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JUSTICE CROWLEY: Thank you, Chief Justice, Madam Attorney, Mr O'Brien
and Ms Thomson for your kind words. I also want to acknowledge the traditional
25 owners of this land and pay my respects to elders past and present. I hope to draw
upon your wisdom and guidance as I strive to do justice in all matters as a member of
this Court.

I'm grateful today to see so many people here to come to celebrate this occasion with
30 me. I want to thank everybody, family, friends, colleagues, members of the
profession, distinguished guests, past members and current members and our
colleagues of this Court and Judges and other judicial officers who have come to be a
part of this. Your attendance here today makes this event even more special. I didn't
realise I knew so many people.

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Most importantly, though, I have my family here today to share this moment with
me. Although my mother isn't able to be here, I know that she'd be proudly
watching on the live stream from Bundaberg. And my mother often tells a story
about how she named me Lincoln Kingsley, a Lincoln after the US President and
40 Kingsley after the novelist Kingsley Amis. She thought it sounded like a name for a
doctor or a lawyer. I suppose it'll do for a Judge. I'm just lucky it wasn't Donald.

This is a momentous, historic occasion. It's a momentous occasion for me
personally and also for my family. I'm honoured and privileged to be joining the
45 ranks of this Court. I've always considered an appointment to the Supreme Court
would be the pinnacle of a career in the law. Yet, when I first started out in the law, I

doubted very much this would be anything more than a lofty aspiration unlikely to ever be fulfilled.

5 This is also a historic, momentous occasion for First Nations People of this State and, indeed, this country. I'm extremely proud and humbled today to be the first Indigenous person to be appointed as a Judge of this Court. It's remarkable in so many ways. Remarkable for me that I am the first, and remarkable for our community that it has taken so long for this occasion to arrive.

10 It was surely more than pure serendipity that my appointment was approved on the 26th of May, National Sorry Day, and publicly announced on 27 May, the commencement of Reconciliation Week. Since that time, though, I've been inundated with calls, letters, emails, texts and with people congratulating me in person on my appointment. I've been warmly welcomed by all the Judges of this
15 Court and I have received heartfelt, sincere messages from family, friends, colleagues, Judges, Magistrates, even strangers, and I've been genuinely surprised and touched by the number of messages of congratulations and support that I have received from here and far, other places within this country and, also, even from
20 overseas.

Many people have taken the time to write lengthy messages, commending me on a well-deserved appointment and detailing the qualities and attributes they admired in me as a Barrister and why those things would stand me in good stead as a Judge. Others were less effusive. One short message I received from a colleague I had
25 opposed in many trials succinctly described me as a "formidable friend." But despite its brevity, that message was a genuine compliment and I took it as an acknowledgement of the hard-earned respect I have won in practice at the Bar.

30 It's been a humbling experience but that's not a bad way to commence a career on the Bench. I think a touch of humility is a positive virtue for a Judge, particularly in the way that famous children's author C.S. Lewis put it:

Humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.

35 It has, of course, been impossible to think of myself less these past two weeks as I've been the centre of much attention.

I knew I'd really achieved something special, though, when I received a text from a friend who said that I had just featured as a trivia question on Have You Been Paying
40 Attention and their teenage son who's watching TV was very impressed.

After the initial excitement and fanfare of the announcement of my appointment, though, I then began to think more deeply about the role that I'll be undertaking as a Judge of this Court and my thoughts have ranged across everything from
45 philosophical musings about the importance of a judicial function and the meaning of justice through to practical questions such as: what lift do I need to take to get to my courtroom.

I've thought a lot about the essential qualities and characteristics that are necessary to adhere and faithfully discharge the judicial office in our system of justice and I've reminded myself, in particular, of the 3 Is: impartiality, integrity and independence. I will endeavour to ensure that all I do in administering justice according to law will be done observing those fundamental imperatives.

Naturally, though, given the enormity of the occasion, I've also spent quite a bit of time thinking about the journey that I've had to get to this point and what I'll bring to this role. And in doing so, it occurred to me that there's another fundamental I word that is equally indispensable and which will also guide me to do justice according to law and, no, it's not iPhone, it's identity, and I don't mean by that word idiosyncrasies or personal foibles that Judges must always guard against and ensure the law is applied consistently and fairly.

What I mean is my background, my life experience and all that makes me who I am. That will necessarily shape and inform my determination of a just outcome in the cases that come before me. And that is because, despite the ubiquitous technology that surrounds us and the advances of artificial intelligence, Judges are not robots. Judging involves more than simply inputting data and punching a button to get a result.

It is a quintessential exercise in humanity requiring the application of human understanding, compassion and insight to find facts, discern and apply the law to those facts, and to achieve justice. Every person that becomes a Judge, of course, brings with them their own background and experience and I'm not different in that respect. There is a difference, however, in the uniqueness of my own personal background and experience which I hope will enable me to see what is fair and what is just. I want to share just a couple of those experiences with you.

I know what it's like to be brought up by a single parent. My parents separated when I was in primary school and I'll never forget the day that my father called me into his room to tell me that my Mum had left and was not coming back. I was devastated. From then on, everything changed and I changed. I struggled to deal with that throughout the rest of my time at school, sometimes not coping so well which led to a few involuntary changes of school.

My brother and I were lucky, though, because we were brought up by our late father, a retired army officer who, if not the first, was certainly amongst the first Aboriginal soldiers to rise through the ranks to become a Major. He was, of course, a tough man. Overt displays of love and affection and expressions of emotion were seldom features of our childhood after that time, but our father loved us in his own way and he provided for us.

We were fortunate that he was such a strong, capable and intelligent man who raised us and, in his own way, encouraged us to get educated and make something of ourselves, usually, with a phrase like, "Use your bloody brain." But we did. He

taught us to work hard and to think for ourselves. I'm sure he's proud of me, as I was of him, and I wish he was here to be a part of this.

5 One occasion I distinctly recall swelling with pride was when I was undertaking
Army Reserve recruit training whilst studying at university. There was one surly
Corporal who was addressing a young Indigenous female recruit and saying
something disparaging about her Aboriginal background after she had said that she
might one day want to become an officer. As if to prove whatever point he was
10 trying to make, I heard him say to her, "Well, have you ever seen an Aboriginal
officer in the army?". Which allowed me to interject and say, "I have. Major
Crowley". To which he replied dismissively, "Yeah, who's that?". I was able to
answer that question with delight, "My father and your boss". That was the end of
the discussion.

15 I grew up in the country in Charters Towers. I knew very little at that time about the
law, and even less about a career in the law. Legal studies was not a subject
available then at Charters Towers State High School.

I'm pretty confident I did not spend much time in my youth thinking about the
20 Supreme Court of Queensland. In fact, I don't think I even knew it existed. But I
knew what was fair and what was not. I knew it was not fair when I would apply for
a part-time job after school at a local shop, later found out that the manager had
thrown my application in the bin while saying, "They're Aboriginal, aren't they?".
And I knew it was not fair when teachers suggested that I wouldn't amount to
25 anything, and when others judged me and my work potential without even knowing
me. So at an early age I decided I would not measure who I was or who I could be
by someone else's yardstick. And even so, even then, not knowing exactly what I
was getting into, I decided to study law.

30 It was only after I got to the big smoke of Townsville and was immersed in my first
year of law that I began to think one day I might practice law. But even then, I
couldn't see that as a reality. I distinctly remember feeling that I did not fit in, and
wondering how I could make it in a profession which seemed like a club of which I
was not a member. Times are changing though, and times have changed. By the
35 time I finished my law degree I decided against practice though, and instead joined
the public service as a graduate, working in age and disability care programs and
policy. And whilst the work was good, and it probably paid a lot more than a job as
a first year lawyer, after a time I felt that I was wasting the degree that I had worked
so hard to obtain.

40 So I returned to study, got admitted as a Solicitor of this Court, and a week later I
was back up in Townsville working as a Solicitor of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Legal Service, about to go to Court and appear for the first time in a bail
application. Now, although my client did not get bail, I knew then that I had made
45 the right choice to practice law. For the next few years I was fortunate enough to do
the job of Solicitor Advocate with ATSILS in Townsville and then here in Brisbane,
appearing in Court almost every day, doing duty lawyer work. It was during those

early days with ATSILS here in Brisbane that I met my wife, Jacinta, who was then working as a court reporter with the Courier Mail.

As I recall our first meeting, it was in the romantic setting of the old number 1
5 Magistrates Court in Herschel Street, where I was trying to make a difficult plea
before his Honour Magistrate Bill McKay. I thought I must have done a pretty good
job for all this media attention. In the years that followed I headed south down to
Sydney. What was supposed to be a short stint to gain some more experience turned
10 into almost eight years in total in Sydney. It was during that time, with the support
and encouragement of colleagues and mentors, that I ultimately made the decision to
come to the Bar, and I never looked back.

For almost 20 years I have had the pleasure and privilege of practicing at the Bar,
15 appearing in the most interesting and intelligent cases imaginable, and working with
so many great colleagues, who also became friends. Not everyone was so supportive
though. During my early days at the Bar in Sydney, I recall having a conversation
with an older barrister about my background. When I mentioned that I was
Aboriginal, he said something like that, "So you've got a touch of the tar. That's all
20 right". It was not quite the collegiate spirit that I expected, nor, fortunately, was it
what I mostly experienced in other later years of practice at the Bar.

And today as I commence the next chapter of my legal career, these accounts are the
personal experience which, of course, do not stand apart from the legal knowledge,
25 training and skills that I have developed over 25 years of practice. Rather, they will
hopefully equip me to judge impartially, independently and with integrity. But
above all, to judge fairly and justly. One particular aspect of my identity which has
been spoken about is, of course, my Aboriginal heritage. I never aspired to be the
first Indigenous person to be appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of
30 Queensland, but I immensely proud to have the honour of such a historic
achievement.

Amongst the avalanche of congratulations and best wishes that have followed the
announcement of my appointment has also been the occasional comment invariably
35 emanating from somewhere in the Twittersphere querying why there has been such a
focus on my Aboriginality and why is it such a big deal. Well, the answers to these
questions are pretty obvious. Diversity matters. The work of this Court and the
administration of justice are enhanced and advanced by having Judges who are
representative of the diverse nature of our community, and who are able to bring with
40 them a broad range of backgrounds and life experiences when deciding what is a just
cause and how justice is to be dispensed.

Representation for Indigenous Australians also matters. Indigenous people must be
presented and involved at the highest levels of decision making across all branches of
government, including within the judiciary. Justice and equality demands no less.
45 More personally, I hope my appointment might encourage and inspire other First
Nations people particularly within the legal profession, to aim high and know that
they too can achieve their dreams with hard work, dedication and belief in their own

abilities. I also hope that the day will come when it is not so remarkable that a First Nations person is appointed to hold an office like this.

5 I want to thank everyone who has come today to be a part of the ceremony. Those who are unable to attend in person but who are watching on the livestream as well. I particularly want to acknowledge and thank my wife Jacinta and our children for their and support. There have been many times over the years that I've been away working interstate on yet another case, seemingly for months on end, but you've always been there. Without you, I would not be here today celebrating this moment.

10 I'm looking forward to undertaking the duties and responsibilities of this appointment. It's an honour to join this honourable court, and to now have the privilege as serving as a Judge, presiding over cases where I have been entrusted with the responsibility of deciding what is a just outcome.

15 And as I discharge my duties, I will strive to do justice in every case. To my mind, that is the most important objective of the law, and the one thing our community expects Judges of this Court will deliver. In the end, justice is what it's all about. Always was, always will be.

20 THE CHIEF JUSTICE: Thank you. All present are invited to join Justice Crowley and the Judges for morning tea in the portrait gallery. Let these proceeding be recorded. Adjourn the Court.

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