IN THE DISTRICT COURT

OF NEW SOUTH WALES

THE CHIEF JUDGE
THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE D PRICE AO
AND THE JUDGES OF THE COURT

MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2023

**SWEARING IN OF HER HONOUR MIIKO KUMAR AS A JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

The Honourable Michael Daley MP, Attorney General, on behalf of the New South Wales Bar

Ms Cassandra Banks, President, Law Society of New South Wales, on behalf of solicitors

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 (Commission read)

 (Oaths of office taken)

PRICE CJ: Judge Kumar, it gives me very great pleasure to welcome you to the Court. Your experience as a lawyer traverses both the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the Court. I am confident that you will make a very valuable contribution to the work of the court.

 On behalf of all the judges, I congratulate you and wish you all the very best in your judicial career.

KUMAR J: Thank you very much, Chief Judge.

PRICE CJ: Mr Attorney.

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Thank you, your Honour. May it please the Court. Your Honour, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Gadigal of the Eora Nation and I pay my respects to Elders past, present and future. I also acknowledge our Aboriginal colleagues and friends here this morning.

 Your Honour Judge Kumar, on behalf of people of New South Wales and of the New South Wales Bar, congratulations on your appointment to this most deserved position.

 I welcome today your Honour’s husband, Marco, and your children, Lenny and Heidi. In fact, it seems like you have a lot of family here. Celebrating with you today is your mother, Mia, and your father, Anil. Alongside them is your sister, Anika, your brother-in-law, Grant, and their children, Misha, Mel and Felix. Also joining us is your extended family, Aunty Indra, Aunty Pranetta, Aunty Judy and your Uncle, former Magistrate Bob Kumar.

 I also welcome many colleagues and friends including, Irene and Bob Steele and their daughter, Sacha, who referred to you as her nearly sister. There are a few people who cannot be with us today. Celebrating in Switzerland are Marco’s family: his parents, Tony and Ruth; brother, Reto; sister‑in‑law, Janette; and nephews, Lucio and Liam.

 I know you would want me to make special mention of your granny, Salme Mankin, she lived until she was 101 years old and was a very important person in your life. Also sadly passed but not forgotten is your aja, Andrew Ram Kissun, and your aji, Madhavi Ram Kissun.

 Friends, family and many others have contributed to this short address today. Their honest thoughts and opinions have provided a clear picture of your life leading up to this moment.

 Your Honour, you were born in 1971, in Camperdown, to Mia and Anil Kumar. You grew up in Five Dock. Mia worked in education and is currently the principal of Burwood Girls High School. Anil came to Australia to study civil engineering and would later help construct White Bay, the Glebe Island container berth and developments at Port Botany.

 You have described your childhood as lovely. Your parents have described you as a bright and wonderful daughter. In those early days, all you wanted to be was a sister and that passion was clear and rewarded when Anika arrived in 1977. You became her best friend, her protector, and most of the time, her teacher. You would often be found with baby Anika, lecturing her in front of your tiny toy blackboard.

 You had, and still have, the most warm and loving relationship with your sister. This warmth was also extended to your friends, especially Sacha. The three of you would organise plays and they were a huge source of fun. You recall Bob Steele being in fits of laughter at your various performances. Your childhood also consisted of dolls, drawing, painting and making things. You loved roller‑skating with Anika, splashing in the pool and reading your favourites, including The Famous Five and Judy Blume.

 One of your dearest memories is spending time with your granny, Salme. There are many moments you cherish but a highlight was the sleepovers at her home in Yagoona with Anika. This childhood, full of fun, was balanced by your desire to do well in school.

 You first went to Russell Lea Infants School, then Haberfield Demonstration, before high school at Concord. You have been described at school as meticulous and well‑organised by your mother. Yes, you have dobbed her in, mum. Your books were in order, and your socks were always colour coded to your underwear.

 You had very clear ideas on what you wanted and how you were going to do it. You were an excellent student. You studied hard, excelling at all subjects but art being a passion and were rewarded with the most amazing of HSC results. What was unclear at the time, however, was what you were going to do with those results. You had ideas of continuing your passion for art, but your father sold you on the ideas of either law or medicine. You appreciated that your effort at school had offered you an opportunity that many others did not have and thankfully for all of us, you chose law.

 In 1990, you were accepted in the University of Sydney, but you did not abandon your passions, combining your law studies with fine arts. On first impression, classmates thought you were glamorous in your 70s heels, lumbering into lectures under the weight of designer shopping bags. Impressions changed when you spoke, you turned into a superwoman and a political power broker.

 You were a founding member of Fems Rea, a feminist discussion group. You even had your own room on campus that you fought, and won, to secure. You also fought for a place on the Board of the University of Sydney Union. You campaigned on an openly feminist ticket, and, again, won.

 Your creatively proved useful with a barrage of designs on publicity poster and Fems Rea t-shirts. These extra-curricular activities were combined with your diligence as a student. Your friends recall you being a passionate and deep thinking student. Over time, you developed a clear interest in the law and how it affected women, children and vulnerable people. You said yourself that it was at this time that your passion for fine arts was joined by another passion, how to use the law to make the lives of others better. That is a constant theme.

 This passion was cemented in 1994 when you undertook a summer clerkship at the DPP, and it only grew upon graduation in 1995. Your first paid job was again at the DPP, a part-time research officer, before joining the Australian Law Reform Commission as a law reform officer in 1996. You returned to the DPP as a solicitor at the Liverpool office in 1998 and took up a role in the torts group with the Crown Sols in 2000.

 Your Honour, you were called to the Bar in 2001. You practised at Jack Shand Chambers until 2017, specialising in public law, administrative law, medical negligence and insurance law. In 2018, you were appointed as a Crown Prosecutor, firstly at Paramatta and then in Sydney. You also worked in the appeals unit before acting as a Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor in 2021. You were appointed Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor in 2022. In your most recent role as Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor, you have appeared in many complex trials and appeals across Sydney West. You were also a supervisor to 19 Crown Prosecutors and 16 Solicitor Advocates, while being a mentor to many others.

 All at the DPP highlight your energy, intelligence and selflessness as some wonderful qualities you bring to their work each day. Across the profession you are renowned for your commitment to complainants and their families. Colleagues add that you have contributed an enormous amount to their working lives. Your unfailing kindness and sense of fun has earned you lifelong friends, and you will be greatly missed, and I know you are sad to be leaving them.

 Your Honour, this would be the moment where I would highlight some notable cases you have appeared in, but I do not have enough time. I am grateful to the speakers that will follow, they can illuminate those achievements because amazingly your career at the Bar is only half of what you have contributed to the legal profession in New South Wales.

 Simultaneously with running a busy common law practice, you have enjoyed an illustrious academic career, starting in 1996 as a casual academic lecturing in evidence law at the University of Sydney Law School. This continued until 2007, when you were appointed as senior lecturer at the University of Sydney, lecturing in evidence, advanced evidence and procedure until 2022. Where did you fit it all in? Your work as a lecturer was recognised in 2007 with the University of Sydney Faculty of Law Teaching Excellence Award. Your colleagues at the university cannot praise you enough. Your students adored you. When you lectured, the place would be standing room only.

 You are also the author of multiple publications, including *Uniform Evidence Law: Cases and Materials*, *Civil Procedure in New South Wales*, and *Secrecy, Law and Society*. As an author, there are too many articles and chapters to list on topics, including prosecutorial disclosure, cross-examining experts, freezing order and privileges, public interest immunity, and the Director’s client legal privilege.

 You have also tirelessly volunteered your time to the profession. You are currently the co-chair of the New South Wales Bar Association Human Rights Committee and co-chair of the Crown Prosecutors Continuing Professional Development Committee. From 2004 to 2020, you were an examiner for the New South Wales Bar and since 2017, you have been an active and effective member of the Sexual Assault Review Committee.

 Your Honour, what a wonderfully impactful career you have had so far. I think all will agree that you have pursued the passion you discovered at university, using the law to help the lives of others.

 Despite your prodigious output and high-level positions in the profession and academia, you have always put your family first. Your colleagues say that you have proudly incorporated your home life into your professional world. You are truly a person who brings her whole self to work. You are a wonderful wife and mother. Many conferences have been conducted from the soccer sidelines and outside at horse-riding lessons.

 You partner in life is Marco. You met in 2005 in Buenos Aires at a tango class. Marco has stated that you are not perfect dance partners, due to lack of ability he says, but he does not say whether it is yours or his. But you are the perfect life partners. Marco came to Sydney in 2005 and you were married in 2006. The wedding was a lowkey affair and the celebration consisted of dinner for two in Darling Harbour, in fact it was not until the waiter enquired about why you were both so well dressed that anybody else found out. The whole restaurant soon discovered as a waiter brought the whole kitchen crew to congratulate you.

 Your children are so proud of your achievements today, and I know you and Marco are equally as proud of them for the people they are fast becoming. You are a close-knit family, you love spending time at your holiday home on the coast, you go to concerts and there is nothing you like more than watching your kids play soccer, dance or perform in various productions.

 Every winter involves skiing trips to Perisher with the extended Kumar family. Your father is a ski tragic, your sister was on the Australian Freestyle Ski Team and you have been described as graceful, elegant and fast. It has been said that most come for the skiing, but all stay for the good food, wine and laughter.

 You friends love your wicked sense of humour. They love your warm and bubbly personality. You can also be relied upon to be the fun or comment on all the nonsense that happens in the world. They also say that off the slopes you are a little bit clumsy. You are always bumping into things and falling over, but always laughing it off.

 Your love of creating art continues. You recently had a sell-out exhibition of mixed media canvases which now adorn the chambers of many in the legal profession and beyond. You have said yourself that you have cultivated a wonderful life and, in a room full of solicitors, barristers and judges, the evidence of this is obvious.

 Also obvious to all here today is what a brilliant judge you will be. They all know that you will never shy away from the hard work that this role requires. They all know that you bring a deep sense of compassion to the work. It is a role that you are well suited to, your balanced view of the legal world and your understanding of the way the world works will be vital.

 Friends say you will be measured, well-mannered and conduct proceedings in a thoughtful way. They add that you have every element one could need to be a good judge. Colleagues are excited to watch your rise to this challenge. They believe, and they know, your academic rigour mixed with your experience as an advocate is a beautiful balance. You will be firm, and you will not tolerate nonsense. You have said yourself that you believe you are ready for the role. You hope to a be fair and kind judge. You hope to get it right. You are thrilled to be appointed and to continue serving the people of New South Wales as a judge of the District Court and we are all thrilled to have you.

 Thank you for saying yes when I rang you and that conversation we had about life and service is one that I will not forget. Congratulations, your Honour. May it please the Court.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Attorney. Ms Banks.

BANKS: May it please the Court. I too acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora nation, the traditional owners on the land on which this Court stands, and I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present. I also acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here today.

 Your Honour, on behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales, it is a privilege to be here this morning to address the Court and congratulate you on this outstanding appointment.

 Your Honour’s experience in common law, insurance and administrative law, in criminal law and academia alongside an encyclopaedic knowledge of the law of evidence will be of great assistance to the District Court of New South Wales.

 Your Honour brings a wealth of legal knowledge, ability and experience to this Court. At the private Bar, your Honour appeared for both plaintiffs and defendants, including in High Court appeals. As a Crown Prosecutor, your Honour has been involved in a vast array of criminal cases. These include appellate cases, assisting in the judicial interpretation and development of the law.

 My researcher gave me nine pages of noteworthy case citations in standard 11-point font since 2001. These cases included the Court of Criminal Appeal of New South Wales on issues such as the rules of evidence, sentences, criminal procedure, inconsistent verdicts, waiver of client-legal privilege, directions to juries and much, much more. The matters often concerned issues that required calm, objective reasoning in difficult circumstances, like child sexual offences, sexual assault or dangerous driving causing death, yet your Honour was noted for your resilience and compassion, day in and day out. There were also many High Court cases at the private Bar on diverse issues like negligence, defamation, the meaning of trade in commerce, unconscionable conduct, industrial accidents, motor accidents and more.

 Your Honour is no stranger to high pressure workloads over many years and yet by all accounts, can manage it with enthusiasm and energy. One solicitor remarked that it can make even the most routine task seem engaging for those around you.

 Your Honour has appeared in print extensively writing several books on evidence, civil procedure and law and society and as we have heard, worked diligently in your academic consideration of the law.

 A mentor to many, a devoted friend and partner and a mother to two children, your Honour can now be found at ballet, horse‑riding and soccer practice and games right around Sydney. A great cook and an amazing painter with a recent exhibition to your name, your Honour has accomplished a great deal both in and out of the law.

 Growing up, your Honour was fortunate to travel with your family and along with your sister was very close to your maternal grandmother, as we have heard, who was a great and positive force often looking after you both while your parents worked. Along with your parents, she helped instil a love of learning and education. Your family have said that Salme Mankin would love seeing this today, your Honour.

 Your Honour was dux of your high school before studying arts and law at the University of Sydney, as we have heard, and embarking on an illustrious legal career which has brought you here today.

 We spoke to many in the legal profession, as well as family and friends, in preparation for today. They independently corroborated that your Honour has always grasped opportunities with a very generous and positive regard for what life can offer, while remaining patient at various stages of your life and career and appreciating the value of where you are. And yet, there are some chinks in the armour, I will quote your husband Marco, to avoid contempt of Court as your Honour’s first matter on the bench, I have a slightly different account of your meeting Marco in South America in 2005 :

“We met in a tango class in Buenos Aires, we were dancing with separate people, and she obviously saw me and thought well he is a very good dancer, because she’s not. I think that attracted her to me, like woah look at that guy. And she even booked a private lesson because she felt she needed a little bit more practice. She might be a leader in law, but she shouldn’t lead in dancing, that’s just my view.”

 Your Honour was remembered by your sister Anika as being a brilliant older sister, protective and creative, who also gang pressed her into servitude when she was about five to act out the Christmas pantomime your Honour unilaterally wrote, directed and staged for your parents and their friends, I am told to rave reviews. I am reliably informed as the two of you grew up, the roles reversed as Anika taught her older sister, by five and a half years, to drive.

 Your husband and one of your oldest friends separately laughed heartily while recounting your Honour’s attempts to learn languages. It was described as a big F for fail with Spanish in South America. Your husband added that while attempting to learn German, he would regularly find you with headphones in, language books splayed open, snoozing as the language lesson played. He rounded off by noting that your Honour’s attempt to speak Italian with his parents, one of a few languages that they speak, was rather one-sided with your Honour deploying a small handful or words and a whole lot of hand gestures.

 Of course, he observed that outside of these confines your Honour approaches life with energy and amazing power, never procrastinating or postponing, for example, producing four whole painting in a few hours of an art class or balancing being a barrister, university lecturer or mother or working demanding criminal law roles for the Crown while remaining buoyant as a person. He said you were always 100% with your work and somehow 200% with your children.

 Those who have worked alongside you as instructing solicitors, senior solicitors, Solicitor Advocates and fellow Crown Prosecutors all noted how effective your speed and quality of work have consistently been. This was illustrated most recently by your Honour’s time supervising 19 Crown Prosecutors and 16 Solicitor Advocates, while continuing to appear in complex trials and appeals and yet making the right decisions consistently and quickly as several senior solicitors observed. From clerks to senior lawyers this was reflected by those who have known your Honour professionally for over 20 years. They have always found your Honour’s ability at law and with people to be of an unusually remarkable calibre.

 Your Honour has extensive experience in criminal law, having appeared abundantly in complex trials and appeals in the Federal Court and the High Court, as well as the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the New South Wales Coroner’s Court. It is fitting that your last role in the legal profession is also the place your Honour began. Your Honour’s summer clerkship in 1994 was at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions where, as we have heard, your Honour was also a part time research officer the following year.

 One solicitor who acted alongside your Honour while you were at the private Bar noted that you were undaunted by being involved in any sort of task, be it negotiations, gathering facts or helping resolve matters, always willing to roll up your sleeves and doing what it took to act in the best interest of the client and your colleagues.

 In a super call-over this year with 80 matters, a solicitor who worked alongside your Honour noted how efficient your Honour was with the huge workload involved, once again in whatever task needed to be done, while remaining methodically across the brief for every matter.

 As we have heard at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, your Honour has supervised and mentored Crown Prosecutors and senior advocates across Western Sydney. Those spoken to were uniformly grateful for your openness, collegiality and care with which you helped them.

 Your Honour has also been active in policy and legal education at the Office of The Director of Public Prosecutions serving in positions including chair of the New South Wales First Nations Mentoring Committee and the chair of the Implementation Committee for the Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program.

 It can be hard to summarise the views of many in a few minutes but the clear constant description of colleagues, friends and family from working with you from a few weeks ago to moments that happened decades ago, the constant view is this, your Honour is genuine, without pretention, incredibly hardworking and bright, intellectual, emotionally strong and compassionate.

 Your Honour was noted by those whose chambers were near yours as often hearing your Honour before they saw you, with a great infectious laugh, always welcoming people, as a well-rounded and refreshing presence in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Your Honour’s appointment was considered a sad loss for the office, rectified only by the huge gain for this Court and the people before it.

 Our profession considers you an excellent choice for the District Court of New South Wales. It is my pleasure to say today on behalf of the more than 40,000 solicitors of New South Wales, congratulations on this appointment, your Honour. I wish you the very best. As the Court pleases.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Ms Banks. Judge Kumar.

KUMAR J: Thank you, Chief Judge. Chief Justice Bell, Justice Ward, your Honours, Mr Attorney, Ms Banks, other distinguished guests and former colleagues, my friends, my beloved family. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for being here today, either in this courtroom or online. Thank you, Mr Attorney and Ms Banks, for your very kind words.

 I too acknowledge the traditional owners of the land which we meet, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and I recognise their enduring connection to the land and waters. I would also like to acknowledge the Burramattagal people of the Dharug nation, the traditional owners of Parramatta where I worked before today. The Dharug name for that area, Burramatta, means place of eels. It was for millennia their main food source, which they gathered from the many eel traps in the river. Burramatta is also significant as the site of one of the major battles of the early frontier wars, the battle of Parramatta in 1797, in which the renowned first nations leader Pemulwuy led 100 warriors in defence of his people and culture against the forces of colonisation. I pay my respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present and to the Aboriginal people here today.

 Over the years, my name Miiko Kumar has created some confusion. Upon meeting me, people are surprised because they expected to see a Japanese woman who is married to an Indian. But as you now know, my mother’s parents were Estonian, and she was born in England. My father’s parents were Fijian Indians. My father was born in Ba, a small sugarcane town in Fiji. My mother’s parents met during the Second World War in London.

 My grandmother left Estonia when she was 19, she went to London to learn English, however, the war broke out and she joined the British Army where she became an ambulance driver. She was a speedy driver right until she stopped driving in her 90s. She met my grandfather, a fellow Estonian, and they travelled to Australia when my mum was 5. They operated a delicatessen in Bankstown.

 My father was born in Fiji. My great grandparents were kidnapped or tricked onto ships in Indian that were bound for the Fiji Islands to be indentured labour for the sugarcane plantations. My great grandmother was 14 years old when she was taken from a village in Kerala, India and put on a ship bound for Fiji.

 My mother’s grandparents were also displaced when the USSR took Estonia. My great grandfather, his wife and his children were forcibly removed from their flax farm in Estonia and sent to workcamps in Siberia.

 My parents had each grown up with the stories of hardship and trauma of the people that came before them. They were raised to believe in the importance of education, kindness and independence. They were each the first in their families to go to university. They met at the University of New South Wales. My father was on a scholarship to study civil engineering and my mother was studying mathematics.

 My parents, Mia and Anil, raised me to be independent and resilient. My mother would often say to me, and she may have even said it this morning, “Remember you are strong, you are resilient, just get it done.” My parents placed emphasis on education and experience. I was very fortunate to grow up in a loving and secure family. My childhood was happy, and I am very thankful to my parents for providing me with so much love and support and also lots of fun and laughter.

 My Estonian granny, Salme, as you heard, lived to 101, was a huge part of my life and her constant devotion gave me enormous strength. As a child, nothing was better than sleeping over at my grandmother’s house in Yagoona. I am very grateful to my granny for her love, care and kindness. Granny was a wise, fair, strong and brave woman.

 I also had the love and devotion of my father’s dad, my aja. Aja was a very wise and kind man who treated every day as a gift.

 I enjoyed learning and I met my lifelong best friend, Naomi Sharp SC in year 7 at Concord High School. I have grown up and grown older with Naomi. Naomi is overseas today, but no doubt watching online. Naomi’s parents and her partner are here today. I thank Naomi and her family for their love and care of me.

 I enjoyed the social and political life at the University of Sydney where I studied arts/law. I met Antonia Leigh in fine arts in the first year and I am still creating art with her nearly 33 years later. I also made lifelong friends with Sally Dowling SC, Alan Blinder and Alina Halloran, who sadly is no longer with us.

 As a university student, I loved belonging to the women’s collective and Fems Rea, which was the women’s law students collective. I am happy to see some former members of Fems Rea here today. I have taught at the University of Sydney Law School since 1996. I made important friendships there, most importantly with Stephen Odgers SC, Justice Elisabeth Peden, Professor Barbara McDonald and the Coffee Club crew. Thank you all for your guidance and support.

 My first job as a solicitor was at the Office of The Director of Public Prosecutions at Liverpool. I met Angela Farage and Julie Ewing in that office and we have remained as the three amigas ever since.

 At the Bar, I read and practiced at Jack Shand Chambers. I loved my time on that floor. I am particularly grateful for junioring the greats of the common law Bar, such as Barry Toomey KC, Peter Hennessey SC and the late Tony Hewitt SC. I am also grateful to Eugene Romaniuk SC for his friendship and for being a barrister that makes other barristers. I thank the clerks of Jack Shand Chambers. I am also thankful to all the solicitors that briefed me over the years.

 I appeared in the High Court as Justice Ruth McColl’s junior in her Honour’s last case before joining the bench. I thank her Honour for her leadership, wise guidance and continued support. The collegiality of the Bar is a wonderful thing and I experienced the open door policy in full operation while I was at Jack Shand Chambers. I also experienced the comradery of female lawyers. I am grateful to the many female lawyers that I have met along the way and have become my close friends. Thank you in particular my dear friend, Justice Chrissa Loukas-Karlsson, and the law girls’ cone group for being here today.

 I became a Crown Prosecutor in 2018 and later the Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor for Greater Western Sydney. This role has been my favourite one to date. I have absolutely loved leading the Crown Prosecutors and Solicitor Advocates in Parramatta, Penrith and Campbelltown. I also very much enjoyed being, as Marley Zelinka labelled me, “The appeals unit CCA BFF”, as I would appear in appeals when the unit needed assistance.

 Director Dowling is performing a magnificent job in a very demanding role. The ODPP is a progressive organisation. I was pleased to learn that last week, Damian Beaufils, a proud First Nations Crown Prosecutor was instructed in Court by Zac Wone, a proud First Nations ODPP solicitor, making history as the first all Indigenous prosecution team.

 Director Dowling is a brilliant boss, and she also remains one of my best friends. We met on the first day of university in a law lecture. We have worked together before, we worked together as waitresses at Taylor Square Restaurant while we were at law school. It has been an absolute privilege and honour to work with her again. Thank you, Sally, for your love and support.

 I appreciated the ability to act as Deputy Director at various times this year. I am grateful for the support of the other Deputy Directors and the legal and administrative staff in Director’s chambers. I also thank Yasmin Sevilgen, who is my executive assistant. Yasmin and I worked at Liverpool ODPP together in the late 90s and I have loved every moment of working with her again at Parramatta.

 I have been proud to work at the ODPP, the Crowns, solicitors, witness assistance officers and administrative staff work hard and are so good at what they do and, they care. Thank you to all of you.

 Now back to my family. I am also grateful to my sister Anika for being such a supportive little sister. Anika, an Australian freestyle mogul ski champion, is a wonderful architect and more importantly, a wonderful sister. I am happy to see her here today with my brother-in-law Grant, my niece Misha and my nephews, Mel and Felix.

 I thank my husband’s family who are watching this in Switzerland. Thank you, Ruth, Tony, Reto, Jeanette, Lucio and Liam. I am grateful to my parents’ friends and their children, who have played an important part in my life. Thank you for being here today, in particular, my nearly sister Alessandra Steele and her parents, my nearly parents.

 My darling husband, Marco. Thank you for your love, strength and unconditional support. Thank you for moving countries to be with me and for always being calm.

 I will now deal with two very important people in my life. These two little people give me the most joy and pride.

 Lenny, thank you for being such a wonderful and thoughtful son. I am sure that you will keep kicking goals in many ways.

 Heidi, thank you for being such a strong and kind daughter. I love that you are interested in so many things. Please keep singing, dancing, writing and learning.

 Thank you, Mr Attorney, for appointing me to this Court. I am honoured and grateful for the privilege of being appointed. I am especially honoured to fill the vacancy left by Judge Huggett, as her Honour will shortly be elevated to the Supreme Court. Judge Huggett was a solicitor when I was a summer clerk at the ODPP. I have respected and been inspired by Judge Huggett since that time and I wish her Honour well in the next phase of her judicial career.

 I have loved appearing in this Court and wish to also thank Judge Hanley, Judge Culver and Judge Gallagher for their encouragement of me pursuing this role. Thank you, Chief Judge, and my fellow judges of this Court, as well as the staff that I have met so far, in particular Lisa Freeman for your warm welcome.

 I pledge to do my best to be true to my oath of office. I hope that I will be a fair, balanced and compassionate judge. Thank you.

PRICE CJ: Thank you Judge. I now extend an invitation to you all to join us for morning tea. The Court will now adjourn.