



MEDIA RELEASE

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The Chief Justice of Western Australia Wayne Martin today announced the formation of a taskforce to deal with the recent charges of sexual assault arising in the Kimberley region.

Chief Justice Martin said the taskforce's aim was to ensure that cases would be dealt with as quickly as possible to minimise the disruption to remote communities.

He will chair the taskforce which will include:

- Chief Judge of the District Court Antoinette Kennedy,
- Chief Magistrate Steven Heath,
- Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Robert Cock QC,
- Deputy Police Commissioner Chris Dawson,
- Legal Aid WA Director George Turnbull, and
- Aboriginal Legal Service, Peter Collins, Director Legal Services.

“The aim is to coordinate all relevant agencies so that we can ensure that resources are deployed effectively to bring these cases to resolution as soon as possible,” the Chief Justice said.

“It is important that the Courts are informed immediately when charges are laid so that we can ensure that judges are available to hear matters promptly.

“These charges have the capacity to seriously disrupt entire communities so it is essential that we do all that we can to reduce the impact on people in those communities.

“Although the taskforce will focus its attention on the charges recently brought in the Kimberley, it will have the capacity to broaden its activities to include other regions if required.”

The Chief Justice said he had been in contact with the Attorney General who had assured him that he would give serious consideration to providing additional resources to assist in dealing with these matters.

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