

Interview with Brihony Boan

What inspired you to pursue a career in law, and what attracted you to specialise in Real Estate?

When I first started studying law, I imagined I would work in human rights and help change the world. As my career developed, though, I was exposed to real estate and quickly realised how much I enjoyed the practice. What attracted me was the opportunity to build long-term relationships with clients, work collaboratively as part of a team and focus on achieving practical outcomes.

Real estate is also incredibly tangible. You can point to a project and see the result of the work you've been involved in. Whether it's helping bring together different stakeholders, solving complex problems or attending a groundbreaking ceremony for a major development, there's a real sense of achievement in seeing something come to life.

What have been some of the defining moments or highlights of your career so far?

The defining moments in my career have really been shaped by people. I've been fortunate to receive support and encouragement from colleagues, mentors, clients and teams throughout my career, including at Gadens. Having people who believe in you, encourage you to be authentic and support your growth makes an enormous difference.

I've never approached my career with a rigid plan or a specific end goal in mind. My focus has always been on doing my best, bringing energy and enthusiasm to the work in front of me and delivering for clients. Looking back, the opportunities that have come my way and the people I've worked with have been what truly defined my career.

One of the highlights now is leading and supporting our team. Seeing talented people develop, grow in confidence and achieve their own goals is incredibly rewarding.

Has your experience as a woman in the legal profession shaped your approach to leadership, collaboration or client service?

Absolutely. When I started my career more than 25 years ago, there were very few senior female partners or leaders around me. The shift I've seen since then has been enormous and having more women in leadership positions has made a real difference.

That experience has reinforced the importance of being a visible role model for women coming through the profession. I want women to see that it's possible to have both a successful legal career and a family, while also being honest about the reality that there is often a degree of give and take involved. You don't have to step away from the profession to have a family, but there will be trade-offs at different stages of life.

I also think women often bring a strong focus on people, relationships and team dynamics. Empathy, collaboration and the ability to see challenges from multiple perspectives are incredibly valuable leadership qualities and they can have a significant impact on client service and team culture.

What changes to the industry have you witnessed over the span of your career that have positively improved the space for female lawyers?

The most obvious change has been the increasing number of women entering the profession. When I started, there were fewer women coming through and even fewer in senior leadership roles. Today, we are seeing far more women join the profession and progress through the ranks.

Another significant shift has been the recognition of parental leave and flexible working arrangements. What was once considered an exception has become much more normalised. Importantly, these changes have benefited not only women but also men, enabling more shared responsibility for parenting and caregiving and creating greater flexibility for everyone.

Statistics show there are currently more female lawyers than male lawyers, yet more male lawyers hold senior roles. What further progress would you like to see across the industry to support women in building and sustaining successful careers?

While we've made significant progress, there is still a large pool of talented women at senior levels who are not progressing into partnership and leadership roles. Understanding why that talent isn't always translating into leadership positions is an important conversation for the profession.

I would like to see organisations continue to explore different ways of supporting career progression, including greater flexibility in senior roles and initiatives such as

job-sharing arrangements or pilot programs that challenge traditional models of leadership.

I also think there is still a role for affirmative action and targets in helping drive meaningful change. We need more women in leadership, but we also need to understand and address the barriers that may be preventing some women from taking that next step.

Who are the female mentors who supported you throughout your career?

One of my earliest female mentors was actually a client. For the first decade of my career, I had very few female leaders around me in private practice, so I found inspiration elsewhere.

A particularly influential mentor was Sabrina Condello, who was leading a major banking operation in Australia at the time. I worked closely with her on a transaction over the course of a year and was struck by how dynamic, focused and capable she was while also managing family responsibilities. She showed me what strong leadership could look like.

More recently, people like Aggie Maisano at Gadens have been influential. Aggie is incredibly smart, authentic and has held leadership roles in high-profile organisations. She brings a depth of experience and perspective that I admire enormously.

What support or advice did they provide that made an impact?

Many of the women I looked up to were energetic, intelligent and successful leaders, and naturally I would ask them how they managed to do it all.

Their answer was always remarkably consistent: you don't.

The advice was never that you can be 100% across every aspect of your life all of the time. Rather, it was that you can have both a rewarding career and a family, but there will be times when different priorities take precedence. Understanding that reality removes a lot of unnecessary pressure.

I've also learned the importance of setting boundaries, prioritising effectively and supporting other women. Having people who understand the challenges you're facing and who genuinely want to see you succeed can make a significant difference.

What would you say to young female lawyers asking for career advice?

One of the most valuable lessons I've learned is not to put pressure on yourself to be everything to everyone all of the time.

It's possible to build a successful legal career while also pursuing other goals outside work, whether that's raising a family, caring for others or following personal interests. But it's important to recognise that there will be trade-offs and that perfection is neither realistic nor necessary.

Focus on doing great work, building strong relationships and backing yourself. A long and rewarding career is built over time, not all at once.

Looking ahead, what continues to motivate and inspire you in your work?

What excites me most is the future of Gadens. There is a real sense of energy and ambition across the firm, and I love being part of an organisation that is continually striving to be better.

There is a strong belief in where we are heading and enormous potential for growth. Being able to contribute to that journey, support our people and help shape what comes next is something I find incredibly motivating. I genuinely believe the best is still ahead of us.



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Recognised in Australasian
Lawyer Elite Women 2026 report