

THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Emergency Management

MEDIA RELEASE

12 April 2012

**APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS
TRIBUNAL AND FEDERAL COURT JUDGE**

Attorney-General Nicola Roxon today announced the Government's intention to recommend to Her Excellency the Governor-General the appointment of two Federal Court of Australia judges, one of whom will serve as the President of the Administrative Appeal Tribunal.

Dr Griffiths is a barrister from New South Wales, who was appointed Senior Counsel in 2001; his areas of speciality include administrative law, competition law, environmental and planning law, Aboriginal land rights, commercial law, appellate practice, revenue law, broadcasting and telecommunications law.

Dr Griffiths will be assigned to the Sydney Registry.

Mr Kerr is a barrister from Tasmania, who was appointed Senior Counsel in 2004; his work focuses on constitutional law, administrative law and appellate work. As well as appearing as counsel before the High Court, Mr Kerr has previously served as a Minister of the Crown.

Mr Kerr will be only the second Tasmanian appointed to the Federal Court, and the first in over 25 years. He is also the first President of the AAT appointed from a state other than NSW, Victoria or Queensland, which reflects this Government's commitment to a greater diversity of appointees to judicial positions.

Mr Kerr will take up his appointment as judge and President of the Tribunal following the retirement of the Hon Justice Garry Downes.

An advisory panel comprising Chief Justice Patrick Keane, Sir Gerard Brennan AC KBE, the Hon Acting Justice Jane Mathews AO and a senior representative of the Attorney-General's Department considered candidates for both appointments. Responses to separate public notices resulted in 58 candidates

being assessed for the position of President of the Tribunal and 42 candidates for appointment as a judge of the Federal Court.

The advisory panel recommended Dr Griffiths and Mr Kerr as highly suitable for appointment based on their past experience, legal expertise and leadership qualities.

A second appointment to the Sydney Registry of the Federal Court will be made at a later date.

Short professional biographies for the appointees are attached.

For all media enquiries, please contact the Attorney-General's Office on 02 6277 7300 or 0409 945 476.

Dr John Griffiths SC

Dr Griffiths holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the Australian National University (1974), a Master of Laws from Harvard University (1976) and a Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy from Cambridge University (1978 and 1981 respectively). He was admitted as a solicitor to the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory in 1975 and the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1985.

During his time at Cambridge University from 1978 to 1982, Dr Griffiths was a Fellow and Director of Studies, Law at Emmanuel College as well as a lecturer for the Faculty of Law. On his return to Australia, Dr Griffiths worked as the Director of the federal Administrative Review Council until joining Blake Dawson and Waldron in 1986, initially as a solicitor and then as a partner. In 1994 Dr Griffiths was admitted to the New South Wales Bar and in 2001, appointed Senior Counsel.

Dr Griffiths is currently a member of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales (a three year term that commenced in August 2009) and has been the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the New South Wales Bar Association since 2012.

The Hon Duncan Kerr SC Chev LH

Mr Kerr holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Tasmania (1975) and a Bachelor of Arts (Social Work) from the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (1977).

Mr Kerr has had a varied career in legal practice, politics and academia. He is currently a barrister whose work focuses on constitutional law, administrative law and appellate work at Michael Kirby Chambers, Hobart (which he established in 2010). He was appointed Senior Counsel for Tasmania in 2004.

He is also Adjunct Professor of Law at the Queensland University of Technology. From 1987 until 2010 Mr Kerr served in the Parliament of Australia as the Member for Denison. During his Parliamentary career he was Justice Minister from 1993 to 1996, Attorney-General for a period in 1993 and Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs from 2007 to 2009.

Before and during his Parliamentary service Mr Kerr appeared as counsel in many jurisdictions including acting in high profile cases in the High Court. Prior to entering politics, Mr Kerr worked as Crown Counsel (Tasmania) and as a solicitor and counsel in Papua New Guinea, Tasmania and New South Wales and was Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Papua New Guinea from 1983 to 1985.