



Swearing in Ceremony for the Hon Justice Peter Davis
Banco Court
Monday, 16 October 2017
9:15am

**The Hon Catherine Holmes
Chief Justice**

On behalf of the Judges, I congratulate Justice Davis on his appointment to this Court. Justice Davis fills a vacancy left by Justice Thomas' resignation and move to the Federal Court. His Honour is not, however, following Justice Thomas' path to QCAT. Justice Daubney will assume the Presidency of the Tribunal. He will be sworn in tomorrow morning - and Justice Davis will remain here with us, sitting in the many and varied matters which come before the Trial Division.

Justices North and Henry join us from Townsville and Cairns respectively by video link. Justice McMeekin is on leave and Justice Applegarth is on circuit in Bundaberg; both have asked to be associated with my remarks today. The ceremony is also being shown in Rockhampton, Mackay and Southport.

We are pleased the Attorney-General could join us today, and we also welcome the Shadow Attorney-General, Mr Walker. There are a number of apologies. I will mention only those of Chief Justice Kiefel and the other two Brisbane-based High Court judges, Justices Keane and Edelman, whose presence is required in Canberra.

I note with pleasure among those present to welcome Justice Davis, Justices Dowsett, Greenwood, Logan and Derrington of the Federal Court; Justices Forrest and Carew of the Family Court; Deputy Chief Magistrate O'Shea and



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other Magistrates, and a number of the retired judges of this Court. I welcome members of the profession, including, of course, Mr Dunning, Solicitor-General, Mr Hughes, President of the Bar Association, and Ms Smyth, President of the Law Society; and I welcome members of the academy, of course; and departmental officers; and members of the public.

And most particularly I welcome his Honour's wife, Mrs Belinda Davis, and his daughters, Emily and Felicity. We all welcome you, both to this ceremony and to the court community. There are other members of his Honour's family present, and a number of his friends. All are very welcome guests.

Justice Davis, you are an Honours graduate in Law from the Queensland University of Technology and practised for a number of years as a solicitor before being called to the Bar in 1990. You took silk in 2005. Your Honour's stellar career has included appearances on both sides of the bar table in trials and appeals in many high profile cases, Carroll and Cowan being but two examples. Here's a tip: as a trial judge, you will want your work to feature less prominently in the Court of Appeal than you did as appellate counsel.

Your experience and success have not been confined to Queensland. You have appeared in courts across the country with, of course, many appearances in the High Court. And you have been a leader of the profession, literally, having been Vice-President and President of the Bar Association.

Your distinguished career has been largely, but not exclusively, in criminal practice. Your experience and expertise in this area make you a particularly



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welcome addition to this bench at this time. To explain, in the 2012/13 year, there were 838 criminal lodgements, that is, matters filed in this Court. In the 2015/16 year, there were 2361, that is, the criminal workload has all but tripled, but we are dealing with that increase with one fewer judge in the trial division. So when I say we welcome your appointment, I really mean it. We would welcome six of you.

Your Honour has a strong reputation for industry. That's also a very fortunate attribute. At a welcome ceremony for new District Court judges on Friday, the Chief Judge said some words to the effect that the Queensland District Court had the lowest number of judges per head of population and lowest cost per finalised criminal matter of any state. At the risk of sounding competitive, I can tell you that the Supreme Court also has the lowest number of judges per head of population for any state and the gap for expenditure per finalisation is even starker for this Court.

The national average cost of a finalised criminal matter for the 2015/16 year was \$23,494, while for Queensland it was \$8,494. It was half of what Tasmania, the nearest candidate, spent, and an eighth of what Victoria spent. So my commiserations, Justice Davis, if you were hoping for a gentler life than at the Bar. But from what I know of you, the prospect of hard work with limited resources will not cause you any great dismay.

Now, I should give others the opportunity to speak of your qualities and accomplishments, of which there are many. I will simply conclude by reiterating, on behalf of all of us on the bench: I welcome you to the Court.



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And just before I ask Justice Davis to speak, not long after I had finished speaking, I had that sinking feeling that I had omitted to acknowledge the Chief Judge and the Judges of the of the District Court. Now, it goes without saying that they're welcome guests, but it is really better if I do say it. So consider it said.