

**Joseph Wheeler** MRAeS, LLB, BA (Psy), GDLP (Qld), GCert Air & Space Law (McGill)

Joseph founded IALPG (an incorporated law practice, *International Aerospace Law & Policy Group*) in 2015. He was determined to build the first law firm to focus on pilots and passengers with a view to strengthening safety for all airspace users. The firm has grown to now engage in drone as well as space industry advice. Joseph's decision to focus on aviation law happened during law school, in 2003, when he learned to fly in his home town of Perth, Western Australia. As Leonardo Da Vinci famously said:

*When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return*

Likewise, once Joseph first 'discovered' aviation law, while reading about the rules of flight and air safety regulations and litigation, he never turned away from it, and in fact went to great lengths to learn more about this niche suite of legal topics over the years, including interning at specialty aviation law firms in New York (Kriendler & Kreindler LLP) and Los Angeles (Condon & Forsyth LLP) at his own expense while studying law in 2006-07.

Joseph now helps people throughout Australia and overseas with domestic and international aviation legal issues, including representation for pilots, remote pilots, their associations, and families who have lost loved ones in air disasters. He has experience in general aviation, airline and airport regulatory, drone, space industry, and liability issues and has provided local advice and expertise to foreign aviation lawyers, claimants, and international organisations and insurers.

Joseph defends pilots through Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) medical and enforcement matters. His role as immediate Past Vice Chair of the Legal Committee of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) has seen him appointed to International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Task Forces on topics as diverse as flags of convenience and unruly passengers. Also, he represented the international airline pilot community at other international forums including the ICAO Legal Committee.

He advances the rights and conditions of professional pilots in Australia and globally and has held such roles as Aviation Legal Counsel for the Australian Federation of Air Pilots, and set up the aviation practices of national law firms including Maurice Blackburn Lawyers and other plaintiff firms to pursue serious accident litigation for claimants worldwide with a portfolio of accident work managing claims like Malaysia Airlines MH370, Malaysia Airlines MH17, flydubai FZ981 and more.

Joseph is one of the few dedicated practitioners qualified in air law from the McGill University Institute of Air and Space Law in Canada (Class of 2011). He enjoys pursuing research which contributes to the broader body of public and private international law of which aviation law forms part. As a regional expert on aviation law, he is often invited to comment in the media on international aviation news, and from time to time writes a column on aero legal and aero political affairs in national newspaper, *The Australian*. He is the Australia Lawyers Alliance aviation media spokesperson.

Joseph previously worked in private practice as a solicitor setting up the Aviation Law Department of national plaintiff firm Shine Lawyers from 2013-15, and prior to that in the public sector, as an Assistant Director in the Airports Branch of the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Transport from 2011-13. His role was responsible for policy advice on the airport planning and development oversight for Victorian and Tasmanian federally leased airports, as well as airport economic regulation policy more broadly.

Joseph commenced legal practice in 2008 in Brisbane after studying law in Perth at the University of Western Australia. He is settled in Brisbane with wife Renee, and two sons (aged 6 and 8).