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Attorney General

Bronnie Taylor
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MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 28 October 2019

RECORD NUMBER OF WOMEN MAGISTRATES IN NSW

The number of female magistrates in NSW has hit a record 47 per cent – up seven per cent from a decade ago.

Attorney General Mark Speakman and Minister for Women Bronnie Taylor welcomed today's swearing in of new magistrates Allison Hawkins and Jillian Kiely. Their appointments bring the number of women on the bench of the Local, Children's and Coroner's Courts to 65 out of 139 magistrates across the state.

"While judicial officers are appointed solely on merit, I'm delighted to see a record number of talented senior female barristers and solicitors being elevated to the bench," Mr Speakman said.

"Not only are we seeing an increase in women vying for top jobs, more than half of the state's law graduates are female, which is helping to drive a huge shift in cultural change across the broader legal profession."

Mr Speakman said the Government would also continue to eliminate barriers to talented women joining the senior ranks of the legal profession.

"The NSW Government has implemented equitable briefing practices of barristers and promotes flexible working arrangements and other measures to help advance careers of women and reduce their attrition rates," Mr Speakman said.

Mrs Taylor said that when Chief Magistrate Judge Graeme Henson was appointed to his role in 2006 only 32 per cent of magistrates were female.

"I applaud Judge Henson for being a champion of equality in law and encouraging more women to apply for judicial roles to reflect the growing numbers entering the legal ranks," Mrs Taylor said.

Women also hold senior roles within the Local Court and Coroners Court including Deputy Chief Magistrate Jane Mottley and State Coroner Magistrate Teresa O'Sullivan.

The appointment of magistrates involves an extensive and competitive merit-based recruitment process that considers a wide range of factors including legal experience.