



# MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC  
Attorney General  
Minister for Industrial Relations

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Monday, October 5, 2009

## **\$87 MILLION WAITING TO BE CLAIMED FROM ESTATES**

Attorney General John Hatzistergos said more than \$34 million from deceased estates was given to unsuspecting beneficiaries in the last financial year, after they were tracked down by the NSW Trustee & Guardian.

Mr Hatzistergos said the agency had distributed the money to 957 beneficiaries who were named in wills or were relatives of people who died without a will.

“The Trustee & Guardian makes exhaustive inquiries to make sure that deceased estates go to rightful heirs and next of kin,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

He said the agency had a special Genealogy Unit which was tasked with finding beneficiaries and in the past had tracked down next of kin as far away as Denmark, Scotland and Canada.

Some \$87 million in deceased estates is currently being held by the Trustee & Guardian waiting to be claimed.

Are you an heir of one of the following?

- Helen Spence, of Burwood, who passed away in 1999, aged 89, with an estate now valued at \$942,000.
- Edward Ward, of Balmain, who passed away in 1996, aged 53, with an estate now valued at \$906,000.
- Albert Organ, of Padstow, who passed away in 2001, aged 85, with an estate now valued at \$863,200.

Interested persons should check the agency’s website ([www.pt.nsw.gov.au](http://www.pt.nsw.gov.au)) for a full list of unclaimed estates.

Mr Hatzistergos said the Rees Government recently made it easier to distribute estates by recognising cousins as eligible heirs to the estates of people who die without wills.

The entitlement of first cousins comes, in order of importance, after spouses and children; parents; siblings; grandparents; aunts and uncles.

“The new law widens the pool of people who can inherit in NSW and recognises that some other jurisdictions in Australia include first cousins in the distribution list under intestacy laws,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

Mr Hatzistergos said the new laws also ensured that spouses automatically inherit the estates of their partners when there is no will.