



MEDIA RELEASE

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

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RECORD MEDIATIONS SETTLE AT SUPREME COURT

More people in NSW are turning to mediation to settle their civil disputes enabling them to avoid costly court hearings, NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos said today.

Mr Hatzistergos said registrars at the Supreme Court of NSW have conducted a record 266 mediations in the first half of this year, up from a total of 282 in 2007.

"Mediation ensures cases can be resolved early and to the satisfaction of both parties, saving time and costs," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"It is very encouraging that so far this year 59 per cent of the mediation sessions have concluded with the litigants resolving their dispute."

Mr Hatzistergos said the Court encouraged litigants, and in some cases required them, to attempt mediation before a court hearing was allocated.

"The earlier they decide to mediate, the greater the benefits," he said.

"A major advantage is that parties to the dispute can resolve their issues themselves, rather than have a judgment imposed on them.

"Also, mediation can resolve a dispute earlier than a court hearing, should be less costly and is conducted privately rather than in a public courtroom."

Ten registrars at the Supreme Court handle mediations. Up to four are held daily, with half a day allocated to each.

The vast majority of the cases are from the Equity Division of the Supreme Court and involve disputes over estates under the Family Provision Act. Others include division of property when de facto relationships break down.

Mr Hatzistergos said the Supreme Court launched a mediation push in March and April this year and has kept up the pace since.

Media Inquiries: Lyndell Coutts 0407 412 269