



## Congratulations Simon Berry

### A Berry good barrister

By Craig Sisterson

When Simon Berry heard his name read out for the second time at the 2008 New Zealand Law Awards™ on 7 November, it capped a marvellous evening for the Auckland-based environmental law counsel. Ascending the stage to receive the Blue Star Print New Zealand Barrister of the Year Award, the modest practitioner who “simply did not see myself as a top barrister” again expressed genuine surprise and thanked his small-but-passionate support staff in front of hundreds of legal peers. Later, he said “to be even considered in the same context as those people is a real honour and a very humbling experience”.

Berry, who spent 22 years working in law firms before moving to the bar, has always considered himself more of a “leading resource management practitioner”, a belief bolstered when he earlier secured the essence Resource Management and Environmental Law Award ahead of five law firms. “Ever since I started out on my own, because I do infrastructure stuff, I tend to be competing with law firms rather than other barristers. We tend to be involved in project work rather than coming in and doing end-stage litigation.”

A fortnight later, the affable Berry continues to praise his “incredibly talented, loyal, and committed team,” which comprises barrister associates Jen Vella and Craig Malone, Practice Manager Fiona McFadden, and new research clerk Libby Bevin. He says they “were thrilled” with his wins, but that “the awards recognise them”.

Together they’ve followed the law awards with more ‘wins’: the Environment Court upholding their client’s (the Waikato Regional Council) position in relation to “a novel measure ... to control farming and other land uses in the Lake Taupo Catchment to maintain the near pristine water quality of the lake”; and settling the appeals for the Te Uku Wind Park, a new wind farm in western Waikato, without the need for a hearing. As Berry says, “It has indeed been a BIG week!”

Clients commented on Berry being “customer focused”, “a pleasure to work with”, and “down to earth without the legalese technical waffle”. One called him “a top professional and a top bloke”, while another noted that “he has always been exceedingly approachable, honest, and has had the ability to foresee issues some time ahead of them being ‘current’”.

Initially “blown away” by his awards, once Berry digested the fact that his Barrister of the Year nod was based on clients who instruct him, including in-house counsel, partners and principals of law firms, taking the time to recognise excellent client service, he realised “it means a lot”.

“I guess the main thing it says to me is that my team and I must be doing something right. I have a particular way of doing things which is very outcome oriented... I always look for the most efficient way to achieve what the client wants, which does not always involve litigation and sometimes includes advising my clients to ‘make haste slowly’. Most often, the smart way through is to fully factor in the ‘human’ factors – the law just sits alongside that stuff.”

As a proud sponsor of the 2008 New Zealand Law Awards, Blue Star Print New Zealand would like to congratulate Simon Berry on winning the ‘Barrister of the year award’.

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