

2008

## Introduction

In 2008 the Honourable Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG delivered the WA Lee Equity Lecture. Justice Kirby in his capacity as a justice of the High Court spoke about 'Equity's Australian Isolationism'. In February 1996 Kirby was appointed to the High Court of Australia. He retired from the High Court on 2 February 2009, shortly before reaching the constitutionally mandatory retirement age of 70. From 1983 until 1984 Kirby was a judge of the Federal Court of Australia. He was then appointed as President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. He was also during that period President of the Court of Appeal in the Solomon Islands from 1995 to 1996. Kirby was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1967. His first quasi-judicial appointment was to the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. He served as Deputy President from 1975 until 1983. He was seconded from the Commission to serve as the first Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission from 1974 until 1984. From 1984 until 1993 Kirby held the position of Chancellor of Macquarie University.

Michael Kirby attended state schools first at North Strathfield Public School followed by Summer Hill Public School for Opportunity Classes. His High School education was undertaken at Fort Street Boys High School in Sydney. He then attended the University of Sydney where he earned a Bachelor of Arts (1959), Bachelor of Laws (1962), Bachelor of Economics (1965) and a Master of Laws (First Class Honours) (1967). While at university he was elected President of the University of Sydney's Student Representative Council (1962-1963) and President of the University of Sydney Union (1965).

As a justice of the High Court Kirby often delivered dissenting opinions. In November 2003, Kirby delivered The Hamlyn Lectures at the University of Exeter on the subject of judicial activism. In those lectures he rejected the doctrine of strict constructionism. He also addressed this topic in a speech to the Bar Association of India in 1997.

Since his retirement, Kirby has been appointed to several academic roles at Australian universities. He has been appointed an honorary visiting professor by 12 universities. He has also undertaken other roles in international organisations concerned with the protection of human rights.

Kirby has been the recipient of many honours. In October 1982 he was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George for services to the law. He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 1991, Australia's highest civil honour. The citation described this award as: 'For Service to the Law, Law Reform, to Learning and the Law'. In the same year he was awarded the Human Rights medal. In August 2008, he was presented with the inaugural Australian Privacy Medal. In 1977 he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal. In 1977 he was awarded

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