

DESMOND M. BALAKRISHNAN*



Categories: [People](#), [Lawyers](#)

Desmond Balakrishnan is an experienced capital markets and securities lawyer with extensive experience advising clients in the cannabis, gaming, entertainment, hospitality, and food, beverage and agribusiness sectors. He is one of the leading lawyers in Canada in cannabis and gaming law and is recognized in numerous legal directories for his work in these industries.

With a broad scope of expertise, Desmond advises on private equity investments, public offerings, mergers and acquisitions, and listed company maintenance. He also acts as counsel on new issues and listings on all Canadian stock exchanges and interlistings with several international exchanges. He is the national leader of McMillan's Cannabis and Gaming groups.

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Expertise: Cannabis, Capital Markets & Securities, Gaming, Media, Communications & Entertainment, Mergers & Acquisitions

Location: Vancouver

Phone: 604.691.7462

Position/Title: Partner, Capital Markets & Securities | Gaming

Community Involvement:

- Governance Officer Bumblebee Preschool Society, Vancouver BC
- Volunteer, Brad Addison Memorial Hockey Tournament, Vancouver BC
- Panel Member, Vancouver Property Assessment Review Panel (2005-2007)

Directorships & Affiliations:

- Vancouver Bar Association
- International Masters of Gaming Law

Education & Admissions:

Degree: Called to the British Columbia bar

Year: 1998

Degree: LLB (with Distinction)

University: University of Alberta

Year: 1997

Degree: BA

University: Simon Fraser University

Year: 1994

Degree: CLA

University: Simon Fraser University

Year: 1994

Media Mentions:

- "[Vancouver law firms vie for cannabis-related clients](#)", *Business in Vancouver*, June 5, 2019
- "[Meet the top lawyers working on some of the biggest deals in the booming marijuana industry that's set to skyrocket to \\$194 billion](#)" by Jeremy Berke, *Business Insider*, January 9, 2019
- "[Cannabis Industry Starts to Boil](#)" by Paul McLaughlin, *Lexpert Magazine*, July 23, 2018

Rankings & Recognition:

- Recognized in the 2024 Lexpert Special Edition on Finance and M&A as one of Canada's Leading Finance and M&A Lawyers
- Recognized in the 2024 Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a Consistently Recommended Lawyer in the area of Corporate Finance & Securities
- Recognized by Chambers Canada (2024) as a leading lawyer in the area of Cannabis Law
- Recognized in the 2023 Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a Repeatedly Recommended Lawyer in the area of Corporate Finance & Securities
- Recognized by Chambers Canada (2023) as a leading lawyer in the area of Cannabis Law
- Recognized in the 2022 Lexpert Special Edition on Finance and M&A as one of Canada's Leading Finance and M&A Lawyers
- Recognized in the 2022 Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a Repeatedly Recommended Lawyer in the area of Corporate Finance & Securities
- Recognized by Chambers Canada (2022) as a leading lawyer in the area of Cannabis Law
- Recognized by *Best Lawyers in Canada* (2022) as a leading lawyer in the area of Gaming Law
- Recognized in the 2021 Lexpert Special Edition on Canada's Leading Health Sciences Lawyers as a Leading Health Science Lawyer
- Recognized in the 2021 Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory as a Repeatedly Recommended Lawyer in the area of Corporate Finance & Securities
- Listed in the Legal500 Canada 2021 as a Recommended Lawyer – Cannabis
- Recognized by Chambers Canada (2021) as a leading lawyer in the area of Cannabis Law
- Recognized by the Best Lawyers in Canada (2021) as a leading lawyer in the area of Gaming Law
- Listed in the Legal500 Canada 2020 as a "Recommended Lawyer" – Cannabis
- Recognized by Best Lawyers in Canada (2020) as a leading lawyer in the area of Gaming Law
- Recognized in Chambers Canada 2019 as a Practitioner of Gaming & Licensing
- Recognized by Best Lawyers in Canada (2019) as a leading lawyer in the area of Gaming Law

- Chambers Canada 2018 - Gaming & Licensing (Recognized Practitioner)
- Named by Lexpert as a "Lawyer to Watch" 2009.
- Recipient of the Lexpert Rising Star Award 2008 - "Top Canadian Lawyers Under Forty".
- Recipient of Business in Vancouver's "Top 40 Under Forty" award 2006.

Speaking Engagements:

- Cannabis Legalization in Canada: Social, Legal and Political Hurdles Canaccord Genuity's Cannabis Investor Day, Vancouver, British Columbia
- January 2017
- 2008-2010

Representative Matters:

- Green Impact Partners Inc. (formerly Blackheath Resources Inc.) in connection with its acquisition of clean energy assets from Wolverine Energy and Infrastructure Inc., the completion of a \$100 million brokered offering of subscription receipts and its listing on the TSX Venture Exchange through a reverse take-over (RTO) structure.
- Acted as lead counsel for Contagious Gaming Inc. in its reverse takeover transaction of Contagious Sports Ltd. and Telos Entertainment Inc.
- Represented Great Canadian Gaming Corp. to secure a C\$200 million revolving credit facility and a US\$170 million term loan and to issue US\$170 million senior subordinated notes for gross proceeds of C\$600 million, February 2007.
- Represented Great Canadian Gaming Corp. to secure \$450 million in financing and redeem Series A & Series B Secured Notes, September 2006.
- Represented Avcorp Industries to complete a private placement of \$12 million, July 2006.
- Represented Great Canadian Gaming Corp. in acquisition of several casino and gaming facilities throughout British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Washington State, 2005.
- Acted as counsel to in joint venture with major resource company for development of Brazilian Assets valued at \$100 million.
- Acted as counsel to Great Canadian Gaming for \$350 million offering and private placement arrangement of \$75 million.
- Acted as counsel to TSE listed issuer for \$82 million equity offering.
- Acted as counsel to lottery service provider for successive hospital and charitable foundation lottery.
- Acted as counsel to concert promotion company with respect to national tour of multi-platinum

recording artists.

- Acted as counsel for acquiror of three standard bred racetracks and casinos in Ontario and British Columbia.
- Acted as counsel for acquiror of British Columbia thoroughbred racetrack.
- Acted as counsel in connection with casino development in Europe and public listing in Canada of management company.
- Acted as counsel in connection with listing of several Australian resource exploration companies on Canadian Stock Exchange.
- Acted as counsel for acquisition of gas lease blocks in Gulf of New Mexico and development funding (\$60 million).

Industries: Cannabis, Gaming, Media, Communications & Entertainment

Practices: Capital Markets & Securities, Mergers & Acquisitions