

**IN THE SUPREME COURT
OF NEW SOUTH WALES
BANCO COURT**

**BELL CJ
AND JUDGES OF THE
SUPREME COURT**

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2024

**SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF HIS HONOUR JUDGE ANDREW COLEMAN SC
AS A JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

- 1 **COLEMAN J:** Chief Justice, I have the honour to announce that I have been appointed a judge of this Court. I present to you my Commission.

(Commission read; oaths of office taken)

- 2 **BELL CJ:** Justice Coleman, you come to this Court with runs on the board, a distinguished innings in the District Court, and you come to the Court with the full support of this bench and respect for your already earned reputation as a judge. Congratulations on behalf of our colleagues and on my own behalf.

- 3 **COLEMAN J:** Thank you Chief Justice.

- 4 **THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL DALEY MP ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW SOUTH WALES:** Thank you Chief Justice. May it please the Court. I acknowledge the tradition custodians of the land, the Gadigal of the Eora Nation and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge any Aboriginal colleagues and friends that are here this morning.

- 5 Chief Justice Bell, thank you for your invitation to address the Court this morning. Your Honour Justice Coleman, on behalf of the people of New South Wales and of the Bar, it's my very great pleasure indeed to congratulate you on your appointment to this honourable Court.

- 6 We welcome today your Honour's wife, Cathleen and your children, Madeleine and Sophie who are here with us today. Also, I wish your son Darcy well, who is celebrating in Poland as part of some Eastern European travels. Also present are your siblings, Debbie and Paul and your in-laws, Sue and Ian Spiers. I think Mum is here today too, isn't she? Patricia. Hello mum. Sadly, not with us today are you father, Barry and your brother Mark. I know you would want me to make special mention of them, but they are watching. And of course, there are many more people who are joining us today online to witness the continuation of your progression through what has been an extraordinary professional life.
- 7 Your Honour was born in 1963 and grew up in Bondi. You were fortunate enough to live very close to your favourite place, the beach, with your three brothers, sister, grandmother and parents. You had a busy and crowded house which was further supplemented by several household pets as well as many surfers who would store boards at your house, swimmers and strangers that you would pick up walking home from the beach.
- 8 You were by many reports, the serious one in the family. It has been said that your favourite colour was brown and your second favourite colour was beige. A conscientious young man, you liked order. It was sometimes hard to come by in the Coleman house, but I have been told that you would join in with some wild streaks of humour which aligned delightfully with your love of Monty Python.
- 9 Home and family was everything. Friends were just as important. In your early life, you developed a knack for building teams and communities around yourself. It continues to be that way to this day.
- 10 You attended Marcellin College Randwick and I should say, your Honour, there is a contingent of Marcellin College legal studies students and teachers here today to witness one of their finest old boys progressing through the ranks of the legal fraternity. At school, you loved humanities as much as you detested science. You were an inspirational leader in the cadet unit. Your early years were marked by a desire to become a pilot, but after some conversations and

guidance from your father and other factors that contributed, aviation's loss was the legal profession's gain when you decided to embark upon a legal career.

- 11 At the University of New South Wales, you studied hard and in Year 3, met the love of your life, Cathleen. Graduating in 1987, you went straight to work at Clayton Utz as a solicitor. This was followed by a stint at Freehill Hollingdale & Page, as it was then, and two years in London at Linklaters & Paines.
- 12 You worked on many notable cases. Your skills were easily identified by colleagues, as was your car; a Ford sedan in Bahama Beige, which was dubbed "The Beast".
- 13 Your Honour became a barrister in 1996. You were a reader and then a member at 11 St James Hall Chambers before becoming a founding member of Banco Chambers in 2005.
- 14 You quickly gained expertise in insolvency, commercial law, insurance, inquiries, common law and sports law and well regarded in all of those and other fields.
- 15 Notable cases include the inquest into the tragic death of our beloved cricketer Phillip Hughes, a class action against Graham Barclay Oysters and representing the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police in the Gobbo Royal Commission.
- 16 On any reasonable assessment, your Honour, you have enjoyed a stellar career. You have been an ornament to your calling with one regrettable exception; it entailed your involvement in a certain legal case in the year 1999, a matter involving the terrible expulsion of the Rugby League Club known as the Pride of the League. A foundation Rugby League Club no less, which would secure no fewer than 21 premierships which is significantly more than the paltry 15 won by a team which your Honour may be familiar. Of course time heals all wounds, sort of.

- 17 No doubt your Honour now reflects on this dark episode as the folly of a younger man who perhaps at the time did not fully appreciate the timeless substance and enduring enchantment attached to the legend of the men decked out in the cardinal and myrtle.
- 18 Of course, you rebounded in splendid fashion and were appointed senior counsel in 2010 and continued contributing positively to your profession by serving on tribunals such as NCAT, National Basketball League and New South Wales Rugby League.
- 19 Colleagues admired your ability to get to the essence of a dispute. Your reliability and collegiate manner was also greatly appreciated and so you were and remain deeply respected within the profession.
- 20 My brief summation of your work as a solicitor and barrister is not a reflection on its merits but more my desire to not repeat what was said in March 2021 when you became a judge of the District Court of New South Wales. When you spoke then you marked it as a momentous day. Your swearing in recognised you as reliable, dedicated and someone whose words were matched by their actions.
- 21 Throughout your time at the District Court, you continued to embody these traits. The role took you away from the lattes and jet-set crowd of your beloved Eastern Suburbs when you started as a sitting judge for the Armidale and Tamworth District Courts. You were the sole judge at these regional venues as you worked in the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the Court. You were greatly respected within those communities; people know that you took your country service very seriously.
- 22 In typical fashion you became a local down there, exploring your new surrounds on weekends, socialising warmly and even becoming a full-hearted fan of the North Tamworth Bears who were formed in 1911 and are one of the oldest Rugby League Clubs in New South Wales.

- 23 Professionally, you have deepened your understanding of the issues facing rural areas and learnt some immutable facts such as it is damn hard to find juries during harvest times, for example.
- 24 I note you greatly admired the care and support offered by your regional legal practitioners and in turn they appreciated your humour, compassion, efficiency and clear thought on the bench. A great example was your dedication helping search for and secure a Fijian interpreter for a case. Unfortunately, come the day of the trial, your face dropped when the complainant started speaking in more fluent English than the interpreter. You took this revelation in good humour and pondered once again on the ludicrous side of life celebrated so wonderfully by Monty Python.
- 25 You are regarded widely as an outstanding judge who seems remarkably human and normal. You have been greatly missed since you left the splendid New England Region in June of this year.
- 26 Your time in Tamworth hardened your thoughts on the importance that all courts should sit regularly in regional areas and that access to justice is a right of every citizen, not just those living in the big cities. It has also broadened your mind and a view of others.
- 27 It has been said that you used to get anxious when North of the Spit Bridge or South of the Shire. I well understand that your Honour. You have been quick to banish that and have offered that you are now perhaps just a little bit country, although no doubt you have retained a goodly portion of the rock and roll glamour of the Eastern Suburbs.
- 28 Your Honour, it is probably fair to say that while you miss the country life, you are happy to be home back in Bondi once more and just as in your childhood, family is the most important thing. Your partner in all these endeavours is Cathleen. You stated that she is the best human you know and is also the best lawyer in the family.

- 29 Together you have also made three wonderful humans in Maddie, Sophie and Darcy. They have set off on achieving their dreams and you could not have been more proud. You both love nothing more than spending your time with your children and heading down to the coast to walk along the beach with your dog Winnie.
- 30 Fishing trips with old friends is also a favourite pastime. Your family is the most important thing and the beach is a close second. You said seeing the water at Bondi after being away still brings a smile to your face. You might argue that the beach is relegated to bronze medal status because of your love of Rugby League and the Roosters is so great. Going to watch Friday night home games is a long-held Coleman family tradition. A Roosters jersey sat pride of place in your chambers for many years and who knows if they had managed to score an extra 31 points last Friday night. I think that is enough about the Roosters.
- 31 Your Honour, these communities and the activities that you have embraced hold you dear, including sport, defence and families. It is well known that you have an abiding belief in the social good in bringing humanity to institutions. They have all been rewarded immensely by your presence. The other institute rewarded is of course the judiciary. First in the District Court and now the Supreme Court. Your elevation has been regarded as a fantastic appointment. You have said that service as a judge is a pinnacle of one's legal career. As always, you are keen to learn and to contribute and continue the hard work that you have always shown on the bench.
- 32 Thank you for your service to date and good luck in the rest of your life of service on this Court. Thank you for saying yes your Honour.
- 33 May it please the Court.
- 34 **MS CASSANDRA BANKS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF NSW:** May it please the Court.

- 35 I too acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which this Court stands and I pay my respects to elders past and present. I acknowledge and extend my respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are here with us today.
- 36 It is my privilege to come before the Court on behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales and offer our warm congratulations on your appointment to this brilliant bench, your Honour.
- 37 As no person comes to such position alone, I would like to make special mention of your close family, wide and deep circle of friends and numerous colleagues, all of whom have helped to make this appointment possible.
- 38 I know friendships in many forms are deeply important to your Honour as they are to all of us, and it is my privilege to make mention of this here in such an esteemed setting.
- 39 In considering the after of this moment and what will come in the work of the Supreme Court for your Honour, I went back to a place beyond living memory. In 1897, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, a judge who served on the US Supreme Court and who is the third most cited legal scholar of the twentieth century wrote:
- “For the rational study of the law we learn that for everything, we have to give up something else and we are taught to set the advantage we gain against the advantage we lose and to know what we are doing when we are left.”
- 40 Opening with the words of a seriously moustachioed nineteenth century scholar who was writing about economics and the law may be one of the driest starts to a speech possible and I apologise for any flashbacks to law school, but for the fact that the sentiment for us here today remains a valid one.
- 41 The solicitor profession in New South Wales is all too aware of the cost of choices, whether in the position of our clients, or legal advice, or how an issue plays out in court. As we have heard, your Honour as a supporter of the

Roosters is also aware of the cost of choices; “A Rooster tragic” as one friend put it.

42 Your Honour has also shown an appreciation of the cost of choices in leaving the solicitor profession for the Bar, the Bar for the Bench and the District Court for the Supreme Court, or the cost of missing parties barely ten minutes’ drive beyond Bondi as a young man because as one old friend put it, “You simply couldn’t be bothered leaving the tides.”

43 The cost and benefit and the choice of a steady diet of criminal law over close to three and a half years in the District Court after gaining a well-deserved reputation for expertise in commercial, insurance, insolvency and sports law at the Bar; that choice though has been one of effectiveness of choosing to always push to represent justice to a very high degree. Of choosing in the District Court to hold professional boundaries while being aware of the emotional impact of serious criminal matters on those before the Court. Of choosing to do so to be able to move to the next matter with clarity day after day, year after year. Choosing to do so because in your own words, “I think you would go crazy if you didn’t.”

44 The view of the profession as far as research would allow was, I am very glad to say, that of a judge who could consume massive amounts of evidence and argumentation whilst seeing the heart of a legal matter and finding the right balance in an outcome. Solicitors described a person well-loved and respected by all sides of a matter; someone who they knew as fair, and who many will miss in the District Court. Solicitors, judges and friends also described your Honour’s good humour, sense of justice from a young man to this very moment alongside someone who, as one friend put it, “Definitely has a judge’s voice and knows how to use it but with clarity and equilibrium”, some of the best aspects of what one would hope for in an appointment to this Honourable Bench.

45 There are, of course, countless strategies for success in law. Your Honour has been noted as efficient, kind and compassionate on the Bench. Efficient in

moving effectively through the work of the Court. Solicitors we spoke to delighted in your Honour's effectiveness in dealing with adjournments in super-callovers from day 1 onwards; in your concentration in listening to advocacy amongst many other things. Thorough consideration without fear or favour was clear. Others mentioned kindness in your dealing with those before the Court and particularly from my view today with solicitors; not a pushover in any sense, far from it, but always clear and reasonable in Court while amiable with practitioners outside it say, if your Honour happened to see them while walking the dog or in the supermarket. This was especially noteworthy for solicitors in Tamworth and other towns where it was greatly appreciated. Simultaneously, your Honour was said to have no time for pretensions based solely on position and acted without ego but with intelligence and integrity.

- 46 There are many complex traits that one might expect of a high functioning, bright legal mind appointed to the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Significantly, empathy was reflected in conversations with solicitors in Tamworth. It was spoken by judges and solicitors in Sydney. Friends spoke of someone chatting about the State of Origin with locals as if old friends, on fishing trips around the Gulf of Northern Queensland. On behalf of Mr Gorry congratulations on finally winning a Team Pufferfish Trophy after 18 attempts.
- 47 Equally, your Honour was said to be involved with how justice affects marginalised communities to this day with nuance, depth and intelligence. Similar qualities bubbled up to the surface in your swearing in speech in 2021. A person of magnificent humour and wit who is universally liked by colleagues and loved by friends and family was one view from back then. There has been a remarkable consistency in views across the different divides of the courtroom.
- 48 Now, three and a half years later, your Honour knows how the things that we read and hear about in a city like Sydney are different when experienced in a town like Armidale or Tamworth where your Honour sat for part of your time as we heard. I raise this because the way criminal matters affect different parts of society is made apparent when one sees different parts of the State.

- 49 The over representation of Indigenous individuals in criminal matters, the generational aspect of this and how this affects people's lives are profound challenges that your Honour is very much alive to.
- 50 Simultaneously, your Honour has had a successful parallel military legal career and the Honourable Judge Humphreys of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia remembered when your Honour entered the military in 2016. Judge Humphreys, then a senior solicitor in civilian life, noted it was the only time he ever led a senior counsel as his junior. Your Honour, being new to the military and roles reversed.
- 51 Nevertheless, despite some tricky questions about the nature of some evidence in your first court-martial matter, there was an agreeable outcome for your client. And from the matter on, his Honour Humphries J is of the view that your Honour has been an adornment to the Australian Army Legal Corps and will be an adornment to this bench.
- 52 The District Court, in your Honour's own words, has been inspiring and at times also confronting, especially seeing how the victims of crime and their families approach the Court. I know that this appointment is an honour. That is all the more meaningful because by all accounts, your Honour was very happy at the District Court. It was where you thought your career would finish but as your children say, you are now back in the "hello zone". Every time you walk down Macquarie Street, it's hello. Everybody seems to say hello. Several years after leaving practice, after moving around the State and working with a different view both literally and professionally, welcome back to Macquarie Street your Honour.
- 53 On behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales, it is a privilege to be served by you in this role and solicitors have every confidence that you will continue as an exceptional judicial officer in the Supreme Court of New South Wales.
- 54 As the court pleases.

- 55 **BELL CJ:** Thanks. Justice Coleman.
- 56 **COLEMAN J:** Mr Attorney, Chief Justice, Justices Gleeson, Jago and Beech-Jones of the High Court, Chief Judges and judges of the Land and Environment Court and the Industrial Relations Commission, judges of the Federal Court, District Court, Federal Circuit and Family Court, Chief Magistrate, Deputy Chief Magistrate, members of the profession, friends and family. I especially want to welcome my very close and old colleague and friend the Honourable Justice Matt Howard, a Justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia, who has travelled from Perth to be here today. Thank you, Matt.
- 57 I too wish to acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, and I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I would also like to acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders present today.
- 58 Mr Attorney, Ms Banks, thank you for your generous words. It was only a little over three and a half years ago that I was sworn in as a judge of the District Court. At that time, the then Attorney and President of the Law Society spoke, and I am afraid there is precious little, to no, new material for each of you to use. You both have been very kind in your words.
- 59 For those who attended the previous swearing-in, I am sorry you had to sit through my rather mundane biographical details again. For those who did not, you are now caught up.
- 60 Like all similar events, that ceremony was recorded and streamed on the unsurprisingly obscure District Court YouTube channel. I recently checked and saw that the stream of the ceremony had attracted 392 views. I admit on those figures, I have not reached the judicial equivalent of Mr Beast as an influencer.
- 61 I understand today's ceremony is being livestreamed and will be available also for later viewing on the Supreme Court YouTube channel.

- 62 To celebrate my growing video collection, I am thinking of releasing a box set of both ceremonies. To sweeten the deal, the first ten subscribers will get a bonus copy of Justice Hammerschlag's recent EP, previously available only on Spotify. I have limited the bonus offer to ten as I do not want to be overconfident for either of us.
- 63 I have been to many swearing-ins in this place. Naturally, I was always on the other side of the bar table or, more recently, on the seats to my right. I have also sat on the bench for swearing-ins at the District Court. There and here, seating is by seniority. Front and centre means you have served some time or are important. Back and to the side means your non-parole period has just started. Apart from the day I was last sworn in, and today, I am always on the back bench. I was working my way slowly towards the centre of the back bench in the Diso. Now it is back to square one.
- 64 Next time I am in this place, I know I will be in the back and at the corner. I doubt I will ever make it to the front again. I can be content, however, knowing that I have now been twice on the front bench so in that respect, at least temporarily, I can match you Mr Attorney.
- 65 It being relatively close in time to my District Court swearing-in, I will not go over the same ground that I did on that day. I thought, rather, I would speak briefly about some experiences I have had as a judge since that time.
- 66 The legal profession has been good to me. It has taken me to many far-flung and exciting places. As a solicitor, I worked in London. As a barrister, I appeared in every capital city of each State and territory and exotic places like Fiji. As a judge, I have been to Parramatta, Campbelltown and Penrith.
- 67 As has been mentioned, I also spent two years in the New England area. I sat in Tamworth and Armidale but before I say more about that, I should clear one thing up.

- 68 My daughter Sophie was keen to share with her friends the news of my appointment to this Court. On the Wednesday it was announced, she googled “Andrew Coleman” to see if the news had become public. The first result of that search was a story in the prestigious North West Star paper which began and I quote, “Farmer Wants A Wife contestant, Andrew Coleman, has been accused by his former partner of travelling to Tasmania and allegedly stealing her car, after their relationship ended.” There are several matters that need addressing.
- 69 First, despite those two years in the New England area and having been to two Tamworth agricultural shows and one rodeo, and even though I received an excellent hat and an R.M. Williams belt as gifts from the local practitioners, I could never legitimately claim to be a farmer. Next, not that this needs saying I hasten to add, I am definitely not looking for another wife. Third, I can assure the Chief Justice that whilst I have been to the land of Beech-Jones, I have never engaged in auto theft.
- 70 Other alarming results of this google search were links such as, “Is Andrew Coleman still alive” and “Andrew Coleman illness”. To avoid the risk of going to dark places unnecessary for the purposes of the speech, I did not click on either link.
- 71 Anyway, I very much enjoyed the regional life. It was certainly quieter than the city, and Cath and I saw most of the towns in the New England and elsewhere.
- 72 The work was relentlessly busy. I did come to appreciate the importance to the local communities of having courts sit in regional areas. The presence of a sitting court does make the community feel that access to justice is real for them. Almost every case in court is reported in the local press. I came to know and respect the excellent and dedicated local practitioners. I am pleased to see that this Court sits in regional areas in both civil and criminal matters where appropriate and I do look forward to sitting in a country area, hopefully in New England when I can.

- 73 As may be known, my background in the law prior to being a judge was purely in civil work. There had been the odd Local Court plea for a friend's traffic matter or the like but apart from that, criminal law was a no-go zone. That quickly changed once I was appointed. After a settling in period in civil for a couple of months, I was posted to Campbelltown for three months and then Parramatta for almost 12 months to get some experience in presiding over criminal matters, before being sent to the bush where all of the work would be sitting in crime.
- 74 The first time I had seen a criminal jury was my first day at Campbelltown. I had never seen a jury empanelled and I had no idea of the process. I was nervous about saying something which would expose my ignorance of the process or even worse, once underway, to cause a trial to abort. I felt shivers of terror every time the jury looked at me for answers about a complex legal direction named after a case I had never heard of. With the help of my judicial colleagues and practitioners, I managed to get through. I would like to thank in particular judges Colefax, Ingram, Hanley and Buscombe who helped me tremendously in those early days. I would also like to thank all of the other judges who put up with what must have seemed like obvious questions, for their patience and assistance in helping me through those initial months.
- 75 I really came to enjoy presiding over jury trials. I shall miss the regularity of them. It is quite a thing to see 12 members of the community sit and judge a fellow citizen on serious and often confronting allegations. Every jury I have had has appeared to approach their task with the requisite solemnity. Sometimes, you might think they get the verdict wrong but perhaps as a result of their approach, free from years of legal cynicism and more of the application of common sense, I do think they get it right more often than not.
- 76 Of course, before the jury is empanelled, you have to deal with applications for potential jurors to be excused. All of the judges here who have empanelled juries will have heard many and varied reasons for applications to be excused. There is the usual "I don't think I can be impartial" to "he just looks like he done it your Honour."

- 77 In the country, I was used to panel members knowing one of the lawyers, parties or investigating police. It was common for farmers to tell me that the cows were calving, the sheep were lambing or the crops needed harvesting. Fair enough, I was happy to excuse those persons. There were sometimes, more unusual reasons.
- 78 On one occasion during the excusal process a panel member approached the bench to make an application. That person was armed with an exercise book. I thought they may have wanted to write their reason for the excusal rather than tell me, but I was wrong. They announced rather loudly, "No one can judge this man, only the Lord can judge us at the time of our deaths." The panellist proceeded to read from the exercise book extracts from scriptures in support of his argument. There were pages of them. I said, in hindsight perhaps a little too defensively, "But I'm a judge, this is my job and the jury must decide if the accused is guilty." "No" was the reply, "No man can judge another." Further quotes were read and there appeared to be many left.
- 79 Now, I am not one to quibble with a person's beliefs, but I felt I was facing a judicial and criminal justice system existential crisis. Concerned as to the risk that other panel members may hear this reasoning and adopt similar positions and the time this was taking, further debate was abandoned and the applicant was excused.
- 80 One of the most significant things I did learn from sitting in the country arose from dealing with the gross overrepresentation of Indigenous accused and offenders. It is easy working and sitting in Sydney and mostly in the commercial world to remain ignorant of the reality of the issues facing the Indigenous population in their interaction with the criminal justice system. Reading about it in the paper does not teach us much, dealing with it day to day brings into focus the stark reality; the issues are real, they are generational and they will keep happening unless some solution can be found.
- 81 More resources are needed for lawyers, social workers and rehabilitation providers. There was just one rehabilitation diversionary program for

Indigenous offenders in the whole of northern New South Wales; more are needed.

- 82 The work now being done in the Walama List in the District Court is groundbreaking, but understandably limited in its area of application. The lawyers at the Aboriginal Legal Service do a magnificent job, but they deal with the effects and not the cause.
- 83 I do not profess to know the answers, but I do urge all involved to work on these matters and engage with those who work and assist First Nations peoples in the justice system to find solutions.
- 84 The two years I spent in the country were sometimes hard and isolating, but it was a very rewarding experience. I have no doubt I will be a better judge for having done it.
- 85 Being appointed a judge of the District Court was a very great honour. To repeat one thing I said at my first swearing in, I regard appointment as a judicial officer as the pinnacle of one's legal career.
- 86 Every judicial appointment is important. We need good people in all judicial positions at all levels of the justice system. Different people fit in different judicial roles. Not everyone is suited to the Court of Appeal, just as not everyone is suited to the Local Court.
- 87 It is at best ignorant, at worst disrespectful, to think of anyone's appointment as being "just" to the 'Diso' or "just" as a magistrate. To think this way shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the volume and importance of the work that the lower courts do.
- 88 I have seen the work that the magistrates do. It is before them that most who have contact with the criminal justice system will appear. I have seen the days when the magistrates have over 100 matters in the list. They then travel to

regional towns each week. The volume of work they get through is astounding and I greatly admire it.

- 89 I have experienced firsthand the life of a District Court judge sitting alone in the regions. A day may consist of a couple of sentence appeals in the morning, then a trial matter involving a complex and confronting sexual assault, then a sentence hearing or sentence remarks in the afternoon, and this is relentlessly repeated for the duration of the sitting.
- 90 I only mention these things to reinforce the value of the work that all levels of the judiciary do. I do not come to this Court thinking the decisions I will make here are any more important to the parties than the decisions made by Local Court magistrates or District Court judges to the parties in the matters before them. Our system of justice could not properly function without each level of courts staffed with appropriately qualified judicial staff.
- 91 I will conclude now with the traditional part of the speech where the thankyou's are made. I will not repeat all of the thankyou's I made in my prior swearing in to those people, including barristers and solicitors, who have played such an important role in my career. If they were at the first swearing-in, they know who they are. If they were not, or for those curious, please get one of my box sets. But hurry with those Hammerschlag EPs, stock will go quick.
- 92 There are a few thankyou's that must be made.
- 93 To my District Court colleagues and friends, I said to you one of you recently that becoming a District Court judge was then the best thing I had done in my professional life. It has taught me so much more about the law and its application, particularly in the criminal law. I have seen the worst and sometimes the best of human nature. I have met so many dedicated and excellent judges who keep that busy Court functioning, dealing with difficult and sometimes emotionally-taxing matters every day. I thank each of you for your friendship, advice and support. Not one of you has ever failed to stop whatever

you were doing to assist with a question on evidence, or a sentencing issue, or even just to listen, and I will miss you all.

- 94 To my associates in order of service, Ryan Pearson, Isabella Strapp, Eva Moretti and Josh Turner, thank you for putting up with me and keeping me grounded. You are all talented and wonderful young people with tremendous careers ahead.
- 95 People in our lives outside of the law are also important. I note in the audience some of my fellow Roosters supporters. We started sitting together at the footy over 20 years ago. Most of us were unknown to each other. We are still sitting together now as firm and lifelong friends, having watched our children grow up and become adults and, I hasten to add, Mr Attorney, Roosters fans: as if they had a choice. I very much cherish the friendships we have made, and I am so pleased you came today.
- 96 There are also present members of team Pufferfish. Team Pufferfish is a group of mates from school and university and one from Las Vegas, who travel each year or so to remote parts of Australia or beyond to fish and be together. As fishermen, we put fear into the hearts of fishing guides all over the world. The fish are, rightly, not so concerned. The trips away together are a necessary tonic to the pressures of the work that we all do. Next near will be the 20th anniversary of our first trip. I hope we continue for many more. Thank you for coming today.
- 97 To my family, I do need to repeat my thanks. My sister Deb and her husband Paul have been constant sources of love and encouragement. Deb, I know you were to travel to London from LA with Paul yesterday, but diverted to come here today before you travelled to London tomorrow. I am so grateful and you know it means the world to me.
- 98 It is great to see so many of the extended family here today as well and I am grateful for their love and support over the years.

- 99 Mum is now 95 and still firing. It is really good that she was able to come today. Thank you, Mum, for all the sacrifices you made over the years to keep the five kids functioning. We never wanted for anything because of you. I cannot thank you enough for everything you have done.
- 100 To my children, thank you for your unconditional love and understanding. Maddie is here today from Melbourne where she practises as a doctor, having missed the last swearing in, although she swears she has watched the video. We look forward to more updates of the day's surgical exploits, but please keep the details general.
- 101 Sophie is now making her mark as a solicitor in Sydney and doing so well. It is amazing to see a child with a depth of knowledge of the law greater than yours.
- 102 Darcy has just finished his engineering and commerce degrees and is travelling in Europe. He is currently in Poland. He says he will watch the live stream when he wakes up. I told him that may not qualify as a live stream.
- 103 Chesht, Darcy, safe travels and see you in a few weeks.
- 104 You are each a constant source of pride to me for your achievements and I love you all.
- 105 And last and certainly not least to Cath, the rock of our family. Once again you have made, without question or complaint, sacrifices so I can pursue my career. Your capacity to give and care for our family, old and young, continues to awe me. I said at the last swearing-in you would knock any judicial stuffiness out of me. I am not one to judge whether you have been successful, but there now may be some additional work to do. It would be simply insufficient to say thank you. I look forward to more travel, laughs and love with you.
- 106 I was very content as a District Court judge. I did think my career would finish there. I was beginning to get settled back in Sydney. I had even mastered the return journey from my chambers in John Maddison Tower to the courts in the

Downing Centre without an associate escort. I am honoured to have been asked to serve in this Court. I am conscious of its history and its stature. I will do my very best to fulfil the obligations that come with this office. I thank you all for doing me and the Court the honour of attending.

107 **BELL CJ:** The Court will now adjourn.