



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW MAGISTRATE TO JOIN CHILDREN'S COURT BENCH

Attorney General Mark Speakman today announced Legal Aid solicitor Debra Maher has been appointed as a magistrate to sit in the NSW Children's Court.

Mr Speakman says Ms Maher brings more than 20 years of legal experience to the bench including currently as Solicitor in Charge of the Children's Legal Service, for which she oversees a team of 18 lawyers working at seven suburban and regional Children's Courts.

"Ms Maher will join the Children's Court where she will preside over a range of matters from crime to applications for apprehended violence orders and cases involving the care and protection of children," Mr Speakman said.

During her career, she has worked across a range of jurisdictions including the Children's Court, Drug Court, Local Court, District Court and the Supreme Court.

"Ms Maher has worked as a senior criminal lawyer for major legal organisations such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and Legal Aid," Mr Speakman said.

As a prosecution and defence solicitor, she conducted trials and sentence proceedings for matters such as armed robbery, aggravated break and enter and committals and has specialist knowledge of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Ms Maher sat on the Board of Women's Legal Services between 1995 and 2009 where she gained significant insight into the issues facing women in the justice system, particularly vulnerable victims, as well as the challenges facing remote communities such as Walgett and Bourke.

She also has extensive knowledge and experience in civil matters and victim's compensation, as well as care and protection proceedings.

As a Legal Aid lawyer, she's played a major role in shaping changes to criminal laws, including by providing feedback on the introduction of the Early Guilty Pleas reform designed to deliver swifter and more certain justice by reducing court delays and alleviating stress for victims.

Ms Maher will be sworn in on Monday, 18 June 2018.

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