QWCDEC LAUNCH

Friday, 23 February 2007 at 4.30pm

Jury Room, Edmund Sheppard Building

31 Walker Street, Townsville

Judge Marshall Irwin
Chief Magistrate

I acknowledge the traditional owners of land on which we gather.

I also welcome Ms Wood and the representatives of Q-Comp, my colleagues in the Queensland Magistracy, Ms Fisher of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, and all of you, our distinguished guests.

I am delighted to introduce to you to Quick-Dec, the Queensland workers' compensation statutory appeals decisions on-line database, in my capacity as the Chief Magistrate of the court, which as the Industrial Magistrates Court hears appeals by workers and employers from reviews by Q-Comp of insurers' decisions under the Queensland workers' compensation scheme.

All Queensland Magistrates and Acting Magistrates are Industrial Magistrates. Since 22 August 2005 the Queensland Industrial

Relations Commission has also been given jurisdiction to hear these appeals.

It is a busy jurisdiction. In 2005-2006, 97 matters were heard in the Industrial Magistrates Court or the Commission, and of these, only 17 were subsequently appealed to the Industrial Court.

My personal connection with the Industrial Magistrates Court commenced about 30 years ago, appearing for the predecessors of Q-Comp. At that time I found the Workers' Compensation Reports which have been referred to by Ms Wood to be a valuable resource.

It has therefore been a pleasure to have the opportunity to be involved in this project with Q-Comp over the past 12 months to develop this data base.

Quick-Deck will fill the gap which has existed since the last hard copy report was published – at least back to those appeal decisions made since 1 July 1999 by the court, and more recently by the commission.

Appropriately the database allows access to decisions within a month of handing them down, by the use of modern technology.

This court is dedicated to working collaboratively to provide timely access to justice to all who appear before it, and to delivering high quality and consistent decisions.

It is committed to making the most of any technological opportunity that can improve service delivery across the sate.

In keeping with this, Quick-Dec has been developed to make appeal decisions readily accessible to decision makers, whether they be Industrial Magistrates or Industrial Commissioners, or the lawyers, workers and employers who appear before us.

It is a 'one stop shop' which makes workers' compensation appeal decisions available at out fingertips. And it is the only resource which deals solely with these decisions. As a result it will make the decision making process faster, more streamlined and more informed.

It will enable lawyers and those who represent themselves to readily identify the legal principles and precedents which will apply in a particular case. This will often allow an assessment to be made by the represented and unrepresented alike, as to the prospects of success.

As a result a more informed decision can be made as to whether to proceed with an appeal, with the resulting saving of time and costs.

This can only help to improve the outcomes for all those involved in the Queensland workers' compensation system.

There are currently at least 478 decisions available on-line. This dynamic database will continue to grow to reflect new decisions.

The development of Quick-Dec has been an immense undertaking by all involved, and in particular Darren Taylor who is with us today.

Although as the Attorney-General said at the official launch, just over two weeks ago, the simplicity and ease of use is a clever disguise of the time, energy and skills devoted to this project.

Quick-Dec can only help to improve the outcomes for all those involved in the Queensland workers' compensation system.

Already there have been over 1000 hits on the website.

I therefore encourage you to become familiar with Quick-Deck and take full advantage of its convenience and accessibility.

I am sure it will be a resource that you will use regularly.