



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Justice

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NEW LEGAL HARRASSMENT LAWS START TODAY

People who habitually use the court system to pursue unreasonable law suits and intimidate others will be subject to new legislation which comes into force today.

NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos said these “vexatious litigants” were a drain on court resources and the government’s new *Vexatious Proceedings Act 2008* aimed to weed them out of the system.

“From today, anyone who frequently and persistently takes legal action without reasonable grounds or for improper purposes can be declared a vexatious litigant,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“Their actions often result in the harassment of innocent parties and a waste of public resources.

“Our new laws aim to stamp out this practice and will give judges the power to banish anyone declared a vexatious litigant from their courtrooms.”

Under the new law:

- It will be simpler to declare someone a vexatious litigant. The applicant need only prove the respondent frequently instituted or conducted vexatious proceedings.
- The range of people who may apply to declare someone a vexatious litigant has been expanded.
- Vexatious proceedings orders can be made against persons acting in concert with vexatious litigants.
- The Land and Environment Court and the Industrial Relations Commission, in addition to the Supreme Court, will be able to make vexatious litigant orders.
- Courts will have extensive powers to deal with vexatious litigants, including powers to stay proceedings and prohibit the institution of further proceedings.

Mr Hatzistergos said he had heard of some instances in which court abusers had pursued more than 100 cases each, costing their unwitting opponents millions of dollars in legal bills.

“We have introduced these measures not only to free up the justice system, but to protect the good citizens of this state.”