platform now is the natural next step," Gardner said in a statement. "Our global approach to serving this market is working well, and we are eager to grow it."



Courtesy photo

Darren Gardner, King & Spalding

While the firm had been rumored for the past year or so to be looking for Australian lawyers for a possible Sydney office, the five partners all already work for the firm.

"I think we can expect them to chase our partners," said the leader of an Australian corporate firm. "It will be interesting to see if they land any big fish."

The launch of King & Spalding in Sydney is the first entry of a significant law firm since Dentons launched in Australia in late 2016, said Joel Barolosky of professional services consultancy Barolsky Advisors.

The firm is entering a mature and competitive market. "It's not like they're entering a market where there's a lot of unmet needs or the incumbents are not able to address current client problems," he said.

Where firms have increased their revenue over the past three years it has been due to fee rises, not because of an increased demand for legal work, he noted.

King & Spalding has more than 30 Australian and Australian-qualified lawyers who span its transactional, regulatory and litigation practices and its offices in Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S. These include partners resident in Sydney who handle complex commercial litigation and arbitration, cross-border energy and technology transactions, and global workforce matters and provide a link to the firm's global platform.

With the Sydney office, the firm now has 26 offices worldwide and more than 1,300 lawyers. King & Spalding ranked 25th on the Global 200 with gross revenue of \$2.37 billion in 2024.