



MEDIA RELEASE

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

Thursday, November 13, 2008

TORONTO COURT DELIVERS SOBERING MESSAGE

High school students will learn about the damaging effects of alcohol and other drugs at a series of workshops to be held at Toronto Courthouse this week, NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos said.

The courthouse is hosting a Community Engagement Day on Friday, which will include mock trials, information stalls and workshops for Year 8 students and their parents.

“The students will learn about the impact alcohol and other drugs can have on a person’s physical and mental health,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“Police will highlight the dangers of drink driving and explain how substance abuse can place young people at a higher risk of being a victim or a perpetrator of a crime.

“Youth workers will provide the students with strategies as to how to cope with peer pressure, to party safely and to assist friends who binge drink or take illicit drugs.”

The workshops for parents will focus on:

- Parental responsibility regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs by children
- Helping parents detect signs of possible substance abuse among their children.

Organisations participating in the engagement day include the Attorney General’s Department, the NSW Police Force, the Salvation Army, beyondblue, the Community Drug Action Team and the Housing Department.

“The abuse of alcohol and other drugs can have a devastating effect on the safety and unity of families and the wider community,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

“I commend the Toronto community on taking positive steps to ensure the younger generation grow into responsible adults.”

The engagement day will be held at Toronto Courthouse from 9:30am to 2pm on November 14. The events, while targeting school students and their parents, will also be open to the community.