



## Increased recovery of costs from Supreme Court Civil Litigants

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The NSW Government will increase fees for Civil Litigants who use the NSW Supreme Court, in a move that will result in an estimated \$1 million in additional revenue each year, Attorney-General John Hatzistergos announced today.

As part of the Mini-Budget, the Supreme Court will charge civil litigants a daily hearing fee if their case runs for two days or more, just as the Federal Court does. Currently, the fee is imposed after 10 days.

"We welcome businesses and other civil litigants who regard Sydney as a centre of excellence for commercial law," he said.

"But at the same time we recognise that NSW taxpayers shouldn't have to bear an excessive burden due to the conduct of those cases in this State."

The fee will be \$345 for a half day or \$690 for a full day of court time.

Mr Hatzistergos said in the past the fees imposed on civil litigants only covered 25% of the cost of hearing the cases.

"The new fee structure brings NSW in line with other Australian jurisdictions that have long recognised civil litigants should contribute to the cost of resolving their commercial disputes."

He said the net cost to the NSW budget from Supreme Court civil cases was \$36.5 million in 2006-07 compared to \$18.4 million for Western Australia, \$17.4 million for Victoria and \$12.6 million for Queensland.

Mr Hatzistergos said it was appropriate to raise the fees so that court users contribute to the cost in proportion to their use of the system.

"In recent years the Supreme Court has heard many large commercial cases, commonly referred to as mega-litigation, as a number of high profile defamation matters, yet until now we were charging less than other jurisdictions."

The Supreme Court will continue to offer free mediation services to resolve disputes without a hearing or to shorten the length of hearings.

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