

Bob Whyburn



Bob grew up in the Hunter Valley and completed his secondary studies at the Maitland Boys' High School, winning a full university scholarship. Despite the fact that Newcastle did not have a university, Bob elected to stay in the Hunter area and studied law by correspondence while working as an articled clerk in a labour law firm. He did so because he played drums in a rock and roll band and was having, in his own words, 'a bloody good time'.

That year he worked with barristers who later went on to greater things. They included the late Harry Glass (New South Wales Court of Appeal), Bill Fisher (president of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission) and Michael Kirby (High Court of Australia).

In 1969, Bob decided that studying law should take precedence over rock and roll and moved to Sydney where he was employed by Roy F Turner Jones & Co (now Turner Freeman). Shortly after his admission in 1972, he was made partner and remained with the firm for thirteen years. He left to start his own firm, Bob Whyburn and Associates.

Throughout his career Bob has principally acted for unions and union members. He appeared for the Seamen's Union of Australia in two Courts of Marine Inquiries and the Meatworkers' Union in the Mudginberri dispute in the Northern Territory. He has also appeared in six Royal Commissions or Commissions of Inquiry, including two

into the building industry. He represented the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia in the Agent Orange Royal Commission and is currently appearing for the New South Wales Nurses' Association in the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Campbelltown/Camden Hospitals.

As solicitor to the New South Wales Nurses' Association, Bob is a leading authority on legal issues concerning the nursing profession. He co-authored *Nursing and the Law* with Patricia Staunton, a judge in the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission.

Bob's firm has offices in four locations throughout New South Wales and is part of a nationwide group of lawyers called PeopleLaw.

He has four grown up children, one of whom is a solicitor managing the firm's Wollongong practice. He is also the grandfather of two boys. Bob and his partner Tessa own a small rural property just outside Sydney and enjoy getting away for weekends.

'Our gate is a locked gate so no-one can come through and the mobile phone doesn't work - it's brilliant,' he claims.

Bob is an APLA board member and president of the New South Wales branch. He is also a director of Child Labour Schools Company Limited, a company formed to raise funds to build schools in India for children in

child labour. Bob feels passionately about this cause.

'I truly believe that anyone who has the opportunity and ability to spend part of their time assisting others who are worse off has a moral obligation to do so,' he says.

He was also treasurer of the New South Wales Society of Labour Lawyers for many years, is a member of the Ethics Committee of the New South Wales College of Nursing and was recently appointed a member of the Industrial Law Committee of the Law Society of New South Wales.

Bob's other passion is thoroughbred horse racing. He part-owns several horses and has had some success in recent times as an owner-breeder.

'A mate once told me, "Never buy anything that eats". I've had four kids and I've got a dozen horses - how stupid am I?'

Bob made a conscious decision to become active in APLA in early 2002 because of his belief that it was uniquely placed to speak on behalf of many sections of the Australian community, provided the association's membership base was broadened. He lobbied hard in favour of the constitutional change which was approved at APLA's Annual General Meeting in October. Bob now looks forward to working with the APLA staff to maximise interest in, and membership of, the association. **PL**