

**Queensland Law Society – President’s Dinner
Customs House
Thursday 25 July 2002, 7.30pm**

TOAST TO THE “QUEENSLAND LAW SOCIETY”

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

Mr President, Your Honours, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am invited these days to propose a variety of toasts: to worthy persons, to enduring institutions, to remarkable concepts. Tonight’s gives me particular pleasure, for I greatly admire the professionalism and the public orientation of the work of the Queensland Law Society.

In my own view, the Society should be especially congratulated for its efforts, now over 74 years, in enhancing the performance of solicitors in this State, and for extending those efforts Statewide.

As to the quality of professional performance, I single out the Society’s dynamic CLE program, now in its third decade, and the brilliance of “Proctor” – not just with my wife’s being an occasional contributor. The practitioners who serve with dedication on the Council and the Society’s many active committees also should be acknowledged.

As to the Society’s geographical reach, let me remind you that while the Supreme Court sits in 11 Queensland centres, and the District Court in 31, yet we have solicitors practising in as many as 124 cities and towns. The Society does a good job in serving and representing them all – all, I believe that is, 4,950 of them.

Now the critically important issue of professional standards will always challenge, and I am confident those persons of undoubted integrity who comprise the Solicitors' Complaints' Tribunal are acutely astute to their obligations. In the Court of Appeal, we occasionally "assist" them in their work, and the people may be reassured that we will continue as necessary to do so. I encourage the Society to continue to support that difficult thrust with the utmost objectivity.

I warmly congratulate the retiring 50th President, Mr Joe Tooma, and the newly inaugurated 51st President, Mr Tom Sullivan. Kaye and I wish you both well, and of course, Jenny and Maree who have supported and will support you so well. You have all served, will serve, your practitioners, and thereby the public, very well indeed.

These days our profession is very much in the spotlight, along with the accountants, the doctors...the priests. I recall the old man who had accumulated a large collection of sovereigns, which he kept in a chest at home. Anxious that they not be mislaid, he entrusted them to the joint care of his doctor, his priest and his solicitor. One day the old man passed on. The custodians met to discuss the fate of the sovereigns. The doctor and priest presented shamefacedly. "Ah", said the doctor, "I must confess to an indiscretion. I took some of the sovereigns to help pay my professional insurance premium"; whereupon the priest joined in; "I too have sinned. I gave some of the sovereigns by way of compensation to a parishioner who'd been wronged by the church." At this point, in self-righteous tone, the solicitor admonished: "Well, that's entirely unsatisfactory. I, too, helped myself to a few of the sovereigns, but the difference between your positions and mine is that the fund did not consequently suffer. In place of the sovereigns, I left my cheque."

Not, of course, a member of the Queensland profession!

Ladies and Gentlemen, would you please rise and join me in honouring: “The Queensland Law Society”!