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## Book reviews

Editor: Angelina Gomez

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### **SIR CHARLES LILLEY, PREMIER AND CHIEF JUSTICE OF QUEENSLAND**

*Sir Charles Lilley, Premier and Chief Justice of Queensland*, by J M Bennett, Federation Press, Sydney, 2014, 365 pages + xvii tables: ISBN 9781862879546. Hardcover \$64.95.

This is the 14th in the series of John Bennett's biographies of the Australian Chief Justices of the 19th century.

Sir Charles Lilley, the fifth child of a Newcastle (England) shoemaker, came to Australia as an articled clerk in 1854. He eventually found work with a firm of solicitors who sent him to their Moreton Bay office. In due course he was admitted as a solicitor in Queensland.

Lilley soon became involved in politics and obtained a seat in the first Queensland Parliament of 1860. He was opposed to the squatter interests and was allied to the working man. Initially, he assented to the proposition that the capital of Queensland should be further north than Brisbane, but after he was nominated for a Brisbane seat, he changed his view.

It is difficult to summarise the life of a very complex individual. In his Foreword, the Hon Paul de Jersey, then Chief Justice (now Governor of Queensland) wrote:

Sir Charles Lilley has proven a polarising figure, often subject to caricature and ridicule. As Dr Bennett observes, the record of Lilley's formidable achievements has been distorted by adversaries, particularly the mostly hostile press of the time, or overshadowed by some infamous errors of judgment. All of this has to date inhibited a balanced appraisal of his life. Dr Bennett's biography goes a long way towards redressing the imbalance.

Those words are, with respect, a good summary of the book and what it seeks to achieve. The book is, as one would expect, very readable and is of the same high quality as the other books in the series. It is a good book to take away on vacation.

*Acting Justice Peter W Young AO*