
Thursday, February 15th 2007

NEW CHIEF MAGISTRATE – A FIRST FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson today announced the appointment of Elizabeth Bolton as Chief Magistrate, the first woman to head a court jurisdiction in the history of South Australia.

Mr Atkinson says Ms Bolton has much experience as a magistrate in South Australia, in the office of the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, as a prosecutor in the then South Australian Department of Criminal Prosecutions and as a practicing solicitor in Adelaide.

“Elizabeth Bolton is a most experienced judicial officer and I was pleased to be able to appoint her. She has a distinguished career and impressed me as being of the highest integrity,” Mr Atkinson says.

“Ms Bolton takes charge of a court that, according to the most recent statistics, is becoming increasingly effective in clearing cases.

“This has not only been achieved because this Government has been putting more money into the courts system, but because we have looked at ways to relieve the load on the court.

“That means measures such as the re-introduction of Special Justices to hear some road traffic and lower-level criminal offences. It also means measures such as those I announced last week to give police the power to home-clamp the wheels of offenders for a range of offences that would otherwise clog up our Magistrates Courts,” Mr Atkinson says.

Ms Bolton completed her law degree in 1983, working as an associate to Justice Jacobs at the Supreme Court before briefly practicing as a solicitor. She joined the South Australian Department of Criminal Prosecutions as a prosecutor in 1987 and then the Adelaide office of the Commonwealth D.P.P. in 1991, eventually rising to becoming Assistant Deputy Director. In 1998-9 she went to Darwin to establish the Commonwealth D.P.P. office.

Her career as a Magistrate began in December 1999 with two years sitting in Elizabeth, where she also went on circuit to Tanunda, Clare, Peterborough and Berri. In 2004 she was appointed the regional manager at the Christies Beach Magistrates Court.

Mr Atkinson thanked Dr Andrew Cannon for stepping up to the position of Acting Chief Magistrate between the departure of Kelvin Prescott, now promoted to Judge of the Youth Court, and the appointment of Ms Bolton.