

CEREMONIAL SITTING OF THE FULL COURT

TO WELCOME THE HONOURABLE THE HON. JUSTICE PENELOPE NESKOVGIN

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

Justice Neskovicin, Chief Justice Mortimer, Justices of the Federal Court, Justices Gordon and Steward out of the High Court, Chief Justice Alstergren, retired Justices of this Court, ladies and gentlemen. It is my privilege and pleasure in equal measure, Justice Neskovicin to offer the national Bar's congratulations on your Honour's well-deserved appointment.

Your Honour, as we have heard, brings to the Court experience in a wide area of practice, all of which are particularly pertinent to the important jurisdiction of this National Court. The Bar has every confidence that your Honour will discharge this function with great distinction and bring credit on yet another of our former members to have joined this Court. In that regard, it is appropriate that we notice your Honour's service to the Victorian Bar, something that Ms Schoff will speak of a little more.

It is also appropriate that we note the public service that your Honour is willing to give by the taking of this appointment. It is no small sacrifice to give away the freedom of the Bar to take an appointment on this Court, and to exercise the important jurisdiction it does. And in doing so, we acknowledge the special place this Court, and Judges of it have, in making peace with our First Nations peoples, not only in the interactions with justice, which the Chief Justice adverted to earlier and has in the past, but also in the important areas of jurisdiction that this Court exercises that touch First Nations people so importantly.

Nobody achieves the success that your Honour has achieved leading up to today, and including today, without the love and the support of family and friends. As we have heard, they are here today, and they should feel justifiable pride in your Honour's appointment.

However, your Honour is a product of the Victorian Bar, and whilst joining a national Court, this is in every sense, Victoria's day. And with those remarks, I offer the National Bar's congratulations, thank your Honour for your service, and pass to my friend Ms Schoff. May it please the Court.

28 February 2024