



# SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



## President's Message

Kia ora

With Christmas on the horizon I wish everyone the best for the holiday season and a well earned break from the day-to-day rigours of business, and look forward to regrouping in the New Year as we build towards celebrating the MLAANZ 50th Birthday, culminating with the 50th annual federal conference in Melbourne.

In this month's issue, MLAANZ and Comité Maritime International (CMI) legend Stuart Hetherington is profiled – a fascinating read. A huge thanks to Stuart for all he has done for MLAANZ and for what he continues to actively do for CMI.

The 49th MLAANZ annual federal conference in Queenstown was a success with the New Zealand Branch – John Knight, Colin Hunter and Paul David special mention – and Mecca putting on an excellent programme with a few magic tricks and humour thrown in for good measure.

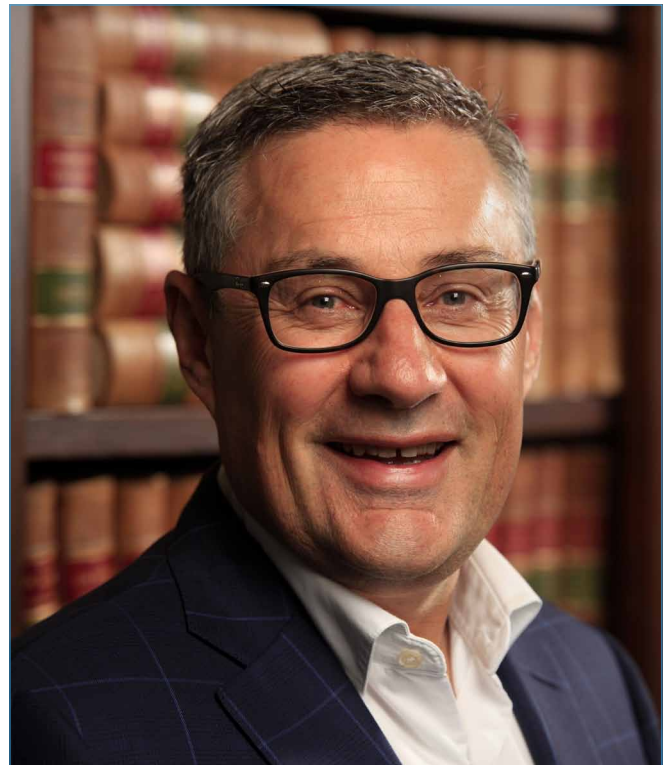
A storm-ravaged Queenstown and South Island saw late flights and some accommodation pressure which added extra spice to the conference and the 90 delegates battled wet weather for most of the event. However, as maritime lawyers they braved the elements and enjoyed the hospitality only Queenstown can provide.

The Dethridge Address from John Gresson was a special moment as we were able to recognise his significant contribution to MLAANZ, maritime law, the Naval Reserve and shipping in the South Pacific. John's address was a highlight and a fitting way to commence the conference.

The magic show at the gala dinner was a calculated gamble taken by the organising committee. However, the entertainer was quiet outstanding with dry wit and clever magic tricks. Even the smartest KCs and judges at my table were outwitted and left laughing ferociously as the entertainment proved a hit. Thanks also to our very own Charlie Street for volunteering to assist and being a great sport.

Included with this article are some photos from the conference – the quality of my old iPhone and lack of camera skills may impact the standard, but I thought some photos were better than none. Apologies for any unflattering angles in advance!

The AGM saw the return of all standing Board members and new additions Charlie Street (Sydney barrister) and John Knight (MLAANZ New Zealand vice-president). A big welcome to Charlie and John and I look forward to working with you.



*MLAANZ president Hamish Fletcher*

The Board held a pre-conference self-funded dinner at the Bunker in Queenstown, providing a great an opportunity to get together socially for an evening and meet with the New Zealand Branch conference organisers. We are looking to make this an annual tradition with the presidents shouting the drinks a highlight!

In my last article I highlighted that the Executive Council of the CMI was submitting a proposal to increase its subscription. This occurred in October, with attendees doing so via Zoom. There was significant support for a 25% increase in next year's (2025/2026) fees which was passed.

Further work is to be put into identifying how CMI sets its fees before any further increases are tabled, as it became clear no-one knew how fees were first set some 20 years ago. CMI has reserves of about €600,000 so is in a healthy financial position overall, but runs a very lean operation which at present operates annually at a loss, as fees have not been increased since being set those many years ago.

To avoid eating into reserves it is important CMI operates sustainably. To do that the budget and fees collected need to increase to match the good work CMI is undertaking on an annual basis. The annual cost to operate CMI is €250,000 with annual income of €180,000, so an increase is necessary.

CMI continues to be active with four questionnaires currently being circulated which require MLAANZ input. These are regular throughout the year. If you have any interest in assisting the Board to complete these questionnaires please do not hesitate to contact myself or secretary Maurice Lynch.

Finally, I am pleased to advise that at least seven MLAANZ members will be making up our contingent to CMI in Tokyo in May 2025. Apart from a contribution to the president's costs, these are all self-funded and it is great to see the level of interest from our members. If you are interested, I encourage you to let me know so I can advise CMI of any increase in our numbers.







Meri Kirihimete (Merry Christmas).

Nga Mihi  
Hamish Fletcher  
President, MLAANZ  
p +64 3 548 4136, m +64 27 220 5122  
[hamish@oceanlaw.co.nz](mailto:hamish@oceanlaw.co.nz)

December 2024

