

GOVERNMENT LAWYERS CONFERENCE

Program

64 mins QCAT – The expeditious resolution of matters

Presenter: **The Honourable Justice Kerri Mellifont**, Supreme Court of Queensland;
President of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Chair: **Jill Petrie**, Director, Legal Services Coordination Unit, Department of Justice and
Attorney-General; Chair, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee



62 mins Artificial Intelligence and digital governance

In an area where rules cannot outpace emerging technology it can be difficult to operate in a highly regulated environment. This session will set out the QLS best practice principles for using Artificial Intelligence. You will consider how it has impacted other areas of the globe, and how you might be able to effectively implement it into your work flow.

Presenter: **David Bowles**, Special Counsel, QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, Queensland Law Society

Chair: **Terri Mottershead**, QLS Artificial Intelligence Consulting Committee

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39 mins Navigating ethics – practical tips for government lawyers

Shane will take you through the latest updates from the Ethics and Practice Centre. This session is an interactive one, so be prepared to learn and engage. You will be asked to contribute to a detailed discussion around issues common amongst government lawyers.

Presenter: **Shane Budden**, Special Counsel, QLS Ethics and Practice Centre, Queensland Law Society

Chair: **Meredith Bennett**, Partner, Ashurst

Ashurst



60 mins Wicked problems, innovative solutions

New technologies, such as artificial intelligence ('AI'), often do not fit well within existing regulatory frameworks. Such frameworks may provide safeguards, but they may also constrain or alter the behaviour of stakeholders. In response to this evolving complexity of legal issues, legal design offers a new and novel approach to designing laws and how they reach the public. Legal design has its origins in computer science and artificial intelligence. It combines legal expertise with designer mindsets and methodologies.

Recently a narrow use of legal design has emerged in relation to limited areas of law, such as social justice. This session explores taking a legal design approach to transforming laws in relation to new forms of technology and AI. Further it considers whether regulatory sandboxes may provide a unique approach to address these challenges, offering a flexible and dynamic framework that balances innovation, competition, and consumer protection.

Presenter: **Amy Dunphy**, General Counsel, Gladstone Area Water Board; Member, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee

Chair: **Simon Newcomb**, Partner and Head of AI, Clayton Utz

CLAYTON UTZ



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58 mins **Workplace investigations in 2025 and beyond**

Workplace investigations are increasing in both frequency and difficulty, whilst facing far more scrutiny. In addition to the increased focus on psychological safety and new WHS duties, employers are also grappling with compliance with the positive duty in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. In the Queensland public sector, there are also additional requirements under Directives, including ensuring that investigators have a sufficient level of cultural capability when conducting an investigation that involves First Nations peoples.

In this session, we will discuss practical ways to meet these overlapping duties and reduce psychosocial risks in workplace investigations, including:

- Triage processes to ensure only appropriate matters are referred for investigation;
- Dealing with volume and the pressure to resolve issues quickly, while being mindful of investigator wellbeing;
- Ways to apply trauma informed approaches at each stage of the investigation process;
- Ensuring natural justice and procedural fairness, including considering and evaluating evidence in this new context;
- Considerations for taking a culturally sensitive approach; and
- The use of AI in workplace investigations..

Presenter: **Tamara Lutvey**, Partner, Ashurst

Chair: **Jesse Hill**, Senior Professional Development Solicitor, Queensland Law Society

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64 mins **Probity and managing conflicts of interest**

There is increasing scrutiny on probity during the procurement stages of government work. This session will consider public sector practice that focuses more on commercial matters, including conflicts of interest.

Presenter: **Alex James**, Special Counsel, Clayton Utz

Chair: **Carol Kahler**, General Counsel, Queensland treasury; Member, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee

CLAYTON UTZ



50 mins **Closing address**

This session will consider the rising use of artificial intelligence, model litigant principles and the costs implications of dealing with the same.

Presenter: **Cecelia Christensen**, Crown Solicitor, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

Chair: **Jill Petrie**, Director, Legal Services Coordination Unit, Department of Justice and Attorney-General; Chair, Queensland Law Society Government Lawyers Committee



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Presenters



Meredith Bennett

Biography

Meredith Bennett is a Partner at Ashurst and serves as one of the firm's Queensland Government Relationship Partners, leading the highly regarded Government practice. Meredith specialises in resolving complex disputes and regulatory matters, with extensive experience across the resources, government, financial, and professional services sectors.

She has advised both Australian and international public and private sector organisations on a broad range of issues, including contractual disputes, negligence claims, joint venture obligations, consumer protection matters, and administrative law. Meredith is highly experienced in supporting government clients in relation to Royal Commissions, Boards of Inquiry, and Parliamentary Inquiries. She also regularly advises clients on regulatory investigations and prosecutions, as well as internal investigations.

Meredith is recognised for her strategic approach and her ability to deliver practical, effective solutions to complex legal challenges



David Bowles

David was admitted as a solicitor in 1996 and was in private practice from that time until joining Queensland Law Society's QLS Ethics and Practice Centre in November 2012.

David's experience, initially as an employee and then as a sole practitioner includes crime, property, litigation and estate planning. As an ethics solicitor he is responsible for providing ethical guidance to members, and continuing legal education.

He holds postgraduate certificates in Artificial Intelligence from the Said Business School at Oxford University, in Cybersecurity from Harvard University Extension School, in Project Management from the University of Adelaide EdX program and is a director of the Australasian Computer Law Institute.

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Shane Budden

As a Special Counsel in the QLS Ethics and Practice Centre/QLS Solicitor Support Pty Ltd, Shane provides ethical guidance and instruction to practitioners. He contributes significantly to the QLS journal Proctor, both through his regular column and by authoring feature articles. He is also a member of the QUT University Animal Ethics Committee.

Shane was admitted in 1992 and worked in general practice with a focus on Criminal Law, before moving to in-house work, initially with the Ipswich City Council internal legal team.

Prior to joining QLS he headed up the internal legal team at the Queensland Building Construction Commission/Queensland Building Services Authority and was Chair of the Society's Government Lawyers Committee.

Cecelia Christensen



Amy Dunphy

Amy Dunphy is currently the General Counsel at Gladstone Area Water Board where she provides legal advice on the full suite of legal matters within the business – from corporate governance, contracts, regulatory compliance to major construction projects. She has previously acted in General Counsel and Project Counsel roles and has extensive experience working at top tier law firms. As an in-house lawyer Amy is able to work easily with the broader business, project teams and external and internal legal teams to support and collaborate with them in an efficient and solution driven way. Amy is also a recognised national leader in developing innovative regulatory solutions for complex legal problems. Her PhD has recently passed examination on this topic as it applies to the regulation of AI data examining the specific example of connected and automated vehicles. Amy has presented on this topic at a range of national and international forums.



Jesse Hill

Jesse joined the QLS in 2022, prior to this he worked in commercial litigation. Jesse enjoyed his time in litigation and prior to legal practice, he worked in the Queensland Public Service in highly pressurised roles.

Jesse facilitates workshops, seminars and conferences across the Sunshine State. He thoroughly enjoys program design and building education experiences that are relevant and enjoyable to his diverse audiences.

Jesse's focus centres around the practical realities of working within the law, both within the public and private sphere. He uses his industry knowledge to equip practitioners within the tools that they require to maintain the high standard of professionalism expected of them.

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Alex James

Alex is a Special Counsel in the Public Sector Group at Clayton Utz. Alex is an experienced advisor to government departments, regulators and corporate entities, on commercial, procurement, regulatory, governance, and compliance matters. Alex has special expertise in procurement, infrastructure projects and the energy sector.

Carol Kahler



Tamara Lutvey

Tamara has over 18 years' experience in providing practical and strategic advice in complex employment, industrial relations, discrimination and work health and safety issues. Her clients cover the public and private sectors and a wide range of industries. She regularly advises on public sector employment law to various Queensland Government departments, statutory bodies and government owned corporations, including in respect of individual employee grievances, performance management, disciplinary processes, industrial action, industrial disputes, workplace investigations, managing ill and injured employees, and managing public interest disclosures and allegations of corrupt conduct. She is an experienced investigator and is skilled in conducting and advising on robust and procedurally fair workplace investigations. She also has extensive experience in conducting and managing employment-related litigation in various courts and tribunals at the State and Federal level, including before the High Court of Australia.



The Honourable Justice Kerri Mellifont

Justice Mellifont was appointed to the Supreme Court of Queensland in October 2021, and as President of QCAT in November 2021. She holds a Bachelor of Laws (Hons), a Master of Laws and a doctorate (Doctor of Juridical Science). She was admitted to the bar in 1994 and took Silk in 2010.

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Terri Mottershead

As the Executive Director of the Centre for Legal Innovation at the College of Law, Terri collaborates internationally with leaders of legal businesses supporting them in transforming their capabilities and practices. She leads CLI's global initiatives including the Legal Generative AI Initiative and The Legalpreneurs Sandbox podcast. Terri also serves as the inaugural Chair of the QLS AI in Legal Practice Consulting Committee.

Prior to joining CLI, Terri was a practising lawyer, founded start-ups on three different continents, and established or led the talent management functions for global firms and associations in Asia and the US including Lex Mundi, the Inter-Pacific Bar Association, and DLA Piper LLP (US).



Simon Newcomb

Simon is a partner at Clayton Utz advising on complex matters involving digital technologies. His legal background centres on technology transactions, intellectual property, privacy, cyber security and AI. He leads the Clayton Utz AI advisory practice and the firm's own internal AI program and is a member of the firm's cyber security board. He has dual qualifications in law and computer science.



Jill Petrie

Jill is the Director of the Legal Services Coordination Unit, Department of Justice and Attorney-General and has a whole of Government coordination role in relation to Government lawyers.

Jill is the panel manager of the whole of Government Legal Services Panel and manages the Queensland Government barristers' list. Her team coordinates the government responses to coronial recommendations directed to the Government.

Jill's team also manages the Significant Litigation Directions on behalf of the Attorney-General. The Directions describe how significant litigation matters are to be managed in Queensland.