

CHRIS RONALDS AO SC

FREDERICK JORDAN CHAMBERS

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Appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to the law and the legal profession, particularly in supporting, mentoring and developing the careers of Indigenous lawyers and law students, Chris specialises in discrimination and harassment law, employment law and administrative law. Her practice also extends to intellectual property, commercial litigation, family provision and related equity matters, and she has particular expertise in the private education sector and its interaction with regulators.

Chris has conducted several landmark discrimination cases and has played an instrumental role in the development and passage of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth), and in the passage of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth), *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW) and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth). She has also assumed other significant roles, including appointment as legal policy advisor at Federal and State level on various grounds of discrimination and aged policy, and has appeared as Counsel Assisting the Commission in several ICAC Inquiries.

An experienced workplace investigator in corporate and government operations, Chris has extensive practical experience and expert knowledge in the governance of corporations, risk and financial management, workplace practices and organisational development. Such knowledge is bolstered by her graduation from the Australian Institute of Company Director's Company Director Course.

Chris was the co-author of the fifth edition of *Discrimination Law and Practice*, a Federation Press publication. She holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney, as well as a number of significant professional appointments. She has also completed a Mediation Workshop with LEADR and a Professional Certificate in Arbitration through the University of Adelaide.

APPOINTMENTS AND ADMISSIONS TO PRACTICE

- 2004 Appointed Senior Counsel
- 1982 Admitted to the Bar of New South Wales
- 1973 Admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND COURSES

- 2017 Company Director's Course: Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD)
- 2006 Professional Certificate in Arbitration: University of Adelaide
- 2005 Mediator's Workshop: LEADR
- 1972 Bachelor of Laws: University of Sydney

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PRINCIPAL AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Administrative Law
- Commercial Law, Corporations and Trade Practices
- Intellectual Property
- Employment and Industrial Law
- Equity
- Human Rights and Discrimination
- Inquests, Disciplinary Hearings and Inquiries
- Mediation, Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Mental Health and Guardianship
- Succession and Family Provision

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1990 – present Barrister, then Senior Counsel, Frederick Jordan Chambers
- 1982 – 1990 Barrister and Policy Consultant
- 1978 – 1982 Legal Officer, NSW Anti-Discrimination Board
- 1973 – 1978 Solicitor, Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department

ACCOLADES

- Order of Australia (AO) for services to the law - 2018
- Highly Commended, Justice Medal, Law and Justice Foundation – 2006
- Order of Australia (AM) for services to women - 1994

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND APPOINTMENTS

- Member, New South Wales Bar Association
- Member, Resolution Institute
- Member, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Member, Sydney Swans
- Trustee, Indigenous Barristers Trust The Mum Shirl Fund
- Member, First Nations Committee, NSW Bar Association
- Committee Member, Law Council of Australia - Indigenous Legal Issues Committee

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author *Discrimination Law & Practice*, 5th edition, Federation Press: 2019

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Chris has delivered multiple speaking engagements on discrimination, sexual harassment, the role of Counsel Assisting and professional ethics

SELECT CASES, INQUIRIES AND REPORTS

High Court of Australia

- *Maloney v State of Queensland* (2013) 252 CLR 168 – challenge to the alcohol restrictions on Palm Island, a disadvantaged Aboriginal community in far north Queensland
- *Purvis v New South Wales* (2003) 217 CLR 92 – operation of disability discrimination law in area of Education

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Federal Court of Australia

- *State of New South Wales v Huntley* [2017] FCA 581 – interpretation of reasonable adjustments in disability discrimination law (appeal dismissed)
- *Wotton v State of Queensland (No 5)* (2016) 352 ALR 146 – Palm Island class action against Queensland Police Service for raids after civil unrest following an Aboriginal death in custody
- *Raffles College Pty Ltd v Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency* (2015) 233 FCR 162 – application by a private college for judicial review of a refusal to re-register the college

Federal Circuit Court

- *Huntley v State of NSW* [2016] FCCA 146 – indemnity costs against the respondent
- *Buckley v Terrigal Grosvenor Lodge (Erina) Pty Ltd (No 2)* (2015) 298 FLR 429, [2015] FCCA 2267 – unfair dismissal – whether applicant dismissed after exercising a “workplace right” and making a “complaint”
- *Haraksin v Murrays Australia Ltd (NO 2)* (2013) 211 FCR 1 – providing wheel chair accessible bus services for disabled travellers

NSW Court of Appeal

- *Lacey v Attorney General of NSW* [2021] NSWCA 27 – rights of Aboriginal young woman to request a hearing before a female magistrate
- *Commissioner of Police v The Estate of Russell* – (2002) 55 NSWLR 232 – race discrimination in policing

New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal / Administrative Decisions Tribunal

- *Wong v NSW Board of Studies* [2010] NSWADT 274 – disability provisions in the HSC
- *VN obo VO v Board of Studies* [2006] NSWADT 106 – race discrimination in courses for HSC

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

Chris has appeared as Counsel Assisting in 6 inquiries and has appeared for parties in other inquiries. The ICAC inquiries covered the following:

- Improper use at a local council by a general manager (2010)
- Fraud in capital work projects (2008)
- Nine month inquiry into fraud in RailCorp (2007 – 2008)
- Fraud in traffic management systems (2006)
- The use of Parliamentary allowances (2004)
- Plagiarism at a university (2004)

Major Reports

- *A Review of the Land Negotiation Program*: March 2020
- *Sexual Harrasment and Sex Discriination in the NSW Police*: January 2007
- *Disability Discrimination in Australia*: Discussion Paper: AGPS – 1990 and Final Report: AGPS – 1991
- *Residents’ Rights in Nursing Homes and Hostels*: AGPS – 1989
- *Green Paper on Affirmative Action for Women*: AGPS – 1985
- *Street Offences by Aborigines*: Anti-Discrimination Board – 1980