

Media Release

New commissioner appointed to NSW Industrial Relations Commission to support safety reforms

Tuesday, 8 September 2026

The Minns Labor Government is continuing to ensure workers in NSW are safe at work by appointing new commissioner Bronwyn Burns to the Industrial Relations Commission.

The new appointment is intended to help resolve disputes between workers and employers, ranging from new bullying and harassment laws and workers compensation matters resulting from the commencement of the Government's largest workers compensation reforms in a generation.

It is anticipated the IRC will see continue to see an increase in its future workload and this appointment ensures the commission is equipped to deliver timely, fair and effective justice for workers and employers,

Ms Byrnes has had a distinguished career in the law, working as a solicitor in the United Kingdom where she completed a Master of Laws at Cambridge University, and as a policy advisor for Amnesty International.

She returned to Australia to work for the Australian Human Rights Commission in the legal department. She was called to the Bar in 2017 and as a barrister has specialised in industrial relations, employment, and discrimination law.

Ms Byrnes has significant experience in the IRC acting for and advising public sector agencies including the Department of Education and NSW Health, on complex matters regarding claims of gender-based undervaluation in their workforces.

Ms Byrnes has also appeared for individuals and organisations in various other courts and tribunals including the Fair Work Commission, Federal Court, the NSW Supreme Court, and Supreme Court of Tasmania. Ms Byrnes also co-authored the highly regarded sixth edition of *Discrimination Law and Practice* with Chris Ronalds AO SC, and has previously lectured in employment law at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) of NSW is the longest continuing industrial tribunal in the world. Its principal role is to hear and resolve industrial and work, health and safety disputes, settle employment conditions and remuneration for employees primarily in the NSW public sector and local government.

Minister for Industrial Relations Sophie Cotsis said:

"Ms Byrnes brings significant legal experience that will ensure she is able to carry out the role of commissioner in a considered and effective way, and I am delighted to announce her appointment.

“The Industrial Relations Commission plays a critical role in ensuring fairness, stability and confidence in NSW workplaces.

“Ms Byrnes’ appointment ensures that the IRC is well equipped to deal with an increased workload and ensures workplace disputes are dealt with fairly, efficiently and with the confidence of workers and businesses across NSW.”

MEDIA: Melissa van der Haak | Minister Cotsis | 0482 771 351