The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5447

Atkinson, Roslyn Gay

(1948 -)

Born	19480101, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Occupation	Arts administrator, Barrister, Educator, Judge, Lawyer, Solicitor, Teacher

Summary

Roslyn Gay Atkinson AO is a Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, having been appointed to that position in 1998. In 2002 she also became the Chairperson of the Queensland Law Reform Commission, and served in that role until her retirement in 2013.

Details

Roslyn Gay Atkinson was born in November 1948 in Brisbane, to Oliver John Scott (Jock) Atkinson, DFC, and Heather Noelle Atkinson. She attended Brisbane Girls Grammar School (1962-1965), before graduating Bachelor of Arts with Honours in English language and Literature (1970) and Bachelor of Educational Studies (1975) from the University of Queensland. She obtained a graduate certificate in Speech and Drama at Rose Bruford College in the United Kingdom.

Justice Atkinson initially pursued careers in the arts and education. She was a teacher from 1970 to 1974 and then became an Actor and Theatre Administrator from 1974 to 1978, before becoming a Lecturer of Literature, Drama, Film and Australian Studies at the Queensland Institute of Technology. In 1985 she entered the legal profession by becoming an Articled Clerk at Feez Ruthning. The following year she was an Associate to the Honourable Justice Brennan, then a Justice of the High Court of Australia. She was admitted to the bar in 1987 and practised there until her appointment to the Supreme Court.

Justice Atkinson then completed a Bachelor of Laws degree with first class honours at the University of Queensland (1985). She received the Feez Ruthning Prize in Company Law (1983), the Ruthning Memorial Scholarship (1984), the Women Lawyers Prize (1984), the Virgil Power Prize (1984), the Morris Fletcher & Cross Prize (1984) and the Wilkinson Memorial Prize (1984). She commenced articles of clerkship at the Brisbane firm, Feez Ruthning (1985), and then served as Associate to Brennan J of the High Court of Australia (1986).

On 23 February 1987, she was admitted as a barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland and commenced practice at the bar in Brisbane. Whilst in practice at the bar, Justice Atkinson also served as a member of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (1988-1990), a member (1990-1996) and deputy chair (1994-96) of the Queensland Law Reform Commission, a member of the advisory committee to the Law Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology (from 1991), a member (1992-94) and later inaugural president (1994-1997) of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, and a hearing commissioner for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (1994-1997). She also served as a member of the management committee of the Caxton Legal Service and as subeditor of the Queensland Reports.

On 3 September 1998, Justice Atkinson was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland. Thereafter she also served as chair of the Queensland Law Reform Commission (2002-2014).

Justice Atkinson has made contributions to the development and strengthening of judicial institutions internationally. Her Honour served as President of the International Commission of Jurists (Queensland) from 2000 to 2013. Her Honour led a delegation to South Africa in 1999 to advise with regard to the implementation of Equality Courts and presented at Anti-Discrimination Law workshops for the South African judiciary in 2000. In 2005, Justice Atkinson gave presentations at a training workshop for Iraqi Judges on International Human Rights Law. Justice Atkinson was Delegation Leader for the International Bar Association's Report on Independence of the Judiciary in Fiji. Her Honour is a Vice-President of the International Association of Judges' Study Commission on the Independence of the Judiciary.

Her Honour is a Member of the National Judicial College of Australia's National Indigenous Justice Committee. In that role, she led a project in 2013 that was aimed at better informing courts and the legal profession in Queensland about many urban, remote and regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Her Honour is also Co-Editor of the Equal Treatment Bench Book of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

In 2015, Justice Atkinson was made an Officer of the Order of Australia 'For distinguished service to the judiciary and to law reform in Queensland, through contributions to the legal profession and to promoting awareness of issues of injustice and inequality in Australia and internationally.'

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section
Judicial profile of The Honourable Justice Roslyn G Atkinson AO, Supreme Court Library Queensland, 2015, http://www.sclqld.org.au/judicial-papers/judicial-profiles/profiles/rgatkinson

Book Section
Roslyn Atkinson, Fotheringham, Richard, 2005

Site Exhibition
Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016, http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers

Author Details
Supreme Court Library Queensland

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