

IAM CONFERENCE 26TH – 29TH MAY 2025

GOLD COAST AUSTRALIA

~ *The Shifting Sands of Mediation* ~

The Venue: [Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort, Gold Coast](#) | [Virtual Site Tour](#)

Conference Program

Monday, May 26

2.00 – 5.00 pm Board of Governors Meeting in the Oyster Bar (without the oysters)

Tuesday, May 27

7.00 am Registration Desk Open

Breakfast from 6.00 am in *Terraces Restaurant*.

Guests staying on a group rate are also entitled to a special rate of AUD \$ 35.00 person.

9.00 am **Conference Welcome & Preliminary Notes** – Conference Chair

9.15 am Welcome to Country by local indigenous elder, Uncle John Graham, a Traditional Custodian of the Gold Coast region, a Kombumerri man, a saltwater man of the Gold Coast part of the wider Yugambeh Language Group with assistance of indigenous musicians and dancers.

9.35 am Welcome to the Gold Coast - Cr Tom Tate, Mayor of the City of Gold Coast

10.45 am An Address by the Honourable Helen Bowskill, Chief Justice of Queensland

10.45 am IAM President's Welcome - Distinguished Fellow Joyce Mitchell

11.00 am **Break**

11.30 am **Session: The Road to Negotiated Settlement in the Context of Class Actions Between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Government in Australia.**
Speakers: Distinguished Fellow Andrew Crowe KC and Joshua Creamer
Chaired by Distinguished Fellow Doug Murphy KC

A conversational discourse between the speakers with first-hand experience explaining the stepped and lengthy mediation process – including the cultural issues, political issues and dealing with the complexities of government decision-making and decision-making by lead applicants, the drivers to settlement and the healing effects of settlements reached.

1.00 pm **Lunch**

2.00 pm **Session: A Masterclass: Multi-Party Environmental Dispute Resolution and Cultural Integration and Local Innovation**
Speaker: Mary Walker OAM

Mary will share her insights from the forefront of her experience as mediator, arbitrator, negotiator, and facilitator in Australian and International disputes over a period of 30 years.

Tuesday, May 27 continued...

3.15 pm **Session: Rural Debt: Mediating in a Perfect Storm of Contributing Factors.**
Speaker: Distinguished Fellow Lee Nevison

Farm Debt mediation often takes place in the context of circumstances beyond the farmers control (e.g. droughts, floods etc).

4.00 pm Free Time

6.00 pm **Cocktail Reception at Sheraton Grand Mirage** [Delegates and Guests]

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Wednesday, May 28

8.00 am Registration Desk Open

Breakfast from 6.00 am (until 11.00 am) in Terraces Restaurant.

Guests staying on a group rate are entitled to a special rate of AUD \$ 35.00 per person.

8.30 am **Gather in foyer for “Talk-about/Talkathon Tour” of the Gold Coast including visit to the World Heritage-listed Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.** [Delegates And Guests] - *at cost, for transport and entry to Sanctuary but worth it. Details to follow.*

Discover how Australia’s weird and wacky native animals - kangaroos, koalas, dingos, emus, echidnas, wombats, and Tassie devils mediate their own disputes, up close and in person. The tour may also include a distinctly Aussie morning tea with some ‘yarning’ with insight into local First Nations culture.

1.00 pm **Lunch**

2.00 pm **Session: Mediation as a Process of Transition**
Speaker: Greg Rooney

In this session, Greg will discuss a process that moves away from seeing a dispute as a static event where mediators are dealmakers or dispute resolvers and sees mediation as a pivotal step in the continuous flow of the parties’ lives, working with, not against, change - a process that shifts the focus from mediating the problem to mediating the moment. Such an approach is underpinned by an acceptance of the primacy of change that requires a different way of thinking by the mediator to allow the new and unexpected to emerge out of human interaction rather than through objective analysis.

3.00 pm **Breakout Discussion Groups** Topics of interest with fabulous facilitators.
See annexure for topics:

4.00 pm Free Time

6.30 pm **Maritime Moments of Congeniality: Broadwater Dinner Cruise** (Optional)
Step aboard for a memorable evening on serene Gold Coast waterways savouring a meal crafted from fine local seasonal produce, perfectly paired with locally brewed beer, wine, or a signature cocktail, all while enjoying the stunning Surfers Paradise skyline. Admire the stars and city lights, capturing unforgettable moments of members’ and guests’ congeniality.

Land Based Moments of Congeniality: (Optional) Your Own Dining Arrangements with suggestions and links to come.

Thursday, May 29

8.30 am Registration Desk Open

Breakfast from 6.00 am (until 11.00 am) in Terraces Restaurant.

Guests staying on a group rate are entitled to a special rate of AUD \$ 35.00 per person.

9.00 am **Session: Changing Reference Points in Dispute Resolution**
Speaker: Dr Laurence Boulle AM

The presentation begins with an outline of prospect theory and its relevance in dispute resolution. It then considers the relevance of comparators in decision-making and ways in which negotiators and dispute resolvers can change comparators to make proposals more attractive. This leads to a discussion of how dispute issues can be framed and reframed by negotiators and dispute resolvers to promote settlement, with practical examples illustrating relevant issues. It concludes with critical reflections on comparators in dispute resolution.

10.00 am **Session: It's All Your Fault! Dealing with the Difficult!**
Speaker: Dr Anne Purcell

An overview of working with clients with difficult, high-conflict or borderline personalities. Managing disputes and negotiating outcomes is something mediators do every day but identifying those with personality disorders or high conflict personalities can be a bit more challenging. This presentation references inter-disciplinary literature at the nexus of psychology, neuroscience and law and provides practical applications for the practice of mediation. It offers a solution-focused, client-centred approach to resolve conflicts or disputes for difficult clients in difficult circumstances. Learn how to identify the just plain difficult, be alert to their behavioural traits or personality disorders, de-escalate a distressed or angry client or colleague, identify when to cease interactions or change the mediation process and help difficult people to feel 'heard' and 'stop complaining'!

11.00 am **Break**

11.30 am **Session: Shifting Sands: Regressing from Getting to Yes: The Return of Zero Sum?**
Speaker: Distinguished Fellow John Sturrock KC

Recent research indicates that, in contrast with older generations who grew up with high growth and developed positive-sum beliefs that everyone can gain, younger people believe that people can only get rich at the expense of others. Winners and losers. Global political trends tend to reinforce this view. Are we seeing the decline of Getting to Yes - and all that so many mediators have sought to achieve - and, if so, what can we do about it? Join John to discuss the implications...

12.30 pm **"Churchill" and all that comes with it, from it, on top of it and without it.**
Facilitators: Distinguished Fellows Michel Kallipetis KC and Phillip Howell-Richardson.

The UK Court of Appeal's decision in *Churchill v Merthyr Tydfil* in November 2023 confirmed the integral role ADR and mediation plays in effectively resolving disputes. The Court found that parties to a dispute can be ordered by the court to engage in alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The Master of the Rolls stated in his judgement that 'as a matter of law, the court can lawfully stay existing proceedings for, or order, the parties to engage in a non-court-based dispute resolution process'. This will be congenial interactive discussion for all.

1.00 pm **Lunch**

2.00 pm **Breakout discussion groups:** Topics of interest with fabulous facilitators.

3.00 pm **Presentation by Scholar-in-Residence, Professor Sarah Cole**
Chair: Distinguished Fellow Nina Khouri (NZ)

Thursday, May 29 continued...

3.30 pm **The Seriously Great Debate: “*That AI Could Become an ADR Practitioner Effective on the Same Level as a Human*”**

Fresh perspectives from ADR thought leaders, to take you on an intellectual journey exploring the nuances of ADR as it adapts to technological change.

Speakers: For the Affirmative: A surprise
For the Negative: Another surprise.
Judges: An even bigger surprise.

4.30 pm Free Time

6.30 pm **Conference Banquet at Sheraton Grand Mirage** - Delegates and Guests

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Friday, May 30

8.30 am Registration Desk Open

Breakfast from 6.00 am (until 11.00 am) in Terraces Restaurant.

Guests staying on group rate are entitled to a special rate of AUD \$ 35.00 / person charged on consumption.

9.15 am **Session: “The Trusted Mediator”**
How to Build Trust and Improve Outcomes in Conflict Situations
Speaker: Gary Edwards

10.30 am **A Prelude to the 2026 IAM Conference in Boston, MA**

10.45 am **Break**

11.15 am **IAM AGM and Installation of New Officers and Board Members.**

11.45 am **Open Mic** with the new IAM President Jonathan Lloyd-Jones.

12.45 pm Remarks by the Conference Chair and close.

1.00 pm **Special Interest Lunch: with very special guest speakers** –
Tom Ray, Perry Cross AM and Professor James St John.

“World Leading Research & Treatments for Sufferers of Acquired Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries”

Once it was a dream. Now there is evidence that spinal cords can regenerate following severe injuries. That means new hope for an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 people globally who suffer a spinal cord injury.

At the Gold Coast’s Griffith University’s Institute for Drug Discovery, the Clem Jones Centre for Neurobiology and Stem Cell Research aims to develop therapies to treat acquired brain and spinal cord injury. Led by Professor James St John, researchers follow an approach that transplants cells from the nose into injured spinal cords to form a cellular bridge, enabling the regeneration of nerve cells to make functional motor and sensory connections. As their work progresses, they never lose sight of the long-term prospect that people suffering quadriplegia or paraplegia may walk and feel again.

Friday, May 30 continued...

Gold Coast based and globally recognised, the Perry Cross Spinal Research Foundation, established in 2010, has joint ventured with Griffith University to result in the ***world's first nerve bridge and rehabilitation human clinical trial for 15 people living with paralysis***. This is a must-listen-to story.

2.30 pm Free Time

5.30 pm **Land-Based Moments of Congeniality:**

Optional Entertainment:

Australian Outback Spectacular– Delegates and Guests (at cost to be advised). Embark on a journey to the 'Heartland' of Australia through an extraordinary show featuring true Australian characters, a transformative arena with immersive technology and mesmerising animals, all whilst enjoying a three-course dinner and drinks.

Return transport for the 25-minute trip from the Sheraton Mirage to the Outback Spectacular Indoor Theatre Arena at Helensvale will be provided. (Details of pricing to come).

Gather at Foyer for transport to Helensvale venue.

Alternative: (Optional) Your own Dining Arrangements with suggestions and links to come

Breakout Sessions – Hot Topics and Hot Facilitators (so far)

- 1. The Edinburgh Declaration of International Mediators.** In 2018, over 100 signed the Edinburgh Declaration that set out the principles of mediation and our aspirations as mediators. Do we need to revisit this now? How could it help us to address the difficult issues faced by mediators – and IAM Fellows - in 2025?
Facilitator: Distinguished Fellow John Sturrock (Scotland)
- 2. Use of Experts in Commercial Mediations**
Facilitator: Distinguished Fellow Hayden Wilson (NZ)
- 3. The Challenge of Change** What are the plus 65ers doing in the later stages of their mediation careers and how are they travelling handling the challenge of change? Are they continuing full throttle/winding down/retiring/semi retiring/changing direction/gardening/surfing/ singing etc., etc.
Facilitator: Distinguished Fellow Geoff Sharp KC (NZ)
- 4. Missing the Forest for Trees** A case study of lessons to be learned. A discussion about multiple levels of communication, i.e., how to understand and deal with the reality that people frequently mean something different from, or deeper than, what they actually say and the importance of listening which goes well beyond words spoken.
Facilitator: Distinguished Fellow Rob Daisley (US)
- 5. What's Hope Got to Do with It?**
A macro and micro discussion as to the role of hope within mediation and in handling crises in general.
Facilitator: Distinguished Fellow Orit Asnin (ISRL)