

Annexure C Salutations to the Best Supportive Persons at the AAT !

Just a short note to briefly thank all you lovely people who have helped & supported me at the Tribunal over the last 5 years & 3 months and those previously, the past 20 years. I am proud to have known you all. You are the best.

Many of you have asked why I did not apply for my existing Tribunal position. So to head-off any misleading speculation or gossip I have included the following paragraph for your information.

I submitted an EOI for a newly established position in 2019, consistent with the principles set-out in the 2018 Tribunal Statutory Review (the Review), of Deputy President (*Counselor*) and was interviewed for this position pre-pandemic in February 2020. This position is a non-renewable position for 5 years specifically established to advise & assist the AAT President & public sector Registrar in implementing the recommendations of the Review. It has a number of mandatory criteria. However, the compelling criteria is that the person be genuinely merit-selected, possess extensive senior Tribunal experience, f/t & p/t, in multiple Australian state & federal Tribunals together with experience in exercising judicial & non-judicial power & jurisdictions in the capacity as either a Tribunal Head or Deputy Tribunal Head.

Now that that is over, to continue with the purpose of this communication, I would like to share with you some of the things I have learnt over my last 48 years of a working life. They might help you in some small way in guiding your way through your own lives.

I was lucky to have 2 loving parents of modest means who made great financial and personal sacrifices for both my brother & I so that we had the best education. They often said that this is what was to be our inheritance, that is, no mansions, no bulging trust funds for us, just some important principles to guide us - to live a good & productive life. We could either squander our invisible inheritance or make use of it. They also instilled in us both some guiding principles including not to expect anything unless you are prepared to work for it- as nothing comes for free. There is always a price to pay. Either way, how we dealt with our opportunities through-out our life would make us become the people we are today. I hope mum & dad are not too disappointed in how my brother & I have lived our lives.

During my work life I have learnt to respect other people, their differences with us as well as what is common between us. I have learnt that it is much more productive to actively listen than to dominate a conversation. Doing the best you can and achieving small gains in work experience is better than huge leaps. Don't bow to those who would attempt to dominate or belittle you. Stand-up for what you believe in- not with great bluster & noise but by example & gentle persuasion. Don't ever do what you think is wrong no matter how reasonably the argument is put to you. Follow your hunch. It is probably right.

Don't ever let a day go by without doing at least something positive as it is a day you will never be able to live again.

Don't be overwhelmed or restricted in your critical opinion by people with titles such as *judge* or *member* or people with numerous letters after their name. Remember, *they are only human*- just like you with all the usual foibles & weaknesses.

All the best in your future careers.

Geraldine Hoeben

AAT Member 24 September 2020

