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DIRECTOR

In reply please quote:

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MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Criminal Courts Statistics 2001

Delays for criminal trials in the District and Supreme Courts of NSW have come down substantially according to the annual Criminal Court Statistics Report released today by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

The median delay from committal to outcome for cases proceeding to trial in the Higher Criminal Courts where the accused was on bail fell by 30 per cent between 2000 and 2001 to 240 days. The median delay for Higher Criminal Court trial cases where the accused was remanded in custody fell by 24 per cent, to 186 days.

The median delay for Supreme Court cases proceeding to trial where the accused was on bail fell 55 per cent, to 247 days. The median delay for Supreme Court trial cases where the accused was remanded in custody fell by 30 per cent, to 259 days.

The percentage of convicted offenders given a prison sentence remained stable or rose slightly between 2000 and 2001.

In the Local Court the percentage imprisoned rose from six to seven per cent. In the Children's Court the percentage given a custodial sentence remained stable at about 11 per cent. In the Higher Criminal Courts the percentage imprisoned remained stable at 67 per cent.

Persons charged with criminal offences are also finding it harder to get bail. The percentage refused bail in the Local Court rose from about five per cent in 2000 to about six per cent in 2001. In the Children's Court the bail refusal rate rose from eight to nearly nine per cent. In the Higher Courts the bail refusal rate rose from 37 to 41 per cent.

The Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn, said that the fall in court delay was very encouraging. 'The NSW Court system has now completely overcome the problems of court administration that once gave it the longest trial court delays in the country', he said.

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