



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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HIGH-SECURITY COURT SETS NEW BENCHMARK

The NSW Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, has welcomed the opening of one of the largest courtrooms in NSW, which will be capable of hosting high-security trials involving up to 14 defendants.

Mr Smith inspected the \$2.5 million courtroom at the Downing Centre complex in Sydney's CBD last week and declared it the best trial court in Australia.

"This is the Rolls Royce of courtrooms - a 232 square metre monster that will be utilised for the longest, largest and most complex criminal trials in NSW," Mr Smith said.

"The Sydney West Trial Courts, which hosted the recent terrorism and airport bikie brawl trials, set a benchmark for security and technology.

"But this new court has raised the bar even further."

The new courtroom includes:

- A 20-seat dock that can be opened or enclosed (the dock includes six seats for Corrective Services officers);
- Two bar tables accommodating up to 36 legal practitioners;
- A 66 square metre jury deliberation room; and
- A 15 seat jury box (a regular trial has a 12-member jury but up to 15 jurors can be empanelled for long trials).

Mr Smith said the jury box featured eight high-definition television screens.

"Instead of passing photographs around and taking turns to scrutinise evidence, jurors will be able to watch video evidence and electronic exhibits more closely - and in a more timely fashion," Mr Smith said.

An audio-visual link system will enable the court to hear bail applications made from prisons and witness testimony given from remote locations.

Mr Smith said the court's technology would make the justice system more open and accessible.

"If the public gallery becomes full during high profile cases, the court will have the option of broadcasting its proceedings on screens outside the courtroom.

"And with the consent of the court, the media will also be able to stream proceedings such as the sentencing of an offender," Mr Smith said.