



**International Women's Day: Women in Justice
Monday 8 March 2004, 5pm
Banco Court Foyer**

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

I warmly welcome you to the Supreme Court this evening. It is a great pleasure and privilege to be addressing such a vibrant group of women. United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, when asked what advice she would give to women law students today said, 'Dream. Work hard to achieve your dreams. Realize that no door is closed to you, and that anything is possible.' The first time I spoke at International Women's Day was I believe in 2001, a few months after the Supreme Court Library's extremely successful exhibition, 'Women in the Law in Queensland'. The exhibition acknowledged those pioneers who believed anything was possible, opening many doors for women in the law, a sentiment still strongly evident as we celebrate 'Women in Justice'. As a point of interest, that exhibition was launched by Quentin Bryce, now our Governor and also a lawyer!

I would like to draw your attention to some figures of which you are most probably aware, however as we are celebrating 'Women in Justice', I see no harm in reiterating the achievements of women in the courts. Seven of the 24 Supreme Court judges are women, the highest proportion of women judges of any superior court in the nation, save for obvious reasons, the Family Court. The District Court has five women judges and most impressively, the number of women Magistrates has increased significantly since 2000 from 12 to 20. These figures are certain to be enhanced in the future as, for example, 58% of University of Queensland law graduates in 2003 were female. In fact, there is evidence to be seen in this very court, where 20 associates of a complement of 24, are women.



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We will shortly hear from two preeminent women in the Queensland legal community, Director of Public Prosecutions, Leanne Clare and the newly appointed Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Rachel Hunter. Forgive me for a degree of flippancy as I leave you now with a quote from another formidable role model, Eleanor Roosevelt: 'Women are like tea bags; put them in hot water and they get stronger'.



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