
Luke Coniston

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BACKGROUND

Luke is a Canberra-based lawyer and contract advisor with 9 years' experience working for the Commonwealth Government and not-for-profit sector organisations.

Luke has worked across a range of Commonwealth Government organisations, including the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the Department of Health and Ageing, Safe Work Australia and Comcare. Prior to joining Proximity, Luke also managed an advisory service for a not-for-profit organisation, with a focus on housing and elder law.

Luke has a current NV1 security clearance.

EXPERTISE

- › Administrative Law
- › Commercial, Contracting and Procurement
- › WHS, Employment and Industrial Law
- › Housing and Elder Law
- › Legislative Reform Projects
- › Delivery of Legal Training

EXPERIENCE

Commonwealth Government Legal Advice Work and Legislative Reform Projects

At the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Luke worked as Executive Officer to the General Manager of the Domestic Vessel Division and General Counsel. In this role, Luke provided high level regulatory and legal advice on potential implications arising from the introduction of the *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessels) National Law Act 2012*. Luke was also responsible for identifying and managing implementation issues relating to the commencement of this Act and the *Navigation Act 2012*. This work included drafting legislative instruments (Marine Orders) under the *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessels) National Law Act 2012* and the *Navigation Act 2012*.

Luke was also involved in a major COAG Legislative Reform Project with Safe Work Australia from 2009 to 2011. In this role, Luke provided legal and policy advice predominantly in relation to skills development to meet high risk work licensing requirements under the (then new) Model Work Health and Safety legislative structure.

Whilst working in the Medicare and Private Health Insurance Law Section of the Legal Services Branch at the Department of Health and Ageing, Luke provided legal advice and assistance to internal Departmental clients in relation to liaison with the Department of Finance and Deregulation on issues arising with spending limitations on health infrastructure and capital works projects through the Health and Hospitals Fund, under the (former) *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*. Luke also provided legal advice and assistance in relation to procedural fairness and other administrative law issues arising from funding decisions made under Radiation Oncology Health Program Grants Scheme.

Luke was also a key member of a specialist internal Employment Law Team at the Department of Health and Ageing. Drawing on his previous experience at Comcare and Safe Work Australia, Luke provided extensive legal advice on the introduction of the *Work Health Safety Act 2011*. Luke also provided legal advice and assistance on industrial and employment law related matters, including issues relating to: the Department's Enterprise

Agreement; the handling of internal harassment and discrimination claims; and termination of employment matters under the *Public Service Act 1999*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

Commercial Contracting and Procurement

While at AMSA, Luke was a panel member for the procurement of goods and services. Luke was responsible for assessing tenders and providing advice and guidance concerning the application of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs) to the tender process and advised the panel in relation to meeting reporting requirements.

At the Department of Immigration and Border Protection Luke provided advice on the drafting of contracts and deeds of variation to various on-shore property and infrastructure contracts, as well as advising on contingent liability matters, and the application of the then new Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) to existing contracts, contract variations and in relation to the redrafting of internal standard templates. Luke also provided legal advice and assistance to internal departmental clients in relation to the application of the CPRs to on-shore procurement tender processes.

Delivery of Legal Training

Luke has significant experience with the development of training packages and delivery of legal training to policy and frontline operational staff. Luke brings a unique blend of skills not only from his experience working as an in-house Government Lawyer across a range of Commonwealth Government organisations, but also additional knowledge and skills in the application of adult education principles obtained through completing a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Luke has previously delivered legal training and advised on the drafting of online e-learning training tools at Safe Work Australia, the Department of Health and Ageing, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

Not-For-Profit Sector Work

For the past two and a half years Luke has managed an advisory service for the Council on the Ageing (COTA), a not-for-profit organisation representing the interests of people aged over 50. Luke has advised on many areas of housing and elder law, including contract formulation between private clients with retirement village operators and aged care service providers. Luke was appointed as COTA's representative on the ACT Government's Justice and Community Safety Directorate's Retirement Village Advisory Group, where he was responsible for the development of several key amendments that were made under the *Retirement Village (Amendment) Act 2016 (ACT)* that passed the ACT Legislative Assembly in June 2016.

QUALIFICATIONS Bachelor of Arts / Laws (University of Newcastle)

Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (Australian National University)

Certificate IV Training and Assessment (YWCA Canberra)

Admitted as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory

Admitted as a lawyer of the High Court of Australia

*Currently undertaking Masters of Environmental Law (University of Sydney)