

Citation for Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*)

James Donald Merralls AM QC

James Merralls was born in Canberra in 1936. His secondary schooling was at The King's School, Parramatta, and Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, where he excelled academically and won several exhibitions in his final year. In 1954, he entered the Faculty of Law at the University of Melbourne, where he became a member of the editorial boards of *Res Judicatae* and the *Melbourne University Law Review* and was involved in the historic transformation of the one into the other in 1957. He won numerous awards during his studies and graduated as LLB (Hons) in 1958.

James Merralls has been a committed teacher who has inspired and mentored generations of law students, including many who have gone on to become judges of superior courts and leaders in their fields. He was a resident law tutor at Trinity College for 12 years which included 18 months as Dean of the College (1967-68). He also tutored at the Faculty of Law between 1958 and 1960 and became an external member of the Faculty of Law in the early 1970s.

James Merralls was admitted to the legal profession on 1 April 1960 and signed the roll of the Victorian Bar later that month. Between 1960 and 1961, he was Associate to the Rt Hon. Sir Owen Dixon, the Chief Justice of Australia. He was appointed a Queen's Counsel in Victoria in 1974 and later in other Australian states.

Through his work spanning more than four decades as editor of the *Commonwealth Law Reports* (CLR), James Merralls has made an outstanding contribution to the administration of justice in Australia. The CLR records the cases of the High Court of Australia: such reports are an essential part of any common law system. It is the role of the editor to select the judgments which are to be included in them and to assign each judgment to a reporter. James Merralls involves himself closely in the entire process of editing and reporting. What distinguishes his contribution is his extensive legal knowledge, his personal integrity, and the unstinting dedication he has shown towards his responsibilities since being appointed as editor in 1969. He is the longest-serving editor of the CLR. The high standard of the CLR is widely acknowledged and has earned public praise from Chief Justices of the High Court, among others. James Merralls leads by example. His meticulous correction and editing of law reporters' draft reports, together with his own reports being models of concision and clarity, have provided invaluable guidance as well as specialist education to the reporters of the last forty years, many of whom have gone on to high judicial office.

James Merralls is also a leading silk, with an extensive practice in both constitutional law and in equity that he has acquired over 50 years. He has provided advice to and appeared for Commonwealth and States, revenue authorities, and trustees of major superannuation funds and estates. His paper about joint ventures is considered seminal and has informed the establishment of many mining and exploration joint ventures since the 1980s. He has been very generous with his time and expertise, sharing his insights on a number of committees, including the Council of Law Reporting in Victoria, on which he served from 1978 to 2006. He is a former chairman of the Constitutional Law Committee of the Law Council of Australia and also served on the Ethics Committee of the Victorian Bar and on the Council of the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration.

In 1999, James Merralls was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his service to the judiciary and to the legal profession as editor of the CLR.