



Welcome ceremony for  
The Honourable Helen Bowskill  
as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland  
Banco Court  
Thursday, 27 July 2017 9:15am

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**The Hon Catherine Holmes  
Chief Justice**

We hold this ceremony today to welcome Justice Bowskill as our newest member of the Trial Division of this court. As has become the practice in these more pressured times, Justice Bowskill was sworn in some weeks ago in a ceremony attended by her colleagues on 11 July, so that she could begin her work here immediately. But I'll ask that the commission appointing her Honour as a Judge of this Court be read. Madam Registrar.

**Commission read.**

On behalf of the Judges, I congratulate Justice Bowskill on her appointment. In addition to the Judges sitting on the bench here, Justice McMeekin joins us by video link from Rockhampton, Justice North from Townsville, and Justice Henry from Mackay where he is sitting.

We are delighted to be joined in congratulating Justice Bowskill by the Honourable the Attorney-General, Ms D'Ath, Chief Justice Kiefel and Justice Edelman of the High Court of Australia. Justice Keane, who is overseas, has sent his apology. Her Honour's former colleagues, the Chief Judge and the many Judges of the District Court who are present, may not be able to join

quite so much into the celebratory mood; but they have nobly overcome their angst at losing her Honour and they join us to wish her well.

I welcome Justice Dowsett and other Judges of the Federal Court, noting that Justice Logan too has sent his apology; Judges of the Family Court, and again I note apologies from Justices Forrest and Carew; Judges of the Federal Circuit Court, Magistrates, the President of the Land Court and that Court's newest member, Ms Stilgoe; many of the retired Judges of this Court, both in person and on video link; the Shadow Attorney-General, Mr Walker, departmental officers; members of the profession; members of the academy; and, of course, members of the public.

And most particularly, we welcome her Honour's husband, Mr Peter Vallance, and her daughters, Zoe, Lucy and Phoebe. We welcome you both to this ceremony and to the community of the Supreme Court Her Honour's parents-in-law, and an old friend in time – not years – are also here to join in the occasion.

I mentioned that some of our colleagues were joining us by video link from northern centres. I am glad to say that the ceremony is also being streamed live to Cairns, where Justice Bowskill's parents and sister, with her family, are presently on holiday. They are watching in the company of her Honour's former colleagues, Judge Morzone and Judge Farr. I am told that Judge Morzone has organised champagne after the ceremony, which is more than anyone will be getting here.

Justice Bowskill has followed a stellar precedent in entering the law. Like Chief Justice Kiefel, her Honour began her legal experience as a secretary with a group of barristers which, at the outset, included Justice Mullins. Justice Bowskill was probably not expecting then that 30 years later, she would be sharing the applications list with her Honour, as she has done this

week. One of Justice Bowskill's fellow secretaries from that period, Ms Phmister, is now employed in the Supreme Court and is as delighted as the rest of us that her Honour has joined the court. I can mention, too, that Justice Bowskill has also worked for a group including Justice Dalton. Working part time, her Honour studied law, achieving first class honours and a University medal from the Queensland University of Technology.

Another step in her Honour's legal career was her service as associate to Justice Drummond in the Federal Court, followed by completion of articles of clerkship with then Mr Andrew Greenwood, now Justice Greenwood of the Federal Court. Her practice at the bar was largely in that Court, because she specialised in native title and administrative law, taking silk in 2013. But despite those Federal connections, her judicial appointments have come in the State jurisdiction where the work is more varied; and, I hesitate to say, more interesting.

In 2014, Judge Bowskill was appointed to the District Court, where she impressed with her energy, intelligence and diligence. And now she joins this Court as its 120th Judge.

It is a rare event that a Judge is appointed from another jurisdiction to this bench. For a number of reasons it is not something that should ever become a matter of common practice, but it has happened before, with excellent results. Many of you will recall the fine example of Justice John Helman, who made the same transition. I have no doubt that her Honour will be another such shining success.