



# Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General  
Minister for Justice

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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11 DECEMBER 2013

### NEW STATE CORONER FOR NSW

Attorney General Greg Smith SC today announced the appointment of Magistrate Michael Barnes as the State Coroner of NSW.

Mr Smith said Magistrate Barnes was highly qualified for the position, having served as the State Coroner of Queensland for a decade.

“Magistrate Barnes conducted inquests in Queensland that led to breakthroughs in cold case deaths and made coronial recommendations that have helped save lives,” Mr Smith said.

“Some of his cases attracted national attention, including the inquest into the disappearance of Sunshine Coast teenager Daniel Morcombe and the probe into three deaths relating to the Rudd government’s home insulation scheme.”

Mr Smith said Magistrate Barnes had also played a pivotal role in improving coronial processes in Australia.

“After leading a review of Queensland’s Coroner’s Act in 2008, Magistrate Barnes was involved in reviewing coronial legislation and practices in Western Australia and Tasmania,” Mr Smith said.

“Earlier this year, he was involved in the design of the National Judicial College of Australia’s training program for coroners.”

After completing his 10 year term as Queensland State Coroner in July this year, he moved to NSW and in August he was sworn in as a magistrate of the Local Court of NSW and as an industrial magistrate.

Prior to joining the judiciary, Magistrate Barnes was Head of the School of Justice Studies at the Queensland University of Technology. He has also worked as chief officer of the Complaint Section of the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission, principal solicitor of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service and as a solicitor and partner in a small legal firm.

Magistrate Barnes will begin his five year term as NSW State Coroner on 6 January 2014. He will take over from Magistrate Hugh Dillon who has been acting in the position since Magistrate Mary Jerram retired as State Coroner last month.

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