



**Dominic Perrottet**

Treasurer

**Mark Speakman**

Attorney General

Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **BUDGET 2021-22: SWIFTER JUSTICE WITH EIGHT EXTRA LOCAL COURT MAGISTRATES**

Victims of crime will benefit from accelerated access to justice in the Local Court, with the 2021-22 State Budget investing \$56.1million over the next four years to appoint eight extra magistrates and boost resources for prosecutors and Legal Aid. The number of magistrates will reach a record total of 149.

Attorney General and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Mark Speakman said the NSW Government's investment in additional Local Court magistrates will deliver more efficient justice in both regional and metropolitan NSW.

"The extra magistrates will help to reduce the trauma of waiting for hearing dates and attending court on victims, witnesses and families. We're committed to easing that burden felt particularly by those involved in domestic violence cases," Mr Speakman said.

Mr Speakman said the increase in magistrates would also enable the Coronial Case Management Unit (CCMU) pilot to become permanent.

"The CCMU helps ensure grieving families can lay their loved ones to rest sooner and receive better and more timely information. Led by coroners, the unit is a successful collaboration between police, forensic pathologists, medical specialists and counsellors," Mr Speakman said.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the investment recognises the critical role of the Local Court in the NSW justice system.

"As NSW continues to grow, we need to ensure the local court system is equipped to meet the challenges of the future and deliver justice to victims as quickly and efficiently as possible," Mr Perrottet said.

NSW Chief Magistrate Judge Graeme Henson AM said the additional magistrates will further improve Australia's most efficient court.

"These additions to the Local Court bench will be invaluable for boosting the capacity of NSW's busiest jurisdiction, particularly in larger regional areas. Increased access to timely justice will benefit all court users and indeed the whole community," Judge Henson said.

Today's announcement complements more than \$150 million committed in the 2020-21 Budget of November 2020 to digitally transform NSW courts and upgrade regional and metropolitan courthouses.

The vast majority (96 per cent) of all criminal cases in NSW are finalised in the Local Court, with 139 locations across NSW.