



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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DVD TO EDUCATE JURORS AND HELP REDUCE MISTRIALS

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, today opened law week and launched a DVD containing important information that will be shown to every person in the state attending court for jury service.

Mr Smith said the DVD, titled 'Welcome to Jury Service', would explain the jury process and highlight the need for prospective jurors to inform the court if they have concerns about serving on a trial.

"The Sheriff's Office estimates that two to three mistrials occur each month due to jurors being discharged," Mr Smith said.

"This causes delays to the trial process and when jury trials cost around \$8000 a day it also places a significant burden on taxpayers.

"It is frustrating that some mistrials are the result of jurors simply not declaring issues affecting their ability to serve until after the trial had started."

Mr Smith said prospective jurors were given ample opportunity if they needed to be excused from a trial.

"Unfortunately some people are reluctant to speak up because they are embarrassed or feel overwhelmed," Mr Smith said.

"The DVD informs prospective jurors that they have the option of writing down the reason they wish to be excused if they are reluctant to announce it publicly.

"The court will consider reasonable requests that could amount to "good cause" under the Jury Act 1977 for a prospective juror to be excused."

The Chief Justice of NSW, Tom Bathurst QC, said the DVD was informative, accessible and inclusive.

"The DVD achieves the dual objectives of emphasising the importance of the community's continued participation in the delivery of criminal justice in the 21st century and ensuring that eligible jurors have an appreciation of what serving on a jury involves," Chief Justice Bathurst said.