



Budget 2008-09
Delivering better services and investment in infrastructure

ATTORNEY GENERAL

New civil court for Sydney

3 June 2008

A \$2 million super-sized civil courtroom will be built for the Supreme Court of NSW, Attorney General John Hatzistergos announced today.

Mr Hatzistergos said the project was just one of many courtroom upgrades to be funded under this year's record \$797 million Budget for the Attorney General's Department, which includes \$50.9 million in capital expenditure.

"Our investment in the Supreme Court will highlight Sydney's standing in Australia and Asia as a global centre of excellence for commercial litigation," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"The new 220-square-metre civil courtroom will be almost twice the size of a standard courtroom. It will be able to comfortably accommodate hearings involving a large number of barristers and lawyers, such as C7, HIH and One.Tel.

"The courtroom upgrade will form part of a two-year redevelopment of the ninth floor of the Queens Square Law Courts in Sydney's CBD."

Mr Hatzistergos said the NSW Budget also provides close to \$13 million for a comprehensive upgrade of Parramatta Courthouse.

"With the high-tech \$330 million Parramatta Justice Precinct now complete, the Lemna Government will focus on giving the neighbouring Parramatta Courthouse a 21st Century makeover," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"The courthouse will receive a new roof, cells complex, a purpose-built Drug Court registry and additional security facilities. Videoconferencing technology will also be upgraded in four of the building's courtrooms.

"More remote witness facilities will be installed and upgraded in NSW courts following a \$3.25 million allocation in 2008/09.

"These facilities enable vulnerable witnesses, such as sexual assault victims, to give evidence via Closed Circuit Television from a private location."

Other projects to be funded in 2008/09 include:

- \$2.5 million for a new cells complex at Goulburn Courthouse;
- \$2 million to complete the Dubbo Courthouse upgrade;
- \$1.5 million to the NSW Sheriff's Office for additional security and 23 new Sheriff's Officers;
- \$1 million for an upgrade of Gosford Courthouse that will include better facilities for juries and people with a disability ; and

- \$1 million for the upgrade of electronic security systems at 12 courthouses, including Broken Hill, Newcastle, Tamworth, Griffith and Belmont.

Mr Hatzistergos said the Iemma Government's \$46.1 million investment in court-related facilities in 2008/09 would ensure the NSW court system remained the best in Australia.

"In NSW we have the smallest backlog of cases in any state or territory, even though we handle more cases than any other jurisdiction.

"The NSW Government is also investing \$5.8 million in 2008/09 in programs to help reduce rates of re-offending by 10 per cent by 2016," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"This includes \$1.9 million to continue and expand the successful Forum Sentencing program, formerly known as Community Conferencing, which gives victims of crime a say in sentences and \$3.5 million in drug and alcohol treatment programs."

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