

# Firm splits but friendship remains



STUART McEVOY

**Kim Lovegrove will continue to exploit his expertise in construction law under the new name Lovegrove Solicitors**

**DEBBIE GUEST**  
JOBWATCH



ALMOST four years after joining forces, Kim Lovegrove and Andrew Lord are amicably dividing their law firm.

Effective this week, the Melbourne boutique practice Lovegrove & Lord will de-merge to become Lovegrove Solicitors and Lord Commercial Lawyers.

Kim Lovegrove told *The Australian* the split came about after the potential to share clients failed to eventuate.

"We thought we would be able to cross fertilise clientele, that was

a key objective," he said. "As it transpired it didn't really occur."

Lovegrove's expertise is in construction law and Lord practices commercial law. Lovegrove said clients came to the firm for a specific area and the potential for him and Lord to refer clients to one another was not great.

Lord said as the practice grew, he and Lovegrove built up their own niche areas and the reasons for the merger were no longer strong.

"We've built up this highly specialised practice and also expanded into immigration. Our clients are serious commercial property players and there's not the synergies that once existed," Lord said.

"The construction guys are still doing their construction stuff and the commercial division is not as relevant as it once was."

Lovegrove said the two separate firms would now be able to

market their individual areas of expertise to clients which was particularly important in the current competitive legal environment.

Lord said the merged firm did not send the message of a niche brand. "Previously the firm was Lovegrove Lord commercial and construction lawyers and that sent a bit of a funny message in one sense," he said.

Lord said his new firm would continue to focus on commercial

law along with business migration law which was managed by Paul Norris.

Lovegrove plans to open a Wellington office later this year to seize on trans-Tasman opportunities but is not "planning to build an empire" in New Zealand.

Despite the separation, the long-time friends will still be physically close, with both firms remaining in the same location.

Lord and Lovegrove both stressed that the de-merger was congenial and their long-time friendship continued.

"It's an amicable parting of ways, we will continue to have an association of sorts for a long time," Lovegrove said.

MIDDLETONS has appointed Paris Petranis partner in the firm's corporate and commercial team in Melbourne.

Petranis specialises in the health and aged care sector.



**Andrew Lord**