

# Lea Christopher

Associate



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

- Fietta LLP, associate (2019 onward)
- Slaughter and May, associate (2017-2019)
- Clayton Utz (Canberra), lawyer (2015-2016)
- Supreme Court of Victoria (Melbourne), Senior Associate to the Hon. Justice Hargrave QC (2013-2015)
- Allens (Melbourne), trainee solicitor (2010-2011) and associate (2011-2013)

## AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Lea Christopher is an Australian-qualified lawyer and Associate at Fietta LLP.

Lea advises on law of the sea and international investment law matters. She also has experience working on cross-jurisdictional and complex disputes for corporate clients and the UK and Australian governments, including in proceedings before English and Australian courts.

Recent highlights of Lea's practice include acting for an investor in an UNCITRAL investment treaty arbitration against a Gulf State and advising on the impact of the European Court of Justice ruling in *Slovak Republic v Achmea B.V* on intra-EU investment treaty arbitration. She has also recently represented a defendant in multi-party competition litigation following on from an investigation by the European Commission into an alleged air cargo cartel, as well as a FTSE listed company on an investigation by the UK's Serious Fraud Office and international prosecuting authorities into potential bribery and corruption offences.

Her recent advisory experience includes advising two Asian States on maritime boundary delimitation and law of the sea issues and advising the national oil company of an Asian State in connection with a constitutional dispute concerning the exploitation of the natural resources of its continental shelf.

Additionally, Lea has prepared and delivered training courses to Australian federal government clients and private companies on topics ranging from good administrative decision-making to the implementation of anti-bribery and corruption compliance programmes. Lea has also advised on business and human rights issues, including in relation to the international agreement between global brands and trade unions created in response to the Rana Plaza garment factory collapse. Her *pro bono* matters include a case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Lea holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws (First Class) from the University of Adelaide and a Master of Laws, International Law (First Class), from the University of Cambridge.

Prior to joining Fietta, Lea worked at a UK "magic circle" firm, a leading Australian law firm, and as the Senior Associate to the Principal Judge of the Commercial Court in the Supreme Court of Victoria.

## REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Highlights of Lea's practice have included:

- Advising an international investor on issues arising in the context of the enforcement of an arbitral award under a BIT against a European State.
- Representing an individual investor in an UNCITRAL arbitration against a Gulf State under the OIC Agreement in relation to a real estate project.
- Advising the national oil company of an Asian State in connection with a constitutional dispute about the exploitation of territorial sea and continental shelf resources.
- Advising an Asian State on international jurisprudence and State practice with respect to the classification of islands, rocks and low-tide elevations under UNCLOS.
- Advising an Asian State on its maritime boundary delimitation with a neighbour.
- Devising a practical training session on provisional arrangements and joint development under UNCLOS for government lawyers of an Asian State.
- Representing British Airways in its defence of follow-on damages claims in multi-party litigation before the High Court of Justice in London, arising from a European Commission infringement decision concerning an alleged international air freight cartel.
- Advising the UK Department for Transport on a procurement challenge brought by Eurotunnel in the High Court of Justice in London concerning the Department's entry into freight contracts with ferry operators in preparation for the possibility of a no-deal Brexit.
- Representing various Australian federal government clients, including the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Employment, in public law litigation (specifically, judicial review and merits review proceedings).
- Advising a FTSE listed energy services company in a multi-jurisdictional investigation by the Serious Fraud Office and other international prosecuting authorities into potential bribery and corruption offences.
- Advising an LNG producer on threatened class actions arising from a significant landslide at a project site overseas.
- Advising an Australian manufacturing company on an independent investigation into allegations of foreign bribery in an Asian State, including involving that State's enforcement authorities.

Highlights of Lea's *pro bono* advisory work include:

- Contributing to a research memorandum by the Cambridge Pro Bono Project in response to a request by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in relation to proceedings related to the intercountry adoption of children.
- Providing advice to litigants in person as a volunteer lawyer at the Royal Courts of Justice Advice Bureau.
- Providing advice to litigants in person as a volunteer lawyer at the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic, Melbourne.

## PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Master of Laws, International Law (First Class) (2017), University of Cambridge

Admitted to legal practice, Supreme Court of Victoria (2010)

Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws (First Class Honours) (2009), University of Adelaide

Exchange in Bachelor of Laws (2006), Uppsala University

## **LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**

English (native), French (conversational)