


Hunter lawyer Marissa Dimarco launches law firm that acts as 'in-house counsel'



Penelope Green



 Gap in market: "As an outcome-driven business, I can value-add and be available to clients," says Marissa Dimarco. Picture: Jonathan Carroll

SEASONED Hunter lawyer Marissa Dimarco has launched her own boutique firm, acting as an "in-house counsel" to a raft of companies, SMEs and not for profits across many industries.

Ms Dimarco cut her teeth in local firms Sparke Helmore, Osborn Law, Dutton Lawyers and Moray & Agnew, where at 29 she became the first female partner in the Newcastle office.

She said her decision to fly solo was driven by demand on the back of the property boom, the regional shortage of lawyers, and her desire to create a new business model for what she sees as a gap in the market.

"The traditional model is still available for clients to engage a lawyer within the firm on an as-needs basis and for time costed and fixed-fee work that arises, however there is a new driver of businesses when obtaining legal services in the commercial and property law market," she says.

Ms Dimarco said many of her clients either struggled to source an in-house lawyer due to a shortage of lawyers in regional areas or did not have enough work for a full-time role and wished to contract lawyers in to assist with their requirements, from attending meetings to training managers in processes and compliance.

"The market has been changing for some time ...and clients are often asking for a retainer arrangement with a lawyer that they can call upon at any time - this is something we can offer which is different to other providers," she says.

Alison Garland, who has 19 years' experience with national firms within commercial, property and finance division, is a senior associate at Dimarco Commercial Lawyers.

"We are unable to physically attend client's premises but we have been providing this service remotely via Zoom and other technology," Ms Dimarco said.

The youngest female to be appointed to Harness Racing NSW's board in 2018, Ms Dimarco says her move to study law was influenced by her grandfathers and father, who ran breeding studs in Sydney and the Hunter: "It gave me a unique insight into the challenges of running small business," she says.