

Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board Meeting July/August 2025

The Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board met on **30, 31 July and 1 August 2025** in Melbourne, Australia.

The Board considered important matters with respect to trans-Tasman patent attorney and Australian registered trade marks attorney (IP attorneys) competencies and conduct. In addition, I am excited to announce several resources for IP attorneys developed by the Board which are coming later this year.

Strategic matters

Competencies Review

Response to Recommendations without a concluded view

In May 2025, the Board provided its [Update to the Professions](#) on the progress of the Competencies Review. The Update included the Recommendations provided to the Board on enhancing the way IP attorney competencies are set out, acquired and maintained. At its most recent meeting, the Board considered the Recommendations on which it had not previously reached a concluded view:

Recommendation 6: Establish a more structured work experience program for patent attorneys and clarify expectations for both trainees and supervisors

Recommendation 8: Add additional structure and more clearly articulate expectations to guide the completion and assessment of the Statement of Skill for both trainees and supervisors

The Board resolved to **accept** these Recommendations. The Board will develop guidelines for trainees and supervisors on effective provision and acquisition of experience during training and how to appropriately capture the acquired experience in a Statement of Skill.

Recommendation 9: Encourage the provision of more trade marks specific CPE courses

The Board resolved **not to accept** this Recommendation. The Board recognises the importance of diverse CPE offerings. However, having reviewed the current availability of trade marks specific CPE content, the Board was satisfied it is sufficient for attorneys to meet their annual CPE requirements.

Opportunities for further consultation

The Board is grateful to those of you who have submitted views on the Recommendations. The Board recognises a need for further consultations with stakeholders on several issues, including:

- “de-coupling” trade marks law and practice topics from the knowledge requirements to become registered as a trans-Tasman patent attorney;
- increasing coverage of international IP law and practice in the knowledge requirements; and
- establishing a more rigorous accreditation process.

The Board will approach appropriate stakeholders for consultations in the coming months.

The Board discussed some of these issues at its hybrid *Connect, Network, Learn* event on 31 July 2025. To those who missed the event, you can watch the recording [here](#). I thank those who attended the event in-person and online, as well as Ms Karen Sinclair, Ms Sarah Cox, and Griffith Hack for hosting it.

Board Health-check of the Code of Conduct and its Guidelines

The Board has established an Ethics and Practice management Working Group (EPWG) to consider the current Code of Conduct (the Code) and its Guidelines in light of emerging IP attorney ethics and practice management issues.

Where appropriate, the Board will proactively address issues through practice notes.

The EPWG’s work will also inform the Board’s regular review of the Code of Conduct to identify whether any amendments to it and its Guidelines are necessary, as required by Recommendation 6 of the [2023 Report on the Review of the Arrangement between the Governments of Australia and New Zealand related to the Trans-Tasman Regulation of Patent Attorneys](#).

Provision of Ethics Guidance

The Board and the Institute of Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys (IPTA) are trialling an extension of the IPTA Ethics and Disputes Committee’s ethics guidance service **to registered attorneys who are not IPTA members**.

The Board recognises that provision of non-binding ethics guidance by peers serves to maintain the high standards of the professions, by assisting registered attorneys when faced with an ethics issue. The Board and I sincerely thank our colleagues at IPTA for their engagement with this important initiative.

For more information about IPTA’s ethics guidance service and the procedure for non-members, please contact the [IPTA Secretariat](#).

The Board and IPTA will assess the outcomes of the trial at the end of 2025–26.

Operational matters

Professional Conduct

The Board resolved a matter concerning a patent attorney, Dr Bradley Postma. Dr Postma has formally acknowledged unsatisfactory professional conduct with respect to several charges and, as a result, proceedings before the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Disciplinary Tribunal were withdrawn.

Dr Postma's public acknowledgment of this conduct is available in the ["Publications" section of the Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Regulation website](#) under "Acknowledgements of Conduct".

Upcoming Resources

TTIPAB, IPTA & NZIPA Webinar – Ethical Scenarios

The Board, IPTA and the New Zealand Intellectual Property Attorneys (NZIPA) are hosting an online webinar exploring ethical scenarios on **Monday 22 September 2025, 1–2 pm AEST**. The webinar is free, open to all registered attorneys, and is claimable as 1 point of Ethics CPE.

Dr Victoria Argyle, Ms Robynne Sanders, and I will be on a Panel, which will be moderated by Ian Horak KC. I encourage you all to [register here](#).

Interactive Modules on Ethics

The Board with support from IP Australia has developed a suite of interactive modules that cover common ethics scenarios, provide relevant principles from the Code of Conduct, and quiz the user's understanding of the principles as they apply to the scenarios.

The modules are a part of the Board's ongoing work to provide additional informative resources to the professions, and are designed to provide attorneys with an hour of Ethics CPE.

The modules will be free and accessible to all registered attorneys on the TTIPA website.

Practice notes on "Keeping File Notes" and "Ownership of Files"

The Board is also finalising two practice notes which provide guidance on keeping file notes and on determining ownership of files.

The practice notes address common issues that the Board has seen in exercising its disciplinary role. They will help attorneys understand the importance of keeping file notes, and what aspects of files are owned by the client.

Once the interactive modules and the practice notes are finalised, the Board Secretariat will notify the professions.

Revisions to the CPE Guidelines

The Board discussed a forthcoming update of the CPE Guidelines clarifying the standards and procedure of the CPE requirements.

Notably, the Board resolved to clarify that the obligation of a trans-Tasman patent attorney is to undertake CPE that is relevant to *both* the Australian and New Zealand jurisdictions. The updated CPE Guidelines will recognise that the extent to which an attorney must maintain knowledge in each jurisdiction will depend on the particular nature and scope of their practice.

The updated CPE Guidelines are expected to be published later this year and the professions will be notified accordingly.

Please note the updated CPE Guidelines will be applied by the Designated Manager during the 2026 renewal process and CPE audit. Submissions for the immediately upcoming CPE audit will be assessed under the current CPE Guidelines.

Board Welcome to New Entrants to the Professions

The Board values the collegiate nature of the professions, and understands the importance of recognising achievements within them. Moving forward, the Post-Meeting Communique will acknowledge individuals who have registered as an IP attorney since the previous Board meeting.

Please join me and the Board in welcoming the below individuals to their respective professions, and congratulating them on their achievement:

Patent Attorneys

- Mr Thomas Francis Cleary
- Mr Fred Oscar Cowey Schrader
- Mr Aled Daniel Thorpe
- Dr Shaahin Madani
- Ms Keira Moore

Trade Marks Attorneys

- Ms Briar Francis
- Ms Lauren Eade
- Ms Connie Beswick
- Ms Brittany Sutherland
- Mr Joon Loong Yap
- Mrs Sheree Cole
- Mr Zeyuan Tang
- Dr Ann Kristine Hua
- Mr Neville Sharples
- Mr James Campbell Barrett

Patent and Trade Marks Attorneys

- Dr Samuel Alexander Fraser
- Mr David P J Mai
- Mr Robert Edward Donaldson

I thank the above attorneys for agreeing to be recognised in this Communique.

Next Board Meeting

The Board's next meeting will be in Adelaide, Australia, on **Thursday 6 November 2025** and **Friday 7 November 2025**.

Andrew Christie
Chair
Trans-Tasman IP Attorneys Board