

**Sylvia Ruth Whistler Emmett AM RANR(Rtd)**  
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### **Qualifications and Appointments**

1981 LLB (U Syd)

1988 Admitted to the NSW Bar 1993

2002 Appointed to the Local Court of NSW

2003 to 2021 Officer in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve

2004 Appointed to the Federal Circuit Court of Australia

2019 Appointed Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for "*significant service to the law, to the judiciary, and to professional legal associations*"

2021 Retired from the Bench

2021 Australian Dispute Centre accredited

2021 Resolution Institute accredited

National Mediation Accreditation Standards registration 101-7358

2024 Appointed Assistant Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force as part of Advisory Panel to Inquiry into Weaponisation of the Military Justice System

2026 Appointed part-time Deputy President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal

### **Judicial Officer**

From 2002 to 2004 Sylvia sat as a Magistrate on the Local Court of NSW and from 2004 to 2021 as a Federal Magistrate and Judge of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia (FCCA). During those years, Sylvia sat in the following jurisdictions: Family Law, Child Support, Industrial Relations, Bankruptcy, Copyright, Consumer Law, Admiralty, Human Rights, Administrative Law, Migration and Crime.

During her time on the FCCA, Sylvia was Chair of the National Security Committee, the Finance Committee and the Judicial Education Committee. Sylvia was a member of the Policy Advisory Committee and the Judicial Conduct Committee and was the FCCA's representative on the national Federal Courts Audit Committee. Sylvia was also the FCCA's representative on a united courts initiative involving the FCA, FCCA, NSWSC, NSW Judicial Commission and the NSWBA in relation to Indigenous law students.

Whilst a member of the RANR, Sylvia presided over Boards of Inquiry into the death and serious injury of Defence Force Members. Sylvia also acted as a Statutory Reviewer of decisions of Defence Force Magistrates.

## **Barrister**

Whilst at the Bar, Sylvia practised in most civil jurisdictions and courts. Her areas of practice included Contracts, Insurance, Product and Professional Liability, Administrative Law, Industrial Law and Intellectual Property.

Sylvia was a member of the NSW Bar Association's Equality and Equal Opportunity Committee, the Education Committee, the Professional Standards Committee and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee.

## **Mediator**

Whilst practising as a barrister from 1988 to 2002, Sylvia developed a substantial practice as a Mediator.

Sylvia has acted as Mediator in more than 400 disputes covering a wide range of conflicts including commercial disputes, professional negligence, product liability, consumer protection, joint venture disputes, partnership problems, intellectual property, industrial law matters, environmental matters, matters involving allegations of sexual assault, farm debt disputes and retail tenancy disputes and many disputes involving Government Departments and Agencies.

Sylvia was a director of LEADR (Lawyers Engaged in Alternative Dispute Resolution - now Resolution Institute) and a member of the Supreme Court of NSW Panel, the District Court Panel, Law Cover Panel, LEADR Advanced Panel, Retail Tenancy Panel and NSW Rural Assistance Authority Farm Debt Mediation Panel. Sylvia co-authored a chapter in Law Book Company publication of Australasian Dispute Resolution Practice on "*Enforcement of Agreements Reached as a Result of Mediation*" as well as various other publications, including in the NSW Bar News Journal.

Significant appointments as Mediator included appointment by the Minister of Environment to mediate a 76+ person community dispute in Gunnedah relating to the application of chemicals in agriculture and extending over 4 days; appointment by the National Registration Authority to mediate an international dispute relating to the licensing of chemicals for use in manufacture in Australia; appointment by WIPO Australia Registrar to arbitrate domain name disputes; appointment by Supreme Court of Victoria to co-mediate with Hon John Clarke QC a 30 party commercial dispute involving professional negligence and trade practices issues extending over 6 days; appointment by the ACCC as part of a 3 person consulting team to evaluate dispute resolution regime in Australian Rail Track Corporation Access Undertaking.

Sylvia chaired a session on "*Designing Dispute Resolution Systems*" at the LEADR International Conference in 2000 and spoke at many other conferences on alternative dispute resolution. Sylvia also acted as a trainer in alternative dispute resolution regularly, including a dispute resolution seminar with Hon Trevor Morling QC presented for all judges of the Supreme Court of NSW. Sylvia was a member of the LEADR National Accreditation Committee and a member of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee of EINSHAC (Einstein Institute for Science Health and Courts).

In 2025, Sylvia was part of a Panel celebrating 50 Years of the Resolution Institute.