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MEDIA RELEASE

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BIRTH CERTIFICATE BLITZ WILL CHANGE LIVES

Hundreds of free birth certificates will be made available to vulnerable people in NSW, including people experiencing economic disadvantage, Aboriginal people and survivors of domestic and family violence.

NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman said a new agreement between the NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages and Legal Aid NSW will provide up to 700 free birth certificates for vulnerable people, particularly in regional and remote NSW.

“Many of us take having a birth certificate for granted,” Mr Speakman said.

“But without a birth certificate, many of life’s important moments – like getting a job, enrolling in further education, opening a bank account or getting a driver licence – are made so much harder.

“Having a birth certificate can also be critical for people who need to access basic government services.

“A birth certificate is more than an official document recording details about birth - it is also a ticket to accessibility and opportunity.”

Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government Victor Dominello said the NSW Government was committed to ensuring everyone had access to this vital identity document.

“Providing on-the-ground support to help our vulnerable communities is central to building an inclusive society where support can be accessed by those who need it most,” Mr Dominello said.

“This new agreement aims to remove the barriers to obtaining a birth certificate for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.”

Legal Aid NSW Acting CEO Monique Hitter said cost, literacy and other barriers to obtaining birth certificates were sometimes connected with legal problems.

“Our lawyers sometimes see people in rural and remote communities who don’t have birth certificates and who struggle to get a licence or get access to other essential services,” Ms Hitter said.

“Not having a birth certificate can impact on other everyday legal issues such as debt problems or obtaining safe and secure housing.

“Supporting people who are in financial hardship to access a birth certificate is a simple step that can help resolve or avoid complex legal issues down the line.”

Legal Aid NSW will work with partners in communities where high need has been identified, including Albury, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Coonamble, Moree, Newcastle and Taree, to help eligible people obtain a free birth certificates and assist them with other legal needs. The free birth certificate blitz will run up to 30 June 2022.