

## **CEREMONIAL SITTING OF THE FULL COURT**

### **TO WELCOME THE HONOURABLE THE HON. JUSTICE EMILIOS KYROU AO**

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

Chief Justice Mortimer, Justice Gordon, Chief Justice Alstergren, Judges of the Federal Court, retired Judges, distinguished guests, but most importantly, Justice Kyrou. It is my privilege and pleasure, on behalf of the Bar nationally, to offer our congratulations and welcome to your Honour to this important national Court, and as President of the Australian Administrative Appeals Tribunal. It is a well-deserved appointment that has understandably been met with wide acclaim.

By the time your Honour was ten, you had arrived in Australia speaking little English. By the time your Honour was twenty, you were well on your way to the esteemed career of which today is just another distinguished chapter. Your Honour's success, and those things that the Commonwealth Attorney has spoken of your character, are a testament to the value of hard work and the benefit of the support of those around you to see you succeed in the way that your Honour did.

Justice Kyrou, it is always a pleasure when I get to address in respect of somebody who came to the Court as a solicitor, rather than from the Bar. I realise that is some long time ago for your Honour now, but there is a special relationship that exists between solicitors and barristers, and it is appropriate that somebody in my position acknowledge on a day like today the grand contribution solicitors appointed to this Court and other courts have made to the jurisprudence in Australia, and the balance and the insight they give to the disposition of legal disputes.

Can I turn, then, to the other task that arises today, and that is that your Honour will become President of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in the short term, and the successor tribunal to it. It is, I might respectfully suggest, the mark, indeed, the emblem, of a civil society that a citizen can, in significant respects, take a decision of the government to an independent tribunal and have it tested. The transparency that comes from that process, and the confidence in government decision-making, cannot be understated.

In that regard, it is appropriate that I recognise on behalf of the Bar nationally the First Nations people on whose land we meet, and who have, since time immemorial, been the custodians of this land, as an exemplar of those people in our society who do need the protection of institutions such as the AAT for their proper recognition and advancement.

Your Honour is well-suited to the task which you have been given by the government. Your Honour spent a decade and a half on the Supreme Court of Victoria, including in notable matters regarding administrative law. Your Honour brings intellect, decency, compassion and humility to the task, all hallmarks of great judicial accomplishment.

In your new role in the tribunal that will replace the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, I can assure you the Bar nationally will support your Honour in your endeavours as you give effect to the government's mandate to change the manner in which the review of administrative decisions occurs in this country.

Your Honour, we also recognise your arrival at this large and important national Court as a Justice of this Court. One does not arrive at a day like today with the accomplishments that your Honour has received, not only today but in the years in the past, without the love and the support of those around you. That is reflected in your Honour's own life. Your wife, Peris; your children John, Stephen, William and Catherine; and your grandchildren, Luke and Demi, should have justifiable pride in your Honour's achievement today and your Honour's many achievements in the past.

The Bar is confident that your Honour will discharge your role with distinction, and is here to assist in whatever way it can. I wish you many happy years in your position.

May it please the Court.

28 June 2023