

MEDIA RELEASE

LOCAL COURT MUST BE PROPERLY RESOURCED

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NEW SOUTH WALES
BAR ASSOCIATION

The New South Wales Government must act to ensure that the NSW Local Court has sufficient resources to deal with its increasing workload, the president of the New South Wales Bar Association Jane Needham SC said today.

‘Comments by the chief magistrate in the 2014 Local Court Annual Review indicate that, while the court’s criminal caseload has increased by 14,000 in the past year, six magistrates’ positions have been cut since 2013, with the prospect of further reductions to come’ Ms Needham said.

The Local Court is one of the busiest jurisdictions in the common law world, and its record in dealing with its criminal workload is second to none. However reductions in judicial resources and support for those judicial officers within the court administration, mean that the court faces the prospect of having to make cuts to services, particularly in rural locations’ said Ms Needham.

‘At a time where the government is increasing police resources and the court’s criminal caseload is growing rapidly, there is a pressing need to increase the number of magistrates in the Local Court.’ Ms Needham said.

‘The proper funding of magistrates’ positions, and of Local Court administration, must be a top priority for government. If the Local Courts are not properly resourced, court sittings will be adversely affected, with flow on effects for the administration of justice as a whole in this state.’

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