

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



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SEVEN NEW MAGISTRATES TO SUPPORT VICTORIA'S COURTS

The Victorian Government has welcomed the appointment of seven new magistrates, whose broad experience and diverse backgrounds will deliver important expertise to the Magistrates' and Children's Courts.

Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes today congratulated Majella Foster-Jones, Michael Gurvich, Jillian Prior, Timothy Schocker, Andrew Waters, Siobhan Whittle and Louise Wildberger on their appointments.

Majella Foster-Jones' has spent three years as a judicial registrar of the Children's Court. She is accredited by the Law Institute of Victoria in Children's Law and has held several roles at Victoria Legal Aid. Ms Foster-Jones previously served as a director of the board of the Law Institute of Victoria.

Michael Gurvich has been a judicial registrar at the Magistrates' Court for the past three years. Prior to this, Mr Gurvich was a barrister for more than two decades, practising both civil and criminal law and regularly appearing in the Magistrates', County and Supreme Courts.

Jillian Prior has been the Principal Legal Officer and Co-Founder of the Law and Advocacy Centre for Women since 2016. Ms Prior has had an array of experience as a Principal Legal Officer, including at the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (Djirra) and the Fitzroy Legal Service.

Timothy Schocker has been a Partner and Principal Lawyer at Stary Norton Halphen since 2017. Mr Schocker is accredited by the Law Institute of Victoria as a specialist in criminal law and is the Co-chair of the Executive Committee of the Criminal Law Section of the Law Institute of Victoria.

Andrew Waters has served as a Senior Public Defender at Victoria Legal Aid since 2021. Before this, Mr Waters was a barrister for 20 years where he practised predominantly in crime, appearing regularly in the Magistrates' and Children's Courts.

Siobhan Whittle joins the Children's Court from the Law and Advocacy Centre for Women, where she has been the managing lawyer since 2021. Her previous experience includes a wide range of roles at the Commission for Children and Young People and at Victoria Legal Aid.

Louise Wildberger has served as Deputy Managing Lawyer at Victoria Legal Aid where she worked at the Dandenong and Moorabbin offices for 20 years. Her focus has been in adult and children's criminal law and family violence intervention order proceedings and applications, regularly appearing in the Magistrates' and County Courts.

Mr Gurvich, Mr Schocker, Mr Waters, Ms Prior and Ms Wildberger have been appointed to the Magistrates' Court, with Ms Foster-Jones and Ms Whittle joining the Children's Court. All appointees will start their roles this month.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

"I welcome our seven newest Magistrates, each highly skilled and experienced legal professionals, to Victoria's judiciary."

"The Magistrates' and Children's Courts play vital roles in the Victorian justice system. I thank these appointees for dedicating their legal expertise to serving the community."

Media contact: Casey Lodge 0410 964 928 | casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au