



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Tribute to Frank Turner

As previously notified by the Association, the late Francis (Frank) Turner passed away in Brisbane on 17 January 2021, aged 73.

After a routine medical test in early December 2020, Frank was told by his doctors to present to the emergency department after which he was diagnosed with untreatable, late-stage liver cancer with a very short prognosis. In his usual understated but determined way, Frank defied the confronting and grim prognosis as best he could.

Frank was born and raised in Cairns and grew up around boats – indeed, he was described as holding an “unofficial” water skiing record from Cairns to Green Island at one point in his youth.

He moved to Brisbane to study law at the University of Queensland. He commenced articles at Thynne + Macartney and, with his interest in boats, gravitated into the firm’s maritime practice. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1972 and became a partner in the firm in 1976 where he remained working, for over 40 years, until his retirement in 2013.

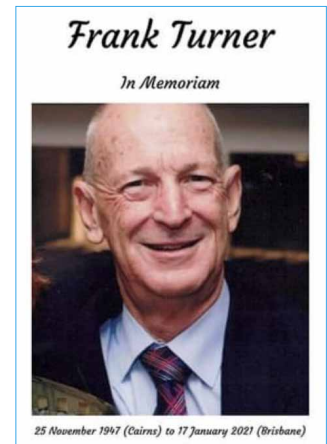
Frank had a prominent practice in maritime law and was regularly recognised as the leading Queensland practitioner in this field, often remarked upon as being the doyen of maritime lawyers in Queensland during his time. He was a long-standing member of MLAANZ and was a past president of the Queensland chapter. He would regularly attend the annual conference and particularly enjoyed the social aspects of these events. I am sure he would be fondly remembered by many members of the Association and by those who might have enjoyed a drink with him.

Frank regularly represented most, if not all, the P&I Clubs as a P&I correspondent and lawyer and was involved in many high-profile and precedent-setting cases. A particular highlight was acting in the grounding of the cargo vessel Anro Asia off Caloundra in 1981 with the vessel leaking bunker oil after grounding on rocks. Frank had to be winched down onto the vessel from an Army Chinook which had been called in to assist the salvage effort and to remove the containers onboard the vessel.

Also, in the 1980s, Frank was involved in a number of landmark cases involving the loss of fishing vessels where, acting for hull insurers (and I believe in conjunction with Stuart Hetherington and the late Justice Richard Cooper), it was found that the vessels had been deliberately scuttled by their owners. The successful defence of the claims had a significant effect on the insurance market for fishing vessels in Queensland.

Frank’s practice encompassed the full gamut of wet and dry maritime work and he was involved in a number of other and more-recent, high-profile casualties including the Global Peace and Pacific Adventurer oil spills and reported maritime cases involving arrest, pollution, salvage and charterparty disputes.

Frank was generous with his time and was always willing to share his knowledge freely. He was a great teacher and mentor to many junior lawyers at Thynne + Macartney, some of whom continue the firm’s maritime practice today.



Outside law, Frank was active in a variety of pursuits – earning the moniker “Action Man” in a profile piece in the Queensland Law Society magazine Proctor – with particular interests in gliding (where he was a long standing member of the Kingaroy Soaring Club and a competitor at Queensland and national championships for over 40 years), motorcycles, dinghy sailing and in more recent times surfing (going on numerous trips to find the perfect wave, especially to Indonesia where he built a villa to base himself for his surfing adventures).

Frank would often say “Do it while you can” and he certainly lived his life this way. Rest in peace Frank; you will be missed but not forgotten.

Matthew Hockaday
Partner, Thynne + Macartney
+61 7 3231 8814
mhockaday@thymac.com.au

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