



**ADDRESS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, DAMIEN O'BRIEN QC  
ON THE OCCASION OF A WELCOME CEREMONY FOR  
HER HONOUR JUDGE DEBORAH HOLLIDAY QC AND HER  
HONOUR JUDGE AMANDA MCCONNELL  
ON MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2021**

1. May it please the court.
2. On behalf of the Bar Association of Queensland, it gives me great pleasure to speak at this welcome ceremony for your Honours Judge Deborah Holliday QC and Judge Amanda McDonnell.
3. **JUDGE HOLLIDAY**, I extend a particular welcome to your family and invited guests who join us today, including your husband Michael and your children Thomas, William and Emily.
4. Your Honour joins this Court following nearly three decades of practice which saw you become one of the pre-eminent practitioners in the area of criminal law, working in both prosecution and defence.
5. In 1993, you were awarded a Bachelor of Laws with Honours by the Bond University. You were then called to the Bar in 1994 and commenced as counsel with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. In 2001, you were made Principal Crown Prosecutor, a role you held until you came to the Private Bar in 2015. In 2017, you were appointed as Commissioner of the Crime and Corruption Commission. In 2020, your Honour was made Queen's Counsel.
6. As Principal Crown Prosecutor, your Honour led what was then called the 'Major Crimes' section of the ODPP, where you had prosecution responsibility for the most serious and complex prosecutions in the state. For a number of years, your Honour was the only Crown Counsel to appear on indefinite sentence reviews in the Mental Health Court following its commencement in 2002.

7. At the Private Bar, your Honour's practice expanded beyond criminal law to include regulatory and disciplinary matters. At both the Employed Bar and Private Bar, you became renowned for your outstanding work ethic, your cool head and your ability to apply the same rational thinking to any problem, large or small. Often dealing with high profile and sensitive matters which require absolute honesty and discretion, you have consistently shown your integrity, insight and judgment.
8. Throughout your career, you have proven to be a great source of knowledge, intellect and a selfless mentor to many junior barristers and solicitors over the years. No matter how busy your own practice was, you have never been too busy to lend your assistance, whether it was on a professional or personal problem.
9. You have been a great contributor to the Bar Association, being a member of the Professional Ethics Committee and assisting guiding barristers who are encountering difficulties in their practice. You were also a member of the sub-committee established last year to assist the continued operation of the courts following the outbreak of COVID-19.
10. On behalf of the Bar, we thank you for the significant contribution you have made to our profession.
11. The Bar and its members extend to you, and your family, their best wishes on this well-deserved appointment. We are confident that your Honour will fulfil this new challenge with the same enthusiasm and dedication as you have demonstrated in practice and assure your Honour of the ongoing support of the Bar.
12. **JUDGE MCDONNELL**, I welcome your family and invited guests, including your husband Damian and your daughter Emma. I know you would love to have your daughter Kate here today.
13. Your Honour joins the Court following three years as a sessional member at the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, prior to which you were a solicitor for 27 years.
14. Your Honour was admitted to practise in 1991 and you commenced your career as a solicitor with Minter Ellison, where you rose to Partner in 2000,

then taking up the role of Special Counsel in 2007 where you remained until 2018. In 2018 you were appointed a sessional member of QCAT.

15. During your time at practice, you were recognised as a prominent solicitor in planning and environment matters, where you were involved in some of the largest cases to be heard by that Court. You worked along side all of the great silks in that jurisdiction providing invaluable insight and assistance in conducting large cases.
16. At QCAT, you have presided over disputes in a wide range of jurisdictions, including occupational regulation, child protection, building disputes, retail shop leasing and the review of administrative decisions.
17. But it is as a leading lawyer in the area of planning and environment that makes you such a valuable addition to this Court.
18. The Planning and Environment Court of Queensland is a world leader in the resolution of planning and environmental disputes. It has built a reputation for the efficient and timely resolution of development disputes through the adoption of innovative procedures, particularly in case management and expert evidence. That reputation has been built on the back of the tireless efforts of the judges of that Court and their ability to focus on the real issues and promptly deliver well-reasoned judgments.
19. I have been lucky enough to regularly appear in the Planning & Environment Court over my career at the Bar and have been able to see the Court's efforts in this regard first-hand.
20. As your predecessor Judge Richard Jones observed at his recent farewell, the importance of the work of the Planning and Environment Court of Queensland cannot be underestimated. The Court's work is critical to the prosperity of the people of this State and for the protection of the environment and resources of this State.
21. Your Honour brings the necessary skills so that the Planning and Environment Court can continue this significant contribution to this State. A deep understanding of the jurisdiction, an eye for detail, a prodigious work ethic, the ability to turn judgments around quickly and a calm demeanour. All of these attributes, for which your Honour is well known, will hold your Honour in good stead for the years ahead on the bench.

22. The Bar and its members extend to you, and your family, their best wishes on your appointment.
23. **JUDGE HOLLIDAY AND JUDGE MCDONELL**, to become a judge of this Honourable Court is to answer a call to public service. It involves taking on the considerable burden of life as a judge of this important Court. For that sacrifice and commitment, the legal profession and the broader Queensland community are extremely grateful.
24. May it please the court.