

Conference Speakers

Kim Gebers

Chief Operating Officer for Gladstone Ports Corporation for Port of Gladstone, Port of Bundaberg and Port Alma



Kim is the Chief Operating Officer for Gladstone Ports Corporation for Port of Gladstone, Port of Bundaberg and Port Alma. Kim has a diverse portfolio of executive experience delivering operational and safety improvements including engineering, operations, asset management, production, bulk handling, ports, planning, commercial and resources.

Previously the General Manager Terminal Operations for Pilbara Ports Authority, Australia's largest port, he has held senior roles across coal export, general cargo, project cargo, LNG export and other bulk commodity exports, including his time as CEO of Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal. Kim has previously also served as Chairman for the International Coal Exporting Terminal Operators Association.

John Holden

Chairman
Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors



John is the Managing Director of Seaweigh Pty Ltd, a marine survey and consultancy company with over 20 years' experience as a marine surveyor. John started his maritime career as a ship builder and holds an Advanced Diploma in Marine Surveying.

He became a member of the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors in 2009 and was elected as Vice President in 2013, becoming a vital contributor to the Executive, which led to his appointment as Chairman in 2021. As Chairman, John is responsible for the development and oversight of strategic direction, succession planning and sound business operations.

Dr Luke van der Laan

Professor
Leadership and Foresight
University of Southern Queensland



Luke van der Laan is a Professor of Foresight and Leadership at the University of Southern Queensland and describes himself as a 'pracademic', balancing practice and theory in real-world applications. He is a fellow and executive board member of the World Futures Studies Federation. Luke's research interest is in the area of strategic foresight, strategic risk and strategic thinking of organisational leaders.

His research spans the education, not-for-profit and private sectors. In particular, his research is concerned with leadership enabled social, educational and business transformation through foresight and strategy.

Luke previously served as the Chief Executive of a national not-for-profit organisation and continues to serve as a board member, advisor to UNESCO and trustee of numerous organisations. Luke holds a PhD (Leadership, Foresight and Strategic Thinking) and has published widely. His book "Strategy and Foresight in the Asia Pacific Region" (Springer) sets out Luke's unique view of the interplay between foresight, risk and strategy in the 21st Century.

Kenny Crawford

Deputy Chief Executive
Technical Advice and Support
Maritime New Zealand



Kenny Crawford is the Deputy Chief Executive of the Technical Advice and Support Group at Maritime New Zealand. With a background as a Chief Engineer and Manager/Director for Germanischer Lloyd, including Country Manager for Ireland, Kenny has a deep understanding of technical and regulatory aspects in the maritime industry.

His career also includes serving as a Senior Marine Surveyor and current Chair of the Port State Control Committee for the Tokyo MOU. Kenny is a certified ISM and ISPS Lead Auditor, as well as being trained in Coordinated Incident Management Systems (CIMS) and incident control. He also holds a NZ certificate in Regulatory Compliance.

In his current role, Kenny leads the Technical Advice and Support Group, providing high quality technical advice and support to key internal stakeholders and external delegated and authorised persons regarding international, domestic, maritime, environmental, and port and flag state control matters.

Dianna Smith

Branch Manager
Domestic Maritime Safety
and Data, Policy and
Regulation

Australian Maritime Safety
Authority



Dianna Smith joined the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) in November 2021 and is currently the Branch Manager Domestic Maritime Safety and Data. She is leading AMSA's delivery of fit for purpose, risk-based, and data-driven regulations and standards for domestic commercial vessels operating in Australian waters.

Dianna is an experienced leader in strategic policy development, legislative reform, stakeholder engagement and project management. She has led policy and regulatory reform across multiple Commonwealth agencies.

Prior to joining AMSA, She has worked on national security policy, particularly in the context of people smuggling and transport security.

Dianna has also held senior leadership positions in the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and the Australian National Audit Office.

Dr Nirman Jayarathne

Lead Engineer – Innovation
Group
Navantia Australia Pty Ltd




Nirman Jayarathne is a Chartered Naval Architect and AMSA Accredited Surveyor with over 18 years of experience in the maritime industry. He is passionate about innovations in naval ship design and integrating rapidly evolving technologies.

Currently as the Innovation Lead at Navantia Australia, he is responsible for driving the development of new and innovative technologies and solutions for the naval defence sector.

His research areas focus on autonomous naval vessel design and ship hydrodynamics. He has led teams that developed a novel Uncrewed Landing Craft concept and Uncrewed-RHIB projects at Navantia Australia. He has co-authored several conference and journal papers on machine learning and autonomous vessel and system design.

James Neil
Director
Aus Ship




James has 25 years of experience in transport. He has degrees in Economics and Law. He qualified as a Solicitor in Australia in 1989 and in England in 1991.

James managed a transport company for 5 years before joining a Sydney law firm in 1989. He worked as a claims executive for a P&I Club in the UK from 1990 to 1993 and then as a Shipping Solicitor for a law firm in Sydney until he founded Aus Ship P&I in 1995.

James has been involved with many high-profile shipping matters in Australia including "The Pasha Bulker", "The Tampa", "The Kiukiang Career" and "The Laura D'Amato".

Ingmar Kofler
Director
K-ROV




Ingmar started his career with a bachelor's and master's degree in marine science and environmental science respectively before going into commercial diving. Spending 10 years working in Australia, Asia, and the North Sea as a diver he then switched his focus to the ever faster developing field of subsea robotics.

By now he has spent over 20 years working in various aspects of marine projects with a focus on offshore and OPL operations. By now the focus is shifting towards developing new and improved ROVs and AUVs inhouse to further improve safety and productivity in the respective fields.

The strange combination of skills has allowed him to navigate the at times complicated issues around biosecurity and environmental laws related to marine operations in Australia.

This helped to shape the very specific capacities provided by the company. As a result, he focuses on ensuring similar compliance with various governing bodies for all our extended dive operations.

Curtis Florager
Project Manager
DAMEN



Curtis Florager is a chartered naval architect with a bachelor degree in ocean engineering from the Australian Maritime College. He has more than 10 years of experience in the marine industry, working on various projects involving ship design, construction, and maintenance.

For the past 7 years, he has been working for Damen Shipyards group, a leading international shipbuilding company. He is currently the project manager and lead engineer for Damen Australia, where he oversees the delivery of high-quality vessel refits and services to their clients in the region.

He is passionate about marine engineering and innovation, and he enjoys collaborating with other professionals in the field. He is always eager to learn new skills and take on new challenges in his career.

Nick Best
National Field Engagement Team
Leader
Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board



Nick Best is a seasoned professional with 8 years of dedicated service in the fire protection industry in Australia. With a strong background in face-to-face training and engagement, he ardently advocates for industry education and collaboration towards shared objectives.

For the past 5 years, Nick has led the development and roll-out of the Field Engagement Program at the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board, fostering daily interactions with permit holders to ensure optimal industry compliance and safety standards.


Kell Dillon
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland



Kell Dillon was appointed as the General Manager, Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) in February 2022. As General Manager, Kell has led the MSQ and successfully managed MSQ's emergency response to the Brisbane flood emergency in 2022. He is a highly experienced Senior Executive, mariner, port manager and Harbour Master who has a wealth of knowledge and experience having held senior roles at Ports Victoria, Port Authority of NSW, Port Kembla Port Corporation, NSW Maritime Authority, and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).

Kell joins MSQ from Ports Victoria, where he held the position of Executive General Manager, Marine and Navigation/ Harbour Master - Melbourne. Previous roles include significant experience in port business management, marine public transport and State based port and marine regulatory functions. As a Commissioned Officer in the RAN, Kell was a specialist Navigator (N+), Surface Warfare Officer, Unrestricted Naval Marine Pilot and held Sea Command. Kell served in a variety of active and operational roles during his Naval career. Kell is a member of the International Harbour.

Eric McIlwain
Principal Surveyor
Hastings Marine and Engineering



Eric commenced his surveying career in 2014. He became an accredited surveyor with Maritime Safety Queensland in 2014 which then transferred to AMSA in 2015.

As an AMSA accredited surveyor, he is accredited for extra low voltage initial surveys and periodical surveys, initial surveys for construction and alterations for hull, deck and superstructure, machinery, equipment, and commissioning; periodic surveys, periodic surveys for loadline and safety equipment.

Greg Hansen

Director, Professional Risks
Austbrokers Countrywide



Greg Hansen is a Director at Austbrokers Countrywide, an Insurance Broker who specialises in managing Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance facilities for professional associations. For over 25 years Greg has focused on professional risks for clients, acting for both Insurance Companies and for Insurance Brokers.

He regularly delivers talks to Associations and Company Boards on Professional and Director Liabilities. Austbrokers Countrywide manage several Professional Indemnity schemes for a number of national associations including the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors

This experience offers great insight into the claim experience and often the contractual pitfalls which can be faced by Marine Surveyors.

Jonathan Mamaril

Employment Lawyer



Jonathan Mamaril is an Employment Lawyer focusing on providing practical value to clients. He advises on all aspects of workplace law, including employee management, employment contracts and contractor agreements and interpretation of modern awards. Jonathan has represented clients in unfair dismissal, general protections, and discrimination matters, from conciliation conferences to arbitration in the Fair Work Commission.

With over 16 years legal experience as well as extensive Management and Leadership experience, the recognition in the market goes beyond a traditional senior lawyer experience as he is regularly asked to present at seminars, conferences, workshops, and summits for industry associations, business owners, human resources, boards, and executives.

He is frequently consulted by media outlets, such as the Sydney Morning Herald, IntheBlack, ABC News, ABC Radio, Courier mail, Brisbane Times and News.com.au, for his expert commentary on legislation changes and significant cases.

Andrew Fielding

Business Development Manager
Boating Industry Association



Andrew is a marine industry professional and has been employed in the industry for over 30 years with experience in yacht brokerage, marine retail, wholesale, boat building and government advocacy. For 23 years, Andrew worked with his father in their well-known family-owned boat sales business, Anchorline (which was established at the Gold Coast in 1975). During his career Andrew has built a reputation for being honest, knowledgeable and professional at all times which has led to him being recognised as a leader in his field. In 2023 he handed his role in the family business over to his eldest son, Curtis.

His role at the BIA also includes the development and delivery of programs to improve industry standards.

Having served as the President the Boating Industry Association (BIA) Ltd, as Chairman of the Queensland Recreational Boating Council (QRBC) and currently holding a position on the board of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority (GCWA), Andrew uses his connections within the marine industry, government departments and marine agencies to build a collaborative approach toward securing the future success of all things marine related in Australia.

Kerryn Woonings

Senior Marine Surveyor and
Loss Adjuster – Global Technical
Services
Crawford & Company



Kerryn is a Senior Marine Surveyor at Crawford & Company, the world's largest publicly listed independent provider of global claims management solutions. Kerryn specialises predominantly in Marine Cargo and Liability investigations and is a qualified lawyer. Kerryn started with Crawford in Sydney in 2014 and relocated to her home in Western Australia (WA) at the end of 2020 to expand Crawford's Marine offering into WA. Prior to that Kerryn worked for a leading global transport insurer after discovering that a life of legal practice was not that fulfilling.

Kerryn has been heavily involved in the Women's International Shipping & Trading Association (WISTA) since 2019, served as the Australian Vice-President in 2020 and 2021, and is currently on the WA board. Kerryn loves the opportunities her roles at Crawford and WISTA present to advocate for women in the maritime industry, and to empower them to make their mark in a very male dominated field.

Kerryn loves to read books and finds any opportunity she can to head to the south coastal port of Albany WA, to watch the ships go by and spend quality time with family.

Nick Parkyn

Nick Parkyn Marine Surveying /
MarineML



Nick has an extensive background in both the marine and information technology (IT) disciplines. His work in the marine industry includes marine surveying, yacht and small craft design and marine software development. Through his company MarineML he is evangelising and applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) concepts and techniques to the Marine Surveying discipline. Nick has studied computer science, yacht and small craft marine surveying and yacht design. He holds several patents, has presented papers at numerous international marine and IT conferences, and has written numerous articles published in marine and IT journals and magazines.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning areas of particular interest include: (1) current and future application of AI and ML to Marine Surveying, (2) AI fluency for Marine Surveyors, (3) Ethical use of AI in Marine Surveying and (4) The role of AI and ML in succession planning and realisation in Marine Surveying. He is a member of the International Institute of Marine Surveyors (IIMS) and Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers (SNAME).