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MEDIA RELEASE

WA courts seek community cultural input

The public is being asked to contribute to a new project to ensure all members of the community have fair and equal access to justice.

The Chief Justice Wayne Martin has commissioned an Equal Treatment Bench Book to ensure a person's cultural or other social background does not disadvantage them in court.

The book will be used by judges and magistrates in both the criminal and civil jurisdictions.

Chief Justice Martin said the bench book would contribute to a modern, responsive justice system.

"I believe our judicial officers do a great job administering justice in Western Australia, but it is very difficult to be aware of all social issues considering the incredibly broad diversity of our community," the Chief Justice said.

"This bench book will be a vital resource for our magistrates and judges, with reference material that will assist in ensuring fair hearings and outcomes from our courts."

"I encourage the community to submit their views for consideration."

The Equal Treatment Bench Book will have sections about different ethnic and religious backgrounds, Aboriginal culture, people with disabilities, homosexual people, young people and the aged.

Submissions are invited from any people who believe they may be subject to discrimination that may disadvantage them in a court and agencies that represent or work with such people.

Further information on making a submission is available on the Department of the Attorney General website under [Equal Treatment Bench Book](#), or by email to equitybook@justice.wa.gov.au.

Submissions close at 4.30pm Friday 20 April 2007.

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