



APPOINTMENTS OF THE NEW CHIEF JUSTICE AND JUSTICE OF THE HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

The Supreme Court of New South Wales warmly welcomes the announcement this morning of the appointments of his Honour, Justice Stephen Gageler AC as Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, and his Honour, Justice Robert Beech-Jones, Chief Judge at Common Law of this Court, as a justice of the High Court of Australia.

Both judges are universally admired and respected for their outstanding legal ability, the quality of their judgments, their integrity and humility, and strong sense of public service.

Of Chief Justice-elect Gageler it may fairly be said that there is no practising lawyer in this country with a deeper knowledge of the Australian Constitution. Further, over many years as a barrister, Solicitor-General and, for the last 11 years, as a Justice of the High Court, he has commanded profound admiration within the legal profession and the Australian judiciary for his mastery of both public and private law. The clarity of his judgments is exceptional.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the enormous contribution Justice Beech-Jones has made to the Supreme Court of New South Wales since his appointment in March 2012 at the age of 46. He leaves the Supreme Court as Chief Judge at Common Law and as a judge of appeal, having presided over more than 500 civil hearings and criminal trials. He has also participated in approximately 375 appeals in the Court of Criminal Appeal, writing the leading judgment in many of those cases. He has also sat on a further 40 appeals in the Court of Appeal. Justice Beech-Jones is particularly acknowledged as an authority in the areas of criminal law, constitutional law and administrative law, and has conducted a number of murder and other complex criminal trials as well as several significant class actions.

His Honour has led the Common Law Division with great skill and energy, and contributed in a very real way to the high reputation and strong collegiality of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. His colleagues will miss him greatly but have every confidence that he will take his very fine attributes as a lawyer and a person to the High Court.

The Supreme Court congratulates both Chief Justice-elect Gageler and Justice Beech-Jones and wishes them well as they take up their new appointments. A special sitting to farewell Justice Beech-Jones from the Supreme Court of New South Wales will be held on 19 October 2023.

Andrew Bell
Chief Justice of New South Wales

22 August 2023