

Tuesday, 10 October 2017

## Law Council welcomes appointment of Chief Judge Pascoe to head Family Court

The Law Council of Australia today welcomed the appointment of Chief Judge John Pascoe AC CVO as the new Chief Justice of the Family Court.

Law Council of Australia President, Fiona McLeod SC, said Chief Judge Pascoe has been a well-regarded leader of the Federal Circuit Court since his appointment in 2004.

“Chief Judge Pascoe has vast experience in family law and a deep commitment to helping Australian families and upholding the rights of children,” Ms McLeod said.

“His experience in leading the Federal Circuit Court will be important in his new role and in light of the Australian Law Reform Commission’s review of family law.

“Not only does he have the wellbeing of families and children close to his heart, he has shown that the welfare of fellow judges is something he is deeply committed to.

“His expertise in family law has previously been recognised by the Federal Government, who appointed him to the Hague working group on international surrogacy in 2015.

“He was also appointed as a Companion to the Order of Australia in 2016 for his service to law and the judiciary. This included for supporting improved access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and his advocacy against child trafficking.”

Ms McLeod also welcomed the appointment of William Alstergren QC as the Chief Judge of the Federal Circuit Court.

“Mr Alstergren is the respected President of the Australian Bar Association,” Ms McLeod said.

“He has strong experience in commercial disputes, particularly in tax and industrial matters. This experience, and his leadership of the bars, will serve him well.”

Ms McLeod also paid tribute to the outgoing Chief Justice of the Family Court, Diana Bryant AO QC.

“Chief Justice Bryant has made an immense contribution to the Family Court. She has served the court with distinction, integrity and courage – setting a standard for all who will follow in her footsteps for years to come,” Ms McLeod said.

“All her professional life, Chief Justice Bryant had lived by the creed of the Family Law Act, that the ‘welfare of the child is paramount’. In recent times this has meant taking a lead role on two of the most important social issues in Australia – surrogacy and family violence.

“Chief Justice Bryant has also been a champion for women lawyers, serving as patron of the Australian Women Lawyers for the past eight years,” Ms McLeod said.

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