



**SUPREME COURT
OF QUEENSLAND**

Presentation of Queen's Counsel; recognition of newly-admitted barristers;
and traditional exchange of Christmas Greetings
Banco Court
Wednesday 13 December 2017, 9.15am

**The Hon Catherine Holmes
Chief Justice**

I welcome the Honourable the Attorney-General, the Chief Judge and Judges of the District Court, Justice Dowsett of the Federal Court, Judges of the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court, the Deputy President of the Industrial Court, the President and members of the Land Court, the Chief Magistrate and Magistrates, retired Judges, the Presidents of the Bar Association and the Queensland Law Society, practitioners, our colleagues from academia, the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of the Department of Justice, whom I particularly thank for their support and assistance to the court this year, Departmental officers and ladies and gentlemen, including and especially the proud family members of our new silks and our new members of the bar. And I am delighted to welcome from the north a number of our judicial colleagues, magistrates from Papua New Guinea.

As always I thank the Crown Law Choir, conducted by Linda Tolmie, for their singing this morning. Sadly, the crush of attendance is such this morning that the choir members have had to be seated in the overflow court, which seems unfair when you consider how much they add to this occasion. This year the

charity that they are supporting is Home for Good, which works to find safe housing for homeless people. Give generously.

Announcements by Queen's Counsel

I invite Queen's Counsel, appointed this year, to make their announcements

Ms Darlene Anne SKENNAR

Mr Justin Andrew GREGGERY

Mr John William PEDEN

Mr Benjamin JOB

Ms Melanie Heather HINDMAN

Mr Michael Robert HODGE

Mr Michael Anthony WILLIAMSON

And now I invite you all to come forward to add your signatures to the roll in order of seniority.

I cannot remember it ever being such a close-run thing whether we would actually be in a position for the award of silk to be recognised at the Christmas Greetings, so I imagine there is an element of relief as well as triumph in this morning's ceremony for you.

You vary in the length of your seniority as juniors, but you are all now leaders of the Bar. Can I say this to you: it is one thing for a junior to lead a selfish and solitary life, not that I am suggesting that any of you has, but part of the package as a silk is that you set an example. You have all just increased your earning capacity; I am sure you can afford some time set aside to contribute to the profession: to mentor juniors, to do work for the Bar Association's committees and for the Bar Practice Course.

As always, if I am preaching to the converted I apologise, but I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important it is that the Bar remain a collegiate profession with strong and visible leaders.

Congratulations to all of you on this recognition and achievement which reflects not just this court's view but those of all the jurisdictions in which you practise.

Newly admitted barristers

Mr Nicholas Anthony Bennett

Mr Alexander George Psaltis

Ms Crystal Jane Lovel

Ms Seraphina Anna Maria Noble

Ms Lara Kate Soldi

Mr Jay William Jo Hanna Merchant

Mr Thomas Henry Sandford Jackson

Mr John Raymond Cook

Ms Rachel Anne Connors

Ms Renee Helen Berry

Mr Duncan Murray Marckwald

Mr William Conroy LeMass

Mr Eric John Engwirda

Ms Avelina Yuwea Tarrago

Ms Christine Jean Wilson

Mr Harry James Knowlman

Mr Nathan Joshua Edridge

Mr Calin Claudiu Bolovan

Ms Holly Michele Christmas Stephanos

Mr Arron James Harnett

Mr Reimen Hii

Mr Matthew John Hynes

Congratulations on your exciting step into a new professional life. First of all I should tell you that it is really not okay to be operate as a selfish and solitary junior: you will have a most unrewarding life in practice if you do. Be a part of the Bar: that is a large part of the point of adopting this life. Get involved with the Bar Association, which is always in need of workers to help in producing policy positions and critiques of legislation. Get to know your contemporaries. It was more or less inevitable when we were on the bench were juniors, but I imagine takes a bit more effort these days.

We wish you well and look forward to future occasions when we will see you on your feet for a bit longer than we have today.

Christmas greetings

Ladies and gentlemen, 2017 has been a year of significant change for the court. We farewelled two of our most senior and longest-serving Judges to retirement, President Margaret McMurdo and Justice John Byrne. We also lost Justice Thomas to the Federal jurisdiction. However we now have President Sofronoff in the Court of Appeal, Justice Ann Lyons exercising her very considerable skills as senior judge administrator and Justice Martin Daubney is now President of QCAT, and the year has also seen the welcome advent of Justices Brown, Bowskill and Davis.

This has, I am afraid been another year of the court trying to do more with not enough. As I have said on other occasions, Productivity Commission figures show that amounts spent per outcome in Queensland are a fraction of those in other States. However I appreciate that it is Christmas and people want to think of angels with harps, not Chief Justices harping. And perhaps there are better days just around the corner.

But I am afraid I cannot leave the topic without pointing out one glaring discrepancy in resourcing between this Court and another jurisdiction. The Supreme Court has always managed to make do with one Justice Derrington at a time. The Federal Court gets two almost simultaneously: 100% more Justice Derrington. But sincerely, we congratulate both their Honours, existing and about-to-be, on their respective elevations. Should you need any counselling on the intricacies of sharing the bench with a spouse, this court is a national centre of expertise. Never let issues of seniority come between you, that's my advice.

This year saw a couple of untoward events: the courthouse fire in February and a half day closure with the massive storm in March. It was getting to the point where by April the Associates were asking when they would be getting their monthly disaster leave day. I must say about the fire that we owe one great debt of gratitude to our own registry staff who worked heroically to keep things going and another to Chief Magistrate Rinaudo and his staff who made it possible for us to set up registries in the Magistrates Court until our own building was usable again.

It was a year in which the Court faced some uninformed media criticism over sentencing — nothing remarkable there. But this year some of the harshest condemnation concerned cases in which because of legislative prohibitions, the full details of the sentencing could be not be made known to the public. There is perhaps not be much to be done in those cases but to ask the public to accept that there may be more to a sentence sparking media outrage than meets the eye; and to ask our parliamentarians to act with restraint in their comments so as not to damage public confidence in the judicial system, when the court is constrained by legislation and cannot with any propriety defend itself.

On a brighter note, Christmas Greetings have become all the merrier for us Judges because of our new ceremonial robes. They may not be quite as entertaining to look at as full-bottomed wigs and fur trimmed red robes with innumerable bits and pieces attached, but they are a great deal simpler and more enjoyable to wear. I think we all feel the Christmas spirit that little bit more for actually being comfortable as we sit here.

A by-product of this is that we now feel able to hold the opening of the Law Year Church Service in February, at a time approximating the opening of the Law Year, whereas previously it was held in July to prevent Judges succumbing to hyperthermia. Next year the service will be held on 12 February at the City Tabernacle Baptist Church in Wickham Terrace. You are all very welcome to attend. And I am delighted to say that the Crown Law Choir will be there too to add their magic in conjunction with the City Tabernacle Baptist Church choir.

And another announcement. As of yesterday, the Supreme Court is tweeting. Justice Atkinson has taken responsibility for overseeing the Court's Twitter account. It remains to be seen whether she will take to angry early morning denunciations of anyone who crosses us, or whether it will be a more staid approach: links to judgments, that kind of thing. I am inclined to think the latter, but follow us and find out.

Many people contribute to the functioning of the Courts and cannot all be recognised. But I would like this year to acknowledge some volunteers: the members of the Legal Admissions Practitioners Board, who give their time to oversee applications for admission, particularly Mr Greg Moroney who has worked unheralded in his role as its head for many years; and the volunteers

of Court Network who do so much to make the courts a less intimidating place.

And, of course, I want to express the Judges' appreciation to the Court's registry and administration staff, ably led by Ms Julie Steel, for their assistance during the year.

On behalf of the Judges I thank you all for joining us on this occasion and I wish you a tranquil and pleasant holiday season.