

Copyright in this document is reserved to the State of Western Australia. Reproduction of this document (or part thereof, in any format) except with the prior written consent of the Attorney General is prohibited. Please note that under section 43 of the Copyright Act 1968 copyright is not infringed by anything reproduced for the purposes of a judicial proceeding or of a report of a judicial proceeding.

THE DISTRICT COURT  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1 of 1900

WELCOME CEREMONY FOR HIS HONOUR  
JUDGE RENTON SC

WAGER CJDC

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT PERTH ON WEDNESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 9.16 AM

MR J.R. QUIGLEY MLA Attorney-General of Western Australia

MS A.D. GIMISIS Deputy President, the Law Society of  
Western Australia

MR M. SIMS SC Western Australian Bar Association

MR A.G. ELLIOTT former President, Criminal Lawyers'  
Association of Western Australia

**WAGER CJDC:** This is a special sitting to welcome his Honour Judge Darren Renton SC to this Court. His Honour received his commission on 23 December 2024 and commenced sitting as a judge of this Court on 20 January 2025. This Court sits on the land of the Whadjuk people of the greater Noongar nation and I pay my respects to their elders past and present. The District Court also sits in 12 other locations around Western Australia. I acknowledge the Traditional Owners from all over the State and I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I also acknowledge the significant contribution made by Aboriginal people in this State to our culture and community. I'm very pleased indeed to be sitting with the judges of this District Court on a Full Bench to welcome his Honour. It's also my pleasure to welcome the Honourable Chief Justice Peter Quinlan to the Bench and I thank him for sitting with us today. I warmly welcome his Honour's family to the Court; his Honour's wife Diane, son James and daughter Zoe.

I acknowledge and welcome Mrs Sue Renton who's his Honour's mother, Stephen Renton who's his Honour's brother and his Honour's father-in-law, Mr John Pascoe. Indeed, all of the invited guests today are very welcome to the Court and I'm very pleased that you are here to share this day. I also welcome our distinguished guests, Ms Janine Kingston on behalf of the Director General of the Department of Justice and representatives of the Executive from Court and Tribunal Services.

Ms Candice Haines representing the Assistant Director of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Rob Owen SC, the Director of Public Prosecutions for Western Australia, Ms Catriona Macleod, President of the Women Lawyers Association, Ms Brooke Sojan, President of the Criminal Lawyers' Association.

I welcome Justice Vandongen from the Federal Court and many of our judicial colleagues from the Supreme Court including the Honourable Justice Mazza, Justice Tottle, Justice McGrath, Justice Forrester, Justice Lundberg, Justice Lemonis, Justice Howard, Justice Cobby, Justice Gething, Justice Palmer and Master Sarah Russell.

I especially welcome our speakers at the Bar table, the Honourable John Quigley MLA, Attorney-General for the State of Western Australia, Ms Angie Gimisis, Deputy President of the Law Society of Western Australia, Mr Michael Sims SC who is speaking on behalf of the Bar Association of Western

Australia and Mr Anthony Elliott, immediate past president of the Criminal Lawyers' Association.

Although by no means a substitute or replacement, his Honour's appointment came about following the elevation of Justice Gething to the Supreme Court. Justice Gething was a Principal Registrar of this Court from 2004 until 2013 and after two years as Principal Registrar at the Supreme Court, was appointed as a judge of this Court where he served for nine years. Justice Gething's contributions over those 18 years was enormous. He has a voracious appetite for work, an encyclopaedic memory and a fondness for governance and strategy.

His Honour was a friend to all in this Court and although we're very proud of his elevation, he's going to be greatly missed. So his Honour Judge Renton's appointment is greatly anticipated and we've been very pleased indeed to welcome him behind the scenes. He's welcomed for many reasons, but primarily because he was a tenacious, meticulous and at all times fair counsel when appearing before this Court.

His Honour's breadth and depth of experience, particularly in complex aspects of Commonwealth crime, is welcomed by all and, of course, he has a mysterious security rating that means that he can be trusted with the most confidential matters that may come before this Court. His Honour has already demonstrated his commitment to the Court and his ability to be a team player. His Honour's future on the Bench will, I hope, be fulfilling and rewarding for his Honour who, I'm sure, will serve the community of Western Australia admirably.

But before calling on you, Mr Attorney, I note that it is your penultimate appearance in this Court as our Attorney-General. I thank you and the Government of Western Australia for his Honour's appointment and I thank you for continuing to prioritise the interests of this Court, even as recently as this morning. Yes, Mr Attorney.

**QUIGLEY, MR:** May it please the Court and thank you Chief Judge Wager. I would like to commence by also recognising the many distinguished guests that you have already welcomed by name and would like to extend a warm welcome to Judge Renton's family who you've also mentioned personally by name who are here today on this day of celebration of his Honour's elevation to the Court.

I'd also particularly like to pay my respects to the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the Court

convenes today, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, their elders past, present and emerging. It is indeed my great pleasure to appear here today on behalf of the State of Western Australia and the Government and people of Western Australia to honour and to welcome Judge Darren Renton SC as a member of the District Court.

Your Honour was admitted to practice in 1994 and amassed more than 25 years of trial and appellate experience in Federal and State criminal law. Your Honour served as in-house counsel and as principal legal officer for the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions for about a decade, conducting numerous complex trials and appeals involving drug importation and trafficking, fraud, terrorism, cybercrime and other serious Federal offences.

Your Honour was called to the Bar in 2010 and as a barrister conducted a host of trials and appeals in the Commonwealth and State cases for the defence and for prosecution briefs. Your Honour has appeared before the Corruption and Crime Commission as both counsel assisting and on behalf of those appearing and in 2013, your Honour was appointed Counsel Assisting the Inquiry into the City of Canning by the WA Government.

During your practice, your Honour represented many foreign Governments on extradition matters at both first instance and in the Federal Court. Between November 2018 and February 2023, your Honour also served as a part-time member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Your Honour's expertise and commitment to the profession and to the administration of justice, was acknowledged when your Honour was appointed as a Senior Counsel in October 2021.

That commitment is reflected in your service to both the legal profession and the wider community. Your Honour has served as Vice President of the Criminal Lawyers' Association of Western Australia, Chair of the Professional Standards Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Perth, Chair of the Australian Bar Association's Criminal Law Committee and as a member of the WA Bar Association's Bar Council.

Your Honour also authored several chapters of the LexisNexis Criminal Law and is the General Advisor, Practical Guidance in Criminal Law for that publication, demonstrating your commitment to the development of the criminal law. Your Honour has also presented several papers at international conferences and represented the

Australian Government on an international, intergovernmental panel dealing with cybercrime.

Since the announcement of your elevation to this Court, I'm sure that you have received many calls of congratulation. So have I. So many people in the profession have contacted me to congratulate me on appointing not only such a skilled counsel, but such a lovely human being and I think it's that last aspect that moved them all to contact me and say, "Yay, you've appointed Darren. What a fantastic appointment. He's a fantastic man."

And that is also reflected, of course, in the many distinguished guests that have attended this ceremony this morning, that have been acknowledged by the Chief Judge, but I also note that interstate Senior Counsel and the person is Mr David Edwardson KC of the Adelaide Bar has travelled and joins us this morning for your celebration and of course, Mr John Agius KC, who led you in some criminal prosecutions for the Commonwealth, has travelled from Sydney to celebrate your elevation together with your family and senior members of the Western Australian judiciary and the profession.

So it's absolutely clear from your Honour's ability and experience and commitment to the law and to our community that it serves that you're an outstanding appointment of a judge of this Honourable Court. On behalf of the Government of Western Australia and on behalf of all the people of Western Australia, I congratulate you on your appointment and wish you all the very best in the next stage of your service to the people of Western Australia. May it please the Court.

**WAGER CJDC:** Thank you, Mr Attorney.

Yes, Ms Gimisis.

**GIMISIS, MS:** May it please the Court. It is my privilege to appear this morning on behalf of the Law Society of Western Australia in welcoming your Honour Judge Darren Renton to the Bench of this Honourable Court. May I also welcome and congratulate members of your Honour's family and acknowledge friends and colleagues, distinguished guests and members of the judiciary present here today.

The Law Society joins in acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation. On the Society's behalf, I pay my respects to the elders past, present and emerging.

As we have heard today, your Honour is highly regarded and well-respected in the legal profession and you have had an outstanding career since your admission in 1994. For the sake of those here today, I will not attempt to cover all of your Honour's achievements, which are far too plentiful for my allocated time. I shall aim for brevity.

Starting out in private practice in 1993 before your admission in 1998, your Honour joined the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions. It was here that you developed a deep interest in complex drug offences, terrorism, white-collar crime, extradition matters, fraud and more.

You've run trials, sentencing hearings and appeals in cases in which the darkest of human nature has flourished, including cases involving murder, corruption, cybercrime, terrorism and child sex tourism. The Law Society was lucky enough to benefit from your criminal tendencies. That is, the tendencies to love the criminal law, that is - with your Honour serving on the Law Society's Criminal Law Committee from 2007 until 2011.

Your Honour remained at the CDDP until you were called to the Bar in 2010. Your extensive skill and experience on both sides of the table in criminal law cases, your astute nose for inquests and inquiries and your grasp of the complexities of administrative law placed you in good stead and for a successful career at the Bar.

When your Honour took silk in 2021, I suspect few were surprised. Your Honour also had a flair for the pen, with numerous journal articles, textbook chapters and practical guidance published under your name. It is this raft of experience and deep passion for complexity which has led to your Honour developing a reputation for fairness, generosity amongst your peers and colleagues.

Gerald Yin, a solicitor at DG Price & Co recalled that his first encounter with your Honour was on 12 December 2010, when he was Lloyd Rayney's instructing solicitor. Lloyd Rayney had just been charged with murder and the legal teams were preparing for a hotly contested bail application to be heard on Christmas Eve. From that first matter, Mr Yin was struck by your Honour's work ethic, temperament, fairness and generosity, qualities that will undoubtedly serve your Honour well on the Bench.

Even in what was a highly adversarial proceeding, your Honour treated Mr Yin, a junior solicitor on the opposing side, with fairness. Beyond that, your Honour's legal

ability and capacity to digest a massive brief and complicated material was impressive. The legal teams all had to digest around five boxes, or 25 lever arch files, of material in less than two weeks.

Mr Yin didn't even try. He was less than impressed by the 100 pages of written submissions in opposition to bail, referencing those materials. Hopefully your Honour's written decisions will be more concise. Take this as you will, but bail was granted. Since then, and over the past 14 years, Mr Yin has had the pleasure of working with your Honour on numerous cases.

He will always recall a co-accused trial involving a married couple charged with creating child exploitation material. It was a very sensitive matter. Your Honour treated everyone, including the victim, with fairness and sensitivity, which is firmly in your Honour's character. The advice your Honour has provided to members of the profession has been invaluable. You are always available for a chat and guidance.

Even after your Honour's appointment, when Mr Yin texted to say congratulations, your Honour demonstrated your generosity of spirit, saying you still had a few weeks before you formally commenced your new post, if there was anything you could do to help with Mr Yin's legal career. That is your Honour's nature, and we are all the better for it.

In closing, on behalf of the Law Society, and the wider legal profession of Western Australia, we warmly congratulate your Honour on your appointment and wish you all the best in the new role in serving the community and the administration of justice. May it please the Court.

**WAGER CJDC:** Thank you, Ms Gimisis.

Mr Sims.

**SIMS, MR:** May it please the Court. May I also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and also welcome his Honour Judge Renton's family and distinguished guests to today's special sitting. On behalf of the Western Australian Bar Association, it is my privilege and honour to speak at this welcome ceremony for his Honour Judge Darren Renton SC.

Your Honour is, as we have already heard, extremely well qualified to serve the State in your new role as a judge of

this Honourable Court. Your Honour comes to this Court with more than 30 years of experience in numerous and varied roles, including as a Crown prosecutor with the Commonwealth DPP, as an independent barrister and as a part-time member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Your Honour has a remarkable depth and breadth of experience in the practice of the criminal law, particularly Commonwealth criminal law, as both prosecutor and defence counsel. The breadth and depth of that experience has already been amply demonstrated by those who have spoken before me, and I do not propose to go over that ground again.

Instead, I propose to focus in particular on the excellent service your Honour provided to the administration of justice in this State and nationally during your time as a member of the Independent Bar. Your Honour was called to the Bar in 2010, well equipped by then with almost 16 years of experience. At the Bar, your Honour conducted a very successful and truly national practice from John Toohey Chambers, undertaking advice, trial and appellate work throughout Australia.

Your Honour also appeared as Counsel Assisting at numerous inquests, inquiries, particularly before the Crime and Corruption Commission and the City of Canning inquiry in 2013. Your Honour diligently served the members of the WA Bar as a member of Bar Counsel between 2014 and 2016. As a member of Bar Counsel, your Honour played an important role in reviewing the Bar Readers' Course, an important component of the training of new barristers in this State.

I am reliably informed that as a leader, your Honour was always very supportive of the junior barristers who worked with you, providing them with the benefits of your Honour's formidable experience whilst allowing them the space to learn, to grow and to develop their own skills. In similar vein, whilst at the Bar, your Honour retrained strong links with your former colleagues at the Office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, offering very generously of your time to train, support and mentor junior practitioners working in that office.

Such mentorship included making yourself available for fireside chats with new lawyers, to assist them in coming to grips with the legal and ethical challenges which are inherent in the role of the prosecutor. Your former colleagues from the CDPP remain very grateful to your Honour for the support and guidance you offered, and they



spoke highly of your Honour's sense of humour and generosity of spirit.

As an aside, I also note that his Honour Judge Troy's exploits as a corridor cricketer at the Perth offices of the CDPD remain firmly etched in the memory of at least some of those with whom you both worked. I understand your Honour likely had to dodge the odd cricket ball in those corridors from time to time. But I digress.

Your Honour's eminence in the practice of the law combined with your Honour's unquestioned integrity, availability and independence was recognised by your appointment as Senior Counsel in 2021. Your Honour was one of a cohort of seven silks appointed by the Chief Justice in that year. History tells us that both the State and the Commonwealth governments have recognised that cohort as one of considerable ability and have drawn heavily upon its talents. Your Honour is the fifth of those seven to have taken judicial law administrative appointment.

Whilst I promised not to repeat what had already been said about the breadth and depth of your Honour's criminal experience, I will conclude by referencing two examples of your Honour's work, which I came across in media articles referring to your Honour, of which I can tell you there are many.

The first was a report concerning what was aptly described as a deeply complicated and tragic first of its kind criminal case in Australia. The case, prosecuted by your Honour, resulted in the imprisonment of a mother for coercing her daughter into marriage. Very tragically, the daughter was subsequently murdered by her husband.

It was apparent from the comments attributed to your Honour following that case that despite its unprecedented and confronting nature, and no doubt, the personal toll it took upon all involved, including yourself, your Honour remained empathetic to all involved and acutely attuned to the complexities and frailties of the human condition.

If I may say, with respect, that you were able to do that in discharge of a difficult but important public duty only serves to reinforce the eminent suitability your Honour holds for the office to which you have now been appointed. It is an ability which will serve you and those who appear before you very well.

The second article concerned a case, again prosecuted by your Honour, against persons alleged to have been involved

in what can only be described as an attempt to traffic illicit drugs into Western Australia on an audacious scale. Alas, at least for those whom you were prosecuting, the audacious scale appears to be matched only by the scale of the errors and misadventures, which resulted in the attempt quite literally running aground near the Abrolhos Islands.

What caught my eye was not so much the detail of those errors and misadventures, which were described as having read like a Hollywood script, though what caught my eye was the byline to the article, which read, and I quote:

How a giant seal foiled one of Australia's biggest drug smuggling operations.

Not much credit for law enforcement there, I would say. Apparently, after their boat ran aground, the accused men had taken shelter with the drugs on a remote island. When the police arrived, they took flight, only to be bailed up on a beach by a giant seal. A local marine rescue volunteer was quoted as saying:

The guys basically had the choice of going through the seal or getting arrested and they ended up choosing to get arrested.

It has been said, your Honour, that truth is stranger than fiction. In my own experience, nowhere does the accuracy of that saying become more apparent than in the telling of true human stories like that one in our criminal courts. Your Honour no doubt has seen, heard and participated in many such stories in your decorated career thus far.

In your new role, your Honour will now see and hear such stories from a different perspective. On behalf of the WA Bar, may I say that we hope and trust your new role will bring you fulfilment and satisfaction, both professionally and personally.

We have no doubt that your Honour will discharge it carefully, honourably and with great skill for the benefit of the people of, and the administration of justice, in this State. The WA Bar warmly congratulates your Honour again on your well-deserved appointment. May it please the Court.

**WAGER CJDC:** Thank you, Mr Sims.

Yes, Mr Elliott.

**ELLIOTT, MR:** Your Honours and your Honour, I'm filling in for Ms Sojan, who is the new President of the CLA. Unfortunately, Ms Sojan has court commitments in Kalgoorlie which have prevented her attendance. Ms Sojan sends her warmest regards and best wishes to your Honour on this important occasion.

As someone who has had the pleasure - and I'm not exaggerating when I say that - of being opposed to you more than once, I jumped at the opportunity to speak at this ceremonial sitting. Whilst I speak on behalf of the Association, I bring my own experiences of dealing with your Honour to bear in, detailing the fine qualities which your Honour brings to this new role.

As I listened to those who have already spoken, I noted that some of the things that I have to say have been universally said by the earlier speakers. There is no need for me to recite your executive roles in many professional bodies, as that has been done, but your involvement in committees engaged with the criminal law reflects your eminence as a criminal lawyer.

I note in particular that your Honour was the Vice President of the Criminal Lawyers' Association between 2020 and 2022. I don't say that in order to encourage others to become members, but they should reflect on that. Speaking about reflecting, reflecting on your involvement with committees, I noted with real interest the connection that many of them have with the topic of ethics.

Your Honour is strongly regarded for your ethics and the wisdom which you can and do impart on that topic. I'm told that colleagues would often seek your advice on ethical issues and that you regularly gave CPD seminars on the topic. Others have spoken about your work as a lawyer and advocate. I will not repeat that history. I will simply touch on your qualities.

You were recognised as and respected for being knowledgeable and fair. These are important qualities, whether acting for the prosecution or the defence. I was engaged opposite your Honour in a notorious and long-running murder case in which those qualities were vividly demonstrated by your Honour. It was a significant case and a testament to your Honour's qualities and skill that you were retained as junior counsel very soon after joining the Bar.

You are respected as a subject matter expert when it comes to Commonwealth offences, prosecutions, and particularly

sentencing. The pool of such experts is a small one, and so your Honour has, in your time at the Bar, been very much in demand.

The Honourable the Attorney-General has touched upon the types of complex matters you have dealt with, as has Mr Sims, and this confirms the description of you as a subject matter expert. Your Honour is highly organised, which adds even greater value to your expertise.

Throughout your career, you're always someone to call on when people needed advice. Your Honour is generous, as others have noted, with your time and wisdom. One of my sources complimented you, saying that he couldn't begin to count the number of occasions when your Honour had stepped in to give sound advice or, more broadly, had presented CPD seminars when asked to do so.

Your Honour worked at the CDPP for about a dozen years before going to the Bar in 2010. Your connection with that office continued throughout your career at the Bar. That organisation, I suspect above all others, will miss your Honour's wise counsel, and dedication to excellence. As an aside, Martyn Plummer hopes that you may still make guest appearances from time to time when they conduct CPDs.

The comments which I received about your Honour were universally positive and praiseworthy. Your good sense and balance will be qualities which will assist you greatly as a judge. I am sure that your Honour will be as well-liked and respected as a judge as you have been as a prosecutor and later, as a criminal advocate.

I tried hard to find some information to qualify a description of you as a straighty 180. I trust that everyone knows what that is. Less colourful variants of that phrase were also used to describe your Honour. In my quest to do so, I reached out to your father-in-law, John Pascoe, asking what he might be able to tell me about you. Whispering quietly, Mr Pascoe told me, "I have nothing to tell you, Tony". After a pause, he said, "My daughter would kill me".

I was impressed by the clever way that Mr Pascoe insinuated that there was something hidden that we might someday discover, but we all know there's nothing. Your wife even confirmed that when I asked her whether straighty 180 was a good description, and she said it fitted you to a tee.

On behalf of the Criminal Lawyers' Association, I am very pleased to welcome your Honour to the Bench of this Court.

And I wish you, on behalf of the Association and personally, the very best during your judicial career.

May it please the Court.

**RENTON DCJ:** Thank you.

**WAGER CJDC:** Thank you, Mr Elliott.

Judge Renton.

**RENTON DCJ:** Thank you very much, Chief Judge.

May I also begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we meet, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Can I begin by acknowledging the very generous gesture of the Chief Justice being present today, his Honour Peter Quinlan.

Chief Justice, thank you very much for coming today. It means a great deal.

Can I also recognise the many distinguished guests who have already been identified by name by the earlier speakers, including all of my friends and family, and the other judges of the Supreme Court, including a number of colleagues of mine, Justice Lundberg and Justice McGrath. And thank you all very much for being in attendance today. It means a great deal that you're all here.

I don't need a PR team after those speeches. My God. Thank you, all. I'm told that today is as good as it gets for judicial compliments. I'm going to stop now, because after that there's nowhere for me to go. And I'm extraordinarily grateful that it was all positive and no negatives, but I think the tyres, to use a cycling colloquialism, are as pumped as they can get, but I'm very grateful nonetheless.

Mr Attorney, thank you very much for your kind words on behalf of yourself and the Government. As I said to you at the welcome, this has been something I have wanted for quite a while. You never know whether what you want is what you'll get, but thank you for entrusting me with the responsibility of this role.

Having sat in the role for a few weeks now, I truly appreciate the magnitude of what it means to be a judge, albeit it's been a very short, sharp learning curve. But I'm very grateful to you on behalf of the Government for giving me this opportunity. Thank you very much indeed. And thank you also for those extraordinarily kind words. I don't know where you dug them up but thank you very much indeed.

Ms Gimisis, on behalf of the Society, thank you as well for your generous remarks. I've been a member of the Society for over two decades, and I can say with absolute honesty, it has been a privilege to be a member of the Society.

I was particularly grateful when the Society decided to include CPDs as part of their membership. Whenever the inevitable scramble for points would come by, it was reassuring to know that the Society had a stock of material that I could get on board with and get my compliance done. So thank you again on behalf of the Society. And can you please give Mr Mack my best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Mr Sims, thank you as well for your kind observations. I very much enjoyed my 14 years at the Bar, and I can attest first-hand to the collegiality that the Bar provides. The Bar is a very important part of the profession and now, as a consumer of the product instead of as a producer of the product, I appreciate that even more. And I'm very much looking forward to the assistance of counsel going forward over the next period of time.

And I do really appreciate the assistance of counsel, and I can't express that enough. Counsel assistance is extraordinarily useful for judges as we try and prepare, as my first few weeks have shown me already. I'm particularly grateful that a number of the people that I've had the pleasure to mentor over the years are now members of the Bar, or hopefully will become members of the Bar. It has a rich future ahead of it, and I look forward to engaging with it over the next period of my journey.

Mr Elliott, thank you. We've known each other for a long time, often at opposite ends of the Bar table. But in all of those years, your passion for the criminal law and those who practise in it have been hallmarks of your practice. Your leadership over many years of the Criminal Lawyers' Association has seen you advocate for a variety of causes, and all of those have enhanced the way criminal lawyers practise.

It was both a privilege and an honour to serve as your Vice President for a number of years. And your commitment to the education, development and general welfare of criminal lawyers marks you as a leader in the profession in that regard. And I thank you for your friendship over the years, and for your extraordinarily kind and positive words. They mean a great deal.

Can I say, my journey on the law wasn't a lineal, straightforward one some 30-ish years ago now. I didn't get articles straightaway. It took a while for that to happen. I never really dreamed that I would end up here. I mean, you have dreams, hopes and aspirations, but the realities sometimes don't always meet with the dreams. I had never thought that I would have taken silk, and to sit here now is a little surreal.

And I look back on the journey and, even if everything didn't go the way I thought or hoped it would at the time, looking back now, everything worked out the way it was meant to work out. It just seems as though, on reflection, the pitfalls and the hurdles were there as learning curves, the good times were just as important, but I'm very grateful to be here.

But at the risk of this turning into what will probably be an Oscars-type speech, I do need to thank a number of people because this journey here hasn't been one I've made alone.

First and foremost, can I thank my wife. It's not easy being married to a barrister, the ups and downs of life at the Bar: "Is a trial going to go ahead?"; "Are we going to get paid?"; "Has somebody not yet paid their bills?" All the things that are wonderful about being at the Bar, you had to deal with a husband who had trials away from home frequently, much travel interstate, hours of the night working hard, weekends away working, or just basically me in the study being very grumpy at the slightest noise.

But it's clear that I wouldn't be here today without you. You gave me the confidence to take risks and believe in myself, all the while knowing that you had everything in place in the background. Your constant support and encouragement, and gentle prodding when the time came to leave the Commonwealth and go to the Bar. As frightening as that was, moving away from a regular pay cheque every fortnight to the uncertainties of the Bar, it worked out. So thank you for giving me the kick up the proverbial backside that I needed to take to see what it was that I

could actually do, and have the confidence that I wasn't half bad at it.

To my children, James and Zoe, likewise, you've had to suffer a dad who's been absent, grumpy, as I say. I've missed the odd birthday or event that I'm sure you would have preferred me to be at. Sorry. But you're both a constant source of joy, and I'm very proud of both of you.

To my mother, Sue, you and Dad taught me the values of hard work, respect, and a sense of what was right and what was wrong. I'm sure if Dad was still around, he would have taken great joy in today's events, even if he might have been somewhat critical of my current dress sense, notwithstanding that the sash was slightly emblematic of Essendon. So perhaps he may have given me some forgiveness.

I've been incredibly fortunate in my career. Despite what sounds like an amazing series of opportunities, sometimes you need to be given those opportunities to be able to take advantage of them. And I've been fortunate to work with a number of leaders of the profession who at one time or another gave me those opportunities to see what it was that I could do, and I will be forever grateful for those opportunities.

That they took what I considered to be the risk and the interest in developing my career said a lot about them, and it meant a lot that they were prepared to do that. And two of those mentors in particular are here today, Mr John Agius KC and, I can just see him at the back, Mr Hilton Dembo who was my mentor and supervisor for a significant period of time at the Commonwealth DPP.

Gentlemen, you have each helped to guide and shape my career over a number of years, and I've valued the friendship and times that we have had together. Thank you both very much for giving me the chance, which has ultimately got me here today.

Can I also acknowledge Judge Christopher Kendall and the Honourable Jeremy Curthoys for their support over the years as well.

I've also been lucky to be blessed with some great friends who have helped me maintain my sanity away from the law. I'm particularly pleased, although they might not like me referring to them in this way, that several of my fellow MAMILs have given up their time away from their busy schedule, Serge, to be here today.



Brad, Serge, Neil and Steve, thank you all gentlemen, so very much for being here today, and also for your friendship and comradery on our rides. You're all far better cyclists than I could ever hope to be, but the comradery we share on our rides, which let's face it, they're group therapy sessions, it's something of a highlight for me. And I hope that we can continue to do that for many, many years to come, even if you do have to slow down slightly from time to time.

I'm also very grateful to all my other friends and family members who have come along today, some from great distances interstate. It means a very great deal to me that you're all here today to celebrate this and watch my emotional destruction live.

Aside from adding a bit of lycra to the Court, I'm afraid that I will do nothing to help the divisions of the Dockers and the Eagles passions on the Bench. As a long-time suffering member of the Richmond Football Club, I bring a good understanding of tragedy. I understand the pain of the Dockers and you have my deepest sympathies.

The Richmond memorabilia that now adorns my Chambers drew a question from Judge Rafferty who asked if Judge Prior had seen it. There was an edge of trepidation in his Honour's voice, but thankfully it met with Judge Prior's approval because it wasn't anything to do with the Eagles. I was also presently surprised to learn that he actually had a soft spot for the Tigers, and I'm grateful for that.

I have, as I've said, been very lucky in my career. I've had an opportunity to work on some truly amazing cases, a number of which were the first of their kind in Australia. And I've had the privilege of working with some truly amazing lawyers, both those who led me and those that I had the privilege of leading or mentoring.

I have, and this is not a boast but this about me, gone to New Guinea to proof witnesses for the children overboard trial. I've travelled to America at the request of the FBI to participate in a Five Eyes meeting on behalf of the Australian Government for cybercrime matters and I got to travel to Scotland as part of the Commonwealth DPP contingent of the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law.

Those international opportunities were again amazing things for a young practitioner to be exposed to. I'm grateful to the Commonwealth that at the time it had the money to be

able to send people away for things like that, something that regrettably does not currently occur.

I've gotten to work around the country and I've gotten to appear before judges from many different jurisdictions at many different levels. I hope that I've managed to pick up some of the traits from some of those judges and the things that made them truly excellent judges. Many of those judges are in this courtroom today and on this Bench with me.

I hope that I can put together something about the way that they worked and use that as I developed my own judicial style, which is still a work in progress, but I'm excited to see where it ends up.

It would also be very remiss if I didn't acknowledge that I have also been very fortunate to have both Kelsey and Bianca help me behind the scenes, make me look good.

And ladies, I hope that we continue to enjoy an exciting year or two ahead and that we get to work out what we're doing with as little hassle as possible.

I valued my time at the Bar and especially my friends and colleagues at John Toohey Chambers, a number of whom have made it here today. Thank you all for coming. But in keeping with the Oscars speech theme, I can hear the band warming up and it's time for me to get off the stage. I will miss the collegiality of the Bar very much, but I very much also look forward to working with my brother and sister judges and the collegiality of this Court to which I have already been so very warmly welcomed. So thank you all for that.

Again, can I thank everybody who's taken the time to come today. It means a great deal. I know many of you are so, so busy so it means a great deal. Thank you once again for coming.

Thank you, Chief Judge.

**WAGER CJDC:** Thank you, your Honour.

And that now completes the special sitting to welcome his Honour Judge Renton SC to this Court and Court will now adjourn.

AT 10.04 AM THE MATTER WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY