



11-17 May 2009  
The Law and Your  
Community



## Media Release 5 May 2009

### **PUBLIC SEMINAR: MENTAL HEALTH AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

What really happens to people who are found “not guilty by reason of mental illness”?

How do courts deal with people who do not have the mental capacity to participate in a trial?

Are there any special options available to the court if a person with a cognitive or mental health impairment has committed a criminal offence?

The Hon Greg James, President of the NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal, and Alison Merridew of the NSW Law Reform Commission will answer these questions, and raise more, at the New South Wales Law Reform Commission’s seminar on “People with Cognitive and Mental Health Impairments in the Criminal Justice System”.

The Chairman of the Law Reform Commission, the Hon James Wood AO QC, says: “Mental health and cognitive impairments affect a large number of people in the community, too many of whom find their way into the criminal justice system.”

“While there have been some important recent changes to the law, other aspects were developed over 200 years ago. A more modern approach is needed to address the complex issues which affect these people in the criminal justice system.”

A free public seminar, part of Law Week 2009, will be held on Monday 11 May from 12.30pm to 1.30pm in the Jubilee Room of NSW Parliament House. Refreshments will be provided.

“All members of the community, mental health and disability sectors, and legal profession who are interested in discussing these important issues, which impact on some of the most vulnerable people in the criminal justice system, are encouraged to attend,” the LRC Chairperson said.

The community is invited to celebrate Law Week 2009 “The Law and Your Community” 11 – 17 May. The entire program of Law Week activities is available at [www.lawweek.com.au](http://www.lawweek.com.au).

Media: The Hon James Wood, Chairperson, NSW Law Reform Commission (02) 8061 9270