



**JUSTICE ENVIRONMENTS CONFERENCE  
BRISBANE 3 – 5 OCTOBER 2013**

**Welcoming remarks**

*Justice Margaret Wilson*

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Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Supreme and District Courts of Queensland, may I welcome you to our new home, the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law. To those of you who have come from overseas and interstate – a special welcome. I hope you will have time to see a little of Brisbane while you are here.

Chief Justice Paul de Jersey regrets that he cannot be here this evening. He is in Cairns where he has been presiding over a murder trial. He sends his best wishes for a successful conference.

This building and the Brisbane Magistrates Court building have been constructed on a triangle of land, 1.6 ha in area, at the western end of George Street. This piece of land has an interesting history.

The first peoples of the Brisbane area were the Turubul and Jagera. So far as we have been able to ascertain, the nearest indigenous settlement was a camp along what is now Countess Street, on the other side of the Roma Street Parklands.

A creek ran across our triangle of land, fed by water running down from higher ground to the north. After a penal colony was established in Brisbane in 1825, the creek soon became the main water supply for the fledging settlement. Initially a small dam or tank was built across it, which stored about 12 months' supply of water. In

1838 convicts constructed an earth dam across it, between what were later Roma and Little Roma Streets. A pipeline of hollow hardwood logs carried water from the dam to soldiers' barracks near Queen and George Streets, pumped by a convict operated treadmill. That was Brisbane's main water supply until the 1860's.

From the early 1880's to the mid 1960's the Brisbane Municipal Markets occupied this site. After the markets were moved to outer suburban Rocklea, it took many years to amalgamate the titles to the land. There were several development proposals which came to nought. Then the State Government acquired the site, and for some years it was used as an open air carpark, with a few old buildings used as retail outlets along the George Street frontage.

The land became known as Queensland Place. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was transformed into a justice precinct. The Brisbane Magistrates Court building, designed by Cox Rayner, was opened in November 2004, and this building, designed by Architectus and Guymer Bailey, was opened in August 2012.

Professor John Hockings of Architectus has described George Street as Brisbane's "colonial civic axis" – with Parliament House at the eastern end and the Law Courts at the western end, and buildings occupied by the Executive arm of government in between. It is intersected by the "Tank Street axis", which runs from the Gallery of Modern Art, across the river along the Kurilpa Bridge, to Tank Street, and on to the Old Mill on Wickham Terrace. The Tank Street axis runs through the public space between the two court buildings.

The first of our presenters this evening is Ross Palmer, a partner in the internationally renowned architectural firm Foster + Partners. He will talk to us about some of the key themes that emerge from his firm's approach to the design of civic buildings, including the realisation of public spaces between and within them.

Since joining Foster + Partners in 1993, Ross has worked on projects around the world, from London's busiest Underground destination (the Canary Wharf Station), to commercial and residential projects in central Sydney, the Masdar Institute in Abu Dhabi (a new postgraduate university dedicated to sustainable research and emerging

technologies), a resort master plan in Montenegro and a high speed railway station for Florence in Italy.

Then Kim Dovey will consider how the architecture of public buildings mediates the tension between authority and democracy. Kim is Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the School of Design within the University of Melbourne, and an architectural critic. His research on social issues in architecture and urban design has focussed on experiences of place and practices of power. He has worked with government, industry and community groups, and has written and broadcast widely in the mass media.

There will be a short time for questions at the end of each presentation, and then time for broader discussion.