



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 19 May 2021

FOUR NEW MAGISTRATES JOIN THE LOCAL COURT

Four new magistrates will bring 80 years of legal experience to the Local Court of NSW.

Attorney General Mark Speakman welcomed the expertise of the new appointees, Michael Ong, Kasey Pearce, Gareth Christofi and Rebecca Hosking.

“The Local Court is the engine room of the NSW justice system, dealing with 96 per cent of all criminal prosecutions and more than 90 per cent of civil cases,” Mr Speakman said.

“Our new magistrates have an impressive breadth of experience across the legal system and will be a tremendous asset to the Local Court.

“In addition, the new appointments will bring the Local Court nearer to gender parity than ever before, with 49.6 per cent of magistrates being women. It is encouraging to see this figure edge closer in a profession that has traditionally been male-dominated.”

Following the swearing in of the new magistrates, there will be 70 female and 71 male magistrates in the Local Court.

The new magistrates will undergo training and spend at least a year in the Sydney metropolitan region sitting in the Local Court, Children's Court and Coroner's Court before commencing country service.

Mr Ong and Ms Pearce will be sworn in on 24 May and Mr Christofi and Ms Hosking on 15 June.

They will replace magistrates who have retired from the court.

Magistrates' Biographies

Gareth Christofi

Gareth Christofi has been elevated to the bench from his role as a Crown Prosecutor. Mr Christofi gained his law degree at Macquarie University in 1997 and was admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW in 1998. He worked for many years as a solicitor with the NSW Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He has also appeared in Local Courts throughout NSW and has provided advice to the Director of Public Prosecutions in relation to investigations conducted by the NSW Police, Police Integrity Commission and Independent Commission Against Corruption. Since 2014, Mr Christofi has appeared as a Crown Prosecutor in complex and serious criminal trials in the District and Supreme Courts.

Kasey Pearce

Kasey Pearce is an accredited specialist in criminal law and holds a Master of Laws (Criminal Practice) from the University of Wollongong. Since her admission as a legal practitioner in 2002, Ms Pearce has worked in both private practice and for Legal Aid NSW, predominantly in criminal law. She has appeared in the Children's Court, Local Court, District Court and Supreme Court. Prior to this, she worked in several policy positions for the NSW Government and as a private consultant in crime prevention policy. She established her own criminal law practice in 2016.

Michael Ong

Michael Ong has practiced for 18 years exclusively in the area of criminal law and has extensive experience in the Local, Children's and District Courts. He was a solicitor for the Western Aboriginal Legal Service throughout the far west of NSW and joined Legal Aid NSW in 2005. He joins the bench from the Sutherland Office of Legal Aid where he was Solicitor In Charge.

Rebecca Hosking

Rebecca Hosking (née Yates) gained her Arts/Law degrees at the Australian National University. She was admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW and the High Court of Australia in 2001. For 20 years, Ms Hosking has specialised in dispute resolution, defending public liability and professional indemnity claims in jurisdictions from the Local Court to the the Court of Appeal. She is a nationally accredited mediator and has worked pro bono for a variety of not-for-profit organisations including the Women's Legal Service, which provides legal help to victim survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Most recently, Ms Hosking has been a partner at a private Sydney law firm.