

my clerk experience at tottle partners

My name is Clinton Bonomelli and I graduated from Murdoch University with a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Commerce (Management).

I clerked at Tottle Partners and I thoroughly enjoyed this experience. I would highly recommend applying there for a clerkship.

Tottle Partners is an excellent commercial law firm on St Georges Terrace with around 50 employees, a good sized firm, practising commercial, corporate, construction, insurance and property law, amongst other areas.

At a firm like Tottle Partners, you can get your teeth into pretty much anything and you are never placed into a silo like you would be further down the Terrace. What I mean is, you get a range of types of work. I was loosely based in the general commercial, insurance and litigation teams, but I was never limited to any particular area.

At these kinds of firms you get straight down to business, there are no facades, no big lunch shows, no propaganda and it is all real work. A law clerk actually contributes to matters.

After a brief introduction I began working with an associate on a substantial corporate litigation matter, undertaking insolvency based research. Later that day, I assisted with a large ongoing Supreme Court vessel construction matter.

I was introduced to all the seniors and juniors and was assigned with a very helpful and friendly graduate buddy.

Over the course of the first week I assisted with an ongoing property matter involving a range of loans and mortgages.

I attended client meetings, sat in on telephone conversations and maintained direct contact with the client.

I was working with a senior lawyer on this matter and we often discussed it. He was always open to listening and I felt appreciated.

On Thursday and Friday nights we would have a chat and a glass of wine.

During the course of the week I was invited to a number of social functions, business development sessions and CPD sessions. These were a chance to get to know the staff in a less formal setting.

I was lucky enough to be invited to the annual Western Australia Law Society Golden Gavel event, a night of drinks, eating and listening to a ton of specific legal jokes - it's really great, you should try it.

Over the second week I continued working on the property matter and another gas/construction arbitration matter. But for me, the best part was when I took on an entire file myself for a week. We had an insurance matter, acting for an insurance provider. A senior associate tasked me with getting a file in order. She gave me a pile of documents in all sorts of order and I organised these documents and prepared a memorandum. This memorandum was used to directly contact the client on potential 'next steps'. When we called the client, they were happy and I felt that my work was valued.

Ultimately, be open minded. Try a range of firms and areas of law and try not to pigeonhole yourself. Speak with as many people as you can, and take up all opportunities to attend lunches, after work events and client meetings and hearings.



Clinton Bonomelli
- Murdoch Law Graduate