



# Brad Hazzard MP

## Attorney General Minister for Justice

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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## NEW LAWS TO RESOLVE RURAL HEDGE DISPUTES

The Land and Environment Court will be given the power to resolve disputes between rural neighbours over hedges that block views and sunlight to windows, NSW Attorney General Brad Hazzard announced today.

“Until now, the court has only been able to make orders about hedges in suburban residential areas but oversized hedges also cause problems on land zoned rural-residential,” Mr Hazzard said.

The NSW Government has accepted the recommendation of a statutory review of the *Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006* to enable the court to deal with hedge disputes in rural-residential areas.

Mr Hazzard said residents concerned about a high hedge should try to resolve the issue through the government’s free mediation service Community Justice Centres.

“The Land and Environment Court will only adjudicate in cases where the aggrieved resident has made reasonable efforts to resolve the dispute with the hedge owner,” Mr Hazzard said.

The court may order that the hedge be trimmed or removed if it is blocking a view or sunlight that a neighbour had previously enjoyed from their windows.

A hedge encompasses a group of 2 or more trees that are at least 2.5m tall and planted so as to form a hedge.

Neighbours can ask an independent expert from the court to help the parties agree on an appropriate height at which the hedge can be maintained.

The court will balance the competing rights of neighbours to enjoy their property, considering a range of factors including privacy, shade and heritage values.

The court can only order compensation if the hedge has caused damage to property or endangered public safety.

“The Liberals and Nationals Government is committed to delivering to people in rural NSW legal avenues that are afforded to property owners in metropolitan areas,” Mr Hazzard said.