

QUICK QUESTIONS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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We asked Michelle Palethorpe and Leo Gallop, two alumni from our Perth office, to answer some quick questions to get a brief update on their journey post-HSF, the differences they have found between private practice and in-house roles and some wise advice for their younger selves.



Michelle Palethorpe is the General Counsel of AFG. She was with the firm through two stints from 2000 to 2018 in the Perth Corporate group.

How did you find the transition from a law firm to a company?

At first, leaving my work home of almost 19 years at HSF was a bit daunting, especially the work (and outside of work) relationships you have developed with colleagues and clients and having the deep pool of knowledge of the great minds at HSF at your fingertips. It did help make the transition smoother that I moved to a client that I had worked with for a lengthy period, so I felt like I had a head start at developing the deep relationships at AFG that you need to work effectively day in and day out. After the first few months it felt like I had been at AFG for ages. I got used to not doing timesheets very quickly.

What roles have you been in since leaving HSF?

I moved straight from HSF to the General Counsel role at AFG and have been in this role for the last 3 and a half years.

What is the biggest difference you have noticed between working in a law firm to your current role with AFG?

The biggest difference is the single focus on the Company. They are your one client and everyone is working towards the same goal. There can be some internal competing priorities but these are managed much easier than external clients competing for your time. Another difference are the wide range of people and skills that you work with, from IT, customer service, marketing, HR and operational. They approach issues in a different way than lawyers typically do and they definitely wear more band shirts and jeans and have more stand up scrum meetings. Whilst HSF lawyers are very good at taking a commercial approach, being in house you do really get into the 'why' and 'how' of any issue, and understand all the drivers of decisions that can be difficult to see when looking in from the outside.

What is your fondest memory of HSF?

I have lots over 19 years, mainly the best friends I made (and still have), being exposed to brilliant minds that make you think in a different way and mentored me over the years, and the different celebrations shared.

What would you tell your younger self?

Take all opportunities that are presented to you, even if they are different to what you have done before (and don't play football on a retreat in the wee hours!).



Leo Gallop joined the firm in 2004 settling in Projects under Jason Ricketts. In September 2011, Leo left our Perth office to join Woodside Energy and continues there as Senior Legal Counsel.

What roles have you been in since leaving HSF?

Joined Woodside Energy's legal team in 2011 and have held a variety of legal roles across its projects and corporate activities, now leading the Australian Operations legal team. Am a board member of the Centre for Stories based in Northbridge WA (which gratefully receives pro bono legal support from HSF).

What is the biggest difference you have noticed between working in a law firm to your current role with Woodside?

The protective barrier and separation between client and lawyer created by different working spaces is removed. Thinking on my feet, advising on the spot and at times beyond the legal issues at play.

What is your fondest memory of HSF?

Debriefing the weekend's AFL round with Tina Stavrianos on Monday mornings, particularly after an Essendon loss. Working in the Perth office with its uniquely parochial and tight-knit (one family) feel within the context of a large, global organisation.

What would you tell your younger self?

Be open to every variety of work that might come your way at the firm. Every matter, issue and client/counterparty interaction fills your knowledge bank and will be useful to you in the future in ways you won't anticipate.