

Plenary

Thursday 15 August 2024

Accredited Specialists' role in building trust in the law

All lawyers, through the oath or affirmation made on admission, and the unique position of trust and confidence that they hold in advising their clients, play a vital role in building and maintaining trust in the law. Several features of the Accredited Specialist scheme itself are integral to building trust in the law, as they require that only those with the requisite knowledge and experience may hold themselves out as experts. Choosing a lawyer is a daunting task for prospective clients that are new to the industry, and the rigor of the assessments, the obligation to keep ones knowledge and ability current, and the requirement of significant experience in the field, mean that people can feel confident in the abilities of an Accredited Specialist. On top of the intrinsic features of the scheme, however, is a responsibility for Accredited Specialists to note the significance of their position. Accompanying the reputational boost that the accreditation conveys is a particularly strong obligation to, as a leader in your field, conduct yourself in a way that builds trust in the profession. At a time in which trust in many institutions has wavered, including the law, those being held out as leaders and experts have the greatest responsibility in helping re-build that trust.

Meet the speaker

The Honourable Justice Julie Ward, President of the Court of Appeal, Supreme Court of New South Wales

The Hon. Justice Ward studied arts/law at the University of Sydney, graduating in law in 1982 with First Class Honours and the University Medal. Her Honour was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court in 1982. Following graduation, Justice Ward worked for a year as the associate to Sir Nigel Bowen, the first Chief Justice of the Federal Court. Justice Ward worked for Stephen Jaques Stone James (now King & Wood Malleons) for two years, then completed a BCL with First Class Honours at Oxford University, having won a post-graduate scholarship from Sydney University. Justice Ward was made a partner of Malleons in 1988. At that time she was the youngest female partner to be appointed at that firm. Her Honour was appointed to the Supreme Court of New South Wales in September 2008. She was the first female solicitor directly appointed to the Supreme Court bench. She sat in the Equity Division of the Court, until her appointment to the Court of Appeal in November 2012. She was appointed Chief Judge in Equity in March 2017 and appointed President of the Court of Appeal on 6 March 2022.