



Friday, 30 August 2024

Weekly Corporate Governance **A Weekly Bulletin listing Decisions** **of Superior Courts of Australia covering Corporate Governance** **Law**

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Executive Summary (One Minute Read)

Lawrence v Melbourne Football Club Ltd (FCA) - Court found that football club having rules restricting electioneering activities by candidates for election to the board was not oppressive

HABEAS CANEM

McGregor the puppy





Summaries With Link (Five Minute Read)

Lawrence v Melbourne Football Club Ltd [2024] FCA 945

Federal Court of Australia

O'Callaghan J

Corporations law - Lawrence was a longtime and well respected member of, and donor to, the Melbourne Football Club Ltd, who had unsuccessfully sought election to its board of directors for some years, and had recently campaigned to change the Club's rules regarding such elections - Lawrence opposed the rules' prohibitions on giving interviews to the media, posting to websites or to social media platforms material that can be viewed by the general public, and making statements which disparage or otherwise reflect adversely on the standing of the club - Lawrence commenced proceedings seeking a declaration that certain conduct of the Club regarding was contrary to the interests of its members as a whole, and oppressive to members, such as himself, seeking election, and seeking orders that the rules be amended to address this oppressive conduct - held: the role of the court in oppression actions where evaluative decisions are challenged is not to step into the shoes of the directors and decide for itself what it thinks is in the company's best interests, as directors routinely weigh competing considerations about which reasonable minds can and do differ - where evaluative decisions made by the company's board as to what is in the company's best interests is the conduct in question, oppression ordinarily requires a lack of good faith or that the decisions were ones which no reasonable board could have reached - here, the directors of the Club had acted bona fide, without collateral motive - the reasons given by the board in respect of the electioneering rules were founded upon matters which permitted it reasonably to adopt the electioneering rules in their current form - the Court declined to have regard to evidence of the rules of various other AFL football clubs - proceedings dismissed.

[Lawrence](#)

[From Benchmark Monday, 26 August 2024]

Benchmark

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Executive Summary and (One Minute Read)

Manchester Ship Canal Co v United Utilities Water Ltd (UKSC) - Manchester Ship Canal company was not barred from bringing a common law damages claim for trespass and nuisance against a public utilities company that discharged raw, untreated and foul sewage into the canal from outfalls lawfully maintained by the sewerage authority

Summaries With Link (Five Minute Read)

Manchester Ship Canal Co v United Utilities Water Ltd [2024] UKSC 22

Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

Lord Reed, Lord Hodge, Lord Lloyd-Jones, Lord Burrows, Lord Stephens, Lady Rose, Lord Richards

In a declaratory ruling, the Supreme Court was asked to decide whether the Manchester Ship Canal Company could bring a claim against the statutory sewerage authority for discharges of foul sewage into the canal. The defendant, United Utilities, was the statutory sewerage authority for North West England and owned about 100 outfalls from which treated sewage was discharged into the canal. However, sometimes untreated sewage was discharged into the canal as well. No allegation was made that the discharge of untreated sewage was caused by negligence. However, it could have been avoided through improved infrastructure. The High Court, upheld by the Court of Appeal, found that a canal owner could not bring a claim based on nuisance or trespass against a sewerage operator unless the discharge was the result of negligence or deliberate wrongdoing. The Supreme Court unanimously allowed the Canal Company's appeal. Sewerage is regulated by the *Water Industry Act 1991* and the Supreme Court held that nothing in the legislation permitted or authorised a sewerage authority to discharge foul water through outfalls. Inasmuch as the statute did not authorise the activity, common law remedies were available. The Court rejected the defence that the only way to avoid fouling the canal would be to construct sewerage infrastructure and that was a matter for Parliament. The Court found that there was nothing in the legislation indicating that Parliament intended to extinguish common law rights of action. While an injunction against further discharge presented questions relating to the process of regulatory approval for capital expenditures by the sewerage authority, that did not mean that common law-based awards for damages for invasion of property rights were precluded.

[Manchester Ship Canal Co](#)



Poem for Friday

i carry your heart with me

by e.e. cummings (1894-1962)

i carry your heart with me (i carry it in
my heart) i am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
by only me is your doing, my darling)

i fear

no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

Edward Estlin Cummings (e.e. cummings), an American poet, essayist and playwright was born on 14 October 1894 in Cambridge Massachusetts. His parents encouraged his creativity, and included in their circle of friends artists, philosophers and writers. Cummings's father was a professor at Harvard, and later a minister of the Unitarian church. Cummings wrote poetry from the age of 8. Cummings was an ambulance driver during the first world war. He was interned in a camp in Normandy in the first world war, for having expressed anti-war sentiments. During his life he wrote about 2900 poems. He returned to Paris many times throughout his life. It has been written of Cummings that "No one else has ever made avant-garde, experimental poems so attractive to the general and the special reader," and "Cummings is a daringly original poet, with more vitality and more sheer, uncompromising talent than any other living American writer."

Read by **Colin McPhillamy**, actor and playwright. Colin was born in London to Australian parents. He trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. In the



UK he worked in the West End, at the Royal National Theatre for five seasons, and extensively in British regional theatre. In the USA he has appeared on Broadway, Off-Broadway and at regional centres across the country. Colin has acted in Australia, China, New Zealand, and across Europe. Colin is married to Alan Conolly's cousin Patricia Conolly, the renowned actor and stage actress: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patricia_Conolly and <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/47250992>.

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