

Susan Kiefel citation

Chancellor, it is with great pleasure that I present to you Susan Mary Kiefel.

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws is being awarded to the Honourable Justice Kiefel, Chief Justice of Australia, in acknowledgement of her exceptional and distinguished service to Australian society through the law.

Susan Kiefel was born in Cairns in north Queensland but moved to Brisbane to be educated at the Geebung State Primary School and Sandgate District High School. She left school before her 15th birthday to commence secretarial training but was determined to become a barrister and completed her secondary schooling at night.

Her legal studies were undertaken through the Barrister's Admission Board while she also worked as a legal secretary and law clerk. She was admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1975.

In 1984 Chief Justice Kiefel completed a Master of Law at the University of Cambridge and was awarded both the CJ Hamson Prize in Comparative Law and the Jenning Prize from Wolfson College. In 1987 she was appointed a Queen's Counsel, the first female in Queensland to take silk. In 1989 she was made a part-time Hearing Commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Chief Justice Kiefel was appointed to the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1993 and then to the Federal Court of Australia the following year. She also served as a judge of the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island from 2004 to 2007 and was appointed a part-time Commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission in 2003.

She was appointed to the High Court in September 2007, then in January 2017 became the 13th Chief Justice of Australia – and the first woman to hold that position.

Chief Justice Kiefel has been a member of a number of Boards, including the National Institute for Law, Ethics and Public Affairs, and was later chair of the Key Centre for Law, Ethics, Justice and Governance at Griffith University. She was elected a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law (2007), a titular member of the International Academy of Comparative Law (2013) and Honorary Bencher of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn (2014).

Chief Justice Kiefel has received numerous honours and awards, notably being made a Companion in the general division of the Order of Australia in 2011 for 'eminent service to the law and to the judiciary, to law reform and to legal education in the areas of ethics, justice and governance'.

I am very pleased and proud to present to you Chancellor, Chief Justice Susan Kiefel, Companion, Order of Australia (AC), Queen's Counsel, Masters of Laws, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa).