

## MEDIA RELEASE



**Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC**  
**Attorney General**  
**Minister for Citizenship**  
**Minister for Regulatory Reform**

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### **Laws passed to resolve more child protection cases out of court**

The NSW Parliament has this week passed laws that will change the way child care proceedings are handled in the Children's Court, increasing the use of alternative dispute resolution in protection matters and sparing vulnerable children and families the trauma of going through a court hearing.

The NSW Government's Court Legislation Amendment Bill implements key recommendations contained in the Wood Inquiry into Child Protection Services that promote mediation to better involve families in decision making processes and resolve more cases outside of court.

The laws also improve the overall efficiency and operation of courts and tribunals, particularly in dealing with child protection matters.

"Going to court can be quite an intimidating experience particularly if there is family violence issues involved or there is the emotional damage of a family break-up," NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos today said.

"Alternative dispute resolution processes like mediation, empower children and their families in the decision making and alert families as to what they can do to remedy a situation. All this can lead to quicker outcomes that are better informed, accepted by all parties and more likely to be implemented."

Mr Hatzistergos said the laws ensure alternative dispute resolution before and during care proceedings by facilitating Dispute Resolution Conferences for matters that end up in the Children's Court.

Dispute Resolution Conferences will be conducted by specially trained Children's Registrars and will provide parties with an opportunity to agree on the action that should be taken in the best interests of the child and allow for the direct participation of the child's family and others concerned for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child in the decision-making process.