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AUSTRALIAN EASTERN NOVICE DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG



HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

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I am proud to be asked to serve as Patron of the 1998 Debating Championships.

Debating is a wonderful way to train the mind and the spirit to engage in the special privilege which we humans have - to communicate by language and to persuade.

The first public recognition I ever received occurred in 1954 when I was part of the team that won the New South Wales Schools Debating Championship. It went on my Prefect's blazer at Fort Street High School in Sydney. Observers who did not look closely probably thought I was a football champion! But I still have the cup which each of us in that team won. The silver is getting a little tarnished and the cup is a little battered now. But the will to communicate and to persuade is just as strong.

I hope that all participants, and not just the winners, will enjoy the competition. It may prepare them for the privilege of a life serving their fellow citizens in the years ahead.

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