

The Hon James Allsop AC

"A brilliant mind"

The Legal 500



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The Hon James Allsop AC is an international arbitrator and mediator. He also accepts appointments as early neutral evaluator, chair of inquiries and legal expert.

James has over 40 years' experience as a commercial lawyer, 20 as Counsel and Senior Counsel at the Australian Bar, 22 years as a Judge and later Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia and President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal.

James has wide experience in and knowledge of commercial law and commercial contracts generally and, in particular, insurance and reinsurance, maritime, Admiralty and transportation, energy and infrastructure, banking and finance, company law, shareholder and partnership matters, intellectual property, insolvency, taxation, competition and anti-trust.

He also has experience in common law, in particular professional negligence of auditors, solicitors and insurance brokers.

James was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 2023 for eminent service to the judiciary and to the law, to organisational and technological reform, to legal education, and to insolvency law. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2013.

James was appointed as an International Judge of the Singapore International Commercial Court in 2024.

James was named 'Arbitrator of the Year' at the Australian ADR Awards 2026.

Note: For the purposes of practice in Australia, James's liability is limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

Expertise

ADR Appointments

James has been appointed as an arbitrator both presiding and party appointed and as a sole arbitrator in a range of matters concerning commercial disputes such as the construction of commercial contracts, shipbuilding, engineering, energy joint ventures, carriage of goods by sea, oil and gas pricing disputes and the sale of goods.

James has acted as a mediator in a wide range of matters many of which are commercial, including confidential information, restraint of trade, patents and technology, copyright, maritime disputes, class actions, employment disputes and other commercial disputes.

James has also acted as a referee and as a facilitator of expert evidence.

Recent examples:

Arbitrator

- Appointed as President in an international ad-hoc arbitration regarding an oil and gas project in Australia.
- Appointed as President in an ICC arbitration regarding operating licenses for natural gas.
- Appointed as President in an LMAA arbitration in 6 disputes regarding ship management services.
- Appointed as President in an international ad-hoc arbitration regarding gas price review.
- Appointed as sole arbitrator in an international ad-hoc arbitration regarding the supply of mining equipment.
- Appointed as Chairman in HKIAC arbitrations in disputes concerning the construction of commercial documents.
- Appointed as Chairman in a HKIAC arbitration regarding a ship conversion contract.
- Appointed as Chairman in a ACICA arbitration concerning a shareholder agreement dispute.
- Appointed as President in a SIAC arbitration regarding social media advertising.
- Appointed as President in an LCIA arbitration concerning a share purchase agreement of an industrial enterprise.

Mediator

- Appointed as mediator in Australia in commercial disputes in a wide variety of matters; and in London in a reinsurance dispute.
- Appointed as mediator in a commercial dispute regarding confidential information.
- Appointed as mediator in a commercial dispute concerning restraint of trade.
- Appointed as mediator in a commercial restraint of trade dispute.
- Appointed as mediator in an industrial dispute in the transport sector.
- Appointed as mediator in various ship collision disputes.
- Appointed as mediator in a dispute regarding new homes.
- Appointed as mediator regarding an insurance dispute involving UK, USA and Australia parties.
- Appointed as mediator regarding a land subsidence matter.

ADR

- Appointed reviewer of an appeal in a commercial dispute being heard in court.
- Appointed referee to report on tenders for the administration of class action settlements.
- Appointed facilitator to assist the presentation of expert evidence in a class action concerning the construction of large residential and commercial buildings, cladding issues were involved.

Judicial Career

- **Non-permanent judge from another common law jurisdiction of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal 25 May 2024**
- **Judge of the Singapore International Commercial Court 8 January 2024**

- Judge of the Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre November 2024
- Expert Member of the International Expert Committee of the China International Commercial Court of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China September 2024
- Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia 1 March 2013 to 6 April 2023
- President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal 8 June 2008 to 28 February 2013
- Judge of the Federal Court of Australia 7 May 2001 to 7 June 2008
- An Additional Judge of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory 2003 to 2008

See [here](#) for a separate list of some of The Hon James Allsop AC's judgments.

Teaching

Over the years James has lectured and spoken at various academic and professional gatherings including the Maritime Law Association of Australia and New Zealand (MLAANZ), AILA, the Intellectual Property Association of Australia and New Zealand, the Institute of Patent Attorneys, the Australian National University, the Centre for Asian and Pacific Law in the University of Sydney, and the New South Wales Bar Association.

- 2015 to 2018 Taught part-time in maritime law on comparative Admiralty practice at the University of Queensland, and from 2016 to 2018 was an Adjunct Professor in the School of Law, the University of Queensland. (2015-2018)
- Co-ordinated, and delivered post-graduate courses at the University of Sydney entitled "Commercial Maritime Law" and "Comparative Admiralty and Maritime Practice", and for some years of that time, was an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Sydney. (2005 to 2014)
- Lecturer in a Master of Laws Course at the University of Sydney entitled "Equity Financing". (2000 to 2004)
- Lecturer in Bankruptcy and then Insolvency at the University of Sydney, being for a number of years the Challis Lecturer in Bankruptcy. (1985 to 1992)
- 1981 to 1983 Tutor at the University of Sydney in Real Property and Equity.

Publications & Speaking Engagements

Recent speaking engagements include:

- *'The legal system and the administration of justice in a time of technological change: machines becoming human, or humans becoming machines?'* – The Sir Francis Burt Oration, 21st November 2023
- *'Win Friends and Influence People: Persuading the Tribunal'* – Panel Member, GAR Live: Sydney, 28th November 2023
- *'Taxation and words: Meaning, Categorisation and Characterisation in Statutes and under the Commonwealth Constitution'* – Toongabie Legal Centre, 22nd March 2024
- *'The Spirit of the Judicial Task and the Importance of International Judicial Dialogue'* – Keynote Address at the 5th Full Meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts, Doha, 21 April 2024
- *'How mediation successfully became an integral part of the dispute resolution system in these speakers' countries'* – 32nd World Forum of Mediation Centres, 4th May 2024
- *'Climate Change, Policy and Arbitrability'* – CI Arb East Asia Branch, 19th June 2024
- *'The Mahla Pearlman Oration'* – The Law Council of Australia and the Environment and Planning Association of NSW, 22nd August 2024
- *'Australia should have a more significant presence in Asia as an International Arbitration Centre'* – The Lighthouse Club Australia, 15th October 2024
- *'The Humanity of Law: Selected Essays of James Allsop'* – Published November 2024
- *"The International Character of Maritime Law and the Importance of the Jurisprudence of Asia"* – presented to The Hong Kong Judicial

Institute, 24th February 2025

Please click [here](#) for a separate list of publications and papers.

Positions and Memberships

- Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.
- Member of the American Law Institute.
- Titulary Member of the Comité Maritime International on 20 October 2022.
- Honorary Bencher of the Middle Temple, being elected in 2010 and Called on 22 March 2011.
- President of the Francis Forbes Society for Australian Legal History.
- Appointed to the Shenzhen Court of International Arbitration's Panel of Arbitrators (2025)
- Appointed to the Dubai International Arbitration Centre's List of Arbitrators (2024)
- Non-permanent judge from another common law jurisdiction of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal (2024)
- International Judge of the Singapore International Commercial Court (2024)
- Appointed to the Singapore International Arbitration Centre's Panel of Arbitrators (2024)
- Since 2023 Member of the Asian International Arbitration Centre's Panel of Arbitrators and Mediators
- Chair of the Judicial Liaison Committee of the Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA). (2019 to 2023)
- Member of the board of governors of the Asian Business Institute (ABLI) representing the Australian judiciary. Through the ABLI he has been actively involved in the International Asian Principles of Business Reconstruction Project. (Since 2019)
- Inaugural Patron of the Australian Insurance Law Association (AILA). (Since 2018)
- Involved in the establishment, organisation and working of the Standing International forum of Commercial Courts (SIFoCC) and current member of its steering committee. Previously involved in the international Judicial Insolvency Network (JIN). (Since 2016)
- Chair of the expert group in the Hague Conference on Private Law (HCCH) on the Use of Video-link in the Taking of Evidence Abroad. (2015 to 2017)
- Member of the governing board of the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden. (2005 to 2009)
- Member of the board of the Australian Maritime College as part of the University of Tasmania in Launceston. (2008 to 2011)