

Closing address at MLAANZ Melbourne Conference

by Matthew Harvey

The Melbourne conference has been a conference of firsts. By my count, there are four firsts. The first is a Dethridge Address which was delivered in less than one hour. The second first was a Dethridge Address that included PowerPoint slides. The third first was working lunches at which members considered various law reform issues like the rewrite of the *Navigation Act*. I congratulate those members who participated in those discussions during the lunch break. The fourth first is the gift of the umbrellas to each of the attendees. Clive Madder came up with this idea and I congratulated him on this stroke of genius, given the rain we have recently had. He informed me that his reason for the suggestion was that his umbrella was, in fact, about to fall apart. Thankfully, Clive's self interest has produced a benefit for all.

During this conference we have learnt many things:

- 1 Christopher Lau told us about a contractual procedure for parties to follow in the event their arbitrator becomes insane.
- 2 Anton Trichardt reminded me to re-read the chapter on Maritime Liens in Davies & Dickie.
- 3 Paul Willee told us that a sedentary organism is not an Australian male but a sea cucumber.
- 4 Peter Dawson spoke to us about SPRFMO and VMEs.
- 5 Matt Flynn told us what "whatsoever" means and that its omission could cost \$3.5 million.
- 6 Sir Murray Rivers told us about the plight of the red faced mattress thrasher.
- 7 Catherine Taylor told us that a river board is a ship.
- 8 Peter Mannion told us that fob does not mean "free on board" but in fact means "free of bother".

9 Kate Lewins introduced us to salami pirates. Rob McLaughlin seemed to think that they were steeling salamis but, perhaps, they were using salamis as weapons.

I think that two great challenges have been laid down for MLAANZ in this conference. The first of those came from Peter Mannion about the state of the home grown shipping industry in our countries. What is our organisation prepared to do about fostering a local shipping industry in Australia and New Zealand? The second great challenge involves the engagement of MLAANZ in the re-write of the *Navigation Act* and I am pleased to see that Dr Michael White is leading our response there.

Finally a number of people need to be thanked. I thank Maurice Thompson and Clive Madder for their involvement in this conference. It fell to the three of us to organise the program and I hope that all of you have benefited from it. I also thank our speakers from Australia, New Zealand and from overseas. I thank our attendees. Like any large family, there are members overseas and occasional fights between us (especially when we are paid to do so) but, when we meet once a year, we all seem to get along. Finally I thank The Meetings Manager and, in particular, Helen and Clare for doing all the administrative dross that Maurice, Clive and I have avoided but which is necessary to make this conference work so seamlessly.

Finally, I know you will not believe that last weekend there were blue skies and bright sunshine in Melbourne. I am sorry that it has rained almost continually through this conference but, quite frankly, we love it.

I look forward to meeting you all again at our next conference in Hawaii.