

Monday, 7 December 2020

Human rights advocate, Stephen Keim SC, wins Law Council of Australia President's Award

The Law Council of Australia's 2020 [President's Award](#) has been presented to Queensland barrister, Stephen Keim SC, a champion of human rights in Australia and around the world.

The President's Award is awarded to an individual who has been an 'outstanding example to the Australian legal profession and to those who might seek to join its ranks'.

Law Council President, Pauline Wright, presented Mr Keim with his award at the annual Law Council Director's Meeting held virtually, as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, on 5 December.

"I am honoured to present the President's Award to Stephen Keim SC who has spent his career fighting injustice. He's never been afraid to take on cases that attract controversy and the public eye," said Ms Wright.

"Skillful advocacy on behalf of our clients is an essential tool for lawyers. But what makes a truly great legal advocate is the ability to engage with heart and passion where the case demands it. Someone whose skills lead not just to just outcomes for their clients, but to the transformation of public opinion and a fairer society.

"Stephen has never been afraid to take on the hard cases, those that invite public debate – even when they threaten his self-interest.

"His career is marked by helping some of the most vulnerable people in society, both here in Australia and internationally."

Ms Wright paid tribute to Mr Keim's commitment to ending the death penalty in his role as patron of Australians Against Capital Punishment and the Julian Wagner Memorial Fund, and for his indefatigable work in the field of Indigenous justice.

"Stephen is an active member of the Indigenous Incarceration Working Group of the Law Council of Australia and works, tirelessly, to promote the rights of First Nations peoples," Ms Wright said.

"His commitment was demonstrated earlier this year, when the High Court in *Love and Thoms* ruled that, under the Constitution, Aboriginal Australians cannot be considered 'aliens' – a decision which generated many headlines and provoked a storm of opposition."

Ms Wright also highlighted Mr Keim's role in one of Australia's most high-profile terrorism cases when he represented Dr Mohamed Haneef. It resulted in Mr Keim being awarded the 2009 Human Rights Medal by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

"Stephen is a most worthy recipient of this year's President's Award. His bravery and unwavering commitment to social justice should be an inspiration to us all," Ms Wright said.

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