



# SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



## Nicholas Gaskell; Gentleman, Scholar, Fashion Icon – a Tribute

To mark the occasion of his retirement from fulltime duties with the University of Queensland (UQ) Law School, MLAANZ would like to take this opportunity to recognise the significant contribution that Emeritus Professor Nicholas (Nick) Gaskell has made to our organisation and more broadly, to maritime law internationally.

During his career, Nick has taught maritime law to students, maritime lawyers and shipping professionals throughout the world including at Southampton University (where he continues to be a visiting professor), London, Belgium, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden and Yugoslavia.



Nick first connected with MLAANZ almost four decades ago when he came to Australia as a visiting academic from Southampton University to Monash University in the mid-1980s. This sparked a connection with Australia that culminated in his appointment as professor of the Maritime and Shipping Law Unit of the TC Beirne School of Law at UQ in 2009. Nick retired from his teaching and research post on March 30, 2020 and has now been appointed emeritus professor of maritime and commercial law at UQ.

Over the years Nick has consistently contributed to the MLAANZ community by presenting at annual conferences in Australia and New Zealand on topics including the Athens Convention, the Rotterdam Rules, electronic bills of lading, crewing contracts, demise charters and admiralty jurisdiction, as well as publishing numerous articles in the MLAANZ Journal. Nick recently made a submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development regarding the Athens Convention with the support of MLAANZ. Nick has been an avid supporter of the Queensland Chapter of MLAANZ, attending almost every event held by the branch since his arrival in that balmy jurisdiction.

In the international community, Nick is a titular member of the Comité Maritime International (CMI), of which MLAANZ is a member. He is currently a member of the CMI Working Group on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) and a member of the CMI Standing Committee on the Implementation of International Conventions and the Promotion of Maritime Conventions.

Nick's involvement in the development of international conventions extends substantially beyond CMI. He has represented the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) at the International Maritime Organization's Legal Committee and the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds. He has attended and participated in many diplomatic conferences which have produced international maritime law conventions, including the 1989 Salvage Convention, the 1992 Protocols to the Civil Liability Convention and Fund Convention, the Hazardous and Noxious Substances Convention 1996, the Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims 1996, the Arrest Convention 1999 and the Bunker Pollution Convention 2001. He was a member of the United Kingdom delegation at the 2002 diplomatic conference which agreed the Athens Convention 2002.

Nick has written widely on areas of maritime law, including carriage of goods by sea (bills of lading and charterparties), collisions and liabilities (including pollution damage, salvage, wreck, passenger claims, and limitation of liability) and shipping regulation. He is the main author of “Bills of Lading: Law and Contracts” (Informa, 2000) and has recently written on new areas of law such as autonomous underwater vehicles.

In November 2019, Informa Law published Nick’s major practitioner work, “The Law of Wreck”, jointly authored with Craig Forrest. This work examines in detail the legal and commercial consequences of a shipwreck, including a detailed analysis of the Nairobi Wreck Removal Convention 2007.

These paragraphs have barely scratched the surface of the tome of work that Nick has contributed to maritime law and our legal profession. These extraordinary achievements are complemented by Nick’s personal qualities. Nick is renowned for his humility, approachability, sense of humour and enthusiasm to share knowledge. Parodies of Nick in the annual UQ Law School Revue are testament to the fond regard he is held in by students. Nick is usually the first to ask a (tricky) question and always eager to engage in MLAANZ presentations and debates. However, this tribute would not be complete without an acknowledgement of Nick’s ability to enhance MLAANZ occasions with his wonderful array of Hawaiian shirts.

MLAANZ thanks Nick for decades of selfless dedication to some of the most difficult issues facing the shipping industry. We look forward to his continuing involvement with MLAANZ in the years ahead.

Michelle Taylor and Paul Baxter  
MLAANZ Executive

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