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MEDIA RELEASE

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SUPREME COURT JUSTICE TO LEAD CONSENT LAW REVIEW

One of NSW's most experienced Supreme Court justices will lead the Law Reform Commission's review of the law of consent in sexual assault matters, Attorney General Mark Speakman and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Pru Goward announced today.

Acting Justice Carolyn Simpson will take up her appointment as part-time Commissioner of the NSW Law Reform Commission immediately.

"Acting Justice Simpson is one of the most experienced and qualified judicial officers in NSW having served in the Supreme Court for 24 years," Mr Speakman said.

"She has been a trailblazer for female lawyers and judges across the state and the wealth of knowledge acquired during a four decades long career will be invaluable to the Law Reform Commission."

"Her Honour's broad experience in the common law, including defamation, administrative, industrial and criminal law, makes her an outstanding addition to the Law Reform Commission. In addition to contributing to the Law Reform Commission's other reviews, her Honour will lead the review of section 61HA of the Crimes Act 1900 dealing with consent and knowledge of consent in sexual assault matters," Mr Speakman said.

One of the catalysts for the review was the case of Saxon Mullins, who endured four separate court proceedings relating to a charge of sexual assault. The proceedings centred around whether the accused knew the complainant did not consent to the act in question.

Ms Goward said: "Her Honour will have regard to relevant law in Australia and overseas as well as the experiences of sexual assault survivors in the criminal justice system. It is vital that survivors of sexual assault feel the system is supporting them and that their voices are heard."

Acting Justice Simpson grew up in regional NSW, starting her working life in 1966 as a school teacher. She then turned her attention to the law, working as associate to the late District Court Judge Hugh Robson and being admitted as a barrister in 1976. She was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1989 and was elevated to the Supreme Court bench five years later.

The Law Reform Commission will accept preliminary submissions until 29 June 2018. Further details are available at: <http://www.lawreform.justice.nsw.gov.au/>

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