

Press Release

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Withers maintains Asia-Pacific growth with hire of Australia and Singapore commercial team

International law firm Withers has continued to expand its presence across the Asia-Pacific region with the strategic hire of the team from the leading Sydney and Singapore-based hotel and hospitality specialist firm Ryan Lawyers.

The team of four corporate and commercial lawyers is led by **Robert Williams** a recognised expert in the hotels sector, who will head Withers' Asia-Pacific Hotels practice. Robert previously ran the Australian business of Ryan Lawyers, and has worked at Baker & McKenzie and Taylor Wessing. He is joined by **Justin Gross**, partner, who has 20 years' experience in M&A, funds and structuring, with tax, accounting and legal skills. **Chris Greiner**, a consultant to the team, is very highly regarded in the industry, with over 30 years of experience in hospitality sector transactions and 20 years at Ashursts, including as a senior partner. **Vivian Chen**, associate, is an experienced junior lawyer and has been supporting the team for a number of years.

Margaret Robertson, Managing Director of Withers, comments: "Withers has a long history of working with leading brands in the hotels and hospitality sectors, including Soho House, Levy Brothers hotel group, Balthazar and Eataly restaurants. Not only is the sector a natural fit with the interests of our clients, but it also has huge growth potential across Asia. Robert and his team are leading advisors in the field and will greatly enhance our offering in the region."

Robert Williams adds: "Withers has a great platform across Asia-Pacific and, importantly, Withers KhattarWong gives us terrific presence in Singapore, which is the centre of gravity for hotel deals in South East Asia. The firm's focus on high net worth investors and entrepreneurs aligns really well with our practice in the hotel and hospitality sector. Hotels and resort investment and development in Asia is growing steadily with S\$12 billion in transactions expected in 2016. We believe that combining our industry experience with Withers' reach and reputation makes for an unbeatable proposition for us and our clients."

The team represents leading owners and operators in the hotels and hospitality sector. They specialise in acquisitions and sales of hotels and resorts, negotiating hotel management, franchising and development/leasing deals, operating platform M&A transactions and providing capital raising, fund structuring and vacation ownership advice.

Withers has transformed its footprint in Asia-Pacific since 2014: opening in Sydney towards the end of 2014 and creating the Withers SBL alliance; establishing the Withers KhattarWong alliance in Singapore in April 2015, which has hugely increased the services and size of the firm in South East Asia; and opening a corporate tax practice in Tokyo in June 2015. With an expanded Californian practice, including offices in San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles and Rancho Santa Fe, the firm is based across the Pacific Rim's key financial centres.

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About Withers

Withers is an international law firm dedicated to entrepreneurs, successful people and their businesses.

With over 160 partners and more than 450 other lawyers, we have unparalleled expertise in commercial, tax, trusts, estate planning, financial services, litigation and arbitration, real estate, charities, employment, family law and other legal issues facing individuals and their families. The firm has advised 42% of the top 100 UK Sunday Times Rich List and over 20% of the top 100 US Forbes list, as well as numerous families in Asia.

Withers has 17 offices worldwide in London, New York, New Haven, Greenwich (Connecticut), San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, Rancho Santa Fe, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo*, the British Virgin Islands, Geneva, Zurich, Milan and Padua. The firm is a member of the Withers SBL alliance, which has offices in Melbourne and Sydney.

*Withers Japan, Zeirishi Houjin.

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