



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

STATEMENT

30 July 2008

070/2008

NEW CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE HIGH COURT

I am pleased to announce the appointment of the Honourable Justice Robert Shenton French as Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia.

Justice French will begin his appointment on Monday 1 September 2008. His Honour will be the twelfth Chief Justice appointed to the High Court since Federation, and the first from Western Australia.

The Honourable Chief Justice Anthony Murray Gleeson AC will retire on Friday 29 August 2008, following 10 years of exemplary service to Australia in the highest judicial office.

Justice French is currently a Justice of the Federal Court of Australia, an office he has held with distinction since 1986.

Consistent with the Government's commitment to extensive consultation on appointments to the High Court, I wrote to:

- State and Territory Attorneys-General;
- the Chief Justice and other Justices of the High Court;
- the Chief Justices of the Federal Court and of the Family Court and the Chief Federal Magistrate;
- the Chief Justices of the State and Territory Supreme Courts;
- the Law Council of Australia;
- the Australian Bar Association;
- State and Territory Bar Associations and Law Societies;
- Australian Women Lawyers;
- the National Association of Community Legal Centres;
- National Legal Aid; and
- Deans of law schools.

A number of very strong candidates were put forward and the views of those who made suggestions greatly assisted the Government's consideration.

A short biography of Justice French is attached.

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STATEMENT

- Name:** The Honourable Justice Robert Shenton French
- Date of birth:** 19 March 1947
- Qualifications:** B Sc (Physics), University of Western Australia, 1968
LLB, University of Western Australia, 1971
Barrister and Solicitor, Western Australia, from 1972
- Current offices:** Justice, Federal Court of Australia, 1986-
Non-resident Member, Supreme Court of Fiji, 2003-
Additional Judge, Supreme Court of the ACT, 2003-
Deputy President, Australian Competition Tribunal, 2005-
P/T Commissioner, Australian Law Reform Commission, 2006-
- Previous offices:** Associate Member, Trade Practices Commission, 1983-1986
Member, Legal Aid Commission of WA, 1983-1986
Deputy Chairman then Chairman, Town Planning Appeal
Tribunal (WA), 1983-1986
Member, Law Reform Commission of WA, 1986
President, National Native Title Tribunal, 1994-1998
- Awards:** Honorary Doctor of Laws, Edith Cowan University, 1998
Western Australian Citizen of the Year – Professions, 1998
Centenary Medal, 2003