



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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

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**Tuesday, March 17, 2009**

## **FOCUS ON LEGAL ADVICE FOR THE ELDERLY**

Marking NSW Seniors Week, Attorney General John Hatzistergos announced that a free legal helpline will place a greater emphasis on assisting the elderly.

Mr Hatzistergos said call centre staff at LawAccess, a helpline (1300 888 529), which provides information and legal advice, had been given additional training on issues which affect older people.

“Elderly people are particularly vulnerable to fraud and face issues such as domestic violence and neighbourhood disputes,” said Mr Hatzistergos.

“LawAccess staff have been given the expertise to communicate effectively with older people and are familiar with the issues that affect them.”

As part of the renewed focus, Mr Hatzistergos said LawAccess is the contact point on a new poster which targets older people. The poster was developed in conjunction with Legal Aid NSW and the Council on Ageing NSW.

He said common issues effecting older people related to wills and power of attorney, loans and gifts to family, guardianship and family law.

Mr Hatzistergos said people over 55 years old represented the third most common users of the LawAccess helpline.

Some 22% of callers to the helpline are over 55, while 8% were 18 to 24 years old, 33% were 25 to 39 years old and 36% were 40 to 54 years old.

Mr Hatzistergos said LawAccess staff began focusing on issues affecting seniors after consulting with organisations including Alzheimers Australia and the Guardianship Tribunal.

LawAccess provides legal information, advice and referrals for people with legal problems. As well as the call centre, users can go online at [www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au)

Customers can speak to LawAccess in a language other than English by calling the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.