

Maria O'Brien is the head of the Restructuring & Insolvency practice at Baker McKenzie's Australian offices. She previously led the Firm's Asia Pacific Restructuring & Insolvency Working Group and is a member of the Global Restructuring & Insolvency Steering Committee. Maria is a Fellow of INSOL International (the International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals), and a director of the Turnaround Management Association (Australia).

Maria has been ranked as a Leading Individual in Restructuring/Insolvency by Chambers Asia Pacific every year since 2011 and has been ranked in the peer-assessed Best Lawyers for Insolvency and Reorganisations every year since 2009. She was the winner of the International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation NSW's inaugural Award for Outstanding Female in the Insolvency and/or Restructuring Industry in 2009.

Practice Focus

Maria is a restructuring and insolvency professional with a background in commercial litigation. She has considerable experience acting for distressed or insolvent companies, their external administrators and creditors on a wide range of insolvency issues (both contentious and non-contentious), including informal workouts, with a particular focus on cross-border restructuring and insolvency. Maria also has extensive experience in facilitating the court approval of members' and creditors' schemes of arrangement under the Corporations Act.

Representative Legal Matters

- Acted for Mark Korda, Jennifer Nettleton and Jarrod Villani as administrators of the Ten Group, one of Australia's three major commercial free-to-air television channels.
- Acted for Australian-listed mining services company Emeco Holdings in its restructure by creditors' scheme of arrangement in the Federal Court of Australia with recognition in the US pursuant to Chapter 15.
- Acted for Mark Mentha, Cassandra Mathews, Martin Madden and Bryan Webster in various operational aspects of the AUD 4 billion administration of steelmaker Arrium and 93 of its subsidiaries.
- Acted for TPG, the lead participant in the senior secured debt syndicate to the Alinta Energy group of companies, in connection with its AUD 2.8 billion work-out, restructuring and privatization. This won the Macquarie Bank ALB Australian Law Awards Insolvency & Restructuring Deal of the Year in 2011.
- Acted for Mark Mentha, Brian McMaster and Scott Kershaw as administrators and subsequently deed administrators of Griffin Coal, Western Australia's largest coal mining operation, in relation to the sale of its power assets and a broad range of operational and litigation issues.
- Advised KKA Holdings and JA Kinghorn & Co. as parent company and secured lender to Krispy Kreme Australia (the holder of the franchise for 60 Krispy Kreme doughnut stores in Australia), which was restructured by deed of company arrangement.

Admissions

Western Australia~Australia (1999)

New South Wales~Australia (1997)

South Australia~Australia (1993)

High Court of Australia~Australia (1993)

Education

University of South Australia (Graduate Diploma Legal Practice) (1994)

University of Adelaide (Bachelor of Laws) (1993)

University of Adelaide (Bachelor of Commerce) (1993)

University of Adelaide (Bachelor of Economics) (1991)

