

2023 AusLSA  
SUSTAINABILITY  
PROFILE



**Hicksons Lawyers**  
**Headcount:** 221 (FTE)  
**Floor Area:** 3,400m2  
**Number of Offices:** 2

Hicksons Lawyers (Hicksons) is a mid-tier, legal and advisory business with offices in Sydney and Newcastle. The firm has undergone growth and transformation as it works towards achieving its 2025 Strategic Vision. The firm's Vision is to 'achieve exceptional outcomes as we put people first'. The firm's purpose is to 'be a forward thinking professional services firm where all individuals feel valued and respected every time they interact with us.' This purpose cascades to a focus on clients, people and the community.

Offering legal and business advisory services across various sectors, the firm assists its clients within the areas of commercial disputes, property, planning, construction, health, general insurance, workplace relations, wills and estates, migration assistance and workers insurance. The advisory practice includes advising C-suites through 'better boards', HR advisory services, migration and strategic negotiations. The firm serves the community through its offering of pro-bono services, student sponsorships, traineeships and commitment to sustainable business practices.



OUR PEOPLE  
SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS:

Part of the firm's growth strategy is a program of continuous improvement, to 'Be our Best'. It is underpinned by the firm's value sets of Excellence, Respect, Integrity and Responsibility which are embedded into the firm through strong leadership and people programs.

The firm prides itself on fostering an environment which creates client solutions, attracts and develops talent and serves the broader community. The firm promotes organic growth, providing education systems, training and development to support internal progression, and enhance engagement. Senior leaders play a crucial role in preserving the culture by way of encouraging an open-door policy, presenting at regular forums, participating in business updates and internal committees. Performance and recognition are supported by policies, systems and practices enabling employees to reach their full potential. The people strategy is an end-to-end solution, including selection, acquisition, on-boarding, development, performance monitoring, progression and success planning, all of which form part of the firm's talent management model.

In addition to a number of people programs, HR practices include providing mentoring support, employee assistance programs, employee benefits program and learning and development opportunities ensuring people are supported to be their best. The detail of these programs are transparent and readily accessible.

OUR ENVIRONMENT  
SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS:

Hicksons occupies office space in One International Towers, Barangaroo and Darby Plaza, Newcastle.

The Barangaroo precinct is certified and rated with; Climate Active, Well International, Active Score Gold, Nabers and Green Star. Tower One has current and future smart building infrastructure which includes the installation of occupancy and environment sensors.

Darby Plaza is a new smart build operating since June 2022, working on a greenhouse gas emissions policy and carbon offsets. The building currently provides water recycling; power reduction initiatives for non-critical plant / equipment and is planning to switch to total green power.

Both offices participate in the annual NABERS reporting through NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment achieving 5.5/6 rating for Sydney and 75% of target for Newcastle. In addition, both tenancies have lighting and movement sensors, as well as timed air conditioner programming.

OUR COMMUNITY  
SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS:

The firm has a CSR strategy, with initiatives contributing back to the community and the industry through:

- Offering pro-bono services through guidance and advice to community legal centres & environmental crisis;
- Sponsorships for students with disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Traineeship programs in partnership with businesses including Western Sydney University, Neuroscience Research Australia and the NSW Government;
- Sponsorship and career opportunities for Indigenous students through placements and the Nanga Mai Awards;
- Sponsorship of the NSW Premier's Hicksons Lawyers Health, Education and Wellbeing Scholarship;
- Commitment to the NSW Police Legacy and sponsorship of the NSW Police Legacy Child Safety Handbook;
- Creation of the firm's Graduate Program, which is committed to creating the next generation of leaders to reach their potential and flourish in their roles.

Hicksons have been involved in various organisation-run programs, some including STEPember, R U OK? Day, Jeans for Genes Day, and Australia's Biggest Morning Tea to show our support and commitment towards important social initiatives. The firm demonstrates involvement through contributions on social media and hosting events to engage staff and clients. We continue to investigate ways we can further involve the firm and staff, and better contribute to change.



OUR GOVERNANCE  
SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS:

Hicksons governance structure is the foundation of its business model. Supported by the firm's culture and values, the model focuses on 4 key strategic drivers; client development, best people, services/solutions and operational excellence. A number of programs and activities within these strategic drivers are developed, to enable the firm to meet its strategic objectives and achieve its overall vision. Hicksons has a commitment to continuous improvement and creating sustainable value. The firm is led by the Board, supported by the Managing Partner and the COO. There are a number of board-appointed committees including Risk and Compliance, Remuneration and Finance.

**GENDER EQUALITY**

**POLICY**

**56% FEMALE** **75% FEMALE** **77% FEMALE** **100% FEMALE**

**GENDER PROFILE**

**INITIATIVES:**

- International Women's Day
- Employer of Choice for Gender Equality
- Female advancement, mentoring and coaching
- Training - Gender awareness unconscious bias
- Internal D&I networks or committees
- Equal pay controls
- Women on Boards

**INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE**

**POLICY**

**POLICY**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Recruitment and promotion for D&I
- Internal D&I networks or committees
- Membership - DCA
- Training - Awareness and unconscious bias
- Staff Surveys - D&I
- Gender pronouns promotion

**FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE**

**POLICY**

**16.0 WEEKS** **16.0 WEEKS** **100%**

**PAID PARENTAL LEAVE** **RETURN TO WORK AFTER PARENTAL LEAVE**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Flexible work hours
- Part time options
- Job sharing
- Remote working tools and systems
- Support for flexible working
- Unpaid leave
- Carer's leave
- Study leave
- Volunteering leave
- Purchased leave
- Career breaks
- Adjusted KPIs after absences
- Sabbaticals
- Domestic violence leave

**PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING**

**POLICY**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Minds Count - TJMF Guidelines
- R U OK? program
- Psychological support/ EAP
- Mental health first aid training and support
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Training - Mental health awareness and management
- External mental health programs hosting
- Mental health office champion

**PHYSICAL WELLBEING**

**POLICY**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Ergonomics program
- Flu vaccinations
- Internal exercise sessions
- Gym memberships
- Team events
- Wellness awareness and promotion
- Subsidised health insurance
- Onsite fruit and healthy catering
- Health EAP

**CLIMATE ACTION**

**GHG IMPROVEMENT TARGET** **ACTION PLAN**

**POLICY**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Telecommuting
- Green Star rated buildings 4-6 star
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGERs) compliant reporting
- Teleconferencing facilities and training
- Earth Hour
- End of trip facilities
- NABERSs Energy Rating
- Climate Active - Carbon Neutral
- Efficient building and lighting automation
- Renewable Electricity
- Voluntary Carbon Offsets

**GROSS EMISSIONS**  
158t - 0.72t per employee

**BUILDINGS** **70%** **0%** **0.25%** **111t** **70%**

**TRAVEL** **3.1%** **25%** **1.8%** **47t** **30%**

**CARBON OFFSETS & RENEWABLES** **0%** **0%**

**NET EMISSIONS**  
158t - 0.72t per employee

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

**POLICY**

**INITIATIVES:**

- World Environment Day
- CitySwitch Green Office

**RECYCLING OFFICES** **100%** **100%** **100%** **100%**

**% office availability**

**PAPER USAGE** **5.2/2** **0%**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Paperlite office program
- Follow me printing

**PAPER CERTIFICATION:**

- Other Certifications

**INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION**

**POLICY**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Cultural awareness training
- NAIDOC Week
- National Reconciliation Week
- Internships and employment
- Scholarships and student mentoring
- Pro bono support
- Funding and donations
- CareerTrackers participation

**NON LEGAL VOLUNTEERING**

**PROGRAM**

**INITIATIVES:**

- NFP Boards
- Organised staff volunteering
- Student tutoring and mentoring
- Secondments to NFPs
- Community volunteering

**CHARITABLE GIVING**

**PROGRAM**

**INITIATIVES:**

- Firm donation program
- Workplace giving
- Matched funding for employee donations
- Internal appeals and collections
- Host external charity events

**LEGAL PRO BONO**

**STRATEGY**

**PRO BONO CENTRE TARGET**

These icons provide limited information about the firm's legal pro bono commitment. More extensive information is reported by the Australian Pro Bono Centre and on individual firm's websites.

**Click for further information from AusLSA:**

**CODE OF CONDUCT /RISK MANAGEMENT**

**POLICY**

**CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING** **COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCE MECHANISM** **RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN** **BCP OR ERP**

**SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

**POLICY**

**BOTH CURRENT AND NEW SUPPLIERS** **MODERN SLAVERY PROGRAM** **FEDERAL LEGISLATION PARTICIPATION**

**SUPPLIER STANDARDS COVER:**

- Human rights
- Indigenous inclusion
- Gender equality
- Modern Slavery
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Fraud bribery & corruption

**SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING**

**REPORTING COVERS:**

- Standalone ESG/ sustainability report