

THE ROLE AND RUNNING OF COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY

Date: Thursday, 1 August 2024
Time: 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm AEST
Place: Banco Court, Level 3, 415 George Street, Brisbane QLD and **ONLINE** - this is a **free public event** and a link will be provided prior to it if you cannot attend in person

Over the past decade or so the use of royal commissions and other public inquiries as an adjunct of government has expanded exponentially. They are often led by a judge, generally retired, or a senior member of the legal profession and, on occasion, by an academic. It is essential for those leading an inquiry and those otherwise involved in it to appreciate how much an inquiry differs from litigation, whether as a judge, a lawyer, or an interested party.

The speakers will discuss the large topic of the role and value of commissions of inquiry in the Westminster system, and range over the question of who should lead an inquiry, the role of counsel assisting, the pitfalls of celebrity and relations with the media, the difficulties in offering procedural fairness within the time constraints of an inquiry, relations with the commissioning government, issues of privilege, variations across jurisdictions, getting and managing the material, and obtaining and nurturing staff.



The Hon Catherine Holmes AC SC: The former Chief Justice of Queensland was Commissioner of the Royal Commission into the Robodebt Scheme and in 2011-2012 was Commissioner of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. At the Bar between 1998 and 1999, she was Counsel Assisting the Forde Inquiry into the Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions. In January 2020, Ms Holmes was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Australia for 'eminent service to the judiciary, notably to criminal, administrative and mental health law, and to the community of Queensland'.



The Hon Margaret White AO: After a distinguished career as a scholar and barrister, including appearing in the *Mabo Case*, Ms White was the first woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court of Queensland. Since retiring as a Judge of Appeal, she has conducted inquiries into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, into the racing Industry in Queensland, and into government processes in PNG over an off-shore loan. Ms White was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2003 and appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2018 for 'distinguished service to the judiciary and community'.



Chair: Emeritus Professor Peter Coaldrake AO has had a distinguished career as a practitioner and author in public administration and higher education, including nearly fifteen years as Vice-Chancellor of QUT and several years as the Chief Commissioner of the Australian higher education regulatory body, TEQSA. In 2022 he conducted a review of culture and accountability in the Queensland Public Sector ('Let the Sunshine In'). He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2011 for 'distinguished service to higher education'.

Please join us for light refreshments after the session

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