



Speech by

Hon. Kerry Shine

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Justice Kiefel

Hon. KG SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland) (10.07 am): The Premier and I have welcomed the announcement that former Brisbane barrister and Queensland judge, Justice Susan Kiefel, will be appointed to the High Court of Australia. Justice Kiefel will be only the seventh Queenslander to be appointed to the High Court and the first Queensland woman to be appointed. She will replace the retiring Justice Ian Callinan.

In 1987, Justice Kiefel became the first Queensland woman to be appointed Queen's Counsel. Justice Kiefel was appointed to the Queensland Supreme Court in 1993 on the recommendation of the then Attorney-General, the member for Murrumba, Dean Wells. In 1994, she was appointed to the bench of the Federal Court by the then Commonwealth Attorney-General, Michael Lavarch.

Born in Cairns and educated at Sandgate State High School, Justice Kiefel's appointment has been widely welcomed by Queensland's judiciary, legal profession and wider community. Justice Kiefel is the first former Queensland Supreme Court judge to be elevated to the High Court since the appointment of Sir Harry Gibbs in 1970. I am delighted Justice Kiefel's appointment will maintain Queensland's representation on the High Court. As the Premier has indicated, Justice Kiefel was one of the nominees the Queensland government put forward to the federal Attorney-General.

I have thanked the federal Attorney-General for his announcement and for considering the Queensland government's advice so closely. I will also be seeking Queensland replacements for future vacancies on the High Court. There is a precedent for more than one Queenslander to sit on the High Court. Between 1981 and 1987 Queensland boasted two justices of the High Court, then Chief Justice Gibbs and Justice Sir Gerard Brennan.