



Judicial Conference of Australia

**Media release by the President
of the Judicial Conference of Australia
15th November 2017**

Attack on Southport magistrate is unfair and ludicrous

A Queensland magistrate has been blamed for the current crimes of a violent offender because five years ago she allegedly handed down a soft sentence to that offender.

Justice Robert Beech-Jones, the President of the Judicial Conference of Australia, the judges' and magistrates' professional association, has condemned this attack in the *Courier-Mail* of November 15 as unfair and nonsensical.

“Commentary on the severity or leniency of a sentencing decision in 2012 is legitimate” he said. But the JCA condemns as ridiculous the identification of crimes committed many years subsequently as the magistrate’s fault.

Justice Beech-Jones observed that the avenue for appeal from the decision made in 2012 always existed but was not taken up by the prosecuting authorities.

The JCA President called on the media, and in particular the *Courier-Mail*, to be responsible in its reporting of court decisions and, in particular, to avoid making personal attacks on an individual magistrate who is not permitted to respond in her own defence.

The Judicial Conference of Australia is the professional association of judges and magistrates in Australia.

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The President of the JCA is not available for broadcast or television interviews on this matter.