



## EXPERT REPORT WRITING COURSE

16 OCTOBER 2026 - SHANGRI-LA THE MARINA, CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND

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### Course Overview

#### Aim

Participants will appreciate the essence and content of a good legal medicine report, and will evaluate and improve their skills to establish a high standard of report writing.

#### Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Understand the expert's role and the requirements for one to be considered an expert.
- Understand the essential elements of a solicitor's letter of instruction and appreciate when further material should be requested.
- Know the essential elements required in an expert report, common to all Codes of Conduct.
- Understand the difference between assumed facts, facts and opinion.
- Understand how an opinion is properly constructed showing how any conclusions were derived.
- Appreciate the proper use of language and understand common pitfalls in an expert's report.

#### Who should attend?

The Expert Report Writing course will benefit any health care professionals who may be called upon to prepare expert reports. This includes medical, dental and allied health care professionals. If you are unsure about whether this course is right for you, simply call or email us to confirm.

#### Further Training

This is a standalone course addressing the requirements of preparing an expert report. This Expert Report Writing course is a pre-requisite to the [ACLM Expert Witness Training Program](#).

For those wishing to further their training in being an expert, we encourage participants to extend their training by attending the ACLM Expert Witness Training Program which focuses on presenting an expert report in court and includes critique of participants' submitted reports.

#### Location/Venue

Shangri-la The Marina, Cairns, Queensland - Pier Point Rd, Cairns City, QLD, Australia - *Marlin Rooms*

Information regarding accommodation options is sent to attendees after registration, or can be requested prior.

*Please note: This is a face-to-face session only (no online attendance available).*

#### Fees (AUD including GST)

\$500 ACLM members | \$650 Non-members

*Optional:* Additional \$100 for post-course submitted report marking



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### Program

The program times below are listed in local time – Cairns Queensland Time (AEST).

| Time     | Session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Speaker                        |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 8:00 am  | Sign-in                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                |
| 8:30 am  | <b>Welcome</b> – 10 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Dr Mike O'Connor AM            |
| 8:40 am  | <b>Legal Brief – Part 1</b> – 40 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction of the role of the expert, opinion etc</li><li>• Legal considerations for being an expert</li><li>• Key concepts of expert evidence:<br/>Relevance, Reliability, Probative value, Weight</li></ul>                                                     | Professor Ian Freckelton AO KC |
| 9:20 am  | <b>Legal Brief – Part 2</b> – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with solicitors</li><li>• Various types of litigation and reports</li><li>• Essential elements of a solicitor's Letter of Instruction</li><li>• Accepting instructions</li><li>• Confidentiality and privacy</li><li>• Solicitor-client privilege</li></ul> | Gabrielle Watts                |
| 10:05 am | Morning Tea – 25 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                |
| 10:30 am | <b>Legal Brief – Part 3</b> – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consent</li><li>• Expectations of counsel</li><li>• Codes of conduct &amp; compliance</li><li>• Proofing a witness</li><li>• Confirming expert status</li></ul>                                                                                                     | Gabrielle Watts                |
| 11:15 pm | <b>Breakout Groups</b> – 20 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solicitor example Letter of Instruction to be critically reviewed by participants (10 mins)</li><li>• Report back to main group (10 mins)</li></ul>                                                                                                                      | All tutors                     |
| 11:35 pm | <b>Morning Mini Q&amp;A</b> – 10 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lawyer extra Q&amp;A time</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                |
| 11:45 pm | Lunch – 45 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                |



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### *Program (continued)*

The program times below are listed in local time – Cairns Queensland Time (AEST).

| Time     | Session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Speaker                        |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 12:30 pm | <b>The Expert Report – Part 1: Preparation</b> – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How your report is used</li><li>Commissioning and the letter of instruction</li><li>Accepting the brief</li><li>Discussing terms and conditions</li><li>Materials required</li></ul> | Dr Mike O'Connor AM            |
| 1:15 pm  | <b>The Expert Report – Part 2: Content &amp; Structure</b> – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Essential requirements</li><li>Content &amp; Structure</li></ul>                                                                                                         | Dr Mike O'Connor AM            |
| 2:00 pm  | Afternoon tea – 15 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                |
| 2:15 pm  | <b>The Expert Report – Part 3: Format, Language &amp; Common Pitfalls</b> – 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Format, Language &amp; Common Pitfalls</li><li>Group discussion to critique a sample report, highlighting common pitfalls</li></ul>                       | Professor Ian Freckelton AO KC |
| 2:45 pm  | <b>Break Out Groups</b> – 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participants break into 4 groups with one tutor assigned per group.</li><li>Participants self-critique a report using the Report Checklist, focusing on how they came to their opinion</li></ul>            | All tutors                     |
| 3:15 pm  | <b>Open Q&amp;A session</b> – 15 minutes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | All tutors                     |
| 3:30 pm  | Program close                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                |



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### *Pre- and Post-course Activities*

As part of this Activity, participants are expected to complete reading and activities as described below. A recommendation of time required is provided as a guide. CPD hours are allocated in accordance with these times.

#### **Mandatory Pre-reading** – 1 hour recommended

- Beran RG. Preparing a Legal Medicine Expert Witness Report in Australia, J Forensic Leg Investig Sci 2025, 11: 104 DOI: 10.24966/FLIS-733X/100104 (Emailed to participants)
- (Psychiatrists relevant) Guthell TG, Hilliard JT. The treating psychiatrist thrust into the role of expert witness, Psychiatric Services 2001; 52 (11): 1526 – 1527 (Emailed to participants)

#### Additional reading resources:

- Codes of Conduct for Expert Witnesses – <https://legalmedicine.com.au/resources/expert-witness-code-of-conduct/>
- Using the "Hot Tub": How Concurrent Expert Evidence Aids Understanding Issues – <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/digital-law-library/judges-speeches/speeches-former-judges/justice-raises/raises-j-20131012>
- Freckelton I. Expert Evidence: Law Practice, Procedure & Advocacy, Thomson Reuters, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2023

#### **Optional Post-course Activity** – 1 hour recommended

Each participant is asked to submit a reflective statement outlining what they have learned from the course and what they intend to apply to their future report writing. A template will be emailed to you following the course. If you choose not to complete the activity, your CPD hours will be adjusted accordingly on your certificate of completion.

#### **Optional Post-course Submitted Report (additional \$100)** – 8 hours preparation + 1 hour reflection recommended

Each participant is invited to submit a de-identified expert report/statement within two weeks following the course. Reports are critically marked to provide feedback as to how they can be improved. If you have not previously written a report/statement, you may create one based on your own clinical experience by creating a mock scenario.

This optional activity provides an opportunity for participants to apply their skills learned on the Expert Report Writing course, receive feedback and review their performance. We highly recommend that participants consider taking advantage of this opportunity for feedback.

Any who go on to attend the Expert Witness Training Program will be expected to demonstrate the ability to prepare a good quality court-ready report. Reports submitted for the Expert Witness Training program which are deemed below an acceptable standard by the Teaching Faculty may be asked to repeat the course to attain a Certificate of Completion.

Note: Any report submitted for this Expert Report Writing post-course activity cannot be reused if a person attends the Expert Witness Training Program in the future.



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## *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Information*

### **ACLM CPD Program recognition:**

8.5 hours, Relevant to Legal or Forensic Medicine

### **CPD home submissions:**

The following allocations are suggested by ACLM and will be shown on the attendance certificate. It is up to the attendee to check that the activity meets their own CPD home's requirements and to allocate the activity type according to their CPD home's guidelines.

Educational Activity: 6.5 hours

Reviewing Performance: 2 hours (-1 hour if post-course reflective statement not submitted)

Total: 8.5 hours (adjusted as per above depending on pre/post-course activities)

Program Level Requirements met:

- Maintaining and developing professionalism

### **Osler CPD home recognition:**

This activity is an Osler Approved Activity for the Osler CPD Home.



ACLM does not upload activities to CPD homes on behalf of participants. You must self-submit to your CPD home to claim points.

### **Adjustments to allocated hours:**

The post-course activity (reflective statement) is optional for all attendees, however your Certificate of Completion will show adjusted CPD hours if you did not submit the activity.

### **CPD allocation for optional post-course submitted report:**

Additional CPD hours can be claimed for those who complete the optional post-course submitted report activity. This will be shown on a separate Certificate of Completion issued by ACLM.

Educational Activity: 2 hours

Reviewing Performance: 4 hours (+ 1 hour reflection on report feedback)

Measuring Outcomes: 2 hours

Total: 9 hours



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## *Cancellation, Privacy and Health & Safety Policies*

By registering to attend, you agree that you have read and accept the Cancellation, Privacy and Health & Safety Policies.

### **Cancellation policy**

A refund less \$100 cancellation fee will be provided for all cancellations received at least 30 days prior to the event start date. Any cancellations after this point will be non-refundable. The \$100 cancellation fee will be applicable individually to the Course and the ASM/Dinner.

### Sickness:

Please do not attend the live events if you are sick with a contagious illness such as COVID-like symptoms. If you cannot attend due to illness, you will be offered a credit note or refund.

### Contingency Planning:

If a situation occurs which significantly affects the majority of participants' ability to attend in person, the event may either be postponed to a later date or held entirely online. Any such decision will be communicated to all as soon as possible if this circumstance arises. By registering, you agree to attend the course virtually on the same dates, should this circumstance arise. We recommend that you consider booking flexible travel and/or purchase appropriate insurance in case your plans change.

### **Privacy policy**

All persons who book will have their data handled in accordance with ACLM's Privacy Policy.

View the ACLM Privacy Policy here- <https://legalmedicine.com.au/policies/>

### **Health & Safety policy**

As part of our commitment to making this event safe you must comply with the following directions:

- Do not attend this event if you are unwell with a contagious illness such as COVID-like symptoms. Contact us.
- You must comply with all government directions regarding health and safety if they exist.
- It is your responsibility to check the latest border, travel and quarantine restrictions to ensure you are safe and able to travel to and from this event. This may include applying for a travel permit or Visa.



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### *Teaching Faculty*

*Please note, ACLM reserves the right to change the teaching faculty if required due to availability.*

#### *Professor Ian Freckelton AO KC – King's Counsel, Barrister, Professor of Law*

Ian Freckelton is an experienced King's Counsel in full time practice as a barrister throughout Australia; a nationally accredited mediator; a judge of the Supreme Court in Nauru; an administrative tribunal member; a board and committee member; an investigator of allegations of misconduct; a professor of law, psychiatry and forensic medicine; a fellow of learned academies; a journal editor; a speaker at international gatherings; an author, editor and book reviewer; and a scholarly traveller.



#### *Gabrielle Watts – Special Counsel, Travis Schultz & Partners (Solicitor)*

Gabrielle Watts is Special Counsel at Travis Schultz & Partners in Cairns. She has over 17 years of legal experience, and has built an impressive career spanning both plaintiff and defendant personal injury practice. A highly skilled lawyer, Gabrielle has spent the majority of her career practicing in New South Wales, and has been a NSW Accredited Specialist in Personal Injury Law for over a decade, reflecting her commitment to excellence and ongoing professional development. She has in-depth experience in dealing with CTP, public liability – with particular expertise in historical institutional abuse – and medical negligence, and navigates complex claims with precision.



#### *Dr Mike O'Connor AM – Obstetrician & Gynaecologist (ACLM Expert)*

Mike O'Connor is Visiting Obstetrician & Gynaecologist at The St George Hospital, Kogarah, and St George Private Hospital, where he is Chairman of the Patient Care and Clinical Review Committee since 2010. He is a Conjoint Senior Lecturer at UNSW in the Division of Women's and Children's Health and Lecturer at Sydney University. He is currently President of the Australasian College of Legal Medicine. He has a Master's degree in Health Law from Sydney University and a Master's degree in Forensic Medicine from Monash University. In 2009, Mike was created a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his longstanding work in Indigenous Health. He is currently the President of the ACLM.



#### *Dr Phoebe-Anne Mainland – Consultant Anaesthesiologist (ACLM Facilitator)*

Dr Phoebe Mainland is a consultant anaesthesiologist, a Fellow of Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) & Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists (HKCA). Phoebe read for MA (Medical Ethics & Law) from King's College, London and has sat on various committees related to these interests including health ethics committees and a medical defence organization advisory committee. Phoebe was admitted as a Fellow of Australian College of Legal Medicine in 2008 and appointed as a Council Member as of 2019 and is currently the Vice-President Academic. She is also a Fellow of the Academy of Experts (UK). Phoebe was 2017/18 President of the Medico-Legal Society of Victoria. In 2015, Phoebe was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for her project related to patient safety. Phoebe was appointed to Medical Panel (Victorian Government tribunal) in 2013 and is a Presiding Member for hearings. Phoebe has been an expert witness for cases in civil, criminal and coroners' courts and has given opinions for investigations of standards of professional practice including to medical boards.

