



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW JUDGE APPOINTED TO LAND AND ENVIRONMENT COURT

NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman today announced the appointment of barrister Dr Sarah Pritchard SC as a judge of the Land and Environment Court.

Mr Speakman said Dr Pritchard has forged an outstanding 36-year career in the legal profession.

“Her extensive legal experience spans many areas of practice, including environment, planning and property law, constitutional law and administrative and public law,” Mr Speakman said.

“She has appeared in the High Court of Australia, the Federal Court of Australia, the Supreme Court of NSW (including the Court of Appeal), the Land and Environment Court, the Local Court of NSW and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. She also appears regularly in inquests, royal commissions and inquiries.

“I congratulate Dr Pritchard and wish her well in her new role.

“Dr Pritchard’s appointment will be a much welcomed addition to the Land and Environment Court, the first specialist environmental superior court in the world. The Land and Environment Court’s judges play a critical part in upholding the rule of law in a wide range of environmental and planning disputes.

“The NSW Government continues to commit significant resources to expand the pool of Acting Commissioners and to reduce the time it takes to have a matter resolved in the Land and Environment Court.

“In the most recent *Report on Government Services* data, the Land and Environment Court achieved an over 100% clearance rate for the second year in a row, meaning the Court finalised more matters than it registered.

“This is the first time this has been achieved in consecutive years since 2009-10. In this year’s Budget, the NSW Government committed \$1.2 million to continue an additional two Land and Environment Court Commissioners.”

Mr Speakman said Dr Pritchard will be sworn into her new position in a ceremony on 15 November 2022.

Biography

Dr Pritchard is currently Environmental Counsel to the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the EPA Board. She was admitted to the Bar in 1999 and appointed Senior Counsel in 2012. Prior to coming to the Bar, Dr Pritchard was an Australian Research Council post-doctoral fellow and senior lecturer in the Faculty of Law at UNSW. She is a fellow of the Australian Academy of Law, a former Adjunct Professor at UNSW, former judicial member of the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal and a former director of the Australian Human Rights Centre at UNSW. She serves on numerous Law Council and NSW Bar Association committees and working parties including as Chairperson of the Law Council of Australia's Human Rights Committee. Dr Pritchard was a former associate to The Hon. Michael McHugh AC KC, a former justice of the High Court of Australia. She was a director of the Diplomacy Training Program at UNSW between 1992 and 2013.

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