



**SUPREME COURT
OF QUEENSLAND**

Queensland Law Society
Welcome to the Profession Event
for newly admitted lawyers (since January 2021)
The Gallery, Banco Court
Friday, 16th September 2022

**Helen Bowskill
Chief Justice**

Good evening everyone, and welcome to the Portrait Gallery of the Banco Court. It is a pleasure to be here with you this evening, to welcome the newly admitted lawyers, who have joined the profession since January 2021.

I acknowledge Ms Kara Thomson, the President, and Mr Matthew Hollings, the President of the Future Leaders Committee of QLS. In particular, though, I extend a very warm welcome to the newly admitted lawyers.

I also acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, and pay my respects to their Elders, those who have spoken for this land in the past and who do so today.

I was interested to learn about the QLS Future Leaders Committee, the organiser of this evening's event, which aims to foster young lawyers who are connected with each other and the legal profession.

That notion of connection resonated in two important respects. The first relates to the concept of citizenship, which was in my mind because this afternoon I attended the Order of Australia Association's Secondary School Citizenship Awards. I speak of citizenship, of course, not in its narrow sense, but in its broader sense, of engagement in the duties and responsibilities of a member of society, with "society" being defined as the fact or condition of being connected.

As members of the Australian society we are all connected – regardless of our cultural or religious beliefs or backgrounds, age, gender or sexual identity. Indeed, the broad diversity of our Australian society, and the kindness and respect we show one another, regardless of our differences, is one of our greatest strengths.

As members of the legal profession, you have a significant role to play in that sense of connection, because of the role you can play in the advancement and

protection of the rights of all citizens. I encourage you to do that, both in your paid professional capacity, but also on a voluntary basis wherever possible.

The second respect relates more fundamentally to your own wellbeing; an important consideration given that we know lawyers experience mental health challenges at a much higher rate than the general public. Anecdotally, and from your own experience, you might agree with the proposition that it makes you feel good to feel part of something, to feel valued and included. As always, we have a lot to learn from our scientific citizens. The psychological scientists posit the theory that human thriving is contingent upon the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs:

- (1) **Autonomy**, which refers to our need to feel authentic, self-determining and volitional, as opposed to controlled, coerced or pressured;
- (2) **Competence**, which refers to our need to feel capable, confident and effective in relation to achieving desired outcomes as opposed to inept, self-doubting or ill-equipped; and
- (3) **Relatedness**, which refers to our need to experience intimacy and genuine connection with others, as opposed to suffering from social exclusion and isolation.

In a recent research study undertaken in Victoria, in relation to judicial officers' stress and wellbeing,¹ **relatedness** in particular was identified as a crucial factor. As the authors of one of the papers to come out of that research, put it:

“Just like lawyers, law students and, indeed, all human beings, judicial officers need authenticity, autonomy, close relationships and supportive leadership and administration in order to thrive... Those judicial officers who reported experiencing closer and more trusting relationships at work were measurably less stressed than the others...”

As you can see, from the start of that passage, the conclusions hold true for lawyers as well.

So, being connected with one another, and with the profession more broadly, is also essential to your wellbeing and ability to thrive.

Well done to the QLS for organising this event, and to you for coming along and joining in. As Justice Pat Keane has said, we are all participants in the great endeavour that is the administration of justice. We have that fundamental connection between us as members of the legal profession and the judiciary. I look forward to chatting to many of you this evening, and once again welcome the new lawyers to the legal profession and wish them all the very best.

¹ Schrever, Hulbert and Sourdin, *Where stress presides: Predictors and correlates of stress among Australian judges and magistrates*, *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, Vol 29(3), May 2021 (at p 24).