



**Valedictory ceremony for the Hon Mr Justice Ambrose**  
Banco Court  
Thursday 11 September 2003, 9:15am

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**The Hon Paul de Jersey AC**  
**Chief Justice**

Officially farewelling any serving member of the court is a noteworthy occasion, in both the court's contemporary life and its developing history.

Farewelling a Judge who has served for as long as has Mr Justice Ambrose, a Judge who has been so signally willing, dutiful and adroit, and a Judge who is such a dear and loyal friend and wise guide to us all, is especially poignant. And I must immediately record our fond regret that his helpmate, Mrs Jean Ambrose, is necessarily also now cutting her formal ties with the court community.

There are some who have asked particularly to be associated with what I am saying this morning. Justice Fryberg, the Right Honourable Sir Harry Gibbs, the Honourable Alan Demack and the Honourable Bill Lee regret their inability to be present, as does Justice Dowsett of the Federal Court: His Honour was appointed to the court at about the same time as Mr Justice Ambrose, and they were for 13 years next door neighbours on the fifth floor. His Honour is disappointed he cannot to be here today, being overseas.

We welcome as always Her Honour the Chief Judge and Judges of the District Court, Judges of the Federal and Family Courts, and retired Judges of this court



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and their spouses. I also note with pleasure the presence of the Acting Chief Magistrate Mr Hine and other Magistrates.

Our distinguished colleague was appointed to the Supreme Court on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1985. Of the 94 Judges who have been appointed to the court in its 142 year history, Mr Justice Ambrose has been the 71<sup>st</sup>. The 18 years following his appointment to this Court in 1985 do not however account for the whole of his judicial contribution to the people of Queensland. That is because previously, from 24<sup>th</sup> August 1981, he served as a Judge of the District Court at Townsville. He therefore leaves us as the State's second longest serving Judge, pipped in the endurance stakes only by Mr Justice Helman who was appointed to the District Court in 1976 and then the Supreme Court in 1994. We look forward, I should say at once, to quite some years more of the valuable judicial work of Mr Justice Helman. My present point is that Mr Justice Ambrose has discharged his judicial function in Queensland in exemplary fashion for an unusually long period, and for that, on behalf of the people of the State, I record substantial gratitude.

Mr Justice Ambrose was born on 29 January 1935: at 68½ years of age, he may be forgiven for leaving us just a little early. Over his twenty-two year judicial career, he has presided over many important cases, some of them colourful and publicly controversial. I instance his ruling invalid the Mundingburra result in the 1995 State election, which led to a bi-election and the collapse of the then State government; his presiding at the trial of Leonard John Fraser, during which, bizarrely, the alleged victim Natasha Ryan was found to be living; his determination of an application for leave to appeal against an arbitration ruling about a claim for \$40 million brought by the British mercenary group Sandline against the government of Papua New Guinea; his determination of an application for judicial review of a 1998 Anti-Discrimination Tribunal ruling



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concerning the denial of access to a sperm bank to a lesbian women; and yet another electoral challenge, this to the 2000 State election on a contention that the appointment of both the Governor and the Premier of the State had been unlawful. His Honour's determinations have excited the interest of the Legislative Assembly, and the Hansard for 2 May 1997 provides a good example. But most significantly, his judicial work has exhibited the patience, wisdom, and in the result certainty, which characterizes the work of the best of Judges.

I have as Chief Justice found his Honour of exceptional measure and loyalty, in all Court affairs, and notably at the Judges' monthly meeting, rightly seen as a reliable barometer of the level of harmony of the Court's operation. As Chief Justice, I will greatly miss Brian's reassuring support.

Our colleague's entry in "Who's Who in Australia" lists his "recreations" as bush walking and music. He will now have greater time to indulge those interests, and to travel, but I suspect of more moment, his abiding passion for the breeding of pure bred cattle, another area in which he has enjoyed considerable success.

For myself and on behalf of all of the Judges of the court, I express sincere thanks to Mr Justice Ambrose and Mrs Jean Ambrose for their contribution to the welfare of the people of this State, and wish them good health and happiness in their retirement from public office.