

## Media Release

# Capacity of District Court of NSW bolstered with two new appointments

**Thursday, 11 December 2025**

The capacity of the District Court on NSW will be bolstered with the appointment of two Deputy Chief Judges.

Judges Stephen Hanley SC and Christopher O'Brien AM will commence their new roles on December 15.

The establishment of the Office of the Deputy Chief Judge will assist with the administration Australia's largest trial court which hears serious criminal offences, appeals from lower courts and civil proceedings.

They will assist Chief Judge Sarah Huggett to manage sitting arrangements, monitor the jurisdiction's performance and provide professional support to more than 80 judges.

Judge Hanley was appointed to the District Court in 2013. He was previously appointed Senior Counsel in 2010, to the Bar 1986 and admitted as a solicitor in 1977.

His professional memberships have included the NSW Bar Association, Board of the Legal Aid Commission and Criminal Defence Lawyers Association.

Judge O'Brien was appointed to the Local Court in 2007 and as a Deputy Chief Magistrate in 2014.

In 2018, he was appointed to the District Court and the following year was made a member (AM) of the Order of Australia for significant service to the law and judiciary.

Judge O'Brien will serve as a Deputy Chief Judge for five years while Judge Hanley's term will conclude on his retirement in June 2027.

### **Attorney General Michael Daley said:**

"I congratulate Judges Hanley and O'Brien on their appointments.

"Both judges both have an extraordinary depth of legal knowledge, demonstrated ability to enhance the operational efficiency of the District Court and outstanding records of service to the profession.

"The addition of two Deputy Chief Judges will strengthen the capacity of the District Court to manage its growing workload."

MEDIA: Georgie Moore | Attorney General | 0439 419 465