

MEDIA RELEASE

6 March 2026

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026 CELEBRATION OF JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

In celebration of International Women's Day 2026, Australian Women Lawyers (AWL) congratulates the women lawyers appointed to judicial office over the past year. Their appointments strengthen a judiciary that better reflects the community it serves and mark important progress toward gender equality in senior leadership in the legal profession.

This year the UN Women Australia theme, "Balance the Scales", calls for dismantling the entrenched barriers that continue to prevent many women and girls from accessing fair, safe, and inclusive justice. These barriers are mirrored within the legal profession. Although women now make up the majority of lawyers in Australia, they remain significantly under-represented in senior roles, including partnership and senior counsel.

AWL President Renée Bianchi reflects:

"The appointment of women to judicial office is always worth celebrating. While the number of women appointed this year is lower than in previous years, each appointment represents a critical step towards a judiciary that reflects the diversity of the community it serves."

"These achievements reflect not only individual excellence but the collective progress of a profession that is slowly evolving. As we mark International Women's Day, 'Balance the Scales' reminds us that although barriers remain, the growing presence of women in our courts shows that the profession is changing for the better and becoming stronger, fairer and more representative as a result."

AWL celebrates the achievements of newly appointed women judges and magistrates, and calls on the legal profession to continue strengthening pathways into leadership, championing equitable briefing, and working collectively to balance the scales so that the profession and the judiciary truly reflect the diversity of Australia.

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About Australian Women Lawyers

Australian Women Lawyers (AWL) is a justice and equity champion advancing women within the legal profession and beyond. Established in 1997, AWL strives to ensure that Australia's legal system protects and upholds women's rights, advocates for the legal profession to recognise and support the equality and advancement of women and provides a professional and social network for women in law.

AWL is the peak body representing women lawyers in Australia with constituent bodies in every State and Territory.

Constituent Bodies:

Women Lawyers Association Australian Capital Territory (WLA ACT)
Women Lawyers Association of New South Wales (WLA NSW) Northern Territory Women Lawyers Association (NTWLA)
Women Lawyers Association Queensland (WLAQ)
Women Lawyers Association of South Australia (WLASA)
Tasmanian Women Lawyers (TWL)
Victorian Women Lawyers (VWL)
Women Barristers' Association – Victoria (WBA)
Women Lawyers Western Australia (WLWA)



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JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Since the last International Women's Day, the following women have been appointed:

Federal

The Hon. Justice Di Simpson	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 1, Sydney
The Hon. Justice Anna Parker	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 1, Adelaide
The Hon. Justice Joanne Stewart	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 1, Adelaide
Her Honour Judge Celia Conlan	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Melbourne
Her Honour Judge Sharney Jenkinson	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Melbourne
Her Honour Judge Amelia Edwards	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Melbourne
Her Honour Judge Philippa Mitchell	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Melbourne
Her Honour Judge Kara Best	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Brisbane
Her Honour Judge Jane Marquard	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Sydney
Her Honour Judge Amy McGowan	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Paramatta
Her Honour Judge Frances Neilson	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Paramatta
Her Honour Judge Kathryn Heuer	Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia, Div 2, Adelaide

Australian Capital Territory

The Hon Acting Justice Patricia Kelly	Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory
Her Honour Magistrate Heidi Robinson	ACT Magistrates Court

New South Wales

The Hon. Justice Natalie Adams	Supreme Court of New South Wales, Chief Judge at Common Law & Judge of Appeal
The Hon. Justice Hayley Bennett	Supreme Court of New South Wales
The Hon. Justice Helen Roberts	Supreme Court of New South Wales
Her Honour Judge Elizabeth Ryan	District Court of New South Wales
Her Honour Magistrate Tania Johnson	Local Court of New South Wales
Her Honour Magistrate Marguerite Vassall	Local Court of New South Wales
Her Honour Magistrate Ann Lambino	Local Court of New South Wales
Commissioner Alison McRobert	Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales
The Hon. Justice Larissa Andelman	Supreme Court and National Court of Papua New Guinea

Northern Territory

Her Honour Judge Sarah McNamara	Local Court of the Northern Territory, Deputy Chief Judge
Her Honour Acting Judge Sally Ozolins	Local Court of the Northern Territory

Queensland

Her Honour Judge Dearne Firth	District Court of Queensland
Her Honour Judge Sarah Farnden	District Court of Queensland
Her Honour Judge Dominique Grigg	District Court of Queensland
Her Honour Magistrate Deborah Mitchell	Magistrates Court of Queensland
Her Honour Magistrate Jessica Keir	Magistrates Court of Queensland
Her Honour Magistrate Rhianna Lee	Magistrates Court of Queensland



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South Australia

The Hon. Chief Justice Laura Stein
The Hon. Justice Katrina Bochner
Her Honour Judge Lisa Dunlop
Her Honour Magistrate Sally Giles
Deputy Coroner Emma Roper
Deputy President Judge Jodie Carrel

Supreme Court of South Australia
Supreme Court of South Australia
District Court of South Australia
Magistrates Court of South Australia
Coroners Court of South Australia
South Australian Employment Tribunal

Tasmania

Magistrate Madeleine Wilson

Magistrates Court of Tasmania

Victoria

The Hon. Justice Melinda Richards
The Hon. Justice Lisa Hannon
The Hon. Justice Diana Inara Piekusis KC
Her Honour Chief Judge Amanda Chambers
Her Honour Judge Melissa Daly
Her Honour Judge Susan Wakeling
Her Honour Magistrate Emily Allan
Her Honour Magistrate Zoe Broughton
Her Honour Magistrate Kartya Gracer
Her Honour Magistrate Samantha Seoud
Her Honour Magistrate Natalie Burnett
Her Honour Magistrate Julia Lever-Davidson
Her Honour Magistrate Isabelle Harrison
Her Honour Magistrate Teresa Porritt
Her Honour Magistrate Melanie Younis
Her Honour Judge Liberty Sanger OAM
Her Honour Judge Therese McCarthy

Supreme Court of Victoria, Court of Appeal
Supreme Court of Victoria
Supreme Court of Victoria
County Court of Victoria
County Court of Victoria; VCAT Vice-President
County Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
Children's Court of Victoria
Children's Court of Victoria
Children's Court of Victoria
Coroners Court of Victoria
Coroners Court of Victoria

Western Australia

The Hon. Justice Fiona Seaward
The Hon. Justice Troy Sweeney
Her Honour Judge Tania Jeyamohan

Supreme Court of Western Australia, Court of Appeal
Supreme Court of Western Australia, Court of Appeal
District Court of Western Australia