

## **Dutch Ambassadorial Reception on the occasion of the Official Birthday of HM Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands**

**6.00pm - Thursday 3 May 2001**

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

Your Excellency the Ambassador  
Honorary Consul  
Ladies and gentlemen

I assume the role of proposing this toast with considerable relish. Queen Beatrix leads a nation for which Kaye and I feel both admiration and fondness: admiration for the great efficiency which characterises the Netherlands, and fondness for the beauty of its heritage and the warmth of its peoples. As well as tourism, there are important trade relationships between Queensland and the Netherlands, and I commend the Ambassador the Honorary Consul especially, for fostering those relationships.

The anniversary of the birthday of Queen Beatrix actually falls on 31 January. It is always, however, celebrated in the Netherlands on 30 April: that was the day in 1980 on which Queen Juliana signed the Act of Abdication, precedent to the investiture, as monarch, of the then Princess Beatrix. That day, 30 April is also, interestingly, the anniversary of the now Princess Juliana's own birthday.

Queen Beatrix is the third successive woman to head the Kingdom of the Netherlands, following her mother Queen Juliana, and before, her grandmother Queen Wilhelmina. Perhaps surprisingly for the progressive Dutch, their constitution refers to the head of State as "The King" even where the monarch is a woman! The Dutch people's reverence for their Queen is reflected in very many ways, including for example the prominent public display of her photograph, even in out-of-the-way places: Kaye and I particularly recall in that regard a bakery in Leiden.

There is no doubt Queen Beatrix is widely regarded as a most effective Queen of the Netherlands, indeed, a most effective head of state of the modern era. Warm correlation with her people is the hallmark of her reign, and she is certainly admired for eschewing undue pomp and ceremony – extending, I believe, to riding her own bicycle from time to time in the sinuous streets of Amsterdam: a monarch both effective and unaffected.

Will you join me, ladies and gentlemen, in acknowledging the warmth of the valuable relationship between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the State of Queensland, and the immense respect felt by the Dutch people, and the international community, for their highly

esteemed head of state?

Ladies and gentlemen, "the Queen of the Netherlands"!