

## Steven Bird

Call Date: 2025 (England & Wales) | 2012  
(New Zealand)

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Steven has a broad commercial practice, with a particular focus on banking and finance litigation. He has extensive experience of high-value disputes spanning general commercial and contractual litigation, civil fraud, professional negligence and securities and group litigation.

He has acted in the full spectrum of financial disputes, including cases arising from M&A transactions, structured products, IPOs and insider dealing allegations. This experience combined with his study of the Chartered Financial Analyst curriculum means he is fluent in a range of financial concepts, instruments and valuation methodologies, providing a practical advantage at all stages of a dispute.

Before coming to the English Bar, Steven practised at a prominent City firm, giving him a commercial outlook as well as a natural understanding of the requirements of those instructing him and their clients. He also completed a secondment to the litigation unit of the Competition & Markets Authority, which provided him with first-hand insight into how regulators investigate and pursue enforcement action.

Steven began his career in New Zealand, where he worked at a leading chambers as the junior barrister to Michael Heron KC, the former Solicitor-General of New Zealand. He appeared as sole counsel in High Court and District Court, and gained experience across high-profile commercial, securities, and public law matters.

## Legal Services

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### Commercial

#### *Drax Energy Solutions Ltd v Wipro Ltd [2023] EWHC 1342 (TCC)*

Acting for Wipro Ltd, a global IT consulting business, in its defence of claims by Drax Energy Solutions Ltd for misrepresentations, delays, and quality breaches arising out of a failed IT project.

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#### *VTB Commodities DAC v JSC Antipinsky Refinery (No 1) [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm)*

Acting for a subsidiary of VTB in proceedings including the maintenance of a worldwide freezing order to the value of €225 million against a large Russian oil refinery.

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***Lucy Group v Singh (BL-2019-001701)***

Acting for a large privately held UK-based company in its action against a former employee who embezzled significant sums. Lucy Group successfully obtained summary judgment.

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***Hussain & Anor v Ahmed & Anor [2021] EWHC 2213 (Ch)***

Acting for a high net worth individual on litigation arising from the sale of a business via alleged fraudulent misrepresentations. The claim was successfully struck out.

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***Agate Assets SA & Ors v Banque Privee Edmond de Rothschild Europe SA & Ors (CL-2015-000224)***

Acting for CNPR and Adenium SICAV in their counterclaim against Commerzbank and Agate Assets for fraudulent misrepresentation in respect of the sale of a €30 million structured note.

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Advising a government department in relation to a potential £100 million contractual dispute with an IT services company, with litigation ultimately being avoided.

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Acting for an oil and gas contractor in a multimillion-pound construction contract dispute.

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Representing a private equity company in a dispute with the vendor of a portfolio company, which was successfully settled.

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***Pernod Ricard v Lion [2012] NZHC 2801; [2013] NZCA 625***

Acting for Pernod Ricard in litigation arising from the acquisition of wine brands, concerning alleged breaches of warranties and the apportionment of excise tax. Pernod was successful in both the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

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***Tiroa E v Chief Executive of Land Information [2012] NZCA 355***

Acting for Maori land trusts in proceedings concerning the acquisition of sensitive New Zealand farm land by foreign purchasers, with the case proceeding to the Court of Appeal.

## Banking & Financial Services

***Agate Assets SA & Ors v Banque Privee Edmond de Rothschild Europe SA & Ors (CL-2015-000224)***

Acting for CNPR (the Italian Accountants' pension fund, with approximately €2 billion in assets under management) and Adenium SICAV (in liquidation) in their counterclaim against Commerzbank and Agate Assets for fraudulent misrepresentation in respect of the sale of a €30 million structured note.

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***Houghton v Saunders [2014] NZHC 2229 (Feltex shareholder class action)***

Acting for the directors of Feltex, who successfully defended claims that they had made misleading statements in the IPO prospectus. This was New Zealand's first litigation-funded securities class action.

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Advising a high-profile public servant in relation to an insider trading investigation by the Serious Fraud Office and Financial Markets Authority, with no prosecution being taken.

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Representing a private equity company in a dispute with the vendor of a portfolio company, which was successfully settled.

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***Pernod Ricard v Lion [2012] NZHC 2801; [2013] NZCA 625***

Acting for Pernod Ricard in litigation arising from the acquisition of wine brands, concerning alleged breaches of warranties and the apportionment of excise tax. Pernod was successful in both the High Court and the Court of Appeal.

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Representing the founder/CEO of a company listed on the Aquis stock exchange in respect of a shareholder

dispute.

## Civil Fraud

### *VTB Commodities DAC v JSC Antipinsky Refinery (No 1) [2021] EWHC 1758 (Comm)*

Acting for a subsidiary of VTB in proceedings including the maintenance of a worldwide freezing order to the value of €225 million against a large Russian oil refinery.

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### *Lucy Group v Singh (BL-2019-001701)*

Acting for a large privately held UK-based company in its action against a former employee who embezzled significant sums. Lucy Group successfully obtained summary judgment.

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Acting for CNPR and Adenium SICAV in their counterclaim against Commerzbank and Agate Assets for fraudulent misrepresentation in respect of the sale of a €30 million structured note.

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### *Edward Gong (with Marc Corlett KC)*

Acting in proceedings taken by the New Zealand Police that resulted in the freezing of NZ\$70 million worth of assets.

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Representing the ultimate beneficial owner of a company registered in the British Virgin Islands in relation to the misappropriation and sale of company assets.

## Derivatives & Financial Product Litigation

### *Agate Assets SA & Ors v Banque Privee Edmond de Rothschild Europe SA & Ors (CL-2015-000224)*

Acting for CNPR and Adenium SICAV in their counterclaim for fraudulent misrepresentation in respect of the sale of a €30 million structured note by Commerzbank and Agate Assets. The matter required a detailed understanding of the structured product, its underlying assets, and the representations made in connection with the sale.

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### *Houghton v Saunders [2014] NZHC 2229 (Feltex shareholder class action)*

Acting for the Feltex directors in the defence of New Zealand's first litigation-funded securities class action, involving claims of misleading statements in the IPO prospectus.

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Advising a placement agent on the merits of contemplated claims against private equity real estate funds.

## Public Inquiries

Assisted Michael Heron KC with inquiries into:

- Immigration New Zealand's procedures for determining the deportation liability of individuals found guilty of criminal and civil wrongdoing;
- Cycling New Zealand's High Performance Programme (the Olympic team) following allegations of inappropriate behaviour;
- the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's immigration arm following the deportation of individuals reported in the news media; and
- the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority following allegations of improper conduct by public servants.

## Professional Negligence

Acting for the CEO of an unincorporated association of over 300 local councils in a £40 million professional negligence claim arising from allegedly negligent property valuations.

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### *Acacia Motorhomes Ltd v McRent New Zealand Limited [2019] NZHC 563*

Acting as sole counsel in High Court proceedings involving the personal liability of a director and whether a

duty of care was owed in a novel context.

## Sport

Member of the Sports Resolutions pro bono panel.

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Represented a Team GB cyclist in a misconduct investigation with no finding of wrongdoing.

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Assisted Michael Heron KC in:

- Arbitral proceedings involving the interpretation of a high-profile All Black's employment agreement;
- A decision of the New Zealand Rugby Appeal Council; and
- An inquiry into Cycling New Zealand's High Performance Programme (Olympic team) following allegations of inappropriate behaviour;

## Education

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- LL.B.
- B.A. (Philosophy, Politics & Economics)
- University of Otago, New Zealand.
- CFA Level I and II
- College of Law Legal Professionals Course — Admitted to the New Zealand Bar

## Appointments

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- Member, Sports Resolutions Pro Bono Panel