



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **HISTORIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM BEGINS TODAY**

A transformational criminal justice reform designed to deliver swifter justice to victims and the community begins in NSW today, Attorney General Mark Speakman has announced.

“These tough and smart reforms encourage serious offenders to enter early appropriate guilty pleas, enabling victims to get on with their lives and police to return to front line duties,” Mr Speakman said.

Mr Speakman said the \$93 million reforms will accelerate the wheels of justice and help ease pressure on the District Court’s backlog of criminal cases.

Funding for the reforms will enable:

- Senior lawyers to manage serious criminal cases from start to finish;
- Prosecutors to certify the most appropriate charges based on earlier delivery of relevant evidence while the matter is still in the Local Court; and
- Mandatory criminal case conferencing between parties to resolve more matters before they’re committed to a higher court.

“We are investing heavily in Legal Aid and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to facilitate continuity of senior legal representation throughout the case. We are also expanding our network of audio-visual link facilities in prisons and Legal Aid offices to support the increased demand for case conferencing,” Mr Speakman said.

The early appropriate guilty plea reform will provide certainty about sentencing discounts. From today, the applicable discounts will be:

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| • Before committal in the Local Court                 | 25 percent;     |
| • Up to 14 days before the first day listed for trial | 10 percent; and |
| • In any other case                                   | 5 percent.      |

“To ensure cases of extreme culpability are adequately punished, judges will have discretion to decline to apply any discount,” Mr Speakman said.

Justice agencies including Legal Aid NSW, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Commonwealth DPP and the NSW Police Force have been trained on the application of the new reforms, as have private legal practitioners and the Aboriginal Legal Service.

The reforms will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure they are working effectively. The Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research will also carry out a review.

**MEDIA: Damien Smith | 0417 788 947**