



UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
**INVESTMENT  
CLUB**

# INVESTMENT BULLETIN

STUDENT WRITERS · STUDENT OPINIONS

## RHODE TO A BILLION: BEAUTY, BUSINESS AND BABYSITTING A BOYFRIEND

*BY ANNABELLE LARSEN*

### + MORE ON:

THE OBESITY DRUGS INDUSTRY AND THE FORCES SHAPING IT

*BY DANIEL GUNHO SONG*

METHONOMICS: NEW ZEALAND'S FASTEST GROWING MARKET

*BY HUNTER SARI*

CONVERSATIONS WITH ALUMNI: HARRY POTTINGER-COOMBES

*BY ISABELLA HO AND ALICE HOUT*

### & FROM OUR PARTNERS:

FORSYTH BARR FOCUS: AVOID THE HOME MARKET BIAS



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# Contents

## The Club

An Update from the Fund	2
-------------------------	---

## Opinions

Rhode to a Billion: Beauty, Business and Babysitting a Boyfriend	3
--	---

The Obesity Drugs Industry And The Forces Shaping It	7
--	---

Methonomics: New Zealand's Fastest Growing Market	12
---	----

## Conversations with Alumni

Harry Pottinger-Coombes	15
-------------------------	----

## Partner Columns

Forsyth Barr FOCUS: Avoid the Home Market Bias	19
--	----

National Business Review	20
--------------------------	----



# Update from the Fund



BY ROHIT GUTHPE, INVESTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Last Thursday marked our first club pitch of the year, with Abbey, Caden, and Amelia presenting a comprehensive investment case for QBE Insurance. The event drew a strong turnout of over 30 attendees and saw great engagement from UAIC exec, Bulletin, and of course the Investment Committee. Club pitches like this are a core part of our calendar - giving the wider club insight into the committee's process and showing prospective analysts how the Committee operates.

The team's thesis centred on diversifying the portfolio into financial services, with a preference for insurance over banking due to the perceived higher earnings quality (less leveraged). They highlighted

QBE's solid operating fundamentals and international growth potential, positioning the stock as a compelling buying opportunity. Abbey also provided a thoughtful breakdown of the challenges involved in valuing financial services firms - touching on low cash flow visibility and the difficulty in forecasting returns on investment float. These complexities influenced the team's valuation approach: a weighted average of DCF and trading multiples, with a stronger emphasis on comparables given the mentioned DCF limitations. Their target price of \$24.70 implied a 4.3% upside - low by the Committee's usual margin of safety standards, primarily due to strong recent price appreciation in QBE stock (note the upside was closer to 10% at the time of the initial pitch).

The presentation was followed by over 20 minutes of thorough discussion, with audience questions spanning valuation, risk factors, and capital structure. Ultimately, the pitch was approved with approximately 80% in favour, with most opposing votes citing valuation concerns.

Congratulations to the team on an outstanding effort. From here, the committee will continue to monitor QBE closely and look to establish a position should the stock pull back to a level with our desired margin of safety. All in all, this was a fantastic way to close out Semester 1 for the Investment Committee - we look forward to building on this momentum in the second half of the year! 📈



FASHION

# Rhode to a Billion: Beauty, Business and Babysitting a Boyfriend

BY ANNABELLE LARSEN

On May 28 2025, e.l.f. Beauty announced its USD 1 billion acquisition of Rhode, Hailey Bieber's skincare line - and arguably the coolest three year old in the industry. In just three years and with fewer than 10 products, the brand has cemented itself as more than just another celebrity passion project.

This deal stands as one of the biggest beauty acquisitions of the decade. But what happens when a mass-market brand built on affordable drugstore dupes buys a prestige skincare line rooted in minimalism and aesthetic perfection?

And perhaps more intriguingly, why is Hailey's husband acting like a spoiled teenager on Instagram instead of celebrating her billion-dollar win and Vogue cover?

## About the brands

In its third year of business, Rhode pulled in USD 212 million in net sales. That's not just your average celebrity vanity brand. That's velocity. For its fiercely loyal Gen Z following, Rhode isn't just Hailey "Rhode" Bieber's skincare line - it's a status symbol. The brand's best-sellers: Lip glosses and a lip gloss holder phone case. Quirky, yes - but they consistently fly off shelves, backed by high sell-through rates and buzzy demand.

With neutral packaging and a signature "glazed doughnut" aesthetic, Rhode sits at the intersection of minimalism and luxury, accessible but not too accessible. A prestige-lite brand that has carved out space in a saturated celebrity beauty market through actual product quality and clever positioning.

Targeted at girls aged 13 to 28, Rhode's minimalist, science-backed formulas are matched by effective marketing. Hailey's own beauty routines, face of the brand, and down-to-earth tutorials gave Rhode what few celebrity lines achieve: authenticity that sticks.

For e.l.f., the acquisition is about more than a viral lip gloss. They're buying a brand with loyal, spend-savvy fans and international momentum. Rhode is already set to enter Sephora stores in North America and the U.K. by year end. That's premium shelf space in the big leagues.

Financially e.l.f. isn't just throwing money at a trend. With 1.3 billion in net sales in FY2024, up 77% YOY, and an adjusted EBITDA of 234.7

million alongside 71% gross margins they have the cash flow and investor confidence to go big, and they just did.

## E.l.f. strategy glows up

The acquisition changes the entire e.l.f. positioning. E.l.f. (Eyes Lips Face) has notoriously led the charge on dupe culture. The brand democratized active skincare ingredients and cracked the code of budget beauty without compromising performance. It regularly outperforms legacy brands in both innovation and social engagement. With viral launches, TikTok prowess, and real R&D chops, what "cheap" means in the beauty industry has been rewritten.

They used to be the best thing on the bottom shelf at Kmart. Now they're the best thing everywhere. They've been building a portfolio through acquisitions like Naturium, Well people, and Keys Soulcare. With Rhode, they've got their crown jewel, not only because it's their biggest acquisition but because it sparkles with long-term brand equity.

There's also a personnel play. Hailey is not just cashing out and running. Hailey will continue with Rhode as Chief Creative Officer, head of innovation and join e.l.f. as strategic advisor across their entire portfolio. She knows how to create cultural relevance, which is rare and expensive, and now it's officially on the e.l.f. balance sheet.

## The Financials

The \$1 billion deal is structured as 60% cash (\$600 million), 20% newly



issued e.l.f. stock (\$200 million via 2.6 million shares), and 20% (\$200 million) contingent on Rhode hitting growth targets over the next three years.

With Rhode generating \$212m in revenue over the past 12 months, e.l.f. is paying around 4.7x revenue - a reasonable multiple in a high growth category. For context, when a similar beauty giant Glossier hit its peak \$1.8 billion valuation, its revenue was similar to what Rhodes is now, meaning it was valued at 8.5x revenue. By comparison, e.l.f. got Rhode for a more measured and arguably smarter price.

Glossier's 2021 valuation wasn't about revenue though - it was about the dream that beauty could scale like software. Glossier certainly has not lived up to these expectations, but Rhode may be that dream, finally grounded in influence and execution.

The structure of the transaction signals strategic discipline: e.l.f. is confident in Rhode's potential but cautious enough to tie a significant portion of the payout to future performance ensuring

Hailey has skin in the game. While Rhode's margin profile isn't public, its low SKU count, prestige pricing, and DTC-heavy model suggest margins potentially exceeding e.l.f.'s impressive 71% gross margin. In M&A terms, this was clean, strategic, and it shows e.l.f. didn't just want the gloss - they wanted the glow-up.

### Challenges Ahead

While e.l.f. and Rhode both wear the "disruptor" label, their audiences and price points are not exactly interchangeable. e.l.f.'s average product retails around \$6-10, built on a promise of affordability, whereas Rhode positions itself as prestige-lite, with prices closer to \$30-40.

The gap raises issues as e.l.f.'s reputation could cheapen Rhode. Consumers worry there might be a formula change to cut costs. Alternatively, e.l.f. may move away from affordability. Just a day prior to announcing the acquisition, e.l.f. implemented a \$1 price hike across its core lineup, which may signal more. And perhaps most critically, putting Rhode on Walmart shelves alongside existing e.l.f. products

would risk diluting its cool girl appeal.

The risk isn't just price but also perception. E.l.f.'s mass-market reputation could clash with Rhodes's curated minimalist identity. Much of Rhode's identity is tied to Hailey's aesthetic, and credibility as a tastemaker. If that halo slips, the brand could lose what makes it magnetic. Even the strongest brand halo can flicker when the spotlight turns personal (take Jeffree Star's boom and bust). And lately, Hailey's billion-dollar glow has been competing with her husband's increasingly chaotic shadow.

### Meanwhile, in the Bieber Household

Even as Hailey Bieber lands the Vogue cover and sells a billion-dollar beauty brand, there always seems to be a man - particularly her husband - all up in her business.

In the early days of their relationship, Hailey was more adjacent to fame - the quiet one in Kendall Jenner's friend group, mostly known as "Justin's wife." But



the tables have turned on their relationship dynamic. She's on the cover of Vogue. And Justin? Well, let just say his feed often reads like the ghost of 2012.

Most recently, [he took to Instagram](#) to confess that he once told Hailey she would never be on the cover of Vogue.

*"Yo this reminds me when Hailey and I got into a huge fight, I told hails that she would never be on the cover of Vogue, Yikes I know, so mean, For some reason because I felt so disrespected I thought I gotta get even...I think as we mature we realise that we're not helping anything by getting even, we're honestly just prolonging what we really want which is intimacy and connection. So baby u already know but forgive me for saying u wouldn't get a vogue cover cuz clearly i was sadly mistaken."*

While some say his intentions were good, just poorly worded which sparked a wave of negative reactions. In response, he has since deleted the original caption and replaced it with a string of emojis, avoiding language altogether. He's not Justin Bieber anymore - he's Hailey Bieber's

husband, and judging by his feed, it hasn't sunk in yet.

### The Rhode Ahead

The real test for Rhode is whether the brand survives the transition from founder-led indie to a brand owned by a publicly traded corporate structure. When LVMH buys a fashion house, the founders tend to fade. When Estée Lauder bought Too Faced, authenticity wobbled. The transition from personal to corporate always comes with risk.

Will Rhode stay cool when it's no longer indie? Retaining its slick creative direction when Hailey's attention is inevitably pulled in a dozen new directions will be tough, especially if e.l.f. scales too fast, too soon.

If e.l.f. get it right, this acquisition could define the next decade of mass-prestige skincare. Potentially Glossier 2.0, but profitable. It has the potential to cement e.l.f. as the beauty conglomerate of the 2030s.

### Conclusion

This isn't just a business story. It is a cultural one. Watching Hailey sell

her company for a billion dollars while navigating fame, public scrutiny, and babysitting her husband. Shows success is not just about timing and a product but also vision, discipline, and consistency. And sometimes about proving people wrong, even the ones closest to you.

Here is what I've learned: Women-led brands are not niche anymore - they are leading the market and when celebrity founders are genuinely involved they can hold their own against the biggest names in beauty.

Maybe not a billion, but one day I'll build something worth celebrating and I'll make sure the person beside me claps louder than the crowd. So here's the biggest takeaway: If your partner won't cheer for your billion-dollar win or Vogue cover, it's time for a board meeting. Or a breakup. 📉

LIVE,  
WORK,  
CREATE.



# The Obesity Drugs Industry and the Forces Shaping it

BY DANIEL GUNHO SONG

Analysts predict the global market for obesity drugs to increase by 10x–15x to USD \$95–150 billion by 2030. This explosion mirrors the 12x worldwide smartphone sales growth between 2007 and 2017.

But unlike technology hardware, this market is fuelled not just by innovation and consumer demand, but also by applicability, affordability, insurance gatekeeping and opaque pricing structures. This article examines various factors that will determine how the current excitement can translate into long-term market success.

## The Public Health Demand

The foundation of this market is a massive unmet medical need. In 2021, higher-than-optimal body mass index caused an estimated 3.7 million deaths from non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancers. The prevalence of obesity will only keep increasing from 17% in 2025 to 20% in 2030.

The anticipation of obesity medications as the next statins (cholesterol medication) reflects an increasing health awareness. Weight loss medications are likely to grow as a breakthrough in chronic disease management.

## The Unprecedented Efficacy of GLP-1

GLP-1 receptor agonists work by mimicking a naturally occurring gut hormone, signalling fullness and suppressing appetite. GLP-1s like Wegovy (by Novo Nordisk) and Zepbound (by Eli Lilly) routinely deliver 10–20% body weight reduction, up from about 6.5% in early versions. That level of efficacy is unprecedented and has cemented their blockbuster potential.

Compared to previous generations of weight-loss drugs, GLP-1's side effects are mild, observed as hollowed appearance of the face, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. This seems to suggest the current generation of weight-loss drugs is likely to retain its blockbuster status.

## GLP-1 is Not for Everyone

Despite the buzz, GLP-1s are not a one-size-fits-all solution. Among the 1 billion obese people worldwide, GLP-1s can serve only a portion.

Some patients (those with extreme obesity) need lifestyle changes or surgical interventions. Others with conditions, especially medullary thyroid cancer or pancreatitis, may be medically ineligible. Side effects like nausea and vomiting can also reduce adherence. And most critically, cost remains a major barrier, especially for the uninsured or underinsured. In the US, only about 2 million of the 105 million obese adults are currently estimated to access GLP-1s due to financial constraints.

Hence, GLP-1s shouldn't be quickly mistaken for a *game changer* or a

*miracle drug*.

## Insurance Will Determine Market Penetration

Private insurance is expected to drive the early market expansion. Nearly 50% of large employers currently reimburse obesity medications, and analysts expect that figure to climb to 90% by 2030. If that materialises, up to 15 million Americans could gain access — around 14% of the US adult obese population — pushing domestic sales to USD \$85 billion and global sales to over \$100 billion.

Public coverage, however, remains constrained. Medicare (a US federal health insurance programme for aged 65+) is barred by law from covering weight-loss drugs. Medicaid (a US joint federal-state health insurance programme for people of all ages with low income) used to cover selectively, on a state-by-state basis. However, the Trump Administration announced that Medicaid will not cover anti-obesity drugs anymore.

Economists warn that making anti-obesity medications available to all Americans with obesity could cost over \$1 trillion annually, more than



the entire Medicare programme.

Without reform, the US market will rely heavily on private insurers. Both the drugmakers and the public depend heavily on the government for commercial scale and widespread access.

### Pricing Remains a Structural Obstacle

Wegovy retails at USD \$1,349/month, while Zepbound comes in slightly lower at \$1,086/month. Though telehealth deals offer some discounts, prices remain out of reach for many. And while generic pressure is expected after primary patents begin expiring in 2026, manufacturers often delay true competition through patent extension tactics and litigation.

In the meantime, there's little incentive for the incumbents to cut prices voluntarily, especially while the demand still outpaces supply. The result is a market where innovation exists, but equitable distribution does not.

### The PBM Problem

Pricing is further complicated by pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) — the intermediaries between pharmacies and drug manufacturers that set the reimbursement rates pharmacies receive for dispensing drugs.

The three largest PBMs associated with CVS and UnitedHealth Group collectively administer roughly 80% of prescriptions in the US. PBMs profit from higher list prices because they earn a percentage of the rebate. This structure rewards

inflated pricing and makes systemic cost reduction unlikely without reform.

Since patients with high deductibles or no insurance pay based on list price, they bear the brunt of this distortion. An MIT economist argues pricing should be set by the government based on "social value" — not what the market will bear, but what the drug contributes to public health.

To preserve innovation while curbing fiscal waste, Gruber proposes redirecting public spending toward NIH-funded research, which benefits the broader ecosystem more effectively than relying solely on private R&D.

### Telehealth's Disruption to the Price War

Telehealth has emerged as a strategic workaround to pricing bottlenecks and PBM influence. As demand surged in 2024–2025, drugmakers like Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk began selling directly to consumers digitally.

Eli Lilly launched LillyDirect, offering Zepbound at USD \$349/month, a steep discount from its \$1,086 list price. Novo Nordisk followed suit, offering Wegovy at \$499/month (first month use will cost as low as \$199).

This shift mimics the digital disruption seen in other industries, using flat-rate pricing and online access to bypass traditional PBM gatekeeping. While these prices are still high, they offer a clearer, more consumer-friendly alternative for patients frustrated by insurance hurdles and inflated list prices.





The telehealth trend reflects the drugmakers' use of digital disruption to bypass traditional PBM gatekeeping. It also signals a strategic pivot to protect market share, particularly after PBMs like CVS Caremark dropped Zepbound in favour of Wegovy in exchange for larger rebates. More importantly, it combats a financial barrier that hinders equitable access.

As competition heats up, digital healthcare will be the battleground where untapped profit and underserved demand are finally brought to the surface.

### Companies to Watch

#### Novo Nordisk (NYSE: NVO)

Novo Nordisk, headquartered in Denmark, is a pharmaceutical and healthcare company that manufactures and markets drugs through two business segments: *Diabetes and Obesity Care* and *Rare Disease*. Being one of the two companies with GLP-1 medications approved for weight loss, Novo Nordisk is considered a market leader. Since 2018, its three GLP-1 drugs, Ozempic, Wegovy

and Rybelsus (FDA-approved in 2017, 2019 and 2021 respectively), have cumulatively raked in over \$50 billion in revenue.

GLP-1 products have accounted for Novo Nordisk's market value growth — market cap gain for Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly combined has been approximated to be 10x the generated revenue since 2017. As the obesity drugs have accounted for 82% of its US revenue, Novo Nordisk is anticipated to continue maximising growth and revenue through its blockbuster products. One method will include minor patent modifications and rebrandings to delay competition. For example, Novo Nordisk has filed 320 US patent applications related to only its three products that use the same active ingredient — semaglutide. This shows the importance of patents in the financialised business model.

Novo Nordisk is a longstanding sector leader in shareholder enrichment, for example spending 41% more on buybacks and dividends than on R&D. But its share price tumbled 53% in the past 12 months owing to intensifying

competition from Eli Lilly. This shows a cold market assessment that market leadership hinges not on short-term shareholder appeasement but on product strength and long-term dominance. The recent decision to replace its CEO after eight years underscores Novo Nordisk's adaptability and suggests a strategic pivot towards R&D to defend its leading position.

#### Eli Lilly (NYSE: LLY)

Eli Lilly is an American pharmaceutical company that operates through a single business segment: *Human Pharmaceutical Products*. Its two GLP-1 medications, Mounjaro and Zepbound, are FDA-approved for weight loss and have cumulatively generated approximately \$25 billion in revenue since 2022. This is a substantial figure considering their later approval (2022) compared to Novo Nordisk's counterparts.

GLP-1 products accounted for 48% of Eli Lilly's US revenue. To date, Eli Lilly has filed 53 US patent applications related to Mounjaro. This shows Eli Lilly's aggressive





patent strategy - filing many minor modification applications despite being in the early patent life cycle compared to Novo Nordisk's products. This reflects Eli Lilly's business model focused on protecting its products' dominance and maximising their profits.

Eli Lilly has historically prioritised R&D, spending 63% more on R&D than shareholder enrichment. In 2022, approximately 9,000 researchers were employed and over \$7 billion was spent on R&D. However, Eli Lilly shows signs of shifting towards greater shareholder enrichment as it announced a new \$15 billion share repurchase programme.

## Conclusion

The GLP-1 obesity drug market holds massive promise, but long-term success hinges on more than clinical results. Access, affordability and distribution models — especially through telehealth — will determine which companies lead. As pricing pressure mounts and public insurers hesitate, firms that balance innovation with accessibility will win. For investors, the opportunity is real, but the edge lies in backing companies that can navigate not just science, but the economics and politics of healthcare. 🏥



LOCAL

# Methonomics: New Zealand's Fastest Growing Market

BY HUNTER SARI

It's cheap, it's deadly, and it's everywhere. Ice. Crystal. P. Though known by many names, the havoc it wreaks is all the same. Destabilising communities, targeting society's most vulnerable, and raking in millions for the gangs who push it. Last year marked New Zealand's highest meth consumption on record, with no signs of slowing down. Why is meth thriving here? Who profits, who pays, and what will it take to stop it?







### A worsening crisis

15 years ago, 1kg of meth was a major drug bust. Now? 500kg seizures are almost routine. Meth is flooding our nation, in higher and higher quantities each year. But where is it all going? Northland is currently the meth capital of New Zealand, but this has been consistent. More shocking is the increases of meth use in regions like Levin and South Auckland, which have experienced consumption increases upwards of 90%. But they don't even come close to a small town in Hawke's Bay called Waipukurau. In the friendly town, where there's "no need to lock the doors when you go out", police were baffled to see meth consumption increase by 333% from 2023 to 2024.

While not everywhere has had such jaw-dropping increases, wastewater testing has shown that across the country, use of the drug is increasing substantially. One week in October last year recorded New Zealand's highest

consumption ever, at 39.2kg. That's almost double the previous peak in September 2021, which was during Auckland's Covid lockdowns. But with everyone out and about again, why is our meth use going up? The answer is globalisation.

### P is for Profit

As New Zealand's biggest businesses become more globalised, so do its underground empires. Despite being a relatively small market, New Zealand is very lucrative due to the high price of drugs, which are 15 times more expensive than in North America. Previously, this has attracted neighbours from Asia, who are now established producers and suppliers. Recently, however, our high prices have caught the eye of cartels much farther away, in Mexico. Seeing an opportunity, they have started selling meth at less than one third of the price of their Asian counterparts. These international cartels sell the drugs to New Zealand gangs, who can

now sell them for cheaper, outcompeting other gangs.

This is why last year, the average price of a point (0.1g) of meth decreased from NZ\$101 to \$78 NZD. Cheaper meth means consumers can buy larger quantities, and more people will be willing to try it, starting the addiction cycle. This is what's driving the surging meth consumption. Therefore, gangs pushing the drug make even more money from new customers and increased addictions. Detective Superintendent Greg Williams estimates gangs make between \$11-\$13 million a week from meth distribution. That's more than half a billion dollars a year. For members of gangs, these crystal-clear profits justify the risk of life imprisonment and the harm done to the community.

### The cost of meth

When someone buys a point of meth, they don't just pay \$78. They pay with increased risk of heart

attacks, severe dental issues, hallucinations and paranoia. The highly addictive nature makes it hard to stop, over time inducing disorders like depression, anxiety, and psychosis.

But it's not just users who pay the price. We all do. It is estimated that current levels of meth use are costing New Zealand \$37.8 million a week. That means in just one year, meth use costs us almost 2 billion dollars. This includes factors related to the individual, such as the loss of life from overdoses and time spent in hospital, as well as community-related factors like harm to whānau, crime funded by drug use, and crimes committed by drug-dependent offenders. Studies have shown that methamphetamine use increases someone's likelihood of committing acquisitive (e.g. stealing) crimes as well as violent crimes. So not only does increasing meth consumption cost us as a society, but it also makes the country a more dangerous place to live.

This is partly why police found Waipukurau's 333% increase so "bizarre". They expected to see more crime and more users in

hospital. Yet in the town it seemed like business as usual. Professor Chris Wilkins, leader of Massey University's drug research team, explained that the personal and community harm that comes from such high levels of meth consumption take a couple months to become apparent.

#### What now?

Should the people of Waipukurau simply wait for meth to take its toll on their community? What about the rest of the nation? It seems unlikely the rampant increase of meth consumption will slow, let alone stop. Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has acknowledged the issue, advising his justice and police ministers to look at what else they can do. But for such an urgent issue, which seems to constantly get more and more severe, is it enough? It's now been almost 3 months without an update from the ministers concerned. Importantly though, the justice system isn't the only way to fight back.

While the government's focus on cracking down on gangs will undoubtedly reduce meth distribution, it does not address

the cause issues behind meth consumption. This is where social programs step in. Northland, the nation's biggest meth hotspot, has had a 34% reduction in harm from offending after implementing a program called "Te Ara Oranga" which combines both police and health approaches to find, support, and re-integrate addicts. This program shows how a focus on preventing and treating meth addictions can combat the epidemic New Zealand is facing. It's no coincidence that Hawke's Bay, where Waipukurau is located, lost funding for a meth addiction treatment program in 2023.

Te Ara Oranga shows that a policing approach can be very effective, especially when combined with social and rehabilitative functions, which stop the addiction cycle. With less meth users, gangs have less power and profit. If programs are implemented across the nation, especially in vulnerable regions like Waipukurau, New Zealand's fastest-growing market can be slowed, saving money for everyone and making New Zealand a safer place to live. 🏠





CONVERSATIONS WITH UAIC ALUMNI

# Harry Pottinger-Coombes

INTERVIEW AND ARTICLE BY ISABELLA HO AND ALICE HOUT



Welcome back to the Bulletin Alumni Conversation Series!

Our latest guest is Harry Pottinger-Coombes, a solicitor at a commercial law firm, King & Wood Mallesons (KWM), in Melbourne. In our interview, Harry reflected on his enriching experience at the University of Auckland, where he studied a Bachelor of Laws and Commerce, majoring in Accounting. Since then, he has been growing his skills in M&A while making time to enjoy AFL, tennis, football, and cricket games in Australia's sporting capital.



## Personal Background and University Life

Harry grew up on the North Shore and attended Westlake Boys High School. Throughout his time there, he played a range of sports, his favourite being tennis. Initially, he had enrolled in a Law and Arts conjoint at the University of Auckland, but switched to a Law and Commerce conjoint in his second year. Having thoroughly enjoyed Accounting 101, and being told by a family friend and litigator that accounting was a useful skill for law, Harry chose to major in Accounting.

In his first couple of years at university, Harry was quite keen on a career in accounting. Ironically, when asked who was not looking to pursue a legal career at the law school orientation event, he was one of few people who raised their hand. However, this changed over time, particularly after Harry completed his contract law course, which showed him how law and accounting could intersect. As a result, Harry reconsidered his career path and has been pursuing law ever since.

Outside his studies, Harry was involved in the Impact Consulting Group and Beta Alpha Psi. He also took on the role of Education Officer and Podcast Director at the Investment Club. As Podcast Director, Harry spoke to various alumni and industry experts, including the founder of the Investment Club. He recalled, "My favourite thing about the club was definitely the people. I've made many of my current friends from the club, including my current

flatmate. Similar to Beta Alpha Psi, the Investment Club allowed me to connect with people in the industry, and this helped shape what I wanted to do career-wise."

## Internships and Clerkships

In his fourth year, Harry completed a tax internship at PwC, but was still interested in exploring law as a career. In November that year, he clerked at Bell Gully, one of New Zealand's leading commercial law firms. Here, he was involved in three rotations: Banking and Finance, Competition and Foreign Investment, and Corporate (M&A and Equity Capital Markets). Harry had not initially considered crossing the ditch in search of graduate roles, but one of his lecturers encouraged him to explore the variety and complexity of legal work that a larger economy could offer. Following this advice, he decided to apply for clerkships in Melbourne. Having already gone through interview rounds in New Zealand, Harry recalled feeling more relaxed and prepared for his Australian interviews. The result was a winter clerkship at KWM for the following June, where he had the opportunity to work in M&A once again.

## Rotations at KWM

As a graduate at KWM, Harry had exposure to three rotations: M&A Public, Banking and Finance, and M&A Funds. In the Banking and Finance rotation, Harry was first involved in the Debt Capital Markets team, which worked on ensuring that bonds and securitisation agreements were





well-drafted to fulfil their function. He notes that this work, which involved packaging up debt and selling it onwards, was especially technical and complex. Harry also worked with the Financial Regulations team within the Banking and Finance division. This team aims to ensure that financial institutions, particularly banks and insurance companies, comply with legislation and the APRA standards (these are risk management standards for firms across the financial industry, developed by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority).

In his next rotation, Harry found that the M&A Public and M&A Funds teams worked on related matters. M&A Fund lawyers help manage the documentation required to raise capital for funds such as private equity funds or superannuation funds. On the other hand, M&A Public lawyers are concerned with spending the money raised in the funds on public companies. For example, a

M&A Public client could be a private equity firm looking to buy and invest in an ASX-listed company.

Speaking about M&A, Harry says: "The M&A side of things is the bread and butter of what corporate lawyers do. Whether a client is buying and selling companies or raising capital, their role is to make sure that the paperwork that underlies those transactions is in order. That's the role from a transactional point of view, but equally, the work isn't all based on transactions. A core component of what directors do is to ensure they comply with their duties. That's why in M&A teams, there's quite a big corporate governance practice, which involves giving advice to boards to ensure that their actions do not result in litigation. On one end of the spectrum, you've got litigation lawyers for disputes that arise. On the other end of the spectrum, M&A lawyers try to document transactions effectively to prevent

disputes from arising."

Harry mentioned that the partner he had worked under during his M&A Public rotation, was an exceptional lawyer and mentor. This was a major influence on Harry's decision to continue pursuing M&A at KWM. As a junior, most of Harry's work comes from the senior members of his team, which is why it is often said that "a junior lawyer's clients are internal." At the moment, Harry's work is primarily task-oriented and includes researching legislation, drafting advice, and proofreading documents. He enjoys the broad variety of work available to him and mentioned that although he has completed two M&A rotations at KWM, the nature of the work is so dynamic that he has never completed the same task twice.

#### Advice to Students

Like many university students, Harry found that managing multiple commitments was a core feature of his university experience. Harry worked throughout his university



years and in his busiest semester, he was taking six papers, working at PwC, partaking in student clubs, and preparing for law recruitment season. During this time, Harry found that staying as organised as possible was extremely helpful. He suggested using lists and digital calendars to visualise all tasks to be completed at any given time. As for recruitment advice, Harry advised students to stay calm during recruitment season, as a clear mind makes for better answers in interviews. Finally, for general advice, he encouraged students to make the most out of every opportunity that arises while enjoying the journey as much as possible.

Turning towards internships and clerkships, Harry agreed that it is important for students to get the small things right, such as being punctual, meeting deadlines, having a good attitude, and being friendly towards others. Additionally, while it's crucial to ask questions while interning, he

suggested having a go at the task first and asking for help afterwards. To manage the transition from university to work, Harry noted that people skills are key. He emphasised that work experience was crucial to developing these skills, and recommends gaining work experience as early as possible. His first retail job taught him how to remain calm in stressful situations, a valuable skill he intends to carry forward in his career.

*Thank you Harry for taking the time to share your insights and experiences with students. 🙏*





# Forsyth Barr FOCUS

## Avoid the Home Market Bias

When it comes to investing, familiarity often feels like safety. But for many investors—particularly here in New Zealand—this comfort can come at a cost. Home market bias is a behavioural tendency of investors to allocate a disproportionate share of their funds to their local market. Unfortunately, this bias can quietly dent the long-term performance and resilience of a portfolio.

Read the full article [here](#).



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