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(previously known as Kate Hesson)

Kate is a conflict resolution specialist who helps leaders, workplace colleagues and business owners navigate difficult conversations, high-stakes decisions, and fractured relationships. Her approach is rooted in empathy, insight, and strategic thinking. She supports clients to work through disagreements before they escalate, to rebuild relationships after harm has occurred, or to end them with dignity.

She brings over 25 years of experience across legal, governance, and community settings, including past work as a commercial lawyer, and now as a trusted advisor in complex business and interpersonal dynamics. Her background includes governance roles, specialist work in mediation, investigations, early conflict intervention, and systems design for conflict prevention.

When Kate practised as a lawyer she specialised in business and property transactions, leasing and contracts plus greenfields property development. She trained as a mediator through the New Zealand Law Society in 2017 and has continued her development as a conflict resolution specialist since then as a member of the Resolution Institute and the Arbitrators' and Mediators' Institute of New Zealand. Having not practised as a litigator Kate is not adversarial, she is more naturally attuned to finding the commercial and human interests at play and finding space for collaboration.

Kate has contributed thought leadership on conflict resolution through her writing and speaking engagements. She is a speaker on topics related to conflict resolution having presented to Human Resources NZ, the Institute of Directors and the New Zealand Law Society. Her regular "Connections" column for the Otago Daily Times, and LinkedIn shares under both Kate Hesson and Kate Keddell, explore the human side of leadership, accountability, and disagreement. Her writing is widely shared and reflects her deep commitment to building trust and restoring integrity in relationships under strain.

Otago born, bred and educated, Kate's style is adaptive, candid, and supportive. She believes her role is not simply to facilitate surface-level agreement, but to create the conditions for truth-telling, mutual recognition, and durable resolution. Depending on the context, her approach may involve joint sessions, private coaching, or structured frameworks that support longer-term relational repair. She does not take a "settlement at all costs" approach, but is willing to challenge assumptions, clarify what matters most, and help parties find their own way forward.

Kate maintains confidentiality and professional integrity as cornerstones of her practice. She does not publish lists of clients or mediations. Rather, she prefers to focus on how she can meet the needs of the particular circumstances before her. **She welcomes inquiries and provides free, private 30 minute discovery calls which can be booked through her website here. Find out more general information about her services and fees here.**