



**ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, DAMIEN O'BRIEN KC  
ON THE OCCASION THE EXCHANGE OF CHRISTMAS  
GREETINGS**

**AT THE SUPREME COURT OF QUEENSLAND  
ON WEDNESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2022**

1. May it please the court.
2. As the year draws to a close and we look forward to Christmas, it is an appropriate time to pause, reflect on the 12 months that have just passed, and give thanks.
3. It has, on any view, been a momentous year for this Court. A new Chief Justice, a new President of the Court of Appeal, two new Court of Appeal judges, a new Senior Judge Administrator, three new Supreme Court judges and the retirement of three leaders of this court - Chief Justice Holmes, President Sofronoff and Justice Fraser. And of course, we have also had the announcement of the impending retirement of another two significant figures on this court in the last decade in Justice McMurdo and Justice Jackson.
4. It is difficult to not get the sense that this Court is going through significant change and renewal. That change and renewal can be seen not just in the makeup of its members but in the way it is responding to the everchanging litigation landscape. The impending commencement of the expanded and modernized Commercial List and the introduction of a Class Action List are changes welcomed by the Bar as necessary to ensure that civil litigation is as efficient, timely and cost effective as possible.

Commercial parties generally can chose where to litigate. These reforms will greatly assist in ensuring that litigation concerning Queensland is litigated in Queensland Courts and that this Court maintains it reputation as a strong commercial court.

5. In addition to acknowledging these significant changes, it is incumbent on me to thank those who have made substantial contributions to our legal system over the last year.
6. Thanks must firstly be extended to all of Queensland's judges, magistrates, tribunal members and other judicial officers, for their continued service to the community and their dedication to the proper administration of justice. Coming out of Covid there was a significant backlog of cases waiting to be heard, particularly criminal cases. All the courts have worked tirelessly to address that backlog.
7. Thanks must also go to the Attorney General, the Honourable Shannon Fentiman, Shadow Attorney General, Mr Tim Nichols, Mr David Mackie, Director General of the Department of Justice, and all of the departmental officers in the Department of Justice for their efforts throughout the year. They have worked collaboratively with the Bar in regard to a wide range of issues, including legislative reforms, judicial appointments and the efficient operation of the courts. I know the Attorney General is not here today due to other commitments but I would particularly like to thank her for her efforts in securing a significant increase in legal aid funding. Legal aid funding is essential for the proper functioning of our criminal justice system and the increase in funding was, and is, greatly appreciated.
8. To all those at the Bar and the Bar Association who have contributed in the last year, whether by assisting on the many submissions required to be made to Government and inquiries,

speaking at seminars, supporting colleagues who are struggling, or undertaking pro bono work, a large thanks is necessary.

9. Can I particularly single out our recently retired president of two years, Mr Tom Sullivan KC. Tom guided the association through two years of Covid and was critical to the efforts to secure the increase in legal aid. Tom's steady and quiet leadership has left the Bar and the Bar Association in a very good position. I have big shoes to fill.
10. Today is a special day for two groups of barristers who are at very different stages of their careers.
11. To those new barristers who have announced their appearance before this Court today, we welcome you to a great profession. The Bar's collegiate nature is one of its great strengths. The members of the Bar will be there to support you over the coming years as you find your feet.
12. To the new Silks, the last time King's Counsel were announced to this Court was in 1951, some 71 years ago. Your appointment to the rank of King's Counsel continues a tradition that can be traced back to Elizabeth I in 1594 when Her Majesty retained for the Crown the services of Francis Bacon by appointing him "learned counsel extraordinary to Her Majesty". It is a rank that reflects the confidence that both the Bar and the Bench have in you that you are a leader of the Bar in every sense. It is a great honour to be appointed silk - and much is expected of you in return. Your work ethic, excellence in the law, character and commitment to the proper administration of justice sets the standard for the rest of the Bar. The Bar congratulates you on your appointment and wishes you all the best in your new role.

13. In closing, on behalf of the Bar, can I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and all the best for the new year.
14. May it please the Court