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## **Delivering better facilities for our justice system**

Attorney General, Simon Corbell, today announced the 2009-10 ACT Budget had allocated \$4 million in funding over two years for the design of a new modern ACT Supreme Court facility.

Mr Corbell said the funding was part of the second phase of the Supreme Court project.

“We are currently in the feasibility phase which is due for completion this financial year. Funding the design phase in the Budget will ready the Government to build a new Supreme Court for the community,” he said.

The Minister said the current Supreme Court Building was constructed in 1963 but its operational requirements had significantly changed since that time.

“A modern Supreme Court is part of the Government’s commitment to improve access to the ACT’s justice system and will deliver improved facilities for court staff and all users of the court,” Mr Corbell said.

As part of its commitment to continue to improve the ACT’s justice system, the Government is also providing \$125,000 for a study to deliver on its election commitment to examine the viability of merging the Magistrates and Supreme Courts to create a single ACT court.

“During the last ACT election, I announced that the Government would investigate the establishment of a single court to replace the two existing ACT courts.

“The Government has now provided funding for this study to start in the next financial year. The investigation will examine a new administrative structure to streamline courts administration and jurisdiction in the ACT,” Mr Corbell said.

The Government will consider the possibility of a single court consisting of divisions which would hear simple, complex and appeal cases. This will be done in consultation with the profession and members of the judiciary.

“Members of the court might be available to sit across each of the divisions. The Government has an open mind about this project and will carefully consider all proposals.”

The study will include extensive consultation with the community and relevant stakeholders, including the wider community, the courts, the legal profession, community organisations and other bodies such as Legal Aid.

Mr Corbell said he anticipated releasing a discussion paper for consultation in the next 12 months.

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**Media Contact: Patrick Cronan 6205 0401(w) 0432 758 224(m)**