



**ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, DAMIEN O'BRIEN KC, ON THE OCCASION  
OF A SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR JUSTICE MICHAEL COPLEY AND  
JUSTICE REBECCA TRESTON, ON WEDNESDAY 8 MAY 2024**

1. May it please the court.
2. It is an honour to speak on behalf of the barristers of Queensland at this ceremony to celebrate the appointment of your Honours, Justice Copley and Justice Treston.
3. **JUSTICE COPLEY**, I extend a particular welcome to your wife Julie, your children Madelaine, John, Mary-Frances and Genevieve and their partners and children, your father John and your sister Zoe. I also welcome your extended family and friends. All of them have every reason to be particularly proud today of all that your Honour has achieved and of this appointment to this Court.
4. Your Honour joins the Bench after 36 years at the Bar. The first 23 of those with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, where you were a Crown Prosecutor. The last 13 were at the private Bar. In that time, your Honour became one of the preeminent criminal barristers in Queensland. Unsurprisingly, your Honour took silk in 2008.
5. Throughout your career, your Honour has appeared in many of the most notable criminal appeals, your practice being particularly focused in the Court of Appeal and the High Court. Your Honour has been described by others as the finest appellate advocate working in criminal law. I was due to see that advocacy in action for the first time yesterday when I was to appear against you in the Court of Appeal on a criminal appeal. Alas, it was not to be - you answered the Attorney-General's call.
6. One of the reasons your Honour is held in such high regard is your ability to quickly synthesise highly technical appeal arguments into a coherent and logical manner, identifying avenues of appeal which others might not. No matter the complexity of the appeal, your Honour has always had mastery of the things that were critical, and the

ability to draw those into concise submissions. Your Honour never had to be concerned with the 10 page limit in the Court of Appeal. Your Honour could state the issue and the answer in half that number.

7. Your Honour also set a great example to others by the way you conducted yourself, both in court and with colleagues. Your Honour has always been unfailingly courteous and considerate in your professional practice.
8. These are ideal skills for a judge, skills which your Honour will no doubt employ on the Bench, and your appointment is celebrated amongst the criminal law practitioners of the Bar, for whom you have been a stellar example of advocacy and professionalism for many years.
9. Outside of practice, you have been a valuable contributor to the Qld Bar Association. From assisting the Professional Conduct Committee with disciplinary matters, to sitting on the Silk Committee and being a coach and presenter at the Australian Bar Association's appellate advocacy course, your Honour has generously given your time to the Bar, especially its junior members, sharing your knowledge and experience. The Association is grateful for all of your contributions.
10. **JUSTICE TRESTON**, there is a sense of inevitability about your appointment to this Court.
11. I say inevitability, because, apart from your obvious expertise and experience as a senior silk of 10 years, you have been a leader of our profession for many years and have always given back to the legal community and the public more generally. You are an exemplar of the attributes necessary to be eligible for appointment to this Court.
12. I extend a particular welcome to your husband, Nathan, your four children Dominic, Matthew, Alice and Eleanor, your brothers and sisters Tony, Brendan, Greg, Jane and Luke and their partners and children, and your father in law, Ross, and mother in law, Carol. I should also mention your mother, Janine, who is not able to be here due to illness, and your father, Tom, who died only a few weeks ago. I know both would have loved to have been here to celebrate this occasion.

13. I also welcome your extended family and friends.
14. Justice Treston, you were called to the Bar in 1996. Your Honour quickly built up a busy and diverse practice. While your Honour is particularly well-known for your expertise in succession, your practice included administrative law, trusts, insurance, common law, statutory liability and professional and medical negligence.
15. You and I were appointed silk in 2013, the year of the Baker's dozen. It wasn't a bad year to take silk. Our contemporaries included the now Chief Justice, Justice Ryan and Justice Bradley of this Court, as well as Justice Carew of the Family Court.
16. Taking silk saw your practice become even busier and led to the blossoming of a busy practice as a mediator. You became the mediator for the most complex and intractable estate disputes in Queensland.
17. Your Honour succeeded in such a wide variety of areas of practice and were so busy because of your well known legal ability and work ethic. All of these attributes put you in good stead for a successful career on the bench.
18. Your Honour has also been a leader of the profession for many years. Your Honour was first elected as a member of the Council of the BAQ in 2002. You were Vice President in 2017 and then elected in November 2018 as the Association's first female President in its then 115 year history.
19. You served for two years as President. Your second year as President was the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. That was an extremely difficult time, both for our members and for the administration of justice. While sitting on the Bar Council I saw firsthand how your Honour worked tirelessly with the profession, the members of this court and other courts and government to steer through the multitude of challenges which the pandemic presented.
20. But your Honour also went out of your way to assist our members on a personal level. No matter how busy you were – and you were very busy – you were always there to help when difficulties struck, be it with a sympathetic ear, a supportive word or by solving a

problem. I saw it first hand and I experienced firsthand. It revealed a compassion and humanity to your Honour that is essential to anyone taking on the role of a judicial officer.

21. Since your term as President, you have also served as Chair of the Annual Bar Conference Committee and have organised the Annual Bar Dinner, both key events on the Association's calendar. That is not to mention the many hours spent assisting the Bar Practice Course, the dozens of CPD seminars, conference presentations, attendances at workshops, and preparation of submissions to government.
22. For your outstanding contribution to the Bar and the Bar Association of Queensland, the barristers of Queensland wish to express their sincerest gratitude.
23. Unsurprisingly, your Honour's desire to give back has extended outside the legal community. Each of the National Heart Foundation, Mt St Michael's College and Mater Dei Primary School have all received the benefit of your time and commitment. Your Honour never stops.
24. **JUSTICE COPLEY** and **JUSTICE TRESTON**, to become a judge of this Honourable Court is to answer a call to public service. Your Honours' expertise and extensive contribution to the profession is such that it is no surprise that your Honours have answered that call when the opportunity arose.
25. We know that your Honours have accepted this appointment because you value public service and understand that the reputation of this great Court can only be maintained if leading members of the Bar are prepared to take on the considerable burden of life as a superior court judge.
26. For that sacrifice, for that commitment, the legal profession and the broader Queensland community are extremely grateful.
27. We congratulate you on your appointments, assure your Honours of our ongoing support and wish you all the best for your future on this Court.
28. May it please the court.