Gleeson appointment a ‘no-brainer’

This extract from Michael Pelly’s new book, Murray Gleeson: The Smiler, explains the reasoning behind the Attorney-General’s appointment of the High Court judge.

WHEN John Howard was elec-
ted prime minister in 1996, he
knew that within two years he
would be facing a tough class action
flood in the High Court. The
workload was on Murray Gleeson,
then chief justice of NSW. Howard
would be at university that fall
and by the time he returned to
private practice as a barrister.

"It would be tough going and
I knew that I was the perfect
man for the job," said Gleeson. "I
had the right experience and
would be able to handle the job.
I was also provided legal
advice." He had a formal education in
law as well as a law office in
Sydney.

He said he had a keen interest
in the field and a passion for
the law. He decided to study
the law in order to gain the
knowledge and skills needed
to effectively handle
class actions.

In January 1996, Australia’s
Attorney-General, Alan Smith,
announced that Gleeson would
be appointed to the High Court.

Gleeson’s appointment was
made public after the
announcement.

He said the decision was based on
his experience and expertise in
handing class actions. He
was recommended to
the High Court by
the Australian Attorney-General's
department.

When asked about the
decision, Gleeson said
he had been aware of
the opportunity
for some time.

"I had been aware of
the opportunity
during my
time at the court,
"It was a huge
opportunity for
me and I
welcomed
the chance
to work
in such
a high-level
position.

"I was very
excited
about
the
prospect
of
working
in
the
High
Court.

"It was a
great
opportunity
to
work
with
such
capable
people
and
I
looked
forward
to
the
experience.

"I was
honored
to
be
appointed
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was
very
grateful
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opportunity.

"I
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Race act could protect opinions

Gleeson appointment as chief ‘no-brainer’

Primary source: Australian

CHRIS MERRITT

Gleeson appointment as chief ‘no-brainer’

Primary source: Australian

CHRIS MERRITT

High Court asked to weigh dubious evidence

Primary source: Australian

CHRIS MERRITT

Victims of sex assault ‘should meet offenders’

Primary source: Australian

CHRIS MERRITT

PREJUDICE

Primary source: Australian

CHRIS MERRITT

Withers said that the federal cabinet would consider a recommendation by the Human Rights Commissioner that the Racial Discrimination Act be amended to make it easier for courts to strike down “bad laws” and to protect freedom of speech.


HIGH COURT

A major report by RMIT University’s Centre for Innovative Justice has called for a new system — including between sexual assault victims and alleged offenders — to deal with disputes over evidence.

The report, which was funded by the federal government as part of the Centre for Innovative Justice’s major project to examine sexual assault legislation, will go before a federal parliamentary committee for review.

Nonetheless, the report indicates it should not be used as a law.

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