



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

Ceremonial Sitting of the Federal Court of Australia to welcome the Honourable Justice Stephen McDonald

Speech delivered by Greg McIntyre SC, President of the Law Council of Australia, Federal Court of Australia, Adelaide.

27 August 2024

May it please the Court.

I echo the acknowledgement of the Kurna people.

It is a great pleasure to welcome Your Honour on behalf of the legal profession.

Your Honour's appointment has been warmly embraced and supported by those who have had the privilege of working with you throughout your career. It seems clear you are universally well liked and respected.

While there are many reasons your colleagues feel this way, a few of the attributes that shine through brightly are your huge generosity of spirit, your sense of humour, and your humility – despite so many others predicting throughout your career that you were destined for great things.

When I talk about your generosity, I am talking about your already mentioned enthusiasm for mentoring others. The junior practitioners who have been fortunate to have you in their corner speak of you taking them under your wing, sharing your analytical thought processes and giving them opportunities to learn by 'doing'.

We heard more than once that you go out of your way to check in on those around you, to enquire about their wellbeing, and ensure they know you are there for them if they need you.

As I understand it, the law is one of Your Honour's great passions, to the point that you read court rulings for recreation.

You have a reputation as an intellectual powerhouse, exemplified in your co-authoring of the text 'Government Accountability Australian Administrative Law'.

I am informed that your love for the written word is reflected in your fondness for challenges like cryptic crosswords and Wordle puzzles.

An extension of this is your enjoyment of puns, which the Attorney has mentioned. I've heard Your Honour likes to critique the pun headlines in newspapers.

Your Honour reached the pinnacle of pun pundits back in 2020, winning the Law Pun of the Year honour at the Australian Legal Research Awards. I couldn't find a record of the pun itself, but I look forward to maybe hearing it directly from Your Honour later today.

Your Honour's interests extend beyond the law and are quite diverse. The Attorney has mentioned your engagement in cricket. Living in South Australia there are usually plenty of big matches played on your home soil each summer. I have been told that friends and colleagues watch the program closely when planning end of year events if they want to ensure you are available to attend and not otherwise engaged at Adelaide Oval.

I also have it on good authority that Your Honour is a toasties aficionado. So I hope the morning tea meets with your standards and tastes in that regard.

But of course, Your Honour's greatest loves in life are your family; your wife and children, who I am sure could not be more proud of you today.

Your Honour's commitment to our profession through your teaching, your articles analysing judgments, and your membership and involvement with legal organisations means that Your Honour's appointment has been universally welcomed by the profession.

But I think all of that can be summarised into simply saying how welcome Your Honour's appointment is.

Your Honour, on behalf of the lawyers of Australia, I congratulate you on your elevation. I have no doubt you will make a significant and exceptionally positive contribution to the administration of justice.

May it please the Court.

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