

# Welcome, again....

A year ago, plans for our Annual Conference had been finalised, launched and a number of registrations had been received. Everything was ready, going smoothly and everyone here at IPTA were excited to be going to Darwin since our last conference there in 2001. Then, bang. The COVID-19 pandemic hit the world like a bat out of hell, and we had to cancel. A year later, during which time we have coped with lockdowns, state border closures, working from home, hand sanitiser, masks and a general contraction of life as we knew it, 2021 began with low infections, an overall improvement in daily life, a Trans-Tasman travel bubble and a big hope for the vaccines currently being rolled out.

Against this backdrop and the steadily growing confidence in business and communities, IPTA made the decision to proceed with our Annual Conference and we do so with the same confidence. Of course, as we have all seen recently, things can change quickly and if it does take a turn for the worse, the conference will be cancelled, and all paid registration fees refunded.

So, on behalf of the Council of IPTA, we have great pleasure in inviting you again to Darwin for the 2021 Annual Conference including the 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting.

The 2021 Annual Conference will be held during **26 to 28 May 2021**. Business sessions will be held at the **Darwin Convention Centre** and adjacent conference hotels, the **Vibe and Adina Hotels**.

Home to traditional owners the Larrakia people, Darwin historically has experienced adversity both from climatic and conflict perspectives. Since the city was established, originally as Palmerston in 1869, Darwin has been hit by major cyclones since 1897 with the last devastating cyclone, Tracey, in 1974. During World War II, Darwin was bombed by the same Japanese fleet that attacked Pearl Harbour 10 weeks earlier, with more bombs being dropped in Darwin than on Pearl Harbour. Each time, Darwin was badly damaged or virtually destroyed, but the spirit and strength of the people prevailed, and Darwin was rebuilt.

Today, Darwin is a modern vibrant and thriving city enriched by its diverse and highly multicultural population. With a year round tropical climate, the month of May is an ideal time to visit with warm sunny days and cooler nights. Darwin is the gateway to exploring Australia's famous national parks of Kakadu and Litchfield, with the Tiwi Islands a boat trip away.

Our Conference Committee has worked hard to put together a highly informative and diverse business program that maintains a strong educational focus covering a range of topics within the trade mark, designs and patent areas with a highlight on indigenous traditional knowledge and Trans-Tasman developments. We are also pleased to say that Justice Nicholas of the Federal Court, has agreed to come to Darwin to present at the conference. Because of the pandemic and international travel restrictions in place we are sadly unable to have present any international speakers outside of the Trans-Tasman travel bubble this year. On the social side, events at key locations around Darwin complements each day.

Beginning with a stand-up brunch on Wednesday 26 May, our 2021 Annual Conference will then be opened by IPTA President Michael Caine. This will be followed by a Welcome to Country performed by local indigenous performers 'The Youth Mill' before commencement of the now traditional afternoon of dedicated trade mark sessions. In the evening, Welcome Drinks for YIPTA members is scheduled, followed by dinner at alfresco waterfront restaurant 'Wharf One'. On the Thursday there will be a full day of business sessions finishing with a visit to beachside 'Mindil Markets', Darwin's largest open-air market, followed by a beautiful sunset casual dinner at the 'Mindil Beach Casino Resort'. The conference will end on Friday 28 May, with separate breakfast sessions for YIPTA members and Corporate members, continuing with our business sessions for the rest of the day.

Our Gala dinner will be held in the evening at the magnificent 'Pee Wee's at The Point' and we are really excited to say that our After-Dinner speaker will be Bruce Pascoe, author of the *"Dark Emu: Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture"*.

We have also slotted in time each day for Wellness at the conference with an early morning walk in the 1886 established 'George Brown Botanic Gardens' on the Wednesday morning; the 'IPTA Fun Run and Walk' on the Thursday morning; a 'Managing Work/Life Balance' lunch seminar also on the Thursday and a 'Yoga – Stretch and Relax' session on the Friday morning.

An optional tour is scheduled for the Saturday which features a cruise on the spectacular Mary River system, which will give you a close-up look at a pristine wetland habitat along with saltwater crocodiles, beautiful water lilies and a host of exotic birdlife. After the cruise there will be a visit to The Humpty Doo Hotel, one of Australia's most iconic pubs.

While all business sessions and social events are included in the full delegate registration fee, we are also offering day rates for members who wish to attend part of the conference only. IPTA encourages newly qualified or registered attorneys to attend the Annual Conference to get to know members across the profession and so this year we are pleased to announce that the full registration price will be discounted for YIPTA members

Finally, in accordance with the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board (TTIPAB) guidelines, registered patent and trade marks attorneys attending the Conference may claim one-hour Continuing Professional Education (CPE) for each hour of business session they attend. This provides the opportunity to record approximately 15 hours of CPE as detailed in the program.

The deadline for conference registration is **24 April 2021** and online registration is now open.

We do hope you will come.

Best regards

**Jennifer McEwan**

Vice- President and Convenor, Conference Committee



**Michael Caine**

President

