

**Statement in Reconciliation by
the Hon Marilyn Warren AC
Chief Justice of Victoria
upon the
Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony
Wednesday 20 May 2015
Courtyard
Supreme Court of Victoria**

Long, long before this area was cleared of its bush and the court building was built, long before the streets and laneways were planned and built, justice was given by the traditional owners according to their system.

Justice is not new to this place. The Supreme Court is over 160 years old and has been on this site for 130 years delivering justice. Traditional justice is thousands of years old. Justice is based on the law of the people, so, for the traditional owners of the land, this place is very familiar.

This day has been a long time coming, I regret that. There have been 10 Chief Justices before me and over 140 Supreme Court Justices. No real offer of welcome, acceptance, acknowledgment or friendship has been given.

To the traditional owners I say: I stand here today on behalf of all the judges, associate judges, judicial registrars and staff of the Supreme Court of Victoria. I welcome and acknowledge you and I offer you our friendship.

There is nowhere here I can pick up grains of sand and tip those grains into the hands of the elders. I ask instead that the elders press their hands against the sandstone when they come here and mark this place again as their place.

On behalf of all the judges I thank the elders and the Wurundjeri people for handing to us the custody of justice in this place.

We commit to deliver justice fairly, with no favourites and to treat all who come before our court with equality.