Leading Territory barrister and solicitor Melanie Little has been appointed to the Magistrates bench, Attorney-General Dr Peter Toyne announced today.

Ms Little has practised law since 1985 and in the Territory since 1996, most recently as the principal of a Darwin legal practice.

Dr Toyne said Ms Little will be a welcome appointment to the bench following the resignation of Cathy Deland this year.

"Ms Little has broad legal experience encompassing criminal, family, civil, discrimination and industrial areas of the law.

"She has also contributed to the development of law through her ongoing participation on the NT Law Reform Committee and editor in chief of the Northern Territory Law Report, and to the legal profession through her presidency of the Northern Territory Women’s Lawyers Association and membership of the Legal Practitioners Admissions Board (NT).

"Other notable contributions include published articles the Aboriginal Law Bulletin and the Territory Law Society Magazine ‘Balance’, and numerous reports and dissertations.

"Ms Little has an impressive history of community contribution including Amnesty International, Community Aid Abroad, the Adult Migrant Education Centre and Employee Assistance Service.

Ms Little will commence duties on the bench in Darwin for a short period before being assigned to Alice Springs.

"Ms Little will join a team of two other Magistrates following the announcement earlier this month of an additional Magistrate for the Centre with Mr Birch’s move to Alice Springs.

"The additional Magistrates position in Alice Springs aims to reduce court list delays and enable the court to increase it’s focus on its role in domestic violence and sexual assault cases, with the impetus to send a clear message to the community that this type of violence is not on," Dr Toyne said.