



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



President's Message

Kia ora

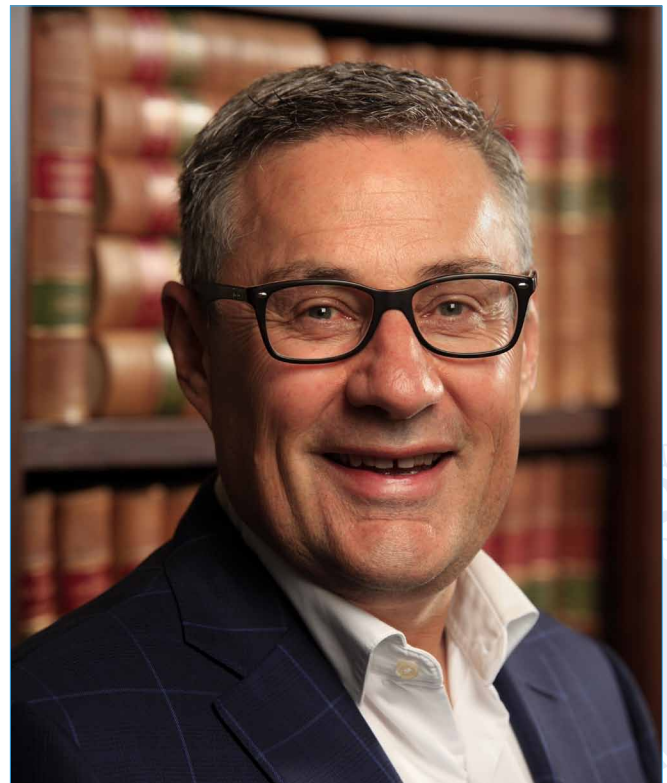
Melbourne has been confirmed as the location for the 50th MLAANZ annual federal conference over the 3rd to the 5th of September 2025. The selection of the Victoria Branch as hosts reflects the birthplace of our association some 50 years ago.

The organising committee led by chair Nick Luxton is excited to be hosting the event at the Intercontinental in downtown Melbourne. The committee, including past MLAANZ president Matthew Harvey KC, MLAANZ Board member Lachlan Boughton and Melanie Long will work hand in hand with our long-trusted event organisers MECCA to put together the conference programme and events. In coming months we will release confirmed activities and speakers.

As part of the lead in to the conference, we intend that the preceding edition of *Semaphore* will include articles from members reminiscing on the history of MLAANZ and how and why the association is so important to them. This will include a cross section of members – so if you wish to share your MLAANZ experiences as part of the celebration please contact me on hamish@oceanlaw.co.nz or Iain MacIntyre on i.macintyre@xtra.co.nz.

Last year we reinstated the president's dinner as a thank you from the president to the Board and organising committee of the conference for their contribution over the past year. This self-funded event will this year see the past presidents of MLAANZ invited to attend to celebrate their contribution to our association. The dinner will be held in the days prior to the conference beginning. In the next few weeks I will be contacting our past presidents.

In previous articles I have referred to the Comité Maritime International (CMI) conference in May this year in Tokyo. Momentum is building for the conference and as MLAANZ president I have been asked to speak at the event on issues arising in our region. I have requested CMI allow two speakers from MLAANZ in the allocated time slot so I can speak to New Zealand issues and one of our entourage can speak to Australian matters. I would appreciate any feedback from members on issues they wish us to consider raising with CMI during our time on the podium.



MLAANZ president Hamish Fletcher

I am pleased to let you know that Sweden nominated our very own immediate past president Michelle Taylor to stand for a contested position on the Board of CMI. MLAANZ did not hesitate to

support Michelle with this nomination. Although ultimately she finished third in the voting and was unsuccessful on this occasion, MLAANZ is nonetheless very proud for Michelle that she is held in such high esteem by the CMI.

Arising out of last year's Queenstown annual federal conference, where Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) director and chief executive Kirstie Hewlett spoke, I have since been able to forge direct working relationships with Ms Hewlett and MNZ deputy chief executive Deb Despard – we now have direct lines of communications with both. For the past six months we have been facilitating MNZ and the chief executives of major fishing companies and fishing industry health and safety groups, all coming together to start a fresh focus on health and safety in the marine environment they operate in.

As a result, Ms Despard recently came to visit me to discuss maritime issues from the MLAANZ perspective. I advised that MLAANZ was willing to assist on reviews of legislation and wanted to be at the table with MNZ. We include some of the best maritime legal minds and are able to bring not only a legal perspective but an industry perspective to legislation.

I look forward to continuing to build this relationship here in New Zealand and will update you on this as it progresses. Similarly, across the Tasman, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has Michelle Taylor on its Board and, although not a MLAANZ appointee, it does assist relationships with the regulator.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution past president Sarah Derrington has made and continues to make to the maritime sector in Australia and thank Sarah for her service on the Australian Maritime Museum foundation from which she is retiring.

By the time of this publication, the the NSW Branch would have hosted a mini conference on 19 March at the Federal Court in Sydney featuring the following guest speakers:

- Matthew Harvey KC – Time limitation under the Hague-Visby Rules: A conflict resolved?
- Stuart Hetherington – The Rotterdam Rules Convention: The need for ratification and the Comité Maritime International's work to achieve greater uniformity and thereby logistics chain efficient improvements, greater transparency and safety in relation to carriage of cargo by sea
- Michael Swanson – Abandoning nuclear goods
- Anna Elizabeth and Emma Campbell – Admiralty and maritime jurisdiction and the power to make laws with respect to navigation and shipping: A consideration of ss 76(iii) and 98 of the Constitution

The New Zealand Branch conference will be held on Friday 9 May at Sofitel Viaduct Harbour, Auckland, followed by a conference dinner.

I encourage all members to make a real effort to come to the 50th MLAANZ annual federal conference in Melbourne and help us celebrate the 50th year of our magnificent association.

Nga mihi
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