

Citation for David Bennett AC QC
Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*)

Friday, 21 May 2021 – 1.00pm

Chancellor, it gives me great pleasure to present David Bennett AC QC to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the legal profession, the Commonwealth and the wider community.

Born in Amersham, Buckinghamshire and educated at the Hall School in Hampstead, David relocated to Australia with his family in 1951. He graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws with first class honours and was prox. acc. for the university medal. He then went on to obtain a Master of Laws and Doctor of Juridical Science from Harvard University. His father, Louis Bennett, was a well-known solicitor in Sydney.

David was a solicitor from 1964 to 1967 before being called to the New South Wales bar in 1967. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1979. He was a member of 5 Wentworth, now the longest established chambers in Sydney, between 1982 and 1998.

He has held many positions during his career, including President of the Australian Bar Association from November 1995 to February 1997, President of the New South Wales Bar Association from November 1995 to November 1997, President of the Association of Lawyer Arbitrators and Mediators in 1998, President of the Medico-Legal Society NSW from 1988 to 1990, and President of the Australian Academy of Forensic Sciences from 1999 to 2001.

From 2009 to 2012, he was a member of the Australian Government's Takeovers Panel, a peer review body that regulates corporate control transactions in widely held Australian entities by the efficient resolution of takeover disputes. He was a member of the International Legal Services Advisory Committee from 2005 to 2011. He is a member of the Honourable Society of King's Inns, the institution that controls the entry of barristers-at-law into the justice system of Ireland. He is recognised in various publications as a leader in the law.

He was Solicitor-General for the Commonwealth of Australia from 1998-2008 and was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2003 for his service as Solicitor-General. In June 2000, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of his service to the legal profession, particularly in the areas of administration, education and practice. He was later appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in the 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to the law, including his advice on matters of national interest during his time as the Commonwealth Solicitor-General and his international promotion of Australian legal services.

David returned to 5 Wentworth in August 2008 as a member of the Senior Counsel. He specialises in general appellate law, administrative law, constitutional law, alternative dispute resolution and arbitration, corporate and commercial law, commissions and inquiries, and banking, securities and insolvency, among other areas. He was named in the Best Lawyers in Australia list in April 2014 in the areas of Constitutional Law and Banking and Finance.

Demonstrating his dedication to the wellbeing of the wider community, on two occasions David has led groups of barristers in Bangladesh teaching advocacy to young lawyers. In recent times, he has taken on a considerable number of pro bono and legal aid cases. He has had a long and distinguished career of public service and service to the legal profession.

Chancellor, I present David Bennett AC QC for admission to the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) and invite you to confer the degree upon him.