



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

31 August 2011

NSW GOVERNMENT UNVEILS LEGAL SERVICES BLUEPRINT

The Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, today announced that the NSW Government's spending on legal services would be subjected to higher standards of transparency and accountability.

Mr Smith today released the Government's *Legal Services Blueprint*, following a major review of legal expenditure in the NSW public sector.

"The Government will increase public access to information about its spending on legal services and introduce measures to ensure the services are high quality and good value," Mr Smith said.

The Department of Attorney General and Justice's Legal Services Co-ordination Unit will drive the Blueprint's reforms, which include:

- more sharing of legal information between agencies to reduce duplication;
- an increase in government-wide specialised training of in-house legal teams;
- standardising tendering processes and documentation for external legal services;
- streamlining the use of legal panels by government agencies; and,
- encouraging the greater use of alternative fee arrangements for external legal services, with a shift away from hourly rates.

Each government agency will be required to monitor and assess the performance of external legal services providers. From the 2012/2013 annual report onwards, agencies will also be required to publish information on legal services expenditure.

A review of legal expenditure found the NSW Government spent \$296 million on legal services in 2008/09 (excluding frontline providers such as the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Police Prosecutors, Legal Aid and the Public Defender's Office).

"Legal services help the NSW Government to manage risk and protect the state's interests," Mr Smith said. "Government agencies will now be able to make better informed decisions about legal services and a more efficient process of selecting service providers will result in long term savings."

For the blueprint got to www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lms