



**ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, CATE HEYWORTH-SMITH KC, ON  
THE OCCASION OF A WELCOME CEREMONY FOR HIS HONOUR  
JUDGE CHRIS KAHLER ON TUESDAY 27 MAY 2025**

1. May it please the Court.
2. It is a great pleasure to speak on behalf of the Bar Association of Queensland and its members to congratulate you, Judge Kahler, on your elevation to this Honourable Court.
3. I would also like to extend particular welcome to your immediate and extended family joining us today.
4. Your Honour joins the Court having spent the last two decades practising as a solicitor in North Queensland, the last nine of those spent as principal of the firm Kahler Lawyers. You have spent your entire legal career in North Queensland, and you become the second graduate of James Cook University to join the bench after His Honour Judge Lynham was the first. As a solicitor, your practice was a broad affair, taking on criminal law, litigation and personal injury matters across Cairns, Innisfail and across the Cassowary Coast.
5. Members of the Bar who were briefed by your Honour as a solicitor report that you were disciplined in your practice, remained calm under the pressure of managing the demands of practice, and gave your clients the whole of your attention. You were prepared, knowledgeable and hardworking – an “*engine room*”. At the conclusion of a matter you were always one to find what you could learn from it. More than that, they described you as excellent company, good-hearted and as enjoyable to spend time with socially as professionally.

6. In addition to your practice, you have actively supported community organisations, having been chair of the Anglican Diocese of North Queensland and President of Warrina Aged Care Innisfail, a councillor with the Queensland Law Society, as well as volunteering with the Salvation Army and Red Cross throughout the years. I understand the Innisfail Vikings also had the benefit of your service as secretary for two years, and as a player for five. We will leave it for the Vikings to determine which of those provided them most value.
7. Your Honour once credited the words of John F. Kennedy “*ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country*” for inspiring your commitment to the community.
8. Your Honour, to accept an appointment to this Court is to answer a call to public service. It is likely the last and hardest job you will ever have. Townsville and its surrounding communities have languished without a third judicial officer on the bench of the District Court. With respect, your Honour, there is no time for pausing to reflect on your achievement. North Queensland requires you to bring to bear that renowned work ethic of yours immediately.
9. The members of the Bar offer their congratulations. We wish you the best for your many years to come on the Bench of this Honourable Court.
10. May it please the Court.