



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 30 June 2020

NEW CHAIR FOR LAW AND JUSTICE FOUNDATION

Attorney General Mark Speakman today announced that Sharon Cook, a highly respected lawyer and champion for women in the legal profession, will chair the NSW Law and Justice Foundation, effective from today for a three year term.

The Foundation is focused on improving the NSW justice system to provide more fairness to our most vulnerable citizens is to have new leadership for the first time in more than a decade.

“The Foundation is fortunate to have legal talent of Ms Cook’s stature to lead its work following the departure of the highly accomplished former Supreme Court Justice Paul Stein AM QC,” Mr Speakman said.

“Ms Cook has been prominent in the legal profession for more than 25 years, working for top tier private law firms before being appointed Chief Legal and Commercial Counsel at National Australia Bank in 2017. She has also been a leader in the legal profession in addressing mental illness and well-being among lawyers.”

Her legal career started at the Sydney and London offices of what is now King & Wood Mallesons.

In 1997 Ms Cook joined Henry Davis York becoming its first female Managing Partner, a position she held for 6 years until 2014. She then returned to King & Wood Mallesons as Managing Partner, Clients.

In 2012, Ms Cook was named as one of the Australian Financial Review’s inaugural 100 Women of Influence in the board and management category and the following year was awarded the Lasting Legacy award by Lawyers Weekly for having “acted as a trailblazer for women”. She is also a member of Chief Executive Women.

Mr Speakman paid tribute to outgoing Chair Paul Stein, who led the Foundation since 2005. Mr Stein was a distinguished barrister who took silk in 1981 before being appointed as a judge of the District Court in 1983, the Land and Environment Court in 1985 and the Supreme Court in 1997.

“Mr Stein has had an outstanding career. I thank him for his outstanding contributions to the Foundation and for playing a crucial role in improving access to justice for disadvantaged people in NSW.”