



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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

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### **Conference marks 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NSW Drug & Alcohol Court**

NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos will today open the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court of NSW's Practitioners' Conference 2010 in Parramatta.

"The NSW Youth Drug and Alcohol Court aims to reduce re-offending by young people with alcohol and/or drug problems who have become entrenched in the criminal justice system," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"It began operations in July 2000 and operates across the Sydney metropolitan region.

"The aim of the court is to rehabilitate young offenders by addressing the broader health and welfare issues, which have influenced the young person's drug use and associated offending.

"The Practitioners' Conference will look at how the multi-agency program brings together the juvenile criminal justice system with various government and non-government adolescent service providers." Mr Hatzistergos said the conference will hear from a range of experts on topics relating to drug use and young people.

The speakers include Magistrate Hillary Hannam; Paul Dillon, Drug and Alcohol Research Training Australia; Dr Alex Wodak, Director, Alcohol and Drug Services, St Vincent's Hospital; and, Matthew Willis, Research Analyst, Australian Institute of Criminology.

The Youth Drug and Alcohol Court examines the reasons behind the offender's behaviour which may include health problems and education.

The program typically requires participants to undergo drug testing, counselling and other treatments over a period of six months.

The program is run with the assistance of the Departments of Justice and Attorney General, Juvenile Justice, Education and Training, Health and Community Services as well as some non-government agencies.

The conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court will be held at the Mantra Parramatta Hotel.

The heads of Children's Courts from 14 jurisdictions, who are in Sydney for the annual meeting of the South Pacific Council of Youth and Children's Courts, will attend the conference.