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Top lawyer on gardening leave after 22 years at Russell McVeagh

CAMPBELL GIBSON · FRIDAY MAY 26, 2017

Russell McVeagh partner Alan Paterson

A highly respected property lawyer has been put on gardening leave by his law firm after he resigned to join another practice.

Russell McVeagh partner Alan Paterson, who has been a partner at the firm for 22 years, says the gardening leave came as a surprise but the firm has been accommodating of clients who still wish to work with him.

Mr Paterson, 59, one of the country's most experienced property lawyers, says he decided to leave because he "no longer fits the age profile" of Russell McVeagh.

He says he was one of the oldest by "a considerable margin."

But the legal veteran says he had a wonderful career at the firm, which he describes as an outstanding legal practice.

From June 1, Mr Paterson will join Anderson Lloyd's Auckland office, as reported by *LawFuel's* John Bowie.

He says the South Island-based firm has a long history in property but not as much in Auckland, so he is looking forward to establishing the firm's presence.

Also leaving Russell McVeagh to join Anderson Lloyd is senior associate Daniel Williams, who Mr Paterson says still wants to work with him.

LawFuel's Mr Bowie describes Mr Paterson's move as "something of a coup" for Anderson Lloyd, which lured a trio of Russell McVeagh partners three years ago — Geoff Busch, Chris Bargery and David Holden.

The Auckland office is bulging at the seams with 20 staff, according to Mr Bowie.

"Alan Paterson's expansive personality will further fill the quarters and one presumes his former colleagues on Shortland St will be trusting and hoping 'Brand Paterson' will not magnetise major property clients like Progressive Enterprises, major subdivision developers, not to mention property work he undertook for Auckland Airport and Ports of Auckland," he says.

"A former Chapman Tripp partner before joining Russell McVeagh, he is a legal enthusiast and team-builder *par excellence* whose energy and experience in a rival firm may leave some at his old firm a tad concerned."

Russell McVeagh chief executive Gary McDiarmid made no comment about Mr Paterson being on gardening leave but says he will finish in the office at the end of May.

"As noted to our team at the time, Alan has made an immense contribution to the firm and we wish him all the best for the future," he says in an emailed statement.

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