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### Convenor's Corner

# Welcome to this Edition of COAT News - December 2016

As this is the first edition of COAT (NSW) News since our AGM held earlier this year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anne Britton who stepped down as our Convenor at that meeting. COAT (NSW) has benefited from Anne's boundless energy and inspiration for many years. Pleasingly, Anne's skills have not been lost to COAT. She has simply taken up higher office having been elected the Deputy Chair of the COAT National Executive – congratulations Anne.

Our annual NSW Conference was held on 26 August 2016 at Dockside, Darling Harbour. Thank you for your support in attending in such large numbers. Particular thanks must also go to both the AAT and NCAT for their significant support of the Conference. Planning has already commenced for the 2017 conference. I am pleased to be able to announce that the 2017 COAT (NSW) conference will be held in conjunction with the COAT National Conference in Sydney on 8 and 9 June 2017. Please mark your diaries now. We are aiming to be in a position to announce the venue for the conference and keynote speakers prior to the end of the year.

The tenth annual Whitmore lecture, in honour of the legacy of the late Professor Harry Whitmore, was held on 12 October 2016. We were honoured that the Hon Justice Margaret Beazley AO, President of the Court of Appeal (NSW), accepted our invitation to give this year's lecture. Her Honour's lecture on "Judicial Review & the Shifting Sands of Legal Unreasonableness" is now available on the COAT website (www.coat.gov.au/publications).

In this edition, Walkley award winning journalist, Debra Jobson, continues her series on life behind the scenes in Tribunals. On this occasion Debra has provided us with an in depth profile piece on the President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, Judge Richard Cogswell.

I trust that you enjoy this latest edition of COAT (NSW) News.

Malcolm Schyvens COAT Convenor

## In Profile: Richard Cogswell

by Debra Jopson

Richard Cogswell has his eyes closed. He often does, to think better while talking.

"Don't be put off by it, my associates notice it very quickly in the piece," he says.

He's poured two cups of Melbourne Breakfast tea from the red teapot kept in the corner of his office and he's reminiscing about an awkward moment when he was waiting for his father to deliver a judgement in Swansea Magistrate's Court.

It was almost 50 years ago. He was a Hobart teenager holidaying with his family on Tasmania's east coast and was sitting at the back of court, conscious that his father was performing in public.

"I heard the prosecution's side, the defence side. I heard the arguments and then, I thought, oh, gosh, what now?" Cogswell recalls. There was deep silence as Bob Cogswell, up on the Bench, cogitated and wrote notes.

"Then he embarked on the judgment. I didn't know what the process was going to be and I realised that [it] can involve listening to evidence, listening to argument, a period of silent reflection, thinking, construction of reasons, and then delivery of the reasons," the son recounts.

The revelation that day still influences the way Richard Cogswell works now. All through his career as a solicitor, barrister, Crown Prosecutor, Crown Advocate, judge – and now – President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT), he has valued silent reflection and prefers to deliver judgements orally whenever possible.

Over the past nine and a half years as a NSW District Court judge, when he has had to reserve a decision, he has usually prepared it with extensive notes, both written and dictated, then delivered it orally from those notes. This way he won't be haunted by too many reserved judgements.

"I speak my thoughts," he says. "If you want to know what causes judicial stress, one of the main items is reserved judgements hanging over your head. That's one of the reasons I employ the oral system because I know if I'm trying to perfect written judgements, it's going to take ages."

On this day, he nibbles almonds and sweetened sultanas which help keep the energy flowing. He is dressed in a red-checked shirt and socks patterned with large red, blue, green and mauve prisms.

Is this what he wears on the bench while completing cases as a District Court judge?

"Yes, deliberately. I like colourful socks. Men don't have a lot of options for colour... I tend not to wear ties, but when I used to wear ties, I liked colourful ties."

He looks relaxed. Over the decades, he has evolved precise routines for reducing stress and extracting the best from his mind and body. He wears a Garmin fitness band and aims to take 12,000 steps daily. He takes Bikram yoga classes three times a week.

"I speak my thoughts," he says.

"If you want to know what causes judicial stress, one of the main items is reserved judgements hanging over your head..."

been doing it for seven years now."

Fittingly for the head of a Tribunal dedicated to mental health, Cogswell has spent time examining his own mind. In a chapter for the book 'So You want to be a Leader,' he advised young lawyers that self-awareness was important in court for managing emotions.

"That's the hot one. I like it because it's vigorous, it gives me good aerobic exercise, it's near my work, they have half a dozen classes a day, so I can go early in the morning or late in the afternoon and it's good for 65-year-old men. I'm usually the oldest and the baldest in the class. I do as I'm told and I've

It's a refreshing acknowledgement of the tensions swirling beneath lawyers' cool exteriors.

"The main faculty you will be using in court is your mind: there will be a lot of thinking, planning and deciding. But your feelings will be bubbling away under the surface; mostly tension and anxiety ranging from mild to near panic," he wrote.

AS A MAN who advocates transparency and accountability, he is frank about his own shortcomings and the help he got from friends and colleagues.

He used to watch the late Tasmanian Liberal politician and lawyer Michael Hodgman, as well as his father Bill in court. They took the same career path, Cogswell once fancied entering politics.

But he decided he was not quick enough and that he would be better at the "cut and thrust of rational argument" the law required.

Once admitted as a lawyer, he won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford and studied philosophy and politics before becoming an associate to Justice of the High Court Sir Kenneth Jacobs. That job brought him to Sydney, where he has remained since, with his wife Anne Collier, a social worker and mediator.

He says he received 30 rejection letters before landing a job as a solicitor. "I wasn't in the league of people with postgraduate legal qualifications or first class honours degrees. That meant a lot of the applications I sent to big firms [were rejected with] three words. You didn't have to read the letter; your eyes would immediately alight on the words 'unfortunately,' 'however' or 'but'."

There were wills, conveyancing and probate work giving him a good grounding in law over three years. But it was on the fourth floor of Wentworth Chambers, where he set up in private practice as a barrister sticking up for injured workers' rights in the Workers Compensation Commission that he had his next "mind-expanding experience."

He learnt that he could use his skills to assist vulnerable people, including many non-English speakers. Later, on the fifth floor, he embraced common law, equity, government, commercial and criminal cases.

Eventually, seeking more time with his young children James and Claire and with a hunger for "the human component of persuading 12 people" in jury trials, he became a Crown Prosecutor. This, he says, was not counter to his passion for championing vulnerable people.

"I try to be very even-handed and fair...I like listening to arguments. I don't like covering things up. I like playing with an open hand a lot. Being a Crown Prosecutor is a job that lends itself to that because ...you have to disclose everything, the strengths and weaknesses of your case and then you run it," he says.

"The main faculty you will be using in court is your mind: there will be a lot of thinking, planning and deciding. But your feelings will be bubbling away under the surface..."

Cogswell is one of the few who can put QC and SC after their names. Nineteen years ago, he was appointed senior counsel in NSW. "It is probably my proudest professional achievement, being awarded silk in this state," he says.

A year later, he became a Queen's Counsel in Tasmania. He's a republican, but says it's worth being a QC because of the status and recognition it holds overseas. He has also been the NSW Crown Advocate, which he describes as "like an assistant Solicitor-General whose specialty is criminal law".

ACCEPTING his new role at the Tribunal, Cogswell said in March, "In sentencing offenders I have had to balance competing factors such as justice and mercy and, importantly, the protection of the community."

Over the past year, he has delivered several newsworthy judgements and sentences in the District Court. In February, he sentenced banker James Ian Longworth to a maximum of four years and 10 months imprisonment for a drunken one-punch attack which left security guard Fady Taiba in a coma and left him with a traumatic brain injury.

Longworth expressed remorse and Cogswell said during sentencing remarks, "Sometimes serious crimes are committed by good people."

In August, he sentenced Hunter region Catholic priest David O'Hearn to a prison sentence of 18 years and 3 months for multiple sex offences against six children, describing the offender as having a public profile as a holy man, while behaving as a "major criminal" in private.

"One of the great things about being a judge is the requirement to give reasons for your decisions," Cogswell says.

"It keeps you intellectually honest and it opens the ability to change your mind. I may be wrong at my first thought."

And now, at the Tribunal, he is adapting to making decisions with two other Members and being treated not so much as a figurehead, but more as a person who speaks directly with patients across a table, or on screen from a mental health facility.

"Well, the first thing I notice is I'm Richard, not judge, which is the custom here, which is fine. In the court context, I'm 'Your Honour' or 'Judge.' People bow when I come into the court. I'm dressed up. I'm robed. It's a much more formal context," he says.

"The proceedings are much less formal. I'm still getting used to it – not that I'm wanting to resist it... I'm not elevated. I'm on the same level.

"I'm used to making my own decisions – going away by myself and making up my mind. I now sit with one psychiatrist and one other suitably qualified person, so I am grateful for the input from them, the opportunity to talk to them about it."

Cogswell has thought deeply about what is means to dispense justice. In a speech three years ago, he asked "How can we be just in all we do?"

His answer was: "Well we can't, at least in the developed world... What we take for granted in everyday life - comforts, facilities, services - are provided to us at the expense of others."

"One of the great things about being a judge is the requirement to give reasons for your decisions,"

Cogswell says.

"It keeps you intellectually honest and it opens the ability to change your mind..."

"I always get a seat and I just sit on the bus and meditate..."

He argued for restorative justice and also explained how meditation shifts his thinking.

"I want to be preoccupied and busy and to drive my own agenda. I do most of the time. But sitting twice a day and focusing away from that agenda teaches me the value of detaching from it for a time, of seeing what else can emerge if I invest in another process than 'driven-ness'," he said.

Cogswell began to practise a mantra-based meditation in the Christian tradition 27 years ago and helped found meditation groups at St James Anglican Church in Sydney's CBD, where he and his wife Anne worship.

Every morning and afternoon, he sits and focuses on one word, "Maranatha" which means "Come, Lord" in Aramaic, the ancient language Christ spoke.

"Can you do that for 20 minutes? No. It's the process of doing it that's important. The process of coming back to the mantra every time you're distracted," he explains. "It's like a lot of human endeavour. It's simple but not easy and takes a commitment."

The afternoon meditation is the hardest to fit in and sometimes it is best to be transported in more ways than one.

As he says, "This is how grounded it is - I'll get the 501 - not the 500 or the 518 - the 501 gets me to Central in about 30 minutes. I always get a seat and I just sit on the bus and meditate."

He becomes just another of Sydney's commuters, a man with closed eyes in bright socks.

# Case law updates

"The findings
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Australian legal
system."

#### **Federal Court of Australia Full Court**

### AMF15 v Minister for Immigration and Border Protection [2016] FCAFC 68

This case summary has been prepared by Aaron Baril of NSW Crown Solicitor's Office

The case of *AMF15 v Minister for Immigration and Boarder Protection* [2016] FCAFC 68 raised the issue of procedural fairness obligations of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia ("FCCA") in determining whether to summarily dismiss a judicial review application in its migration jurisdiction. The findings have relevance to tribunals applying the relevant legal concepts to the myriad of factual circumstances in which the issue may arise. This is particularly so if there are combined issues of self-representation and lack of familiarity with the English language or the Australian legal system.

The applicant was an Iranian citizen whose application for a protection visa was rejected by the Minister's delegate. The applicant sought review of that decision in the then-Refugee Review Tribunal ("Tribunal"). The Tribunal rejected the applicant's claims based primarily on its adverse findings concerning the applicant's credibility.

On judicial review of the Tribunal's decision, the FCCA dismissed the applicant's application at a "show cause" hearing on the first FCCA Court date, delivering *ex tempore* reasons.

On appeal, the Full Court of the Federal Court ("Full Court") held that the FCCA had denied the unrepresented applicant procedural fairness. The Full Court considered the following legal principles, which have relevance to tribunals as well (though perhaps sometimes to a different degree).

All judges have an overriding duty to ensure a fair trial for all parties who are involved in a proceeding (*Dietrich v R* (1992) 177 CLR 292). The discharge of this duty may involve different considerations and difficulties where one or more of the litigants is unrepresented. In *SZRUR v Minister for Immigration and Border Protection* [2013] FCAFC 146, the Full Court held that the trial judge should have explained the relevant court procedures to the appellant, having regard to the fact that he did not speak, read or write English and had no legal training nor any understanding of court rules and procedures.

When considering whether to summarily dismiss a matter, special considerations apply. There is existing authority recognising that there must be processes for dealing efficiently with cases in a "high volume jurisdiction" such as that conferred on the FCCA by the *Migration Act*. However, the authorities also recognise that there is much at stake in the migration jurisdiction for an individual in terms of fundamental rights, including the consequences of the mandatory detention regime in Australia, and removal from Australia. The Full Court has cautioned that the high volume of cases should, if anything, give rise to extra caution to ensure no injustices are being done because of judicial workload pressures.

Factors indicating that the applicant was denied procedural fairness by the FCCA included that the primary judge made no attempt:

- (a) to ascertain the applicant's understanding of the summary dismissal procedure, including that he carried the onus of persuading the Court that his application raised an arguable case for the relief claimed;
- (b) to explain the Court's processes to the applicant in a meaningful way, including the applicant's right to seek an adjournment;
- (c) to inquire whether the applicant's requests for legal aid were being further pursued, in circumstances where the applicant expressed that he was having difficulty in the context of not having legal aid;
- to provide the applicant with any meaningful explanation of several complex legal concepts used by his Honour (such as "show cause", "jurisdictional error", "not a court of appeal", "review the merits" and "excess of jurisdiction");
- (e) to consider whether the applicant would be in a position to properly digest the
   318-page Court Book, with documents primarily in English, in a single day;
- (f) to draw the applicant's attention to the rule that his application be supported by an affidavit which included any document or other evidence he sought to rely on;
- (g) to ask the applicant what his view was concerning the Court moving immediately to hear the Minister's application or whether he wished to apply for an adjournment;
- (h) to ask the applicant to explain, when he submitted that the Tribunal had not correctly applied the "rules and laws" to his case, what he meant or to identify the relevant "rules and laws"; or
- (i) to allow the applicant an opportunity to read a case handed to him and relied upon by the Minister's solicitor on the day, instead almost immediately asking the applicant to respond to the Minister's application.

While there is no formula for procedural fairness, the above can be a useful guide when dealing with unrepresented applicants, particularly in the circumstances of summary dismissal.

#### **New South Wales Court of Appeal**

#### Spratt v Perilya Broken Hill Ltd; Spratt v Rowe [2016] NSWCA 192

This case summary has been prepared by Belinda Cassidy

Mr Spratt was injured by a motor vehicle driven by a fellow employee. Because Mr Spratt was injured at work and by a motor vehicle he made both a workers compensation claim and a motor accident claim. In respect of his workers compensation claim, Mr Spratt brought proceedings under s 66 of the *Workers Compensation Act* 1987.

"the vehicle
that caused the
accident was
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the claim was
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of the vehicle
(Mr Spratt's
employer)"

In respect of his motor accident claim, the vehicle that caused the accident was unregistered and the claim was made against the driver and owner of the vehicle (Mr Spratt's employer) under the *Motor Accidents Compensation Act* 1999. That claim was exempt from assessment by the Motor Accidents Claims Assessment and Resolution Service but not from assessment by the Motor Accidents Medical Assessment Service.

The Workers Compensation Commission found that the accident caused injury to Mr Spratt's cervical spine and that he injured it in the course of his employment by aggravating, exacerbating, accelerating and making worse a pre-existing condition of cervical spondylosis. This finding entitled Mr Spratt to claim lump sum compensation for impairment and pain and suffering. A Medical Assessor from the Motor Accidents Medical Assessment Service determined that no injury to the cervical spine had been caused by the motor accident. The Assessor also certified that there was no injury by the motor accident that gave rise to a permanent impairment of greater than 10 per cent. That determination meant Mr Spratt was not entitled to claim damages for non-economic loss including damages for pain and suffering.

The Proper Officer of MAS, refused Mr Spratt's application to have his medical assessment referred to a review panel (essentially an 'appeal'). His application in the District Court for further assessment was also refused. Mr Spratt appealed the Proper Officer's and District Court's decisions in the NSW Court of Appeal, on the basis that the determination by the Commission resulted in an issue estoppel which bound the Medical Assessor.

Leeming JA (McColl and Gleeson JJA agreeing) held that there was no issue estoppel for two reasons. First, Mr Spratt's motor accident claim was against the driver of the vehicle. His District Court action joined both the driver and employer, but the liability of the latter was purely vicarious. As Mr Spratt conceded, the driver could not be regarded as a privy of his employer. As such, he could not be bound by any issue estoppel.

Second, even if an issue estoppel arose as to causation of Mr Spratt's injury, it did not bind a Medical Assessor determining a medical dispute in accordance with Pt 3.4 of the *Motor Accidents Compensation Act*.

Leeming JA also commented on the need for matters to be procedurally compliant and stressed the importance of grounds of appeal being clear, precise and non-repetitious to allow the Court and the other side to identify the gravamen of a claim. His Honour also highlighted the importance for written submissions to be signed by counsel who has prepared them.

Editor's comment – A person injured at work by a motor vehicle may have rights under both the workers compensation and motor accident schemes. While both schemes are administered by the same department (Better Regulation Division of the Department of Finance Services and Innovation) and both schemes have to determine similar issues e.g. causation of injuries in an accident, there are several differences:

- The WCC is an independent tribunal, the Motor Accidents dispute resolution services are embedded in the department;
- · WCC has Arbitrators, CARS has Claims Assessors;
- WCC has Approved Medical Specialists, MAS has Medical Assessors (many of whom overlap);

- WCC Arbitrator's determine causation of injuries and refer issues of degree of impairment to a medical specialist for determination whereas Motor Accident Medical Assessors determine causation and degree of impairment with no input from the Claims Assessor;
- The method of assessing whole person impairment (assuming causation is determined in favour of the worker/claimant) is similar but the tools are different (American Medical Association Guides 5<sup>th</sup> edition versus 4<sup>th</sup> edition)



### People & Events

#### **Upcoming Events**

SAVE THE DATE
Joint COAT (NSW)/COAT National Conference
8 and 9 June 2017, Sydney

#### **Recent Events**

# **COAT NSW Conference 2016: Deliberations and Dilemmas in the Digital Age**

On 26 August 2016, at Dockside Darling Harbour, the Committee of the NSW Chapter of COAT hosted the 2016 Conference, "Deliberations and Dilemmas in the Digital Age". The conference included a key note address from Benjamin Law, of SBS series "The Family Law" on the impact of social media. Conference attendees had the opportunity to explore the world of paperless Tribunal hearings, in a dedicated workshop. Continuing the digital theme, James Griffin of KPMG provided a practical session about how Tribunal members could keep themselves safe online and barrister Miiko Kumar dealt with the emerging issue of updating skills to deal with evidence obtained from smart devices. Other addresses also included the evolution on the rule against bias with Professor Simon Young from the University of Southern Queensland and a practical session in refreshing online legal research skills from Chris Matthies of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.









COAT NSW Conference 2016: Deliberations and Dilemmas in the Digital Age (continued)



















# Whitmore lecture 2016: Hon. Justice Margaret Beazley AO, President, NSW Court of Appeal.

It was with pleasure that the Committee of the NSW Chapter of COAT hosted the tenth annual Whitmore lecture on 12 October 2016, titled "Judicial Review and the Shifting Sands of Legal Unreasonableness", delivered by the Hon. Justice Margaret Beazley AO, President, NSW Court of Appeal.













#### **Recent Appointments**

#### **Appointments to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)**

In May 2016, the Attorney-General announced 76 appointments and reappointments for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The new full-time senior members are Dr Denis Dragovic, Theodore Tavoularis and Adria Marissa Poljak, who will serve terms of seven, five and three years, respectively.

Chelsea Rebelle Walsh has also been assigned a full-time senior member role, after previously serving part-time.

A further three senior members were appointed on a part-time basis: April Christina Freeman and John Sosso for seven years, Peter Edward Nolan for five years, and Professor Michael John McGrowdie for three.

Senior-level re-appointments include John Cipolla and Kira Raif as full-time members for five years, John Billings as a full-time member for three years, and Mr Shahyar Roushan as a part-time member for three.

Outside of the senior level, new full-time appointees include Clyde Campbell and Peter Vlahos for seven years, Angela Cranston, Justine Clarke, Jeffrey Robert Thomson and Jennifer Cripps Watts for five years, and Ms Moira Brophy and Mr Mark Gordon Hyman for three.

New part-time members on seven-year terms are Michael Bruce Hawkins, Kate Juhasz, and Saxon Rice.

Part-time appointees on five-year terms comprise Ann Barbara Brandon-Baker, Dr Louise Bygrave, Mila Foster, John Fitzsimons Godfrey, Dr Eric Knight, Michael Manetta, Jane Louise Marquard, Adrienne Millbank, Seamus Francis Rafferty, James Edward Silva, and the Honourable Judith Mary Troeth AM.

Finally, new part-time members appointed on three-year terms include Rhonda Ruth Bradley, Marshal John Douglas, Julie Dianne Forgan, Paul Samuel Glass, Dr Heidi Gregory, William Bruce Kennedy, and Dr Sofia Khan.

#### NCAT Appointments (as at 1 Sept 2016)

Mr Malcolm Schyvens was reappointed as the Deputy President and Head of the Guardianship Division. In addition, two new part time Principal Members have been appointed: The Hon Brian Tamberlin QC and Mr Malcolm Craig QC.

The Attorney General also appointed and reappointed a group of Principal, Senior and General Members. The new appointees are:

- Lyn Anthony,
- · Ian Bailey SC,
- · Wendy Blaxland,
- · Esther Cho,
- · Julie Claridge,
- Gregory Curtin SC,

- Deborah Dinnen,
- · Laura Dive,
- · Richard Fela.
- Roger Hamilton SC,
- · David Jay,
- Christa Ludlow,

- · Elizabeth Lyne,
- Nicholas Matkovich,
- · Karen McMahon,
- · Peter Moran,
- · Linda Pearson,
- · Dr Susan Pulman,
- · Kay Ransome,
- · Shahyar Roushan,
- Dr Elina Safro,
- · Michelle Sindler,
- · Gemma Slack-Smith,
- Dr Alexandra Walker,
- · Dr Sidney Williams.

### The reappointed Principal, Senior and General members are:

- · Peter Alexander.
- Mark Anderson,
- · Robyn Bailey,
- · Dr Susan Barnes,
- · Steven Bliim,
- · Dennis Bluth,
- · Mary Bolt,
- · Rhonda Booby,
- · Philip Boyce,
- · Stuart Boyce,
- · Anne Britton,
- Mary Burke,
- Susan Burns,
- Peter Callaghan SC,
- · Dr Tanya Carter,
- · Dr Robert Churchill,
- · Andrew Coleman SC.
- · Janice Connelly,
- · Elaine Connor,
- · Janene Cootes,
- The Hon A/Judge Dennis Cowdroy OAM QC,

- · Dr Julie Crawford,
- · Dr Helen Creasey AM,
- · Debbie Crowley,
- · John Currie,
- · Sonja Daly,
- · Patricia Davidson,
- · Steven Davison,
- · Rodney Dawson,
- · Professor Robert Deutsch,
- · Peta Drake,
- Francis Duffy,
- Philip Durack SC,
- Belinda Epstein-Frisch AM,
- · Lynden Esdaile,
- David Fairlie,
- Susan Fenwick,
- · Ingrid Ferriera,
- · Dr Barbara Field,
- · Matthew Foldi,
- Emeritus Professor Philip Foreman,
- · Phillip French,
- · Stephen Frost,
- · Fiona Given,
- Professor Jane Goodman-Delahunty,
- · Dr Jennifer Green,
- · Nathan Halstead,
- · John Harris SC,
- · Philip Harris,
- Elayne Hayes,
- Monique Hitter,
- · Barbara Hughes,
- · Naida Isenberg,
- · Norman Isenberg RFD,
- · Dr Gail Jamieson,
- Susan Johnston,

### Committee NSW Chapter of COAT

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Deputy President NCAT

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Principal Claims Assessor Motor Accident Claims Assessment & Resolution Service

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Member, Administrative Appeals Tribunal Senior Member, Veterans' Review Board Presiding Member, NCAT Legal Member, Mental Health Review Tribunal, NSW

**Susan Johnston** 

Member NCAT

### **Contact Us**

NSW Chapter of the Council of Australasian Tribunals (COAT)
Secretary Belinda Cassidy
email: bcassidy@maa.nsw.gov.au

Direct phone: 02 8268 1488

- · Amanda Jones,
- · James Kearney,
- · Claudia Kennedy,
- · Suzanne Leal,
- John Le Breton,
- · Ashley Limbury,
- · Wendy Longley,
- · Dr Juliet Lucy,
- · Dr Meredith Martin,
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