



**SUPREME COURT  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**  
Stirling Gardens  
Barrack Street  
Perth WA 6000

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5 December, 2011

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **SENIOR COUNSEL APPOINTMENTS**

The Chief Justice of Western Australia, the Hon Wayne Martin, today announced the appointment of three Senior Counsel for 2011, after 19 applications were received. The appointments are Mr James Thomson, Mr Brahma Dharmananda, and Mr Joseph McGrath.

Appointment as Senior Counsel is based on eminence in the practice of law, especially in advocacy, unquestioned integrity, availability and independence.

A Committee advises the Chief Justice on applications for appointment. The Committee, chaired by Chief Justice Martin, comprises the President of the Court of Appeal, the Senior Judge of the Supreme Court, the President of the State Administrative Tribunal, the Senior Judge of the Federal Court resident in Perth, the Chief Judge of the Family Court and the Chief Judge of the District Court.

#### **Mr James A Thomson**

Mr Thomson was born in July 1949. He was awarded a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) in 1971 and a Bachelor of Arts in 1974 from the University of Western Australia. He completed a Master of Laws (1975) and a Doctor of Juridical Science (1981) at Harvard University.

He was admitted to practice in Western Australia in 1972. He received a Fulbright Scholarship (1974 -1976) and a Post doctoral Fulbright Scholarship in 1986-87 (Visiting Fellow at Harvard and Columbia Law Schools).

He completed his articles with Kott Wallace & Gunning in 1971-1972, and joined the Crown Law Department in 1973. Mr Thomson has worked for the State Solicitors Office since then, primarily in the Attorney General's office. He is involved in negotiations between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, including all matters of Commonwealth/State relations, the development of legal and constitutional policy and the progress of national legislation. He has been the legal representative for the states and territories on Australian delegations to international forums.

Since 1977, he has been a part-time lecturer and tutor in Constitutional Law at the University, and held a similar role at Murdoch University from 1987 – 2004.

**Mr Brahma Dharmananda**

Mr Dharmananda was born in March 1964. He was awarded a Bachelor of Jurisprudence (First Class Honours) in 1986 and a Bachelor of Laws (First Class Honours) in 1987 from the University of Western Australia, winning the HCF Keall Prize and the David De Barran Cullen Prize. He completed his Bachelor of Civil Law (Second Class Honours) at Oxford in 1992.

He completed his articles at Mallesons Stephen Jaques in 1987 and was admitted to practice in WA in 1988. Mr Dharmananda practised principally in litigation/dispute resolution in Perth, and also worked in the company's New York office in 1990/91, and its Melbourne office in 2005/06. He joined the Independent Bar in 2006 where he is regularly involved in large commercial, mining or gas contractual disputes, matters involving State Agreements, banking and property disputes, and Corporations Act and insolvency matters.

**Mr Joseph McGrath**

Mr McGrath was born in May 1964. He was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in 1986 from the University of Western Australia, a Bachelor of Laws in 1989 from the Australian National University, and a Master of Laws in 1996 (UWA). He completed a Master of Laws (with Merit) in Public International Law & Criminal Law at the London School of Economics in 1999.

Mr McGrath was admitted to practice in WA in 1991 and worked for Freehill, Hollingdale and Page from 1990 – 1991. In 1992, he was Associate to Justice Lee in the Federal Court, Perth. From 1993 -1998, he was Principal Legal Officer/Senior Legal Officer for the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions in Perth, and Senior Assistant Director in 2000 – 2001. He joined the Independent Bar in March 2001, until his appointment as Director of Public Prosecutions in 2010.

At the Bar, Mr McGrath's practice involved both civil and criminal law, with an emphasis on corporate criminal matters and law enforcement issues.

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