



Swearing-in of Mr David Octavius Joseph North SC as a
Judge of the Supreme Court, in the Trial Division,
and as Northern Judge
Supreme Court, Townsville
Wednesday 20 July 2011, 9:15am

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

In welcoming all distinguished guests present this morning, I particularly acknowledge the presence of the Honourable the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, from Brisbane Justice Kiefel of the High Court of Australia, here in Townsville Justice Dowsett of the Federal Court of Australia and a former Judge of this court, Justices May and Monteith of the Family Court of Australia, Mr Michael Stewart SC President of the Australian Bar Association, Senator MacDonald, Member for Herbert Mr Ewen Jones, Professor Graw Head of the Law School at James Cook University, Councillor Tony Parsons representing Mayor Tyrrell, Magistrates, the recently retired Northern Judge Justice Cullinane and of course members of the North family.

We warmly welcome Justice North to the Supreme Court, and congratulate him on his appointment as the 12th Northern Judge, and as the 110th Judge appointed to the Court in its 150 year history.

How especially momentous to join the court in his historically significant year!

The ceremonial sitting to acknowledge that anniversary will occur on 5 August, necessarily in Brisbane, but with the regional judges present, in person. Let there be no doubt: all Judges of this court see themselves as Judges of the Supreme Court of Queensland, not some court restricted to the south-east corner.

Justice North brings undoubted qualification and experience to this important appointment, drawn from a most successful 32 year career at the Bar, including almost 15 years as Senior Counsel.



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He has served in a number of ancillary positions, especially notably I suggest as Chairman of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for the State of Queensland for the last seven years, and as a member of that Council for a decade.

His Honour brings broad experience of life to this highly significant role as Northern Judge, and he could – were he inclined – boast substantial country connections.

There is one other observation I should make. The other currently serving regional Judges of this court, and the recently retired Justice Cullinane, were all sworn in in Brisbane. The technology now available has meant that Justice North could be sworn in in the region he will directly serve, with all the Judges of the court effectively present, together with members of the profession here and in Brisbane.

You may be interested to know that when we Judges meet monthly, the Judges in Brisbane are joined per telephone by the regional Judges. One day that will be by video link, when resources permit. I mention this not to pressure the Deputy Premier in relation to resources, but to emphasize this court's contribution to a developing and progressive democracy, especially relevant in a uniquely decentralized Australian State.

I am especially pleased that this ceremony is taking place in the Supreme Court at Townsville: it is right for the region, for the Judge, and for the court.

May I be pardoned this concluding personal note? I have had a family connection with regional Queensland, and Townsville, for many years, and that has engendered considerable long-standing affection. Upon my own appointment to the court in 1985, the Chief Justice dispatched me at once to Townsville for a month in the criminal court. For a commercial silk, that was especially challenging. Justice North, take heart, I think that sittings, perhaps strangely, survived any appeal.



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All members of the court who can be present are here today, either directly or by video link from Brisbane: all would wish to be associated with my remarks. We all join in warmly welcoming the new Northern Judge, and wish him well in the discharge of his especially important regional and State responsibilities.