Australian National Group
Activity Report for Calendar Year 2018

Group Leadership and Membership

The Australian National Group of AIPPI is managed by a Committee consisting of the following members:

- President: Matthew Swinn
- Vice President: Sarah Matheson
- Treasurer: Clare Cunliffe
- Secretary: Tom Reid
- Ordinary Members: Richard Brown, Nina Fitzgerald, Damon Henshaw, Kate Hay, Andrew Massie, Grant Fisher, and Peter Franke

Prior to the Group’s Annual General Meeting, which took place on 22 November 2018, Damon Henshaw served as President, Matthew Swinn served as Vice President, and Carolyn Harris and Connie Merlino served successively as Secretary.

In addition, the Committee benefits from the assistance of Connie Merlino, Manuel Schmidt, and Peter Treloar as regular observers.

The Group has had a consistently healthy membership of approximately 80-100 members over the last few years, with a significant spike in membership occurring around AIPPI’s Congress in Sydney in 2017. The majority of members are in private practice as lawyers, patent attorneys, trade marks attorneys, or barristers, but the Group includes a number of representatives of academia and of IP-focused industries, including the biotech industry.

Participation in AIPPI’s activities

Besides the Group’s contributions to AIPPI’s annual Study Questions, members of the Committee and of the wider Group membership are active participants in AIPPI’s ongoing activities. In particular, throughout 2018 until the Cancun Congress, Sarah Matheson served as Reporter General of AIPPI. In addition:

- Peter Franke serves as Chair of the Venue Selection Committee
- Grant Fisher serves on the Membership Committee
- Andrew Clarke, Andrew Blattman, and Michael Christie serve on the Biotechnology Subcommittee of the Pharma and Biotechnology Standing Committee
- Mark Metzeling and Deborah Kuchler serve on the Commercialization of IP Standing Committee
- Wayne Slater and Robert Wulff serve on the Designs Standing Committee
- Clare Cunliffe serves on the Free Trade Agreements Standing Committee
- Richard Brown serves as Vice Chair, and Katherine Rock serves as a member, of the Information Technology and Internet Standing Committee
• Peter Treloar serves on the IP and Green Technology Standing Committee
• Eliza Mallon serves on the Pharma and Biotechnology Standing Committee
• Elisabeth Opie and Peter Treloar serve on the Standards and Patents Standing Committee
• Mark Metzeling serves on the Trademarks Standing Committee
• Clare Cunliffe serves on the Amicus Briefs Standing Committee (which in 2018 was the Bureau Advisory Committee on Amicus Briefs)
• Sarah Matheson serves as Vice Chair, and Peter Franke serves as a member, of the Client Attorney Privilege Standing Committee
• Andre Meyer serves on the IP Office Practice and Procedures Standing Committee
• Nicole Murdoch serves on the Trade Secrets Standing Committee
• Warwick Rothnie serves on the TRIPS Standing Committee

A total of 10 members of the Group contributed directly to the drafting of the Group’s responses to the four Study Questions that were on the agenda at the Cancun Congress in 2018, with additional members contributing through their participation in an annual Questions Forum convened by the Group to debate the drafts prior to their submission.

Local activities of the Group in 2018

In calendar 2018, the Group sought to capitalise on the increased profile of AIPPI flowing from the Sydney 2017 Congress. Its activities included:

• Participation in two stakeholders’ meetings convened by IP Australia to discuss topics to be included in IP Australia’s policy agenda. The Group also used these meetings to present the Cancun resolutions to IP Australia.
• A reinvigorated seminar series that included seminars presented by:
  o Judge Julia Baird of the Federal Circuit Court on the Court’s Intellectual Property National Pilot Scheme
  o The Honourable Dr Chris Jessup QC, a former Justice of the Federal Court, on Joint Liability and Company Directors
• Ongoing sponsorship of the Francis Gurry Lecture, convened by the University of Melbourne Law School

Challenges

The Group’s biggest challenges remain (i) attracting and retaining younger members, and (ii) demonstrating relevance and value to the Australian IP community, particularly when competing for the time and attention of those in the community who may also be involved in one of the several other IP-focused associations that exist in Australia. In that regard:

• The Group has been examining the UK National Group’s successful approach to attracting younger members, and is examining options to provide financial incentives, such as “golden ticket” prizes for the most active young participants (for example, funded attendance at an AIPPI Congress), reduced membership fees, and seminar pricing that incentivises membership over casual attendance.
The Group is also actively expanding its seminar series, modelled again on the UK Group’s “rapid response” approach to deliver content that is immediately relevant. The Group has already conducted one seminar in 2019, with a second scheduled for the end of June.

In addition, in 2018, the Group undertook a significant overhaul of its website, and moved to a new email system to allow easier and more frequent communication with its members. In 2019, the Group is continuing to update the website so that it is an up to date and comprehensive resource for its members.