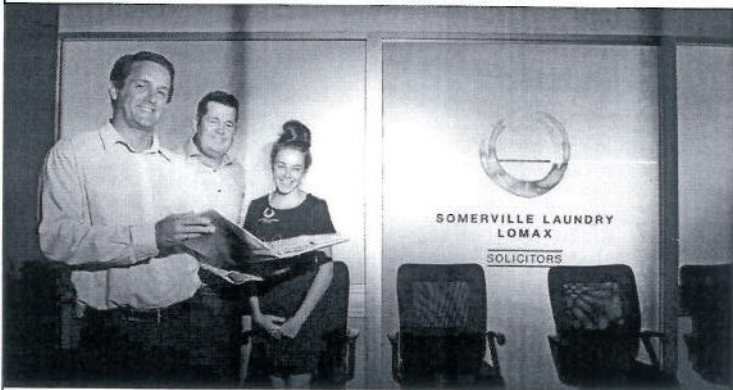


Somerville Laundry Lomax Solicitors: from one local to another



Somerville Laundry Lomax Solicitors secretary Caitlin Jaeger, partner Sean Radburn, and solicitor Steve Spinks at the newly refurbished offices in Lismore.
Photo Marc Stapelberg / The Northern Star

It has been a prominent name in Lismore since 1888 making Somerville Laundry Lomax Solicitors one of the longest running law firms not only in the region but Australia-wide as well. While it holds a place amongst the town's rich history, the firm continually looks to the future with a recent expansion seeing its Lismore offices introduce two interviewing rooms, a board room and a comfortable,

spacious reception area all at ground level providing greater accessibility for elderly clients as well as those suffering from injury. With a team of 35 staff including five partners and up to 12 solicitors, partner Sean Radburn said it's the firm's broad range of legal expertise that sets Somerville Laundry Lomax Solicitors apart. "It gives us a specialist solicitor in every area of

law you may need whereas some other firms are sole practitioner firms meaning they practice in just one or two areas of law which means you might not be getting the best advice available," he said. "If you come to us for compensation claims for example we can look after you and if you're also looking to buy a house in the near future you can pop across the hall and see our specialist in

property conveyancing." According to Mr Radburn the firm's vast range of specialists also means it is big enough to compete with larger city-based firms while still maintaining a strong connection to the local community. "When you come to visit us we are able to sit down and talk in person, one local to another," Mr Radburn said. "We are from the area so the issues that affect our clients in the region affect us as well."

As a further part of the firm's expansion, the team has introduced Peter Warren to the role of practice manager allowing the solicitors and staff to concentrate on providing their clients with legal service. Born and raised in Lismore, Mr Warren brings a wealth of knowledge and experience of the local region to the team. "The team is able to focus on their clients while I take care of the finances as I have more than 30 years of experience in the finance industry," Mr Warren said.

Employment Relationships Get it right from the start

According to solicitor Nathan Job of Somerville Laundry Lomax Solicitors the vast majority of employers have the very best intentions when it comes to the management of employees.

So why is it common for disputes to occur in respect to entitlements and conditions of employment?

"I would estimate that 80% of such disputes arise as a result of informal employment arrangements, a lack of essential workplace documents including contracts and policies and a lack of certainty in the terms and conditions of employment," Mr Job said. "Many businesses lack a thorough understanding of complex workplace laws and often arrangements between employees and employers are done on a 'handshake agreement' with the impression that official documents are either 'not warranted' or put into the 'too hard basket'."

Mr Job said such informal arrangements can lead to uncertainty in the employment relationship which inevitably leads to a dispute.

"I highly recommended that employers give priority to ensuring they have some formal and compliant employment documentation in place," said Mr Job. "Employment contracts and policies can be used to outline the essential terms and conditions of employment and assist employers to address general expectations."

"Getting it right from the start will provide grounding for a healthy employment relationship." The Employment Law team at Somerville Laundry Lomax provide advice to local businesses on compliance with workplace relations laws and best practice, and assists employers in ensuring their employment documentation meets best practice standards.