



**ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT, MR G A THOMPSON QC,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE WELCOME CEREMONY FOR
HIS HONOUR JUDGE MICHAEL WILLIAMSON QC
AND HIS HONOUR JUDGE NATHAN JARRO
OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF QUEENSLAND,
ON THURSDAY 12 APRIL 2018**

May it please the Court

Your Honour, the Chief Judge, your Excellency, the Governor of Queensland and Mrs de Jersey, the Honourable Attorney-General of Queensland, Judge Williamson and your Honour's family and Judge Jarro and your Honour's family, the Chief Justice of Queensland, the President of the Court of Appeal of Queensland, Justices of the Supreme Court of Queensland, President of the Land Court of Queensland, Judges of the District Court of Queensland, Chief Magistrate, members of the judiciary who I haven't mentioned and retired members, the Solicitor-General and the President of the Queensland Law Society, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Bar Association of Queensland it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Judge Michael Williamson and Judge Nathan Jarro on your appointment as judges to the District Court of Queensland. The attendance today of such numbers both here and by video link is itself a testament to the very high regard in which your Honours are held by the legal profession and generally by this community.

May I first address some specific comments to you, Judge Williamson. Your Honour was called to the Bar in 2004 and appointed Queen's Counsel in 2017. Your Honour was a specialist developing an extensive highly regarded practice as an advocate in planning and environmental law. Your Honour's standing as one of the leading practitioners in that field was recognised by your appointment as Queen's Counsel last year. A review of the reported cases in the planning and environment jurisdiction discloses the extraordinary breadth of your Honour's practice, regularly dealing with cases involving developments that concern many millions of dollars in value and very complex legal and planning issues. Your Honour is held in high regard by your fellow practitioners in that field, and by those experts who your Honour called over the years of practice. Many of them have called me personally to ask that I pass on their regards and congratulations. Your Honour also regularly appeared in the Court of Appeal arguing important and difficult cases concerning planning and environment issues. You have a reputation of being diligent and exercising a high level of intellect in dealing with these complex matters.

Prior to coming to the Bar your Honour obtained a Bachelor of Applied Science with a distinction from Queensland University of Technology and worked as a quantity surveyor before turning to the law - a suitable background to the work you had chosen as your area of specialisation. Adding to that your Honour was Associate to his Honour Judge Thomas Quirk of the Planning and Environment Court, a further good grounding for this appointment. I have no doubt that your Honour's practical and technical experience contributed to the excellence of your practice at the Bar in areas which were derived from input from those two important areas of background.

Beyond your practice at the Bar your Honour has been heavily involved with the Queensland Environmental Law Association, having presented a number of papers at seminars dealing with a range of planning or issues relevant to your specialised area. Your Honour has also contributed to the Bar Association through advocacy and the submission writing as a member of the Planning and Environment Committee, for which I am personally thankful.

I'm reliably informed that your Honour has a number of passions in order of descending importance: your Honour's family, cricket, playing bass guitar, and the Beatles. As to the first passion we are aware that your Honour and your Honour's wife, Michelle, will, within a few days, have an addition to your family, and we wish you both all the best for that important change in your life.

The Bar Association and its members extend to your Honour, congratulations on a very well deserved appointment. We are confident that your Honour will fulfil this new challenge with the same enthusiasm and dedication as you have demonstrated in practice, and we assure your Honour of the ongoing support of the Bar.

Your Honour Judge Jarro, your Honour attended Marist Brothers Ashgrove where you are reported to have been an outstanding athlete and held positions of leadership. Your Honour was then awarded a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Business from Queensland University of Technology in 1999 and became an Associate to Justice Monahan, after which you joined the firm of TressCox as a solicitor in medical defence and insurance areas of practice. Among your clients was included Queensland Health. Mr Gastene, a former partner of the firm, has asked that I pass on his congratulations, and, when pressed, was unwilling to otherwise embellish stories which might have made this speech more colourful.

Your Honour was called to the Bar in 2004 and joined the Chambers of John Griffin of Queen's Counsel who stands beside me as your Senior Master. Apocryphal, perhaps, he claims to have passed on many useful advocacy tips. Your Honour developed an extensive practice in the areas of commercial and insurance law, personal injury law, public and administrative law, inquests and inquiries, to name but a few. You were highly regarded as a careful, diligent, intellectually rigorous and gifted advocate. Your Honour has made extraordinary contributions, as we've heard from the Honourable Attorney-General, to both the Indigenous community and to the Queensland community and to Queensland at large.

Like Judge Williamson, your Honour's passions include your family, Alli and Lily, and sport. Apparently a loyal supporter of the Brisbane Lions AFL team. You are a passionate supporter of arts in Queensland. Among your many roles, some of which have been mentioned, you've served as a director of Major Brisbane Festivals Proprietary Limited and the Queensland Theatre Company. You were a founding member and served as president of the Indigenous Lawyers Association of Queensland. You served as a director of National Indigenous Television Limited. You were on the editorial board of the Indigenous Law Bulletin. You've been on the Council of the Queensland University of Technology and chaired the Queensland University of Technology Indigenous Education and Employment Consultative Committee, and been secretary of Brisbane Boys College Indigenous Scholarship Fund.

Your Honour has also been an active member of the Association's Indigenous Barristers Committee for which the Bar Association particularly thanks you. Your Honour is the first Indigenous judge appointed to the District Court of Queensland, a significant matter in itself, the significance of which cannot be overstated. It is enormously important both to the Indigenous community as well as to Queenslanders at large. I am specifically asked by Magistrate Morton from Mount Isa to extend his congratulations on this well-deserved appointment. He rang me this morning to ask me to pass that on to your Honour.

The Bar Association and its members extend to your Honour, congratulations and its best wishes on this well-deserved appointment. Again, we are confident that your Honour will meet this new challenge with the same enthusiasm and dedication that you have demonstrated with practice, and, again, we assure your Honour of the ongoing support of the Bar.

May it please the Court