

Mr Attorney, distinguished gentlewomen and gentlemen, I commence by thanking Olman Walley for the Welcome to Country and I too acknowledge and pay my respects to the Noongar people, particularly those of the Whadjuk and to their elders past, present and emerging.

The land on which we are gathered has deep significance to the Noongar people. In the present built environment of Northbridge, it is difficult to imagine this land 200 years ago. The first white settlers noted the wetlands to the north of the city in the area now encompassed by Northbridge, North Perth, Highgate and Leederville. They were known as Perth Great Lakes and a memory of those lakes live on, both in the name of the street and Hyde Park. According to the Noongar people, the Wagyl, a huge spirit serpent, moved across the land creating trails and hills, and going underground before rising to form the lakes. These lakes were an abundant supply of fresh water and foods such as water birds, frogs, gilgies and turtles. Inevitably, the wetlands were drained to make way for the inner city development with which we are familiar. To our eternal shame between 1927 and 1945, aboriginal Australians were not permitted in the region now known as Northbridge without a 'native pass'.

Those of you who have passed by this building in recent times will have noticed a curious bell tower at the front. It had no connection whatever to the site. It happened that the late Robert Holmes à Court bought a large block of land in Cottesloe, formerly the home of Loreto College when that school merged to become John XXIII School. He razed the College to build his manorial home but was persuaded, after some community pressure, to promise to retain the bell tower. Among his many businesses at the time was John Holland Constructions Pty Ltd, the builders of this building. So Mr Holmes à Court satisfied everyone, or alternatively no-one, by having the bell tower rebuilt on the corner of William

and James Street where it served for many years as a ventilator. Thankfully, the new owners have had it removed.

Until the early 1970's, where we are standing was known as Perth. A competition gave us the name 'Northbridge'. With the sinking of the railway and the opening of Yagan Square, the Horseshoe Bridge, which inspired the name, has lost most of its influence. The opening of Yagan Square is part of the city's growth past the railway and the Commission is pleased to be part of it.

The building is owned by Warrington Properties and this floor is leased by the government for the Commission's purposes.

The Commission premises at 186 St Georges Terrace for 14 years were in the heart of the oil, gas and mining hub, with rents to match. It was a building developed by the ill-starred FAI Insurances Ltd.

By contrast, the rent here is a little over half what we were paying. An incentive to enter into the lease has enabled the Commission to complete a state of the art fit-out at no cost to government.

The benefits do not end there. Our former premises had windows at each end so that most of the building was not exposed to natural light. Each directorate was on a separate floor, discouraging easy access, communication and collaboration. By contrast, as you can see, this building with its central atrium and the perimeter glazing allows everyone access to sunlight and a view. Being on one floor provides an environment that facilitates innovation, and better interaction and collaboration between people. We have deliberately designed lots of meeting places ranging from formal conference rooms to small pods.

A major investigative tool is an examination, either private or public. You will have the opportunity to see and inspect our two examination rooms. One is a less formal room, more appropriate for the majority of examinations. The other

is more traditionally designed, similar to a court to emphasize the seriousness of proceedings on oath. Having two examination rooms available means we can, for the first time, consider concurrent examinations.

In keeping with the practice started 18 months ago, when the Commission does exercise its discretion to conduct a public examination, that examination will be live-streamed to anyone with access to a computer or mobile device. Partly for this reason, there is less space in the public gallery although immediately outside the public gallery is a large screen for an overflow. In my time as Commissioner, I don't seem to be able to pull the crowds the way I once did presiding over a sensational trial in the Supreme Court. Although, my online profile seems to have boomed with our social media presence and livestreaming service.

In keeping with modern practice, there are few enclosed offices and those have glass walls. The majority of staff are working in an open plan environment enhancing the level of transparency and openness within the Commission. Every desk has been ergonomically designed to allow a person to sit or stand at their will.

The Commission is a statutory secretive body. We have been trying to become more open and accessible within the constraints of the Act. When I started nearly three years ago, the Commission was siloed and clandestine. These new premises will allow us to be more open with each other. After all, every Commission employee (except I) is at least NV1 cleared and many are Top Secret cleared.

In addition, we now have access to a range of the latest technology, facilities and systems that will assist the Commission to work more effectively and efficiently.

The physical modifications and emphasis on creating a contemporary and bespoke operations centre within our office are evident. Our new office environment also brings a strong appetite to continue to transform our culture and the way we work with one another, and the public authorities.

The new workplace will challenge us to do things differently.

In the past week, I have already witnessed how the new office space and its purpose built layout has made improvements to the working behaviours, attitudes, and general wellbeing of staff.

Inevitably, a substantial endeavour such as this produces a long list of thanks for many people who have made a material contribution. Rather than read a list, the people who have contributed to the development of the building and our relocation can be found on the screens outside the café and many of you are here in the room today, and I would like thank you for your contributions to what is a most successful project.

While everyone in the Commission has been responsible for helping with the move, I would particularly like to thank Emma Milne, Corporate Services Director, Mike Owen, the office relocation Project Manager, Felix Ling and his IT team, and Steve Jones and his security team who have worked long hours since before Christmas to ensure that the move has been seamless.

My first act as Commissioner on 28 April 2015 was to finalise Mr Ray Warnes' selection as Chief Executive. a task considerably assisted by a reference from the Chief Justice, who as usual, put personal considerations aside to recommend the appointment of the outstanding Executive Director of Courts who worked closely with the Chief Justice.

In relation to this project, Mr Warnes has been indefatigable in bringing the project to fruition.

The Commission has a great responsibility laid on it by Parliament to investigate, expose and disrupt corruption in the WA public sector in all its forms. This new office, with its modern features and benefits, will better enable the Commission to perform these duties.