



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
HON ROBERT MCCLELLAND MP**

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Gillard Government today announced a range of measures to improve access to justice, particularly for people living in regional Australia in the 2011-12 Budget.

The Government's *Strategic Framework for Access to Justice* is about ensuring Australians have equal access to justice and legal services.

The Gillard Government will invest an additional \$4.0 million over four years to improve access to legal assistance services for people living in regional Australia through the National Broadband Network. This initiative will assist people by providing greater access to advice and information to help resolve legal problems without costly litigation, where possible.

The NBN represents a significant opportunity to reduce some of the main costs in providing legal assistance services in regional areas and will enhance existing state-wide services that provide outreach to regional centres.

The funding will be provided to legal aid commissions and other community legal services, which are well placed to develop initiatives which utilise the NBN.

Other measures announced today by the Attorney-General include:

- An additional \$6.1 million over four years for the High Court of Australia, including funding to maintain registry services and circuits in all capital cities across Australia.
- Additional funding of \$2.9 million over four years to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). This boost will mean a total of \$5.7 million for the AHRC to establish an Age Discrimination Commissioner and support team, as well as restoring the stand-alone positions of Race, Sex and Disability Discrimination Commissioners.

The Gillard Government is committed to an effective federal civil justice system, as well as supporting measures to combat discrimination and intolerance, promote equality and cultural diversity, and give a voice to those who have suffered through discrimination.

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