



THE HON. CHRISTIAN PORTER MP
Attorney-General

Media Release

Thursday, 27th September 2018

APPOINTMENTS OF CHIEF JUSTICE AND DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

I announce today the appointment of the new Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia

The new Chief Justice of the Family Court will be the Honourable William Alstergren, the current Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia and Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court. Chief Judge Alstergren will retain his commission as Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court.

Chief Judge Alstergren was appointed as Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia in October 2017. He has held a dual appointment as Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court since December 2017 and has been presiding over the Appeals Division of the Family Court since March 2018.

Chief Judge Alstergren completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Melbourne in 1989. He also has a Master of Laws. He practised as a barrister in Melbourne from 1991, and took silk in 2012. He was the Chairman of the Victorian Bar in 2013 and President of the Australian Bar Association in 2017.

Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia

With Chief Judge Alstergren's elevation, the Honourable Justice Robert McClelland will become the new Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court.

Justice McClelland was appointed as a judge of the Family Court in June 2015. Justice McClelland has a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Laws. He was admitted to the Supreme Court of New South Wales as a solicitor in 1982 and signed the bar roll in 2011. Justice McClelland was elected as the Federal Member for Barton in 1996 and served as Commonwealth Attorney-General from 2007 to 2011 and Vice President of the Executive Council from 2010 to 2012.

Both appointments will commence on 10 December 2018.

I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to retiring Chief Justice of the Family Court, the Honourable John Pascoe AC CVO, for his long and distinguished contribution to the law and Australian public life.

Chief Justice Pascoe brought invaluable knowledge and expertise to the family law system in Australia, particularly during his time as Chief Justice of the Family Court and Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court. He will leave an enduring legacy on Australia's family court system, as recognised by his appointment as a Companion of the Order of Australia in January 2016 for eminent service to the law and to the judiciary.

On behalf of the Government, I congratulate Chief Judge Alstergren and Justice McClelland on their appointments, and thank them for their willingness to serve the people of Australia.