

WFW OPENS TOKYO OFFICE

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Watson Farley & Williams (“WFW”) is delighted to announce the opening of its new office in Tokyo, Japan, its 19th worldwide. The office will be led by WFW Partner Simon Collins, who relocates to Tokyo from Hong Kong, and newly arrived Partner Keisuke Imon. In addition to Keisuke, Counsel Shusuke Fukunaga and a team of associates and paralegals are also joining WFW Tokyo. Most of the team previously worked together for leading international law firm White & Case in Tokyo.

WFW Tokyo will initially focus on asset and structured finance in the aviation and maritime sectors, offering both Japanese and English law capabilities. Japan is a key jurisdiction for those sectors and the firm already has long-standing relationships there, providing an excellent starting point from which to develop a strong presence in the country. The firm is registered locally as Watson Farley & Williams (Gaikokuho Kyodo Jigyo Horitsu Jimusho) and includes both Japanese qualified *bengoshi* and registered foreign *gaiben* lawyers.

Simon, who is qualified as a solicitor in England & Wales, was an associate at WFW in both London and Singapore before joining White & Case in 2005 and re-joining WFW in May 2022. He is widely recognised as one of the top asset finance lawyers in the region by leading legal and industry journals including *Legal 500*, *Chambers* and *Airfinance Journal*. He advises clients on complex cross-border aviation and maritime finance transactions, including asset and project finance, structured lending, leasing and commercial transactions.

Keisuke, who worked for Clifford Chance before joining White & Case, is qualified as a *bengoshi* and has extensive experience in the Japanese market advising on a wide range of financing matters including asset, project, structured, debt and real estate finance. Clients include export credit agencies, financial institutions and Japanese and international leasing companies. Keisuke is also acknowledged as one of Japan’s top asset finance lawyers, with *Chambers Asia Pacific 2022* noting that clients praise him as “the best aviation lawyer in Japan”.

Shusuke, qualified both as a *bengoshi* and a solicitor in England & Wales, advises on a broad range of banking and finance transactions and is recognised by *Chambers Asia Pacific 2023* as a “rising star who advises on domestic and cross-border financings, with a particular focus on aircraft and ship financing”.

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WFW Senior Partner George Paleokrassas commented: “We are extremely excited to be opening in Tokyo with such a first-class team, giving us a strong presence on the ground in the world’s third largest economy and further reinforcing our dominance in asset finance across Asia. In addition to our strong maritime practice, we now have the largest aviation finance practice in the Asia Pacific region. Following as it does our recent opening in Seoul in February, this latest expansion highlights WFW’s commitment to the Asia Pacific region and its importance to our business”.

Simon added: “We are really excited to be opening in Tokyo. WFW’s long-standing reputation for excellence for transport sector asset finance is universally acknowledged and makes it the obvious platform from which our team can truly expand and enhance the service we can offer our Asia Pacific clients. I am delighted to be bringing the team back together as the new WFW Tokyo office and look forward to making WFW the ‘go-to’ law firm for aviation and maritime finance in Japan”.

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