



MEDIA RELEASE

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

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CRACKDOWN ON ROGUE JPs

Misbehaving Justices of the Peace could face being struck off under plans to introduce a code of conduct for their office, Attorney General John Hatzistergos said today.

Mr Hatzistergos said the code would apply to the 84,000 currently registered JPs and would come into force in the first half of this year.

"Recent reports have seen a number of JP's exploiting their office for personal gain and demonstrating a lack of integrity in the performance of their duties," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"While most JPs are upstanding citizens, it is important that their reputations are not being besmirched by those who engage in misconduct.

"Over the last two years, 22 JP's have been stripped of their office for illegal actions, dishonest conduct or bankruptcy," he said.

Mr Hatzistergos said breaches of the code could result in JPs being removed from office, and would cover:

- Prohibitions on charging fees;
- Ensuring JPs do not profit from their office;
- The need to maintain confidentiality;
- Requirements to notify certain information to the Attorney General's Department, and
- Guidelines relating to the general conduct of JPs.

"Over the last twelve months, 90 JPs have come to attention for not following correct procedures when certifying statutory declarations or certifying documents," Mr Hatzistergos said.

Mr Hatzistergos said the code of conduct could also include a simplified JP handbook and fact sheets for JPs and members of the public.

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