

HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS WELCOMES ENHANCED AUSTRALIA SINGAPORE BILATERAL AGREEMENT

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News

Herbert Smith Freehills has welcomed [today's joint announcement](#) by the Singaporean and Australian Governments which will see the expansion and deepening of the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (**SAFTA**) and further enhance the strong cultural and economic ties between the two nations.

This latest development sees the two governments agreeing to a significant new package of bilateral cooperation initiatives which strengthen and further enable the original objectives of the SAFTA, signed by the two countries in June 2015.

Herbert Smith Freehills' Regional Managing Partner, Asia & Australia, [Sue Gilchrist](#), noted in particular that the enhanced agreement will be beneficial for Australian lawyers, and for local and international firms and their clients who do business in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Today's announcement promises greater certainty for Australian lawyers and for law firms operating in Singapore, as well as for Singaporean law firms who work with such Australian firms. Singapore will recognise some postgraduate law degrees from some universities, and increased visa access for Australian contract workers and executives will be facilitated.

"Collectively it will be easier and simpler for firms to operate seamlessly across both markets on cross-border transactions and matters, and it will lead to enhanced business and investment opportunities for clients across a number of sectors, with Australian businesses to be granted greater facilitated access to Singapore," she went on to say.

Herbert Smith Freehills' joint Regional Managing Partner, Asia & Australia, [Justin D'Agostino](#), said, "The arrangements better facilitate spouses and children to live and work in Singapore, which will make it much easier for us to enable greater opportunities for our Australian lawyers to be seconded to Singapore, to experience the wonderful, vibrant culture and learn first-hand about conducting business between the two nations.

"I particularly appreciate that this has been done in a spirit of reciprocity, and with collaboration and innovation at its core – two values that are incredibly important to our firm," he continued.

Herbert Smith Freehills' Managing Partner, South-East Asia, [Alastair Henderson](#), said Herbert Smith Freehills' heritage in Singapore stretches back over 30 years, and reaffirmed the firm's strong and long-standing commitment to Singapore and to the region, which was further strengthened in November last year with the launch of a Formal Law Alliance with Singapore law firm Prolegis LLC.

"Our alliance with Prolegis created a one-stop-shop for clients to access the legal services of each firm – the international skills of Herbert Smith Freehills and the Singapore law expertise of Prolegis LLC. Like this agreement, this mutually beneficial relationship has deepened existing areas of cooperation and opportunity, and catalysed new ones.

"We look forward to continuing this offering for clients, in an exciting and dynamic period where it will now be easier than ever to do business across the region," he said.

Notes to editors

1. Herbert Smith Freehills' heritage firm, Freehills, began working in Singapore in 1985, while Herbert Smith opened in 1995. Today's practice offers international law expertise in corporate, finance, projects and disputes matters from its Singapore office, assisting clients across Southeast Asia and around the globe.
2. Across Asia-Pacific, Herbert Smith Freehills operates through 12 offices – in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane, and Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Jakarta (an Herbert Smith Freehills LLP associated firm), Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo. There are over 225 partners and over 1,125 fee earners across the region.
3. [Link to announcement](#) by The Prime Minister of Australia, The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

KEY CONTACTS

If you have any questions, or would like to know how this might affect your business, phone, or email these key contacts.



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