



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

Ceremonial Sitting of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia – Judge Tuskeen Jacobs

Speech delivered by Elizabeth Shearer, on behalf of the President of the Law Council of Australia, at the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Brisbane.

31 July 2024

May it please the Court.

I acknowledge that this ceremony takes place on the traditional lands of the Jagera and Turrbal peoples, here in Meanjin, by the banks of the river this afternoon. I pay deep respect to the Elders of this place, past and present, and extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

I also acknowledge Mr Steger representing the Attorney General; Your Honour the Chief Justice; Mr Dunning KC, President of the Australian Bar Association; Ms Daykin President of the Family Law Practitioners Association of Queensland; all judicial officers; dignitaries, colleagues; and most of all Your Honour; and Your Honour's family and friends.

In recognising Your Honour's appointment today on behalf of the Law Council of Australia and the Queensland Law Society I would like to begin by reflecting on the extraordinary work of this Court.

Coming to this Court Building in the late afternoon, a visitor experiences the court as a serene place. But those of us who come here to represent our clients know that it's a place that few litigants approach with serenity. It's the place they come to when, not only has the relationship in which they hoped to build their future ended, it has ended in a way that renders the family incapable of moving forward without the intervention of the law, lawyers and ultimately the Court. There are no easy cases.

Faced with this, the Court aspires to provide a fair, transparent and efficient process, that minimises risk to the vulnerable, so that families can move forward as safely and quickly as possible, achieving just results according to law.

But these aspirations only become reality if talented practitioners are willing to step into the life of service required of Judges of this Court.

Today, then is cause for celebration, because we can have confidence that your Honour will serve those who come before you exceptionally well.

I say this because as an Accredited Family Law Specialist with over 20 years of experience, your knowledge of family law is both wide and deep.

But paired with Your Honour's technical expertise is your compassion. Your Honour truly understands and respects that family law is about people; people who are going through some of the most difficult times of their lives and deserve kindness, empathy, certainty and closure.

A surprising commonality between many of the accomplished members of our profession is that their focus was first in another field before the law became their calling.

I believe Your Honour shares this history and originally obtained a degree in psychology. No doubt this plays a role in Your Honour's outstanding ability to read people and to understand and consider the human, as well as the legal dimensions, of the issues coming before you for determination.

Your Honour is also renowned for your meticulous attention to detail, your strong organisational skills, your capacity to quickly get to the core of an issue, and your ability to remain calm even as chaos reigns all around you. These qualities predict a successful life on this bench.

While a member of our profession, Your Honour, has been most generous in sharing your wisdom and insights, hard won from experience, with others, especially as a mentor to

those who have had the privilege of working with you and who wish to express their gratitude to you.

But nothing is more important to Your Honour than family.

Your Honour's large, extended family, and especially, your children are at the centre of your world, and I am sure they are all remarkably proud of you today.

On behalf of the Australian legal profession, and in particular your former colleagues, the solicitors of Queensland, I formally congratulate Your Honour on your appointment.

May it please the court.

Disclaimer:

This document remains the property of the Law Council of Australia and should not be reproduced without permission. Please contact the Law Council to arrange a copy of this