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Gold Coast

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Alexandria Utting, Gold Coast Bulletin

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GOLD Coast law firm partner Mark Howden is one of two new magistrates to be appointed to the Southport Courthouse today.

The Gold Coast Bulletin can reveal Attorney-General and Minister for Justice Yvette D'Ath will announce Mr Howden and Sunshine Coast barrister Andrew Sinclair as the newest judicial officers at the state's second-busiest courthouse. It is understood a third magistrate will be appointed to the Gold Coast in coming weeks.

The appointments come days after the Gold Coast Bulletin reported two out of three summary trials listed daily on the Gold Coast could not be heard because of a chronic shortage of magistrates.



📷 Mark Howden (left) outside Brisbane Courthouse in 2011.

As part of today's announcement, Toowoomba-based barrister Robbie Davies will be the newest appointment for the Dalby Magistrates Court.

"These three new appointments bring a wealth of experience to the Magistrates Court," Mrs D'Ath said.

"I congratulate each of them on their appointments and wish them all the best for their future on the bench."

The appointments will take effect from April 26.

Mr Howden said he was "flattered" to be appointed to the Southport Courthouse where he had spent much of his working life.

“I’m so used to being on the other side of the bar table but I’ve been practising since 1990 and I think you get to the stage where you want to do something different, get a new perspective and have a new challenge,” he said.

For the past 15 years, Mr Howden has been managing partner of criminal defence firm Howden Sagers Lawyers, which has offices on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane.

Admitted to the bar in 1995, he has worked as a solicitor in Victoria and the Northern Territory practising in the areas of crime and native title.

Mr Howden was also a member of the Queensland Criminal Law Committee between 2005 and 2011.

Mr Sinclair has worked as a barrister in Maroochydore since 2006, specialising in planning and environment law, body corporate disputes and commercial law.

Queensland Law Society President Christine Smyth said the society “welcomed” the new appointments to Southport Magistrates Court.

“Further appointments are necessary for Southport and ... we call on the government to make these as soon as possible,” she said.

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