



Mark Speakman

Attorney General

Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL LEADER TO TRANSFORM OUTCOMES

Wiradjuri man and current Legal Aid chief executive Brendan Thomas will head up a new NSW Government division dedicated to improving Aboriginal outcomes in criminal justice, child protection and housing.

Attorney General and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Mark Speakman said Mr Thomas would commence on 8 November as Deputy Secretary Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes at the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

“The NSW Government is committed to tackling the deep-rooted causes of Aboriginal disadvantage and improving our services and programs to achieve meaningful, permanent outcomes that improve the lives of Aboriginal people,” Mr Speakman said.

“Brendan’s appointment to this important new role will drive us in meeting the National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets across child protection, the criminal justice system, housing and the prevention of domestic violence.”

Mr Thomas said the first step in his new role was to improve the way DCJ engages with Aboriginal communities.

“I’ve been given a huge role to undertake – one that is more than 200 years in the making,” Mr Thomas said.

“DCJ touches so many Aboriginal lives in so many ways. This means it has the potential to divert people away from prison, and to ensure women and children are safe in their homes. These are important issues affecting our most vulnerable, that we can and we must continue to address.

“The only way we can make a difference is to change our systems, embrace and engage with Aboriginal communities and transform their perception of DCJ.”

Mr Thomas was appointed as CEO of Legal Aid in 2017. Prior to that he was a Deputy Secretary in the former Department of Justice, leading major criminal and civil justice reforms in the fields of domestic violence, services to victims of crime and Aboriginal communities.