



SUPREME COURT OF VICTORIA
210 William Street
MELBOURNE 3000
☎03-9603 6173
anne.stanford@supremecourt.vic.gov.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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END OF ERA FOR MASTERS; NEW BEGINNING FOR ASSOCIATE JUDGES

The historic title of “Master” in the Victorian court system has been removed with Masters being renamed Associate Judges from today.

Chief Justice Marilyn Warren said the re-titling of Masters to Associate Judges reflected their evolved status as judicial officers.

Masters have been part of the Supreme Court since the 19th Century assisting in the general business of the court. They hear and determine civil cases which are not within exclusive jurisdiction of Trial Division judges, and perform a range of pre- and post trial functions.

The role of the new office of Associate Judge has been expanded in jurisdiction in accordance with the change of title.

“They will sit on trials and hear cases,” the Chief Justice said. However, Associate Judges will continue their recent role of mediating cases.

“The mediation of cases by Masters and now Associate Judges is a vital part of the court’s service,” she said.

“The name change replaces a title which was outdated, misleading and did not truly reflect the judicial character of the work that had evolved over the years from its clerical origins to one of judicial functions.

“It was also an awkward title for women,” Chief Justice Warren said.

“The new name of Associate Judge will also assist the public in understanding the nature of the office.”

Last month, the Government appointed Simon Gardiner under the new legislation as the first Associate Judge of the Supreme Court.

He joins seven Masters who from today will be known as Associate Judges. They are Associate Justices Kevin Mahony, Robyn Lansdowne, Ewan Evans, Kathy Kings, John Efthim, Jamie Wood and Melissa Daly.

Media Inquires: Anne Stanford, Strategic Communications Advisor.

