



Media Release

AUSTRALIAN BAR PRAISES COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S CONSULTATION

The President of the Australian Bar Association, Mr. Tom Bathurst QC, today praised the Attorney-General for Australia, The Hon. Robert McClelland MP, on the consultative approach adopted by him in making recent appointments to the Federal Court and, in particular, the High Court of Australia.

Mr. Bathurst said 'The Attorney-General deserves the congratulations of the Australian legal profession for his approach to the appointment of judicial officers to federal courts.' He said 'Mr. McClelland's consultative approach had ensured that the views of a wide cross section of the profession had been sought which had resulted in the identification of very strong candidates for appointment.'

He said the appointment process now being followed by the Attorney-General had not only been comprehensive, it had also been both meaningful and constructive. Mr. Bathurst noted that the approach adopted was both welcome and appropriate.

Mr. Bathurst said that 'The Australian Bar Association had always encouraged public debate on the judicial appointments process and had convened a public forum in 2006 to explore the issue. He said 'the willingness of the current Attorney-General to discuss the issue, to debate alternatives and to actively engage in the debate, was refreshing'.

Mr. Bathurst said that the procedure adopted in respect of the recent appointments demonstrated that an effective consultation process can occur without the need for a Judicial Appointments Commission or the Attorney-General being required to make a statement in the federal Parliament about individuals who were not appointed.

The Australian Bar Association is committed to assisting the Attorney-General, the federal Government and the wider community in this most important aspect of the administration of justice. Mr. Bathurst said that 'The constituent Bars of Australia have a wealth of knowledge and experience at a national and local Bar level which, the ABA believes, can be beneficially tapped into when appointments are to be made.'

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