

News releases - John Rau

New law tackles delays in criminal trials

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Major reforms to the way serious crimes are dealt with will see shorter trials and shorter waiting times for hearings.

The new laws streamline the way courts hear major criminal cases.

The changes include:

- Requiring case statements from both prosecution and defence prior to arraignment, helping to better identify and narrow matters that are in dispute prior to trial; and
- Greater control of the process by the courts rather than lawyers.

Background

Longstanding concerns about delays in disposing of major criminal matters have been have been the subject of a major reform project led by the Attorney-General's Department.

Changes to the way major criminal matters are handled were developed, following extensive consultation.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General John Rau

Every day courts deal with serious, complex criminal cases. It's important we ensure they're devoting their valuable time and resources in the most efficient manner possible.

This means hearing the cases that need a judge's time, and not allowing lawyers to run to their own timelines.

These reforms help uphold the basic principles of our legal system – to seek out the truth and protect a person's right to a fair trial – while helping to stop unnecessary delay.

These reforms will narrow the scope of arguments that need to be made before a judge. Defendants will have more information, sooner, making a decision on a plea of guilty possible early on.

Court time will be occupied by cases that need to be heard. There will be less chance of late adjournments or wasted court time. Judges will have more control over case management.

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