



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **SEVEN NEW DISTRICT COURT JUDGES APPOINTED**

Seven of the state's top barristers, including five Senior Counsel, will become judges of the NSW District Court in February next year as part of the NSW Government's \$150 million package to deliver swifter justice and reduce pressure on the court.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the new additions to the bench are Ian Bourke SC, Sean Grant, Jonathon Priestley SC, Kara Shead SC, Robert Weber SC, Richard Weinstein SC and Nanette Williams.

"Between them, the new judges have amassed more than two centuries of legal experience, the majority spent at the Bar," Mr Speakman said.

"For the first time, the District Court will start the law year with a record 75 permanent judges, paving the way for increased sittings across the state and ensuring the court is in a strong position to tackle the criminal case workload in 2019."

The government's \$150 million package for the District Court will be delivered over four years and includes \$63 million for new judges, sheriff's officers, court staff, jury costs and security upgrades at courthouses.

It also provides \$45 million for additional officers at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, including extra Crown Prosecutors and Witness Assistance Service officers. In addition, there is \$34.5 million for new senior lawyers at Legal Aid NSW, more grants for private practitioners representing legally-aided clients and improvements for regional offices.

Mr Speakman said each of the new judges had impressive careers at the Bar in a range of criminal and civil jurisdictions.

Mr Bourke and Mr Priestley will be sworn in on 4 February, Mr Weber and Ms Shead on 7 February, Mr Weinstein on 11 February, and Ms Williams and Mr Grant on 14 February.

**Ian Bourke SC** has been a lawyer for more than three decades including seven years with the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, 22 years at the Bar and four years as Senior Counsel. He has appeared in complex and high profile criminal trials, including proceedings concerning two teens accused of planning a terror attack. Mr Bourke has acted as Counsel Assisting in 20 coronial inquests and inquiries over the past five years including those concerning the Springwood and Mt Victoria bushfires.

**Sean Grant** joined the Bar three decades ago and has worked across all court jurisdictions including Supreme, District, Coroner's and Local Courts. He has represented clients in murder trials, serious drug offences, complex fraud and financial crimes, as well as criminal appeals in NSW, Victoria and other states.

**Jonathon Priestley SC** was first admitted as a legal practitioner in the Northern Territory 30 years ago, practiced as a solicitor in NSW until 1995 including a period in England, came to the Bar in 1995 and was appointed Senior Counsel in 2014. His areas of practice include home building matters, equity, family law, Succession Act disputes, disciplinary matters and property litigation.

**Kara Shead SC** has been with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for two decades and is currently a Deputy DPP. She has prosecuted a range of criminal trials, including that of ice addict Sean Lee King who murdered his girlfriend Jazmin-Jean Ajbschitz. As Deputy Senior Public Defender, she also acted for Glen McNamara in the Jamie Gao murder trial.

**Robert Weber SC** has spent the majority of his 35 year legal career as a barrister including 17 years as a leading silk. His areas of practice included arbitration, commercial, insolvency and bankruptcy, professional liability, sports and competition law. He was an arbitrator for the Court of Arbitration for Sport and appeared in numerous coronial proceedings including the inquest into deaths which occurred during the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race.

**Richard Weinstein SC** began his career at the Bar 25 years ago. His main areas of practice are alternative dispute resolution, disciplinary proceedings, coronial inquests, medical and professional negligence, personal injury, wills and probate. He has been an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of NSW since 2013 where he lectures in the law of evidence.

**Nanette Williams** joined the DPP 32 years ago and was a Deputy Senior Crown Prosecutor. She won the DPP Award for Excellence in 2016 and was named as one of the Top 50 Public Sector Women in NSW in 2018. She has appeared in hundreds of criminal trials and was lead counsel in the first prosecution of female genital mutilation offences in NSW. She is also a Commander in the Royal Australian Navy Reserve.