



**ADDRESS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT, MR GEOFFREY DIEHM QC, ON THE
OCCASION OF A VALEDICTORY CEREMONY FOR THE HONOURABLE
JUSTICE ALAN WILSON OF THE SUPREME COURT OF QUEENSLAND,
ON THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2015**

May it please the Court.

On behalf of the barristers of Queensland I appear today to acknowledge your Honour's many years of service to the courts of this State, and over many more years to the legal profession, and to indeed thank your Honour for it.

May I extend the apologies of the Bar's President, Mr Doyle QC, who is unable to appear today because of other professional obligations. Mr Doyle has asked it to be specifically noted that he endorses what I am about to say.

In a newspaper editorial today the assertion is made that judges of this Court are not fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. It is merely an assertion because no evidence in support of it is cited.

The judges of this court are charged with the responsibility of presiding over disputes between citizens and between the State and citizens.

An examination of the daily law lists and the judgements of the court, which are readily accessible, shows that the judges of this court who were so criticised continue to discharge their duty to the highest of standards.

More vividly still, attendance in the court rooms demonstrates that those judges are diligent and highly capable people well worthy of the office bestowed upon them. The criticism is without merit.

A number of the landmarks in your Honour's career in the legal profession and on the court have been referred to already. Your Honour enjoyed 17 years at the junior Bar followed by another two years as Senior Counsel, before being appointed as a judge of the District Court. While at the Bar, your Honour first specialised in personal injuries law before becoming a recognised expert in the field of succession law. In the last few years of your Honour's time at the Bar, your Honour became a leader in the emerging field of mediation. Like in your Honour's other experiences of specialised areas of practice, your Honour was highly sought after.

The profession's appreciation for your Honour's appointment to the Bench in 2001 was only equalled by its disappointment at its loss of your Honour's service as a member of it.

After 8 years' service on the District Court, mastering again new frontiers such as the Planning and Environment jurisdiction and the Childrens Court, your Honour was appointed to the Supreme Court and as the inaugural President of QCAT. Apart from becoming a master of administrative law your Honour had to become a master of administration. The successes enjoyed by that Tribunal following its inception are in no small part due to your Honour's efforts in that role. I will return to the likely reasons for your Honour's success in that respect and in others shortly.

While at the Bar, your Honour was a very substantial contributor to the profession. Your Honour was the founder and editor of the Queensland Bar News, a publication which continues in a modified form to this day. Your Honour was a member of the Barristers Board. Your Honour lectured in various courses and chaired a number of committees inside and outside the Bar. Your Honour served as a member of the Bar Council.

Subsequent to each of your Honour's appointments, your Honour has continued in educative roles for the profession both through CPD programs and, importantly for the Bar, through your Honour's involvement in the Bar Practice Course. We hope that despite your Honour's retirement from the Bench that the Bar can steal some more of your Honour's valuable time on occasions to enable future generations to have the benefit of your Honour's teaching.

Your Honour's career in the law, in the profession and on the Bench, has been, in a word, successful. The reasons for the successes are in common. Apart from possessing the necessary intellect and enviable skill both in oral and written communication, your Honour has proven throughout this time to be calm, attentive, respectful, and even kind, in the way in which your Honour has dealt with litigants, witnesses and lawyers alike. It is easy to see why those qualities served your Honour well in practice at the Bar in areas such as succession law and in particular as a mediator. It helps to understand why your Honour had such success as the inaugural President of QCAT, with the many challenges involved in its establishment. It is easier still then to understand why your Honour is a judge who has earned the highest respect that could be hoped for from the profession.

We wish your Honour and your wife Lyndie a long and enjoyable retirement. It is indeed apt to say, we are indebted to your Honour.

May it please the Court.