

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MAGISTRATES COURT

JUDGE IRWIN, Chief Magistrate

IN THE MATTER OF THE SWEARING-IN OF
MAGISTRATES COLIN JOHN STROFIELD AND
KEVIN JOSEPH PRIESTLY AS MAGISTRATES
OF QUEENSLAND

BRISBANE

..DATE 06/03/2008

WARNING: The publication of information or details likely to lead to the identification of persons in some proceedings is a criminal offence. This is so particularly in relation to the identification of children who are involved in criminal proceedings or proceedings for their protection under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, and complainants in criminal sexual offences, but is not limited to those categories. You may wish to seek legal advice before giving others access to the details of any person named in these proceedings.

Also present

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Mr Shine MP

Minister for Justice and Attorney-General:

Mr Stewart SC

On behalf of the Bar Association of Queensland:

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Ms Mahon

On behalf of Queensland Law Society:

Mr Baston

On behalf of Defence Legal Service:

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HIS HONOUR: Thank you, please be seated. Well, good morning and welcome to this ceremony for the swearing-in of Colin John Strofield and Kevin Joseph Priestly as Magistrates for the State of Queensland.

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I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners and custodians on the land on which we gather today. I would like to recognise their wisdom and their culture.

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I also acknowledge the presence of the Honourable the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister assisting the Premier for Western Queensland Kerry Shine MP and also at the Bar table Mr Stewart SC representing the Bar Association of Queensland and, of course, the President of that Association. Ms Mahon, the President of the Queensland Law Society and Mr Baston representing the Defence Legal Service.

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I also recognise and thank for their attendance here today
Justice Martin from the Supreme Court of Queensland, Deputy
President Hack of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and also
Judge Koppenol of the District Court of Queensland. It is a
pleasure to have you with us today.

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I also wish to welcome all of those Queensland Magistrates who
have been able to find the time away from their judicial
functions to join us this morning and also the judicial
Registrars who have been able to join us this morning.

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Not everybody can be here because many of our Magistrates are
conducting Court already in Brisbane and also in other parts
of the State but I have particular apologies from the
Childrens Court Magistrate, Magistrate Dowse, and Magistrate
Halliday from Petrie and Magistrate Quinn from Sandgate and I
know that our two appointees have already received messages of
congratulations from Magistrates far and wide and I do speak
this morning on behalf of all Queensland Magistrates.

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I would also like to acknowledge Colin's wife Donna, his
mother Pat and Donna's mother Jeanette O'Shea and also Colin
and Donna's children Jonathon, Thomas, Samuel, Eloise and
Amelia. Alexandra apparently cannot be here, which is
probably a blessing in one way because I am not sure if there
would be any more room left in the Court if the whole of
Magistrate Strofield's family could join us this morning.

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There will be a welcoming ceremony for Magistrate Priestly in Cairns on the 1st of April which will enable his family and the local legal profession to participate but it was important that he is sworn in so that he can commence performing his judicial duties as soon as possible and so he is a part of the swearing-in ceremony this morning.

I also acknowledge the presence of the acting Director-General of the Department of Justice Ms Julie Grantham and Mr Paul Marshcke the Court administrator and I can see the Director of Public Prosecutions in the audience and also Mr Shadbolt from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service. There are many other people here, I cannot mention everybody, but I welcome all of you, our distinguished guests and I must say that it is a pleasure and a tribute to the quality of the appointees that this Court is so full this morning.

I will now ask you, firstly Magistrate Strofield, if you would stand and take the Oath of Office, if you could take the Bible in your hand as well and if you just repeat the Oath of Office.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

HIS HONOUR: Well, congratulations, Magistrate Strofield, welcome officially to our Court and please accept this Bible which is suitably inscribed as a memento of this special occasion.

Could I now ask Magistrate Priestly to stand and take the Bible and also repeat the Oath of Office.

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OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

HIS HONOUR: Well, Magistrate Priestly, I also congratulate you on your appointment and welcome you to the Bench of Magistrates for the State of Queensland and I also have pleasure in presenting this Bible to you as a memento of this occasion.

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MR PRIESTLY: Thank you.

HIS HONOUR: Magistrates Strofield and Priestly bring a depth of knowledge and experience that is welcomed by our Court and I am sure that you will hear more about that this morning from all of our speakers. That is not confined to the field of law because as I am sure you will also hear they bring a broad life experience and a large degree of common sense to this Court and that is such a vital ingredient in the discharge of a Magistrate's functions.

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His Honour Magistrate Strofield comes from a country background including a period growing up at Katherine and I know and I recognise in the audience today Mr Ross Smith who together with his wife Julie, as his Honour puts it to me, put him on the track to be here today. I understand that Mr Smith was something of a surrogate adopted father for Colin in his other role as being a next door neighbour while they lived at

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Katherine, and I should say that if anybody wishes to take photographs this morning, particularly family members, I give approval to do that as I am entitled to do in my capacity.

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Moving along, Magistrate Strofield spent a year near Dirranbandi as a jackeroo before he started to gain his legal experience which has led him here today. That experience in regional and remote areas will serve him well when he commences his second appointment in 10 months time to the Charleville Magistrates Court for two years where he will be replacing Magistrate Rinaudo who will have completed a similar period of time before returning to the Bench in Brisbane, but for the next 10 months his Honour will be serving in the Brisbane Magistrates Court.

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In fact he has a connection with the Magistrates Court having been a clerk with the Court from 1980 to 1986. I understand that some of that time was spent in the old Arrest Courts at Herschel Street and I believe that they were somewhat quieter days than our Arrest Court that has now expanded across three Courts and he was able to hone his indoor cricket skills before leaving to join the Crown Solicitors Office in 1986.

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He was admitted as a solicitor in 1990 and for the last nine years has been the Queensland Police Service solicitor and I can see that the Queensland Police Service are well represented here today. Commissioner Atkinson sends his apologies, he is actually attending interstate to official business this morning but I know that Deputy Commissioner

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Rynders is here, Deputy Chief Executive Mr Brown and also Assistant Commissioners Stewart and Davey. I hope I have not missed anybody but it is sometimes a little hard to make everybody out in the back of the Court.

It is in this capacity as Queensland Police Service solicitor that I, and other Magistrates, have had a close contact with his Honour because he was the principal point of liaison for us with the Queensland Police Service and as a result it has been possible to resolve a number of issues, which obviously arise from time to time in the administration of a Court which relate to the Queensland Police Service in the mutual interests of both the Court, the Police Service and the community through Colin's involvement and his advice and the application of the common sense which I have mentioned previously.

Mr Baston is here this morning, I should say, I do not think I mentioned it previously because he is representing the Defence Legal Service and that is because his Honour is a member of the Navy Reserve as a legal officer and has been counsel assisting Boards of Inquiry which concern the Navy. He is also a mediator and he has involved himself in community activities.

One aspect of that, which I thought was of particular note, is his role as a mentor to tertiary students with disabilities and particularly to those who suffer from blindness. That is an organisation quite appropriately called "Willing and Able".

Finally, his experience as a rugby referee will undoubtedly be of value, particularly in refereeing matters at the Small Claims Tribunal.

Magistrate Priestly. Well, Magistrate Priestly really has a foot in both branches of the legal profession so both the Bar and the solicitor's branch of the profession can feel a sense of pride today. He has practised in Cairns for the last 22 years, the first 20 of those as a barrister and the next two as a solicitor.

He has practised in a broad range of jurisdictions but in more recent years he has been involved in the field of safety risk management, in the development of compliance and safety management systems in the areas of aviation, maritime, work force and adventure tourism and also in the mining areas.

He has been a regular member of teams undertaking audits of management systems including risk management assessments and this will hold him in good stead to accept the allocations of functions in the newly created position of local Coroner in Cairns. His appointment, and I thank the Attorney-General for this, continues the approach of appointing appropriately qualified legal practitioners to centres in the regional areas in which they have practised and has been particularly the case in Cairns and Townsville of recent times.

The area in which his Honour will provide coronial services extends from Bowen north to the Papua New Guinea border and west to the Northern Territory border. As anyone familiar with that region will appreciate it contains an incredibly diverse range of communities with almost limitless opportunities for sudden and unnatural death.

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It includes large urban centres such as Cairns and Townsville with a high concentration of visitors engaging in adventure tourism. It includes Mount Isa with its sometimes hazardous industries and the communities on Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands where light aircraft and boats are common modes of transport. It is a truly diverse and challenging catchment for a Coroner so he will be travelling widely to serve the needs of those communities. On past records he is likely to receive over 500 reportable deaths in the next year so his Honour will be very busy.

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He also has a strong community ethos. One of the roles that he has given up on this appointment is that of a part-time urban fire fighter in Kuranda. I thank the Attorney again for his support in the creation of this position which has been developed by the conversion of the previous relieving position based in Cairns for a Magistrate.

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Not only will it provide a specialist full-time coronial service for the community within his area of jurisdiction, but it will also free up Magistrates to undertake other aspects of our growing jurisdiction and that will in turn benefit the

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community by permitting the allocation of earlier hearing dates without those dates having to be moved aside to deal with coronial matters.

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I also thank the Attorney that in conjunction with this he has supported the creation of a second Brisbane Coroner which relieves the significant burden which has been so diligently, and with such fortitude, been shouldered by Magistrate Clements as the sole Brisbane Coroner and so I am sure that she has welcomed Magistrate Lock who has been appointed to that position thereby creating the position to which Magistrate Strofield has been appointed today.

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This brings the total number of Magistrate positions in Queensland to 86. With two part-time Magistrates that means there are now 87 Magistrates and I am pleased today to say that all of those positions are currently filled and I recognise the fact that since the 1st of January 2007 there have been three additional Magistrates appointed to our Court in Southport, in Cairns and now in Brisbane.

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In a recent opinion piece Justice Debell, the President of the Judicial College of Australia identified the professional qualities of a judicial officer, as a sound knowledge of the law and relevant experience, analytical ability and good judgment as well as the capacity for hard work and diligence. He added that beyond legal ability he or she must have personal qualities of courtesy, patience and the ability to listen, integrity and impartiality and a strong sense of

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fairness. The primary consideration, he said, should be merit and in the case of your Honours there can be no doubt about that.

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In conclusion to adopt the words of a former Chief Justice of Australia Sir Gerard Brennan, I congratulate each of you on your acceptance of an office which is of pivotal social importance and your willingness to expend much of your time and energy and all your talents in performing its duties. You will work hard and longer than most of your non-judicial colleagues and friends. Your every judicial word and action and some words and actions as well, which are not uttered in judicial forums, will be open to public criticism and the public esteem of the judiciary may be eroded by attacks which are both unjustified and cannot be answered, but if at the end of the day you share with colleagues whom you highly esteem a sense of service to the community by the administration of justice according to law, you will have a life of enormous satisfaction.

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On behalf of the Institution of the Judiciary and in particular the Queensland Magistrates Court I thank each of you for your commitment in undertaking this role. On behalf of all Queensland Magistrates I wish you both a fulfilling judicial career.

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Mr Attorney, may I invite you to address the Court.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Thank you. May it please the Court I too
would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land
in which we gather here today. I also acknowledge their
traditional customs, wisdom, enduring history and culture.
Might I also acknowledge Justice Glenn Martin of the Supreme
Court and Justice Tim Carmody of the Family Court, Deputy
President Philip Hack of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal,
Judge Greg Koppenol of the District Court, Brisbane
Magistrates and Judicial Registrars who are here today, Ms
Julie Grantham, Acting Director-General of my department, Ms
Ulla Zeller, the Assistant Director-General, Ms Robyn Hill,
the Director of Courts Supreme and District, Mr Paul Marshcke,
the Court Administrator, Magistrates Court, Ms Leanne Clare,
the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Glen Rice, the Deputy
Director of Commonwealth Public Prosecutions, Mr Greg
Shadbolt, a senior solicitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Legal Service, Mr Peter Baston of Defence Legal
Service, senior members of the Queensland Police Service and
members of the Police Prosecutions Office as well as family
and friends of the Magistrates who are being sworn in today.

Magistrate Priestly, I take this opportunity to welcome you to
the Magistrates Court. You will join the Bench in Cairns as
the designated northern Coroner, a position for which you are
indeed highly qualified. Having been admitted as a barrister
in 1985 you have practised extensively across a broad cross
section of areas of legal practice. In your early career you
focused on criminal law but later practice saw you move into
the area of motor accident and work place personal injury law.

An interest in becoming involved in accident prevention and hazard management was behind your decision to leave the Bar in 2006 and commence practice as a solicitor. In that role you have developed a practice as a consultant in the field of safety risk management.

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The areas of which you specialised have been aviation, maritime, tourism and workplace health and safety and the skills that you have developed over the course of your career will prove invaluable in your role as a Coroner and will assist with the detailed analysis required in Coronial investigations together with the recommendations for prevention of further similar incidents.

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Having spent most of your working life in Cairns you have become an integral part of the Cairns legal community and indeed the wider community, particularly through your involvement in community organisations. Your service as a part-time urban fire fighter with Queensland Fire and Rescue Service at Kuranda is testament to your commitment to safety in your own area.

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Unfortunately your family is unable to be with you today as they are, of course, in Cairns, but I look forward, with the Chief Magistrate, to meeting them when I attend the welcoming ceremony for you in Cairns next month.

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Magistrate Strofield, I would like to welcome you also to the Magistrates Court Bench. You, of course, will be based in

Brisbane for the remainder of this year and early next year will take up the position as Magistrate at Charleville. I was in Cunnamulla on Tuesday as part of my duties and the Magistrate from Charleville was sitting in Cunnamulla that day. Cunnamulla has been blessed with about 21 inches of rain, I think, since November and it is a real picture.

I think the Magistrate was quite busy and unable to come to the event, that I was at, so that may be indicative of the extent of your duties when you do get there. Your posting in Charleville will be a return, as the Chief Magistrate indicated, to your early life in the county as you were born in Mungindi. You left Mungindi for Katherine at the age of 11 and when you and your brother left the local school it had to close down due to lack of numbers. I had the same experience at a little state school called Wivenhoe Pocket State School and I have always felt guilty ever since. I hope you do not share the same guilt.

You spent the rest of your childhood in Katherine but in the last few years of schooling you spent the school terms in Brisbane where you attended BBC as a boarder. Life in Katherine gave you a number of interesting experiences. You were sent, on one occasion, to Melbourne with a number of other students and in order to acclimatise you and the others for a Melbourne winter you were sent to the meat works every week where you spent an increasing amount of time in the freezer to acclimatise you for Melbourne.

On one occasion, when it was time to leave, one of the boys was unable to move. He had not been wearing shoes and his feet had been frozen to the freezer floor. That is probably something that Magistrate Priestly might take note of in terms of recommendations as a Coroner for the future. I hope you do not need to take any drastic actions as that to prepare for the climate in Charleville.

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You commenced your working life as a jackeroo out near Dirranbandi but felt you were more suited to a job indoors so packed up your Valiant and headed east for Brisbane where you commenced work as a clerk for the then firm Cannon and Peterson. It was at Cannon and Peterson that you met your wife Donna who also worked there.

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Your appointment as a Magistrate is really a coming home to the Magistrates Court service as you spent six years working in the Brisbane Magistrates Court while studying law part-time.

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You then, of course, moved across to the Crown Solicitor's Office where you continued studying and were admitted as a barrister in 1989. The experience you gained there covered a broad cross-section of legal practice, it included conveyancing, administrative law, general litigation, personal injuries and damages claims, Coronial Inquiries, compulsory acquisition of land and planning law.

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From 1989 until your appointment last week you were the
Queensland Police Service solicitor providing legal advice to
the Commissioner and senior executives of the Police Service.
This provided you with many interesting moments amongst your
ordinary day to day duties, for instance, the look, I am told
on Deputy Commissioner Dick Condor's face when you told him
that Natasha Ryan had been found alive and well in a cupboard
in a house in Rockhampton.

I am pleased that your wife Donna has been able to join us
today to celebrate this important milestone in your career
together with five of your six children. Your mother has also
made the trip down from Toowoomba to be with you for the
occasion and we welcome her. I am always pleased as my friend
the President of the Law Society is to pay tribute to any
Toowoomba resident.

The appointment of two Magistrates to the far north and the
far west of Queensland shows that this is an important Court
that covers the length and breadth of this vast State. This
is the Court that most Queenslanders who come into contact
with the justice system will have experienced. That is why
appointments to the Magistrates Court are so integral to the
justice system in Queensland.

We welcome you both, Magistrate Priestly and Magistrate
Strofield and wish you well in your important new endeavours.

HIS HONOUR: Thank you, Mr Attorney. Mr Stewart, can I first
congratulate you on your appointment, your election, as the
President of the Bar Association of Queensland. This is the
first occasion that you have appeared in our Court on such a
ceremonial occasion since your appointment I welcome you and
also observe what a pleasure it is to see the robing protocol
spreading throughout the ranks of the barristers who are
present in Court today.

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MR STEWART: Thank you.

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HIS HONOUR: I invite you to address the Court.

MR STEWART: May it please the Court. It is my privilege on
behalf of the Bar to welcome your Honours as the latest
appointees to the Magistrates Court and to congratulate each
of you on your appointments. This Court is a most important
one. It is by far the busiest trial Court in the State and
that will increasingly be the case. As the Attorney-General
has mentioned, the vast bulk of Queensland has experience of a
system of the administration of justice and in this State
consists of those they have in this Court and the Magistrates
Court throughout the State. As such the Magistrates Courts
occupy a vital position the civil institutions of our society
in Queensland.

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It follows that it is essential that Magistrates appointed to
the Court had demonstrated abilities and qualifications which
not only equip them for the demanding task ahead of them, but

which also command the confidence of the broader community.
The Bar has every confidence in both of your Honours' qualifications for these appointments.

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Magistrate Strofield. Your Honour's practice as the Queensland Police Service solicitor alone is claimed by those who know to qualify your Honour amply for this new task but diverse and demanding as that position has been, it is but one of the part of a wide experience that you have gained as you progressed from the University of Hard Knocks in Dirranbandi where, as has been mentioned, you worked as a jackeroo, to the other end of the scale, one might say, the Queensland University of Technology where your Honour acted as a part-time lecturer and tutor. To my mind, as a father of mere four, being a father of six probably qualifies you for most challenging tasks as well.

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I understand that your Honour is a lieutenant in the Naval Reserve which clearly explains the Chief Magistrate's wise choice of that dreamy coastal hamlet Charleville as your second port of call. It must be especially pleasing to many members of the Court to note that your Honour's appointment completes the circle, as it were, of you having worked as a clerk in the office of a Court many years ago.

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Magistrate Priestly. As a barrister in Cairns you won the admiration and popularity of your colleagues from both branches of the profession for the hard work you lavished upon your briefs and the calm and sensible way in which you

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advocated the interests of those for whom you appeared. Both
of these qualities will fit you to your new role. Your busy
practice encompassed the commercial, family, maritime,
aviation, insurance and in your early years the criminal
fields and you developed an expertise in Coronial Inquiries
which will stand you in perfect or fine stead in your new role
as the Deputy Coroner for the vast district the Chief
Magistrate has mentioned.

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I am reliably informed that to date one of your Honour's
defining features has been a propensity to announce somewhat
dramatically to your colleagues at the Bar in Cairns that you
were leaving practice for greener pastures definitely this
time and then to leave, making good your word, only to return
unobtrusively to Chambers a matter of a few months later.

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Despite this history, your Honour, those same colleagues are
confident that you have finally broken free of the
gravitational force the Bar imposed on you and that this time
you will not return because you have found your true vocation.
Your Honours, the Bar is pleased to support your appointments.
May it please the Court.

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HIS HONOUR: Thank you, Mr Stewart. I note that in the back
of the Court is Vice President Linnane from the Queensland
Industrial Relations Commission, welcome. I also notice a
number of Queensland Police Service Prosecutors in the back of
the Court and I also expressly acknowledge you, and in calling
upon Ms Mahon I also note, very unobtrusively, is Mr Glen

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Ferguson, a former President of the Queensland Law Society who has joined us today. It is a pleasure to have you with us as well. Ms Mahon, I invite you to address the Court.

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MS MAHON: Thank you, your Honour. May it please the Court. It is a very great pleasure to be here this morning at the swearing-in of two Magistrates who are both distinguished and very experienced members of our profession. Many of the society's members, and in fact staff, are, of course, bunkering down at our symposium at the South Bank convention this morning so are unable to be here.

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The striking differences in the backgrounds of Magistrate Colin Strofield and Magistrate Kevin Priestly both underline and reflect the diversity of the Queensland Magistracy. Magistrates, of course, have one thing in common and that is a demonstrated and acknowledged skill and experience with the law, but everyone comes from a different background with varying interests and practice areas.

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This diversity of professional and life experiences enriches the Court and makes it better able to deal with its many challenges in the front line administration of justice in this State.

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Magistrate Strofield. You were, it might be said until very recently, helping the police with their inquiries although I hasten to add that you have never been a suspect, and certainly never a defendant, but rather were, for some nine

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years, the Queensland Police Service solicitor as we have heard.

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Your Honour, the Queensland Law Society has been indebted to you over many years for your invaluable service and contribution outside of your daily professional duties serving on committees as diverse as the Law Council of Australia Military Justice working group as our representative and the QLS Government Lawyers Committee. I am grateful for the generosity of your time, valuable input, considerable expertise and support of the society, its members and me personally. I do hope that you are able to remain a familiar face to the society at its functions at the very least.

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In many ways, your Honour, this appointment to the Bench represents another phase in your professional life of service which began with your admission, as we have heard as a solicitor in 1990, although you had gained experience in the business of justice and the law from as far back as 1978 when you joined Cannon and Peterson as a clerk.

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You come to the Magistrates Court uniquely skilled after those nine years with the Police Service and 13 years in various positions with the Crown Solicitors Office. As the Attorney referred to, having links with Toowoomba is always notable.

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Magistrate Kevin Priestly. You commenced practice as a barrister in 1985 and gained a wealth of experience over the years in the criminal jurisdiction and subsequently in a

remarkably broad area of practice including everything from insurance and commercial law to land law and administrative and government law. Your Honour's recent work as a legal risk management consultant has been, I am advised, both innovative and trail blazing.

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You will no doubt be very warmly welcomed in Cairns as the northern Coroner, even if your welcome ceremony is, as the Chief Magistrate mentioned, the 1st of April. It is actually a date of significance also for the Queensland Law Society who, in its current form turns 80 on that very day.

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I did mention at the start of my remarks that both of your Honours had widely different backgrounds, but you do have at least one shared interest, the sea and those who go to sea in ships. Magistrate Strofield who has served with the Royal Australian Naval Reserve was counsel assisting the 2002 Inquiry into the disappearance overboard of a sailor from HMAS Darwin while Magistrate Priestly has among his many accomplishments a strong interest in maritime law and has been a member of the Maritime Lawyers Association of Australian and New Zealand.

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Your Honours come to your important new positions with my personal best wishes and congratulations and those of the Queensland Law Society and its members. May it please the Court.

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HIS HONOUR: Thank you, Ms Mahon. Mr Baston, I invite you to address the Court.

MR BASTON: May it please Court. I welcome Magistrate Priestly and Magistrate Strofield. Magistrate Strofield is, as you have heard, a member of the Royal Australian Naval Reserve legal panel and holds the rank of lieutenant. His colleagues would know that he brings to this Court a sense of family community, good humour, strong judgment, common sense and professionalism, but I offer a word of caution to you all about Lieutenant Strofield. As many would know in the Crown Service he is known as very budget conscious having six children. I recall Lieutenant Strofield and I travelling by helicopter from Christmas Island to HMAS Darwin for the Board of Inquiry and Magistrate Strofield saying to me, "Do we need a meal ticket?".

My first occasion to be aware of your Honour's budget consciousness was in Mareeba many years ago when preparing for Coronial Inquiry, when having left the travel arrangements to your Honour we arrived in town only to be driving around to find the cheapest motel. The most recent of those experiences was when we attended Birdsville to find that our accommodation was in the abandoned disused courthouse and it was the first occasion I have seen his Honour in the dock and hopefully I will never see it again, your Honour.

On behalf of the Chief of Defence Force Air Marshall Angus Houston, the Chief of Navy Admiral Chris Shalders and the

Director-General Defence Legal Services Commodore Vicki
McConachie and Captain Dale Stephens, the Director of Navy
Legal Services, I welcome your Honour to the Court and hope
that your Honour will have the time to participate as a
president in Boards of Inquiry in the future and we hope to
continue to have you at our functions and participate in our
continuing development. Thank you, your Honour. May it
please the Court.

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HIS HONOUR: Thank you, Mr Baston. Your Honour, Magistrate
Strofield, I now invite you to speak from the Bench as a
Magistrate for the first time.

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MR STROFIELD: Thank you. Firstly, may I acknowledge the
traditional owners of this land, Mr Attorney, Mr Stewart, Ms
Mahon, Mr Baston, Chief Magistrate, Deputy Chief Magistrate,
Magistrate Priestly, Justice Martin, Deputy President Hack,
Judge Koppenol, Mr Jones, member of the Land Court, Deputy
President Linnane, could I also acknowledge Dr John Forbes
sitting in the back of the Court, ladies and gentlemen. I
have to say I am experiencing considerable difficulty in
expressing the degree of honour and privilege that I currently
feel. Perhaps the obvious smile that has been continually on
my face since the Attorney rang me might be an indication as
to how I am feeling. I believe I am very honoured to serve on
this Court, and although it is trite to say it is, one that
plays a very important role in the arena of justice.

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I have to say, Mr Attorney, I am particularly excited, I cannot say that my children are, to be invited to serve Charleville and the surrounding community and I do look very much forward to that. It is also a great privilege to serve on this Court, a great privilege, not only because of the importance of the Court that it plays in the justice system, but also because this Court touches the lives of so many people, be they litigants, victims, witnesses or accused people. Decisions of this Court play a significant role on the navigation of people's lives.

I must also say that I am very, very fortunate. Fortunate because I have been touched by so many people. I think there is not one person in this room that I have not been touched by. So many people have influenced me. I have fond memories of my early days growing up in Mungindi and material possessions were very few, as they were later on in Katherine in the Northern Territory. I would, however, be surprised if you are not familiar with that well-known metropolis of Mungindi. Perhaps some of you may not have visited there, but I am sure most of you have.

Being the eldest son of a Queensland drover one, as I initially thought I would, would follow the same or similar path. My short experience as a jackeroo out near Dirranbandi somewhere near Noondu Siding was a sobering experience. I saw little attraction in the northern end of south-bound sheep. I think the truth more likely is that I was not physically, nor did I have a requisite mental robustness required to continue

along that road. I headed east. There are a number of people in this room who have had a significant influence on my life.

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First of all my mother. It would be remiss of me not to mention my very dear friends Ross and Julie Smith, my next door neighbours from Katherine. To Ross and Julie I am eternally grateful. Ross and Julie walked me to the door of opportunity, opened that door, walked me through it and gave me the opportunity to change the course of the rest of my life. I will never forget that.

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Thirdly, my extended family known affectionately to me as the outlaws. They have embraced me as one of their own. I am one of these people who have a mother-in-law who treats me as one of her own as I do her. I have no mother-in-law jokes, only stories about her driving skill or lack thereof.

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To my wonderful children, all six of you, you provide me with a great deal of strength.

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Fifthly, but most importantly and most significantly, as you have heard my father passed away when I was eight years of age. For the next 12 years I questioned and struggled to understand why that was so and 30 years ago fate intervened. A beautiful young woman walked into my life. I then had some understanding as to why God chose my father. That woman has influenced my life ever since then. That now even more beautiful woman, my wife of some 27 years, is my source of

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inspiration, strength, courage, support and continued encouragement.

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I should also mention to you that there have been some very, very rare occasions when she has deemed it necessary, without hesitation or reservation, to chastise and correct me. The penalty has always been manifestly excessive but my grounds of appeal, I think, would probably be deemed spurious and probably vexatious.

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Mr Attorney, Mr Stewart, Ms Mahon, Mr Baston, thank you for your kind words. Thank you everyone for sharing your day with me. I would like to thank Magistrate Herlihy for his time, patience, guidance over the past few days during which time I have had my training wheels very firmly attached to my magisterial bicycle. I also congratulate Magistrate Priestly. I will look very fondly on this day and be able to say that I am honoured to have been sworn in with you. I will do my utmost to serve this Court with compassion and fairness to everyone who comes before me in accordance with the rule of law. I thank you one and all.

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HIS HONOUR: Thank you, your Honour. Now, I invite Magistrate Priestly to respond.

MR PRIESTLY: Thank you. Firstly, Mr Attorney, Mr Stewart, Ms Mahon, Mr Baston, and I will not attempt to identify, as my colleague has, the rest of the distinguished guests, but thank you very much for your very, very kind words. Can I also

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congratulate my colleague on his appointment. We both met, for the first time, on Monday morning. I saw someone standing outside the lower level of the Court dutifully waiting for 8.30 when we were to wait for security to open and we could proceed up to the Chief Magistrate's Office. However, I was somewhat impetuous and pressed the intercom security and proceeded through leaving my colleague standing below not realising who he was at the time until he joined us later in the Chief Magistrate's reception and there we sat for a little while and jokingly commented to each other that it was like a new page in our lives, like new students waiting to be taken to our new class, meet the principal and be taken to our new class.

We then met brother Marshall and he dutifully took us and introduced us to our new class master who, for that time, was to be Brother Jim Herlihy. We very slowly got over our anxieties and discussed this concept of having been quietly excited over the past couple of weeks.

I must also acknowledge and thank three very influential women in my life. There is my mother Pat Priestly who instilled in me the values that have guided me through the good times and the not so good times, my partner Margo for her constant support and I have to say patience with me, and also my daughter Pepper whose presence and conversations were always a constant reminder of what really matters in life. Something I discovered on becoming a father is that you can read all these personal self-growth books and things like but it usually only

takes two or three words from your daughter to soundly ground you and make you realise what really matters in life.

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Since accepting this position, as I said, I have been greatly excited by the prospect of being the northern Coroner. I did not think anything could subdue that excitement until yesterday afternoon. The State Coroner Mr Michael Barnes had organised a Coroner's master class as I read the folder for Tuesday, to be followed up by a day yesterday, at the John Tonge Centre. There was some very, very informative and expert presentations by a number of experts whose title generally ended in something like "ology", but then we were taken for a tour of the mortuary and viewed an autopsy over two hours. The quiet excitement just became quiet.

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I am pleased to say that I am quietly excited again and I can relate to my colleague's comments about having this silly grin on your face wherever you walked for the last two weeks, it has returned notwithstanding what I witnessed yesterday.

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I have been a long believer in the coronial system and have watched the reforms to it in various states over the past decade and it has had and will continue to have challenges to stay relevant to the community needs. Its contemporary role of focusing on public health and safety can only be strengthened by focusing the workload and permitting full-time or near full-time Coroners to develop and build upon the expertise and technical knowledge required to discharge that function efficiently and effectively and I look forward to

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being part of what is a multi-disciplinary team within the
Coroner's office. Thank you.

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HIS HONOUR: Thank you, your Honour. And I would like to
thank everybody who has gone to the trouble of making this
such a special occasion today. It is always wonderful to see
the Court as full as it is in recognition of our two new
Magistrates. I would also like to recognise Mr Jones from the
Land Court, I am sorry I have not done that before.

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All that remains for me to do is to invite anybody who is able
to join us and our new Magistrates for morning tea to join us
on level 9 of this building immediately after Court has
adjourned and I now direct that these proceedings be recorded
by a mechanical device and that Jodie Pamela Coles be the
recorder and I adjourn the Court, thank you.

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THE COURT ADJOURNED

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