



Longreach Regional Council  
Civic Reception  
Tuesday 17 August 2010, 1pm

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

Mayor, Councillor Palmer, Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I begin by expressing my gratitude for your generous and welcoming hospitality today.

I am grateful for two reasons: first, that you honour the office of Chief Justice in this way; and second, that you welcome so warmly a one-time resident whose pride over that affiliation has never waned.

When I was last in Longreach, shamefully as long ago as 1999, I rather pressed the point that I was Chief Justice of Queensland, not Chief Justice of South East Queensland. Well I have over the last decade sat in many regional court centres, and as I mentioned in opening the court here yesterday, my absence from Longreach for a decade has only one explanation, an explanation of which the community should be pleased, and that is an absence of Supreme Court work in the interim. When I learnt that there was some court work to be dealt with, I jumped at the opportunity to come here again, and this is in fact only the second time in the history of the State that the Chief Justice has conducted court proceedings in Longreach.

On a personal level, I am exhilarated to recall my happy and formative childhood years here, a country-based formation which has since stood me in good stead, and of which I am very proud. I know I have a comparatively small country credential, but it nevertheless extremely important to me.

In the late 1950's, when I was fortunate enough to live here, the region was thriving on the merino driven economy. I have quite vivid memories – the many extended road trains;



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goats in profusion, mounting car roofs to eat the bougainvillea blossom; learning to swim in the public pool over the road from the school – it was filled with bore water which had to be sprayed with town water to cool it down; swimming in the Thompson by the old bridge; the iconic railway station and water tower, now as they were then; the constant noise of the powerhouse next to the pool – but we got used to that; and barbeques at station homesteads, which brings me to my abiding childhood memory, of the genuine friendliness of the people, again, the same now as then.

Ladies and gentlemen, the town is presenting very well indeed, and for that, you Councillors, as well as the citizenry, are to be congratulated. My occasional observations date back as I have said to a merino driven economy. How wonderfully the town and region have responded to the substantial challenges of the intervening six decades, displaying both resilience and progressiveness. You have my respectful congratulations on your outstanding achievements.

Thank you all, again, most sincerely, for this generous and kind treatment of me today: it is deeply appreciated.