



# MEDIA RELEASE

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

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## **CRIMINAL COURT HEARINGS TO GO ONLINE IN NSW**

The Local Court of NSW will today begin dealing with some preliminary criminal matters online in a revolutionary process set to increase the efficiency of the justice system and save taxpayers millions of dollars, Attorney General John Hatzistergos announced today.

“Online Court is a message board that enables parties to case manage administrative matters via the internet and be alerted by email when there is a development,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

Mr Hatzistergos said Online Court has enormous potential to accelerate criminal proceedings in the Local Court.

“Online Court will significantly reduce time and travel costs associated with bringing parties together in court for administrative matters that might only take a couple of minutes,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“The message board will be accessible 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, which will encourage the prosecution and the defence to communicate outside of the courtroom.”

Online Court will be trialled in the Downing Centre Local Court over the next 12 months and will be rolled out to other courts if successful. During the trial, Online Court matters will be limited to prosecutions brought by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) where the defendant is on bail and legally represented.

“The system will not be used for contested matters, such as bail applications, committal hearings or other hearings where witnesses are called – these proceedings will continue to be conducted in physical courtrooms,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

Online Court will initially operate in cases involving the DPP, Legal Aid and/or the Aboriginal Legal Service. After three months, the court will consider extending Online Court to include matters where a defendant has private legal representation.

Mr Hatzistergos said Online Court would uphold the principles of open justice.

“Any member of the public interested in an Online Court matter will be able to obtain a print out of the proceedings,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

A similar Online Court system is used for some civil matters in the Supreme and District Courts.

The Online Court is part of JusticeLink, a sophisticated internet-based case management system operating in the Local, District and Supreme Courts of NSW.

JusticeLink is also enabling legal practitioners and mercantile agents to lodge a range of court documents online, instead of at a courthouse registry. More than 31,000 forms have been lodged electronically since the e-lodgment program was launched in May last year. More than 50 per cent of applicable forms in NSW were e-lodged last month.

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