



Brad Hazzard MP

Attorney General Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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JUSTICE PRICE - NEW CHIEF JUDGE OF DISTRICT COURT

Attorney General Brad Hazzard today announced the Honourable Justice Derek Michael Price AM has been appointed as the new Chief Judge of the District Court of NSW.

Justice Price replaces the Honourable Justice Reginald Blanch AM who was appointed in 1994 and is retiring on August 7.

Mr Hazzard said he was pleased to also announce that Justice Blanch was not retiring from public life and had been appointed as the new Chairperson of the Serious Offenders Review Council, taking up a three year appointment on 1 September 2014.

Mr Hazzard said Justice Price brings a wealth of experience to the role of Chief Judge of the District Court and is one of the few people in NSW to have been appointed to three courts.

“Justice Price has had a long and distinguished career, having worked in the justice system for more than four decades,” Mr Hazzard said.

“His Honour’s leadership, experience, sound judgment and commonsense are highly valued by the NSW Government and his fellow members of the judiciary.”

“His Honour began his judicial career as a Magistrate at the St James Local Court and, subsequently, the Downing Centre.

“In 1999, His Honour was appointed as an Acting Judge of the District Court of NSW before being made permanent in 2000.

“Justice Price became the Chief Magistrate of the Local Court of NSW in 2002 where he oversaw many significant changes to civil and criminal procedures.

“His leadership saw the Court being recognised in the annual Report on Government Services as one of the most efficient Local Court jurisdictions in Australia.

“Justice Price was appointed to his current role as a Judge of the Supreme Court of NSW in 2006.

“In June 2010, His Honour was made a member of the Order of Australia for service to the law and the judiciary, the development and delivery of justice initiatives for the

Indigenous community, children and young persons, and for his contributions to legal organisations.”

Justice Price remains a judge of the Supreme Court and will sit, from time to time, on the Court of Criminal Appeal.

Mr Hazzard thanked the Honourable Justice Reginald Oliver Blanch AM for his outstanding service to the District Court of NSW.

"Justice Blanch has served as the Chief Judge of the District Court of NSW for nearly 20 years and will be remembered as one of Australia's most effective heads of jurisdiction," Mr Hazzard said.

"Under His Honour's leadership the District Court has established a reputation as one of the leading intermediate jurisdictions in Australia regularly demonstrating its efficiency in the annual Report of Government Services.

"This performance has been acknowledged both within Australia and internationally with many judges visiting the court to learn of His Honour's approach to efficient case management.

"Justice Blanch has established strong international connections with Asian jurisdictions and has long-held connections with judges and courts in China, regularly leading judicial delegations to that country. His Honour also regularly sits as a judge on the Court of Appeal.

"In January 2004, Justice Blanch was made a member of the Order of Australia for service to the judiciary and to the administration of the civil and criminal justice systems in New South Wales.

"I thank His Honour for his enormous contribution to the community, justice system and legal fraternity.

"I wish him well in his retirement and know that he will continue to contribute to the justice system and community more broadly.

"I also express my personal thanks to His Honour for his generous advice and assistance in my transition to the role of Attorney General," Mr Hazzard said.

The Chief Judge is the principal judicial officer of the NSW District Court and is appointed by the Governor of NSW in line with the *District Court Act 1973*.

There are more than 60 judges of the District Court who preside over serious criminal and civil matters throughout the state.