THE 2016
LawFuel
POWER LIST
New Zealand’s leading and most influential Lawyers

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“Power” has a multitude of meanings, and ranking “Power” in terms of lawyers is a job that may defeat some. However, with the assistance of an editorial panel and solicitations from a range of private and public practicing lawyers, academics, consultants, recruiters, barristers, clients, in house counsel and others, we’ve compiled our list of 50.

Judges and politicians are excluded. The list is drawn from those in practice or who are lawyers working in a field where their major impact may not be upon the law or clients, but rather upon commerce, public practice, policy and other matters.

What are the factors that we have used to delineate “power”? We put together our list based on our knowledge of the law business combined with an informal survey of some of the most significant and knowledgeable figures in the industry – from barristers and in-house counsel to law firm managers, legal consultants, law recruiters, journalists and others.

Ranking power is a specialised business – we don’t say that altogether tongue in cheek, either – because the nature of power changes, its impact varies and those who wield it alter and change. Some, for instance those exercising vast power over government agencies are, as one team member put it, are simply “seat warmers”, while others truly place their mark upon their roles. Commerce Commission chair Mark Berry is a case in point so far as the latter is concerned. Similarly, in making our ‘power assessment’ we have weighed the relative nature of power in terms of those working directly within the law and those, such as directors and others, whose influence is measured more by their impact upon others. In other words we considered the influence excerted by those in their work capacity.

We have placed some of the “public power” people into a short, special category, just as we have also placed some of the Mainland’s major legal players into another list. Influencer’s – the academics, commentators and others who influence the way we think about and approach the law.

The Power List is not about popularity, the most voted-for or the most recent deals, but rather by possessing an influence exerted through ability, expertise, knowledge, contacts or sheer drive and a rolodex of influencing contacts. Some Power Listers may be downright unlikeable, but they all have influence or control the way in which the law may be practiced, discussed or wielded.

But, we await your feedback. Feel free to let us know at lawfuel@gmail.com.

John Bowie, Publisher, LawFuel Media.
ALL-NEW JAGUAR F-PACE
THE PERFORMANCE CAR OTHERS LOOK UP TO

JAGUAR
Dame Patsy Reddy may not be your typical practising lawyer, but as a lawyer holding one of the most important constitutional roles in the country, her position as LawFuel’s list-leading position is one that is unassailable.

She is also our biggest-rising listee, up from last year’s Power List depths to the number one position with her appointment as Governor General.

Although there are few instances when the Governor-General may exercise discretion under her reserve powers (which includes appointing a Prime Minister and forcing a dissolution of Parliament and refusing to assent to legislation) the powers are nonetheless considerable, including the ability to use her powers in emergency situations or against ministerial advice.

However Dame Patsy was powerful prior to her appointment and had the ear of both public and commercial interests in a manner that saw her profile grow significantly.

Prior to her appointment she had made the headlines with her work reviewing the New Zealand spy agencies along with Sir Michael Cullen. Her governance work had already seen her with directorships at Telecom and NZ Post, as well as her work as chairwoman of the New Zealand Film Commission and deputy chairwoman of the NZ Transport Agency at the time of her elevation to Government House.

Reddy is a lawyer, director, reviewer and Crown negotiator, who most recently hit the headlines for her work on a review of New Zealand’s spy agencies with Sir Michael Cullen.

She is the third woman to be appointed, following Dame Silvia Cartwright and Dame Catherine Tizard and also follows in the legal footsteps of several others including Sir Michael Hardie Boys and Sir Anand Satyanand.

A bright and capable lawyer from the start, the Waikato girl who moved to Wellington to study and succeed as a lawyer and successful businesswoman has assumed the mantle at the top of the Power List in a role that may be largely ceremonial, but which carries powers and a personal cache that will see her assume an influence beyond many who have preceeded her.

Last Year – No. 48
ANDREW BRIDGMAN

Chief Executive of the Ministry of Justice with 3000 employees and over 100 offices, vast power over the way justice is dispensed, fines collected, courts organised and much more.

At last year’s number 1 on the List, Andrew Bridgman moved down one slot this year.

A self confessed “recidivist” Justice Ministry mandarin, Andrew Bridgman is nonetheless a highly effective operator who has wrought significant change to the reorganised Ministry, including the establishment of a new management and policy group to oversee the changes, which have included the establishment of the Public Defence Service, the elevation of the role of the Office of Treaty Settlements, the funding of legal aid, modernisation and reorganisation of the courts, the Criminal Procedure Act shake-up affecting the way criminal law is dispensed and the biggest such change in over half a century.

Mr Bridgman’s ‘customer-centric’ approach to justice has displayed an astute management of the major changes he has overseen, including hiring top talent such as trade negotiator Nigel Fyfe from MFAT to oversee the establishment and deployment of the PDS as well as the controversial cuts to legal aid, as well as appointing former diplomat and defence deputy secretary Brook Barrington as his deputy chief executive.

The major changes have not been without controversy and dissent, including from the Law Society on occasion, such as with the reorganisation of the Auckland District Courts, family court changes, court closures and other matters.

The increased use of technology in the delivery of justice services and fines collections, which has involved a drive for efficiencies in the interests of recovering fines in an effective manner, which has permitted the dispensing with half the bailiffs, setting up a multilingual, high-tech call centre in Auckland and other drivers designed to streamline the delivery of judicial services.

Even the judges themselves have not been spared the need for increased austerity as he took a close look at their $20 million in annual expenses. The half-million dollar man sits atop the power list as the man with the most power in the LawFuel Power List.
Mark Berry, former partner at Bell Gully and consultant to Chapman Tripp and now chairman of the Commerce Commission has assisted in driving the Commission’s role as a major influence over commercial and consumer life in New Zealand, also down one position from last year on the List.

Dr Berry holds a doctorate from Columbia University and holds his current position until 2019. Playing a significant role in fighting cartels, the Dunedin-born lawyer is the son of a radio journalist and a former lecturer at Otago Law School, the competition lawyer is also on the advisory board at the Institute for Consumer Antitrust Studies at Loyola University of Chicago Law School as well as serving as an associate member of the powerful Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

His diminutive size belies his power over business, public and competition law. At the Commission, which he has chaired since 2009, handling issues ranging from broadband internet pricing to interest rate swaps, foreign exchange cartels, supermarket supply monopolies and other key pressure points in the New Zealand economy.

The Commission has been front and centre in significant investigations like the forex probes and which have involved tackling some of the most powerful financial institutions in the world, including Goldman Sachs, Credit Suisse, Citigroup, JP Morgan and others, the position of the Commission and his chairmanship has been a major factor in driving the investigations, his ability to grant immunity from prosecution in the case of cartel investigations, currency manipulation and other matters and generally wielding the increased power the Commission has obtained in recent years to compel the giving of evidence.

He was personally involved in the $60 million settlement regarding alleged misdescription of securities by Credit Agricole and brokers Forsyth Barr. Similarly he was heavily involved in the 2013 decision to sue the major banks over interest rate swap contracts that were sold to farmers and others and involving intensive, individual investigations.

Although a role that could be highly politicised, his chairmanship has been characterised by their use in cases that might be seen in some quarters as potentially compromising government interests, such as the decision in respect of wholesale pricing of copper broadband and recommendation as to the need for wholesale broadband services from Chorus needing to fall beneath the planned entry level suggested by Government.
A rapid rise up the rankings for Una Jagose, who was appointed to replace retired Solicitor General Michael Heron QC in November 2015.

Una Jagose had already held a position of considerable power as acting head of the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB). She had previously been Deputy Solicitor, Crown Legal Risk at Crown Law for two years before moving to the GCSB role. Earlier, she worked for Crown Law for over a decade and had also been chief legal advisor at the Ministry of Fisheries.

Most recently she has faced dealing with the high profile discharge without conviction of rugby player Losi Filipo.

**Last Year – No. 31**

Rob Everett, the Chief Executive of the Financial Markets Authority, Rob Everett has overseen the strengthening of FMA’s powers since joining the agency in 2014.

From the UK and starting his legal career with Allen & Overy, Rob Everett is formerly a director of regulatory consultancy Promontory Financial Group and prior to that with the Bank of America Merrill Lynch, he has significant international regulatory experience. Working in Merrill Lynch’s legal department for almost 10 years gave him a solid grounding in transactional and debt markets experience in Europe and the United States before being appointed head of legal/compliance for the firm’s research division.

Strengthened powers of the FMA following the finance company debacle of 2009 and with changes like the Financial markets Conduct Act have provided significant powers to the agency and its chief. Taking over from the former Securities Commission, the FMA’s role is now more significant and powerful with its chief commanding powers that supersede what his predecessors wielded.

Although criticised in some quarters for his settlement of the Hanover case, returning $18 million to investors who had collectively lost $500 million through the group, it also displays an investor-focused approach and a pragmatic one as well. However, notwithstanding the pragmatism, Rob Everett’s role is a powerful one that will provide significant influence on the shape of business in New Zealand.

**Last year – No. 15**
Nuance®
Dragon®
Professional
Individual
6. JEREMY SALMOND

Jeremy Salmond heads The Treasury’s legal department as Legal and Business Services manager. With high GDP growth and a resilient economy and with ambitions to have a world-leading Treasury, Jeremy Salmond’s role leading the legal team is central to the Treasury’s success, as well as residing significant power within his hands so far as the all important “legals” on major government deals are concerned.

Major floats and restructuring such as those involving Solid Energy, IPOs for Mighty River, Genesis and Meridian and major infrastructure funding including the Christchurch restructuring is part of the major work undertaken by his team and more recently major concerns over DHB finances and other issues have created significant Treasury involvement. Apart from the legal team he also handles business services and ministerial advisory work.

With a relatively small team of under 10, the group work with the all of government panel and their selection of a team for a procurement deal or anything else can have major repercussions for law firms. To get offside with Jeremy Salmond can have major consequences, as one senior lawyer told us. Most importantly however he has the capacity to effect changes to the law through policy advisory work as well as working with it.

Last year – No. 7

7. BRIAN DICKEY

Finishing 2016 with successful prosecutions for corruption against an Auckland Council officer and a roading contractor, Brian Dickey has notched up a high profile success to help mark his first 20 months since being confirmed as Auckland’s Crown Solicitor.

As Auckland’s Crown Prosecutor, Brian Dickey’s role may be less than it once was under the likes of the Justice Simon Moore or the combative and colourful David Morris, but it remains a significant role nonetheless.

A partner in long-serving Auckland Crown Prosecution firm Meredith Connell, who have held the Crown warrant for over 90 years, Brian Dickey has handled a large number of financial company collapse prosecutions, including the high profile prosecution of Bridgencorp’s Rod Petricevic.

Married with three sons, Mr Dickey has been with his firm since 1994 and a partner since 2000. He has been acting prosecutor since Simon Moore’s elevation to the High Court in 2014 and formally appointed in 2015. Although the Auckland warrant was split with the establishment of the Manukau warrant-holders – Kayes Fletcher Walker, Meredith Connell still devote around 20 per cent of their work to prosecution activity and as the largest city in the country it sees the most crime.

Last year – No. 20
8. MARK VERBIEST

Mark Verbiest’s move has been upwards as he has cemented his position as one of the most powerful lawyer/businessmen in the country. Chairing the country’s largest digital media company Spark, the former Telecom, he stirred the commercial world with the company’s announcement to move towards virtual meetings.

Further elevating his position has been his appointment, along with fellow Power Lister Cathy Quinn, as non-executive directors of the Treasury Board, where they already served as the Treasury’s advisory board.

Verbiest has developed a list of director and chairmanships that place him at the forefront of New Zealand business, following his career with Simpson Grierson as a commercial lawyer. A seven year hiatus with (then) Telecom as company secretary and member of the company’s senior executive team saw him subsequently develop his network as a consultant to a variety of companies across multiple commercial areas ranging from telecommunications to medical insurance, banking and property.

His work on a range of strategic and governance issues, including undertaking substantial work within the energy and communication industries, including as chair of the Electricity Industry Transmission Pricing Methodology Project.

As chairman of Spark and Transpower, director of Freightways and Willis Bond Capital Partners and a former board member of the Financial Markets Authority.

Last year – No. 22

9. KATHRYN BECK

Being law Society president provides an immediate position of power, albeit one that may be influenced with greater or lesser effectiveness depending upon the office-holder.

She’s a founding partner in the specialist employment law firm SBM Legal and been the New Zealand Law Society’s Auckland Vice-President and is a former convenor of the Law Society Employment Law Committee.

Kathryn Beck is relatively new to the position and follows the popular and effective predecessors in Chris Moore and Jonathan Temm QC.
David Goddard QC is the most successful appellate lawyer appearing in the Supreme Court, David Goddard’s list of appellate successes rank him as one of the most influential lawyers of the current generation.

A jurist-in-waiting he inhabits Wellington’s pre-eminent Thorndon Chambers and practices across a wide variety of commercial and public law, adding a dash of contract and international law to the mix.

A QC since 2003 he has also been extensively involved in policy and law reform issues, as well as representing the government on significant negotiations, conducting a Ministerial inquiry into ACC Funding, supplying commercial law reform advice to the government and helping shape the nature of commercial law through his wide-ranging commercial cases.

This year alone – catch your breath – he has been involved in his appearance for Carter Holt Harvey over alleged leaky school buildings, appearing for US company Americhip over the “catch me if you can” fraud involving two former employees, acting for 40 hip replacement clients suing the manufacturer, acting for Huka Lodge Alex van Heeren (right) in his challenge of a US$25 million Court of Appeal judgment and appearing for Bill English and Paula Bennett in a dispute over the sale of State housing to commercial providers in Tauranga.

A Rhodes scholar and former Chapman Tripp partner, lecturer and author he is inhabits a star still in its ascendancy notwithstanding a small ranking drop this year.

Last year – No. 6

Mai Chen is undoubtedly one of New Zealand’s highest-profile lawyers, combining her public law position with writing, lecturing and a range of other activities that see the diminutive figure of Mai Chen stride the New Zealand political and legal stage.

Few New Zealand lawyers have achieved their own Wikipedia pages replete with details of their legal and commercial exploits, but Mai Chen’s accomplishments and boundless ambition and energy have resulted in a range of significant achievements ranging from her University of Otago attendance, where she graduated first equal with her first class honours degree to setting up her law firm with none other than former Prime Minister and fellow Power Lister Sir Geoffrey Palmer QC in 1994.

The eponymous law firm, from which her partner Palmer retired in 2002 when he turned 60, has represented an array of high profile clients with a particular effectiveness representing disgruntled groups seeking public law redress.

An author of the “Public Law Toolbox” published by LexisNexis, and an adjunct Professor at University of Auckland, she has also found time to act as Chair of New Zealand Asian Leaders (she was born in Taipei and came to New Zealand as a six-year-old in 1970), she was also appointed as a director of the BNZ in 2015. She has also undertaken a range of pro bono work for a range of groups ranging from the Auckland Zoo to a Wellington school for teenage parents.

She opened her firm’s office in Auckland in 2013 and has continued to exhibit her trademark energy and intellect in equal measure.

Last Year – No. 14
12. **KATHERYN ANDERSON**

Katherine Anderson may have been a late starter in terms of commencing her legal career, but it has not prevented her handling major work for the current and previous Labour government and now for the all-powerful Goff-lead Auckland Council, where she is legal director, a position occupied since early 2014.

A Tokoroa local, she started her law studies after the birth of her son, now adult, and relishes the challenges provided by her Auckland City role, telling LawTalk “our legal book includes Treaty-related work, supporting co-governance post-Treaty settlement entities, planning, commercial contracts, infrastructure and development agreements, procurement, retail bond issues, private-public arrangements – like Skypath, prosecutions, judicial review – environmental and non-environmental, civil litigation, major property transactions and advising Local Boards and Governing Body.”

A Chapman Tripp alumni she previously worked with the New Zealand Police, Crown Law and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

With a full time team of 40, the Council legal division is responsible for delivering on the Long Term Plan and Unitary Plan, as well as settling major priorities in the heart of New Zealand’s beating commercial heart, confronting major issues that will shape the city and in many ways the country’s direction on important matters.

**Last Year – No. 9**

13. **ROBERT FISHER QC**

Robert Fisher QC is regarded as the ‘go to’ mediator by many in the corporate world and has achieved a high profile with his various assignments and writings on evidential, arbitration and related issues.

A former High Court judge, having retired from the bench in 2004, he has applied himself fulltime to his arbitration and mediation practice, as well as serving as an appellate judge in several Pacific states and undertaking government enquiries such as the infamous inquiry into David Bain’s compensation.

As a High Court Judge, a position he achieved in 1989, he was supervising judge of the commercial list, Executive Judge of the Auckland High Court and a divisional member of the NZ Court of Appeal. and chairman of the NZ Rules Committee.

Academically distinguished, with a Doctor of Laws and Fulbright Scholarship, he has handled some of the most significant commercial arbitrations in New Zealand and continues to attract a wide following and busy case load, including relationship property issues and a more recent case involving domain name dispute between two tax refund operations.

Having written widely on a range of legal issues, he also continues to provide articles on matters ranging from how to tell if a witness is lying, to the finer points of arbitration.

A boating, running and tennis aficionado and French speaking romantic, Robert (Bob) Fisher is well placed to continue his role as the country’s leading mediator and arbitrator although his place has slipped through pressure on the upper echelons of the Power List and his less prominent role in recent mediation and arbitration work.

**Last year – No. 12**
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14. REBECCA KITTERIDGE

Rebecca Kitteridge came to the NZSIS after six years as Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Executive Council, within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Having served under four Prime Ministers and four Governors-General in that role and in earlier roles in DPMC she also worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and started her career with nine years in the private sector.

Kitteridge joined the Security Intelligence Service in May 2014, just as the world became a much darker place.

As she did in her previous job as Cabinet Secretary, right hand woman to the prime minister during closed door Cabinet meetings, she leaves her secrets at work.

15. ALAN GALBRAITH

Alan Galbraith QC is the scholarly and successful barrister who fields some of the toughest commercial cases in the court calendar on a regular basis. A Rhodes Scholar (1967) and Oxford graduate, his academic and personal credentials stand him in good stead, providing testimony to his intellect and legal ability.

A Queens’ Counsel since 1987 he is also a passionate runner like a number of the other Power List members (Fisher QC, No.13) and has slipped in rankings with the elevation of other members of the list, rather than through any reduction in workload or influence.

Being slight of build and as quick footed physically as mentally, his other abiding interest is horse racing which has seen his "Rich Hill Stud" interests in the Waikato, shared with former Supreme Court Justice Bill Wilson QC.

Among his notable cases have crossed the spectrum of New Zealand business, ranging from litigation where he has appeared for Air New Zealand, the Auckland City Council, the BNZ, Brierley Investments, Fisher & Paykel, Fletcher Challenge, Fonterra and just about every other significant name in New Zealand commerce.

He has also served as a board member of the TAB, the NZ Racing Industry Board, NZ Racing Authority, Broadcasting Commission and most recently as Deputy Chairman of the Sports Tribunal and his most recent high profile case was representing former NZX CEO Mark Weldon in the lengthy lawsuit between the Exchange and Melbourne-based Clear Grain Exchange.

Last year – No. 5
THE POWER LIST - THE COUNTRIES LEADING INFLUENTIAL LAWYERS
The most powerful, legal influencer’s and leaders who help shape how we use the law and what we know of it.

16. BRENDEN HORSLEY
Brendan Horsley, Deputy Solicitor General (Criminal) since April 2014 has a significant role after serving as the first director of the Public Defence Service (PDS), whose development and growth he oversaw as its first National Director. The PDS expanded from its initial 50 lawyers to around 140 today, the largest grouping of criminal lawyers in the country.

Considered a potential contender for the top job in the office following Michael Heron QC, Horsley is a Wellington boy who started his legal career in Gisborne, where he started with Burnard Bull, Brendan Horsley he cut his teeth in the civil service with the Commerce Commission handling various quasi-criminal and criminal prosecutions before joining Crown Law in 2001.

His current role sees him signing off on appellate work undertaken by the Crown, including deciding whether Crown Law will agree to mutual assistance requests and other statutory functions. The increased role of the Public Prosecutions Unit and increasing the overall government legal network provides him with significant influence over the way prosecutions and Crown legal work is handled across multiple departments and agencies.

He attracted public attention before the High Court when he had to defend the Crown’s breach of journalist Nicky Hager’s rights during a search of Hager’s home when a document found in the home was emailed to the police and the appeal against their 17 year sentence by baby Moko’s killer Nicola Dally-Paki.

17. PETER WATTS QC
Professor Peter Watts QC is highly regarded and one of the few academic lawyers to have become a silk. Appointed in the ‘catch up’ round in 2013, Professor Watts is recognised internationally as an expert on commercial law matters, particularly agency and company law, equity, restitution and insolvency.

However his role as a consultant and adviser upon a range of legal issues has seen his hand behind many complex commercial matters that is not necessarily evident to many outside of the immediate legal teams. Residing at Bankside Chambers he is also door tenant at London’s Fountain Court Chambers.

His academic writing is extensive, extending from his editing of the leading text in the Commonwealth on Agency (Boxstead & Reynolds on Agency being a major and prestigious work) as well as his texts on company law and directors powers and duties.

His influence also extends beyond these shores with his academic writing in numerous law journals cited by judges in the House of Lords, the Australian High Court and many Commonwealth courts, including our own Supreme Court.

More recently he has been embroiled in a disagreement within the Auckland University Law School regarding the increase in the student intake in a move that could also harm the University’s rankings.

“The main problem with it is the difficulties of recruiting top quality teachers in law means that there’s a concern that the quality of the teaching of the basic compulsory course in the law degree will be adversely affected.”

Acknowledging how the new move could affect the university’s world rankings, Watts said: “Some people think an increase in the size of the law school is likely to improve the ranking. But a lot of people – including myself – think that that’s unlikely and in fact will harm the ranking,” he told the NZ Herald.
18. NICK KYNOCH

The expanding influence of the FMA has seen a central role for Nick Kynoch since returning from the UK where he was global head of conduct risk and contentious regulatory compliance at Barclays Bank and from partnership with global legal firm Mayer Brown.

He is on the frontline of regulatory and enforcement action with the FMA, leading the enforcement and litigation policy and governance at the FMA as well as the corporate, legal and audit teams, investing him with highly significant power in the local business scene.

His wide experience in financial services regulation in the UK and Europe (he also served on the City of London Law Society Regulatory Committee) give him a perspective and background that pushes him to the top echelons of the Power List.

Before joining Barclays he had worked at Mayer Brown, the US-based legal giant, and then Berwin Leighton Paisner. At both firms he led the London based financial services regulatory teams, advising financial institutions on the requirements of the UK and European regulatory regimes, and the provision of financial products and services.

19. DAVID WILLIAMS QC

Sir David Williams QC, former jurist and New Zealand’s leading arbitrator retains one of the busiest arbitration practices in New Zealand, ruling on some of the most complex and high value arbitrations in the world where he has been involved either as counsel or arbitrator in over 130 international arbitrations.

His work involving oil and gas, joint ventures, reinsurance, construction and other disputes places him at the forefront of international arbitration work.

He also teaches international arbitration at Auckland University Law School where he is an honorary professor and sits on a variety of international arbitration panels, as well as acting as a visiting speaker. Together with Amokura Kawharu, he is co-author of Williams and Kawharu on Arbitration (LexisNexis, 2011).

He was knighted in the 2017 honours list.
There are few power assets more powerful than controlling money — and when the money is close to $30 billion you have a great deal of power.

Matt Whineray, as chief investment officer at the New Zealand Super Fund has more say than just about anyone in the country on major investments in the country.

The fund received recent publicity over its proposal to invest up to $260 million in small and medium-sized New Zealand companies through three venture funds in a move that will be a massive boost to the burgeoning start-up and existing enterprises that hold high potential for growth.

A former First NZ Capital and Credit Suisse banker, the Auckland law and commerce graduate is highly regarded by those in the business as both a smart operator and nice guy.

Martin Smith might have an everyday name, but his position as Chief Tax Counsel at the IRD makes him one of the country’s most powerful lawyers, conducting and assisting in the prosecution of massive tax cases.

Formerly a tax consulting partner in a major accounting practice in Sydney and Director of Taxation Research for Ernst & Young in New Zealand, he has degrees from Adelaide University and a Masters in Tax Law from Auckland.

Relishing a low profile, he nonetheless commands a powerful position astride one of the largest and most significant departments in the country, affecting taxpayers large and small. The IRD’s tax department is one of the largest in the country and its effect upon taxpayers, corporate policy, international tax law and other issues is almost unparalleled.

Last year – No. 13

Spymaster Cheryl Gwyn, New Zealand’s “M”, has both the lawyer’s precision and clear thinking combined with a sense of humour that may belie her current role as head of the Security Intelligence Service.

A former socialist activist who belonged to the very far-Left organisation that the SIS once took keen interest in, the Socialist Action League, which she joined along with equally far-Left former Green MP Keith Locke. She wrote articles for its newspaper Socialist Action, mostly about workplace disputes, between 1981 and 1984, and was the Hastings organiser for the Young Socialists, the SAL’s youth wing.

She worked at the Whakatu meat works following her graduation from Auckland University, where she campaigned for women butchers, and also worked for both Chapman Tripp and Russell McVeagh before being appointed by the Clark Government to the position of Deputy Secretary of Justice and in 2003 she became Deputy Solicitor-General in the Crown Law Office in a dramatic rise to power.

Some remain sceptical of her political leanings and the unusual position she now occupies, but few deny the power it provides, albeit more from the shadows than the parapets from which she once walked.
23. **CRAIG MULHOLLAND**

General Counsel at the ANZ Bank, Craig Mullholland’s influence on those firms seeking bank work.

Craig is responsible for legal and corporate governance matters for ANZ Bank New Zealand Limited and its New Zealand businesses.

He has more than 20 years’ experience in legal and commercial roles across a range of industries in New Zealand and overseas.

Prior to joining ANZ in 2011, he worked in a leading private practice in New Zealand and held a number of high profile in-house legal and commercial roles in large listed and private companies with global interests.

24. **JULIE READ**

Serious Fraud Office Chief Executive Julie Read came to the office in late 2013 as an experienced litigation, including 20 years with Australia’s Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) where she held several senior roles.

Regarded as an experienced and capable civil servant combined with some battle-hardened litigation experience, Tasmanian Julie Read has brought increased rigour to the SFO, managing around 50 staff and overseeing serious fraud prosecutions as well as maintaining effective relations with government and sister Crown agencies and operations.

Her experience includes acting as ASIC’s representative on the International Organisation of Securities Commissions, responsible for cross-border securities law enforcement and acting as Director of Enforcement and General Counsel with ASIC.

She has undertook a significant shake up of the SFO in order to better focus the organisation on complex crime investigation and prosecution and to, as the SFO report last year stated, to “triage complaints and focus …”.

The Agency struggled with the finance company collapses in the wake of the GFC and badly needed reorganisation and better focus to deal with the onset of wide-ranging complex crime prosecution.

So far, Julie Read appears to be handling the job competently although prosecutions under her leadership have dropped and she more recently encountered some criticism in the local media for her attendance back home on an intensive training course.

Last Year – No. 21

25. **WHAIMUTU DEWES**

‘What’ Dewes, of Ngati Porou and Ngati Rangitihi descent, holds a powerful position among a number of key organisations.

Chairman of Sealord, which announced the investment of $70 million in fisheries vessels in August 2016, with the intention of being the best deep sea fisheries company in New Zealand. In early 2016 he was appointed to the board of Aotearoa Fisheries Ltd and he has served in a number of seafood-related roles including the first 10 years on the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission.

He is a former Director of Moana Pacific Fisheries and was Deputy Chair of Sealord from 1992 to 2008. As well as being active in the affairs of his iwi, Mr Dewes is also on the boards of Contact Energy, and the Treasury and has held directorships at TVNZ and AMP NZ Advisory Board.

Also a climate change iwi group leader he continues to collect significant advisory and directorships as he steps into an increasingly influential role as a Maori leader.

His former directorships include Television New Zealand Limited, Housing New Zealand and the AMP New Zealand Advisory Board, and he was deputy chairman of Sealord Group between 1992 and 2008. He has also held senior management roles at Fletcher Challenge and the Department of Māori Affairs.

Whaimutu has a Master’s degree in public administration and degrees in arts and law.
THE POWER LIST - THE COUNTRIES LEADING INFLUENTIAL LAWYERS

The most powerful, legal influencer’s and leaders who help shape how we use the law and what we know of it.

26. **Nick Wells**

As Chief Executive Partner at Chapman Tripp, one of the largest and the most profitable law firm in New Zealand, Nick Wells has a powerful position in the legal universe, enhanced by his role as a leader in Maori law issues.

An expert in corporate structuring for businesses and Maori groups, he is Kaihautu of the firm’s Maori legal group helping iwi and Maori organisations needing assistance in handling Treaty settlements and joint ventures.

A member of the Treaty Team for Ngati Whatua Orakei and he assists a number of community organisations, including the Te Potiki National Trust, the Sir Hugh Kawharu Foundation, the Sir Peter Blake Trust and the First Foundation.

He is also an Honorary Teaching Fellow in Law at the University of Auckland and is responsible for the Law School’s Iwi Governance and Commercial Transaction courses.

Working with Chapman Tripp chairman Roger Wallis he helps control one of the true power houses of New Zealand law.

27. **Miriam Dean**

Highly regarded in the commercial and dispute resolution area, Miriam Dean is one of the country’s most highly regarded silks and a leading advocate of the movement to develop the role of women in the law.

As the first woman parter at Russell McVeagh in 1987 she became a barrister in 1995, as a litigator who has increasingly moved into governance and providing legal strategic advice. Her company and governance abilities have given her an in-demand

Having overseen the billion dollar broadbank rollout and the creation of the Auckland Super City, she has also helped direct one of the Auckland Council’s organisations that supervise the council’s investments.

Chair of New Zealand on Air, Chair of the Banking Ombudsman Scheme, Deputy Chair of Auckland Council Investments, Director of Crown Fibre Holdings Ltd and a trustee of the Royal New Zealand Ballet. She regularly chairs independent inquiries for the Crown, with the Government entrusting her with the review of Crown Law in 2012, and the Ministerial Inquiry into the WPC80 botulinum scare in 2013. A keen supporter of women’s success in the law, she is enthusiastic about sharing her career experiences.

Most recently she made significant recommendations in a report to the government on the ACC that originated from the Acclaim Otago group involving problems faced by those injured and facing appeals against the Corporation’s rulings.
28. RON MANSFIELD

After something of a dearth of top criminal lawyers with the death of legal legend Peter Williams QC and the demise of practitioners like.... Hart, the criminal bar has been somewhat starved of legal stars. However Ron Mansfield has assumed the mantle with his hyperactive criminal practice, built around the solid foundation of both his energy and mainstay client, Kim Dotcom.

Ron Mansfield's chambers continue to reverberate to ringing phones and assorted clientele – at least those free to visit his chambers – and with a legal and support team to investigate and handle criminal defence work his practice continues to grow.

The defence of Kim Dotcom, facing his long-running battle with the US government, Ron Mansfield's 25 year legal career has hit a public high point, although his expertise across the criminal law spectrum was already well known.

29. MARK WEENINK

Former Minter Ellison Rudd Watts managing partner Mark Weenink is the only lawyer sitting on the management team of a major bank, also possessing one of the longest titles of anyone on the list, being General Manager, Regulatory Affairs, Compliance & General Counsel New Zealand.

He joined the bank in August 2015 after a successful career within the profession and with a wealth of experience as both a lawyer specialising in the finance field and with proven leadership abilities.

Practising with Minters since 2008, he has also worked with a financial services group in Sydney and with US-based mega firm McDermott Will & Emery in London. His earlier legal days were with Bell Gully in Auckland. A winner of numerous awards his influence within Westpac and

weenink-brothersAlso unique is his membership of the Weenink Brothers (not a rock band) but three successful legal brothers, all Rongotai College old boys, home to numerous current and former All Blacks, one of whom (Scott) has also made the Power List at no. 43.

Brent Weenink is head of compliance and regulatory affairs at OM Financial.
30. **MARK HENAGHAN**

Professor Mark Henaghan, Dean of Otago Law School has achieved near legendary status as a mentor and leader, as well as a passionate advocate for using law for the benefit of the under privileged and abused. Apart from his teaching however, the charismatic academic is also a regular commentator and participant in legal queries, as well as being a long time rugby and on-stage performer creating a persona larger than just about any academic.

Having a strong interest in family law issues, including child abuse, relationship property and also the Judiciary, he has written on many issues, including on human genome law. A spirited and accessible commentator on law issues, particularly family law, he has also served on the editorial boards of the leading UK journal on children’s issues and on the leading journal on human rights.

He collaborates with UK and Australian researchers on the study of family relocation cases, a matter of increasing importance, as well as playing a vital leadership role in the university, including active involvement with rugby, student theatrics, debating and other roles that see his larger-than-life personality generate a near cult-following for a dean.

In a well reported debate with fellow power lister Mai Chen, an Otago alumni and current Justice Simon Moore, formerly an Otago Law School guest lecturer, he shed his clothes to reveal fake tatts, fish-net tights and all the accoutrements of an AC/DC rocker. As someone who shuns the pomp of academia for real-life involvement and a passion for making the law deliver justice for every sector of the community.

Last year – No. 29

31. **NIGEL HAMPTON QC**

Nigel Hampton QC is one of the country’s foremost criminal lawyers, having practised since 1964 and handled some of the most controversial cases since then. A mentor to fellow Power List member Jonathan Eaton QC, Nigel Hampton’s hirsute appearance cuts a rather different figure to the stylish Eaton, but his sharp mind and legal ability have placed him at the forefront of the New Zealand criminal bar.

A strong advocate against miscarriage of justice he has most recently been involved in the establishment of the New Zealand Public Interest project, designed to plug the gap in New Zealand’s criminal justice system by establishing a substitute for the (non existant) Criminal Cases Review Commission to review cases involving those like Teina Pora who have fallen through the cracks in the system.

Apart from his work at the bar, Nigel Hampton has also served as the Chief Justice of Tonga in the mid-1990s, the subject of recent publicity over corruption, drugs and other nefarious activities, as well as many educational and charitable organisations, including Law Society offices and the Litigation Skills Programme. He currently also serves as an alternate member of the Disciplinary Appeals Board for the International Criminal Court, a four year term and is the first New Zealander to be so elected.

A QC since 1989 and holding an OBE he is one of New Zealand’s few internationally recognised lawyers in the criminal law scene.

Last year – No. 25

32. **CHRISTINE GRICE**

Christine Grice. Often seen as the voice of the Law Society with pronouncements and interviews on matters affecting the profession, Christine Grice, as Executive Director of the New Zealand Law Society, has become something of an exemplar for women in law – one of the key issues facing the profession.

Since beginning her legal career in the 1980s and as a litigation consultant with Harkness Henry, she is also a past president of the New Zealand Law Society and former chair of Radio New Zealand as well as playing a role in other organisations.

An experienced mediator and arbitrator, she wields considerable power in her current role as Executive Director of the Law Society, using her ability to help shape the Law Society’s relationship both with the profession and with the outside world.

Last Year – No. 26
33. **STEPHEN FRANKS**

Stephen Franks, former Chapman Tripp partner and current principal at Franks & Ogilvie in Wellington, a firm he co-founded in 2009 as well as blogger and former ACT MP Franks occupies a unique position as both a participant and commentator upon a range of legal and social issues.

As one of the country’s highest profile lawyers he has occupied a position that may not be as hyper-energetic as his colleague in public law and public commentary, Mai Chen, but is nonetheless one that provides a useful and occasionally controversial counterpoint to much of the debate occurring around everything from legislative change and judicial performance to issues surrounding the victims of crime.

35. **ANDREW HARMOS**

Andrew, one of the firm’s two serving co-founders, advises on a wide range of corporate transactions, with a focus on takeovers, corporate advisory, co-investment and joint venture arrangements, and business acquisitions and divestments.

He has particular expertise in providing strategic governance and board advice, and is regularly asked to provide specialist independent advice to boards in tandem with a company’s usual legal advisers. He is the lead legal adviser to a number of NZX listed entities including Abano Healthcare Group, Argosy Property, Green Cross Health, and Vital Healthcare Property Trust, and a specialist adviser to a number of other NZX 50 companies.

Andrew is recognised as one of New Zealand’s leading public takeover lawyers, and co-heads the firm’s takeover practice. His experience in advising on the defence of hostile or unsolicited bids is unrivalled, and he is often sought out to provide specialist governance and strategic advice to boards who receive unsolicited bid proposals. He has presented on takeover defence to the New Zealand Institute of Directors Chairman’s Group and other specialist bodies.

Before founding Harmos Horton Lusk, Andrew was a senior corporate partner at Russell McVeagh.

34. **MADELEINE LARACY**

Madeleine Laracy heads the Public Defence Service, heading a team of around 200 and up to 16,000 cases. Placed in the position following the resignation of the former head, she came from Crown Law where her specialty areas were contempt cases and assisting in international criminal cases.

**Last Year – No. 32**

36. **JOHN STROWGER**

John Strowger, Chapman Tripp partner has been a leading commercial lawyer and at the vanguard of New Zealand’s developing investment industry, helping the law firm co-ordinate its China practice as well as playing a role with the FMA since his appointment to its board in 2012.

Consistently achieving top rankings from major legal publications like Chambers Global, Chambers Asia Pacific, the Asia Pacific Legal 500 and IFLR 1000, he is internationally regarded as a leading equity and investment lawyer, as well as for his abilities in M&A work.

He has also achieved “star” ranking in the Chambers Global for 2013-2015 and Deal Maker of the Year for the 2015 Australasian Law Awards. However, awards aside, the practice developed by John Strowger is impressive. His array of deals ranging from the sale of Carter Holt’s pulp and paper division to Japanese Oji Holdings for over $1 billion in 2014 to the purchase of five local shopping centres by Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC Real Estate for $1 billion in November 2014 demonstrate his wide ranging and heavy hitting legal prowess in major investment and M&A deals.

In October 2016 he also advised Waterman Capital on its investment in the successful My Food Bag company, which has grown to provide over a million means a month in New Zealand and is poised for further significant growth.

A keen music fan and concert goer, John Strowger reportedly a regular at Music Month shows at Ponsonby’s Whisky Bar.
37. CATHY QUINN

Cathy Quinn has continued her upward trajectory and leadership in the profession, in particular with women lawyers. Although she was replaced in December 2016 as Chair of Minter Ellison Rudd Watts she remains as a central power figure in the profession.

An experienced M&A partner, her leadership at MERW has seen the development of the firm’s Corporate Social Responsibility programme that merges pro bono and community partnerships with sustainability initiatives in a programme that sees young lawyers working in the community. Along with Power Lister Mark Verbiest she was also appointed this year to the Treasury’s board as non-executive directors.

A doctor’s daughter from Hawkes Bay, Cathy Quinn has the reputation for being a tough and effective commercial lawyer. A former co-author of the leading text Morison’s on Company Law, her legal expertise combined with her leadership both within her firm and the wider business and commercial community, including in the NZ-China Council, have seen her serve nine years on the Securities Commission and receive an appointment to the government’s Capital Markets Development Taskforce and also being named as a leading lawyer by a number of overseas journals, including winning Euromoney’s Women in Business Law Awards in Australasia in 2013 and the Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman (New Zealand) 2010.

The growth in gender diversity initiatives, the growing number of women lawyers seeking top positions as female graduates numbers continue to exceed males has seen women such as Cathy Quinn play an increasingly significant role as both leaders and role models for male and female lawyers alike who seek to develop their roles in the profession.

Last Year – No. 1

38. PIP GREENWOOD

Pip Greenwood, has several ‘Dealmaker of the Year’ awards under her belt and remains also a key member of Russell McVeagh’s senior management team.

She has also been active in moving the firm towards greater diversity, her speaking and seminar involvement and as a mentor for women in the professional and business community, she is also a highly proficient lawyer.

As a deal maker with the firm she has also been involved in a range of major transactions including for clients Fonterra, Telecom’s demerger and working on the Meridian and Mighty River Power IPOs.

A force to be reckoned with on the business and law front, an adherent to the principle of ‘disobedient thinking’ (ie pushing the envelope) her role as a leader, in particular for women professionals, sees her well placed to continue her involvement as a powerful influence in the years ahead. She is married to investment banker husband with two children.

She was quoted as saying people needed to use “disobedient thinking” to create success –

“I first heard this phrase recently at the Kea World Class New Zealand Awards. Award winner Geraldine McBride referred to disobedient thinking in her acceptance speech as the winner of the Information and Communications Award. This is about feeling free to challenge the status quo, push the envelope, come up with new ideas for doing things. Why not? What have you got to lose? In the words of Steve Jobs “Here’s to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in square holes… the ones who see things differently — they’re not fond of rules… You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, but the only thing you can’t do is ignore them because they change things… they push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.”

Last Year – No. 36
Andrew, one of the firm’s two serving co-founders, advises on a wide range of corporate transactions, with a focus on takeovers, corporate advisory, co-investment and joint venture arrangements, and business acquisitions and divestments. He has particular expertise in providing strategic governance and board advice, and is regularly asked to provide specialist independent advice to boards in tandem with a company’s usual legal advisers. He is the lead legal adviser to a number of NZX listed entities including Abano Healthcare Group, Argosy Property, Green Cross Health, and Vital Healthcare Property Trust, and a specialist advisor to a number of other NZX 50 companies. Andrew is recognised as one of New Zealand’s leading public takeover lawyers, and co-heads the firm’s takeover practice. His experience and expertise in advising on the defence of hostile or unsolicited bids is unrivalled, and he is often sought out to provide specialist governance and strategic advice to boards who receive unsolicited bid proposals. He has presented on takeover defence to the New Zealand Institute of Directors Chairman’s Group and other specialist bodies.

Before founding Harmos Horton Lusk, Andrew was a senior corporate partner at Russell McVeagh.

He is a member of the New Zealand Council of Legal Education, a member of the Executive Council of the Legal Research Foundation and a Trustee of the New Zealand Universities Law Review. His most recent book is The New Zealand Supreme Court: The First Ten Years (LexisNexis, 2015, with Michael Littlewood).

Jim Farmer QC, yachting aficionado remains a doyen of the New Zealand bar although his practice is somewhat quieter now than in days past.

Nonetheless he retains an important role as a key voice on matters affecting the law and lawyers including recent comments on proposals by Auckland University Law School to increase numbers.

He as appeared in some of the most significant commercial cases heard in New Zealand in the past two decades and continues to act in a variety of cases.

When not sailing (he also runs Georgia Racing Ltd, a company specialising in contractual disputes in the yachting world and providing “Grand Prix services” to the yacht racing community) he continues to thrive in his busy practice as one of the country’s most sought-after commercial barristers. His most recent public foray has been representing the son of former Supreme Court Justice Sir Robert Chambers in an action against fellow power lister Dame Deborah Chambers. Interestingly he has largely shunned the trend towards placing himself in a silo of specialisation but demonstrated an ability to handle everything from complex commercial litigation, competition law issues and similar to family fights like the current Chambers dispute. His involvement in many of the country’s most important litigation over the past quarter century gives him a leading role at the bar and in the profession, despite a somewhat quieter practice today than in years past. A former Russell McVeagh partner and author or many articles and books as well as practising for a decade in New South Wales where he was also appointed a QC.

Last Year – No. 23
PUBLIC POWER

Deputy Auditor General. He may be seen as the odd position for someone to be in, but that when the auditor is Deputy Auditor General, it will decide the way which public entities spend their money.

Inside the embassy, the Auditor General operates separately and apart from governments to ensure there is no conflict of interest, even when involved in questions of tax or law, government departments and agencies, state-owned enterprises and local authorities.

Like the auditor, the Auditor General operates separately and apart from governments, to ensure there is no conflict of interest, even when involved in questions of tax or law, government departments and agencies, state-owned enterprises and local authorities.

A law and arts graduate from Victoria University, that to date has not been Chief Legal Adviser at the State Sector Commission, and to date has not been Chief Legal Adviser at the State Sector Commission, has spent the past five years in the auditor general's office in this period, he has played a key role in the financial governance of New Zealand, and the financial governance of New Zealand, and the financial governance of New Zealand.

Liam Mason holds significant powers and is the Director of Regulation at the FMA. He is responsible for ensuring that the financial system operates in a safe, efficient and competitive manner, and that it provides a fair and equitable framework for New Zealand.

Brendan Arthur is the Chief Legal Advisor at the Commerce Commission. He is responsible for ensuring that the financial system operates in a safe, efficient and competitive manner, and that it provides a fair and equitable framework for New Zealand.

The role of the auditor general is to provide independent assurance that public entities are meeting their financial obligations and that their financial decisions are made in the best interests of the public. This role is critical in ensuring that public entities are transparent and accountable to the public.

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THE POWER LIST - THE COUNTRIES LEADING INFLUENTIAL LAWYERS
The most powerful, legal influencer’s and leaders who help shape how we use the law and what we know of it.

42. JEN CRAWFORD
For a downhill ski racer, Jenny Crawford has fast-tracked her career to become one of the leading resource management and planning lawyers in the country.

Joining Anderson Lloyd from in 2014, resource management and planning specialist Jenny Crawford has become very much a go-to lawyer in that space, representing a number of corporates and commercial players.

With a strong interest in the arts, she has played a key role also in one of the largest heritage projects in the world, the earthquake issues involving 22 heritage buildings in Christchurch and serves as the Chair of the Arts Centre, Christchurch.

43. SCOTT WEENINK
Recently appointed general counsel at Auckland International Airport (AIA), Scott Weenink comes with high credentials.

Helping the country open up to the world is an exciting opportunity, says Singapore-based Scott Weenink, Asia GC for telecoms provider Ooredoo.

Myanmar has seen tremendous change in a short period of time and one manifestation of this is the growing number of foreign business people and travellers visiting the country.

Myanmar’s former capital and largest city Yangon is certainly among the most visited places by New Zealander Scott Weenink, a legacy Norton Rose alum and Asia general counsel of Ooredoo. Although based in Singapore, he has spent a lot of time in Myanmar in the past two years.

Ooredoo, which means ‘I want’ in Arabic, is a brand introduced in February by Qatar Telecom to replace Qtel. It is the exclusive telecoms provider in Qatar and has a growing presence in South East Asia.

44. DAVID WETHERELL
A co-founder of leading commercial law boutique Mayne Wetherell has been involved in

A former partner of Russell McVeagh, he has represented a wide range of clients including Fonterra’s finance work, Auckland Airport, Auckland Council and various banks and finance institutions, as well as private equity group TPG. some of the country’s major commercial deals and retains a highly respected position as one of the country’s leading corporate lawyers.

45. SIR GEOFFREY PALMER QC
He may no longer be the force he once was – former PM, Law School Dean – but Sir Geoffrey Palmer QC retains a cache that he calls upon to maintain his public position as a leading academic and jurisprudence expert.

Having held just about every significant legal position short of judicial office, the academic, writer and former politician and current barrister continues to assert his views on constitutional and other issues.

He recently pronounced upon the need for a written constitution for New Zealand and regularly lectures, writes and advises upon these and other matters.

Practising from his Wellington Chambers he has handled domestic and international briefs and continues to actively engage in such matters.
46. JONATHAN EATON QC

A leading barrister who has appeared in a large number of high profile cases including numerous jury trials, notably the

He also regularly prosecutes for various arms of government and acts in professional disciplinary hearings, as well as playing a central role in Bar Association and law society matters. Appointed a QC in 2013.

He recently defended a drug addict who murdered an 87 year old man for money and achieved national prominence with his defence of former Christian Heritage political leader Graham Capill when his client was punched by a bystander leading to the fighting-fit QC tackling the offender without a care for his pinstripes.

Originally influenced by Power Lister Nigel Hampton QC, who he believes is the leading criminal silk in the South Island, the pupil however is more than ready to assume that title.

He also handles a range of white collar crime cases, including playing a prominent role in the South Canterbury Finance prosecutions.

47. MICHAEL HERON QC

Michael Heron QC slipped in placings following his resignation from his role as the Government’s chief legal adviser, but the fact of that position alone, together with his ongoing involvement in major litigation sees him retain his List position, albeit further down the ranking.

The former partner at Russell McVeagh and Meredith Connell, Michael Heron’s break with tradition with his surprise resignation was nevertheless something that fits with his career where he has balanced his professional life with his family interests.

Although not directly involved in the unsuccessful prosecution of former ACT leader John Banks, Mr Heron received some criticism for it and in fact helped develop Crown Law’s role and culture and remained a popular chief, despite presumably preferring litigation to leadership in a significant government department.

Since returning home to Auckland he has continued to receive both private and Crown work, as well as setting up an innovative, online dispute resolution service that adds yet another field of experience to his legal career.

Last year – No. 3

48. KEVIN JAFFE

Kevin Jaffe, Chairman of Simpson Grierson since 2009, Kevin Jaffe has achieved considerable rankings internationally for his M&A and corporate law work via various publications, including Chambers Global Corporate Commercial listings, the IFLR1000 M&A list and others, but he has also shown himself to be an astute law firm manager and one who has helped position Simpson Grierson as a firm that is thrusting its developing power and influence at the Holy Legal Trinity of Chapman Tripp, Russell McVeagh and Bell Gully.

He has helped cement the firm’s position as a major player in public and commercial law, providing innovation on service pricing in the face of increased competition from in-house law teams, hiring former Health Minister Tony Ryall (a non-lawyer) last November to head the firm’s public policy practice as well as placing the firm at the forefront of diversity, being first to receive the gay-friendly Rainbow Tick.

Holding a post-graduate degree from Oxford, Jaffe has been with the firm since 1986 and handled major deals including Solid Energy, including the recent sale of the Solid Energy Mines in 2016 and Mediaworks’ restructuring among others.

He has acted on a wide range of deals ranging from Solid Energy’s restructuring in 2013, Mediaworks restructuring and many others.
Lady Deborah Chambers QC continues as a powerful member of the bar and an inspirational figure for the growing female bar in particular to listen to as a proponent of how women in law can handle the glass ceiling.

Lady Deborah has been a prominent member of the bar for some years, casting her elegant and stylish shadow upon a range of cases in the relationship property and trusts arena, as well as co-writing a handbook on domestic property law and a guide to trusts.

Her star rose with the marriage to the dashing and late Supreme Court Justice Sir Robert Chambers who died suddenly two years ago. Having accumulated the entitlement to “Lady Chambers”, a title she uses sparingly after her late husband was posthumously knighted, the 53 year old has continued to forge ahead with the legally important Clayton wrangle involving a $28 million fortune, but holding significant importance in terms of trusts and relationship property, involving issues as to ownership of a power of appointment.

She continues to make waves in the matrimonial property stakes with cases such as those involving the Chambers family (non-related) where a valuable Mount Maunganui property lead to a dispute between siblings and the re-writing of a will as well as speaking with law students in an address in August 2016 that saw her describe how her early punk rock beginnings from “deepest Glenfield” had lead to her role as a high profile, glamour QC.

Other cases in the trust and relationship property area, among others, have also shown the ability and sheer grit of a woman who was born of working class parents in a State house and risen to the top of the profession, earning respect and privilege, without forgetting her origins or sense of commitment to justice.

Last year – No. 35

Willie Akel has been a pre-eminent media lawyer for more years than most lawyers have been in practice, but his face became most noticed in the representation his firm Simpson Grierson provided for Kim Dotcom. To be fair, he’s a figure that should have been in the inaugural Power List as a pre-eminent litigator and legal power player.

The likeable and astute Whakatane-born litigator has handled some of the most important media cases in recent years, many for TVNZ but also for private and public parties involved in media, defamation and related matters.

He fought for the ability to see Rainbow Warrior bombers Alain Mafart and Dominique Prieur to be filmed in court, won the right for TVNZ to screen a police video of a man found not guilty of murder in 2009, has also secured the rights of media to search court records and various other important media freedom cases.

Colourful cases involving colourful characters including Sir Robert Jones, journalist Ian Wishart, cartoonist Tom Scott and of course Kim Dotcom have also marked his career.

He acted for Penthouse Magazine’s publisher who were wanting to have the magazine, which included such delights as group and lesbian sex, to be available within New Zealand.

The fight involved a hearing before the Indecent Publications Tribunal and strident opposition from both the Crown and well known decency campaigner Patricia Bartlett’s Society for the Promotion of Community Standards.

Among others, Willie Akel called cartoonist Tom Scott to give evident where he described Penthouse as “primarily a male masturbatory aid” which might be handed to men giving semen samples “rather than a copy of the New York Review of Books”.

The result was that the international edition of Penthouse could be sold in New Zealand to people over 18, provided it was sealed in a plastic wrapper.

It was one of numerous cases that have proven to be landmark decisions in New Zealand involving not just the high profile media law cases but in dispute resolution and private international law cases.