
Professional profile

Richard John Dennis AM PSM

Legal practitioner, professional legislative drafter, consultant

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Qualifications and awards

- Bachelor of Laws (Honours)—University of Adelaide (Awarded May 1979)
- Graduate Diploma of Business Administration—University of South Australia (Awarded May 1993)
- Barrister and Solicitor of Supreme Court of South Australia (Admitted 1 February 1980)
- Public Service Medal—Awarded June 2010 (for services in the fields of statutory interpretation and legislative drafting)
- Member of the General Division of the Order of Australia—Awarded June 2018
- Rotary Foundation—Group Study Exchange 1988 Ireland

Work history

- January 2016 – current: Legal practitioner and consultant
- October 2006—December 2015: Parliamentary Counsel—South Australia
- 1982—2006: Legislative drafter—Office of Parliamentary Counsel, South Australia
- 1979—1982: Legal practitioner working in private practice in Adelaide

Professional experience

Legislative drafting and related experience

- I have over 40 years of experience as a legal practitioner.
- As a legislative drafter (including as the South Australian Parliamentary Counsel for over 9 years), I have drafted Bills and subordinate legislation in all areas of the law for the South Australian Government and the Parliament of South Australia. I also now have extensive

experience in working as a consultant drafter for the Government of South Australia, the Commonwealth Office of Parliamentary Counsel, the Northern Territory Government, the Western Australian Parliamentary Counsel's Office and the New South Wales Government. I have also completed projects that relate to the laws of New Zealand and the laws of Vietnam.

- I have played a key role in numerous national law projects over many years, especially as a member of the Parliamentary Counsel's Committee of Australia and New Zealand.
- Statutory interpretation continues to have increasing significance in legal practice and in both the public and private sectors and this is a key area of my expertise.
- In January 2016 I commenced work as a legal practitioner in private practice, contract drafter and consultant.

Other professional skills

- I have been a member of a number of organisations, including at board or executive committee level, as set out on a later page of this profile.
- I also have experience in providing advice about corporate governance, processes and procedures. My interest in establishing and managing high-performing and effective organisations is reflected by my Graduate Diploma in Business Administration.
- I am highly qualified to work in areas associated with the development, operation, implementation, administration and review of legislation and government policy. My skills may also be applied to areas which require the provision of legal advice or other services connected with legislation, government activity, regulatory schemes or program delivery. I have also undertaken the review of several statutory schemes (including reviews required to be tabled in the South Australian Parliament).
- My work as a legislative drafter means that I have highly developed writing and communication skills.
- I have prepared and delivered a number of papers on topics such as: (1) the preparation of legislation; (2) the interpretation of legislation; (3) the use and validity of subordinate legislation; (4) Parliament and its processes; and (5) national law schemes and the referral of matters to the Commonwealth Parliament.

Contract work

- My clients since I commenced work as an independent legal practitioner and consultant have included: the Attorney-General's Department (SA), the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (SA), the Department for Planning, Infrastructure and Transport (SA), the Essential Services Commission of South Australia, the Department of Treasury and Finance (SA), the Department for Environment and Water (SA), the Department for Education (SA), the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (SA), the Department for Energy and Mining (SA), the Department of Human Services (SA), the Office of the Commissioner of Public Sector Employment (SA), Return to Work SA, SafeWork SA, Courts SA, the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (Commonwealth), the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (Commonwealth), the Department of Treasury and Finance (NT), the Department of Primary Industries and Resources (NT), the Public Health Directorate (NT), the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (WA), the Department of Justice (WA), the Department of Communities (WA), the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (WA), the Office of Energy and Climate Change (NSW), the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (NZ), the Ministry of Transport (NZ), the New Zealand Commerce Commission, a company providing policy and drafting advice to the Government of Vietnam on water resource management, and advice to the New South Wales Government on the enforcement of water resource management legislation, and NEOM (Saudi Arabia).
- My work now includes: (1) legislative drafting (including secondary and tertiary instruments); (2) instruments drafting more generally (including licence conditions); (3) the provision of legal advice; (4) assistance with policy development; (5) projects and reports associated with the review of existing legislation; (6) the preparation of drafting instructions; (7) board and committee work.

Boards, executive and professional committee memberships and community organisations

I have had an active role on a number of boards and committees and in a number of organisations, including the following:

- September 2016—current: Member of the South Australian Superannuation Board
- September 2016—current: Member of the Board of Southern Select Super Corporation
- May 2016—current: Bellberry Limited (as a committee member undertaking ethical reviews of research projects)
- 2005—current: Member of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide Drafting Committee (current Chair)
- October 2018—August 2023: Governor of The Wyatt Trust
- 2010—2020: Member of the Board of Governors of Walford Anglican School for Girls
- 2004—2017: Member of the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide (holding the position of Chancellor of the Diocese of Adelaide 2016 – 2017)
- 2004—2010; 2016—2017: Member of the Diocesan Council of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide
- 2003—2014: Member of the National Church Law Commission—Anglican Church of Australia
- 1997—2013: Executive Committee member—Australian Institute of Administrative Law (South Australian Chapter)
- 1994—2000: Deputy Member, Passenger Transport Board
- 1994—2000: Member, Passenger Transport Standards Committee (hearing accreditation and disciplinary matters)
- 1990—2005: Director—Arthritis Foundation of Australia—Sydney (including a significant period as company secretary)
- 1987—2005: Director/Council Member—Arthritis Foundation of South Australia (15 years of service as Honorary Secretary)

Professional association memberships

I have a keen interest in professional standards and development. I am a member of the following professional bodies:

- Law Society of South Australia
- Australian Institute of Administrative Law (AIAL)
- Australian Association of Constitutional Law (AACL)
- Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel (CALC)
- Clarity International

Order of Saint John

I am a Knight of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller