

# Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP  
Attorney-General



Tuesday, 15 December 2020

## NEW PRESIDENT OF CHILDREN'S COURT TO COMMENCE NEXT YEAR

The Andrews Labor Government has today announced the appointment of Magistrate Jack Vandersteen as the next President of the Children's Court and as a Judge of the County Court.

The Children's Court plays a vital role in ensuring access to justice for young Victorians – catering to the specialised needs of children and young people in both the criminal and family jurisdictions.

With a distinguished legal career spanning more than 25 years, Mr Vandersteen brings to this important position a wealth of experience and knowledge across a range of justice issues.

Mr Vandersteen served as a Magistrate for the past 11 years, during which time he fast-tracked family violence matters and overhauled listing practices as Regional Co-ordinating Magistrate for the Dandenong Region.

These moves led to a significant reduction in delays and pending cases in both the Magistrates' and Children's Court – reducing recidivism by offenders and improving timely access to justice for the community.

This followed 10 years as a solicitor and manager at the Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP) in a variety of areas, including the Advocacy Unit, Drug Section and General Prosecutions.

While at the OPP, Mr Vandersteen established and managed the Specialist Sexual Offence Unit and appeared regularly in the Magistrates' and County Courts.

Mr Vandersteen's varied experience also includes several years lecturing in subjects such as state and federal criminal law at the Australian Institute of Public Safety.

His unwavering commitment to helping those in need can be traced back to his earliest practicing years at Birch, Ross & Barlow – where he represented clients in both private matters and as a Victorian Legal Aid duty solicitor in the Family, County and Supreme Courts.

Mr Vandersteen holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws from Monash University and was admitted to practice in 1994.

His appointment will commence on 1 January 2021, following the retirement of current President Amanda Chambers.

### Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

*"Mr Vandersteen has contributed greatly to helping young and vulnerable Victorians access the support they deserve and I look forward to this continuing in his important role as President of the Children's Court."*

*"With a career characterised by a strong sense of justice and commitment to public service, Mr Vandersteen will be an asset to the Children's and County Courts."*

*"I would like to extend my gratitude to Judge Chambers for her excellent stewardship of the Children's Court over the past five years and acknowledge the positive impact of her leadership on our youngest Victorians."*