

BFSLA 2023 Conference Report

For the first time since 2019, the BFSLA was delighted to be able to host its 39th annual conference with members from Australia and New Zealand attending in person. After 3 years of pandemic-fuelled disruptions, over 200 delegates travelled to Queenstown to connect with colleagues and friends in the spirit of the conference theme, “*Stronger together*”.

The conference was held at QT and Rydges Hotels in Queenstown from 2 to 4 September 2023. The full conference programme is available [here](#).

Conference highlights

The conference opened with an insightful keynote presentation by The Hon. Andrew Bell (Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New South Wales) on “*The corporation in private international law*”. Further judicial case law updates were presented by The Hon. Justice Brigitte Markovic (Federal Court of Australia) and The Hon. Justice David Goddard (Court of Appeal of New Zealand), with both judges in particular providing engaging perspectives on recent PPSA cases.

Other sessions covered various thought-provoking and high profile issues affecting the banking and finance industry including privacy and data security law, greenwashing, taking security over contractual rights, the consumer data right, director’s duties in a distressed scenario, sustainability-linked finance, mandatory breach reporting, the new prudential framework in New Zealand, corrupt benefits to trustees, the new unfair contracts regime in Australia and crypto collapses.

The last session of the conference was a debate by the well-known comedy duo of Diccon Loxton and Nuncio D’Angelo on whether the deed is dead. The jury remains out.

In addition to the formal conference sessions:

- the Opinions Committee Breakfast met for the first time since 2019 with a record number of attendees (which was all the more impressive considering it was held at 7.30am)
- the Academic Committee held an inaugural one-day Academic Symposium before the main conference commenced
- a lunch was held for the Future Leaders’ Committee
- the Annual General Meeting was held (and was also attended by a record number of members).

Social events

The conference kicked off with welcome drinks at Queenstown Skyline. Delegates rode the newly refurbished Skyline Gondola to Bob’s Peak and sipped cocktails above the twinkling lights of Queenstown.

The next night delegates attended the conference dinner where The Hon. Justice David Goddard (Court of Appeal of New Zealand) was the after-dinner speaker. After threatening to break the world record for the world’s longest after dinner speech, the only record His Honour came close to breaking was for giving one of the funniest speeches at a BFSLA conference.

The conference closed with a wine tasting excursion to a local Queenstown vineyard.

Award winners

Dayle Buckley was announced as the winner of the BFSLA 2023 Scholarship and Lachlan McIntyre was announced as the winner of the BFSLA Research Prize Essay.

Diccon Loxton received a lifetime achievement award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the BFSLA over many years.

Comings and goings

It was announced at the conference dinner that Matt Cunningham would take over from James Connell as the BFSLA’s new president and that Tony Ryan and Helena Busljeta were elected to the Board to replace retiring directors Rebecca Hope and Phil Harvey.

Vale John Stumbles

At the conference dinner, tribute was paid to Professor John Stumbles who sadly passed away a few days before the conference. A consultant and former partner of King & Wood Malletson, and a former Professor of Law at the University of Technology Sydney and Sydney University, John was a long time member of the BFSLA. He will be missed.

Thank you to our sponsors

The conference would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. We thank our many sponsors for their support. In particular, we give special thanks to:

- CSC, for sponsoring the welcome reception drinks
- Equity Trustees, for continuing to sponsor the now iconic coffee cart which was swarmed by caffeine-deprived delegates between sessions.

BFSLA Conference 2024

Next year's conference will be the BFSLA's 40th Annual Conference and will be held at the Sheraton Mirage Gold Coast from 5 to 7 September 2024. Conference planning will get underway shortly, and further details will follow in due course.