



# Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General  
Minister for Justice

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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6 July 2012

### MEETING ON GRAFTON JAIL

Acting NSW Premier Andrew Stoner and Attorney General Greg Smith SC met a delegation of Grafton community and union representatives in Sydney this afternoon in the wake of last week's announcement to downsize Grafton Correctional Centre.

Mr Smith said the Government had an obligation to taxpayers across the State to run the prison system efficiently and that Grafton had reached its use-by date, with millions of dollars in maintenance required every year.

Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis led a delegation that included Clarence Valley Mayor Richie Williamson, Chamber of Commerce President Jeremy Challacombe and three union officers, but Mr Smith told them the decision would not be put on hold.

Mr Smith, who is also Minister for Justice, explained that Grafton Correctional Centre's cost per inmate was \$173 against \$98 for the new centre at Cessnock – where many of the prisoners will be relocated.

"I acknowledge the upheaval this will cause in Grafton and that's why we had the meeting today," Mr Smith said. "I feel most sympathy for the families of prison officers who will be devastated by this decision.

"However, Cessnock is a recently upgraded facility with better safety measures in place for both prisoners and correctional officers. We started moving prisoners into more modern jails last year and this is part of that process."

Mr Smith said he had accepted the advice of Corrective Services to downsize the jail but said officers who do not want to move to other centres would be offered voluntary redundancies.

Earlier today, Mr Stoner announced that the NSW Government would develop a Northern Rivers Jobs Plan to help businesses in the region create new jobs, and invited local businesses to apply for grants under the scheme.

The NSW Government has grown public sector jobs in the region since coming to power, with an extra 164 nurses in the Local Health District, 32 Department of Education and Communities staff in the Clarence, and 24 new probationary police officers in the Local Area Command.