



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

MEDIA RELEASE

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**ADDITIONAL \$154 MILLION FOR
LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

The Rudd Government will invest an additional \$154 million over four years in legal assistance programs to improve access to justice in the community.

The Attorney- General, Robert McClelland, said that the investment would play a key role in ensuring disadvantaged Australians have the means to resolve disputes early before they escalate and become entrenched.

“This is the largest and most significant injection of new funding into the legal assistance sector for well over a decade,” Mr McClelland said.

The additional funding will be provided from 1 July 2010 and will include an additional:

- \$92.3 million over four years for legal aid;
- \$34.9 million over four years for Indigenous legal services; and
- \$26.8 million over four years for community legal services programs.

The investment takes the Commonwealth’s total funding for legal assistance services to over \$1.2 billion over four years.

This will help legal assistance providers to enhance and increase their services, including:

- increasing the availability of legal aid for separating families as well as improving the availability of legally-assisted mediation;
- helping people with consumer credit and debt related legal issues;
- meeting the rising demand for Indigenous legal aid services; and
- strengthening the capacity of community legal services to help victims of domestic violence and those at risk of homelessness.

“Consistent with the Government’s *Strategic Framework for Access to Justice*, the funding will focus on ‘early intervention’ and will reinforce a shift away from expensive adversarial court litigation.”

Funding for Legal Aid Commissions will be provided to the States and Territories under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services.

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