



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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CLEARER PICTURE AFTER SUPREME RENOVATIONS

The evidence will be clearer in the NSW Supreme Court, following the arrival of high definition video technology in selected courtrooms at the Law Courts Building in Sydney's CBD.

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, said he was impressed with the latest improvements in a visit to the court today.

"All 10 courtrooms on levels 8 and 11 have received a technology upgrade as part of the renovations, and most are now equipped with high-definition cameras and 60-inch LCD monitors," Mr Smith said.

"The technology is capable of delivering crystal-clear pictures and superior sound and will improve the transmission quality of recorded evidence and witness testimony via audio-visual links.

"This is the first time that high-definition technology has been installed in a NSW court and it will set a benchmark for future court upgrades."

Levels 8 and 11 have also been made more accessible to people with a disability.

"People using a wheelchair will now be able sit on a jury in defamation hearings at Queens Square, following the installation of ramps and a fully accessible jury box and deliberation room," Mr Smith said.

Mr Smith said the improvements were part of the ongoing renovation of the Law Courts Building.

"Twenty-four of the 32 courtrooms occupied by the Supreme Court in the building at Queens Square have been refurbished from floor-to-ceiling and will be the envy of judges in other jurisdictions," Mr Smith said.

"Nine of the courtrooms are now E-Court compatible, which will enable practitioners at the bar table to access real-time transcripts of proceedings on their lap top computers."

Mr Smith noted that many of the previously windowless courtrooms were now filled with natural light.

“The courtrooms have been redesigned to create a more welcoming atmosphere in keeping with the NSW Government’s philosophy that the judicial system should be open and accessible,” Mr Smith said.

Other areas to be refurbished include interview rooms for the legal profession, judge’s chambers and public amenities.

Work will begin in October on the refurbishment of levels 10 and 13 of the Law Courts Building. All 10 floors occupied by the Supreme Court are being refurbished at a cost of \$94 million, with the project due for completion in 2013/14.

“To minimise disruption to the Supreme Court, the renovations are being conducted two floors at a time with most of the work being done outside of sitting hours, including at night and on weekends,” Mr Smith said.

The 23-floor Law Courts Building accommodates 50 Commonwealth and State courtrooms. The NSW and Federal Governments are jointly funding the refurbishment of the building. The project also includes new air conditioning, electrical and fire safety systems, new windows and frames and substantial improvements to the building’s lift network.