

Simon Leslie

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Simon Leslie is a partner in the firm's Corporate practice, with a focus on emerging-growth and venture capital transactions, including financings, strategic transactions and exits.

Simon advises companies, founders and venture capital funds across the full venture lifecycle from seed and early-stage financings through successive growth rounds to liquidity events. His experience includes advising on acquisitions, secondary sales, restructurings and redomiciliations, equity incentive plans and governance issues.

He is frequently engaged on exits of venture backed companies, where he advises on the legal and commercial dynamics between founders, investors and strategic acquirers throughout complex time sensitive processes.

He regularly acts on transactions involving international investors and acquirers, as well as cross-border expansion, with a particular focus on capital flows between the United States and Australia.

Simon's practice is focused on the technology sector, including deep technology, artificial intelligence and fintech.

Clients regard Simon as "a*n outstanding partner*" who "*combines deep technical expertise with a sharp commercial mindset, consistently providing clear, pragmatic guidance that reflects a strong understanding of the venture capital landscape*" (The Legal 500 Asia Pacific 2026).

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Simon previously practised in London, advising venture capital funds and high growth technology companies on investments and exits. This experience continues to inform his work for clients operating within the Australian venture ecosystem and engaging with international capital and strategic counterparties.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognised by *The Legal 500 Asia Pacific* in Australia
  - Recommended Lawyer for Corporate and M&A, 2024-2026

EDUCATION

- Legal Practice Course, Nottingham Law School, 2003
- Diploma in Law, Nottingham Law School, 2002
- B.A., Cambridge University, 2001

ADMISSIONS

- Solicitor, England and Wales (non-practising)
- Supreme Court of New South Wales

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- 3 November 2026, Guide to US Flip-Ups
- 14 September 2026, Key Refinements to Streamline Australia's Merger Control Regime Passed Into Law: Threshold for Control Increased, Removal of Voiding Provisions and Changes to "Stale" Notification Timelines
- 2 December 2019, Protecting Your Corporate Keys
- 2 August 2019, Australian Mid-Market M&A Report

NEWS & EVENTS

- 25 February 2026, K&L Gates Advises Blackbird Ventures on Eucalyptus Sale to Hims & Hers Health, Inc.
- 24 February 2026, K&L Gates Advises Blackbird Ventures in Gilmour Space Technologies' Series E Funding
- 26 May 2025, K&L Gates Advises Australian Venture Capital Firm Square Peg on Airwallex's US$300 Million Series F Fundraise
- 15 August 2024, Cross-Border K&L Gates Team Advises Generative AI Company Leonardo.ai on Sale to Graphic Design Platform Canva
- 25 April 2024, K&L Gates Advises on the Establishment of US$100 Million Web3 Gaming Fund
- 19 December 2022, K&L Gates Adds 40 Lawyers to Firm's Partnership
- 11 July 2019, K&L Gates Advises on Acquisition of Montessori Academy Group

OTHER MEDIA MENTIONS

- Mentioned, "K&L Gates guides Square Peg in Airwallex's US$300m Series F fundraise", *Australasian Lawyer*, 29 May 2025

- Mentioned, "Canva scoops up Leonardo.AI with advice from top globals" (Excerpt), *Australasian Lawyer*, 15 August 2024
- Mentioned, "The Council's Updated Model Form Documents: Melbourne", *Australian Investment Council*, 23 October 2023

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Emerging Growth and Venture Capital
- Private Equity Transactions

INDUSTRIES

- Aerospace and Defense
- Digital Assets and Blockchain Technology
- Digital Health
- Financial Services
- Fintech
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Private Equity
- Technology
- Video Games and Immersive Technology

EMERGING ISSUES

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Venture Capital

- Acted for funds managed by Blackbird Ventures Pty Ltd as co-lead investors in respect of the Series E funding investment round in Gilmour Space Technologies.
- Advised Immutable on its US$240 million Series C financing led by Temasek.

- Advised Zeller on its AU$100 million Series B financing led by Headline.
- Advised Lexer on its AU$33.5 million Series B financing led by King River Capital.
- Advised Spaceship on its AU$24 million Series B financing led by Grok Ventures.
- Advised Main Sequence Ventures on various portfolio investments including investments into Nourish, Quintessence Labs, and V2 Food.
- Advised a venture capital fund on various portfolio investments including investments into a healthcare technology company, a space technology company, and a company that creates medical devices with AI technology.
- Advised Square Peg Capital on various portfolio investments including investments into Constantinople and Vow Foods.
- Advised AirTree Ventures on various portfolio investments including investments into Milkrun, Open, and Robob.ai.
- Advised Folklore Ventures on various portfolio investments including investments into Arli, HealthMatch, and Swoop Aero.

Mergers & Acquisitions

- Advised the sellers on the sale of Rex Labs Holdings Pty Ltd to Potentia Capital. Rex Labs is an 80-person digital product and service company providing CRM, property management, digital advertising suite, and website solution for the real estate industry in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. Potentia is an Australian, specialist private equity investor focused on technology and tech-enabled businesses.
- Advised the Sellers on the sale Modibodi Australia Pty Ltd to Quadrant Private Equity's new growth fund, QPE Growth LP. Modibodi is a high growth business producing leak-proof apparel, underwear, and swimwear for periods, incontinence, perspiration, and pregnancy. Certain Sellers rolled part of their interest in Modibodi into the new holding structure.
- Advised the Sellers on the sale of MyXplor Pty Ltd to Transaction Service Group, a company backed by global private equity fund Advent International. MyXplor (also known as Xplor) is a provider of childcare software.
- Advised Capgemini Australia Pty Ltd on its acquisition of WhiteSky Labs Pty Ltd, an Australian MuleSoft software consultancy services provider.
- Represented Serco Pty Limited in its acquisition of Facilities First Australia Holdings Pty Ltd, a facilities maintenance and cleaning services business in Australia. The acquisition received Australian Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) approval.
- Acted for Greentown Service Group Co. Ltd. on its acquisition of a majority interest in Montessori Academy the Sydney-headquartered Australian long day childcare centre operator. The deal required close collaboration between K&L Gates's Australian and China-based teams on Greentown's first acquisition in Australia.

- Advised the sellers on the sale of a New South Wales, Australia-based marketplace to discover and book top professional models, actors, and influencers.
- Advised Grace Loves Lace on the sale of a majority interest to private equity fund, Seidler Equity Partners.