



**Central Queensland Law Association annual conference  
Yeppoon, 8 November 2003  
Toast to “the law”**

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**Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC**

Kaye and I are very pleased to be present again at this important annual conference. The Central Queensland profession is a microcosm of the Queensland profession at its very best. And yes, I do appreciate the difference between a compliment and flattery: this is a justified compliment.

In toasting the law, we invariably look back to our roots, and forward to further exciting possibilities. With centenaries the flavour of the day – the Bar Association, the High Court – I thought tonight I would take you back for 30 seconds even beyond a century, in fact to the year 1888, when the Earl of Carnarvon was visiting the Queensland colony in his role as Under Secretary for Colonies. His personal diaries in the British Museum are currently being transcribed, and you may find the entry for 21 January slightly diverting. It reads:

“Almost all of the public men in Brisbane are said to drink hard ... Sir Samuel Griffith is said to be freer from this vice – but only freer. The night on which I dined at the Queensland Club after I had left at about 11 pm the members sat up to 4 am and passed a very riotous time. There was a “set to” with fisticuffs between two members and a mock trial of de Winton with the Chief Justice in the chair and a sentence of death was pronounced on him ...”

And what is the explanation for these high spirits? Well as recorded by Lord Carnarvon:

“It is due to the climate, general indolence and absence of any high public opinion. The Bishop confided this to me.”

Well, ladies and gentlemen, that may describe the profession in Brisbane in the 1880's, but I am sure those sentiments would never have been true of Central Queensland, where you have always reached the very apogee of professionalism!

Ladies and gentlemen ... “the law”.