



Jenny Hutson

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## hutson leads the way

by Alexa Zivkovic

Stepping down from partnership at the firm she's been at since her first days in law, from April 1 former McCullough Robertson Partner Jenny Hutson will become the Managing Director of new merchant bank, Wellington Capital Ltd.

In addition to her new venture, Hutson will also maintain an office at McCulloughs in the capacity of Consultant, and she'll also be increasing her responsibilities as Chair of S8, a company due to become Australia's third-largest travel related group after Qantas and Flight Centre once a merger with tourist services provider Transonic Travel is completed later this year.

In her 15 years at McCullough Robertson, Hutson has helped develop the firm's corporate team into one of Queensland's largest corporate advisory groups, and has been involved in more than 120 capital raising projects.

In 1996, she was also the first woman to be appointed Partner at the firm.

In 2001, she became Chair of Gold Coast company S8, a role which has seen her take over Harvey World Travel last year and spearhead a \$124 million campaign to merge S8 with Sydney-based Transonic Travel.

Now, she's established Wellington Capital, a Queen Street merchant bank that will become one of the country's few such banks that specialises in property-related transactions.

While Hutson said she's enjoyed her legal career to date, the time had come to reassess her career path.

“I love the 'deal'. I've had great opportunities to see the deal from a number of perspectives as a lawyer, and now I'd like to be in a position where I can design the deal, from the beginning of the transaction, and helping find the capital and manage project outcomes. It's all about looking at the same transactions from a different perspective, from a more entrepreneurial point of view, and that's something I love doing,” she said.

“The Queensland economy has had a wonderfully buoyant ride in the last few years, and we've got all of the drivers for growth here. Property is so important to the Queensland economy, and with Wellington Capital it's something I've now got the opportunity to be involved in from a corporate perspective.”

Hutson attributes her decision to step down from McCullough's partnership to a period of reflection she had during long service leave last year, and said she sought inspiration from corporate lawyers in Sydney

and Melbourne who have successfully branched out into merchant banking.

“The style of practice I've had here at McCulloughs has led to my being able to do that too, and I also attribute the opportunity to the clients I've had over the last seven or eight years. It's naturally evolved this way,” she said.

“Wellington Capital will be working with McCullough's when it comes to structuring transactions, so I'll still be involved with the team I've nurtured there over the years. I think it's important to encourage people to go beyond their boundaries and their comfort zones, though. I've always seen myself as a 'glass-half-full' kind of person, and I think that's something I've learned from being at McCullough Robertson. I'm not afraid to have a go, to back myself or to back the team I put together,” she said.

“I'm having an absolute ball at this point in my life. With Wellington Capital, we're at the beginning of something rather than at the end in terms of property in Queensland at an institutional level. In three to five years, I'd hope that Wellington Capital itself gets floated on the stock exchange.”



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