

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE

Property Law Track

Program

58 mins **Body Corporate update**

An update on all things body corporate including how the recent changes to strata law have been dealt with by those in strata along with some of the more interesting recent decisions from the Commissioner's Office that should be of interest to practitioners.

Presenter: **Frank Higginson**, Partner, Hynes Legal

Chair: **Laura Gahan**, Partner, Cooper Grace Ward



57 mins **Beyond Precedents: Possibilities, Pitfalls and Progress in the Modern Market**

Join the presenter who is an expert in leasing law, for a dynamic session. This session will explore the evolving landscape of leasing in Australia, unpacking recent caselaw developments, the impact of the Unfair Contracts Regime on lease negotiations, and the legislative shift brought by Queensland's Property Law Act 2023. Tanya will also delve into the growing influence of ESG framework considerations on leasing practices, offering practical insights and forward-looking strategies for legal professionals navigating the modern market. Whether you advise landlords or tenants, this session promises to challenge assumptions and inspire new thinking—beyond the precedents.

Presenter: **Tanya Sciasci**, Partner, MinterEllison

Chair: **Kristan Conlon**, Chair of Partners, McCullough Robertson



PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE

47 mins **Year in review: Key changes to easements and what this means for property owners in Queensland**

Discussion on how the new Property Law Act 2023 (Qld) impacts easements, including changes to the seller disclosure duties, and recent judicial approaches to easement disputes

Presenter: **Miranda Klibbe**, Partner, Cooper Grace Ward

Facilitator: **Laura Gahan**, Partner, Cooper Grace Ward

Chair: **Billy Dent**, National Sales Director, Commercial Property, First Title



54 mins **Law, Land and Logic – The planning puzzle**

This session will provide attendees with an overview of the challenges practitioners currently face within the planning and development area of practice. This session will then transition into a discussion on important updates and trends within this area of practice.

Presenter: **Rachel Jones**, Special Counsel, McCullough Robertson

Chair: **Kristan Conlon**, Chair of Partners, McCullough Robertson



PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE

57 mins **Tax issues in Property and Commercial practice**

In property and commercial transactions, tax implications often lurk in the fine print—and the consequences of overlooking them can be costly. This session is designed to give property and commercial lawyers the tools to spot common tax traps early and know when to involve a tax specialist. Through practical examples and current case studies, this seminar will explore:

- The Accidental Developer: Tax considerations when clients flip properties, subdivide land, or build to sell—often without realising they might be in business in the ATO's eyes.
- Joint Ventures with Developers: Understanding the evolving tax landscape and its impact on structuring and drafting joint venture agreements.
- Common GST issues when drafting real estate and commercial contracts.
- Identifying the consideration for the transaction – why it matters for duty.

Presenter: **Jodie Robinson**, Special Counsel, McCullough Robertson

Chair: **Despina Priala**, Director, Priala Legal



58 mins **Round up – contracts, cases and legislation**

The panel will cover the important REIQ contract changes, any relevant cases and legislative update in 2025 including the Trusts Act and how best to manage the changes for best practice. The REIQ contract changes will include non-seller disclosure changes and reasoning for them – including Residential Tenancies changes and deposit notice process.

Presenters:

Tim Elliss, Barrister, Queensland Bar

Peter Nugent, Partner, PiperAlderman

Matthew Raven, Consultant, gadens

Chair: **Daniel Petrucci**, General Manager – Property, InfoTrack AU



PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE

60 mins

Seller Disclosure – lessons learnt after commencement

Learn from the key experts in a panel discussion of the lessons learnt about Seller Disclosure obligations in practice. Understand the background of the legislative framework for this area of property matters. Further Lexon will update you on the issues that have arisen since the commencement based on practitioner feedback and Lexon's in-person risk visits helping practices throughout the State. Hear about real issues impacting other practices as well as risk strategies to deal with these and other anticipated problems before they impact your practice.

Presenters:

Professor Sharon Christensen, Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law and Gadens Professor in Property Law, QUT

Simon LaBlack, Legal Practitioner Director, LaBlack Lawyers; Accredited Property Law Specialist

Robert Mackay, Senior Risk Solicitor, Lexon Insurance Pte Ltd

Chair: **Murray Walter**, Director of Partnerships, Dye & Durham



PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE

Presenters



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.



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.



Professor Sharon Christensen

Prof Christensen is the Gadens Professor of Property Law and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law at QUT. She has been a member of the QLS Property Law Committee since 1996, was the leader of the QUT review of Queensland Property Laws released in 2017 and is the author of Land Contracts in Queensland and Conveyancing Manual Queensland as well as many journal articles on property related topics.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Kristan Conlon

With over 25 years of property law experience, Kristan drives a market-leading practice specialising in structuring, development, leasing, acquisition and disposal of all asset classes and tenures.

Kristan holds a number of positions on leading industry boards in addition to her role as Chair of McCullough Robertson Lawyers, including Chair of the Community Housing Industry Association (Qld), Member of Property Council of Australia's Residential Committee and Chair of its Social and Affordable Housing Round Table and Member of Queensland Law Society's Property and Development Law Committee.



Billy Dent

Billy Dent has expertise in commercial property transactions, financial solutions, deal structuring and insurance.

He currently leads the commercial property department for First Title, a global specialist title insurance company. First Title specialise in risk mitigation, deal facilitation and protection for institutional and private property purchasers and major bank and non-bank lenders.

Title Insurance is commonly ordered by lawyers on behalf of their clients and is available for residential or commercial transactions and provides cover for purchasers under the new seller disclosure regime.



Matt Dunn

Matt is the Chief Executive Officer of Queensland Law Society (QLS).

Appointed in March 2024, Matt was previously General Manager – Advocacy, Guidance and Governance for QLS. Originally joining QLS in 2005, he departed to take up a national policy leadership role with the Law Council of Australia in 2014, before returning to raise his family in Brisbane.

Matt's extensive industry experience places him in the unique position of having a strong understanding and insight into the issues affecting the modern profession. An advocate for ensuring practitioners have affordable and accessible resources to build and maintain their practice, Matt is proud to be in such a position of trust to guide and enable the profession.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Tim Elliss



Laura Gahan

Laura is a real estate lawyer who assists clients across varying property classes with acquisitions, disposals, leasing, development, disputes and asset management. Her multi-disciplinary approach means that she anticipates potential obstacles early and is able to consolidate Cooper Grace Ward's broad expertise to ensure transactions proceed smoothly. Laura works with large corporations, family businesses and private investors, as well as national and regional owners and tenants. Laura's experience is consolidated by having worked on secondment as in-house legal counsel for one of the world's largest family restaurant owners, meaning she is acutely aware of the challenges faced by clients with respect to asset management, and is responsive and practical when advising clients. Laura is passionate about property law and Australian real estate. She has previously held committee roles with the Property Council of Australia and also undertaken academic work in the Faculty of Law at the Queensland University of Technology.



Elizabeth Gore-Jones

Elizabeth Gore-Jones is a solicitor with in excess of 30 years' experience in franchising law.

Elizabeth is the vice chairman of the Queensland Law Society Franchising Law Committee and is regularly called upon to provide Franchising CPD presentations to various bodies.

Throughout her career Elizabeth has lectured about franchising law for the Bond University Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and sat on various franchising committees including the Women in Franchising Committee and the Queensland Chapter of the Franchise Council of Australia.

Elizabeth's practice includes establishment of new franchise systems, advising franchisors, advising franchisees, business sales and acquisitions and alternative dispute resolution.

You can read more about Elizabeth and The Franchise & Business Lawyers at this link: www.thefranchiseandbusinesslawyers.com.au

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Frank Higginson

Frank was admitted in 1997 and since the early 2000s has practiced almost exclusively in strata law.



Jesse Hill

Jesse comes to the QLS from private practice, where he worked exclusively in commercial litigation. Prior to his time in litigation, he worked in the Queensland Public Service in highly pressurised roles.

Jesse is acutely aware of many of the challenges faced by the legal profession both in the private and public sphere. He now seeks to equip legal practitioners with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in practice.



Rachel Jones

Rachel is a specialist planning and development lawyer focusing on planning and environment litigation, advisory work and compliance.

Known for her outcome focused and lateral thinking approach, she provides frank and practical legal advice tailored to her clients' needs.

Her litigation experience includes involvement in a number of seminal cases in the Planning and Environment Court. She is highly skilled in undertaking due diligence for prospective land purchases, assessing existing use rights, ensuring regulatory compliance and considering development proposals prior to lodgement.

Regularly advising on local planning schemes, infrastructure charges and infrastructure agreements, Rachel has a deep understanding of the Planning Act 2016 (Qld) and its related legislation and predecessors.

Her expertise extends to compliance matters, including enforcement action in both the Magistrates Court and Planning and Environment Court, with particular focus on development and environmental compliance, Local Law breaches and Food Act offences.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Miranda Klibbe

Miranda Klibbe is a partner in Cooper Grace Ward's litigation and dispute resolution team. She acts for both large corporate clients and private clients on a wide variety of litigated matters.

With a proven track record of delivering commercially focused advice to Australian and multinational businesses, Miranda manages complex, high-value disputes across a broad range of industries.

Miranda has particular expertise representing clients in wide-ranging property disputes, including leasing, property sales, easement and encroachment matters, and involving registered and unregistered interests in land.



Simon LaBlack

Simon practises exclusively in Property Law in Queensland. In 2017, he became one of now 25 Accredited Specialists in Queensland Property Law. Simon assists organisations and private clients in all property law related matters including property acquisitions and disposals, commercial property matters including leases, developments, transactions and disputes, subdivisions and compulsory acquisition matters. Simon is a member of the PEXA Member Advisory Council, acting as a Court-Appointed Statutory Trustee for Sale and as a specialist consultant to the profession. He is also a contributing author for LexisNexis in their practical guidance materials.



Robert Mackay

Robert is the Senior Solicitor in the Risk Team at Lexon Insurance and plays an active role in the development of risk management tools. Robert has developed and run the industry first in-practice System Testing program since 2014 which have been conducted in hundreds of legal practises across Australia. These are designed to help practitioners identify and manage any system gaps that can result in claims for professional negligence. Robert was admitted as a solicitor in 2005 and regularly presents at the QUT PLT Course and at QLS Conferences.



Ashlea McKenzie

Ashlea McKenzie is the Director of Rules Reform at AUSTRAC, leading the development of the new AML/CTF Rules framework. Ashlea has worked across the private sector and public sector before starting her AUSTRAC career in the legal team. Recently Ashlea alongside the Attorney-General's Department on the AML/CTF reforms and AML/CTF Amendment Act 2024 prior to focussing on the new AML/CTF Rules.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Paul McQuade KC

Paul practices in the area of commercial litigation, with particular emphasis on banking and finance, competition and consumer law, corporate law, contract law, corporate and personal insolvency, equity, partnerships, property, securities and trusts.

The matters in which Paul is involved are factually and legally complex, and utilise the specialist knowledge that Paul has developed in the areas of corporate and personal insolvency and corporate law, and also the skills and experience he gained as a Chartered Accountant.

Chambers & Partners Asia Pacific 2017-2025 and Global 2021-2025 rank Paul in Band 1 for Restructuring & Insolvency. He is also listed by Doyle's Guide as a 'Preeminent' KC for Insolvency in Queensland (2016–2024), 'Recommended' or 'Leading' KC for Insolvency & Reconstruction Australia (2015-2022) and 'Recommended' KC for Commercial Litigation & Dispute Resolution in Queensland (2015, 2017, 2019). Paul is also listed in the Australian Financial Review's Best Lawyers® 2017-2026 for Insolvency and Reorganisation as well as 2021 – 2026 for Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Paul is instructed to act as mediator in matters across a broad range of commercial disputes.



Anthony Messina

Anthony is an experienced commercial barrister practising in complex litigation and alternative dispute resolution.

Recognised by Doyle's Guide to the Australian Legal Profession as a leading junior counsel in Queensland, Anthony advises and advocates for public and private companies, directors and officers, trustees, insurers, external administrators, and professionals.

Anthony is retained in trials and appeals in Federal and State courts, and in arbitral proceedings, expert determinations, and mediations. Clients rely on Anthony's clear advice, commercial judgement, and skilful advocacy to manage litigation risk and achieve optimal commercial outcomes.



Presenter name

Peter has over 30 years of experience in all aspects of commercial property practice, including residential and commercial property sales and purchases, drafting contracts for and managing bulk conveyancing for property developers, complicated property projects and major mixed-use developments. Peter also has considerable experience with development and joint venture agreements, financing structures and planning advice.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Simone Pentis

Managing Director of Advantage Partners Lawyers, Simone brings a background of extensive experience as a corporate and commercial lawyer having worked in private legal practice, universities and in-house positions at Australian and international companies.

Simone has for over 25 years acted for various national and international franchisors within Australia, assisted franchise groups move into various international markets, and acquire other international and Australian systems. Simone has also assisted master franchisees and franchisees as they acquire and deal with their franchises.

Simone managed and operated the legal departments for national and international franchise networks, and is Chair of the QLD Law Society's Franchising Committee, as well as a long standing committee member of the Franchise Council of Australia (Qld Chapter).



Daniel Petrucci

Daniel has been a Licensed Conveyancer for over 20 years working for top tier law firms as well as smaller boutique firms.

Within these firms he has held various roles across commercial and residential Conveyancing, Banking & Finance and Intellectual Property law.

After having run his own Conveyancing practice, in 2011 he joined the associated ATI Group of companies (LEAP and InfoTrack) where he has held several Executive roles as a General Manager.

Daniel has a passion for property and conveyancing. He has combined this passion with his experience in delivering exceptional client service and has helped thousands of firms across Australia embrace technology to drive efficiencies and increase profits.

In his spare time, Daniel enjoys playing with his young children, Marciano and Aurelia.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Despina Priala

Despina Priala has been practising property law in Queensland for over 31 years. She graduated from Bond University in 1989 and in 1994 Despina was admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court in Qld. She is also admitted to the High Court of Australia.

Despina began her career as a lawyer at the Gold Coast's largest law firm in the early 90s, where she worked with leading Qld property players of that era; she then progressed to the position of in-house counsel for the Sunland Group in the early 2000s, during their golden era when they developed Palazzo Versace and Q1 on the Gold Coast.

In 2007 Despina established Priala Legal, a boutique property law firm on the Gold Coast.

In 2021 Despina was recognised as reaching the milestone achievement of 25 years of membership with the QLD Law Society.

In 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2021 Despina became a finalist in the National Lawyers Weekly Annual Awards for Sole Practitioner of the Year.

In 2022 Despina was invited to join the Qld Law Society's Property and Development Law Committee, an honorary role advising on law reform in Qld which she proudly still holds today.

Despina is also a member of the Southport Chamber of Commerce and the Gold Coast District Law Association.

Despina is a regular presenter at various law events and functions.

Matthew Raven



Jodie Robinson

Jodie is an Accredited Tax Law Specialist with over 20 years of experience working with SME clients and their advisers in business and transaction structuring and restructuring. Jodie is passionate about providing clients with results-driven, commercial advice and solutions for their taxation and business needs.

Her core practice areas focus on providing advice on a broad spectrum of taxation matters including duty, GST, capital gains tax, employee share schemes, payroll tax and cost-effective business structures and restructures.

Jodie regularly advises on the tax consequences of the sale of significant businesses and business restructures including applicable rollovers and duty exemptions. Jodie also assists clients and their advisors in obtaining private binding rulings on complex tax matters.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Rukshana Sashankan

Rukshana Sashankan is the General Manager of Practitioner Services at PEXA.

Rukshana brings a unique perspective to AML/CTF compliance in property transactions, combining her background as a property lawyer with extensive operational leadership experience in eConveyancing. With over 18 years in the property industry and seven years at PEXA, she leads the national team supporting lawyers and conveyancers in conducting digital settlements across Australia.

Rukshana's leadership extends beyond operational excellence to championing industry best practices. She holds a Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts (Double Major in Psychology), and Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice. Her contributions to the sector include serving on the Property Council of Australia Queensland's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and her appointment as a board director at The Sycamore School. Through her work with PEXA's extensive practitioner network, Rukshana understands the evolving compliance challenges facing conveyancers and the critical importance of integrating AML/CTF safeguards into modern digital property transactions.



Tanya Sciasci

Tanya Sciasci is a nationally recognised leasing specialist and trusted advisor to some of Australia's most prominent institutional landlords, government bodies, and national tenants. With over two decades of experience, Tanya leads MinterEllison's national leasing practice, delivering strategic, lifecycle leasing solutions across retail, commercial, industrial, health, and education sectors.

Known for her sharp commercial acumen and pragmatic approach, Tanya transforms complex leasing challenges into streamlined, value-driven outcomes. Her work spans high-profile portfolios including Charter Hall, Stockland, Suncorp, Cromwell, ISPT, Woolworths, Lendlease, Cromwell and Abacus —where she's led initiatives in sustainability, best practice and bespoke leasing arrangements.

Tanya's reputation for innovation is matched by her commitment to clarity and efficiency, championing plain-English leasing documents and tailored onboarding frameworks that set clients up for long-term success. Regardless of the scenario, Tanya brings precision, creativity, and deep sector insight to every leasing engagement.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Jeannette Scott

Jeannette was originally admitted as a barrister in 1996. She is a member of various professional bodies including the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP), the Australian Compliance Institute (ACI), the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and was one of the inaugural recipients of the designation CCP (Certified Compliance Professional) from the Australasian Compliance Institute (as it then was) in 2006.

In private practice since the end of 2016 and lecturing since 2021, Jeannette was previously Director - Legal & Regulatory Affairs with the Association for Data-driven Marketing and Advertising (ADMA). Prior to that she was the National Manager – Legal, Compliance & Risk for the National Heart Foundation.

Jeannette's background spans the not-for-profit, marketing, travel, hospitality and financial services sectors, focusing on commercial legal, regulatory compliance, governance, and risk management. During her time at Accor Première Vacation Club, she received a national recognition award from the Australian Timeshare and Holiday Ownership Council as a result of her work briefing the sector on the implementation of the Do Not Call Register.

A former chair of the Brisbane/Gold Coast chapter of the International Association of Privacy Professionals KnowledgeNet, Jeannette is a passionate privacy advocate and unabashed Privacy Geek. She lectures in privacy for the College of Law's Master's program and is an Adjunct Lecturer with the College's Queensland PLT Program.



Anna Sharpe

Anna Sharpe is chair of Queensland Law Society's Privacy, Data, Technology and Intellectual Property Law Committee. She has been in continuous practice for over 40 years. Anna was a partner of Clayton Utz for over 12 years and is currently the principal of Sharpe Ivo. She is also a consultant to HopgoodGanim in Brisbane and the Sydney firm Swaab.

PROPERTY AND COMMERCIAL LAW CONFERENCE



Joe Siracusa

Joe advises international companies and government businesses on complex IT, IP and procurement matters, and has served as probity advisor for several major projects. He is chair of the QLS Ethics Advisory Committee, a member of the Law Council of Australia's Professional Ethics Committee, and a member of the QLS Privacy, Data & Intellectual Property Law Committee.



Professor Andrew Stewart

Andrew Stewart is Professor of Work and Regulation at QUT, and a consultant to the national law firm Piper Alderman. A leading expert on employment law and workplace relations, and the author of popular texts Stewart's Guide to Employment Law and Creighton & Stewart's Labour Law (the seventh edition of which has just been published), Andrew has several decades of experience in advising employers, unions, government agencies and the International Labour Organization.



Murray Walter

Murray has over 20 years experience in the data and information industry and has held several senior management roles at Dye & Durham since joining the business in 2016. With a background in sales and operational management, these roles include Head of Customer Experience and Operations, General Manager for Dye & Durham Terrain and most recently as Director of Partnerships.

Murray is passionate on delivering high value solutions to customers through innovation and focus on solving problems. A Brisbane local, Murray has a Bachelor of Business from the Queensland University of Technology.



Marcelle Webster

Marcelle Webster is a commercial litigation and industrial relations lawyer with over 20 years of experience. She has extensive experience in acting for both employers and employees. She takes time to get to know her clients and is open and transparent with the advice that she provides. She is passionate about working closely with business owners to ensure compliance with workplace laws and to prevent issues from arising. In her spare time Marcelle is a dedicated mother who enjoys travelling and spending time with her young daughter.
