

Speech by Chief Justice Marilyn Warren at the
Ceremonial Sitting for the appointment of
Senior Counsel of and for the State of Victoria
5 December 2006

The Court notes the announcement of senior counsel of and for the State of Victoria for 2005.

For each appointee it is a very special time for each one has reached the height of his or her career as an advocate and as an individual devoted to long standing practise as counsel.

The time marks, also, the elevation to the highest rank of Victoria's counsel. As with most good things in life, there is benefit but there is also burden.

Appointment of senior counsel brings with it an expectation by the courts, peers and clients of particular standards. They are standards of intellectual excellence and rigour,

meticulous preparation and marshalling of the brief and utmost honesty and integrity. In other words, the new appointees are expected to be leaders as counsel.

The appointees have been selected for appointment as Senior Counsel for Victoria because they have been recognised as leaders. In the three years in which, at the request of the Victorian Bar, I have appointed senior counsel I have endeavoured to do so on an informed basis to the highest degree. To achieve a level of confidence in the appointment, I have engaged in wide but confidential consultation with senior and junior judges (both appellate and trial) in this Court, the heads of higher and significant jurisdictions, the leaders of the Victorian Bar and the Law Institute of Victoria, the Directors of Public Prosecutions for Victoria and the Commonwealth and the Solicitor General for Victoria. I expect to continue and develop that process. It is an arduous and intensive task but it has seemed to me the best way, as presently advised, to make the most informed appointments.

Hence, you have been judged as you have, as the leaders.

You should wear your Victorian rosettes with much pride.

I also add that the burden of the appointment process is gladly assumed by those involved because the Court regards the appointment of senior counsel as so important.

This is because senior counsel play a very important role in the administration of justice in this State.

The importance is marked also by the sitting this morning of what might be called a mutli-jurisdictional and representative Full Bench: the President of the Court of Appeal and the Principal Judges of each of the Criminal, Common Law and Commercial and Equity Divisions of the Court.

We all look forward to the futures of the appointees.

Your appointment is one of personal significance for each of you. Justifiably, it is a time of great celebration and joy for each new Senior Counsel and his or her family and friends especially the partners and children whom we are delighted to see in Court today. The Court congratulates you upon your appointment as Senior Counsel of and for the State of Victoria.