

Opening of replicated "Smoking Room" of the QGSY *Lucinda*
Friday 30 March 2001
5.30pm Banco Court

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey AC

In warmly welcoming you all here this afternoon, your Honours, Senators, ladies and gentlemen, I particularly mention the presence of the Attorney General, the Hon Rod Welford, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Mr Ray Hollis, the Hon Justice White Chairperson of the Supreme Court Library Committee, and members of that Committee, our distinguished guest Professor Geoffrey Bolton AO, the Director Ms Libby Anstis and members of the Centenary of Federation Committee (Queensland), and Dr Michael White QC, Convenor of the Supreme Court History Society.

We are also very pleased to have with us lineal descendants of Sir Samuel Griffith.

On 8 September 1999 the Chairman of the Centenary of Federation Committee (Queensland), Professor Ross Fitzgerald, visited me in my Chambers. As is well known, Professor Fitzgerald has personally long been interested in a reconstruction of the historically significant Queensland Government Steam Yacht, the *Lucinda*. Acknowledging the financial impracticability of a complete reconstruction, Professor Fitzgerald raised with me the prospect of a replication of the *Lucinda*'s to us most fascinating section, the constitutionally interesting, so-called "smoking room of the upper floor cabin" the room in which Sir Samuel Griffith's party engaged, over Easter 1891, in substantial drafting of the Constitution with the vessel then moored on the Hawkesbury. Would the Supreme Court be interested in housing such a thing? The prospect at once fired my imagination and that of my colleagues.

Today we see the accomplishment of the vision and an intriguing result it is: creatively inspired by Professor Fitzgerald; substantially developed by the Supreme Court Librarian Mr Aladin Rahemtula in conjunction with Justice White and the members of the Supreme Court Library Committee; financially facilitated, by the Queensland Government through the Centenary of Federation Community Grants Program, and by generous private donors from the legal profession and the judiciary; and brilliantly executed by the master craftsmen of E Chapman and Son.

Let me at once gratefully acknowledge some outstanding contributions: first, the uniquely talented Chapman personnel, especially the proprietor, Mr Greg Chapman, and his skilled employees Mr Charles Denby and Mr Glynn Hasthorpe; the accomplished and enthusiastic consultant to the project, Mr Chris Gladwell; Mr Bruce Wilson, the Director-General of Transport Queensland, and his Executive Director (Maritime), Captain John Watkinson, for their generous loan of the elegant

Lucinda model; the Speaker, and his Executive Officer Mr Stirling Hinchliffe, for their preparedness to lend the Court, permanently, an impressive collection of original silverware from the vessel previously housed in the Parliamentary Annexe, and now, within a cabinet superbly crafted and donated by Chapman & Son; I thank Mr Kim Robinson and Mrs Enid Robinson for their generous gift of sections of the original *Lucinda* seating, including armrests and front panels of the benches; Mr Mark Williamson, who lent a number of original *Lucinda* items for reproduction, including the finely decorated windows, window frames and ceiling panels; Mr Rod Newton, the departmental Director of Finance, and his staff, for their assistance on legal and technical matters; Senator George Brandis, for not only his personal financial support, but also his successful intercession on our behalf with the President of the Senate, to permit our reproduction of the grand Tom Roberts painting of the Opening of the First Parliament by the Duke of Cornwall and York, the painting on permanent loan to the Australian Parliament from the British Royal Collection; I thank the Law Book Company for its generous financial sponsorship; and our accomplished Library staff, especially Ms Rebecca Cook, Ms Claire Eardley, Ms Rowen Henderson, and Ms Madeline Cocolas. Claire's father, the solicitor Mr Peter Eardley, incidentally, donated the decanters within the smoking room: they have been filled with liquid the colour of which bears some resemblance to that of the liquor from which Sir Samuel Griffith is said to have drawn, if only occasionally (!), a degree of inspiration.

Professor Fitzgerald reminds me it is said that while, on the *Lucinda*, Griffith and Sir Edmund Barton imbibed copiously, the teetotal Sir Charles Kingston impatiently paced the deck! The figures within our room, by the way, represent Sir Samuel Griffith and Mr Andrew Thynne, also a Queenslander and founder of the firm Thynne and Macartney, generous contributors to the project.

For its era, the *Lucinda* was upmarket and sophisticated. We have replicated its smoking room. And as to what occurred in that smoking room, our purpose has not been to encourage, here, the smoking of tobacco or the drinking of whisky! Within, a constitution may not be drafted, but our nation's Constitution will undoubtedly be thought about. We hope this display will, in its own way, invigorate consideration of the nature and history of our system of government matters of which Australians are, generally, somewhat under-informed.

The person I would call the "originator" of the project, Professor Fitzgerald, greatly regrets his inability to be present this evening because of Parole Board commitments. He asked me specifically to mention that, and in doing so, I record my gratitude and the Court's gratitude for his inspiration and unfailing support.

And speaking of support, the Librarian invites me to mention we are still \$10,000 short of our total: any further contribution will be most welcome!

I warmly welcome Professor Bolton this evening. Professor Bolton greatly honours

the Court by his distinguished presence and by his most generous preparedness to travel from Perth for this occasion.

But a year ago, on Friday 11 February 2000, His Excellency the Governor opened our distinctive Rare Books Room. Over the period of only 13 months since, the public corridor outside this courtroom has been transformed, and without resort to the Court's financial resources, into a quite remarkable historical precinct, one which elevates the public presentation of the Supreme Courthouse into a diverting new dimension.

This particular centenary year initiative of the Supreme Court Library Committee is something of which the Judges of the Court are extremely proud. I know it will enure to the benefit and delight of all who see and pass through it!

Mr Attorney, would you honour us by introducing Professor Bolton?