Delia Lawrie
ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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NT Government welcomes Cross Border Justice Scheme

The Attorney-General, Delia Lawrie, today welcomed the swearing in of four NT Magistrates as part of a new agreement between the Northern Territory, West Australian and South Australian governments to deliver seamless justice across state and territory borders.

Ms Lawrie said the new cross border justice agreement applies to the central east and southern Northern Territory, Western Australia’s Ngaanyatjarra Lands and South Australia’s APY Lands.

During a ceremony at Alice Springs Court today, Chief Magistrate, Jenny Blokland and Magistrates David Bamber, Gregory Borchers and John Neil were sworn in as Cross Border Magistrates.

“This is an historic agreement and an Australian first that addresses the issues and challenges of delivering justice in remote communities,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Previously different arrangements in different jurisdictions have often placed constraints on police apprehending, arresting and transporting offenders in the cross border regions in the Territory, SA and WA.

“Now there are effectively no legal state boundaries in this region which covers some 475,000 square kilometres making it difficult for offenders escape justice.

“Police, magistrates and other officers will be able to deal with offenders from any of the jurisdictions which will streamline the delivery of justice and improve cross-border regions.

“This agreement also recognises the common cultural and social bonds of these cross border communities as well as the mobility of the traditional Indigenous people.”

Ms Lawrie said the Cross-Border Justice legislation allows:

- Magistrates to deal with charges from all three jurisdictions
- Police to make arrests and investigate offences in cross border regions and take a person from one jurisdiction to another to undertake investigations
- Take a person before a Magistrate in another jurisdiction to be heard sooner
- Correctional Services Officers to act on behalf of all correctional services in the region and provide the enforcement of community-based orders
- Prisoners from the cross border region able to serve sentences in any of the jurisdictions.

“Importantly this agreement will see justice delivered more quickly and improve the response times in dealing with offences in the cross border region,” she said.
“It will also allow police to cross over state and territory borders and bring offenders before the courts more quickly and ensure they have confidence in the justice system.”

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