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AUSTRALASIAN LEGAL BUSINESS

## ALB Special Report: Brisbane 2010

Back in business

### Mid-tier mergers

Is the consolidation game back on again?

### Lockstep

Out of step and out of date?

# WATCHLIST



## Ten firms to watch in 2010

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2010

As the industry enters the New Year with a renewed sense of optimism, *ALB* singles out ten firms that are set to have a big 2010. Reasons for including some firms (such as the newly merged Norton Rose) are obvious, while the inclusion of other names on the list might be more surprising. Yet all these firms are equally capable of distinguishing themselves through their own unique brand, philosophy and plans for growth





## Marque Lawyers

Managing director: **Michael Bradley**  
Offices: **Sydney**

Marque Lawyers has become the standard bearer for those advocating a fresh approach to billing. Will this fledgling firm be able to continue the momentum in 2010?

**M**ichael Bradley is still a bit miffed that he wasn't named as one of Australia's hottest lawyers in last year's *ALB* Hot 40 feature, but luckily he agreed to speak with us for this article. Marque Lawyers opened its doors in August 2008 and has experienced remarkable growth in its short lifespan, growing from four to seven partners and adding 12 lawyers to its original five lawyer base. All of this occurred at the height of the GFC and Bradley describes it as "exceeding wildest expectations." Much of the growth has come from direct referrals from existing clients and industry contacts. Bradley believes that this support has been a response to Marque's innovative billing concepts and a "longstanding, deep-seated frustration" in the market at traditional hourly-based legal billing. Alternative billing arrangements are not unique to Marque, but Bradley says even firms which would like to pursue alternative systems face fundamental constraints. "In those firms, each individual in the firm is accountable for every hour of their day. The billable hour is culturally embedded and a fundamental part of the business model." Bradley is looking to consolidate in 2010 and says that he's keen for Marque Lawyers to "continue to be as annoying as we have been in the past."