

First Sitzings of Court of Appeal in Rockhampton

Tuesday 16 May 2000

Chief Justice s observations

Before commencing today s hearings, it is important that we pause to note the historical significance of the occasion. This is the first time a bench of three Judges of the Supreme Court has sat in Rockhampton for the purpose of hearing appeals. The Supreme Court of Queensland is conventionally regarded as having been established on 7 August 1861, with the first Central Judge, the Honourable Virgil Power, appointed Central Judge in 1895. Since that time, appeals from decisions made within the Central District and I am sure there have been comparatively few have been heard in Brisbane. Under the leadership of the President, and with my full support and encouragement, the Court of Appeal has sought to sit, where practicable, in Supreme Court centres outside Brisbane. This is obviously worthwhile, in symbolising, as directly as possible, the involvement of the people in the work of the Court. Justice should where possible be taken to the people, that is, where the litigants reside. Now clearly the amount of appeal work generated within this district could not sustain a regular sitting of the Court of Appeal in the City of Rockhampton. But with the concurrent presence in the City, for other reasons, of the President, Justice Demack, Justice Dutney and me, it became possible to convene a Court of Appeal, and we accordingly investigated whether there would be a sufficient caseload to justify our doing so. There was. And so today I am very pleased to inaugurate this first sittings of the Court of Appeal in the City of Rockhampton and the Central District of the Supreme Court of Queensland.