



**Law Council**  
OF AUSTRALIA

# Welcome Ceremony for Her Honour Judge Doust

**Speech delivered by Law Council of Australia President, Mr Greg McIntyre at the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Sydney**

**6 December 2024**

If it please the Court.

Since UNESCO declared 2019 the Year of Indigenous Languages and followed that up by making this the decade of Indigenous languages, it has been my practice to acknowledge the traditional owners in the Noongar language of my home town, Boorloo, or Perth, in the following words taught to me by Emeritus Professor Len Collard, a Whadjuk Noongar traditional owner:

*Kaia*

*Nyunh kaditj ngulluck nyinniny*

*Gadigal Eora Boodja*

*Nyunny burrunyin quop kaditj kanya*

*Nitja baarl birrdiya baarl boodja*

*Koora yeye borrdahwan*

*Kaia.*

It is a pleasure to be here today to welcome Your Honour's appointment on behalf of the Australian legal profession.

I would like to start with a story that was told to one of Your Honour's colleagues by your father and then generously shared with me.

Apparently when Your Honour was a child, you received a gift of a Batman/Batwoman outfit – which I believe you loved – and wore it to climb up a tree and then jump off.

Such fictional characters bear some resemblance to your Honour's real-life characteristics. I am told by the people around you that that you characteristically are a person who assists from the shadows, in the sense that you never ask for or expect credit and that you accord everyone equal kindness, respect and support.

This extends to noticing when a person needs a little bit of help and quietly doing what you can to make a difference without any fanfare or even the person knowing the extent to which you have gone.

Like the cartoon character your fight against evil is enhanced by being exceptionally smart. I am informed that at an age when most of us were content with children's books and comics, Your Honour was easily devouring tomes such as *Gone with the Wind*.

And to push the analogy as far as I can, Your Honour is also known for travelling around town utilising cool modes of transport, including a motor bike, a motorised scooter and a bicycle in a recognisable costume, in the form of a bright backpack.

Your Honour started work with the Australian Government Solicitor. You have also worked with the Aboriginal Family Violence Service in Central Australia and

Maurice Blackburn and Cashman in Melbourne before joining the Bar in 2008 at 6 James Hall Chambers.

Your long-standing work in Industrial Law commenced with your work as a Legal Officer with the Mining and Energy Division of the CFMEU.

Over the course of Your Honour's career, you have become one of the country's leading experts in industrial relations and your departure from the Bar is mourned as a significant loss by those who worked with you.

No doubt you will have a wide variety of fascinating fact situations come before you in your judicial role, but I wonder if any of them will match the CFMEU v Fair Work Ombudsman (Boggo Road Cross River Rail Case) decided by Justice Abraham on 25 May 2023 in which you appeared with John Agius SC to argue successfully that Judge Vasta had erred in declaring that the "Pete, Pete, pumpkin eater" was a homophobic slur, when such an interpretation was not known to or being advocated for by the Counsel for either party appearing before him or a matter of common knowledge to which he was entitled to have regard pursuant to s 144 of the *Evidence Act*

Outside of work, you are a dedicated fitness devotee and a huge supporter of women's sport.

You are an animal lover, to the point of choosing a vegetarian diet.

Combining these two passions, a colleague mentioned that when one finds themselves on a power walk to an appointment with you, every dog you pass receives an enthusiastic greeting. This is despite the fact Your Honour is most definitely a cat person, sharing your home with Missy and Pandy.

Your Honour, you bring so many attributes to this Court that will serve those who come before you well.

Your assiduous work ethic, intellect and attention to detail is accompanied by an exceptional capacity for compassion, understanding and patience.

Your Honour has played a key role in the development of our profession as an outstanding mentor and advocate for young lawyers.

We all gain from the skills and insight you bring to the continued administration of justice in Australia.

Your Honour, on behalf of the profession I congratulate you on your elevation and wish you well.

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