

Papua New Guinea Independence Day Celebrations
Consulate-General
15 September 1999 - 5.30pm

The Hon P de Jersey - Chief Justice of Queensland

Consul-General Mr Henry P Koiaie, Speaker the Hon Ray Hollis MLA, the Hon Doug Slack MLA, Members of the Consular Corps, ladies and gentlemen.

It is very good for us to have the opportunity this evening to join to mark the significance of our close and good neighbour as it celebrates twenty-four years of independence. Our State, and Papua New Guinea, our nearest sovereign nation across the sea, are not only close geographically, but we have deep and enduring links, valuable to both of us, at many significant levels: culturally, as traders, and governmentally. The warmth with which the State of Queensland respects that relationship is demonstrated by many things, and interestingly by high level visits by the Queensland Premier to Papua New Guinea - on three occasions Premier Goss, with visits by Premier Beattie both in that capacity and while Leader of the Opposition. The Premier's most recent visit related to the proposed Papua New Guinea to Queensland gas pipeline. That enormous project is extremely exciting, with potential for massive benefit to us both, in terms of employment and wealth generation. I am informed that successful meetings between Prime Minister Morauta and Premier Beattie even further strengthened an already vital relationship. As Chief Justice I am very interested in developing links between the Supreme Court of Queensland and the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea. I have mentioned this to the Attorney General. I believe that we can assist each other, quite apart from the worthy symbolism of forging yet another neighbourly link.

I am very pleased tonight to acknowledge the effective work of the Consul-General, and to express Queensland's strong support for his important endeavours. He has been directly involved in several projects associated with memoranda of understanding between our two governments. Those important memoranda cover areas as diverse as education and training, resource development, business co-operation, transport and infrastructure; they express a real and functioning partnership between the State and the Nation. That partnership will continue to develop, through goodwill and determination on the part of the people and the governments of Papua New Guinea and Queensland, as has occurred over the last twenty-four years of nationhood of the independent State of New Guinea.

I am honoured, on behalf of the people of Queensland, to ask you to join with me, ladies and gentlemen, in honouring the Queen and the people of Papua New Guinea.

