

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **NSW BUDGET TO DELIVER FAST & SECURE JUSTICE**

The 2017-18 NSW Budget will deliver new high-tech courts and fund a range of initiatives to protect our communities and make the justice system faster and more accessible, Attorney General Mark Speakman announced today.

“This budget delivers a comprehensive range of projects and initiatives to ensure the NSW justice system remains the best in the country,” Mr Speakman said.

The Budget provides \$17.8 million towards the \$38 million redevelopment of the Surry Hills Children’s Court, in which hearings will begin early next year for the first time in three decades.

“The three-storey complex will set a benchmark for children’s justice facilities in Australia and will replace the ageing and significantly smaller Bidura Children’s Court in Glebe,” Mr Speakman said.

“The redeveloped Surry Hills Children’s Court will include four state-of-the-art courtrooms, a private room for vulnerable witnesses to give video evidence and other features to make court less daunting for young victims of crime and children in care and protection cases.”

The 4,500m<sup>2</sup> building, which will retain its 106-year-old façade, will top out with a new roof next month.

The Budget also delivers \$8.54 million for two new secure trial courtrooms, a further three jury deliberations rooms and two judge’s chambers at the Downing Centre in Sydney’s CBD, and a State Parole Authority hearing room at the Sydney West Trial Courts at Parramatta.

Other Budget highlights include:

- \$27 million for measures to encourage offenders to enter early guilty pleas so victims can get on with their lives and police can return to frontline duties faster
- \$5.9 million to roll out ballistic vests for all NSW Sheriff’s Officers and for a 12-month extension of 40 temporary Sheriff’s Officer positions created under a counter-terrorism initiative
- A \$6 million boost over two years for Community Legal Centres to deliver targeted assistance to those most in need
- An extra \$2.8 million for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions’ (ODPP) ICAC Special Prosecutions Unit that helps bring corrupt individuals to justice

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