

# Criminal Lawyers Appointed as Local Court Magistrates

In October 2018, NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman announced a [four year, \\$148 million funding boost designed to ease the pressure of the state's District Courts](#) by facilitating the appointment of seven new judges, more senior lawyers at Legal Aid NSW and upgrades to regional courts to enable them to accommodate for jury trials.

## Five new Magistrates for NSW Local Courts

This week, [Mr Speakman announced the appointment](#) of five new Local Court Magistrates as part of a \$4.1 million package aimed at dealing with an influx in sexual and indecent assault cases resulting from the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The appointees have a combined experience exceeding a century. They comprise a criminal defence barrister, three solicitors with significant experience in criminal law and a former coroner.

“The Local Court deals with more cases than any other court in Australia and increasing its ranks on the bench will help ensure it continues to lead the nation in the delivery of timely justice,” Mr Speakman stated.

## The appointees

Miranda Moody and Greg Elks will be the first to join the bench on 21 January, before Ian Rodgers Fiona McCarron in late February, and Stephen Olischlager in late March 2019.

## Miranda Moody

Ms Moody was an associate to a number of judges in the District Court of NSW for several years before becoming a

barrister in 2006.

She has represented clients in cases ranging from drink driving, common assault and drug possession in the Local Court up to jury trials for serious offences in the District Court.

She has also appeared for clients before the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and is a member of the Legal Aid Commission's General Criminal Law Panel.

### **Greg Elks**

Mr Elks commenced his involvement in the criminal justice system as a police officer in 1979, before attaining the rank of sergeant and working as a police prosecutor from 1988.

He was admitted as a lawyer in New South Wales in 1991 and was employed for many years as a solicitor with Legal Aid NSW and then the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, before opening a law firm in Cronulla.

He became an Accredited Specialist in Criminal Law in 1999 and has serviced the community with integrity and commitment throughout his career.

### **Ian Rodgers**

Mr Rodgers was admitted as a NSW lawyer in 1998 and has been employed as an Associate to a District Court Judge, a solicitor with the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) and a policy officer with the NSW Department of Justice.

For the past three years, Mr Rodgers has been in charge of Newcastle's busy Legal Aid office, managing several lawyers and administrative staff.

### **Fiona McCarron**

Ms McCarron was employed as a Judge's Associate in 2000 before being admitted as a lawyer in NSW in 2002 and joining the

Legal Aid Commission.

She was involved in the case of Sydney woman Christine Lee, who was [charged with fraud](#) after going on a spending spree when Westpac mistakenly deposited \$4.6 million into her bank account.

Ms Lee spent large sums of money on penthouse apartments, designer shoes and handbags, and siphoned about \$33,000 a week over a period of nine months into her other accounts.

The [charges against Ms Lee were ultimately dropped](#) when the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions decided the essential element of 'deception' could not be proved.

Ms McCarron has worked as the solicitor in charge and managing solicitor of Legal Aid's Inner City Local Courts office.

### **Stephen Olischlager**

Mr Olischlager has had a lengthy and varied career in the criminal justice system – working as a registrar, a coroner, a developer of policy and a drafter of legislation including the Civil Procedure Act 2005, Coroners Act 2009 and Uniform Civil Procedure Rules.

Since 2009, he has been employed as an Assessor in the Small Claims Division of the NSW Local Court.

His involvement in the legal system spans 23 years.

It is hoped the newest appointments will help ease the pressure on some of the state's busiest courts.