Attorney General Mark Speakman today announced the appointment of Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor Gina O'Rourke SC as a judge of the District Court of NSW.

“Ms O'Rourke is an outstanding barrister who has prosecuted more than 200 jury trials in the Supreme and District Courts of NSW, including murder, sexual assault, large-scale drug manufacturing and supply, and fraud matters,” Mr Speakman said.

In 2014, she conducted the prosecution of former *Hey Dad!* star Robert Hughes, who was jailed for a minimum of six years for sexual offences against children.

Ms O'Rourke has been at the forefront of court initiatives to reduce trauma for victims of child sexual abuse, including the implementation of a pilot program which enables child victims to pre-record evidence and be supported by an intermediary.

She has also helped formulate guidelines on medical and forensic photo documentation of cases involving child abuse and been consulted by the Royal Commission on improving processes for complainants giving evidence.

In a career spanning almost a quarter of a century, Ms O'Rourke has worked for Legal Aid Tasmania, and in the Northern Territory, Commonwealth and NSW Offices of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP).

Ms O’Rourke became a Crown Prosecutor for the NSW ODPP in 2002. In 2015, she was appointed a Senior Counsel and for almost two years she has been a Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor. Over the past six months, Ms O’Rourke has been acting as a Deputy Director of the ODPP.

Ms O’Rourke will replace Judge Paul Conlon who retires on 28 January 2018.

“Like Ms O’Rourke, Judge Conlon came to the bench after many years as a highly effective Crown Prosecutor,” Mr Speakman said.

“Judge Conlon won’t be hanging up his robes just yet and I look forward to him returning to the District Court on a part-time basis early next year.”

Judge Conlon's appointment as an acting judge will take effect on 29 January 2018 and Ms O’Rourke will be sworn in as a District Court judge the following day.