

MEDIA RELEASE

URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS CRIMINAL CASE DELAYS IN DISTRICT COURT



NEW SOUTH WALES
BAR ASSOCIATION®

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The release of today's Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report on NSW Criminal Court Statistics 2016 has highlighted the need for continued action to address delays in criminal cases in the District Court the President of the New South Wales Bar Association Arthur Moses SC said today.

'This report demonstrates the fact that the District Court, while very productive, has a crushing workload' said Mr Moses. 'The number of matters remitted for trial in the District Court has increased by over 35% over the last four years. Although the number of matters finalised by trial in that period increased by almost 40%, criminal trial delays have continued to increase despite the best efforts of the Court.'*

'The median time between arrest and trial finalisation is now 714 days (up from 512 days in 2012)* and there are currently around 2,000 criminal trials awaiting hearing in the District Court' Mr Moses said.

'These delays have an impact upon victims of crime and witnesses who must anxiously await hearings, as well as individuals who are in custody awaiting trial that may be ultimately acquitted. Delays in matters being heard may also result in evidence going stale, which may jeopardise prosecutions or result in unfair hearings' said Mr Moses.

'The Bar Association looks forward to continuing to provide its input on solutions to address these issues. The Bar will work with the Court and the Attorney General to find effective and lasting means of addressing these delays. Whilst the Government has announced a scheme for early guilty pleas which the Bar is still considering, the initiatives however, must include the allocation of additional resources for legal aid to ensure the efficient preparation of matters and the appointment of additional judges to the Court', Mr Moses concluded.

*Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

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