



MEDIA RELEASE

**Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Citizenship
Minister for Regulatory Reform**

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Courts given greater powers to utilize judicial expertise

The Supreme Court and the Land and Environment Court of NSW will be given greater power to share judicial expertise as part of State Government legislation introduced today.

NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos said processes would be simplified to enable Supreme Court judges to sit on the Land and Environment Court and vice versa.

“Until now, the arrangement needed to be approved by the Executive Council of Government and the Governor of NSW. The new process means it only requires the agreement of the judge concerned and both heads of jurisdictions,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“The NSW Government is committed to sharing skills and expertise between courts.”
Mr Hatzistergos said the changes to the Supreme Court Act and the Land and Environment Court Act will also ensure judicial resources are allocated where they are most needed.

“A Land and Environment Court judge may be called to sit on a Supreme Court case that involves technical planning issues, in which the judge has a high level of expertise,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“A judge could also be called to the bench of either court to fill in for another judge who is ill or on leave. This could help reduce the need for acting judges by encouraging each court to utilise judges who are available in the other court”.

Mr Hatzistergos said the legislation will also enable chief magistrates to hold dual commissions as District Court judges, elevating the standing of the NSW Local Court.

Following its passing, Mr Hatzistergos said he proposes to recommend Chief Magistrate Graeme Henson’s appointment as a District Court judge.

“Chief Magistrate Henson oversees the Local Court of NSW, which is responsible for finalising 98 per cent of the state’s court cases including some serious and complex matters that would have previously gone to the District Court,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“By affording chief magistrates a dual commission as District Court judge, the Government is formally recognising the significance of the Local Courts in the NSW justice system and the Chief Magistrate’s important leadership role.”