

MEDIA RELEASE
20 November 2012



**AUSTRALIAN
WOMEN
LAWYERS**

**A Brilliant Appointment
But Sadly Another Missed Opportunity For Women**

Australian Women Lawyers (AWL) congratulates Federal Court Chief Justice Patrick Keane on becoming the fiftieth judge to be appointed to the High Court of Australia.

Chief Justice Keane is a highly regarded jurist and an outstanding legal mind. He will be a formidable replacement for Justice Dyson Heydon upon his retirement in early 2013.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government has again missed an opportunity to appoint an equally capable and accomplished female judge to the High Court, which retains a male majority despite the majority of Australia's population being female. Interestingly, the current Federal Government features the first female Prime Minister and the first female Attorney-General, yet the two appointments they have made to the High Court bench have both been male.

AWL President Kate Ashmor said today:

“AWL is opposed to tokenism and supports judicial appointments solely on merit. Fortunately there are a number of meritorious female judges around our nation who would make excellent High Court judges. It's a pity they've missed out again.”

AWL looks forward to the next round of High Court appointments in mid 2015, when Justices Hayne and Crennan are due to retire. AWL hopes that the next Federal Government, whatever its political persuasion, will seize the opportunity to ensure the composition of the High Court bench reflects the gender, cultural and geographic diversity of our nation.

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