

Power

POWER

THE KEY PLAYERS PULLING THE MOST STRINGS IN THE SECTORS OF INVESTMENT BANKING, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, LAW, PROPERTY, TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION.

DEALS SARAH THOMPSON & ANTHONY MACDONALD

Cheap money, big tickets, fast and furious deals. It's an unprecedented time for deal makers. As the fees flow in from record-sized mergers and acquisitions, and a new wave of deals appears on the horizon, deal makers are licking their lips. While there's plenty of work to go around, the cream of the crop emerged in the past year.

The big trend they're all chasing is the unstoppable march of private capital. Once-conservative superannuation funds have morphed into big capital markets players, throwing their weight around like risk-taking private equity funds. Everyone on this year's list has benefited from the rise of private capital. Sometimes it's corralling a syndicate of buyers, other times it's holding a superannuation fund's hand as it makes its first big takeover. There are also public company boards with targets on their backs to tend to.

This year, the power's dispersed, the players scrambled across a higher number of employers. New entrants are taking it to the old guard, while the incumbents have had to step up to defend their territory.

The new guard - Barrenjoey, Jarden, Jefferies - appear hungrier, perhaps less burdened by legacy relationships and practices. They're keen to make a buck quickly, while the old guard,

often weakened, wait for their new rivals' teething problems to worsen.

Macquarie Capital, Goldman Sachs and UBS are joined by Barrenjoey as the big four of Australian investment banking. MacCap, now under Tim Joyce, is more about team strength than one or two "rock stars". Jeremy "the man who knows everything worth knowing" Tasker, Laura Golis and Russell Keating lead by example. Its team attitude makes it hard to select one deal maker for this year's list.

JPMorgan and Bank of America, huge names globally, miss out too, along with RBC Capital Markets, despite being well regarded in its key sectors of infrastructure, health and technology. So, too, do the boutiques, although Jamie Garis and Ron Malek at Luminis Partners could be considered unlucky not to be on the list, while Tim Day's Sternship Advisers is a force in Perth, Rothschild & Co duo Marc Rubinstein and Sam Prentice keep it in the game, and Tony Burgess' Flagstaff Partners never ceases to amaze with its blue-chip assignments out of Melbourne.

In recognition of the frantic activity, the once-in-a-generation deal-making boom and the dispersion of power, the list looks a little different this year, with more faces and a few pairs linked by strong forces.



1 JARROD KEY

No one's surfed the private capital wave better than Key. Barrenjoey top dog Matthew Grounds likes to say it's not all about him, and he's right. Key almost single-handedly put Barrenjoey - a start-up bank - on the map last year with half a dozen big tickets in quick succession. Key's not everyone's cup of tea, but he originated more deals than most of his rivals put together. It was a true show of power, timing and aggression. The Grounds and Fowler show will roll on, the equity capital markets boys (Jabe Jerram, Dyson Bowditch) will pump out trades, but the understated Key has been Barrenjoey's true gem to date.



2 MICHAEL STOCK, AIDAN ALLEN

Former colleagues turned rivals, they're the pair the industry loves to get stuck into. Both are ambitious and proven deal makers, now running their own teams. And both have an incredible ability to drum up activity. At Jefferies, the stern Stock has a stranglehold on Australian private equity and won accolades for his Virtus Health defence, while at Jarden, Allen's moved on from his sponsors' roots to pop up at Woolworths, Origin Energy, Brambles and others. Allen, to his credit, also built a strong team, with up and comer Mitchell Schauer owning the real estate sector in particular. Both Stock and Allen have detractors, but charge on unashamedly regardless. And clients are rewarding them for it while it lasts.



3 NICK SIMS

Goldman Sachs' golden boy has come into his own, deftly managing up and down to emerge as a true leader. He's blessed with a big and always accountable team, and an organised co-head in Zac Fletcher, who will enter the big league should he make Goldman's partnership ranks. Goldman's still the go-to for public company M&A, where Marissa Freund is directing traffic. Kiwi boss Andrew Barclay, who's the No.1 deal maker across the Tasman, is an invaluable asset, as is his Australian counterpart Simon Rothery, whose high-level approach can smooth over situations. It's Sims, though, who has the golden touch.



4 KELVIN BARRY, RICHARD WAGNER

Two adversaries who tussled over Crown Resorts but may have more in common than they would like to admit. Both are taking the fight to the new brigade on behalf of the old guard. Barry, at times criticised by rivals for his defensive approach, has kept UBS in the top tier of investment banks with his rusted-on client relationships. No one can dispute that. And promoting capital markets boss Richard Sleijpen to co-head was also important, signalling capital markets was still king inside the Swiss bank. Morgan Stanley's Wagner, having advised Blackstone for Crown, and Woodside on its BHP deal, is at the top of his game and taking with him M&A boss Richard Hersey, a rising star in the industry, and perennial performers Emma-Jane Newton and Andrew Hunter.



5 TONY OSMOND, DRAGI RISTEVSKI

The master and the apprentice. Osmond, Citi's banking boss for more than a decade, shows nice guys don't have to finish last. His late career revival, where he secured big M&A tickets at Boral, AusNet Services, Orica, Nearmap and others, sees him rejoin the list. His decision to hire Alex Cartel as his successor was also vindicated, and freed him up to win more client work. Ironically, Cartel's arrival squeezed out Risteovski, who took a banking head job at Credit Suisse. In hindsight, it was an impossibly hard time to join Credit Suisse, and while its revival isn't complete, Risteovski has injected new energy and big mandates particularly in the world of private equity, working for top dogs KKR, TPG Capital and The Carlyle Group. He's also proved to be an effective poacher.

CONSULTANTS EDMUND TADROS

The consulting firms were flying in 2021-22, a lack of qualified staff being the main constraint on growth. Demand was up from both public and private sector clients looking to digitise and decarbonise and for advice on adapting to a high inflation, low unemployment economy.

Supply was a different story. As of August, the five largest firms - Accenture, Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PwC - were on the hunt for 4000-plus recruits. This is up from about 3300 open positions at the start of 2022. The talent crisis is getting worse even though