

Peter Woulfe

Barrister



Practice summary

Peter's areas of practice include, but are not limited to, constitutional and administrative law, civil appeals, professional liability claims, medical negligence claims, contractual disputes, Australian Consumer Law disputes, workers compensation disputes, motor vehicle negligence disputes (including the relatively new local statutory defined benefits scheme), dust disease disputes, building disputes, compulsory acquisition of property claims, employment law, work health safety law, disciplinary proceedings, discrimination disputes, and health and medical law.

Peter is one of Australia's leading Commonwealth compensation barristers, having worked on various matters of importance to the application of the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (Cth) including matters in the High Court of Australia.

Recent achievements

- Peter led the Law Council of Australia's Federal Administrative Law Reform Working Group in responding to the Commonwealth's *Administrative Review Reform: Issues Paper*. He led a team of leading administrative lawyers from the Law Council and its constituent bodies to develop a comprehensive submission to the Commonwealth for the purpose of replacing the Administrative Appeals Tribunal with a new body. Peter also appeared before the Commonwealth's Expert Advisory Group, chaired by the Hon Patrick Keane AC KC, and advanced the Law Council's law reform position as set out in its submission, including an appearance before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee.
- Peter led the Law Council's liaison with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. He effectively and efficiently managed stakeholder engagement, contributing to the Tribunal's various COVID-19 special measures practice directions.
- Peter led the Law Council's response to the *Callinan Review of the Tribunals Amalgamation Act 2015* (Cth). That included coordinating industry leaders at a specially convened forum in Sydney on 29 October 2019, the results of which were shared with the Attorney-General's Department and other significant stakeholders.
- Peter has liaised closely with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal since 2010 in bringing the twice annual *Hot Topics in Commonwealth Compensation* seminar, attended by numerous industry leaders and practitioners.

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Appointments

- Chair, Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution Section, Law Council of Australia, 2020-present
- Deputy Chair, Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution Section, Law Council of Australia, 2016-2020
- Treasurer, Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution Section, Law Council of Australia, 2014-2016
- Executive Member, Federal Litigation and Dispute Resolution Section, Law Council of Australia, 2010-present
- Chair, Administrative Appeals Tribunal Liaison Committee, Law Council of Australia, 2016-present
- Chair, Commonwealth Compensation and Employment Law Committee, Law Council of Australia, 2010-present
- Secretary, Council of the ACT Bar Association, 2018-2021
- Treasurer, Council of the ACT Bar Association, 2017-2018
- Councillor, Council of the ACT Bar Association, 2014-2017
- Member, Australian Institute of Administrative Law, 2011-present
- Member, Editorial Board, AIAL Forum, 2016-present
- Member, ACT Independent Cricket Tribunal, 2011-present
- Councillor, Council of the Law Society of the ACT, 2004-2005
- Member, Public Law Committee, Law Society of the ACT, 2025-present

Sample of Notable Cases Peter Appeared In

- *Nimhurchu v QBE Insurance (Australia) Pty Ltd* [2026] FCA 59 (leading)
- *K & S Freighters Pty Ltd v King* [2026] FCA 58 (leading)
- *Prosegur Australia Pty Ltd v Higginson* [2024] FCA 203 (unled against senior counsel) (leading)
- *Pacific National Services Pty Ltd v Tsoumbris* [2024] FCA 324 (leading)
- *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission v May* (2016) 257 CLR 468
- *Hickey v Australian Postal Corporation* [2023] FCA 57
- *Comcare v Drinkwater* (2018) 260 FCR 150
- *Comcare v Wuth* (2018) 260 FCR 89
- *Smith v Comcare* (2015) 65 AAR 288 (unled against senior counsel)
- *Portors v Comcare* [2018] FCA 914
- *Novosel v Comcare* (2017) 72 AAR 269 (unled against senior counsel)
- *Bis Industries Ltd v Dale* (2017) 156 ALD 169
- *Ringshaug v Comcare (No 2)* [2017] FCA 349 (unled against senior counsel)

- *Chun v Comcare* (2013) 209 FCR 399
- *National Disability Insurance Agency v Attorney-General for ACT* [2020] ACTSC 52 (unled against senior counsel)
- *Hill v Council of Law Society of ACT* [2019] ACTSC 79
- *Re Russell and Australian Postal Corporation (Compensation)* [2022] AATA 3227
- *Re Pearson and Prosegur Australia Pty Ltd* [2021] AATA 312
- *Re Uijland and Comcare* (2019) 164 ALD 573
- *Re Brideson and ACT* (2019) 156 ALD 197

Publications and Presentations

- Hot Topics in Commonwealth Compensation panel discussion with Deputy President Humphries and Dr Khurana (neurosurgeon), *Going behind the concurrent evidence curtain*, 2019.
- Bench TV, *Statutory construction in workers compensation claims*, 2018.
- Bar Bulletin, ACT Bar Association publication
 - February 2026, at 23 – Video surveillance material in merits review proceedings
 - February 2014, at 10 – *Heffernan v Comcare* [2014] FCAFC 2: is an automobile medical treatment?
 - Nov/Dec 2013, at 16 – *Comcare v PVYW* [2013] HCA 41.
 - May 2013, at 9 – High Court to review workers' compensation employment test.
- ACT Bar CPD Conference
 - 2013, *Concurrent Evidence*, presentation with the President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Kerr J).
 - 2014, *Special Leave Applications in the High Court of Australia*.

Education

- Master of Laws with merit (Australian National University), 2006
- Bachelor of Laws including a taxation law thesis (University of Canberra), 2000
- Bachelor of Social Science majoring in public sector management and law, (University of Canberra), 1998

This curriculum vitae is current as at 17 April 2026. See also LinkedIn profile.

Contact

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