

Chris Nikou

Practice Area Leader - Corporate

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OVERVIEW

Chris Nikou has acted for major Australian and international companies and works closely with his clients, taking the time to understand their businesses and provide them with sound guidance and advice.

Chris has acted in numerous merger and acquisition matters from detailed due diligence enquiries, asset and share sale agreements, joint ventures and contract negotiations. He also provides commercial advice on franchising and intellectual property issues and has been involved in expanding a number of Australia's best known brand names both locally and overseas. He also has considerable experience in the automotive industry having acted for numerous dealers and suppliers.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognised by *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific*
  - Recommended Lawyer for Corporate and M&A in Australia, 2017-2019, 2024-2026
  - Recommended Lawyer for Corporate (including M&A) in Hong Kong, 2026
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in Australia*™
  - Corporate Law, 2021-2027
  - Franchise Law, 2013-2027
  - Intellectual Property Law, 2017-2024
  - Private Equity Law, 2014-2026
  - Sports Law, 2023-2027
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in Australia*™ as 'Lawyer of the Year'
  - Sports Law, 2025
  - Franchising Law, 2016, 2019

- Recognised by *Lexology Index* (Formerly *Who's Who Legal: Australia & New Zealand*) for Franchise, 2024-2025
- Harvard Business School course in leadership in professional service firms, 2012

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Chairman, Football Australia
- Previous Director, Melbourne Renegades T20 Cricket

EDUCATION

- LL.B., Monash University, 1988 *(Honours)*
- Bachelor of Economics, Monash University, 1984

ADMISSIONS

- High Court of Australia
- Supreme Court of Victoria

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- 23 January 2025, New Franchising Code to Commence in April
- 30 October 2024, Franchising Code Reforms: Exposure Draft Released
- 22 February 2024, Independent Review of Franchising Code – Final Report Released
- 1 September 2023, Another Review of Franchising Code Announced
- 14 September 2022, Franchisors Need to Register by 14 November 2022
- 4 June 2021, Changes to the Franchising Code Now Apply
- 16 February 2021, Talking Sports Law: A Conversation with Football Australia Chairman and K&L Gates Partner Chris Nikou
- 24 August 2020, Franchising Update | Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services: Main Changes from the Australian Federal Government Response
- 15 May 2018, Franchising Update - May 2018
- 8 May 2017, Franchising Update
- 24 November 2016, Franchising Update

- July 2016, Franchising Update
- 17 March 2016, Franchising Update
- 14 January 2014, Competition and Franchise Review: 2014
- 22 January 2013, On Air: 2013 Review of the Franchising Code of Conduct

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "Australia" *International Franchising*, Centre for International Legal Studies, JURIS, 1st through to 8th editions, 2010-2017
- Buying out your Competitor, 2008

NEWS & EVENTS

- 16 April 2026, More Than 80 K&L Gates Lawyers Across Asia-Pacific Recognised in 2027 Best Lawyers, Ones to Watch Editions
- 27 August 2025, K&L Gates' Corporate Practice Ranked in Q2 2025 Global League Table Rankings
- 22 May 2025, K&L Gates' Corporate Practice Ranked in Q1 2025 Global League Table Rankings
- 24 April 2025, K&L Gates Adds Capital Markets Team in Hong Kong
- 4 October 2019, K&L Gates Advises Evoqua Water Technologies on Memcor® Product Line Divestment

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Emerging Growth and Venture Capital
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Private Equity Transactions
- Restructuring and Insolvency

INDUSTRIES

- Apparel and Footwear
- Consumer Electronics
- Consumer Goods and Services
- Financial Services

- Fintech
- Franchising
- Private Equity
- Sports

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Acted for the founders of HDS Distribution and Storage, a company that offers temperature-controlled deliveries and refrigerated transport services across Australia, in the sale of a minority stake to Seidler Equity Australia, a private investment firm with offices in both the United States and Australia, as part of a roll-up transaction.
- Represented Anthony Dipietro Investments Pty Ltd and Blue Lake Investment Group Pty Ltd in the buyout of all of the shares held in Premier Fresh Australia Pty Ltd (Company) by the majority New Zealand shareholder Market Gardeners, making the Company 100% Australian owned. As part of the transaction, the buyers were also required to refinance all existing debt of the Company.
- Acting as the lead Australian partner for Brightstar Capital Partners, L.P. on their US$1 billion acquisition from SoftBank of 75% of the equity of Brightstar Corp., a Miami-based distributor of mobile telephones and provider of wireless industry services which involved a team of almost 60 K&L Gates lawyers globally who assisted on the diligence of Brightstar Corp.
- Lead Australian partner in advising Evoqua Water Technologies on its cross-border carve-out sale of its MEMCOR product line to DuPont Safety & Construction, including stock of Australian entity and assets located in the U.S., Canada, UK, Singapore, Australia and China.
- Representing ThyssenKrupp on its acquisition of Australian Maritime Technologies.
- Representing New York Stock Exchange listed company Wabtec in it its acquisition of Trackside Intelligence and Relay Monitoring Systems.
- Acting for Drew Marine on the acquisition of Flight Data Systems across Australia, the UK and U.S.
- Acting on the sale of American and Australian technology provider Spatial Info Systems Inc to Synchronoss.
- Acting for global engineering company ABB Group on its Australian acquisitions.
- Acting for leading agribusiness Nutrien Ag Solutions in numerous JV shareholdings.
- Acting for Directed Electronics Australia Pty Ltd on its acquisition of a global aftermarket safety products and equipment supplier and related services business by way of a business sale and acquisition of three companies (in Australia, NZ and the U.S.)
- Acting on numerous acquisitions conducted by Traffic Technologies Limited including the acquisition of Aldridge Traffic Systems.

- Acting for Middendorp Electric Co Pty Ltd in its purchase of Salmon Bros Electric Pty Ltd, a Sydney-based electrical wholesale supply business.
- Advising the sellers in the share sale of Ventair Pty Ltd to Woomera Ventilation Pty Ltd (a member of the Volution Ventilation Group, based in the United Kingdom).
- Representing global agribusiness player Agrium on acquisition of Macrofertil.
- Acting for Capitol Health Limited on its AU$70 million acquisition of Southern Radiology.
- Representing Japara Healthcare Ltd on M&A transactions including Whelan Health Care and Profke Health.
- Representing Kalari Pty Ltd (part of the Swire group) on its acquisition of facilities at Port Hedland.
- Acting in the sale of Tamar Valley Dairy to Fonterra.
- Advising United Petroleum on numerous acquisitions.
- Acting for Advent Private Equity in its acquisition of the UGM Group concerning provision of engineering services to the underground coal mining industry.
- Acting in the sale of Bulk Handling Australia to Hawksbridge Private Equity including preparation of sale agreements, shareholder agreements and subordination deeds.
- Acting on the acquisition by Werner Inc of Bailey Ladders.
- Acting for the Spotless Group in the disposal of businesses.
- Acting for NexCen Brands on its sale of Athlete's Foot master rights in Australia.
- Acting on the sale of the Pizza Haven network in New Zealand to Dominos Pizza and in Australia to Eagle Boys Pizza.
- Advising the Mitre 10 Group on its acquisition of independent hardware chains.
- Acting for the receivers of the Solar Shop group of companies.
- Advising on the restructure of the Australian Music Group.
- Representing the shareholders of Technika appliances in their 100% sale to Glen Dimplex UK .