

Media Release

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\$2 BILLION INVESTMENT IN THE STATE'S JUSTICE SYSTEM

The NSW Government is investing more than \$2 billion in 2022-23 to increase access to justice and further strengthen courts and frontline services.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said key initiatives funded in the 2022-23 Budget include \$18.0 million for the expansion of audio visual facilities, including for domestic violence complainants and witnesses, in approximately 50 courts and tribunals.

“As part of the NSW Government’s commitment to support victims of family and domestic violence, \$3.4 million is being directed towards funding for court-appointed questioners to prevent domestic violence complainants from being directly cross-examined by self-represented defendants,” Mr Speakman said.

“The Statewide Court and Community Liaison Services (SCCLS) program will be expanded to help divert people with serious mental illness from the criminal justice system and connect them with appropriate support services.

“Funding for three acting District Court judges will help to reduce the backlog of matters resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Overall, the \$2 billion investment will alleviate the stress for victims, their families and other vulnerable people who come into contact with our justice system,” he said.

Key justice investments include:

- \$481.1 million for Legal Aid NSW to provide legal services to people experiencing disadvantage in 2022-23, including support to continue the Community Legal Centres program
- \$18 million to expand and upgrade audio visual facilities in courts and tribunals, including for domestic violence complainants and witnesses
- \$13.8 million for three acting District Court judges to address the backlog of matters as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$13.4 million over four years to expand the SCCLS, with NSW Health, for people with mental health conditions
- \$10 million over four years to trial bail advocacy and support services for First Nations young people and women in Newcastle and Sydney
- \$7.3 million over four years to support equal and genuine partnerships with First Nations communities as part of the NSW Government’s commitment to improve justice outcomes, and family and community safety

- \$6.0 million in recurrent expenditure over four years and \$2 million in capital expenditure in 2022-23 only on court-appointed questioners to ensure domestic violence complaints are not directly questioned by self-represented defendants
- \$5.5 million over four years to provide six full-time commissioners at the Industrial Relations Commission, including support staff and infrastructure
- \$3 million on the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ Hate Crimes
- \$0.7 million over two years to support the Government's legislative commitment to outlaw coercive control in current and former intimate partner relationships

"The NSW Government's \$2 billion investment in our justice system will help modernise and increase access to justice in our State, particularly for those vulnerable members of our community, and support important legal reforms that are making a real difference to the citizens of New South Wales," Mr Speakman said.