



CLAANZ 2025 Annual Conference and AGM: *Current Issues in Charity Law*

Meet the speakers

Matthew Harding, The University of Melbourne

Professor Matthew Harding is a barrister at the Victorian Bar and a professorial fellow of the Melbourne Law School at the University of Melbourne. He practises in commercial and public law. He has particular expertise in equity and trusts and in the law and regulation of charities and other not-for-profit organisations. Matthew is widely recognised as an internationally leading scholar and his published work is regularly cited by courts both in Australia and overseas. He was Dean of the Melbourne Law School from 2022 to 2024 and is a member of the Law Council of Australia Charities Committee, a member of the Council of the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, and a fellow of the Australian Academy of Law. He is also a past chair of the Charity Law Association of Australia and New Zealand and continues to be a proud CLANZ member.



Dr Juliet Chevalier-Watts, University of Waikato

Dr Juliet Chevalier-Watts is a specialist in charity law, equity and trusts, and religious law. Juliet's recent contributions to the literature includes the monographs "The Law of Religion in New Zealand" and the 2nd edition of the "Law of Charity" (with a 3rd edition on its way), and the OUP article "Advocating for the environment, charity law and Greenpeace: A New Zealand perspective". Juliet has authored 4 other books, several book chapters, numerous journal articles, as well as giving radio interviews and podcasts, and producing a number of commissioned reports. Juliet also provides pro bono charity law work.



Bridgid Cowling, Arnold Bloch Leibler

Bridgid Cowling is a special counsel in the public interest law and native title groups at Arnold Bloch Leibler. She advises a broad range of clients with a focus on charities and not-for-profit organisations, Aboriginal Land Councils and Native Title Representative Bodies.

Bridgid is recognised by Chambers Asia Pacific in the area of 'charities' for her wealth of experience acting for the not-for-profit sector on range of matters including the establishment of new charities and governance issues. She is also recognised as a "next generation partner" by Legal 500 Asia Pacific for native title. Bridgid is the current chair of the Law Council of Australia Charities and Not-for-profit Committee, as well as a Director of Country Needs People and of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation.



Melissa Goode, Australian Conservation Foundation

Melissa is Co-General Counsel at Australian Conservation Foundation, Australia's national environment organisation, which uses advocacy to protect nature and cut climate pollution. Melissa has been providing legal advice to the charitable sector since 2014, previously working at Australian Red Cross in a variety of roles for over 8 years. Melissa is a current member of the ACNC's Sector Forum and is on the Steering Committee of the Stronger Charities Alliance. Her early career was in the commercial field, as a lawyer with Allens and then in-house at Coles Myer Ltd providing strategic legal advice to Coles, Kmart and Officeworks.

**Elizabeth Shalders, Mills Oakley**

Elizabeth has been practising solely in the field of Not-for-profit and charity law for 15 years and is recognised as an expert. She's special counsel in the Mills Oakley Not-for-profit, Human Rights & Social Impact Team, which is ranked "band 1" by Chambers & Partners. Recent work includes restructuring of a large disability services provider, responding to an ACNC investigation, charitable trust litigation, and advising on compliance and governance requirements in complex structures, particularly in religious organisational contexts. In addition to day-to-day practice, she has also contributed to academic works, including on the topics of advocacy and public benefit.

**Kim Weinert, TC Beirne School of Law, UQ**

Kim's list of publications exhibits a multifaceted exploration of the law. Spanning across different topics, her research sits at the intersection of society, public policy, and the law. Exploring the traditional boundaries of doctrinal law and its theoretical foundations in relation to emerging and new societal challenges, her research unites several strands of legal inquiry linked to social justice and equality.

**Caitlin Edwards, ACNC Legal Counsel**

Caitlin joined in the ACNC as Legal Counsel in July 2023. Caitlin began her legal career in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet before becoming a Senior Associate in a Melbourne law firm's Native Title and Public Interest Law practice. In this role, Caitlin advised a broad range of clients with a focus on charities, social enterprises, Aboriginal Land Councils and Indigenous Corporations.

Caitlin has also been a volunteer Director and Company Secretary for several charities and continues to volunteer as a veggie gardener and florist for her local Early Learning Centre. Caitlin is admitted to practice law and holds a Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Languages (Mandarin) and Juris Doctor (Laws) from the University of Melbourne.



Elizabeth Lathlean, Gilbert + Tobin

Elizabeth is a Special Counsel in the Gilbert + Tobin Charities and Social Sector practice. She has significant experience providing legal advice and assistance to charities, not-for-profits and social sector organisations. She advises on charity and not-for-profit formation, registration, regulation and compliance, mergers and acquisitions, restructuring transactions and corporate governance.

Elizabeth is ranked as an Associate to Watch for Charities in Chambers Asia-Pacific 2025 and is recognised by Best Lawyers in Australia for Corporate Law. She is a non-executive director of CBM Australia.

**Leah Russell, BDO Australia**

Leah is a Partner in BDO's Audit & Assurance team in Sydney. She has over 25 years' accounting and audit experience, and provides audit and assurance services to a broad range of clients, ranging from ASX-listed entities to large private groups, and not-for-profit/for-purpose entities. Leah joined BDO as Partner in 2019 after 17 years with a Sydney accounting firm (including 12 as Partner), where she managed the New South Wales partners, and was a member of the national leadership team.

**Sue Woodward, ACNC**

Sue Woodward AM commenced as Commissioner of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) on December 12, 2022. Her career has spanned private legal practice, academia, government, philanthropy and the not-for-profit sector.

Sue played an instrumental role in the formation of the ACNC and has decades of experience working and volunteering in the sector, including as a board member on a range of peak, advocacy and service delivery charities and a community foundation. Her work establishing and then leading Justice Connect's Not-for-profit Law service is a lasting contribution the sector. Sue was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in 2021 for "significant service to the not-for-profit sector, fundraising and the law."



Jennifer Moltisanti, Australian Taxation Office

Jennifer Moltisanti has been an Assistant Commissioner with the ATO since 2010 and currently leads Client Experience and Business Transformation for Indirect Tax. Jennifer has a broad and long experience in public sector administration. After working in two major Commonwealth agencies, external boards and a posting with the OECD, Jennifer's span of influence crosses diverse disciplines. This includes law enforcement, human resources, technical law interpretation, compliance, program and project management, information technology, risk management, governance and international.



Carly Kind, Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

Carly Kind commenced as Australia's Privacy Commissioner in February 2024 for a 5-year term. As Privacy Commissioner, she regulates the handling of personal information by entities covered by the Australian *Privacy Act 1988* and seeks to influence the development of legislation and advance privacy protections for Australians.

Ms Kind joined from the UK-based Ada Lovelace Institute, where she was the inaugural director. As a human rights lawyer and leading authority on the intersection of technology policy and human rights, she has advised industry, government and non-profit organisations on digital rights, artificial intelligence, privacy and data protection, and corporate accountability in the technology sphere. She has worked with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, numerous UN bodies and a range of civil society organisations. She was formerly legal director of Privacy International, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting data rights and governance.



Krystian Seibert, Philanthropy Australia

Krystian Seibert has extensive experience shaping the policy and regulatory frameworks for Australia's not-for-profit sector. As Executive Director – Policy and Sector Development at Philanthropy Australia, he leads the peak body's efforts to drive policy outcomes and strategic initiatives to grow giving and its impact.

Krystian previously served as an Associate Commissioner at the Productivity Commission, appointed by the Australian Government to jointly lead a wide-ranging inquiry focused on philanthropy. The inquiry's final report, 'Future Foundations for Giving', was released in July 2024. In his role as an adviser to a former Assistant Treasurer in the Australian Government, Krystian managed the delivery of major reforms focused on the not-for-profit sector, including the establishment of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the introduction of the *Charities Act 2013 (Cth)*.

Krystian also serves as Chair of Mental Health First Aid International, an Australian charity whose evidence-based mental health first aid training programs have been delivered to over 8 million people around the world.



Samantha Loff, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer

Samantha Loff is a Senior Associate in the Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer Charity Law team, specialising for over a decade in governance, tax and compliance for charities and foundations, with a particular passion for working with and for queer, trans and First Nations organisations. Samantha works with grassroots organisations as well as government regulators to ensure charities meet their legal obligations while enabling effective impact in the community.

**Alice Macdougall, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer**

Alice is a leader in the Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer Charity Law practice which specialises in advising and assisting charities and foundations. Alice assists clients with governance, compliance, tax and structuring advice and has specialised in this area of law for 25 years. She has a detailed knowledge and understanding of all the many regulations and laws affecting charities in Australia.

She is an active participant in the development of laws and policies applying to charities and recently has been closely involved in the development of the new DGR category for community charities. Alice works closely with the Pro Bono and Community operations in HSF, and is a member of the ACNC Professional Adviser Forum and Deputy Chair of LCA's Charity and NFP Law Committee. She is also on the board of Geelong Community Foundation.

**Vera Visevic, Mills Oakley**

Vera has over 30 years' experience in acting for numerous charities, religious and not-for-profit organisations. Vera provides a full suite of commercial services to not-for-profit clients, including protecting commercial arrangements through drafting services agreements, privacy policies, internal policies and procedures, and reviewing grant and other government agreements.

Vera is a sought-after speaker throughout Australia. In the last year she has presented at the Better Boards Conference, and Legalwise and TENS seminars on not-for-profits. She has also authored a chapter within Charity Global Guide (2018), published by Thomson Reuters, and has authored a paper on lessons not-for-profits should learn from the recent Royal Commissions, published by Pro Bono Australia.



Penny Harris, Melba Support Services

Penny has more than 15 years' experience as a lawyer and has been Melba's General Counsel since 2020, and Company Secretary for the Melba entities since 2024. Prior to joining Melba, Penny was the Principal Legal Officer at the Disability Services Commissioner for two years after working for six years as a Barrister at the Victorian Bar. Penny also worked as a Solicitor and Judge's Associate before that. Penny has broad experience in commercial, administrative, and regulatory law, as well as coronial and other inquiries including Royal Commissions.

**Kate Fazio, Kate Fazio Consulting**

Kate is an award-winning leader and innovator working across technology, law, for-purpose and large-scale consumer businesses. Kate recognises technology's great potential to improve access to the law and justice, and also recognises that when implemented poorly, technology can inflict system-level harm.

Kate led the development of one of the first legal domain AI tools in Australia, a diagnostic model that can parse text and identify legal problems, ethically trained on real-world language samples. She has also led the development of a range of consumer and lawyer-facing technology systems now used in five continents by hundreds of thousands of users.

**Dr Philip Bender, List A Barristers**

Dr Philip Bender practices in administrative law and various areas of commercial and property law, including taxation/superannuation and charities/trusts/deceased estates and is a Nationally Accredited Mediator. He is also a sessional member of the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and has been a member of the Fisheries Licensing Appeals Tribunal. Philip is the author of *Bender's Australian Stamp Duties*, a book published by the Tax Institute.

He previously worked in a "Big 4" firm acting for corporates, financial institutions/managed funds and superannuation funds, including acting in many large cross-border transactions and fund listings. As a barrister he has acted for various regulators, including the ATO, ASIC, the SRO, VGSO, the Official Trustee in Bankruptcy and WorkSafe. He has also acted for private clients consisting of individuals, businesses of various sizes, managed funds, superannuation funds, and charities.



Kimberly Lawrence – Greg Kelly Trust Law

Kimberly specialises in complex private and charitable trust matters, with a focus on providing technical legal opinions, strategic advice, and minimising risk for trustees.

In recent years she has been involved in a number of leading cases addressing the interplay between the Trusts Act 2019 and the Charitable Trusts Act 1957.

**Darren Fittler, Gilbert + Tobin**

Darren Fittler is the founder and lead partner of the Gilbert + Tobin Charities and Not-For-Profit group. He specialises in the provision of legal assistance to charities, not-for-profits and social impact organisations.

Darren was the recipient of the 2014 Human Rights Commission Law Award in recognition of his long-term commitment to assisting not-for-profit and charitable organisations. Darren is a volunteer director of Vision Australia and has previously held roles on the boards of numerous charities. Darren also attended meetings at the United Nations in New York, helping in the development of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

**Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes OAM, Queensland University of Technology**

Professor Myles McGregor-Lowndes OAM is the former Director of The Australian Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (ACPNS). He has written extensively about nonprofit tax and regulation, nonprofit legal entities, government grants and standard charts of accounts as a means of reducing the compliance burden.

He is a founding member of the ATO Charities Consultative Committee and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Advisory Board. In June 2003, Myles was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM). In 2023 he was reappointed to the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Advisory Board.

**Murray Baird**

Murray Baird is an Australian Legal Practitioner and leading advisor on the Law, Governance and Regulation of Charities in Australia. He has acted for many of Australia's prominent charities and been involved in several leading cases defining charities in Australia.



Meet the CLAANZ Board

Professor Ian Murray, Chair

Dr Ian Murray is an academic at the University of Western Australia Law School where he teaches and researches in Taxation and Not-for-profit Law, with a focus on the intersection between Not-for-profit Law, Tax and Corporate Governance. He has a number of years' experience as a practitioner and practical experience in the regulatory and governance issues faced by not-for-profits, having been a not-for-profit board member for over 5 years and having worked as an in-house lawyer at the University of Western Australia.

Ian has published widely on charity tax concessions, charity regulation, native title charities, accumulation of assets by charities, tax administration and resource taxation from the perspectives of tax policy, equity, trusts, property law, corporations law and regulatory theory. He is a co-author of one of Australia's leading taxation law texts, *Understanding Taxation Law*.



Sari Baird, Director

Sari's charity law practice is grounded in senior executive legal and board governance roles. Most recently Sari was General Counsel and Company Secretary at Oxfam Australia, a charity that tackles global poverty. Sari's early career was in the commercial field, as a lawyer with Herbert Smith Freehills in Melbourne and later, Jakarta. She has held the positions of General Counsel and Company Secretary in an ASX listed company, and in legal and compliance in higher education, prior to moving to an in-house role in the charitable sector in 2010.

Sari's involvement in charity governance includes her past board roles at the Art Gallery of Ballarat and Sovereign Hill Museums, and her local Community Legal Centre's Committee of Management. Sari is a member of the Law Institute's Charity and NFP Committee and previously served on the ACNC's Professional Advisor and Sector Forums from their inception.



Sue Barker, Director

Sue Barker is the director of Sue Barker Charities Law, a boutique law firm based in Wellington, specialising in charities law and public tax law. Since its founding in 2012, the firm has won a number of awards, including Boutique Law Firm of the Year at the New Zealand Law Awards. In 2016, Sue was made an Honorary National Life Member of the National Council of Women of New Zealand Incorporated for her work assisting the Council with charities law issues. Sue is currently on sabbatical as the 2019 New Zealand Law Foundation International Research Fellowship, undertaking research into the question "What does a world-leading framework of charities law look like?", with a report due by 2021.



Jennifer Batrouney AM KC, Director

Jennifer practises in taxation, equity, superannuation, commercial and administrative law. With 27 years' experience at the Bar, she is a trusted advisor to a range of corporate, government and not-for-profit clients. In addition to general income tax and R&D matters, she has experience in advising in relation to GST, FBT, payroll and land taxes. Jennifer appears before the High Court, the Federal Court and the superior State courts, mainly in revenue matters.

Jennifer has been a silk for over 17 years and is a past President of the Victorian Bar and of the Tax Bar Association. She is presently President of the Australian Bar Association and Chair of the Law Council Charities and Not-for-Profits committee.

**Marla Cowen, Director**

Marla Cowen is a charity law specialist at Herbert Smith Freehills. After working in tax at Allens Linklaters, Marla began her charity law career at the ACNC, where she worked as Legal Counsel during the first 4 years of the ACNC's establishment. Marla gained further regulatory and tax experience as a director at the ATO, and later undertook a secondment as manager of the NFP Advice team at Justice Connect.

At HSF, Marla advises on a broad range of matters affecting charities, including charity establishment, ACNC requirements, ACNC reviews, tax endorsements, constitutions and governance, and has a particular interest in charity law issues regarding the charity/government distinction and professional associations.

**Seak-King Huang, Director**

Seak-King Huang established Milner + Huang, lawyers to the for-purpose sector, with Alex Milner in mid-2021. Previously she was a Partner of Prolegis Lawyers and before that, she was General Counsel and Company Secretary of World Vision Australia and a Partner at Clayton Utz.

Seak-King is also the Chair of the Charities and Not-for-profits Committee of the Legal Practice section of the Law Council of Australia. She is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a board member of two Australian registered charities. Additionally, she is a member of the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia.



Jo Lennan, Company Secretary

As Head of Legal at Paul Ramsay Foundation since 2023, Jo works across the Foundation's portfolio of impact investments and grants. Before joining the Foundation, she worked as Principal Legal Officer at the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. She was previously a lawyer at Blake Dawson (now Ashurst).

Jo holds a master's degree from the University of Oxford and is a Fellow of the Gilbert + Tobin Centre of Public Law at the University of New South Wales. She has written about law and justice for publications including The Economist and The Monthly.

**Kris Morrison, Director**

Kris is Board Chair of Parry Field Lawyers Limited, a New Zealand law firm with offices in Canterbury and on the West Coast, which provides services nationally to charities and non-profit organisations as well as to other corporate and private clients.

Kris joined Parry Field in 2002 and practices in the area of corporate and commercial law, including for many charitable clients - assisting them with a range of issues including charitable ownership and operation of business, property matters, drafting of constitutions, trust deeds and operational rules, incorporation, charitable registration and applications for inclusion in schedule 32 of the Income Tax Act 2007. He also represents a number of schools and has particular expertise in the framework that governs state integrated schools in New Zealand. Kris's previous governance experience includes as a trustee of New Zealand charity, Digital Future Aotearoa.



Kris holds a Bachelor of Laws with Honours and a Bachelor of Arts from Victoria University of Wellington.

Natalie Silver, Director

Dr Natalie Silver is an academic at the University of Sydney Law School, where she teaches contract law. Her research focuses on not-for-profit law and regulation, and she has published widely on the tax aspects of charitable giving, the regulation of cross-border philanthropy, and the intersection between contract law and charity law.

Natalie worked for a number of years as a lawyer in the New York office of Kirkland & Ellis LLP and is a member of the New York Bar. She also has extensive philanthropic advisory and grantmaking experience through her work in the Philanthropic Services group at JP Morgan Private Bank in New York, Jewish Funders Network, and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

