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MEDIA RELEASE

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CHIEF JUDGE REVIEW TO REDUCE COURT DELAYS

The Chief Judge of the District Court, the Honourable Justice Derek Price AM, will carry out a review of case management and jury processes, to reduce delays in criminal proceedings in the District and Supreme Courts, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

The NSW Liberals and Nationals have already introduced criminal justice reforms to help reduce the flow of cases into the District Court and stabilise delays. The criminal justice system is also benefitting from the Government's \$150 million investment in seven extra District Court judges including funding for more prosecutors and public defenders.

Mr Speakman said the review is a further opportunity to target delays through streamlining the processes for dealing with serious criminal matters.

"The time is right for a review of some of the long standing procedures around juries and case management. Parties want effective processes to reduce the issues considered at trial to ensure they're ready to proceed as early as possible," Mr Speakman said.

The Department of Communities and Justice will assist the Chief Judge with his review of possible reforms in case management and jury processes, focusing on:

- improved procedures to ensure trial readiness;
- better pre-trial case management;
- the potential for new technology to assist efficiency and case management;
- simplifying decision-making processes for juries; and
- examining potential for limiting jury use in certain circumstances.

The review builds on 2018 reforms to encourage early appropriate guilty pleas and measures to reduce the workload of criminal matters in the District and Supreme Courts.

Justice Price said he was pleased to be working with the NSW Government and the Chief Justice of NSW, the Honourable TF Bathurst AC, to improve processes that may be leading to unnecessarily lengthy trials or delays in matters being heard.

"The increasing complexity of many serious criminal matters makes the task difficult, but there are some good ideas we can draw upon, both here and overseas, to try and make things as efficient as possible," Justice Price said.

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