

OPENING OF BRISBANE MAGISTRATES COURT – Nov 16, 10am

SPEECH NOTES

Judge Marshall Irwin, Chief Magistrate

The Premier of Qld and Minister for Trade, the Hon. Peter Beattie MP
Cabinet Ministers
The Hon Rod Welford, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
The Hon Robert Swarten, Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing
The Hon. Paul de Jersey AC, Chief Justice of Queensland
President of the Court of Appeal
Snr Judge Administrator
His Hon Judge Brabazon QC
Brisbane Magistrates
Ms Rachel Hunter, Director General JAG
Councillor Michael Caltibiano, on behalf of Lord Mayor Campbell Newman
Aunty Ella and Murri Elders

This is a very significant day for Magistrates, staff and users of the Brisbane Magistrates Court. Those who worked in the old Central Courts Building at 179 North Quay have been counting down the days, eager for it to arrive.

It is fitting that this building, which includes a purpose built Murri Court room, stands on the site of waterholes, called the Tank Steam by the colonisers, where aboriginal law prevailed for thousands of years. Aboriginal people from the Brisbane region and its surrounds used to gather near this site for cultural exchanges. Therefore it is with sincerity and great pleasure that I particularly acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this courthouse is built.

The magistracy is very pleased to be moving into this modern new courthouse, with its friendly and accessible character for magistrates, court staff, witnesses, members of the public and lawyers alike. It has a sense of space and light, and the court rooms and public spaces retain a sense of integrity with the outside world.

Together with many other aspects of the layout and amenities contained in the building, this should help ease some of the tension and trauma associated with attending at court.

The courthouse represents a modernisation of our justice system through the new technologies which are evident everywhere, including the video conferencing and CCTV facilities.

It is significant that, unlike the old Building, this new courthouse has been custom built for the magistracy. It is also a building for the future, with capacity for expansion from the current 25 court rooms.

In keeping with the artwork which is integral to the design this is a place where different perspectives are revealed... a place of, contemplation, enlightenment, and ultimately resolution of issues which deeply affect the life of the community.

I wish to thank all those involved in this project including the Departments of Public Works and Justice, the managing contractors, the architects and those who have been involved on site.

There has been a significant amount of planning leading up to today. The Department of Justice is to be congratulated on the extent of its consultation with the magistracy, including with my predecessor and myself, in this endeavour.

We have been invited to provide input into issues such as the choice of fabrics and furnishings. I did not know when I was appointed Chief Magistrate that I would need interior decorating expertise. Fortunately these choices have been made democratically and collegiately, with contributions by all Brisbane magistrates.

So on their behalf, I sincerely thank Barry Mulheran and Denis Revell from Justice Property Services for their tireless efforts at ensuring that, not only the magistrates, but the court staff as well, were kept up-to-date with the progress on the building.

Their assistance and that of the Court Administrator, Paul Marschke and his staff has guaranteed a smooth transition to this new complex so that it will be ready for operation tomorrow.

We are very proud to be moving into a building where so much effort has gone into making it environmentally friendly. I congratulate all who have been involved in this achievement and wish them well for those awards for which they have rightly been nominated.

This is yet another significant step in the rollout of contemporary court facilities in keeping with the world today and with a contemporary magistracy.

Thank you.

(Premier hands keys to Chief Magistrate)

It is the tradition, on the opening of a courthouse constructed by the executive arm of government, that the keys are handed over and entrusted to the judiciary, symbolizing its independence.

It is a recognition of the stature of the Queensland Magistracy for the Premier to hand over the keys today. Thank you Premier Beattie.

It is therefore with much pleasure that I accept the keys to this new court house on behalf of the Queensland magistracy.