



MEDIA RELEASE

Hon. John Hatzistergos MLC
Attorney General
Minister for Industrial Relations

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

RENOVATION OF PARRAMATTA COURTHOUSE COMPLETE

Attorney General John Hatzistergos and the Member for Parramatta Tanya Gadiel today opened the newly renovated Parramatta Courthouse.

Mr Hatzistergos said the \$14 million renovation had been completed on budget and on schedule.

“The building has undergone a 21st century makeover internally, with all public areas refurbished and new videoconferencing technology installed in most courtrooms,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

He said the revamped building, which comprises nine courtrooms, included a new callover court for short procedural matters.

Mr Hatzistergos said videoconferencing enabled the court to hear bail applications made from prison and evidence from witnesses who are overseas or otherwise unable to attend court.

“A new ‘safe room’ will provide witnesses and victims of crimes, such as domestic violence, with a secure place to wait before their matter comes before the court.”

He said the Local Courts registry has been redesigned to make services simpler, faster and easier to access.

“A public computer terminal will enable court users to browse legal information on the internet, while display boards will contain details about legal resources and support services,” Mr Hatzistergos said.

A separate registry has been built for the NSW Drug Court, which will conduct all of its hearings in a dedicated courtroom. A Deputy State Coroner will also be based at the courthouse and will use one of the courtrooms to hold inquests.

Other improvements to Parramatta Courthouse include:

- Six new or refurbished holding cells
- Five new or refurbished rooms for the legal profession to interview clients
- Improved disability access throughout the courthouse
- A new roof
- A fire safety upgrade
- New prisoner transfer lifts

Ms Gadiel said the project would provide a major boost for the area.

“Because Parramatta has had the second highest Local Court workload in NSW, the new facilities will be a welcome addition for court users,” she said.

“With the District Court moving into the Parramatta Justice Precinct, Local Courts will have access to six state-of-the-art courtrooms, which is two more than they previously occupied at the courthouse.”

She said the courthouse upgrade provided the finishing touches to the revitalisation of the city’s legal precinct.

“Parramatta already has the largest Children’s Court in NSW and the most secure trial court complex. With the completion of this courthouse, the city now has first class Local Court, Drug Court and Coroner’s Court facilities.”

“This means that most cases that begin in Parramatta will be finalised here, whereas in the past many cases had to be transferred to other facilities in Sydney’s CBD.”