



## **FAREWELL SPEECH TO MAGISTRATE ROSS WOODFORD**

Friday, 14 July 2006

REDCLIFFE

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**Judge Marshall Irwin  
Chief Magistrate**

Attorney, Members of the magistracy, retired magistrates  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen-

I acknowledge the traditional and spiritual owners of the land on which we gather and I am delighted to share in this celebration to farewell Magistrate Ross Woodford as he embarks upon his retirement.

I want to take a few moments to reflect on Ross's service to the justice system in our state – a service which has spanned just a few months short of 42 years and one that has demonstrated a keen ability to meet challenges and change as well as a strong sense of commitment to serve his community.

Ross's service to the Queensland Magistrates Court commenced at Brisbane Magistrates Court on 23 November 1964 just before

his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. His journey from the most junior clerk at the Brisbane Magistrates Court to his appointment as Clerk of the Court in the City of Ipswich in December 1986 took him to Court centres such as Redcliffe, Blackall, Beenleigh, Toowoomba, Mt Isa, Holland Park, Cooktown and Caloundra. In 1976 just 12 years after he had commenced duty in the Court, Ross was appointed to act as a Stipendiary Magistrate whilst he was domiciled at Holland Park and he was often required to preside in that capacity throughout his service there over the following four years. I am sure Ross and those of his workmates from each of those centres have a wealth of memories which will be shared tonight and over the coming years.

When Ross was appointed to the Magistracy at Roma on 12 September 1988 he clearly brought with him a wealth of legal experience from his 24 years in the registries of the Court and that combined with his practical application of the law and his courteous disposition ensured his future as a highly respected and effective member of the Queensland Magistracy.

In 1991 Ross constituted a court at Toowoomba for eight months before taking on the role of Relieving Magistrate based in Brisbane until March 1993. Ross proved highly effective and most supportive in this diversified role and was transferred to the busy court at Ipswich in April 1993 where he remained for six years. In March 1998 he was appointed to Redcliffe as the resident Magistrate - a role he has eminently fulfilled for the past 8 years and where he will end, at least, this phase of his working life, at midnight tonight.

With Ross's retirement, the Magistrates Court of Queensland will have said "farewell" to four very experienced magistrates over the last two weeks. The years of service these four men contributed to the Court total some 167 years.

Although it is essential to bring new blood into the court – and I know that newly appointed magistrates do bring significant expertise to the Court - we will miss the quality of knowledge, the sense of commitment and the true professionalism of these judicial officers, that has been demonstrated by them on a daily basis in the interests of justice and for the benefit of their community.

Ross's wealth of legal experience, even temperament, court management skills and sense of commitment to our Court will leave a great void in our Court and I know he will be very much missed by the loyal staff who have assisted him in his work here at Redcliffe.

I am therefore pleased, and I am sure Ross will be pleased, that Magistrate Alec Chilcott, who has been a resident on this peninsula for many years, will constitute the Redcliffe Magistrates Court as from August 1st. I can assure the people of Redcliffe that Alec brings to the Redcliffe Courthouse qualities similar to those of Ross and he will be a hard working judicial officer with a wealth of experience in the justice system who will serve this community admirably. I know that this is already accepted by the local legal profession who have supported and welcomed his appointment here.

Ross, thank you for your outstanding service to the community of Queensland and to our system of justice. On behalf of the Magistrates of the Queensland Magistrates Court I thank you for your loyalty and hard work and the sense of collegiality and friendship you so readily extended to us.

Congratulations on an outstanding career and our best wishes to you and your family for the future. May you enjoy good health and great adventures.