

# Land and Resources Tribunal

## **PRESIDENT'S WELCOME ADDRESS**

### **EMERALD – 4 OCTOBER 2000**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the first regional sittings of the Land and Resources Tribunal of Queensland. Today is an historic occasion, and my colleagues and I are very pleased to be sitting today in Emerald.

The Tribunal was established by legislation passed by State Parliament last year. Our jurisdiction involves mining, native title, cultural heritage and compulsory acquisitions. But various delays occurred before the Tribunal's full jurisdiction became operative. That occurred only 2 weeks ago. The Tribunal has since received more than 60 mining applications and we have made directions in a large number of them. We propose to work through all applications in a fair, just and prompt way – and we are looking forward very much to the work which lies ahead.

Regional sittings will be a routine part of the Tribunal's operations. That is important for the parties and witnesses. It will assist in streamlining and speedy decision making. It will also ensure that the Tribunal is a truly State-wide body.

May I also mention briefly that a number of innovations have been introduced for Tribunal proceedings. Active case management will apply. Barrister's wigs and gowns have been scrapped. Each party will normally bear their own costs. Mediation will be encouraged. Proceedings will be conducted with minimal appropriate formality. Our forms and rules are very short and written in simple English. The rules of evidence have been relaxed. Hearings will usually be open to the public – but can be closed where culturally- or commercially-sensitive evidence is being given. Tribunal judgments will be published on the Internet. And as you see at the front of the Bench, Member name plates will now be used.

The Tribunal is pleased to be in Emerald today. The Emerald area has a long and significant history in respect of various mining activities. That is also reflected in the fact that more than a quarter of the applications which the Tribunal currently has before it are from the Emerald region.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the Emerald community for the hospitality shown to the Tribunal. Our special thanks are also extended to the Magistrates Court for generously permitting us to use their court facilities while we are here. That is very much appreciated.

The Tribunal will now adjourn briefly to reconstitute.

President Koppenol