

MEDIA RELEASE

INVESTMENT IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDED TO REDUCE DELAYS

7 June 2017



NEW SOUTH WALES
BAR ASSOCIATION®

Attorney General Mark Speakman and Treasurer Perrottet announced today that \$8.5 million will be spent on two new trial courts at the Downing Centre in Sydney's CBD, and on a new State Parole Authority hearing room at the Sydney West Trial Courts in Parramatta, which will free up a courtroom for trials there.

The president of the New South Wales Bar Association Arthur Moses SC has welcomed today's announcement by the State Government that it will invest in two new courtrooms with state of the art facilities, but cautioned that more than this is needed to have any real impact on delays in the criminal justice system. He has asked that the government give additional funding for the justice system in the NSW Budget.

'A recent report by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research showed the full extent of the delays in the District Court. There are currently 2,000 criminal trials pending in the District Court. These delays cause unnecessary anxiety and stress to victims and witnesses as well as denying an accused a trial in a timely manner. Expenditure on two courtrooms is not going to reduce the delay in any significant manner.'

'Importantly, the government needs to allocate more resources for legal aid and the appointment of additional judges if the delays are to be reduced in any meaningful manner. Legal aid funding is especially important because qualified legal representation is essential for the efficient preparation and conduct of matters before a court, which will reduce delays', Mr Moses said.

'The government should also consider investing in new and improved court facilities for the entirety of the District Court, not just for two courtrooms. The facilities at the John Maddison Tower have been deteriorating for some time', he said.

MEDIA CONTACT: Alastair McConnachie 0420314462