



Welcome to the Hon John Roberts
Chief Justice of the United States
Thursday 29 July 2010, 5:45pm, Banco Court

**The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice**

Chief Justice Roberts and Mrs Sullivan-Roberts, Mr Attorney, Chief Justice Keane, Your Honours, Vice-Chancellor, Professors, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an immense pleasure, Chief Justice Roberts, to welcome you and Mrs Sullivan-Roberts to the State of Queensland and the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Some many years ago, at a meeting of the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, at a time when I was Chairman of the Queensland Cancer Fund, I was introduced to a group of Texans as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. They had not by that stage heard my Australian accent, and went on to greet me as they would an emanation of the deity. I did disabuse them, and sought to recover ground by pointing out that the State of Queensland is three times the size of Texas. You hold, Chief Justice, a greatly significant office, and we are obviously most honoured by your presence here, and that Queensland should be one of your ports of call in this regrettably brief visit to Australia.

You may be slightly interested to know that our respective courts share this in common. As the prospective representation of women on your court will likely rise soon to 33% with the expected Senate confirmation of Elena Kagan, mine has for some years reflected a 32% representation of women judges. But then we both trail the High Court of Australia, of whose Justices 37% are now women. The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom rather lags at 8%.

I am sorry to raise what is ultimately a fairly meaningless statistic. The real point is that you lead a court which reflects contemporary expectations, as does mine, and we look



Welcome to the Hon John Roberts
Chief Justice of the United States
Thursday 29 July 2010, 5:45pm, Banco Court

forward very much in that context to hearing your extra judicial observations, as the Chief Justice of one of the most influential and interesting courts in the world.