

CEREMONIAL SITTING OF THE FULL COURT OF THE HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN OF THE HONOURABLE ROBERT THOMAS BEECH-JONES
AS A JUSTICE OF THE HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA
AT CANBERRA
ON MONDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2023

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

Justice Beech-Jones, Chief Justice Gageler, Justices of the High Court, retired Chief Justices and Justices of the High Court, distinguished guests all, it is my pleasure and privilege in equal measure, Justice Beech-Jones, to offer the congratulations of the Bar nationally upon your Honour's appointment to our apex Court.

As has been observed by speakers who have gone before me, your Honour's appointment to this Court has received universal acclamation, and unsurprisingly so. Your Honour brings to this Court a decade of exceptional service to the New South Wales Supreme Court, essayed in detail by Chief Justice Bell at your Honour's recent valedictory. Your Honour departs that Court not only with the deep affection of the New South Wales Bar but with a reputation earned across the nation for your skill as a jurist. You enjoy a reputation for being as industrious as you are well humoured, as decisive as you are courteous.

Prior to your appointment to the Supreme Court of New South Wales, your Honour spent two decades in practice at the New South Wales Bar. Your 11th Floor St James Hall members are understandably delighted by the success that one of their alumni has achieved today. Your Honour's breadth of practice, Bench and Bar, across the gamut of all areas of law: crime, civil disputes, public law, and constitutional law, equips your Honour well to deal with the wide and varied jurisdiction necessarily administered by this Court. Your Honour enjoys a reputation for a great insight into the human condition, something that is essential to fairly, and in an even handed fashion, dispense justice.

Your Honour, our members look forward to having the opportunity of appearing before you and developing the affection that the New South Wales Bar so evidently has for you. The experience your Honour brings to the Court resonates with the practice of all members of the Australian Bar. Your Honour's career is an exemplification that the ultimate discharge of judicial office involves quietening real controversies between real people, and, as necessary, adjudicating between the citizen and the State. Today, Justice Beech Jones, is a day of understandable pride for your Honour's family and friends. No one attains the sort of success of today, and those successes that have preceded today for you, without the love and support of your Honour's family and friends.

Your wife, Suzie, your children, Gabriel and Sasha, your parents, and all of those near to you, should feel an understandable sense of pride and a stake in the success that is exhibited today. Justice Beech-Jones, the Bar nationally offers its congratulations on your Honour's fine appointment and greatly looks forward to appearing before you in this Court.

May it please the Court.