

## **Western Suburbs District Court Complex**

### **Opening Ceremony**

**Tuesday, 27 July 2004**

### **Speech by Judge Irwin, Chief Magistrate**

Welcome to this ceremony to mark the Opening of the new Western Districts Court Complex

### **Acknowledgements**

Traditional owners of the land, Mr Billie Bonner, Yagara Tribe

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon Rod Welford – who has seen this project to its completion so that the community in the western suburbs can access justice through a modern technologically advanced court house.

### **(acknowledgement of distinguished guests)**

It gives me great pleasure to participate in the opening of this new Western Districts Court House

On the way here I made one more pilgrimage to the old Inala Court House to say farewell to a building which has served the local community well for approximately 40 years.

Historically it is a place where many of our magistrates cut their teeth as clerks:

- Andy Cridland (Charleville) was the first clerk and also was one of the last magistrates to sit in the court.
- Graham Hillan (Townsville) was also one of the earliest staff members
- Brian Hine, now Deputy Chief Magistrate

- Brian Williams, Paul Johnson, Laurie Mellors, Greg McIntyre and Trevor Arnold.
- The courts registrar, Leigh Madden has been here since 1991

It has been a place where young prosecutors of my era gained valuable experience before Mr Buchan, later a Chief Magistrate prosecuting under the old Roads Maintenance Contribution legislation.

But to quote from a recent observation about an old style Magistrates Court in the Week End Australian:

“Interesting places, these magistrates courts; shabby décor like a pub renovated in the 1970s, replete with walls that look nicotine-stained.”

And so it is time to move on from a court with one court room and another shoe box sized one, and which has been outgrown by the expanding local community.

To move into modern new court house, with its friendly and accessible character for magistrates, court staff, witnesses, members of the public and lawyers alike.

I am sure the Attorney-General will say more about the modern facilities and technologies that it provides. However I observe how pleasing it is to see that this new court house has two full sized courts and room for expansion, together with videoconferencing and CCTV facilities.

This will enhance the flexibility of the operation of the court, and consequently its efficiency.

It also contains modern and secure access for persons in custody, that was not available in the old courthouse.

Finally, I am sure that our resident magistrate, Mr Johnson and his visiting Colleagues, such as Ms Cornack will particularly appreciate the advantages of this new court house after having worked in the old one.

This is yet another significant step in the roll out of modern facilities in keeping with the world of today and with a modern magistracy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to take part in this opening ceremony.