



**Mark Speakman**  
Attorney General

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FAB LABS PROVIDE FUR THERAPY AT COURTS**

'Australia's most trusted charity', Guide Dogs, will deliver a new service that's bound to put smiles on the faces of vulnerable and anxious people at 10 courts across NSW, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

"Guide Dogs NSW/ACT is busy training dozens of Labradors who will be the stars of the Canine Court Companion Program at Burwood, Campbelltown, Gosford, Goulburn, Lismore, Manly, Nowra, Orange, Sutherland and Taree," Mr Speakman said.

"The fab Labs will patrol the courthouses, looking to help anyone who's stressed and in need of fur therapy."

The rollout of the Canine Court Companion Program follows a successful pilot program at Manly Courthouse involving Delta Society dogs. The Manly program received unanimous support, with anxious victims and witnesses feeling more relaxed and ready to give evidence after patting the helpful hounds," Mr Speakman said.

"I thank the Delta Society for helping to pioneer therapy dogs in courts in NSW, with its work at Manly Courthouse laying the platform for the program to grow."

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has been awarded the contract to expand the Canine Court Companion Program following a merit-based tender process.

Dale Cleaver, CEO of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT said the organisation is excited to be working with the NSW Government on the new program.

"We know that the presence of a dog can help calm people and lower anxiety, and it's wonderful to see our dogs are already doing this at Manly Courthouse. I'm looking forward to seeing our dogs soon bring comfort and companionship to court users at other courts throughout NSW," Dale Cleaver said.

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has more than 60 years experience as the leading provider of guide dogs and orientation and mobility services that enable people with sight loss to move around their communities independently. The organisation also has a growing Pets As Therapy program, with dogs helping children and adults struggling with challenges beyond sight loss.

For six consecutive years, Guide Dogs Australia has been named nation's most trusted charity brand in the Reader's Digest Trusted Brands survey.