

MEDIA RELEASE

\$10 MILLION JUSTICE ADVOCACY SERVICE A WELCOME INVESTMENT IN THE RULE OF LAW

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NEW SOUTH WALES
BAR ASSOCIATION

The New South Wales Bar Association has welcomed the announcement by the NSW Government of a new \$10 million service to assist victims, witnesses, suspects and defendants with cognitive impairment who come into contact with the state's criminal justice system.

The tender is now open for an organisation or consortium to deliver the new 'Justice Advocacy Service' over two years across NSW.

Announcing the initiative this week, Attorney General Mark Speakman said the service is intended to assist people with cognitive impairment to better understand their rights and responsibilities and communicate clearly with the police and the courts.

'It is a crucial tenet of the Rule of Law that laws must be knowable and able to be obeyed by everyone,' the Association's President, Arthur Moses SC, said today.

'Navigating the criminal justice system in any capacity is a difficult and stressful experience for any member of the community. It is particularly difficult for vulnerable people with forms of cognitive impairment, including dementia, acquired brain injury and autism spectrum disorder.

'The Justice Advocacy Service has the potential to promote fairer, more equitable outcomes by assisting people with cognitive impairment to better understand what our criminal justice system requires of them, whether they are providing police or witness statements, testifying in court or adhering to bail conditions.

'The Association looks forward to working with the Government, the successful tenderer and the courts to improve access to justice for all members of the NSW community,' said Mr Moses SC.

The tender for the Justice Advocacy Service is open until 23 October 2018. Further information is available at www.tenders.nsw.gov.au.

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