



**SUPREME COURT
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**
Stirling Gardens
Barrack Street
Perth WA 6000

MEDIA RELEASE

8 October 2009

STRATEGIC CRIMINAL JUSTICE FORUM

Western Australia's courts and criminal justice agencies have joined forces in a unique forum to improve the justice system.

The Strategic Criminal Justice Forum brings together the state's most senior members of the judiciary, police service, prosecution and lawyers.

The forum, chaired by the Chief Justice Wayne Martin, comprises District Court Chief Judge Antoinette Kennedy, Chief Magistrate Steven Heath, Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan, Acting Director of Public Prosecutions Bruno Fiannaca, Law Society Senior Vice President Hylton Quail, and other senior judges and police officers.

Chief Justice Martin said the forum provided an opportunity for coordinated action by the courts and key agencies involved in the administration of criminal justice.

"It's a simple idea that we think will work," he said. "The most senior individuals in the criminal justice system will meet each month to bring problems and ideas to the table.

"We believe that by sitting down together on a regular basis we can find better ways to deliver justice in this state – in a more timely, efficient and fairer way."

The forum's aims include minimising the time and number of court appearances between the laying of charges and the final disposition of charges, and finding ways to promote the early identification and narrowing of issues to be determined by trial.

Other objectives are to maximise the use of video links for court appearances by prisoners in custody, and to eliminate unnecessary transport of those in custody.

The Chief Justice said the forum was also looking for ways to promote and enhance the interests of victims of crime and their families throughout the court process.

"We also believe it is important to look at the impact of the trial process on vulnerable witnesses, and ways we can minimise that impact," he said.

The issue of prosecution and defence disclosure will also be on the group's agenda.

Media Contact: Val Buchanan, Manager, Media and Public Liaison
tel: (08) 9421 5303 or pager (08) 9324 4319