



Lara Wiggins

Partner, restructuring kordamentha

P (03) 8623 3430

e lwiggins@kordamentha.com

 [LinkedIn](#)  [Website](#)



In what year did you become a registered liquidator?

I became a registered liquidator in the middle of Melbourne's COVID lockdown in 2020.

Briefly summarise your work history.

I am a Partner in the Restructuring team at KordaMentha where I have worked since starting as a Graduate in 2009. With over 15 years' insolvency and restructuring experience, I assist large and small businesses along with other stakeholders to navigate distressed and challenging situations.

I am a Chartered Accountant and a member of the TMA, ARITA and WIRV (as well as a former WIRV Executive Committee member).

During my time in the profession, I have acted on several large, high profile and complex external administrations and receiverships including Arrium, Timbercorp, Gunns, Roger David and Made Establishment (George

Calombaris' restaurant group). I also regularly work with small to medium sized ('SME') businesses and am chair of KordaMentha's national SME leadership group. My expertise includes undertaking financial reviews and advising on informal restructures, particularly in the manufacturing space.

I have strong technical insolvency knowledge, being the top student nationally of my cohort in completing the ARITA Advanced Certification Program. I sit on KordaMentha's national technical committee and was involved in drafting our work programs in respect of Mortgagee in Possession appointments and the PPSR.

I regularly speak at industry and client events on diverse topics covering the manufacturing, retail and construction sectors as well as technical matters and soft skills including network building and stakeholder management.

I am passionate about promoting females in our industry and in 2020 was awarded the WIRV Outstanding Female Award for my contributions in this area.

What industries do you have experience in?

- Manufacturing and food processing
- Retail and hospitality
- Property/construction
- Forestry and agriculture
- Aged care

Which external administration/receivership has been a career highlight for you, and why?

The matter that most stands out for me was the receivership of Gunns. This was a major forestry group based in Tasmania, with operations in forest management, wood chipping and sawmilling. It owned over 100,000 hectares of premium hardwood and softwood plantations.

We spent around two years in Launceston reestablishing the forestry business as part of a broader sale strategy. Gunns Forest

Products ('GFP') was Australia's leading forestry and woodchip export business prior to the collapse of Gunns but had largely ceased trading in the lead up to the appointment given weak market conditions. GFP formerly employed approximately 100 people across five states and operated a national seed to port value chain delivering export logs and woodchips to Asian markets.

As part of our role, we simplified the forest ownership structure to unencumber productive assets, rebuilt harvest, haulage and wood chipping capabilities and repaired long standing customer relationships in key Asian markets.

We ultimately restored GFP to a million tonne a year export operation. This enabled a going concern sale to a new owner with the financial capacity to continue to invest in the business and returned a significant sum to the secured creditors of Gunns. The reinvigoration of this historically important Tasmanian industry also benefited the wider regional economy.

It is extremely rewarding to see that the business continues to this day (under a new name) as an industry leader in sustainable plantation management.

What is your advice for aspiring registered liquidators?

Your career is a long time. Invest in your own development, say 'yes' to opportunities, ask questions and be flexible. Experience is important in such a dynamic, demanding field and it takes time to develop. My career path has had some interruptions (I fell pregnant with my third child not long after becoming a Registered Liquidator..!) but I've found it helpful to focus on the journey rather than the destination.

How you treat people matters. We often engage with people facing potential loss of employment, financial distress and other challenges. Put yourself in their shoes and remember we are trying to make the best of a bad situation.

Start building your professional networks early. Investing in relationships founded on genuine connection, trust and mutual respect with the people you will ultimately grow into your career with is both deeply satisfying and worthwhile.

What are your other interests?

As a mum of three kids under the age of 10 (two boys and a girl), most of my spare time is spent chasing them around. School and sporting activities are never ending! As a family, we enjoy skiing and road trips in our caravan.

My other interests are running (or anything active) and going to the beach. I grew up in Newcastle near the water, so I get to the beach whenever I can. I also converted to AFL (Richmond Tigers) and discovered hot drinks (chai lattes) when I moved to Melbourne.