

## Opening of Rare Books Room

Friday 11 February 2000

5.30pm

Welcoming Remarks

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey

Your Excellency the Governor and Mrs Arnison

The Right Honourable Sir Harry Gibbs and Lady Gibbs

Mr Attorney-General the Honourable Matt Foley, MLA

The Honourable Justice White, Chair of the Supreme Court Library Committee

Your Honours

Ladies and Gentlemen

In its unadorned state, the corridor along which you approached this grand Banco Court this evening, is pathetically bland. And so would be our lives without inspiration. Through the generosity last year of the Queensland Art Gallery, we added to that corridor Anne Graham's beautiful contemporary visions of Australia. Subsequently walking that corridor, saying "hello" from time to time to lawyers, occasional witnesses - once the family of an alleged murderer - I sensed an uplifting of spirit: amazing, they said, that the fabric of a courthouse might so readily be made interesting. Blandness, but with an added touch of beauty thereby inspirational! What else might we achieve?

Well, you say, a courthouse is expected to exude tradition. It is evident here in this courtroom, but how many people, we Judges asked, come in here? Many more these days than a few years ago of course, but for all that? Our exceptional, significant, rare books, the grand robes of the Honourable Jack Lawrence Kelly those sorts of things exude tradition, we Judges felt, but how to remind the people that tradition is truly not barren: it can be beneficial? And so we are presenting hallowed tradition to a contemporary public in a captivating modern setting.

We regard these books as evidencing the roots of our current legal wisdom, the robes as an important signification to the people of the dignity of their courts. We have rendered them accessible. They can be scrutinised, assessed, evaluated at close quarters indeed like almost every aspect of today's judicial role. We have facilitated that assessment by placing these beautiful treasures in a modern context; and likewise we Judges today strive to render justice more accessible, we strive to render justice according to law, more currently comprehensible.

The striking module outside, irreverently recently termed by some a Dr Who Tardis, a Maxwell Smart cone of silence, is full of rare books. This court room, ladies and gentlemen, is full of rare individuals: interesting, distinctive, memorable people, and on behalf of the judiciary, I warmly welcome you all. This evening's court room is indeed a cauldron of creativity our vice regal representative, current judges including a Justice of the High Court of Australia; the Hon the Attorney-General; former Chief Justices including a former Chief Justice and charismatic State Governor in Sir Walter Campbell, and Sir Harry Gibbs, one of only three Queenslanders who have reached the eminent rank of Chief Justice of Australia, he together with the legendary Sir Samuel Griffith, who gazes down upon us, and Sir Gerard Brennan; former Judges; Consuls; Mr Cedric Hampson QC, the stylish long term leader of the Queensland Bar; Law School Deans, Presidents of the professional associations; our Librarian Mr Aladin Rahemtula, himself a treasure, indeed a gem ) Doyens as are you all, of many varied sections of our broad Queensland community, I regret I cannot offer individual biographies, but I respectfully suggest that like our rare books, you should all be taken from the shelves and savoured, as may indeed occur following the oration!

I warmly welcome you all to this event of such significance in the life of the courts, and thereby the people of Queensland. It is significant particularly for drawing back into the public domain a very important part of Queensland's legal heritage: these wonderful treasures which have languished too long behind then necessarily closed doors. The courts are deeply indebted to the Supreme Court Library Committee for co-operating in this course, and of course to those generous benefactors who have facilitated it: The Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for the State of Queensland, and the Grants Committee of the Queensland Law Society. I welcome their representatives, including Mr Cedric Hampson QC as Chairman of the Incorporated Council, and Mr Brian Kilmartin as Chair of the Grants Committee.

I also note with pleasure the presence of the architect Mr Leigh Shutter, whose innovative style progressively revealed last year, increased my excitement level, as my colleagues may confirm, to the point of irrepressibility; and of the builders, E. Chapman and Son, whose craftsmanship is self evidently beyond measure.

The public significance of this event is further signified by the presence of leaders of the other arms of Queensland government: the Honourable the Attorney-

General, whom, as always, I welcome to the Court; and ultimately His Excellency the Governor, who also does great honour to the Court. We are indeed privileged and delighted, Your Excellency, that you have kindly agreed to be present this evening, to speak about the development of the project, and formally to open our splendid new public facility.

Your Honours, ladies and gentlemen, will you join me in welcoming His Excellency the Governor...