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Daily Construction A Daily Bulletin listing Decisions of Superior Courts of Australia

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Executive Summary (1 minute read)

Marmax Investments Pty Ltd v RPR Maintenance Pty Ltd (FCAFC) - contract - franchise agreement - rights and obligations in relation to operation of franchise businesses - two appeals - one appeal allowed - other appeal allowed in part

Workers' Compensation Dust Diseases Board of NSW v Cook (NSWCA) - workers compensation - *Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942* (NSW) did not permit Board to refuse claim for compensation because claimant recovered damages - appeal dismissed

Anderson v Ausgrid (NSWSC) - negligence - fire which damaged house caused by defendant's negligent installation of replacement meter - judgment for house owners

Westpac Life Insurance Services Ltd v Guirgis (VSCA) - insurance - life insurance policy - no fraudulent non-disclosure or fraudulent misrepresentation - insurer's appeal dismissed

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Summaries With Link (Five Minute Read)

Marmax Investments Pty Ltd v RPR Maintenance Pty Ltd [2015] FCAFC 127

Full Court of the Federal Court of Australia

Middleton, Foster & Gleeson JJ

Contract - franchise agreement - Marmax Investments Pty Ltd (Marmax) and Spanline Weatherstrong Building Systems Pty Ltd (Spanline) appealed from two decisions of single judge - dispute between Spanline, Marmax and RPR Maintenance Pty Ltd (RPR) over parties' rights and obligations in connection with Spanline franchise businesses operated by Marmax and RPR - Marmax and Spanline ordered to pay RPR damages for breach of contract - Marmax ordered to indemnify RPR for costs incurred to bring proceeding against it - Spanline to pay RPR additional damages and damages for RPR's costs of proceedings against it - held: primary judge erred in finding contractual relationship between Marmax and RPR under sub-franchise agreement after certain date - Marmax's conduct working in RPR's territory during certain period did not breach sub-franchise agreement - Marmax's "incursions" into RPR's territory did not breach transfer of business agreement - Marmax not liable to pay damages to RPR - Marmax's appeal allowed on certain grounds - primary judge erroneously found Spanline breached contractual obligations to RPR by not taking "reasonable and available" steps to ensure RPR's territory remained exclusive - Spanline did not breach obligations to RPR by failing to adequately investigate RPR's complaints about Marmax's activities - Spanline did not breach contract by failing to demand Marmax give full disclosure of work done in RPR's territory - permission given by Spanline to Marmax to perform work in RPR's territory was breach of contract which caused RPR loss - Spanline's appeal allowed in part.

[Marmax](#)

Workers' Compensation Dust Diseases Board of NSW v Cook [2015] NSWCA 270

Court of Appeal of New South Wales

Basten & Macfarlan JJA; Sackville AJA

Workers compensation - statutory interpretation - employee contracted pleural mesothelioma from exposure to asbestos in course of employment - employee sued company (Amaca) in Supreme Court of Victoria for damages for negligence - employee accepted offer of compromise served by Amaca - prior to settlement employee applied to Workers' Compensation Dust Diseases Board of New South Wales for compensation under s8 *Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Act 1942* (NSW) - Board refused application on basis that awarding employee compensation under Act would "amount to a double recovery" of compensation - employee appealed to District Court but died prior to judgment - District Court allowed appeal and made awards under Act for weekly payments for total disablement and for medical and other expenses - Board appealed - held: Act did not permit Board to refuse claim for compensation because claimant had recovered damages - appeal dismissed.

[Workers'](#)

Anderson v Ausgrid [2015] NSWSC 1308

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Supreme Court of New South Wales

Adamson J

Negligence - plaintiffs owned and lived in residential house on property - while plaintiffs on holiday fire started in or around the meter box on property - fire spread and damaged house - agreed that damage amounted to \$819,676.50 (agreed figure) - about a month before fire defendant replaced one faulty meter - plaintiffs claimed agreed figure from defendant on basis of negligence - principal issue was cause of fire - ss5B, 5C, 5D, 5E & 5O *Civil Liability Act 2002* (NSW) - whether fire caused by defective installation of meter - held: more probable than not that fire caused when resistance at joint where wire screwed to replacement meter generated sufficient heat to ionise surrounding gases - plaintiffs discharged onus of proving fire caused by defendant's negligence - plaintiffs proved factual causation - if scope of liability had not been accepted by defendant Court would have found it was appropriate that responsibility for harm should be imposed on defendant - judgment for plaintiffs.

[Anderson](#)

Westpac Life Insurance Services Ltd v Guirgis [2015] VSCA 239

Court of Appeal of Victoria

Hansen, Beach & Kaye JJA

Insurance - life insurance - respondent took out insurance policy with applicant which provided for payment of a monthly total disability benefit in event respondent suffered total disability within meaning of policy - policy also provided for payment of monthly partial disability benefit in event respondent became partially disabled under policy - respondent claimed on policy - respondent claimed she reduced working hours due to her fibromyalgia and that her arm and shoulder pain prevented her working - respondent subsequently advised applicant conditions producing asserted total disability had expanded to include 'depressed mood - applicant contended respondent failed to comply with duty of disclosure under s21 *Insurance Contracts Act 1984* (Cth) and advised applicant had avoided policy from inception in accordance with s29(2) - respondent claimed applicant breached policy - County Court gave judgment for respondent - applicant sought leave to appeal - held: no basis for attack on trial judge's finding he could not conclude respondent 'was aware of the fibromyalgia diagnosis in August 2007' - no error in trial judge's conclusion he was not satisfied there was any fraudulent non-disclosure or fraudulent misrepresentation by respondent - no error in trial judge not being satisfied applicant established no policy would have been entered into had respondent disclosed existence of fibromyalgia - leave to appeal granted - appeal dismissed.

[Westpac](#)



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On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

BY John Keats

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

[Keats](#)

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