

Australia

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1 Patent Enforcement

1.1 Before what tribunals can a patent be enforced against an infringer? Is there a choice between tribunals and what would influence a claimant's choice?

The Federal Court of Australia (**Federal Court**) and the state and territory Supreme Courts have jurisdiction to hear patent infringement matters.

Patent infringement proceedings are typically brought in the Federal Court because this Court has numerous judges with extensive patent expertise who are appointed to the patent list and allocated to hear these matters.

1.2 Can the parties be required to undertake mediation before commencing court proceedings? Is mediation or arbitration a commonly used alternative to court proceedings?

Parties cannot be required to mediate before commencing proceedings. However, under the *Civil Dispute Resolution Act 2011* (Cth), the legal representatives for the party issuing the proceedings must sign and file a genuine steps statement which sets out the steps that have been taken to try and resolve the matter before issuing the proceeding.

In the course of the proceeding, the Federal Court will consider options for alternative dispute resolution, including mediation, as early as reasonably practicable and may order the parties to mediate. Mediation is more common than arbitration, unless the dispute is governed by a contract mandating that arbitration be undertaken before or *in lieu* of Court litigation.

1.3 Who is permitted to represent parties to a patent dispute in court?

Barristers and solicitors represent parties in patent proceedings in the Federal Court.

In Australia, patent attorneys are a separate profession and have a right of audience in the Australian Patent Office but cannot appear in Court.

Self-representation is possible, but a corporation must be represented by a legal practitioner unless leave of the Court is given.

1.4 What has to be done to commence proceedings, what court fees have to be paid and how long does it generally take for proceedings to reach trial from commencement?

To commence proceedings in the Federal Court, a party must file an originating application. The originating application will be accompanied by a statement of claim and a genuine steps statement in accordance with the *Federal Court Rules 2011* (Cth) (**FCRs**).

The fees to file an originating application are prescribed in schedule 1 of the *Federal Court and Federal Circuit Court Regulation 2012*. As of July 2018, the fee for filing an originating application for a corporation is AUD 4,045.

The period of time that elapses between the filing of the originating application and the final trial depends on the complexity of the proceedings – for example, whether the applicant seeks to amend the patent(s), the number of patents asserted, whether experiments need to be carried out, and how long evidence preparation takes. Generally, parties should allow anywhere between 12 and 18 months before the final trial on infringement.

1.5 Can a party be compelled to disclose relevant documents or materials to its adversary either before or after commencing proceedings, and if so, how?

The FCRs provide several mechanisms for disclosure of documents both before and after the commencement of proceedings.

Before commencement

A party that believes they have the right to obtain relief against a party, but does not have sufficient information to decide whether to start a proceeding, can seek an order for “preliminary discovery” of documents by that party.

After commencement

The FCRs also provide mechanisms to obtain “standard” and “non-standard” discovery of documents after the commencement of a proceeding.

Orders for discovery after commencement are not made as a matter of course and a party must only seek discovery (whether “standard” or “non-standard”) if it will facilitate the just resolution of the proceeding as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible.

Other mechanisms

A party to a proceeding can use Notices to Produce served on a party, requiring the party to produce any document or thing within the party's control at the trial.

1.6 What are the steps each party must take pre-trial? Is any technical evidence produced, and if so, how?

There are numerous steps a party must take in the lead-up to trial.

The Federal Court Practice Note, “Intellectual Property Practice Note (IP-1)”, provides some examples of special steps which may be ordered to be undertaken in patent matters. For example, the Court may order that the parties file a technical primer to assist the Court.

The first step in the proceeding is the pleading of each party’s case (a statement of claim, a defence and any cross-claim, defence to cross-claim and replies).

After the close of pleadings, evidence will be led by both parties.

Evidence relied on for both infringement and revocation will invariably include expert technical evidence.

In the immediate lead-up to the trial, a case management conference will occur before the judge. At the case management conference, the judge will set a timetable for the filing of submissions, Court book preparation and other requirements the judge may have in preparing the matter for trial. This may include orders regarding a timetable for competing experts to confer prior to the trial and evidence being given concurrently at trial.

1.7 How are arguments and evidence presented at the trial? Can a party change its pleaded arguments before and/or at trial?

At the trial, any affidavit evidence upon which a party intends to rely will be formally “read” by the party relying on the evidence and admitted into evidence. A person that has given evidence in affidavit form may be required for cross-examination by the other party.

The parties’ arguments are made by both written and oral submissions.

In terms of seeking amendments to a pleaded case, the Court is generally receptive to applications for amendment. The FCRs provide that:

- a party must seek leave from the Court to amend its originating application both before and at trial; and
- a party may amend a pleading once without leave of the Court at any time before pleadings close. After pleadings close (as well as during the trial), any amendment is only by leave of the Court or with the consent of the opposing party.

1.8 How long does the trial generally last and how long is it before a judgment is made available?

The length of a trial will depend on the complexity of the issues before the Court. On average, trials concerning one patent can run for anywhere between five and 15 days.

Judgment can be anticipated some three to six months after the end of the trial.

1.9 Is there any alternative shorter, flexible or streamlined procedure available? If so, what are the criteria for eligibility and what is the impact on procedure and overall timing to trial?

Parties are able to seek an expedited or truncated hearing process and a tailored or concise pleading process in any proceeding. Whether a proceeding will be expedited will depend on whether the Court is of the view that there are circumstances which make the matter appropriate to be determined expeditiously.

A party should make known its request for an expedited procedure and hearing at the time of filing an originating application. A party should otherwise make its request for an informal or abbreviated pleadings process known at the first case management hearing.

The impact on overall timing will depend on the complexity of the proceeding. It is unlikely that a patent proceeding would be finalised in under three months if expedition is ordered.

1.10 Are judgments made available to the public? If not as a matter of course, can third parties request copies of the judgment?

Judgments are publicly available in Australia, typically within 24 hours of being handed down by the judge.

1.11 Are courts obliged to follow precedents from previous similar cases as a matter of binding or persuasive authority? Are decisions of any other jurisdictions of persuasive authority?

The doctrine of precedent is central to the Australian judicial system. Australian Courts are bound to follow the *ratio decidendi* (reasons for the decision) of superior Australian Courts, and will not depart from decisions of the same Court without good reason.

Older decisions from the United Kingdom may be persuasive (Australian patent law has departed from UK patent law), but they are not binding. See *Seiko Epson v Calidad* [2017] FCAFC 1403 for an example of this consideration. Decisions of European and US Courts are of interest, but are less persuasive. However, since adopting the concept of “support” instead of fair basis in Australia, European cases may have some increased persuasion on that issue.

1.12 Are there specialist judges or hearing officers, and if so, do they have a technical background?

There are presently 15 judges in the Federal Court’s Intellectual Property National Practice Area – Patents & Associated Statutes, who can be assigned to patent cases.

There is no requirement for these judges to have a technical background, though some of them do.

1.13 What interest must a party have to bring (i) infringement, (ii) revocation, and (iii) declaratory proceedings?

- **Infringement**
Only the patentee and the exclusive licensee can bring infringement proceedings.
The exclusive licensee is defined in the *Patents Act 1990* (Cth) (**Patents Act**) as the licensee that has the right to exploit the patented invention throughout the patent area to the exclusion of the patentee and all other persons.
- **Revocation**
Any person has standing to bring an application to either the Federal Court or state and territory Courts for an order revoking the patent.
A defendant in any infringement proceedings may also cross-claim for revocation.
- **Declaratory proceedings**
A person can apply to the Federal Court for a declaration that an act does not or would not infringe a patent, whether or not the patentee has made an assertion that the doing of the act would infringe a claim.
The person cannot apply to the Federal Court for a declaration unless the patentee has refused or failed to make a written admission of non-infringement.

The person must have given the patentee full written particulars of the act and asked the patentee in writing for a written admission that the doing of the act does not or would not infringe the patent. The person must also undertake to pay the patentee's reasonable costs of obtaining advice as to whether the act has or would infringe the claim. The patentee must be joined as a respondent in the proceeding.

1.14 If declarations are available, can they (i) address non-infringement, and/or (ii) claim coverage over a technical standard or hypothetical activity?

Non-infringement declarations can be sought in relation to technical standards and hypothetical activity.

1.15 Can a party be liable for infringement as a secondary (as opposed to primary) infringer? Can a party infringe by supplying part of, but not all of, the infringing product or process?

In Australia, a party can be liable for "indirect" or "contributory" infringement of a patent.

The Patents Act (section 117) provides that if the use of the product by a person would infringe a patent, then the supply of that product by one person to another is an infringement of the patent by the supplier, unless the supplier is the patentee or licensee.

1.16 Can a party be liable for infringement of a process patent by importing the product when the process is carried on outside the jurisdiction?

A person can be liable for infringement of a process patent by importing a product into Australia made by the process outside the jurisdiction.

In *Apotex Pty Ltd v Warner-Lambert Company LLC* (No 2) [2016] FCA 1238, the Federal Court found that the importation and sale in Australia of a product that was made overseas using a method or process which was the subject of an Australian patent, infringed claims of the Australian patent because the acts of importation and sale occurred within Australia.

1.17 Does the scope of protection of a patent claim extend to non-literal equivalents (a) in the context of challenges to validity, and (b) in relation to infringement?

Australia does not have a doctrine of non-literal equivalents. It can be argued that integers are inessential and need not be present for an infringement finding.

1.18 Can a defence of patent invalidity be raised, and if so, how? Are there restrictions on such a defence e.g. where there is a pending opposition? Are the issues of validity and infringement heard in the same proceedings or are they bifurcated?

A respondent can assert in an infringement proceeding, in response to an allegation of patent infringement, that it has not infringed the patent because the patent is invalid and should be revoked. This claim does not arise in relation to a patent application (i.e. a patent application under opposition).

In this regard, in any proceeding for infringement, the alleged infringer can counter-claim for revocation of the patent, including on the basis that the patent is not a patentable invention.

Issues of validity and infringement are usually heard in the same proceeding. However, a Court may consider issues of infringement before issues relating to validity in appropriate circumstances, or the Court may consider it appropriate to hear issues of validity and infringement concurrently.

1.19 Is it a defence to infringement by equivalence that the equivalent would have lacked novelty or inventive step over the prior art at the priority date of the patent (the "Formstein defence")?

No; there is no such defence under Australian patent law as there is no doctrine of equivalence.

1.20 Other than lack of novelty and inventive step, what are the grounds for invalidity of a patent?

In the Federal Court, other than lack of novelty and inventive step, the validity of a patent may be challenged on the grounds that:

- the patentee is not entitled to the patent;
- it is not a manner of manufacture;
- it is not useful;
- the patent was obtained by fraud, false suggestion or misrepresentation; and
- the specification does not comply with section 40(2) and (3) of the Patents Act, being internal support, "best method" and clarity requirements.

1.21 Are infringement proceedings stayed pending resolution of validity in another court or the Patent Office?

Court proceedings are the superior proceedings and so no procedure can take place in the Patent Office if there are pending Court proceedings.

If two separate proceedings concerning the patent are ongoing, a party may seek to have the matters listed together but there is no rule that a revocation claim be determined before a parallel infringement proceeding.

1.22 What other grounds of defence can be raised in addition to non-infringement or invalidity?

Australian patent law includes these specific exemptions to infringement:

- immediately before the priority date of the claim, the person was already exploiting, or had taken definitive steps (contractually or otherwise) to exploit, the product, method or process in Australia;
- use of a patented invention occurred on board or in a foreign vessel, and the vessel came into Australian territory only temporarily or accidentally;
- use of a patented invention occurred in the construction or working of a foreign aircraft or land vehicle if the aircraft or land vehicle came into Australian territory only temporarily or accidentally;
- exploitation was connected with obtaining regulatory approval in Australia; and
- an act was done for experimental purposes relating to the subject matter of the invention.

1.23 (a) Are preliminary injunctions available on (i) an *ex parte* basis, or (ii) an *inter partes* basis? In each case, what is the basis on which they are granted and is there a requirement for a bond? Is it possible to file protective letters with the court to protect against *ex parte* injunctions? (b) Are final injunctions available?

Preliminary injunctions

Preliminary injunctions are available on an *ex parte* and *inter partes* basis.

In deciding whether to grant a preliminary injunction against an alleged infringer, the Court will make two enquiries:

- does the patentee have a *prima facie* case (that there is a probability that the patentee will succeed at final hearing); and
- does the balance of convenience favour the granting of the injunction (this involves an assessment of the harm to the applicant and prejudice to the respondent in ordering the injunction, and whether damages are likely to be an adequate remedy if the applicant is successful at final hearing).

There is no requirement for a bond. Rather, the patentee will have to give the “usual undertaking as to damages”; that is, undertakes to the Court to submit to any order the Court may consider to be just for the payment of compensation to any person affected by the operation of the injunction.

If the person in whose favour the preliminary injunction is granted is resident overseas and has no assets in Australia, or is otherwise unlikely to be able to satisfy a call on the undertaking as to damages, the Court may require that person to provide security for the undertaking as to damages.

Final injunctions

Relief that a Court may grant for infringement of a patent includes an injunction, subject to such terms that the Court thinks fit.

1.24 Are damages or an account of profits assessed with the issues of infringement/validity or separately? On what basis are damages or an account of profits assessed? Are punitive damages available?

In patent matters in Australia, it is typical for an order to be made that the issues of liability for infringement/validity be heard prior to and separately from determination of damages/account of profits.

Damages are compensatory in nature and so the assessment is made on the basis of the actual loss suffered by the patentee. The analysis will require the Court to determine what proportion of the infringer’s sales would have been sales of the patentee or the exclusive licensee, and then determine the profit that would have been made by reason of the sales.

Additional (punitive) damages can be awarded, but this provision has only been applied once in Australia and resulted in an award of a modest sum.

An award of additional damages may be appropriate, having regard to:

- the flagrancy of the infringement;
- the need to deter similar infringements;
- the conduct of the infringing party, including after it was informed that it had allegedly infringed;
- any benefit accrued to the infringer because of the infringement; and
- any other relevant matters.

Profits are assessed by calculation of the profit earned by the infringer by reason of the conduct. This is a forensic accounting exercise.

1.25 How are orders of the court enforced (whether they be for an injunction, an award of damages or for any other relief)?

Enforcement of a judgment or orders in the Federal Court is ordinarily an *ex parte* procedure that commences with the filing of a Request for Enforcement and supporting documentation. A registrar will consider the Request for Enforcement, and if satisfied, issue the enforcement process, which is then handled by the Sheriff’s office.

The methods of enforcement include:

- warrants for the seizure and sale of property;
- order for possession or delivery of goods; and
- an enforcement hearing.

An application may also be made for contempt. This is a broad power of the Court, and includes the power to fine and imprison.

1.26 What other form of relief can be obtained for patent infringement? Would the tribunal consider granting cross-border relief?

Other relief which a Court may grant for infringement of a patent includes declarations of infringement. Cross-border relief will not be ordered.

1.27 How common is settlement of infringement proceedings prior to trial?

Settlement prior to trial is common – estimated to occur in 50% of cases.

1.28 After what period is a claim for patent infringement time-barred?

Infringement proceedings cannot be brought unless started within:

- (a) three years from the day on which the relevant patent is granted; or
- (b) six years from the day on which the infringing act was done, whichever period ends later.

1.29 Is there a right of appeal from a first instance judgment, and if so, is it a right to contest all aspects of the judgment?

A party can appeal judgment of a single judge of the Federal Court to the Full Federal Court of Australia. Appeal is as of right in respect of any aspects of the judgment but will only succeed if the Full Federal Court finds that the judge at first instance made an error of law.

1.30 What are the typical costs of proceedings to first instance judgment on (i) infringement, and (ii) validity? How much of such costs are recoverable from the losing party?

The range of expected costs in running/defending an infringement case or running/defending a combined infringement and revocation case ranges between AUD 500,000 and AUD 1.5 million.

The successful party would anticipate recovering between 70% and 75% of its costs from the unsuccessful party.

1.31 For jurisdictions within the European Union: What steps are being taken in your jurisdiction towards ratifying the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court, implementing the Unitary Patent Regulation (EU Regulation No. 1257/2012) and preparing for the unitary patent package? Will your country host a local division of the UPC, or participate in a regional division? For jurisdictions outside of the European Union: Are there any mutual recognition of judgments arrangements relating to patents, whether formal or informal, that apply in your jurisdiction?

No. There is no formal or informal recognition of foreign judgments specifically relating to patents in Australia. Australia is party to enforcement of foreign judgment treaties, and judgment debts of foreign Courts can be recovered in Australian Courts in prescribed circumstances.

2 Patent Amendment

2.1 Can a patent be amended *ex parte* after grant, and if so, how?

A patentee may seek the leave of the Commissioner of Patents to amend a patent after grant (section 104 of the Patents Act).

2.2 Can a patent be amended in *inter partes* revocation/invalidity proceedings?

A patentee may make an application to a Court during any relevant proceedings for an order that the patent be amended (section 105 of the Patents Act).

2.3 Are there any constraints upon the amendments that may be made?

An amendment must meet the requirements in section 102 of the Patents Act – an amendment is not allowable if the amended specification claims or discloses matter extending beyond the complete specification as filed.

If the application to amend is made to the Court during proceedings, then the Court must also be satisfied that there is no matter that should dissuade the Court from exercising its discretion to allow the amendment (e.g. delay by the patentee in seeking amendment after knowing that it should so amend; covetous claiming).

3 Licensing

3.1 Are there any laws which limit the terms upon which parties may agree a patent licence?

Pursuant to section 144 of the Patent Act, a term of a patent licence may be void in certain circumstances, including where the effect of the term is to:

- prohibit or restrict the use of a product or process (whether patented or not) supplied or owned by a person other than the lessor or licensor; or
- require the acquisition of a product not protected by the patent by the lessor or licensor.

3.2 Can a patent be the subject of a compulsory licence, and if so, how are the terms settled and how common is this type of licence?

After a period of three years from when the grant has elapsed, a person may apply to the Federal Court for an order requiring the patentee to grant the applicant a licence to work the patented invention (section 133 of the Patents Act). If the fee is not agreed, the Court sets the fee.

Very few, if any, compulsory licences have been ordered.

4 Patent Term Extension

4.1 Can the term of a patent be extended, and if so, (i) on what grounds, and (ii) for how long?

The term of a patent relating to pharmaceutical substances can be extended if regulatory approval was not obtained until at least five years after the date of the patent.

The extension period is the difference of the time period from the filing date of the patent to the first regulatory approval date less five years.

5 Patent Prosecution and Opposition

5.1 Are all types of subject matter patentable, and if not, what types are excluded?

No. Human beings and processes for their biological generation are not patentable (section 18(3) of the Patents Act).

Pure business processes are not patentable subject matter, even if they are computer-implemented: *Commissioner of Patents v RPL Central Pty Ltd* [2015] FCAFC 177.

5.2 Is there a duty to the Patent Office to disclose prejudicial prior disclosures or documents? If so, what are the consequences of failure to comply with the duty?

There is no such duty.

5.3 May the grant of a patent by the Patent Office be opposed by a third party, and if so, when can this be done?

The grant of a patent may be opposed by a third party within three months after the patent application has been advertised as accepted by the Patent Office.

5.4 Is there a right of appeal from a decision of the Patent Office, and if so, to whom?

There is a right of appeal under the Patents Act from a decision of the Patent Office to the Federal Court from:

- a refusal to grant a patent (section 100A);
- an opposition decision (section 60);
- a decision to revoke after re-examination (section 101); and
- refusal or grant of, or direction to make, an amendment (sections 104 and 109).

5.5 How are disputes over entitlement to priority and ownership of the invention resolved?

Disputes over ownership can be resolved in the Patent Office (section 32 of the Patents Act), or by the grant of the patent after an opposition in the Patent Office (section 33 of the Patents Act) or by application to the Court.

5.6 Is there a “grace period” in your jurisdiction, and if so, how long is it?

There is a grace period of 12 months.

5.7 What is the term of a patent?

A standard patent has a maximum term of 20 years (or up to 25 years for pharmaceutical substances). An innovation patent has a term of up to eight years.

5.8 Is double patenting allowed?

No, it is not (section 64(2) of the Patents Act).

6 Border Control Measures

6.1 Is there any mechanism for seizing or preventing the importation of infringing products, and if so, how quickly are such measures resolved?

No, there is not.

7 Antitrust Law and Inequitable Conduct

7.1 Can antitrust law be deployed to prevent relief for patent infringement being granted?

The *Competition & Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) (CCA) can be deployed against a patentee. This was argued in *Apple v Samsung*, but whilst the case proceeded to concluded trial, the case settled before judgment.

7.2 What limitations are put on patent licensing due to antitrust law?

From 13 September 2019, the licensing and assignment of intellectual property will be subject to the same competition laws as other commercial transactions due to the repeal of section 51(3) of the CCA (which had provided an exemption from certain provisions Part IV of the CCA).

Licensing, assignment and other contractual arrangements, whether existing before the repeal or coming into effect after the repeal, are affected.

The following are examples of the type of conduct prohibited under the CCA that may arise in relation to patent licensing:

- cartel conduct;
- the making or giving effect to agreements, arrangements or understandings that have the purpose, effect or likely effect of substantially lessening competition in a market; and
- engaging in the practice of exclusive dealing.

7.3 In cases involving standard essential patents, are technical trials on patent validity and infringement heard separately from proceedings relating to the assessment of fair reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) licences? Do courts grant FRAND injunctions, i.e. final injunctions against patent infringement unless and until defendants enter into a FRAND licence?

There is the potential for a separate question, but such matters are typically heard at the same time.

There has been no decision in relation to SEPs and the applicability of FRAND terms in Australia, the *Samsung v Apple* case having settled shortly after hearing.

Motorola v Hytera is a current case which may provide some insight on FRAND terms and injunctions in Australia. The matter is listed for hearing for four weeks commencing the end of July 2019, and for a further two weeks in May 2020. Judgment would not be expected for about six months after the conclusion of the hearing.

8 Current Developments

8.1 What have been the significant developments in relation to patents in the last year?

- Determination for the first time of the amount of compensation to be awarded pursuant to an undertaking as to damages given on a preliminary injunction where the patent was revoked: *Sigma Pharmaceuticals (Australia) Pty Ltd v Wyeth* [2018] FCA 1556.
- A potential shift away from the granting of interlocutory injunctions in pharmaceutical patent matters after the conclusion of *Sigma*, including in *Sanofi-Aventis Deutschland GmbH v Alphapharm Pty Ltd (No 3)* [2018] FCA 2060 where Justice Burley refused to grant an interlocutory injunction against Alphapharm to restrain the launch of its biosimilar to Sanofi-Aventis' Lantus SoloStar product.
- Confirmation that the threatened import of and supply in Australia of medicines manufactured outside Australia will be a threatened infringement of Swiss claims of a patent: *Warner-Lambert Company LLC v Apotex Pty Limited (No 2)* [2018] FCAFC 26.
- Refusal by the Federal Court to stay an order dismissing an interlocutory injunction pending an appeal by the Patentee where the patent was found invalid on two grounds, where previously such orders had been stayed: *Mylan Health Pty Ltd v Sun Pharma ANZ Pty Ltd (No 2)* [2019] FCA 505.

8.2 Are there any significant developments expected in the next year?

- Repeal of section 51(3) of the CCA.
- Judgment is eagerly awaited from the Full Court in *Encompass Corporation Pty Ltd v InfoTrack Pty Ltd* [2018] FCA 421, which is likely to help clarify the law relating to the patentability of computer-implemented business methods in Australia.

8.3 Are there any general practice or enforcement trends that have become apparent in your jurisdiction over the last year or so?

No particular trends have emerged.



Jane Owen is a partner and head of the Intellectual Property practice of Bird & Bird in Sydney.

She has more than 25 years' experience in all aspects of intellectual property, including portfolio establishment, IP strategising, commercialisation and enforcement. Her main sector focus is within life sciences, healthcare and education.

Specialising in contentious IP, Jane focuses on patent litigation, particularly in the life sciences sector. Her experience ranges across complex patent infringement/revocation, trade marks and passing off, design infringement, disputes on ownership of IP, and appeals from decisions of the Commissioner of Patents and the Registrar of Trade Marks. Jane's litigation experience also allows her to advise clients in IP-driven commercial transactions, enabling them to minimise the risk of later disputes.

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Rebecca Currey is a senior associate in our Intellectual Property practice, based in Sydney.

She has experience across all areas of intellectual property, particularly trade mark enforcement, patent litigation, and copyright matters. Rebecca's main focus is on patent litigation matters where she has acted for clients in relation to a large variety of technologies including pharmaceuticals, mining, telecommunications, and banking and payment systems.

She also acts for clients in contentious trade mark matters in the Federal Court of Australia including acting for a client in relation to a claim of trade mark infringement by the use of registered trade marks as part of a Google Adwords strategy and misleading and deceptive conduct allegations.

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