



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

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EMINENT FORMER JUDGE TO LEAD SENTENCING COUNCIL

The Honourable Peter McClellan AM QC, former Judge of Appeal and Chief Commissioner of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, has been appointed as the new Chairperson of the Sentencing Council.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said Mr McClellan is one of the most experienced and respected legal figures in Australia, whose career included 17 years on the bench of the Supreme Court before his retirement in 2018.

“Justice McClellan has made enormous contributions to the justice system including as Chief Judge of the Land and Environment Court and Chief Judge at Common Law of the Supreme Court,” Mr Speakman said.

“His work as Chair of the Royal Commission demonstrated compassion for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and was central to recommending law reforms aiming to ensure these tragedies are never repeated.”

His Honour was admitted to practice in 1974 and appointed Queen’s Counsel in 1985 before becoming a judge of the Supreme Court of NSW in 2001. In 2011 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to the judiciary.

As a barrister he was Counsel Assisting the Maralinga Royal Commission into British Nuclear Testing in Australia – an inquiry by the Australian Government in 1984-1985 to investigate the testing of nuclear weapons. In 1992-1993, he served as Acting and Assistant Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

His Honour will serve as Chairperson of the Sentencing Council of NSW from 1 June this year until 31 October 2022.

Justice McClellan replaces James Wood AO QC, who is now serving as chair of compliance review for the World Anti-Doping Agency.

“I thank Mr Wood for his service on both the Sentencing Council and as head of the State Parole Authority and wish him all the best in his new role,” Mr Speakman said.

The Sentencing Council has 16 members including judges, prosecutors, criminal defence lawyers, victims’ advocates and police. The Council is an independent body established in 2003 to advise the Attorney General on sentencing matters.

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