



MEDIA RELEASE

**Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Industrial Relations**

Thursday, May 7, 2009

RESOLVING EVERYDAY LEGAL DISPUTES MADE EASY

Resolving everyday legal disputes could be made cheaper and quicker according to a new discussion paper, released by Attorney General John Hatzistergos.

He said the Blueprint for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) lays out a range of strategies to make it easier to resolve civil disputes, from neighbours arguing over fences and noise to commercial contracts disputes worth millions of dollars.

“Only a small number of these kinds of disputes get decided by a judge. But many people spend a lot of time and money preparing for court anyway,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

Mr Hatzistergos said the discussion paper will be used to inform future policy surrounding the use of ADR and its potential for expansion in NSW.

“One idea in the paper is to have a one-stop-shop so that people can more easily access information about resolving their everyday disputes without going to court.”

He said the strategies in the paper would build on free legal advice and mediation services provided by the NSW Government through the LawAccess helpline (1300 888 539) and a network of Community Justice Centres.

He said the discussion paper also outlined strategies for big businesses involved in major commercial disputes.

“The discussion paper suggests establishing Sydney as a centre for international arbitration including having organisational facilities, secretarial, computer and research support, located in a single location.”

He said other strategies outlined in the discussion paper relate to legal training, professional practice and case management.

Mr Hatzistergos said ADR reform was an important step toward streamlining civil procedure and will require support from government agencies, the courts and other key stakeholders.

“I encourage anyone with an interest in this area to comment on the strategies contained in the ADR Blueprint, as these will form the basis of future reforms.”

Submissions are due by May 29, 2009. The paper is available on the Attorney General Department’s website. (www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au)