

Dear Colleagues,

Most of you who don't know me personally would know of me if for no other reason but my alleged colourful personality. I suppose, to put it another way, always in trouble, pushing things to the limit, however you describe me it should be uncontested that I do everything in my power to keep up to date with the law, understand the law and help my clients.

I joined the Police Force in July 1975 and left on the 20th May 1987. During that period of time I had the good fortune to be involved in under cover work and to help many people. I worked as a law clerk at two different solicitor's firms until the 20th May 1991 when I was admitted as a Barrister and conducted my first trial in the District Court in Gladstone, a four day, grievous bodily harm trial involving two accused, two weeks after having been admitted. I acted for both father and son and both were acquitted.

I have accepted a nomination for a position on council. I hope that the period in which I serve, should I be elected, I will be able to come to the position from a perspective of where all I want to do is assist others. Whatever anyone thinks, as to whether I would have succeeded in any event, if I had ever applied, I come to this position of my own choice against a background in which I have never applied to be take Silk and likely never will and I have never applied for appointment as a Magistrate or Judge and never will.

The only basis on which I come here is to try to help others. I have no self interest at all and I hasten to say that I am in no way suggesting any other member who seeks election has anything other interest other than to also help their colleagues at the Bar.

Whilst, if elected, I will be a small cog in a bigger wheel, my intention is to work the hardest I can in the following areas in which I maintain a special interest:

1. Mental Health

To me it is inconceivable that in this day and age we are almost one of the last professions to accept bullying in the workplace. This must stop. It affects people greatly and I am tired of standing in courts where year in year out I see young people and even some of the more mature and experienced members, denigrated, intimidated and even abused to the point of bringing them to tears. There is no room for this in our profession. Recently her Honour, High Court of Australia Chief Justice Kiefel AC observed:

“ Much has been said about the need for a judge to be courteous to the lawyers

appearing before the court and to witnesses. It is not only an example that needs to be set, it is the most effective way of managing the proceedings. In court, a judge's real temperament is exposed. When it is said that a person does not have the temperament to be a judge, this usually implies that the person has a combative manner or a short temper; whereas a model judge is calm and measured.¹

It is time to not only join as a strong Bar Association to protect our members and even the bench from that sort of conduct and to assist those in every way we can who struggle with such issues.

2. Multi-Culturalism

My second platform would be to push the truth of the fact that we are a multi-cultural society and that we, as somewhat leaders in the community should understand this better than anyone and the Bar Association needs to work to assist anybody in our multi-cultural community and our clients from multi-cultural backgrounds to understand our way, our law and to have our compassion and support during any difficulties they encounter in an attempt to integrate. We should strive to encourage government to make multi-cultural appointments so that those who are appointed to positions can continue to work together with others to encourage a culture of acceptance and removing any point of distinction, real or otherwise, even an apprehension of it.

3. Appointment of Silks

I would push for greater transparency in appointments in all areas (as stated below at point 4) including appointments of Barristers to the status of silk. This above all concerns me. When I came to the Bar I was fortunate enough to meet and associate with some of the doyens of our profession. Being a silk was a status that brought from other members of the Bar for the individual, an understanding that the person had great knowledge, a clear understanding that that person was prepared to help others, teach them skills and give of their learning. They were very carefully selected in my view so that people like me so respected them that you would seek them out to lead you so you could learn. With the greatest respect that knowledge and exceptional quality has been so diluted by so many of the appointments that cannot be said to have reached that standard especially when

¹ The Hon Justice Susan Kiefel AC High Court of Australia, On Being a Judge, Public Lecture, 15 January 2013 The Chinese University of Hong Kong; http://www.hcourt.gov.au/assets/publications/speeches/current_justices/kiefelj/kiefelj-2013-01-15.pdf

you see some of the brilliant people at the Bar who have not been appointed that these days I myself and no doubt many other juniors would not consider seeking to junior some of the silks that have been appointed. Indeed in some instances you would relish being against them.

4. Other Appointments

I would also push for greater transparency regarding the distribution of government work and more importantly to the distribution of work to Commissions of Inquiry and the like. Each and every one of you would know someone or another who consistently gets a role at some commission or another or some government position or another, almost to the exclusion of others. There needs to be fairness and equality. Sometimes flowing from these appointments are flow on appointments to colleagues closely associated to those who are regularly appointed with little or no scrutiny.

5. Junior Counsel

Each and every one of us was admitted as Counsel, something no doubt each and every one of us worked hard to achieve. We are customarily referred to as junior Counsel unless of course you have been given the honour of taking silk I will be striving hard to have this archaic reference removed so that you are referred to as Counsel by both those who have taken silk and each and every one of your colleagues.

6. Support to newly admitted members of the Bar

A concerted effort to help those at the Bar who are in their first five years, not in a perfunctory way but in a real way where we encourage more senior Counsel to assist them with work, where we encourage Legal Aid and governments to disseminate the work amongst the lot not a select few. Sure some of this is already being done and the Bar have worked hard to achieve great steps forward but there are many more. I certainly cannot achieve it on my own but as some of you may know, I can be a thorn in somebody's side if they are not striving for those goals. More than anything else I strive for equality and fairness for all members of the Bar. Above all the Bar Association has to make a move to support those who from time to time have difficulties both within the profession and outside the profession. It is not good enough for the Bar Association to stay out of these things,

it is important that they bring their members into the fold and fight for them where necessary without fear or favour.

Should you choose to elect me I promise to do everything within my power to encourage others in the Bar Association to team up and fight for these issues?

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