



MAGISTRATES COURT OF QUEENSLAND

**Richlands Murri Court
Sash Presentation
Wednesday 3 November 2010**

Brian Hine Deputy Chief Magistrate

At the outset, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this court stands. The traditional owners have cared for and been part of this land for thousands of years. That rich cultural heritage is preserved in the wisdom of the elders past and present and informs our Murri Court process today.

The Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Attorney-General & Minister Industrial Relations
The Honourable Annastacia Palaszczuk MP, Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs
Murri Court Elders
Magistrate Errol Wessling
Acting Magistrate Haydn Stjernqvist
Phil Clarke, Deputy Director General, JAG
Paul Marschke, Executive Director, Magistrates Court Branch
Peter Kent, Director, Courts Innovation Programs
Diane Antonsen, A/Regional Manager
Brisbane Murri Court Elders, Uncle Albert Holt and Aunty Alex Gater

Apologies – His Honour Judge Brendan Butler, Chief Magistrate

My thanks to Uncle Albert Holt for the acknowledgement of country. Uncle Albert was one of the founding members of the original Murri court in Brisbane and his help and friendship over some 9 years or so has been one of the highlights for me.

I am very proud and privileged to be here with you today to celebrate this ceremony for the Elders of the Richlands Murri Court.

I was present for an initial meeting about 2 years ago to discuss the formation of this court. It is great to be back on this important occasion.

I especially acknowledge the elders present. This is your day. Today the Court and the Government recognise, here in your community, that you rightfully sit as respected members of this important Court in our legal system.

The number of Murri Courts throughout the state has steadily increased since the first Murri Court opened its doors in Brisbane in August 2002, there are now 17, a reflection of the growing numbers of Elders, Magistrates and Registrars supporting this initiative.

I am proud to say the Murri Courts are an initiative commenced by the Queensland Magistrates.

It was the magistrates who first decided they could improve justice outcomes for Indigenous people in Queensland by seeking the advice of Elders. Magistrates every day see the best and worst of what can happen in people's lives.

As magistrates we are saddened to see the over representation of indigenous people appearing before our courts. This is where the Murri court can make a difference.

The Murri Court adheres to the law of Queensland. It is the same law for everybody – but the Murri Court applies this in a culturally appropriate way. It's not about lighter sentences but about sentences that are more meaningful to the offenders. The sentence is delivered by the magistrate. What the elders bring to the court is a different but very positive contribution.

They :

1. advise the magistrate about cultural issues
2. assist the defendant understand the court process, and
3. assist the magistrate to decide on the most appropriate sentence.

The strength of the Murri Court process lies in the involvement of the Elders who sit on the court.

Mr Attorney General, I am delighted that the Queensland Government is committed to supporting the Murri Court system in Queensland. I thank you for your support.

I thank all the local magistrates who sit in the Richlands Murri Court. Special mention should be made of Aunty Alex Gater who we know so well from Brisbane.

Finally, my special thanks go to the elders who give so freely of their time to make this Court a success.

Congratulations to each of you. You rightly deserve the recognition symbolized in the sashes awarded to you today.

Thank you.