



Hon. Robert McClelland MP
Attorney-General

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 8 December 2011

APPOINTMENTS TO THE FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA AND THE FEDERAL MAGISTRATES COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, today announced appointments to the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court of Australia.

“It is with great pleasure that I announce the appointment of four judicial officers today.

“Ms Kirsty Macmillan SC and Ms Anne Rees SC have been appointed as judges of the Family Court and Mr Ronald Curtain and Mr Matthew Myers have been appointed as Federal Magistrates.

“All candidates were selected from the advisory panel reports that were prepared in response to public notices calling for expressions of interest and nominations.”

The advisory panel for the Family Court appointments, comprising Chief Justice Diana Bryant, the Hon Ian Callinan AC, the Hon Richard Chisholm AM and a senior official of the Attorney-General’s Department, assessed a total of 60 candidates for these roles.

Ms Macmillan has been appointed to the Melbourne registry and Ms Rees to the Sydney registry; both take up their appointments later this month.

The advisory panel for Federal Magistrates Court appointments, comprising Chief Federal Magistrate John Pascoe AO CVO, the Hon Susan Morgan and a senior official of the Department, assessed a total of 89 candidates.

“The appointments to the Federal Magistrates Court will enable the Court to rebalance its family law workload, after a number of experienced Magistrates were assigned more migration work at the beginning of the year”, Mr McClelland said.

Mr Curtain has been appointed to the Melbourne registry and Mr Myers to the Sydney Registry. Mr Curtain and Mr Myers will take up their appointments in January 2012.

“I congratulate Ms Macmillan, Ms Rees, Mr Curtain and Mr Myers on their appointment and look forward to the contribution they will make to the law in their new capacity as judges and magistrates”, Mr McClelland said.

“I also want to acknowledge Mr Myers’ achievement in becoming the first Indigenous lawyer to be appointed to a federal court.”

Short professional biographies of the appointees are attached.

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BIOGRAPHIES

Kirsty Macmillan SC

Ms Macmillan holds a Bachelor of Laws from Monash University and was admitted as a solicitor and barrister of the Supreme Court of Victoria in 1979.

In 1980, Ms Macmillan worked as a research assistant at Monash University reviewing Medibank legislation and the amendments to that legislation and as a part-time solicitor with Springvale Legal Service. She joined Snyder and Fulford Solicitors in 1981 and spent four years with that firm working in areas of family law.

In 1985, Ms Macmillan signed the bar roll and commenced practice as a barrister of the Victorian Bar. In 2009, Ms Macmillan was appointed Senior Counsel. Her practice has focused on all aspects of family law including complex children's matters and commercial property matters.

Ms Macmillan is a member of the Family Law Bar Association of the Victorian Bar, the Women Barristers Association, the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia and a member of the organising committee of the combined Law Institute/Victorian Bar biannual residential conferences. She has been a member of the Victorian Federation of Legal Centres, Chair and member of the Legal Aid Appeal Committee, Victorian Legal Aid Commission and member of the organising committee of the first National Conference of Community Legal Centres.

Anne Rees SC

Ms Rees holds a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sydney and was admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1978.

From 1976 to 1978, Ms Rees worked as an articled law clerk at John S Gibson in Penrith. After her admission, Ms Rees joined the general practice, Grossmans, as a solicitor, and then in 1979 formed the partnership of McDonald Rees.

In 1981, she joined Legal Aid as a legal officer. Ms Rees worked with Legal Aid until 1987, attaining Senior Legal Officer standing. Ms Rees commenced private family law practice in 1987, becoming a partner of Laurence and Laurence Solicitors.

In 1993, Ms Rees was admitted as a Barrister of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Her practice included first instance and appellate work in relation to both parenting and property matters. Ms Rees was appointed Senior Counsel in 2009.

Ms Rees has been a teacher at the Australian Advocacy Institute since 2006. She is the New South Wales Bar representative on the Executive of the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia. In that role she is the Chair of the committee on the law relating to children and responsible for the oversight of the national training course for Independent



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Children's Lawyers. Ms Rees is also a member of a joint working party of the Law Council of Australia and Family Law Council drafting the 'Best Practice Guide for Lawyers doing Family Law Work'. She is a former member and Chair of the Family Law Review Tribunal of the New South Wales Legal Aid Commission and member of the Family Law Committee of the Law Society of New South Wales. From 2002 to 2005, Ms Rees was a member of the committee of the Family Law Council reporting to the Attorney-General on the representation of children.

Ronald Curtain

Mr Ronald Curtain is 60 years of age and is qualified for appointment. He holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Jurisprudence from Monash University and was first admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Victoria and the High Court of Australia in 1977.

In 1976, Mr Curtain undertook articles of clerkship and later worked as a solicitor with Cornwall, Stodart and Co. From 1978 to 1980 he was a legal officer at the Geelong office and later senior legal officer at the Melbourne headquarters of the Australian Legal Aid Office.

During this time, he also acted as duty solicitor at the Geelong Magistrates Court. He established and solely operated the office of Duty Solicitor at the Melbourne Registry of the Family Court of Australia in 1980 and continued in this role until 1984 when he was admitted to the Victorian Bar. Mr Curtain's practice at the Bar extends over 27 years. For the past 20 of these years he has specialised in Family Law.

Mr Curtain is a member of the Law Council of Australia, the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia and the Family Law Bar Association of Victoria and was its representative on the Legal Professional Committee of the Dandenong Registry of the Family Court from 1995 to 1999. He also regularly undertakes circuit work and has appeared each year since 1998 in the Ballarat circuit of the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court. He was a volunteer at Springvale Legal Services in its Domestic Violence Project, and has volunteered at Fitzroy Legal Service since 2001. Mr Curtain will be appointed to the Melbourne registry.

Matthew Myers

Mr Matthew Myers is 40 years of age and is qualified for appointment. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of New South Wales, a Master of Applied Law (Family Law) from the College of Law and a Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution from Bond University. Mr Myers was admitted as a solicitor to the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1997.

From 1997 to 1999, Mr Myers worked as a solicitor at Strain Kernan Cameron Solicitors in Terrigal, undertaking Legal Aid and private family law work in parenting and property



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matters. In 1999 he commenced the partnership of Cameron & Myers in Erina, continuing with Legal Aid and private family law work in parenting and property matters.

Mr Myers has been a partner at Central Coast Family Law since 2009. He regularly appears in family law matters in the Family and Federal Magistrates Courts.

Mr Myers is a member of New South Wales Legal Aid's Family Law Panel and Independent Children's Lawyer Panel, the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia and Hunter Valley Family Law Practitioners Association. He is an accredited Family Law Specialist in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland and as an accredited Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner he currently undertakes part time work with CentaCare. He is actively involved at a community level and in pro bono work including as a legal advisor to clients of the Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre on the Central Coast. Mr Myers is a former member of the Gosford and Wyong Community Aid Panels and solicitor member of The Honoured Friends of the Salvation Army. He is a member of the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and National Congress of Australia's First People. Mr Myers is a notary public of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and a nationally accredited mediator. He will be appointed to the Sydney registry.