

My Career

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MYRESUME Michael Mackinnon, equine law specialist



Picture: Vince Caliguri

A specialist in horse law would be a fairly rare animal.

I'm not aware of anyone else writing standard contracts for retail Australia-wide. I run HorseForce with a partner to distribute contracts for sale and purchase, lease, agistment, training and breeding.

Any other horse sense?

I'm planning to get an Australian Financial Services Licence to offer insurance and performance horse investment.

And you're involved with Equitana?

Yes, I'm a guest speaker talking about law reforms in the horse setting and liability for horse accidents.

What and when is that?

Equitana is a horse fair from November 4-7 at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. There'll be world cup competitions in dressage and show jumping, international and Olympic riders giving demonstrations, educational sessions, 200 trade stands and entertainment.

What kinds of horse issues do you handle?

Working out what's important in each type of transaction and drafting the contract in line with relevant state/territory legislation so it will stand up in court, taking account of law reforms in the recreational services area.

Do you handle non-horse law?

Yes, a broad range of contractual and property-related dispute work-outs across many industries, professional negligence claims and building disputes. I really enjoy advocacy and accept briefs from other legal firms as independent counsel in civil cases.

Where were you educated?

Geelong Grammar and Monash University.

What prompted the horse business?

My partner and I are involved in horses and have been all our lives.

In 1999 I wrote down what was important to us about a particularly good performance horse that we finished up buying. This got us thinking that we could help people with affordable, off-

the-shelf legal products for myriad horse transactions.

How often do you ride?

About once a month, but I regularly attend horse competitions when my partner competes.

What are the top five traps for first-time horse buyers?

- Make a note of any important information from the seller and attach it to the contract.
- See if you can lease the horse for a short period to trial it.
- Beware of the difference between a deposit and a part payment.
- Engage a horse vet to check over the animal and discuss and evaluate the findings in light of your purpose for the horse.
- Be responsible for your own safety because you will be required to sign a waiver at events and competitions.

How much of your working life concerns horse law?

About half, and it's always increasing.

What's your average work week?

55 to 60 hours.

How do you achieve work/life balance?

I enjoy the earthiness of gardening and live on a large patch outside Melbourne where I get my hands dirty.

PAUL EDWARDS



Picture: Guy Mollison