



ALAANZ COUNCIL MEMBERS



Shannon O'Hara – ALAANZ President, QLD Branch

Shannon O'Hara is the Legal Counsel to the Aviation Team at QBE Insurance Australia Pacific (QBE). In this role she partners with the aviation underwriting, industry development and aviation claims teams to efficiently assess and provide legal guidance on underwriting risk exposures, aviation litigation and claims strategies and general insurance law matters affecting the aviation business. In addition, Shannon actively supports QBE's Aviation's industry development team to promote and develop aviation safety, industry growth and thought leadership and has been instrumental in the drafting and preparation of multiple submissions to the Federal Government on a range of proposed aviation industry changes and developments.

Prior to joining QBE Insurance in February 2019, Shannon worked in private legal practice for 14 years specialising in Australian and international aviation law with a particular focus on aviation insurance and litigation. Shannon has managed commercial and litigated disputes across Australia, the United States of America, Papua New Guinea, the United Kingdom, Fiji, and the Pacific Islands with particular experience in managing major aviation losses and personal injury claims for aviation operators in Papua New Guinea.

A constant industry contributor, Shannon is a Director, and current President, of the Aviation Law Association of Australia and New Zealand (ALAANZ), she sits on the Board of the Australian Helicopter Industry Association (AHIA) and is the National Corporate Membership Chair for Women in Aviation International, Australian Chapter. In late 2020, Shannon was appointed by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack to the Future of Aviation Reference Panel (made up of four members including Shannon). She has been included in the #celebratingwomeninlaw campaign recognising women who have had an influence on the legal profession, in 2015 was identified by Australasian

Lawyer as one of “50 Women to Watch / Experts in their Field” and has been recognised by Best Lawyers (Aviation) in 2018 and 2019 (prior to leaving private legal practice).

Shannon speaks regularly at industry events including the Avalon Air Show; the Women in Aviation (Australian Chapter) National Conference; the Association of South Pacific Airlines bi-annual conferences, and the Australian Helicopter Industry Association’s Bi-Annual Rotor-tech Conference and the Australian Aviation Insurance Industry Forum. She makes regular written contributions to the aviation community via industry updates, QBE publications and the ALAANZ Aviation Briefs. Whilst in private legal practice Shannon was also often sought for media comment on aviation matters in popular news publications.

Shannon holds degrees in Law and Commerce with a major in Politics and Public Policy from Griffith University, is a mother to two beautiful children, a self-confessed av-geek, prolific reader, Pilates and yoga addict, traveller and foodie-in-heels.



Duncan Ferrier – Immediate Past ALAANZ President, New Zealand Branch

Duncan practices as a Barrister at Capital Chambers in Wellington, New Zealand. He graduated in 1992 from Canterbury University with a BA and an LLB and in 2002 from Victoria University of Wellington with a Masters degree in law. While his practice incorporates a broad range of civil and public law litigation issues, his particular focus is on matters of transport and liability.

He acts for the New Zealand aviation and maritime regulatory entities, and has, from time to time, provided in house legal services to both of these organisations. Duncan advises and acts for insurers and other participants within the aviation and maritime industries.



Robert Burns – Victoria Branch

Robert T Burns (Robbie) has been in practice at the Victorian Bar nearly 30 years. He has a general law practice which covers Family and Crime (with the odd Aviation matter). He is a pilot with nearly 2000 hours flying experience gained in military, airline and general aviation.

He has been a member of the National Council for many years and has held the positions of Victorian Branch Chairman and Secretary.



John Ribbands – Victoria Branch

John was admitted to practice in 1987 and came to the Bar in 1988. He has an extensive practice in commercial and administrative law appearing regularly in the Federal Court and the Supreme Court in all states. Through his own prior experience in aviation (a little bit of flying and a lot of skydiving) he has developed an extensive practice in aviation related matters.

John has obtained a Masters in Aviation (Human Factors) from Swinburne University. He advises and appears regularly in the AAT and Federal Court in regulatory and licensing disputes. His aviation practice involves appearing in inquests and inquiries. He has acted for both plaintiffs and defendants in numerous insurance, negligence and contract actions. He has appeared in aviation inquests for interested parties as well as acting as Counsel assisting. John is the current president of the Victorian Branch of ALAANZ.



Mark Gray-Spencer - New South Wales Branch

Mark has represented Underwriters, Insurers, Reinsurers and direct aviation clients in many Australian, New Zealand, Asian and South Pacific jurisdictions in a variety of aviation and insurance related matters for over 25 years.

These include civil claims, product liability claims, Coronial Inquests, Royal Commissions and prosecutions arising from breaches of Occupational Health and Safety laws and environmental prosecutions. Underwriters have also regularly consulted Mark in relation to coverage and indemnity issues and policy and endorsement drafting. Mark has acted for such industry aviation participants as international and local air carriers and operators, aircraft owners, airports and ground handlers.

Mark has extensive commercial litigation practice in most Australian jurisdictions. Further, due to his post graduate qualifications in Trade Practices law, he has advised clients specifically in respect of the *Competitions and Consumer Act 2010* in both civil claims and prosecutions, in particular, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers in product liability claims. His master's degree also incorporated an extensive review of the ongoing difficulties with international carriage under the then *Warsaw Convention*.

Mark has consistently been named in *Euromoney Legal Group Guide to the World's Leading Aviation Lawyers* since 1998 and *World's Best Lawyers (Aviation)* since 2012.



John Dawson – New South Wales Branch

John Dawson was admitted as a legal practitioner in 1985 - he currently serves as a director of ALAANZ and is a former President of the Association. He is a principal of Vector Legal, a Sydney firm specialising in aviation and employment law, having previously been a partner of a CBD law firm.

John started his working life with the Civil Aviation Authority in Air Traffic Services and was the NSW Secretary of the principal union representing aviation personnel employed by the Commonwealth. John was a pilot, has lectured in aviation regulation and aviation law in the Bachelor of Aviation degree at the University of NSW and is a director of a

leading defence contractor specialising in the supply and support of radar and radio communications systems.

He is a professional member of the Resolution Institute, the preeminent body offering alternative dispute resolution services and accredited as a mediator and arbitrator. He has served on the NSW Law Society committees for arbitration and alternative dispute resolution.

John represented the families of sixteen Australian passengers who lost their lives in the MH370 and MH17 tragedies. He is the only plaintiff's lawyer listed in the Doyle's Listings of Leading Australian Aviation Lawyers.



Patrick Hornby - ACT Branch

Patrick is the Manager, Legal Services, at the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB). He practises across a wide range of areas that encompass coronial inquests, civil litigation, commercial matters, administrative matters and legislative development and drafting.

Working with the ATSB, he has particular subject matter expertise in transport accident investigation. Patrick was responsible for developing the amendments to the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* which created the Bureau on 2 July 2009. He also negotiated and drafted the Casualty Investigation Code for Maritime Investigations which is annexed to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea.



Chris McKeown - ACT Branch

Chris came to the Bar in 1989. He was a solicitor for 6 years from 1983. Chris appears in all mainland State jurisdictions and all Commonwealth jurisdictions. He can, in some circumstances, deal directly with clients in aviation matters.

Chris practices in a number of areas of the law including Criminal Defence work, Administrative Appeals, Negligence law and Damage Claims and Commercial Law. He specialises in Australian Aviation Law.



Jessica Henderson – Western Australia Branch

Jessica practices as a barrister at Francis Burt Chambers in Perth, Western Australia. She holds a BA(hon), PhD and LLB from the University of Western Australia, and was awarded a fellowship to the University of Virginia. She completed her practical training at Freehills, and worked in the aviation finance divisions of Stephenson Harwood and Clyde & Co in London.

She was admitted to practice in WA in 2011 and in the High Court in 2015. She was called to the Bar in 2014. Within her broad commercial and construction litigation practice, Jessica specialises in aviation finance, transport and insurance. She has acted for airlines, the Commonwealth of Australia, insurers, and key players in the mining and construction industries.



Michael Nas – Western Australia Branch

Michael is a Principal at Bennett + Co, practising in commercial litigation and specialising in complex mining, corporate and technical disputes, appearing as junior counsel at trial in the Western Australian Supreme Court and the Federal Court. He is part of Bennett + Co's Defence & Aerospace team. Michael has studied the laws relating to drones since approximately 2007, and holds a Master of Laws (by Research) relating to global drone regulation.

Michael is the Vice-President of the Perth Branch of the Aviation Law Association of Australia & New Zealand, and sits on the committee of the Perth Branch of the Royal Aeronautical Society – Australian Division. Michael is passionate about the role

technology can play in society, and has delivered presentations to various stakeholders and interest groups relating to drone technologies and regulations since 2016.



John Parnell - New Zealand Branch

John is a born and bred Wellingtonian, but whose family have strong links across New Zealand and Australia. John has practiced law for 21 years, first as Barrister and then as a Barrister and Solicitor in Private Practice and later in government.

He has been a lawyer with the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority for 13 years and is currently in the role of Principal Solicitor.



Marion Hiriart - New Zealand Branch

Marion is a Principal Adviser at the Ministry of Transport of New Zealand where she focuses on a range of aviation matters, such as unmanned aircraft regulation and policy and airline alliances reauthorisations. Previously, Marion worked as a Principal Policy Adviser for the New Zealand Space Agency as well as a Legal Adviser for Air New Zealand. She also spent some time in Canada working as a consultant for the Air Transport Bureau of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Marion developed and taught the course of Aviation Law at the University of Auckland (Law Faculty). She earned a Master of Laws in Air and Space Law from McGill University (Canada), and is an enrolled barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.