



## **Swearing-in of the Hon Justice James Douglas as a Judge of the Supreme Court**

Monday 1 December 2003, 9:15am  
Banco Court

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### **Chief Justice's observations**

An appointment to the rank of the State's Supreme Court is momentous. The exercise of the ultimate judicial power of the State is committed to those who are demonstrably qualified by substantial experience and formal accomplishment of high order.

I am in that context very pleased to welcome Justice Douglas to the Court. His lengthy and successful career at the Bar, including 14 years as Queen's Counsel, fits him very well for the discharge of these weighty responsibilities.

Justice Douglas comes to the Court, first in my assessment, as a distinguished lawyer of formidable experience in the trial courts of the State. He may be taken to know the intricacies of the legal system, and to acknowledge the abiding stipulation that our courts are predicated on the delivery, not of idiosyncratic justice, but justice according to law.

Second, and of similar importance, his Honour comes with a broad and valuable experience of life. He is married, and an active parent with Mrs Margaret Douglas of their children. He has involved himself substantially in community life, particularly as a part-time member of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, as Chairman for six years of the Queensland Theatre Company, and as Chairman of the advisory board of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra for seven years.



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I understand his Honour also has the privilege of being the custodian of a black Labrador dog called 'Archie'. His Honour's humanity was recently corroborated by Archie's following his master all the way from Taringa to his George Street Chambers: there lies sterling testimony of our new colleague's compassion.

We Judges all wish Justice Douglas well as he assumes this significant new role, and those who cannot be present today would wish to be associated with this greeting.

I use the occasion to emphasize that the filling of vacant positions on the Court should not be delayed. Mr Justice Ambrose left the Court on 11 September, approximately three months ago and after considerable advance notice. The lack of a Judge in the meantime has led to delays in the disposition of criminal sentences and an unfortunate limitation on the work to be accomplished in the applications jurisdiction. I am gratified, of course, that we now have an appointment as the especially busy court calendar, approaching Christmas, bears down. I do however ask for timely appointments to replace retiring Judges on our State's most significant judicial institution.