



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Citizenship
Minister for Regulatory Reform

Thursday July 15, 2010

CHIEF MAGISTRATE APPOINTED A DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos today announced the appointment of Chief Magistrate Graeme Henson as a District Court judge.

“The dual commission afforded to Chief Magistrate Henson is an acknowledgement of the close relationship between the District and Local Court, which work together to provide NSW with the most efficient court system in Australia,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“All criminal matters in NSW begin in the Local Court and 98 per cent of cases are finalised by this court, including some complex and serious matters that would have previously gone to the District Court.

“The Local Court refers cases to the District Court that must be dealt with by a trial by jury or by a sentencing judge.”

Mr Hatzistergos said Chief Magistrate Henson would continue to oversee the Local Court.

Chief Magistrate Henson will be sworn in as a District Court judge on Tuesday, July 20.

Mr Hatzistergos today also announced the appointment of retired Deputy Chief Magistrate Paul Cloran as an Acting Judge of the District and Drug Courts. Mr Cloran has been appointed as a judicial member and Deputy Chair of the State Parole Authority for 3 years.

The NSW Government has recently announced that the highly successful Drug Court program will be expanded to the Hunter region.

The Hunter Drug Court will be run from Toronto Courthouse and will service Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Maitland and Port Stephens.

Since 1999, the Western Sydney Drug Court has diverted thousands of drug-dependent offenders into supervised treatment to eliminate their drug dependence. Offenders are subject to strict supervision, including regular urinalysis, and those who fail to comply risk being sent to prison.

“During his 23 years on the bench of the Local Court, Mr Cloran saw first hand the devastating impact that drugs had on defendants,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“I am sure Mr Cloran will draw upon his extensive experience to help defendants trapped in a cycle of drugs and crime to turn their lives around.”

A recent evaluation of the Drug Court at Parramatta by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has shown that it has been highly effective in reducing rates of recidivism.