



VICTORIAN BAR

---

## SPEECH

---

### ADDRESS AT THE WELCOME FOR HIS HONOUR MAGISTRATE RICHARDS, IN THE MAGISTRATES' COURT OF VICTORIA ON THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2020

#### BY TREVOR MONTI QC, ON BEHALF OF THE VICTORIAN BAR

May it please the Court.

I appear on behalf on behalf of the Victorian Bar to congratulate Your Honour on your appointment as a Magistrate of this Court.

I also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet, the peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay my respects to the elders past and present.

Your Honour was born in Melbourne and spent your early years in the 1960s on the Woomera Rocket Range in South Australia, where your father was an Aeronautical Engineer employed by the Defence Department. The residence of Your Honour was surrounded by desert, but you have fond memories of Woomera as being a great place to grow up, particularly when rockets or satellites were launched as the school would close for the day so all could attend the launch. Your Honour has now taken the position where Your Honour will be able to launch verbal rockets and satellites to all those who deserve them. One won't be surprised to see Mr Carson come into Your Honour's Court in full protective clothing, and with the best set of earmuffs that money can buy.

Your Honour is the eldest of eight children, being six boys and two girls. No doubt you were instilled with a sense of responsibility at the age of 18 when your parents and your four younger siblings moved to Indonesia where your father was to take up a position with the CSIRO. You were left to keep the home fires burning and take responsibility for the house, garden, three siblings and a dog. Apart from a broken window involving a surfboard, a visit by a divisional van and the local constabulary and the near arrest of your younger brother, those three years were handled admirably by Your Honour.

Your Honour was educated at St Bede's College in Mentone. Your Honour obtained your Higher School Certificate in 1974 and in that year was the school dux. As it eventuated, your brother Greg was the school dux in 1975 and brother Paul was the



school dux in 1976. It might be said that brothers Richards can be likened to a shooting gallery, three 'ducks' in a row.

Upon leaving school, Your Honour enrolled at the University of Melbourne Law Faculty and in 1978, you graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Law. While attending University, Your Honour worked at Southland Myer in the record department which introduced Your Honour to Rock n Roll music which initiated a lifetime love of such music. When leaving that position, the manager tried to entice Your Honour into a Myer Management Program dangling the carrot of a stellar career in the retail industry. Your Honour's cunning led you to decline the offer and to proceed with an ambition to practise the law. However, the experience has left Your Honour with an encyclopaedic knowledge of music from the 70s and 80s. I am not sure if your monthly subscription to Rolling Stone magazine will be covered by the Magistrates' Library allowance but, undoubtedly, you will make the appropriate enquiry.

You then completed your practical legal training at the Leo Cussen Institute in 1979 and you were admitted to practice on the 1st day of November 1979.

Your Honour was called to the Bar in 1980 and on the 13th March, Your Honour signed the Bar Roll.

Thereafter, Your Honour established a very busy practice in the area of workers' compensation, firstly commencing in the days of the old Workers' Compensation Board sitting at Marland House. While practising in the Workers' Compensation jurisdiction, until its abolition on the 1st day of September 1985, Your Honour developed a keen interest in things natural including, in particular, horticulture and percussion. Every Friday about lunchtime, Your Honour's keen interest intensified in horticulture and percussion and to satisfy Your Honour's thirst for knowledge on those subjects, you took up a position at the Flower Drum with other colleagues who shared the same interests.

From 1985, until your appointment, Your Honour continued to practise almost exclusively in the Workers' Compensation jurisdiction, firstly at the Accident Compensation Tribunal which succeeded the Workers' Compensation Board, and more lately, in the Compensation jurisdiction of the Magistrates' Court.

Your Honour established a very large and busy practice appearing for both Plaintiffs and Defendants and indeed, in the latter years of your practice, it is fair to say, you were the most experienced member of Counsel continuing to practise in the jurisdiction. Your Honour was the 'go to man' for other members of the Bar who wanted advice about various legal issues and aspects associated with workers' compensation. Your Honour's



door was always open to provide assistance to those who needed it, younger members of the Bar and indeed from time to time, members of the Inner Bar.

After being called to the Bar, Your Honour joined, and provided, valuable contribution to a number of Committees including the following:

- the Compensation Bar Association Committee (of which you were a member for 17 years);
- Magistrates' Court WorkCover Users Group (of which you were a member for 12 years);
- Barristers' Clerk Lennon's List Committee (of which you were a member for 12 years);
- the Essoign Club, the private Club for Judges and members of the Victorian Bar (of which you were a Board Member for 20 years including some years during that period as Secretary);
- for the last four years, you were Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Club and over your years of service, you provided extremely valuable and energetic contribution to the challenges which existed in relation to the operation of the Club, and its ultimate ongoing success.

When Your Honour came to the Bar, you read with Max Cashmore, who was later to become a Magistrate. His Worship and your former mentor, Max Cashmore presided in the criminal jurisdiction of the Court and by reason of his sentencing philosophy, he quickly became known as 'Maximum Max'. With Your Honour's appointment to this Court, where you will preside in the WorkCover jurisdiction, Your Honour will be dispensing compensation to those Plaintiffs who deserve to be compensated. It might not be long before Your Honour attracts the same salubrious title as your mentor and become known as 'Maximum Mick'.

At the Bar, Your Honour was hard working, respectful of others and compassionate. No doubt, Your Honour will call upon those same qualities in your role as a Judicial Officer of this Court facilitating the administration of an extremely important arm of the Court, namely the WorkCover/Workers' Compensation Division. The Compensation Bar looks forward with great anticipation to the understanding and experience in compensation law which Your Honour will bring to this Court.

Your Honour is married to Kathy and you and Kathy recently celebrated your 35th wedding anniversary. You have two sons – James and Edward, and as a devoted family man, you have great pride and love for both your immediate and large extended family.



Your parents have been unable to attend today although they are extremely proud of your achievements, especially your 92 year old father who has enthusiastically supported your appointment to this Court once he was reassured that he could continue to take part in the Lennon's List football tipping competition.

Your Honour also claims to be a 'better than average' chef, and you derive great pleasure from cooking for your family, particularly around Christmas time. However, on one occasion, your prowess as a chef was put to the test by a competition with Mr Carson as to who could barbeque the best pork belly. Regrettably for Your Honour, Mr Carson was judged the victor, a fact that still irks Your Honour. This is an important matter to be borne in mind by Your Honour when Mr Carson appears in Your Honour's Court.

Another great interest of Your Honour is following the fortunes, or misfortunes, of the St Kilda Football Club. It speaks volumes for Your Honour's patience, stamina, courage and resilience that after following that Football Club for so long, you are still prepared to do so.

I am sure that Your Honour will always enjoy the support and friendship of colleagues and will in turn offer them the same support. Trust and respect from the Bar is vital to the well being of the legal profession.

On behalf of the Victorian Bar, I warmly congratulate Your Honour on your appointment and on behalf of the Bar, I wish you a long, satisfying and distinguished career as a Magistrate of this Honourable Court.

May it please the Court.