

A DAY IN THE LIFE

James Geremia

Graduate at Law, Melbourne
International Clerk, Chicago



After completing a Seasonal Clerkship with Baker McKenzie in February 2018, in the Firm's Banking & Finance team, I was fortunate to receive a Graduate position with the Firm. I was then thrilled to be selected to undertake an International Clerkship at the Firm's first office which was established in Chicago, which I completed during January/February 2019.

I was drawn to Baker McKenzie because of the Firm's high quality cross-border work, its unrivalled international presence and its ability to provide training and secondment opportunities across its global network. Having been born in Los Angeles, California, I always held ambitions to return to the US to work in commercial law or to undertake further legal study. However, I never anticipated that my legal career would involve working in a major US commercial hub at one of the world's largest law firms, so early in my legal career.

Melbourne to Chicago: 44 to -30 degrees Celsius

I departed Melbourne for my International Clerkship in the midst of a heatwave in late January. In the lead up to my departure, I was closely monitoring the conditions in Chicago. To my dismay, I learned that I was leaving behind the Melbourne summer for the coldest winter that Chicago has ever experienced, with temperatures reaching historical lows of up to -30 degrees Celsius! As I trudged through the terminals of Tullamarine, I was dressed in a manner that would have indicated to onlookers that I was embarking on an arctic voyage, rather than an International Clerkship with a commercial law firm.

International M&A

When I arrived in the Chicago office, I was welcomed by a fellow Melbourne Baker's colleague who was working in the Corporate & Securities team as part of a year-long secondment. Upon exiting the lift on level 50, I was immediately struck by the remarkable views that the office enjoys over Lake Michigan - which at the time was frozen. I worked in the Corporate & Securities team, which is one of the largest groups in Chicago, comprising more than 20 Partners. I quickly learned that the culture of the Chicago office was similar to that of the Melbourne office, where people are very down to earth and friendly.

During my International Clerkship, I gravitated towards one of the Corporate Partners who had a very interesting M&A practice. Included amongst his clients were some of the most well-known technology, logistics and food companies in the world. Throughout the Clerkship, he involved me in a

broad range of matters that demonstrated the remarkable quality and international flavour of the work at Baker McKenzie. Most notably, I was involved in the due diligence processes for two major M&A transactions which subsequently made international headlines. One involved a major international fast food client acquiring an artificial intelligence company and the other involved the purchase by a high profile Hollywood celebrity of a stake in a global fitness company. I also had the opportunity to draft several share purchase agreements on some smaller transactions. I learned how different the US style of drafting is, compared to Australia. On the business development front, I assisted one of the Corporate Partners in his preparation for a pitch at a major technology company in the Silicon Valley. I produced a presentation on the recent increase in antitrust and regulatory scrutiny faced by tech companies and the impact of this upon M&A activity in the US. Having undertaken an honours thesis on related issues in my final year of law school, I was very excited to engage with these topics in a commercial context. Whilst working in the Chicago office, I also attended a series of professional development seminars delivered by external lawyers on shareholder activism in the US.

Other highlights

The International Clerkship also provided me with the opportunity to explore one of the great American cities. Despite the arctic conditions, I immersed myself in Chicago's restaurant and bar scene and went to see a variety of musical performances, including Hamilton. I spent time at the Art Institute of Chicago, one of the world's great art museums and visited the home and studio of storied architect Frank Lloyd Wright. On the way home from my International Clerkship, I traded thermals and down jackets for board shorts, stopping off in Hawaii for some much needed sun and surf!

Ultimately, the International Clerkship gave me a great insight into the possibilities that exist for lawyers at Baker McKenzie, including the ability to be seconded to one of the Firm's 78 offices worldwide and to work on matters that transcend national borders. The experience enabled me to build a network of colleagues (and friends!) in a US office, who I remain in contact with and who I will inevitably deal with on future transactions. I look forward to an exciting career ahead with Baker McKenzie!



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Jessica Tang

Graduate at Law, Sydney
International Clerk, Hong Kong

A focus on international practice

Choosing Baker McKenzie from amongst the sea of other firms was largely due to the Firm's strong global presence and focus on building and nurturing international partnerships. The International Clerkship program represented a unique opportunity to be involved on a global scale, even at such an early stage in my legal career. I have always been interested in the growing relationship between Australia and Asia so I knew that Baker McKenzie was the right choice for me to further explore this area and get firsthand experience on the ground in a place where strong partnerships had already been forged.

Following my Summer Clerkship, I was fortunate enough to be selected for an International Clerkship in Hong Kong. A city that is known for being one of the largest international financial hubs in the world and the melting pot in which Eastern and Western culture come together seamlessly. As part of my family is from Hong Kong, I had previously had the opportunity to visit as a tourist, but the International Clerkship promised a different perspective of everyday life as a professional in a top law firm, as well as a local finding my place in a new home.

Hong Kong

As soon as I stepped out of the taxi from the airport, the first thing I noticed was how vibrant and alive the city felt. The constant buzz of people hurriedly walking on the street, bumping into each other with reckless abandon. The constant beeping of the traffic. There was a limitless array of new sights and smells as I made my way to my accommodation in the Mid-Level area of Hong Kong island. Given the island's size, it is hugely dense and you rarely have to travel far to find a new restaurant or café.

My first day in the Baker McKenzie office was a great way to start the journey. I was introduced to the Intellectual Property Group, the team with whom I would work with most closely during my time in Hong Kong. Everyone was inviting and made me feel right at home. Similar to the view from the Baker McKenzie office in Barangaroo, the Hong Kong office overlooks a beautiful body of water: the famed Victoria Harbour after which Hong Kong is named - *Hong Kong* means "fragrant harbour" in Chinese.

It is a credit to a firm like Baker McKenzie that I was able to have such an inspiring and unique experience in an exotic and far-away place. It will have a lasting impact on

my personal and professional development moving forward.

Intellectual property group

I had the opportunity to work on a variety of matters during my stay with the Intellectual Property Group, including conducting research on data privacy and artificial intelligence issues, drafting cease and desist letters, generating trademark reports, and preparing internal presentations on technology updates. My experience in the Hong Kong office has exposed me to the complex relationship between Hong Kong and China especially when a matter involves both jurisdictions. Due to their different legal systems, we are often required to communicate with our colleagues in China to resolve a mutual issue. This is an area in which Baker McKenzie has proven to excel continuously and without disappointment. Because of our strong global presence and tight knit community, we are able to resolve cross-border, complex legal issues efficiently.

I was grateful to join the team during the Chinese New Year period, which represents the most important holiday in the Chinese calendar. During Chinese New Year, all businesses are closed for a week and people typically feast with their friends and families. This period is also famous for handing out "lai see" or "red pocket money" where the most senior and respected figures show their appreciation for their junior staff members by rewarding them with red envelopes. As the most junior person in the firm, this was definitely a highlight!

I also had the opportunity to join the Global Legal Hackathon with a few Baker McKenzie colleagues. The Hackathon is an event for people to come together to collaboratively build and launch technology-based solutions aimed at solving a particular problem. My team and I came up with a precedents management software used to efficiently manage internal firm documents. Although we didn't win, it was definitely a great learning experience.

Developing long lasting friendships

The Intellectual Property Group took me under their wing and truly made me feel like we were friends rather than colleagues. I am extremely grateful for this International Clerkship experience as it allowed me to develop long lasting relationships with people in Hong Kong. Now I have fantastic contacts for any cross-border matters I might be involved in and when I visit Hong Kong again in the future.