



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



President's Message

At the Annual General Meeting of MLAANZ, to be held via Zoom on the evening of Thursday September 30, 2021, I will hand over the leadership of the Association to a new president and committee.

As I reflect on my two years as president of MLAANZ, it is clear this has been a period of unprecedented dislocation for the shipping sector, and for our community of maritime lawyers. Many of us have experienced lockdowns for extended periods – in my own case, being domiciled in Melbourne, I have been locked down and working from home for about half of the 740 days I have been president.

The challenges thrown up by the COVID-19 pandemic have meant the Association has been unable to conduct an annual conference in either 2020 or 2021. We maintain fond memories of our Auckland conference held in September 2019 and look forward to a 2022 MLAANZ conference, likely to be hosted by either our Queensland or Western Australian Branches. The planned conferences of the Comité Maritime International (CMI), of which our Association is a member, originally planned to be held in Tokyo in 2020, then 2021, have also needed to be cancelled. The Tokyo conference has now been rescheduled for April 5-8, 2022.

Over the year there has been dialogue between MLAANZ and the CMI on a variety of topics, ranging from breaking limitations to classification societies to the Nairobi Wreck Removal Convention.

Members of our Association have developed new skills in organising online seminars. All of our Branches, in New Zealand, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, have been active in conducting “virtual” seminars. In this calendar year, events have included the following topics:

- February – Western Australian Branch seminar on “Section 11 of COGSA and an Unintended Lacuna in the Interstate Carriage of Goods by Sea”
- March – Victorian Branch seminar on “*Halliburton v Chubb*: Implications for Arbitration in Australia”
- April – Victorian Branch seminar on “COVID and Insurance in the Maritime and Transport Industries”
- May – New Zealand Branch Annual Conference at The Beehive, Wellington
- May – Victorian Branch seminar on “Salvaging Treasure from Wrecks: Public and Private Law Issues”
- June – Western Australian branch seminar on “Ever Given: Where to from Here?”
- September – NSW Branch “Winter Seminar on Marine Insurance”



MLAANZ president David Goodwin

- September – Western Australian Branch seminar on “Cleaning up: Australia’s New Offshore Decommissioning Regime”
- September – Queensland Branch seminar on “The Regulation of Domestic Commercial Vessels”

This demonstrates the wide range of subject matter which is of interest to our members. We are grateful to all of our guest speakers and the Branch organising committees for their efforts in arranging this series of successful seminars, which has maintained the vibrancy of our Association.

Our inability to hold annual conferences has had a positive effect on the Association’s bank balance, as we generally aim to run our conferences at a small loss. As at June 30, 2021, MLAANZ had cash at bank of A\$171,944, as can be seen in the audited accounts distributed to members this week. Your Association continues to enjoy a strong financial position.

The challenges for the new president and committee, of which I will be part as immediate past president, will be to enlist new members, to grow our links with maritime lawyers in other jurisdictions and to increase our dialogue with our Governments on shipping policy and maritime law issues. In the post-COVID recovery period ahead it is likely there will be a focus on new initiatives to bolster international trade and enhance economic activity. We can anticipate a raft of proposed new legislation and regulations which will require vigilant scrutiny from the skilled members of an Association such as ours.

It has been an honour and privilege to serve as president of this illustrious Association, and I thank my fellow directors for their support. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of my predecessor as president Pat Saraceni, and board member Paul Baxter, a former secretary of the Association. Both Pat and Paul will step down from the board on September 30 following many years of dedicated and tireless service. We are grateful for all they have contributed to MLAANZ.

Yours in shipping

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