



Swearing in Ceremony for the Honourable Justice Shane  
Doyle as a Judge of the Supreme Court and as a Judge of  
Appeal and the Honourable Justice Christopher Johnstone as  
a Judge of the Supreme Court  
Monday, 28 July 2025  
Banco Court

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**Helen Bowskill**  
**Chief Justice**

The Court sits today here in Brisbane and also in Townsville and in Cairns where Justice North and Justice Henry are sitting. We are streaming to Rockhampton, but we are very pleased to have the Central Judge, Justice Crow, joining us here in Brisbane. Justices Martin, Burns and Davis were unable to be here today as they are on leave and Justice Smith has a persistent cough and so sends his apologies. But we all join in warmly congratulating Justice Doyle and Justice Johnstone on their appointments and in welcoming them to the court.

We are, as always, honoured to be joined today by many serving and retired judicial officers of state and federal courts and tribunals and I acknowledge in particular Justice Edelman of the High Court of Australia. There are a number of serving and retired judges who have sent their regretful apologies. And we are enormously grateful for the huge presence of members of the Bar and the legal profession more generally.

I also acknowledge the first custodians of the lands and waters across Queensland, in particular in the Brisbane area, the Turrbal people and the Jagera people. I acknowledge with respect the wisdom, courage and

resilience of their ancestors and elders who cared for these lands and waters for thousands of years before us.

On this special occasion, we extend a very warm welcome to the family and friends of Justice Doyle and Justice Johnstone.

This is not only a proud moment for each of these new judges individually; it is also a collectively important part of our Court's evolving history, and you all honour this important institution by your presence.

At the Bar table, I acknowledge the Attorney-General, the honourable Deb Frecklington; the Solicitor-General, Mr Gim Del Villar KC; Ms Heyworth KC, the president of the Bar Association; and Ms Dee, the president of the Law Society.

We welcome you all, distinguished guests, members of the profession, ladies and gentlemen.

The appointment of Justice Doyle follows the recent retirement of our dear colleague Justice Peter Flanagan which took effect last Friday, 25 July 2025. His Honour did not wish to be the centre of attention at a ceremony to mark his retirement after just over 11 years as a judge of this court, three of those as a judge of appeal. But it is important to record the enormous contribution that Justice Flanagan has made, as well as our heartfelt admiration for, and gratitude to, Justice Flanagan who has been a truly excellent colleague in every possible respect. Justice Flanagan's outstanding skill and ability as a jurist has been spoken of before when first welcomed to this Court in 2014 and when sworn in as a judge of appeal in 2022. He leaves an impressive legacy of beautifully crafted judgments, delivered with commendable timeliness; judgments which elucidate the law on a wide range of topics with clarity and precision and which will be cited authoritatively for many years to come. Perhaps less tangibly, but no less importantly, Justice Flanagan has been a paragon of judicial conduct: unfailingly polite, courteous, thoughtful and prepared. His Honour is the

consummate gentleman, a man of great generosity and kindness, not to mention excellent good humour. I know I speak for all of us when I say that we will miss him enormously; but we also wish him all the very best for a happy and healthy retirement.

Justice Shane Doyle comes to the Court following a remarkable career at the Bar, including almost 30 years as a silk, enjoying an international reputation as an outstanding leader in a broad range of commercial legal matters. There are some consistent themes in what has been said about Justice Doyle in other contexts which bode well for his judicial life: a strong intellect, an ability to quickly grasp issues, narrow a case down to what actually matters and to make decisions. His Honour is also reputed to be calm under pressure, an essential judicial characteristic. The work of the Court of Appeal is relentless and not for the faint-hearted. We have every confidence that, given his Honour's professional standing and extensive experience, Justice Doyle will make an outstanding contribution to the work of the Court for the benefit of the Queensland community whom we serve.

The appointment of Justice Christopher Johnstone is made in anticipation of the retirement in March 2026 of Justice North, the Northern Judge resident in Townsville. I record the Court's gratitude to the government for acceding to our request for this appointment to be made now to ensure that we are appropriately resourced while Justice North takes some leave prior to his formal retirement. More will be said of Justice North at that time.

Justice Johnstone will sit here in Brisbane and on circuit in Townsville until taking up the position as the Northern Judge in March 2026. Justice Johnstone joins the Court after 18 years at the Bar and having taken silk last year. He brings to the Court a wealth of experience in a broad range of commercial disputes as well as in relation to sports law and military tribunals, including courts martial. Justice Johnstone is also an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force and has previously been deployed on active

service, including in Afghanistan and Iraq. That speaks of a person within whom service to the community is deeply engrained.

Whilst such service is a hallmark of the legal profession to which all lawyers should subscribe, it is the essence of the commitment of a judicial officer, embedded within the affirmations and oaths of office and of allegiance that each of our new judges have made today.

We warmly welcome both Justice Doyle and Justice Johnstone and we look forward to working with them.