



**ATTORNEY-GENERAL
HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP**

MEDIA RELEASE

22 June 2009

**RUDD GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO
IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, today introduced legislation into the Parliament to help reduce the cost of litigation and minimise unnecessary court delays.

The *Access to Justice (Civil Litigation Reforms) Amendment Bill 2009* introduces targeted reforms to ensure people are able to resolve their disputes quickly, effectively and fairly.

“The Bill will make clear that the court, litigants and their representatives are expected to conduct litigation efficiently,” Mr McClelland said.

“Cases like the Bell liquidation and C7 show the need for courts to have strong powers to ensure that public resources are used responsibly and that justice is accessible to all Australians.”

The Bill includes key reforms, including:

- introducing an overarching obligation to facilitate the just resolution of disputes as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible;
- providing powers to impose cost penalties on parties and their lawyers who fail to comply with this duty;
- clarifying directions the Court can make to control the progress and conduct of legal proceedings; and
- streamlining appeals pathways to reduce confusion for litigants and ensure the best management of Court resources.

“These reforms are essential in enabling federal courts to deliver a fair, effective and affordable service to litigants,” Mr McClelland said.

The introduction of the Bill forms an important part of the Rudd Government’s overall commitment to enhancing the operation and accessibility of the federal civil justice system for all Australians.

Media Contact: Adam Siddique 0407 473 630