



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Friday, 21 December 2018

### **FIVE NEW DISTRICT COURT JUDGES FOR NSW**

Five new judges have been appointed to the District Court of NSW, including two judicial officers from other jurisdictions, an internationally experienced criminal barrister, an accomplished prosecutor and a senior Sydney litigator, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

South Australian District Court judge Susanne Cole, Federal Circuit Court judge Justin Smith SC and barristers Graham Turnbull, Alister Abadee and Sharon Harris will be sworn in as District Court judges in NSW in February next year.

Judge Cole will serve as a Deputy President of NCAT and the head of its Administrative and Equal Opportunity and Occupational Divisions, while Judge Smith, Mr Turnbull, Mr Abadee and Ms Harris will sit on the bench of the District Court.

“It is a coup for NSW to secure the services of two highly-respected judges from other Australian courts and it further demonstrates the high esteem in which our justice system is held across the nation,” Mr Speakman said.

“The District Court of NSW will also benefit from the considerable expertise of Mr Turnbull who has worked extensively in criminal law both in Australia and overseas, Mr Abadee who has been a leader in civil litigation for many years and Ms Harris, a prosecutor with extensive experience, particularly in the difficult field of child sex abuse.”

Judge Cole will join NCAT on 28 February 2019. Judge Smith, Mr Abadee and Mr Turnbull will take their positions on the District Court bench on 11, 18 and 21 February 2019 respectively. The trio replaces Judge David Frearson, Judge Peter Berman and Judge Audrey Balla who are retiring and Judge Paul Lakatos who has been appointed as President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Judges Berman and Balla will commence as Acting Judges of the District Court on 29 January.

**MEDIA: Damien Smith | 0417 788 947**

**Biographical details are available separately.**