

Jessica Fisher

Director of FCB Group

Partner and Solicitor at FCB Workplace Law



WORKPLACE LAW



Jessica is a director of FCB Group and partner and solicitor at FCB Workplace Law. Based in our Sydney office, she is a highly experienced employment and industrial relations lawyer who has special expertise in working with clients operating in the aged-care sector, as well as in manufacturing, professional services, education, professional services and the pharmaceutical industry.

'I began my career in workplace relations while still at university. I worked as an associate and researcher for three different judges in the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission. After that, I joined Unions NSW, where I worked as a WHA officer and then a consultant and learned how trade unions operate. After concentrating on my studies during my final years at university, I started a workplace relations consulting business to help pay the bills. This small business soon evolved into FCB. I have to say that I'm proud of what we've achieved over the past 22 years.'

At FCB Workplace Law, Jessica specialises in:

- Developing, negotiating and implementing enterprise agreements and individual contracts
- Devising enterprise bargaining strategies and other labour models
- Managing and resolving complex industrial disputes and claims
- Advising on change management, workforce planning, restructuring and transfer of business issues
- Acting in unfair dismissal and unfair contract claims
- Advising on discrimination and harassment complaints and compliance
- Managing the complexities of mentally and physically ill and injured workers
- Conducting employment-related investigations.

'I provide my clients with advice that combines a thorough knowledge of the law with an understanding of the commercial drivers that sit behind their businesses. Even more importantly, I have a pretty unique combination of skills - firstly the technical legal skills you need to be an excellent workplace relations lawyer and secondly, I take a pragmatic approach to problems, whether I'm dealing with an issue that affects the board or the shop floor. Third, unlike a lot of lawyers, I listen to my clients and then make sure that any advice I give them takes into account both their individual and business objectives.'

Jessica has a special interest in the aged-care sector. She has worked with several large and many small employers in this area, including members of the Aged Care Guild. Her work has included supporting and advising on acquisition strategy, transfer of business and enterprise bargaining. In each case, this has involved supporting the longer-term strategic business direction of the client's business, as well as providing a full range of employment and industrial litigation and advisory services. She has presented at industry conferences on enterprise bargaining trends specifically for the aged-care sector, and has collaborated with other members of the FCB team to prepare white papers on employment issues affecting the industry.

'I have a client who is growing rapidly and seeking to become the dominant player in the aged-care industry, primarily through the acquisition of smaller businesses. As a result of their acquisitions, they ended up with several dozen enterprise agreements in place across all the Australian states. My role involved developing a sensible and practical approach to managing their staff consistently and overseeing the compliance process while ensuring they had a realistic, sustainable cost base that would support their long-term strategic objectives. The team at FCB worked closely with key client stakeholders to transition employees to a more uniform and suitable employment model, and I'm pleased to say that we were able to avoid any disputes with employees and unions.'

Jessica's clients include:

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- Several of the leading for-profit aged-care providers
- A global manufacturing and building supply company
- A large industry association in the education and IT sector
- A global management consulting business
- A global household cosmetic and pharmaceutical company.

'I think FCB is a very different kind of firm, because we have a strong and supportive internal culture that allows us to attract and retain the very best workplace relations practitioners. We also offer a unique combination of smart solution-based services that combine law, human resources, migration services, an HR technology platform and an employment insurance product that can be tailored to each client's needs. As a client, you can access these services and products either individually or in the form of a complete workplace solutions package through HR Assured. I think this demonstrates that we are nimble and cost effective, as well as being technical leaders in our field. As lawyers, we think outside the box and draw on our interdisciplinary backgrounds. Most importantly, we're a motivated, intelligent bunch of people who love what we do and are passionate about helping our clients.'