



Welcome Ceremony for the Hon. Justice Mullins AO to the Court of Appeal,
the Hon Justice Callaghan and the Hon. Justice Williams
as judges of the trial division.
Banco Court, Friday 28th February 2020

**The Hon Catherine Holmes
Chief Justice**

We hold this ceremony today to welcome Justice Mullins as a judge of the Court of Appeal and Justice Callaghan and Justice Williams as members of the Trial Division of this Court. All three judges have already been sworn in over the last month in the presence of their colleagues. This is an opportunity, though, for their commissions to be heard by this much wider public group, so I will ask that they be read in order of seniority.

Commissions read.

Today we have a break with tradition, which I think all concerned have agreed will remain broken. It is this. I will undertake to make all of the acknowledgements of those present and those who have sent apologies so that, apart from the Attorney-General's acknowledgement of the traditional owners, none of the other speakers will need to make acknowledgements. So if anyone is left out it is entirely my fault. It's a burden I'm willing to bear.

You will see that we have an almost full bench today, including Justice Henry who has come from Cairns. Justice Crow joins us by video link from Rockhampton. Justices Daubney, Martin and Applegarth are away from Brisbane and Justice North is unable to attend, but all would wish to be associated with my remarks today. Apologies have been received also from a number of our Federal Court colleagues who can't be here, but we are delighted to be joined by the Chief Justice of Australia, Justice Kiefel, and Justices Keane and Edelman of the High Court; by many of our colleagues on the District Court headed by the Chief Judge; by Judges of the Federal Court and Family Court and Federal Circuit Court, as well as the President and a member of the Land Court, the Deputy President of the Industrial Court and the Chief Magistrate and Magistrates.



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At the bar table, of course, we have the Attorney-General, Solicitor-General and Presidents of the Bar Association and the Law Society. We are delighted, too, to be joined by the Shadow Attorney-General, Mr Janetzki. And of course we welcome the departmental officers, members of the academy, members of the profession and members of the public who are present. As well as those present in person we have video links, as I have mentioned, to Rockhampton and also to Townsville, Mackay, Cairns and Maroochydore where a number of District Court judges are in attendance. And there is a necessary overflow court.

Returning to physically present persons, we have the retired judges, former members of this bench and the Federal Court and also the Honourable Donna O'Reilly formerly of the Family Court, who is here as Justice Mullins' guest. There are a great many apologies from former judges of this Court unable to attend. I mention just three of those who were particularly concerned to have their apologies recorded in public. The first is our most recent former colleague the Honourable James Douglas who is overseas, and the others are the Honourable Bill Lee and the Honourable George Fryberg. All of the retired judges of this Court, present and those sending apologies, have sat with Justice Mullins and with the father of one of our new judges.

Which brings me to a very important group, and that is the family and friends of our newly appointed judges. Many of these, of course, are not new faces to us. Among Justice Mullins' invited guests are her husband Patrick Mullins and her daughter Dr Anna Mullins, who have been part of our court family for many years. Justice Williams has among her guests her parents, our former colleague the Honourable Glen Williams, and her mother Mrs Roberta Williams. It's a delight to see them here in this new capacity as proud parents. We welcome also her Honour's brothers and niece.

So the only really new ones are Justice Callaghan's partner Ms Mara Van Denberg, his daughter Olivia and son Leo and his father Mr Jim Callaghan, all of whom we are very glad to have join us. And of course there is a wider group of all three judges' family and friends who are very welcome.



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Now I will start with a small lament. Preparing this welcome speech has made me acutely aware of the passage of time and age. Justice Mullins, I have been reflecting on our shared experience as judicial colleagues and there has been plenty of reflecting to do. In a little over two weeks, you and I will share our 20th anniversary as judges of this Court.

Justice Callaghan, my first recall of you is as a bright-faced young lists clerk at the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions office; a mere 35 years ago. Justice Williams, I am not the only one on this court who has the sobering realisation that we now moving on to sit with our second generation of Justice Williamses.

It is all rather daunting. But there is a happy mix of continuity and renewal in these appointments all of which will be very beneficial to this Court.

Justice Mullins, you have asked that everybody say as little as possible about you, with the day left to the new judges. I will honour that request; it seems to me that everyone has the benefit of two decades of your stalwart performance as a judge of this court from which to conclude what an asset you will be to the Court of Appeal.

Justice Callaghan, you are well known to all of us on the bench, particularly Justice Henry, with whom you attended kindergarten. You are also, I am sure, well known to the members of the High Court who are here today, having appeared many times to argue criminal matters there. You began your career as a prosecutor before moving to the private Bar a quarter century ago. You have over three decades of practice behind you, the last half of which you spent as a silk. By now it will be clear to anyone numerate that you are older than you look.

You have appeared in some of this country's most celebrated criminal cases, with a national practice, as well as taking the role of senior counsel assisting inquiries. You have often appeared pro bono for indigenous people and others in need of assistance, particularly where their human rights and dignity were under challenge. In that respect, you trod the same path as a lion of the Queensland Bar, Lew Wyvill QC, who died last Saturday. He is remembered by many of us with respect and admiration.



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And finally in relation to you, Justice Callaghan, as an indication of your independence of mind we can look to the fact that you are one of about three practising barristers in this State who continue to bear the appellation Senior Counsel, having elected not to adopt the title of Queen's Counsel.

Justice Williams, your background is quite different. You are the third solicitor appointed to this Court after the Senior Judge Administrator and Justice Thomas, who has since gone further afield. Do not emulate him. The adaptation to a speaking role can be difficult, but for you I think it will be much easier than for most, because you were the litigation partner at a major firm. I see it is very well represented by attendees here today. There is a kind of glow of pride in your achievement concentrated in the back row of the courtroom.

You, like Justice Callaghan, are a graduate in Arts and an honours graduate in Law from the University of Queensland. You were a university medallist and received a Menzies Scholarship which took you to the University of Cambridge where you achieved first class honours in your Master of Laws degree. In your 25 year career, you have acted in many major commercial disputes, so the commercial work of this Court will look very familiar to you. A particular cause of excitement for the Senior Judge Administrator is your experience in running electronic trials, and general IT know-how, which we very much hope to put to use as the Court advances, as we very much hope it will, and soon, to a much wider application for electronic filing, case management and trials.

Now I will not say any more about these three Judges because others will, other than to say, Justice Mullins we are all very pleased as I am sure the profession is, by your elevation, and Justice Callaghan and Justice Williams we all greatly look forward to working with you as colleagues.