

SIR NINIAN STEPHEN LECTURE 2024

The Honourable Justice Ruth McColl AO SC will deliver a lecture titled:
*The whirligig of time: the seemingly never-ending quest to balance reputation
and freedom of speech.*



ANNUAL SIR NINIAN STEPHEN LECTURE

The School of Law and Justice is delighted to announce The Honourable Justice Ruth McColl AO SC as our distinguished guest speaker for this year's event.

Her Honour will deliver a lecture titled: *The whirligig of time: the seemingly never-ending quest to balance reputation and freedom of speech.*

Initiated in 1993 to commemorate the inception of the Bachelor of Laws program at the University of Newcastle, the Sir Ninian Stephen Lecture is an annual tradition, featuring a keynote address by a distinguished member of the legal profession.

We look forward to your company for this highlight event on the Newcastle School of Law and Justice's calendar.

Date: Thursday 17 October 2024

Time: 5.30pm: light refreshments will be served.

6.30pm: Lecture commences.

Location: The UoN Conservatorium, Corner of Auckland and Laman Streets, Newcastle

RSVP: Please confirm your attendance by close of business on Monday 14 October 2024

[**REGISTER FOR THE LECTURE HERE**](#)

One-Day Defamation Masterclass with The Honourable Justice Ruth McColl

Defamation: The Galapagos Islands Division of the law of torts or a tort which balances the right to reputation and the right of free speech?

Join us at the School of Law and Justice for a compelling one-day masterclass on Defamation Law, presented by the Honorable Justice Ruth McColl.

This masterclass will explore the delicate balance between the right to reputation and the right to free speech. It will examine this complex tension through the principles of defamation law, including both the common law and statutory formulations.

Date: 18 October 2024 **Location:** University of Newcastle

Full masterclass details can be found [HERE](#)

**The Honourable Justice Ruth
McCull AO SC**



In the last decade several defamation cases have captured public attention in a way most private litigation would not. They were *Wilson v Bauer Media Pty Ltd & Another*, *Rush v Nationwide News Pty Ltd*, *Roberts-Smith v Fairfax Media Publications Pty Limited* and *Lehrmann v Network Ten Pty Limited*. In each case, either a party or the underlying events or both were well known to the public, most likely the reason the trials consumed public interest. Each case, and undoubtedly unknown to the public, turned in part, or to a significant extent, on amendments to the statutory law of defamation enacted in the past two decades – a period in which such statutory law has attracted significant attention. Has that legislative reform achieved its intention, or has it triggered further amendments to ameliorate gaps these cases exposed?

The Honourable Justice Ruth McCull AO SC was a Justice of the Court of Appeal of the Supreme Court of New South Wales from 2003 until 2019. Prior to becoming a judge, she practised as a solicitor, a barrister and was appointed Senior Counsel in New South Wales in 1994. While a barrister, she appeared in many defamation cases including for the defendant in *Lloyd v David Syme* (1985) 3 NSWLR 728 which took her to the Privy Council twice and the defendant in *Ettingshausen v Australian Consolidated Press Ltd* (1991) 23 NSWLR 443. While on the Court of Appeal, she wrote many of the leading judgments stating the principles of the law of defamation.

She has held numerous positions within the legal profession including President of the Australian Bar Association (2001-02), President of the New South Wales Bar Association (1999-2001), President of the New South Wales Women Lawyers' Association (1996-97), Vice-President of Australian Women Lawyers (1996–1999), President of the Board of the Public Interest Law Clearing House (1999-2002) and President of the Judicial Conference of Australia from 2008 - 2010. She was a member of the New South Wales Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee from 2004 - 2010, and chaired that Committee from 2007 - 2010. She was appointed an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) in 2004.



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