IN THE DISTRICT COURT

OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, His Honour Judge Peter McGrath SC was sworn in as a Judge of the District Court of New South Wales by Justice Price AO, Chief Judge in a private ceremony on 7 February 2022.

A Welcome Ceremony was held on 24 March 2022. The following are the speeches made at that ceremony.

THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022

**WELCOME TO HIS HONOUR PETER MCGRATH SC AS A JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Mr M McHugh, President, on behalf of the New South Wales Bar

Ms J Van der Plaat, President, Law Society of New South Wales, on behalf of solicitors

PRICE J: Judge McGrath, I had the privilege of swearing you in as a Judge of this Court in a private ceremony on 7 February of this year. I now have the particular pleasure of presiding over this welcome ceremony.

You bring with you to the Court a wealth of experience in the criminal law. I know that you have been made most welcome by all your judicial colleagues. I wish you every success in your judicial career.

MCGRATH: Thank you, Chief Judge.

PRICE CJ: Mr McHugh.

MCHUGH: May it please the Court. I begin by acknowledging the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

Chief Judge, my principal role this morning is to express the Bar’s absolute confidence in Judge McGrath. While his Honour's appointment will be a great loss to the Office of the DPP and the legal profession more generally in Sydney and beyond, I congratulate the Attorney General for making such a shrewd appointment.

Earlier this month I had the privilege of attending the swearing in of your Honourable Andrew Bell as the 18th Chief Justice of New South Wales. While it was a grand occasion, I am now as honoured to speak as this ceremony today.

The District Court is he trial court of this State and where in particular the great bulk of the State’s criminal jury and judge alone trials take place.

Judge McGrath, few occupations bring someone into such frequent contact with examples of human frailties as that of the trial judge. One sees the dignity shown by victims of crime, the suffering of those with a mental illness or the anguish on the face of the mother of an accused, and regardless of who they are their experience when they are before this Court can have a significant impact on the future course of their lives.

The role your Honour embarks upon - I was going to say today but it is last month - matters a great deal, and by all accounts your Honour is well qualified for the role having been a leader in and out of court and on both sides of the bar table.

Your Honour graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws in 1981. Apparently, about this time your Honour frequented the Sydney Trade Union Club, Chequers and the Civic Hotel, just around the corner, to hear punk and underground bands such as the Young Doctors, the Celibate Rifles, the Kelpies and the Laughing Clowns. Apart from this, not much is known about your Honour's academic record.

Your Honour was admitted as a solicitor on 22 December 1983 and a year later commenced at the fledgeling Commonwealth DPP where your Honour remained until called to the Bar in August 1990. Your Honour read with Des Fagan and John Graves and practised at 11 Garfield Barwick Chambers where we first met when I was selling CD rollers for Butterworths. And then your Honour went to Samuel Griffith Chambers.

Your Honour's principal area of practice was, of course, criminal law but with a smattering of common law. This was, of course, at a time when every plaintiff got a prize before the changes to tort law reform. Your Honour appeared for both the prosecution and the defence, and another iron in the fire was appearing before commissions of inquiry, including ICAC, the Lithgow Bushfires inquiry and, of course, the Wood Royal Commission.

Your Honour became a Crown Prosecutor in 2012, took silk in 2014 and swapped sides of the bar table for just over a year in 2017 when appointed Deputy Senior Public Defender. Before your Honour returned to the prosecutors as Deputy DPP, your Honour was an active member of the Bar Association’s Wellbeing Committee, ably assisting Nomchong SC on a subcommittee to assess and manage the Bar Association’s response to judicial bullying. Members of the profession can expect a courteous and efficient hearing provided they are across all details of their briefs and properly so. Your Honour represented the Director on working parties for both the Walama List and the Bugby Project giving valuable input from the prosecution’s perspective, yet with the lived experience of a senior public defender.

Outside of the law, I am informed your Honour has a wide circle of friend from all walks of life, normal people. It seems your Honour cannot take many steps at a sports match without happily stopping to chat. Such fellowship may have served a politician well, yet politics’ loss has been the law’s gain.

Your Honour's love of sports is well-know. After finishing university, your Honour’s cricketing mates formed teams to join various competitions in Sydney. One such team was Lenin’s 11, as in Vladimir. Another, the Cowdrays. No doubt these appellations were due to the presence of some political economy lecturers and a wry sense of humour. However, I am not sure comrade is now such a suitable epithet for your Honour.

Your Honour is a keen ocean swimmer and a member of the Buttercups, a social club whose yellow caps can be seen swimming across Toowoon Bay. And, of course, your Honours is a diehard Roosters fan, as is your mother Helen who I met earlier this morning. When at the NRL judiciary, your Honour obviously set his loyalty to one side and prosecuted impartially. However, I understand there may have been some friction in the family over how unfairly your Honour had treated the Roosters players. Your Honour, nevertheless, enjoyed the advocacy at the judiciary calling it advocacy in action.

According to one sports reporter, your Honour was seen by players as the most feared man in the league, and your Honour is now on a first name basis with the Burgess family.

Your Honour is suitably coy about notable cases. Unsurprisingly, while many of these cases attracted intense media fascination, it was usually for all the wrong reasons and there was invariably a disconnect between the coverage and the legal principles in question.

A few anecdotes may suffice to evidence the high regard your Honour was held in as an advocate.

Your Honour was once defending a woman on a murder charge. However, she was destitute and was brought to hearings in prison clothes. Your Honour’s wife was discarding her corporate lawyer power suits for charity, which were promptly intercepted by your Honour and given to the accused.

Later, your Honour was a model of fairness where as a Crown Prosecutor in a murder trial your Honour adhered to an arrangement to tender, in lieu of oral evidence, the reports of the Crown and defence experts who were in relevant agreement, despite a thinly veiled desire, apparent desire on the part of the judge, to challenge the opinions of both in front of the jury. Of course, we are all creatures of our instructions from time to time.

Back in 2006-2007, acting as an exemplar of barrister’s duty to confine matters to those truly in dispute, months were shaved from a Commonwealth drug trial by one consenting as defence counsel to the admission of virtually the entirety of the large Crown case alleging the importation of ice in the hull of a speedboat, then too promptly calling the accused to explain his significant involvement was the result of a naïve but honestly held belief that the hull was full of stolen gold and jewels. Nevertheless, there followed a speedy guilty verdict. And when the judge later suggested it was pens down for the jury after they had been told of the stolen gold and jewel, I am informed your Honour's response was confined to a wry smile and I understand that offender is no longer in the jurisdiction.

I think we have all seen that smile, your Honour, and certainly the broader one we are all familiar with. Neither one belies your Honour's real judicial qualities, including intellect, experience, compassion and a determination to uphold the law. No doubt your family is familiar with these qualities and I note the presence of your mother Helen, wife Bronwyn, children Elly, Callum and Amelia, sister Jen, and watching online I understand will be sister Kath and brother Andy in Hong Kong.

Judge McGrath, the Bar has absolute confidence that your Honour has all the essential qualities to be a fine judge and the community will be well-served by this appointment. We wish your Honour every success in the years to come. May it please the Court.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Mr McHugh. Ms Van der Plaat.

VAN DER PLAAT: May it please the Court. I, too, acknowledge the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which this Court stands, and I pay my respect to the their Elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge any Indigenous Australians present today.

I come before the Court on behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales to offer congratulations and wish your Honour well in your appointment to the District Court of New South Wales. Mindful of the important role family has played in your Honour's life, I would like to acknowledge your family and friends joining us today and watching online.

Your former colleagues have praised your Honour as an unflappable advocate, a generous mentor, and the most thoughtful of legal practitioners. These traits have defined your Honour as both a prosecutor and a defender. Even at the private Bar when your Honour was mostly doing defence work you were always quick to take up opportunities to prosecute, determined never to be wedded to one thing. Your Honour once reflected on this habit, noting “some say it would show a lack of commitment, I prefer to think that it shows more of a balanced and professional attitude, you take the case you are given and you do your professional ethical best whether prosecuting or defending someone”. The ability to see both sides of a case made your Honour an indispensable member of the courtroom team.

When your Honour was Deputy Senior Public Defender, your colleagues did not want you to leave. For them you were the calm, funny, smart and hardworking deputy, someone they described as a very spiffy dresser, with the reputation for eating impossibly large salads out of equally large bowls. But they consoled themselves by noting, in the words of one colleague, the benefit of having a fair-minded prosecutor on the other side who understands the pressures of defence and prosecution and uses this knowledge to ensure balance and fairness in the criminal justice system.

Fairness is a thread that runs throughout your Honour's legal career. Your Honour is scrupulously fair. In fact, my friend mentions for Roosters fans for which you were one. There is some concern that your Honour is a little too fair and that as an NRL prosecutor at judiciary hearings a little partiality might go a long way.

Your Honour's loyalty to the Roosters started early. When your mum took you out of preparation for your first Holy Communion to watch them train, you knew this was something serious. They have been your team ever since.

Your Honour's commitment to fairness also explains a remarkable story your Honour once shared in an interview with the ABC’s law report program. It concerned the time your Honour called as a witness the father of the accused. In conference you told him “look, it’s awkward, I am the man who is trying to get your son convicted of an awful crime and inevitably, if that happens, go to gaol for a terribly long time” to which he replied “look, I understand, you’re doing your job and I’m here to be a witness”. At the end of the trial, having secured a guilty verdict, the father approached you saying he appreciated the fair job that you did. By your own admission, this was an unusual and touching experience. But your Honour's care and concern for all parties in the trial was anything but unusual.

Your service has been a testament to the fact that the criminal justice system exists to serve all citizens, including perpetrators and their families as well as victims and theirs. Over many decades your Honour has accumulated enormous wisdom in criminal law and running trials which you have shared freely. I am told that your Honour's presentation on practical advocacy at the Legal Aid criminal law conference in 2019 practically stole the show. Ironically, you got one of your biggest laughs with the advice to avoid humoury in trials, telling an audience of criminal lawyers “none of you are funny, get over it”. Your Honour is a gifted presenter, able to talk about anything from case theory and exculpatory evidence to the Chewbacca defence, an awesome gift from the 1998 episode of South Park. Your Honour has always put this knowledge to great effect.

Solicitors at the Aboriginal Legal Service wanted me to convey the depth of their gratitude for your work. While as the first prosecutor involved in the Bugmy Bar Book Steering Committee, your Honour’s approach was marked by openness and collegiality. For many people in the law, your Honour’s ascension to the bench deprives them of their most reliable phone a friend.

I would like to conclude today with a final observation.

A former colleague at the DPP said your Honour was a delight to work with, down to earth, with an even temperament, “I don’t think I ever saw signs of exasperation or annoyance even when the circumstances warranted it”. This equanimity places you in good stead for the challenges

ahead.

Your Honour brings a wealth of knowledge, personal integrity and insight to the District Court of New South Wales. The people of our State are privileged to be served by you in this role and solicitors have every confidence that you will make an exceptional judicial officer.

On behalf of the solicitors of New South Wales, congratulations, your Honour. As the Court pleases.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Ms Van der Plaat. Judge McGrath.

MCGRATH: Thank you, Chief Judge.

Chief Judge, colleagues, President McHugh, President Van der Plaat, gorgeous and delightful magistrates - I’m looking at you, Barko - learned and elegant judges of the Supreme Court, particularly those who may sit from time to time on the Court of Criminal Appeal, colleagues, friends and family, thank you for your attendance today.

I hope that those who could not attend for various unfortunate reasons are following on YouTube. If so, give it a like. My daughter Ellie is conducting an analysis of how many likes all the different swearing in speeches have gathered, not that it is a popularity contest, but the chance of being a YouTube sensation is too good to pass up.

Mr McHugh, Ms Van der Platt, I have come prepared to issue you a warning under section 165 of the Evidence Act in relation to the reliability of your unnamed sources and informers. Unfortunately, some of them have proved to be, unfortunately, accurate. But I thank you for your kind welcome. Mr McHugh in particular, I congratulate you on your leadership of the Bar during the COVID pandemic which has been very difficult and very inspired.

Ms Van der Platt, some of my best friends are solicitors. Hell, I even married one. But more on that later. I congratulate you on your appointment as President and remind everyone of the strength of the bond between the solicitors and barristers of this State, one branch of which could not exist without the other.

Since my appointment I received many messages of congratulation, and if any of those were sent to my former DPP email address then I apologise. One of the tremendous initiatives of the new Director, Sally Dowling, was the instalment of a new Outlook email system which automatically sent any email of any importance directly to the junk email folder. This was an excellent innovation as it freed up prosecutors from having to deal with tedious correspondence and disclose things and answer queries and requisitions and just get on the job of prosecuting people. So if any of you emailed me with congratulation and I did not reply, I apologise, your email was junk and was treated accordingly.

I have received a very warm welcome, as the Chief Judge has mentioned, from my fellow judges and so many offers of excellent advice, much of it conflicting. It seems justice truly is individual.

I would like to thank the court officers and tipstaves for their assistance and, of course, my delightful associate Maddie.

Since coming to live in the John Maddison Towers, a Mirvac development, I have discovered that one meets lots of people in the lifts without necessarily knowing who they are, or they you. I have met one particular man a couple of times. I have no idea who he is or what he does but he is very nice. He seemed to express surprise when I told him that I was a judge because he explained it was unusual to see judges smiling. I explained that I was a very new judge and I was sure it would soon pass.

My appointment to this Court came with a previously undisclosed condition precedent. It was announced that I was to replace his Honour Judge Steve Norrish QC. I immediately went pale. How on earth does one possibly replace Steve Norrish. Surely, he is not merely unique but absolutely irreplaceable. This point was driven home to me, particularly forcefully, by his Honour Judge Steve Norrish when he telephoned me to congratulate me on my appointment and point out that he was in fact irreplaceable. I determined that nonetheless I would try. I embarked upon a rigorous gym program to develop a vice‑like handshake which I thrust upon anyone who comes within range, pumping their arm vigorously while telling them, very genuinely, how lovely it was to see them again, sometimes several times in one day for the same person.

In seriousness, of course Steve Norrish QC has been a giant of the criminal law and counsel and judge for many decades, with a particular and tireless dedication to highlighting and addressing the systemic issues which see so many indigenous Australians caught in the criminal law’s often inflexible grasp. It is an honour to be mentioned in the same sentence as Steve and I will do my humble best to uphold the legacy that you have left on this bench.

From the account of what has been somewhat generously described as my legal career, you may have detected a theme. I seem to have trouble holding down a job. I hope the Chief Judge is not having second thoughts. But at each stage of my career I have been blessed to work with lawyers who were, or were to become, greats of the criminal law. The newly formed Commonwealth DPP back when I joined was a remarkable work environment, many of whose alumni have gone on to positions of eminence in the law and to judicial office at all levels of State and Federal judiciaries. I am pleased to be finally joining you in this late entry mature age scholarship.

I am very chuffed to have been appointed alongside my old mate Judge Penny Musgrave, hitherto known or from this point known as P2, who was sworn in two days after me, making me not the most junior judge on this Court. At the Commonwealth I was lucky to come under the guidance of the estimable Gabrielle Drennan, a woman who has forgotten more criminal practice, procedure and evidence than most people could remember. I got to work with great lawyers and to instruct great counsel, such as Paddy Bergin, Margaret Beazley, Nick Cowdery QC, Peter Hastings QC, John Agius, Keith Chapple, Bob Sutherland and others, and also to see the best of defence counsel, including Chester Porter, Paul Byrne, Winston Terracini, Bob Toner, to name only a few, and Elizabeth Fullerton of course because no such occasion can go by without mention of her Honour.

Upon coming to the Bar, the Bar reading course bootcamp was devised and conducted by the extraordinary Phil Greenwood. Mr Greenwood practised all the intensity and mental disintegration of a marine corps drill sergeant. There are very few members of the Bar who can count amongst their former readers Chief Justices, and Phil’s life membership with the Bar is thoroughly deserved. It was a great introduction to life at the Bar.

As you have heard, I have read with two fine lawyers, John Graves, now senior counsel, and Justice Des Fagan. It is somewhat daunting to think that, as a member of the Court of Criminal Appeal, Justice Fagan will once again be in a position to correct my work. I am sure he will be as patient and kind as he once was all those years ago.

Throughout my career I have benefited from supportive and generous senior barristers and heads of chambers. I particularly mention Michael Finnane QC for whose generosity and support of me as a young barrister I remain always grateful. I also mention Ian Lloyd QC as head of chambers, very sadly only briefly Paul Byrne SC at Samuel Griffith Chambers, and the de facto head of Samuel Griffith Chamber Mick Ainsworth, Mark Ierace SC now Justice Ierace, the Senior Public Defender and leader of the Public Defender’s Chambers, and the Directors of Public Prosecutions under whom I worked, Lloyd Babb SC and Sally Dowling SC.

I cannot at this stage fail to mention some of the brilliant clerks who have assisted me, particularly Nick Tiffen at the very start of my career who is still charging into the fray as a clerk all these years later, Christine Chamberlain at Garfield Barwick Chambers, Jen Lewis at Samuel Griffith, and then the Nolan and Ratner partnership at Samuel Griffith Chambers. I also mention, of course, Renee Spinks at the Public Defender’s Chambers. They have all assisted me greatly.

In Director’s chambers I benefited from the breadth of legal knowledge and the friendship of Huw Baker SC and Frank (Belter) Veltro SC. If you do not know where the Belter acronym comes from, it is in the law almanac.

The members of the Bar whose friendship, legal skills and generosity have enriched me are too numerous to mention. Many are now judicial colleagues who, once again, find themselves sources of anxious advice. Many of you have been opponents but remain friends.

You have heard something of my cricketing misadventures, thankfully Mr McHugh missed out of the Reggae Cavaliers.

At Sydney University I played cricket, I found myself playing cricket in 1977 with a young Greg Stanton. He is still the only Lebanese person I know who surfed and played cricket. You can always tell something about someone’s advocacy from their bowling. Enough said.

Please forgive my crimes of omission in not mentioning you all. I thank, though, Mark Cahill for his persistence, Mick Ainsworth for his ability to call a spade a shovel and the unnamed but joint and glamorous heads of the ODPP Court of Criminal Appeal unit for their ability to explain High Court judgments so that even I thought I understood them.

I must also mention my former readers. Deputy State Coroner Derek Lee and Public Defender Peter Krisenthal, they have done very well despite reading with me.

It would, of course, not be a judicial welcome in the modern tradition without the obligatory acknowledgement. I speak, of course, of a mention of Strickland SC. We have each prosecuted and defended against each other, yet remain friends. In fact, as a mark of the closeness of our friendship, Strickland rang me and offered to write this speech for me. When I asked “But wouldn’t that mean that it would be all about you”, he replied “Not exclusively”. Mr Strickland, nice try.

In all my roles of private counsel, public defender, Crown prosecutor, I have been briefed by extraordinary solicitors in private practice, from the DPP, from Legal Aid and from the Aboriginal Legal Service. Thank you all for forgiving my irritability, my occasional distraction, my obsession with irrelevant detail, my failure to grasp the main point of the case or the defence and my extraordinary ability to lose any document of importance. I have benefited and leaned from all of you. Again, forgive my crime of omission in not mentioning all of you, but I do thank Peter Katsoolis for introducing me to the Drive-By Truckers.

I must make mention of the extraordinary leadership of the New South Wales DPP’s Director’s Chambers legal advisers by the principal legal advisers James Dorney and Esther Kwiet. They both have scary brains, are superb lawyers and managers and each in their own different way is completely delightful. They work in high pressure environment and manage that admirably.

As Mr McHugh hinted, you may gather that my career is perhaps not littered with landmark cases about which one can boast over dinner parties. But there have been some memorable characters and for no particular reason the memories of them bring me joy. I fondly recall acting for Mr Braine who wasn’t, Mr Fail who did, Ronnie Corbett - it was goodnight from him-, and a Mr Marceau who insisted on his right to silence.

I have appeared at all levels of the court system, the Local Court, the District Court, the Supreme Court, the Court of Criminal Appeal. But in more recent years it has been the opportunities I got to appear before the land’s highest and most esteemed judicial body whose cases are keenly anticipated and closely followed, whose decisions are analysed and debated having, as they do, the capacity to affect the lives of Australians from all walks of life. I speak, of course, of appearing as judiciary counsel before the National Rugby League Judiciary Tribunal under the chairmanship of Justice Bellew. I now join a court which of course takes its rank and presence in the court system and its proper place below that august body.

I acknowledge all my friends who have remained my friends, some of them from primary school, many from high school and university, particularly Dom and Nettie Burke and Mike Burden who are here today. And unfortunately some of the friends who are unable to attend for reasons that are, unfortunately, commonplace at this time. Thank you all for your persistence in maintaining our friendship and your tolerance. There may be present members of Bronte or Toowoon Bay Surf Clubs. If so, I apologise for not recognising you wearing clothes.

I turn now to the most important people here, my family.

My father was a wonderful man and I still miss him, but he could be distant and hard work. Born during the First World War, his family managed to escape a drunken father but not the ravages of the Great Depression during which they suffered greatly. He served his country in the Second World War. He realised that education and determination were the only things that would help him improve his life and he worked hard to ensure that his family would never suffer as he and his mother had. So it was left to my mum Helen who really ran the house and supply the love, which she did with aplomb, looking after our spiritual and sporting educations and teaching us important life lessons, such as the irrelevance of use by dates particularly when affixed to foodstuffs or medicines.

,Ours was a religious upbringing. Our particular holy trinity were Artie Beetson, Duggie Walters and Kenny Rosewall. The family would solemnly undertake religious observance on Sunday afternoons at our place of worship, the Sydney sports Ground, home of the mighty Eastern Suburbs District Rugby League Football Club where our own version of the miracle of the loaves and fishes would be performed. On the strength of two borrowed season tickets, the entire McGrath and Burden families, assorted friends and on one occasion the family dog, would all miraculously gain admission where we would sit on the eastern hill and worship with the other members of the congregation.

At the age of 90 years young, mum enjoys going to the gym, aquarobics, the theatre, the ballet and book club, and demands to be taken to attend cricket test matches and any reasonably accessible Rooster game. Her favourite thing, though, is being shouted a meal at the local club on cheap steak Thursday by her two grandsons.

My two younger sisters, Kath and Jen, and my brother Andy, were and are intelligent and stupidly good looking. They accepted me graciously. We are unusual brothers and sisters in that we all quite like each other and we enjoy getting together, although such occasions are not for the faint-hearted. I hope that my brother Andy and his husband Kelly are watching online in Hong Kong while this sort of thing is still allowed in China. We are looking forward to seeing you again.

Bronwynne, you got engaged to a solicitor of some years’ experience and with reasonable to middling prospects. You married a penniless barrister with an overdraft. This was a blatant example of attempting to obtain a benefit by deception on my part but in fact you encouraged it, telling me to stop talking about going to the Bar and just bloody do it. Any of my achievements are really yours. You put your own exceptional career as a corporate solicitor on hold while you looked after our three children. You provided love, care and discipline with occasional unhelpful contributions from me. The discipline was important.

Soon after our engagement we attended a country show near the town of your birth, a completely foreign experience for me, I did not know what was going on. A rural young man of your acquaintace who ran a property and had been to school with you, took me aside and said “mate, just watch out for her left hook”. I laughed politely thinking he was joking. As our son and I can each separately attest, he was not. The circumstance in which we each found this out do not bear telling on this occasion.

Bronwynne, I owe everything to you.

My children. Jess is unable to be here but it watching online, I understand. It has not been easy and I am glad you are in my life. My daughter Emilia unfortunately has not been able to come at the last moment but I hope is watching. Ellie, Cal and Emilia, you are each intelligent, independent, compassionate and as different from each other as people can be.

Ellie, you work in the provision of mental health and drug and alcohol services to those who most need them, and you are a full-time mother to your dog Pond who does need mental health services. You have the world’s largest private Harry Potter and Dr Who collections. In a previous career you have been a criminal law paralegal, which included working on Roger Rogerson’s defence team at his murder trial. That did not end up so well, but you still refer to him as Uncle Roger. You are a stalwart of the McGrath- Kent family tipping competition.

Cal, having broken nearly every bone in your body playing sport, a testament to your headlong attitude to all things, you have established your own successful carpentry business which you work in when you are not driving up and down the coast in your modified van looking for the best waves. You have been accused of being stubborn, but as you point out it is not being stubborn when you are actually right. By the way, your lovely partner Taylor is a keeper. No correction.

Emilia you possess great creativity and, surprisingly, organisational skills. Your achievement and successfully nurturing and staging of your triumphant university review, nursing it through the COVID pandemic and keeping the cast and crew motivated was quite extraordinary. One of the bands that you manage is shortly to commence a world tour of the Central Coast. It is a shame that you are no longer work at BWS as the staff discount was very handy.

You all have a highly developed sense of humour and can hold your own in an argument. Elly and Emilia, you both have excellent taste in music and fashion. You, Cal, not so much.

I am proud of you all and hope I have succeeded in embarrassing you in public.

In life we are sometimes asked profound questions. For example, my mother: “Why can’t you just listen to nice music like other people?”; and my father, upon reading yet another patchy university academic transcript: “Can’t you just get a good job in the public service or something?”. But the winner, the winning question, goes to my son Cal who many years ago, after a day of playing on the beach, surfing, playing football and the like, as we were relaxing afterwards said to me “So, dad, what are you going to do when you grow up”. I think we’re about to find out.

My presentation has been devoid of any legal reference whatsoever, another hallmark of my career. Though, can I make one final quote from that learned legal luminary Fenech J: “I love youse all”.

Thank you, Chief Judge.

PRICE CJ: Thank you, Judge. I warmly welcome you all to join us for morning tea.