



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Industrial Relations

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NEW FUNDING WILL HELP LOCAL WOMEN SEEKING AVOs

Attorney General John Hatzistergos and Member for Newcastle Jodi McKay today announced the Hunter Women's Domestic Violence Court Service had been awarded a major funding boost to continue running an important local program.

Ms McKay said the service will receive \$356,061 for the 2009/2010 financial year, up by \$165,939 on last year.

"Four new specialist advocacy workers will be recruited to provide court advocacy services to women seeking Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders," Ms McKay said.

Ms McKay said the new positions will assist women at Newcastle, Toronto, Belmont and Raymond Terrace Local Courts.

"Going to court to seek a domestic violence order can be a daunting experience for a woman who is trying to escape from a violent relationship," Ms McKay said.

"The additional advocacy workers will provide greater access to this vital service for vulnerable women and children in the Hunter region."

Attorney General John Hatzistergos said domestic violence was an abhorrent crime that destroyed families and often thrust women and children into the justice system for the first time in their lives.

"As well as helping women seeking Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders, the additional workers and will provide referrals to counselling, housing and material aid services that may be of assistance."

Hunter Women's Domestic Violence Court Service Coordinator Pam Lorimer said the additional funding would allow the organisation to expand its support to women at Raymond Terrace courthouse for the first time.

"The additional funding will also allow us to assist women during hearings, as opposed to just on list days, both for domestic violence orders and criminal matters," said Ms Lorimer.

She said part of the additional funding will be used to recruit specialist workers to provide enhanced service to local Aboriginal communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Rees Government has increased funding across the State by \$2.7 million, up to a total of \$7 million a year, extending the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program to more than 100 courthouses.