

**FEDERAL CIRCUIT AND FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA (DIVISION 2)**

**CEREMONIAL SITTING OF THE FULL COURT TO WELCOME**

**THE HONOURABLE JUDGE McARDLE**

**Speech by Peter Dunning KC, President of the Australian Bar Association**

May it please the Court. Judge McArdle, it is my pleasure and privilege, in equal measure, to speak on behalf of the barristers of our Commonwealth to offer our congratulations today on your well-deserved appointment to this Court. Your academic prowess has already been essayed and I will not repeat it, but you bring to this Court a measure of learning and experience which is invaluable for what it needs to do. Your Honour has had a distinguished career at Legal Aid, and in particular, in those most vexed of cases concerning children.

After that distinguished career, as we've heard, you came to the Bar and were popular among your colleagues, highly regarded for your skill, your acumen, your decency and your kindness. One might think attributes, Chief Justice, that you will find more than handy in the discharge of judicial office in this Court.

In all that time, you found time to contribute significantly to the profession and its associations, for which, as a Bar, we are most grateful. By clients, solicitors and barristers alike, your Honour carved out a special area of practice in parenting matters. It is an important role and one that touches the lives of many Australians at their most vulnerable. The contribution that people like your Honour make to that important task ought not be underestimated, and ought be acknowledged on a day like this. In that sense, today represents simply a profession of decades of public service on behalf of your Honour, of which the people of Australia have been well served and will continue to be well served.

But your Honour has a non-work side. We have already heard that your Honour is a great lover of fine food and fine wine. Your Honour likes travelling, and I am reliably informed your Honour is something of an adroit traveller because COVID brought all of its complications for all of us. Given your Honour worked in Brisbane and lived in northern New South Wales, it brought more than its fair share to your Honour; yet, I am told, together with all of those attributes I have just mentioned, together with some adroit negotiating skill, your Honour was able to cross the Queensland/New South Wales border during COVID times with a particular skill. Something that, no doubt, will come in handy in navigating your way through the Court.

Your Honour, as we have heard, has a love of music and, I am reliably informed again, is a fine singer. But your Honour's talents don't, I'm told, stop at singing. Your Honour enjoys a touch of pantomime and is still favourably recalled as Cinderella, Queen of the Desert. In fact, I understand your Honour rejoices in the nickname 'Cinderella' amongst your closest colleagues. Now, I am not sure if the Chief Justice can offer you similar pantomimes amongst your new colleagues, but it is, perhaps, something to think of.

Today is a day of justifiable pride, Judge McArdle, for you and for your family and friends. It represents a lifetime of hard work and diligence, and the undoubted respect and regard of your colleagues.

Not having ever crossed paths with your Honour professionally, I had occasion to make inquiries for the purpose of today's speech. I have given many such speeches. Rarely have I found a new appointee who has been greeted by such universal warmth when I have telephoned around.

On behalf of the barristers of Australia, and particularly those of Queensland, we salute your appointment and wish you many happy years as a judge of this Court.

May it please the Court.

27 February 2023