



MEDIA RELEASE

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

**Embargoed* Thursday August 26, 2010*

FREE PUBLIC FORUM ON CRIME AND SENTENCING IN NEWCASTLE

A free public education forum about crime and how criminals are sentenced will be held in Newcastle this evening to give the community an opportunity to hear from some of the State's top legal experts.

"The public forum at the Newcastle City Hall tonight is open for everyone to come along to ask any questions they have about the criminal justice system and to directly hear from some of the state's top legal minds," Attorney General John Hatzistergos said.

"The forum will give the Newcastle community a chance to hear first hand accounts of how sentences are determined from a panel of experts that includes a former judge."

The panel will include:

- NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos
- The Hon Jerrold Cripps QC, Chair of the NSW Sentencing Council
- Howard Brown from the Victims of Crime Assistance League (VOCAL)
- Mark Ierace SC from the Public Defenders Office

The Process of Justice forum is in response to a survey by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and the NSW Sentencing Council, which found many people were interested in knowing more about the NSW justice system.

Over the past 12 months, forums have been held in Wollongong, Parramatta, Campbelltown, Gosford and Tamworth with each event attracting strong community interest.

Minister for the Hunter and Member for Newcastle, Jodi McKay, said the process of sentencing involved a range of considerations, including the need for punishment, deterrence, community protection and rehabilitation.

"It is important that our community understands the process so that they can make up their own minds about whether the punishment fits the crime," Ms McKay said.

"I encourage the community to come along to this forum and learn more about our justice system."

Mr Michael Talbot, Assistant Director General, Court and Tribunal Services, Department of Justice and Attorney General will open the forum, which will include a presentation followed by a question and answer session.

The Newcastle 'Process of Justice' Public Forum will be held at:

Venue: Hunter Room, Newcastle City Hall,
290 King Street, Newcastle
Time: 5.00pm Registrations 5.30pm start
Date: Thursday 26 August, 2010
Registration: At the door or call (02) 8688 7651