

Judicial Independence – From what and to what end?

**The Hon. Chief Justice
of Australia
Susan Kiefel AC**

PUBLIC SEMINAR – DARWIN

Saturday 27 March 2021

5.00pm to 7.00pm

Grand Ballroom, Hilton Darwin
32 Mitchell Street, Darwin



Australian lawyers might think the phrase ‘judicial independence’ to be clear in its meaning. Yet even in our federation it may have different connotations. So too does constitutional context in other jurisdictions give it a different meaning. History teaches us that judicial independence of thought is not always vigorously pursued and that judicial independence is not always a force for good. These reflections may be seen to raise two questions about judicial independence: independence from what and to what end? And those enquiries may illuminate what judicial independence can and should mean to us.

The Hon. Chief Justice Susan Kiefel AC. LLM (Cantab)

The Honourable Susan Mary Kiefel was appointed Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia on 30 January 2017, having served as a Justice of the High Court since 3 September 2007.

Her Honour was born in Cairns, Queensland, Australia in 1954. She was educated in Queensland and at the University of Cambridge, where she received a Master of Law. Having been admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1975, in 1987 her Honour became the first woman in Queensland to be appointed Queen's Counsel. She became a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1993, and a Justice of the Federal Court in 1994. For four years (2003 to 2007) her Honour served as a part-time Commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission. She also held a commission as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island from 2007. Her Honour was made Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2011.

In 2008, her Honour was made an Honorary Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge and a Doctor of the University of Griffith University. She was made a Doctor of Laws honoris causa by the University of Queensland in 2009, and awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Adelaide in 2018. In 2019, her Honour received the awards of Doctor of the University from both the Queensland University of Technology and the University of the Sunshine Coast. Among other things, her Honour is a titular member of the International Academy of Comparative Law; an Honorary Bencher of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn; and an Honorary Professor of the Faculty of Law at The University of Hong Kong.

Her Honour is the Patron of the Australian Academy of Law.

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