



The ABA acknowledges the relationship between the land on which it and its members work and the First Nations' peoples of Australia

INTRODUCTION OF SHANE DRUMGOLD SC

3 February 2020

In a moment I will ask Shane Drumgold SC of the ACT Bar to respond to the toast made.

When 14, our speaker asked a career adviser what he needed to do to become a lawyer. He was told “you have got to be less stupid”. He vowed to take his revenge and become a lawyer. I am not sure whether your revenge – even at its imagined height – included taking silk and being appointed the DPP for the ACT.

No smooth path had led to that exchange. Rather, it was a childhood full of trauma and difficulties.

Nor was the path any more straight-forward in the long 20 years which followed before he started to study law. He graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Laws with Honours from ANU; was awarded a Masters in International Law in 2004; and awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study restorative justice in indigenous communities in North America and Polynesia. He served as a Public Defender in the Solomon Islands as part of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands; which experience was captured in his book “Palm Tree Justice”.

Within the DPP’s Office of the ACT, he was appointed its first Senior Trial Advocate in 2009, the Office’s Assistant Director in 2014, Deputy Director in 2017. He was then appointed the ACT’s fifth DPP on 1 January 2019.

The book I mentioned is dedicated to Shane’s father who took his own life after suffering from severe psychiatric illness and a younger brother who died at 3 from encephalitis.

In the dedication of that book, he wrote:

“Growing up, I experienced first-hand that humans treat people who are weak, injured and socially different as most other pack mammals, by excluding them from the pack. Occasionally, the pack gives them the left-over carcass of charity or social welfare, but this only to ensure, deep down, that these people don’t get too close to the pack. When people like my family die, they don’t get parks or buildings named after them: they just cease to exist.

Our three lives have been as different as three lives could possibly be, yet we share an inescapable bond that endures through time and social circumstance. A bond that has instilled in me the unalienable belief that everybody matters.”

Please welcome Shane Drumgold to the lectern.

END OF SPEECH.