



# Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General  
Minister for Justice

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **SIMPLE, QUICK AND EFFECTIVE JUSTICE FOR NSW**

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC today announced a plan to simplify the state's "complex and bewildering" tribunal system and make it more accessible to the community.

Mr Smith said 23 of the state's tribunals will be integrated into a new overarching tribunal that will provide a simple, quick and effective process for resolving disputes, supervising occupations and reviewing executive action.

"The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) will be a one-stop shop for almost all state tribunals, ranging from relatively small bodies such as the Chinese Medicine Tribunal through to the much larger Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal," Mr Smith said.

The Industrial Relations Commission is not one of the bodies to be consolidated at this time.

"Enabling tribunals to exist as a network, rather than in isolation will improve the quality, consistency and transparency of services."

Mr Smith said the new integrated body would be divided into five specialist divisions – Consumer, Administrative and Equal Opportunity, Occupational and Regulatory, Guardianship, Victims - and staff will continue to use their specialised expertise.

"One of the strengths of the state's tribunals is that their panels contain experts from the community and relevant professions and these specialist panels will form the backbone of NCAT," Mr Smith said. "This will allow us to take advantage of their expertise."

"The NSW model will be structured to preserve existing specialties rather than taking a 'one size fits all' approach," Mr Smith said.

"In that way, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal will be different from the super tribunals operating in Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland and the ACT and we are hoping to learn from their experiences."

NCAT will have an internal appeals panel to enable quick and accessible reviews of most tribunal decisions.

"Currently there are limited avenues of appeal against the decisions of some tribunals, but all divisions of NCAT will be accountable for their determinations," Mr Smith said.

NCAT will include the following tribunals and bodies exercising tribunal-like functions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Tribunal</li> <li>• Aboriginal Land Councils Pecuniary Interest and Disciplinary Tribunal</li> <li>• Administrative Decisions Tribunal</li> <li>• Charity Referees</li> <li>• Chinese Medicine Tribunal</li> <li>• Chiropractors Tribunal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal</li> <li>• Dental Tribunal</li> <li>• Guardianship Tribunal</li> <li>• Local Government Pecuniary Interest and Disciplinary Tribunal</li> <li>• Local Land Boards</li> <li>• Medical Radiation Practice Tribunal</li> <li>• Medical Tribunal</li> <li>• Nursing and Midwifery Tribunal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Therapy Tribunal</li> <li>• Optometry Tribunal</li> <li>• Osteopathy Tribunal</li> <li>• Pharmacy Tribunal</li> <li>• Physiotherapy Tribunal</li> <li>• Podiatry Tribunal</li> <li>• Psychology Tribunal</li> <li>• Vocational Training Appeal Panel</li> <li>• Victims Compensation Tribunal</li> </ul>
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A small number of bodies will not be consolidated. A Supreme Court judge will be appointed President of NCAT to ensure its independence and Deputy Presidents with relevant experience will head the five divisions.

The Government will establish a steering committee to ensure NCAT starts operating in January 2014. The committee will take advice from tribunal members and administrators, representatives of tribunal users and professional associations.

The President of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, Judge Kevin O'Connor AM, welcomed the integration of tribunals, saying it would strengthen their professionalism and versatility.

“NCAT will have greater flexibility to move resources to areas of greatest need. The sharing of facilities will mean that people in both metropolitan and regional areas will have access to tribunal services through one point of access.”

The Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice recommended the NSW Government establish a new tribunal to consolidate existing tribunals “where it is appropriate and promotes access to justice”.

The committee found many stakeholders viewed the current system as “complex and bewildering”. The Government today tabled its response to the inquiry.