

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Attorney-General
Minister for Resources



Wednesday, 23 December 2020

NEW CORONERS TO BOLSTER PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Victorian Government has today appointed two new Coroners – who together, bring extensive public health and workplace safety expertise to the Court.

Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes congratulated Katherine Lorenz and Kate Despot on their appointments to the Coroners Court where they will play a critical role as Victoria recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

Ms Lorenz was admitted to practise law in 2003 and has specialised in commercial and public health law, as part of her executive management roles with Monash Health and the Royal Children’s Hospital.

She has developed an invaluable understanding of how the health system operates, the needs of patients and its profound impact on the community.

Prior to her appointment, Ms Lorenz held the position of Chief Executive Officer at the Victorian Bar since 2018.

During this time, she led the organisation through the COVID-19 pandemic – where she introduced a range of initiatives to ensure the Victorian Bar continued to operate safely and effectively, to deliver its important services.

Ms Lorenz holds a Bachelor of Laws with First Class Honours and a Bachelor of Arts from Flinders University. She has completed Executive Education courses at Harvard and Stanford University, and the Australian Institute of Company Directors’ Course.

Kate Despot was admitted to practice in 2003 and most recently held the position as Executive Director of Legal and Governance and General Counsel at WorkSafe Victoria.

Ms Despot’s leadership has supported significant legislative reforms and governance changes, and she has in-depth experience in the area of occupational health and safety law.

She previously held a senior leadership role with the Victorian Building Authority and has worked with the Office of Public Prosecutions.

Ms Despot holds a Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts (Criminology) and has completed the Australia and New Zealand School of Government Deputies Leadership Program.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

“Our new Coroners are both leaders and experts in their field – they will be a huge asset for the Coroner’s Court in promoting public health and safety on the other side of this pandemic.”

“I congratulate Katherine Lorenz and Kate Despot on their appointment and wish them all the best in their new roles.”