

Flexibility Allows Rebecca To Realise Ultimate Career Goal

Posted on: April 11, 2021

The 40 year-old mother-of-two is the first person to be appointed a Partner while continuing to work part-time at the long-established firm.

“From my perspective it’s really important to be able to have a life and be there for my children. But also, I wanted to become a Partner because that’s the next step in my career.” Rebecca graduated from Otago University in 2003 and subsequently worked at Buddle

Findlay in Auckland and at Magic Circle firm Freshfields in London, specialising in banking and finance. She returned to New Zealand in 2011 and settled in her hometown of Tauranga – a move she herself did not see coming.

“Tauranga has changed a lot since I was a child. I remember the Harbour Bridge opening and if you wanted a university qualification you had to leave town. The growth has been incredible and that’s good because it’s a much more attractive place for younger people to live now and there is more opportunity locally.”

Rebecca joined Cooney Lees Morgan almost a decade ago. She works in the firm’s Private Client and Trust team and uses her experience to help clients with their commercial and property transactions and structuring their affairs. “I’ve acted on some quite significant farming and orchard transactions and many of my clients are based outside of Tauranga. A lot of business is now done online and it’s seamless. So you can live in Tauranga with all the lifestyle benefits that brings, while working with interesting clients nationwide.”

When her first child was born six years ago, she took time off and started back at just two days a week. Her hours have slowly increased, and she currently works in the office three full days and two half days. Rebecca acknowledges the part-time partnership arrangement is a “leap of faith” for both parties, but she’s excited to get involved in running the firm which now has 90+ employees.

“There are really good people who do really good work. They have good family values so I’m very excited to join the partnership.”

Rebecca will be one of two female partners in the nine-strong group and does feel a sense of responsibility to make the new arrangement work so other women can follow suit in future. “There’s lots of really good female lawyers but the figures still show that senior positions in law are male dominated. It’s good to be a role model in that regard so more female leaders can come through in future.”